

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

(Reference: Appropriation Bill 2002-2003)

Members:

**MR G HUMPHRIES (The Chair)
MR J HARGREAVES
MS R DUNDAS
MRS V DUNNE
MS K GALLAGHER**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

MONDAY, 22 JULY 2002

**Secretary to the committee:
Ms J Henderson (Ph: 620 50129)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

The committee met at 9.04 am.

Appearances:

Mr B Wood, Minister for Urban Services, Minister for the Arts and Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services

Department of Urban Services—

Mr A Thompson, Chief Executive

Mr A Eggins, Executive Director, Corporate

Mr A Phillips, Manager, Finance, Corporate

Dr C Adrian, Executive Director, Policy Coordination

Ms M Hillson, Director, Arts and Cultural Services, Policy Coordination

Mr B MacDonald, General Manager, Road Transport, Policy Coordination

Mr A Franklin, Manager, Housing Policy

Mr G Zatschler, Manager, Group Business Management, Policy Coordination

Dr M Cooper, Executive Director, Environment ACT

Ms L Fowler, Director, Environment ACT

Mr J Heinemann, Finance Manager, Environment ACT

Ms S Ross, Executive Director, Operations

Mr T Elliot, Director, Canberra Connect, Customer Services and Information

Mr J Thwaite, Director, Property and Services, Customer Services and Information

Mr G Davidson, Executive Director, City Management

Mr H McNulty, Director, Roads, City Management

Mr T Gill, City Management

Mr T Bartlett, Director, ACT Forests

Ms J McKinnon, Executive Director, Land

Mr M Hehir, Land

Ms H Elvin, Chief Executive, Cultural Facilities Corporation

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister, thank you officials. We will just go through some housekeeping. A reminder that we have come to an arrangement whereby we will receive, or hopefully receive, answers to questions taken on notice within three full working days. We appreciate your cooperation in achieving that deadline. To help make that happen, we will be transmitting the transcript of each day's proceedings by email to the minister and the departmental contact officer for distribution to witnesses as soon as it is available. We would ask people who have spoken in that transcript to check the transcript for commitments that they made to provide additional information or responses to questions on notice.

I would ask members who want a question to be taken on notice to indicate that quite clearly to the officers concerned so that they are aware that there is a question to be taken on notice rather than just an issue that they are going to follow up at some stage in the future. It is also handy if reference is being made to matters in budget documents to quote the page in the budget document so that it is clear for the sake of the transcript at least what exactly is being talked about.

Members will recall that we came to an arrangement whereby we will flag at the beginning of each day what matters members expect to ask questions about. So, if there are no questions in certain areas we can indicate early that those particular people are not required and need not be present. We would ask that they not go off onto the golf course,

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that they still be available in their offices in case recall is necessary. But if they are not actually required for questions then we anticipate they would not need to be here during the day. We will do that now.

Today we have Mr Wood, the Minister for Urban Services and Minister for the Arts. We have output classes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 7. I assume there will be questions on each of those areas. We will work on that assumption. Are there any questions in respect of the Cultural Facilities Corporation?

MR HARGREAVES: I don't have any.

MS DUNDAS: I have one small one.

THE CHAIR: I think I have one as well. Commissioner for the Environment? No. Canberra Cemeteries Trust?

MS DUNDAS: I have one small one in respect of the Commissioner for the Environment. I am willing to put that on notice, though.

THE CHAIR: Okay. If we put it on notice, that is another way of dealing with it. Canberra Cemeteries Trust? No. ACT Forests?

MRS DUNNE: Yes, I have few there.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Minister, you can indicate to your officers that we won't require the Commissioner for the Environment or the Canberra Cemeteries Trust today.

Morning tea will be at 10.30 and afternoon tea at 3.30 approximately. I remind you that proceedings are being broadcast to specified government offices and the media may record proceedings and take visual footage, so you can't be shy. I ask that witnesses as they come to the table state their name and the capacity in which they are appearing. That is the housekeeping done. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Mr Wood: Thank you, Chair, I will. Let me say how good it is to be answering questions this time, not asking them. Since October 2001 when the present government took office we have been taking important steps to fulfilling community expectations by introducing a range of policies and programs aimed at improving the overall quality of life in the ACT.

In particular, I am happy to say that the Department of Urban Services is contributing to the following key result areas of government, namely:

- strengthening community participation and enhancing the formation of partnerships with community groups, particularly through our restoration of funding to the National Institute of the Arts and related arts initiatives, and via our environmental and nature conservation programs;
- improving community access to information and services through both online and traditional access options via Canberra Connect, the ACT's public libraries, and new strategies within Environment ACT;

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- building on our commitment to a clean and sustainable environment through improved waste and energy management measures, a range of nature conservation and greenhouse initiatives, and the introduction of new heritage legislation which you will see soon; and
- implementing major road transport and infrastructure policies and projects to offer a more integrated approach to transport planning and improved transport safety, and to enhance the amenity value of our city.

Overall, the department would deliver the municipal, environmental, heritage, arts and cultural, transport and property services required to keep the city running well over the coming year.

An indication of the diversity of services delivered by DUS can be gauged from the following statistical examples. In the coming financial year, the department will:

- employ around 1,300 staff;
- provide waste and recycling services to 125,000 households;
- provide over 2.5 million public library loans;
- process 785,000 financial transactions through Canberra Connect;
- undertake over 60,000 motor vehicle inspections;
- attract over 300,000 visitors to the theatres and museums managed by the CFC;
- manage over 130,000 hectares of national parks and nature reserves, which will attract over 2 million visitors this year; and
- provide advice on over 1,500 heritage-related inquiries.

DUS exists to serve the community and the department strives to provide Canberrans with the very best service possible. The budget has been developed to meet this challenge and further improve the quality of life for Canberrans while also seeking to achieve better value within available funds.

The key initiatives for DUS in the 2002/2003 budget are: continuing to deliver key initiatives towards achieving the goal of no waste to landfill by the year 2010; maintaining 5,582 hectares of urban open space, 460 playgrounds and 14 lakes and ponds; providing public access to 95,000 hours of Internet terminal use; doubling the range and scale of services provided by the National Institute of the Arts to the ACT community; increasing support for innovative arts projects and local arts organisations; boosting the funds available to maintain ACT arts facilities, including heritage-listed facilities such as Gorman House in what has been an excellent current budget for the arts; encouraging the use of alternative means of transport to the private car through the introduction of paid parking in Belconnen and Tuggeranong; providing extra resources to

assist the ACT Parks and Conservation Service develop and implement an integrated nature conservation plan and improved environmental education programs; encouraging Canberrans to assist in reducing greenhouse gas emissions by adopting environmentally friendly choices such as solar hot water and cavity wall insulation; delivering comprehensive weed control and bushfire management programs; delivering high quality helpline, website and environment information centre services; contributing to the national program to eradicate the red imported fire ant; and supporting the work of the ACT Commissioner for the Environment and his 2003 state of the environment report.

DUS is committed to being accountable to the community which it serves and always seeks to achieve value for money in the provision of its services. The department, the government and the people of Canberra are fortunate—and I say this very strongly as a minister coming into this department—to be served by excellent staff and these staff are committed to delivering an efficient, cost-effective and professional service across a broad range of municipal activities. The work of DUS plays a critical role in maintaining the excellent standard of living which we enjoy in the ACT. Mr Chairman, that completes my introductory statement.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. Could I lead off with a question about greenhouse targets. You refer to the work that is going on in 2002-03 to promote or progress the ACT greenhouse strategy. You mention some of the things that are being prepared in that respect, including improved conservation and looking at an energy performance for commercial buildings program. Have the targets in the greenhouse strategy changed at all or is there an expectation that the timetable for reducing greenhouse gases that was set down in the past will be continued as a priority for this government?

Mr Wood: The targets were sound targets to reach—modest, perhaps slightly ambitious. We are reviewing the greenhouse strategy and we will be looking at the establishment of the targets and whether they will be adjusted in that review. That review has commenced or is about to commence and that is when we will be focusing on those targets once more to see how the targets previously set will hold up.

You are aware of the initiatives that we have taken, and some of them flow on from the former government. So we will get into more detail, if you like, when the environment people are here.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I see slightly connected to that is the review of the No Waste by 2010 strategy, and there is a second phase—2003-2006, I think—which is now being developed. You have got work underway to develop what the targets will be or what the measures will be during that period. Has that work begun and are you expecting to produce a paper of some sort before the end of this calendar year?

Mr Wood: As to production of a paper, Mr Thompson might like to say something.

Mr Thompson: Alan Thompson, Chief Executive, Urban Services. Obviously the no waste strategy, if you like, was initiated back in '96 and we have made very good progress to date. But we think we are at a pretty important point in terms of assessing whether and how we continue on down the path we have set ourselves.

One of the most challenging aspects is the nature of the technologies to actually get right down to no waste. In order to get there you have got to have ways of separating out the waste stream all of the different products. Some other municipalities around Australia and elsewhere around the world have made various attempts at that, have not been entirely successful to date, but we do know that the technologies are evolving.

So the proposition is to conduct a comprehensive review, and assess directions which can be realistic and affordable. In those terms, yes, a review is being got under way now, and my recollection is that we would hope for a report before the end of this calendar year.

THE CHAIR: Right, which will be a report for members of the public and the members of the Assembly to see?

Mr Thompson: I would expect so, yes.

THE CHAIR: All right.

MR HARGREAVES: Could I suggest that perhaps Hamish McNulty come to the table because he is the guy who is running the No Waste by 2010 strategy, and my question will be related to him?

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Thompson: Mr Hargreaves, if we can insert Gordon Davidson in lieu of Hamish.

MR HARGREAVES: Either, so long as the person knows the state of the tip. If you know exactly the layout of the tip, that is fine.

THE CHAIR: Ms Dundas has a question on no waste.

MS DUNDAS: I have a couple of questions on no waste.

THE CHAIR: I will come back to Mr Hargreaves.

MS DUNDAS: Under capital works there is \$2.4 million for a new trench at Mugga Lane. How does this fit into the no waste strategy? Why are we spending \$2.4 million on a new hole for waste when we are still working towards no waste by 2010?

Mr Wood: I think the answer is we are still working towards it. Mr Davidson might like to elaborate on that, but we are going to continue to get a stream of waste. The current facility will take another six months or so—it is getting fairly close to being fully utilised—so we are going to need that period at least.

Mr Davidson: Gordon Davidson, Executive Director, City Management. The reason we have got to spend that money on a new trench is that, even though we are working towards the no waste goal, we currently produce and dump into landfill about 200,000 tonnes a year, and even though that has reduced significantly in the last four or five years, that is still a significant amount of waste and we have to treat it accordingly. The

existing trench is nearly full and we have got to build a new one. That will last us then for a number of years as we continue to work towards reducing the quantity.

MS DUNDAS: \$2.4 million worth of trench—how long is that expected to last?

Mr Davidson: A number of years. It depends a little bit on how quickly the amount of landfill, the amount of rubbish produced, pans out. It will last us for a number of years. We may not have to do it again before 2010.

MS DUNDAS: Okay. Also on that, the target weight of waste going to landfill roughly this year is only a 5 per cent decrease on what we actually did last year. So by the time we get to 2010, by my calculations we will be still sending 139,000 tonnes of rubbish to the landfill. What initiatives are in train, besides digging a hole to put this rubbish in, to actually reach the no waste target?

Mr Davidson: It is true that in the last year the amount of material going to landfill has not reduced very significantly, although when you look at it over a number of years, we had been coming down fairly rapidly and we have got to the point where we have now reduced the total by about 61 per cent to what it was in the mid-90s.

We have, however, hit a plateau, and the sorts of things we are working on now are a refinement of the technologies that we have been using for the last few years. But at the same time, we are reviewing through the review that was mentioned a few minutes ago what the next big step will be. And the next big step will take place when the technology is right to do it. In the meantime, we have a number of programs going which concentrate on attitude and continuing to increase the amount of separation at source and those sorts of recycling activities in order to keep the momentum going.

MS DUNDAS: If the next big step is reliant on technology that either we can't afford or isn't thought of yet, and this strategy was thought of in 1996, where were we meant to be at this stage? Were we going to be waiting for new technology, or what was the plan?

Mr Davidson: Well, if you graph it, you could argue we are pretty much on target. It was a pretty ambitious goal when we set out 2010. We certainly admitted at the time that we didn't have all of the answers, but we were aware that there were a number of strategies being worked on. We are now aware, as Mr Thompson mentioned earlier, that the technologies are out there. They are just still moving towards the point of being financially viable.

Mr Wood: One of the big steps we have to take is to move more into the commercial area. I think the household collections and recycling have been very successfully done. One of the next steps is to look more heavily into that commercial strength and see what we may do to get more recycling out of that strength. In fact, early on in my piece, I launched a program which was a flow through from the former government towards a greater awareness in the commercial sector. But we have got to then pursue that to see that the awareness is followed up by some real action.

MS DUNDAS: Two more questions, with your indulgence, Chair.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

MS DUNDAS: The percentage of recovered material from the total waste stream had a target—I am referring to Budget Paper No 4, page 199—of 66 per cent for 2001-2002 but the estimated outcome was 63 per cent, and we have a target for this financial year of 68 per cent. Can you explain why we missed our target by 3 per cent and why you think we can then increase to meet the target by an extra 5 per cent?

Mr Wood: It is hard work closing that gap and the closer you get, the further along the path you get, the harder it gets.

Mr Davidson: We take an audit at the end of each year of what has been achieved. We did set ourselves a target of 66 per cent and it didn't quite reach that number. The reason for that was that in some categories of waste the amount going to landfill went up. In other areas it went down.

MS DUNDAS: What areas did it go up in?

Mr Davidson: Domestic waste went up by 3,000 tons. Putrescible waste went up by nearly 20,000 tons. Builders spoil came down significantly by 20,000 tons. Garden waste went down and general categories of waste went up by about 5,000 tons.

In terms of putrescible waste, where there was a significant increase, we have got an initiative going at the moment with the commercial businesses in town where up until recently our major efforts towards recycling have focused on the household and domestic area. We are now turning our attention to the commercial area, particularly supermarkets where large amounts of organic waste are produced. We are encouraging them, and they are responding, towards separating their waste at source too, so that that can be streamed off into the recycling area rather than going to land fill. So we expect to make some good ground there over the next year.

MS DUNDAS: On that point, the bio bin trial in Chifley has resulted in bio bins not being continued. Is the reintroduction of bio bins or something similar being thought of to help reduce waste going to landfill, especially when a lot of people can't make compost in their own homes?

Mr Wood: There is not anything right in front of us. The experience at Chifley is well in our mind, but I am not putting forward at this stage any other option, any further option, on that. I think as we get down the track, as we tighten our belt towards that 2010 target, we may have a look at that again. But it also means some pretty solid work in educating the community ahead of any further proposal.

Mr Thompson: Ms Dundas, perhaps if I could just add a bit there. The Chifley trial had a very mixed response from the residents of Chifley. A lot of people were very keen on it but there were some who were very, very unkeen and we found that over time there was progressive resistance emerging amongst some people.

So the review that I mentioned a bit earlier would at least take into account some of the emerging technologies. One of the approaches that people are endeavouring to develop is where you have probably only two bins but the waste in one of them, perhaps in lieu of our current green bin, would go through a mechanical sorting process which would allow

all that biodegradable material, putrescibles and so on to be sorted out. That could then be streamed off into compost or whatever and the non-biodegradables taken elsewhere for other treatment.

If we can do that successfully in a factory-type process, a little bit like we have got at the moment for dealing with the yellow bins, then that may be the way for the future. As we mentioned, we are doing this review at the moment to check out on cost because the current people who are offering very robust technologies are also suggesting pretty high prices. Frankly, we think those prices might be beyond the willingness of Canberrans to pay.

We are not just talking about domestic waste going through this sort of process; we would be talking about the whole waste stream from supermarkets and Canberra's factories. So it would be a large volume exercise and you wouldn't want to commit to go down that path unless there was agreement in the community in terms of willingness to pay and we were quite convinced the technology actually worked. There have been some experiments elsewhere in the last four or five years. Other councils have built facilities which don't work, and we don't want to be in that situation at all.

MS DUNDAS: Just to go back a step, can you tell me what size the new trench at Mugga Lane will be and when work is meant to start?

Mr Wood: Well, it is very large—I think 300 cubic metres is the amount of soil being removed.

Mr Thompson: I have got the figures in front of me. At this stage we are contemplating a two-stage process and it will depend on how rapidly the overall waste stream declines. The first stage, which is the \$2.4 million investment, will give us about another 800,000 cubic metres of capacity. It does involve moving a large amount of soil and rock to create the trench or the cell. It is a peculiar shape because it is on the side of a hill. So it is not a neat trench in the ground. It is roughly—I am not sure how you would describe this in the *Hansard*—but it is like that.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Thompson, can I just interpose—

MR HARGREAVES: Can I go down the track, please Mr Chair. I have been waiting very patiently for Ms Dundas to exhaust herself.

MS DUNDAS: I am very interested in this, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: You are very insistent, Ms Dundas. Can I ask please a couple of questions of the minister and his officers. I refer to the current issue between Revolve and Thiess at Mugga Lane. I realise that the departmental officers are trying to play honest broker between these two players, but I am also conscious of the adverse publicity which has popped up recently about it. Could you give us an update on where we are with that?

Mr Wood: Well, it was close to being accommodated just a week or so ago. I haven't heard if it has finally been agreed between the two parties.

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Mr Davidson: We understand that there is an agreement in principle, and they are currently working through the details of their contract.

MR HARGREAVES: That was the situation at least a week or so ago.

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MR HARGREAVES: And it hasn't changed since?

Mr Davidson: No.

MR HARGREAVES: I understand it was also the case before the operators of Revolve actually went public with their complaints. Did that have any jeopardising effect on negotiations, do you think?

Mr Wood: What, their going public?

MR HARGREAVES: Yes.

Mr Wood: Well, I haven't heard any outcome of that.

MR HARGREAVES: I am aware that—

Mr Wood: Certainly governments are used to people going public.

MR HARGREAVES: I am just aware that the departmental officers are doing everything they can to actually resolve the issue. I was having some sympathy and wondering just how much difficulty there had been additionally incurred by the placing of it in the media. I take it by Mr Davidson's nodding that he is in agreement with me—if he won't say it for the *Hansard*, I will.

Can I also go down this track: the whole of Mugga Lane in fact requires a complete change of mindset with the transit arrangements that are there. Can you give me some sort of an indication as to public acceptance of your changes? You are introducing increased tip charges.

Mr Wood: Yes.

MR HARGREAVES: It is a little bit more difficult for some people who are not particularly good at backing trailers. However, I have been out there and had a look at it and it seems like it is doing all right. But I would like you, for the record, to show what your thinking is.

Mr Wood: There has been a lot of pressure at Mugga. On some days if you go at peak time there is a bit of a queue—more than a bit of a queue on a few occasions. It does take skill in backing a trailer, which I am sure you have, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: Indeed.

Mr Wood: Better than I do. It is also the system now operating at Mitchell, of course. As to the acceptance by the public, let me very anecdotally and sparsely put it this way: I used to get a call or two on a Sunday when the queue was very long. I have had no calls more recently. I also think it might be a little bit early to really assess what the public view of the change is. If Mr Davidson has any recent information, we might hear it.

Mr Davidson: Only some general feedback that, yes, there were some teething problems early and now that it is continuing to improve and there is a generally high level of acceptance.

MR HARGREAVES: The whole reason for putting it in there was to separate all of the materials taken to landfill into recyclable chunks, shall we say. What sort of achievement do you think the installation of that thing has had in terms of prevention of stuff going to landfill, encouragement of people to take it to such places as Revolve, and recycling and separating out their stuff?

Mr Wood: I think it is very early to be able to assess that. I think it has a number of advantages in that there is a safe and controlled means of separation. I think one of the measures—and I haven't seen any outcome of this—would be to assess what Revolve takes back into the tip. If Revolve is consistently taking material back into the tip, as I understand it does from time to time, then people are either being too ambitious in removing from the waste stream or Revolve isn't getting rid of enough of its stuff. I understand that issue was one of the questions in the argument between Revolve and Thiess, and I believe Thiess waived any fees if Revolve took stuff back to the tip. That is likely to occur; I won't say it has occurred.

Mr Thompson: Mr Hargreaves, if I can just make another observation. I was down at Mugga last week just watching what was happening in the domestic waste disposal area. Just because it is a bit cleaner and neater, it would seem that people are now setting aside some of the stuff that they previously just threw into the landfill; they are putting it aside and Revolve are then coming along and picking it up, whether it is old televisions or old bits of furniture, and then taking it off to their shed. It is anecdotal, and we don't have any quantification yet, but I think it is a cleaner, neater environment and I think that will assist people to have a mindset where they don't just throw things in the hole but put them aside and let recycling happen.

Mr Wood: I think the importance of that very large shed should be noted—half a million dollars worth which will get much more of Revolve's material out of the weather.

Mr Davidson: The feedback from Mitchell, too, is that there is an increased amount of recycling happening as a result of those arrangements and the subcontractor out there is reportedly doing quite well. But we don't have any formal figures to demonstrate that yet.

MR HARGREAVES: I imagine that the new arrangements, in fact, would create a better working environment from an OH&S perspective for those people who are working at the tip-face and from Revolve's perspective as well.

Mr Davidson: Absolutely, yes. There were a number of OH&S concerns about scavenging activities at the tip which have, under these arrangements, been effectively solved.

MR HARGREAVES: Are we having any less activity by the most notorious scavenger of all down there?

Mr Wood: I think he is pretty crook in any case.

MR HARGREAVES: I will ask my last question on this waste issue. How is second-hand Sunday travelling?

Mr Wood: Well, it has been okay. There has been a fairly intensive effort but we're not sure if it will continue.

MR HARGREAVES: Can I, as an aside, just advise you minister that I extolled the virtues of second-hand Sunday in England during the recent parliamentary visit that I made. The people in the council in Coventry were particularly interested in the process. You may or may not get a call but they were very, very interested in it as a process.

THE CHAIR: On a different subject, could I ask about the Link. What is the state of play with the Link, and when can we expect work to begin on the Link?

Mr Wood: Well, it is not in the budget. There are a number of reasons for that. We have a very tight capital works program. But it is also the case that it has been much delayed, let me put it gently, through negotiations with the National Capital Authority. That has taken a lot of time and it is not by any means settled yet, although I understand that there is a degree of confidence now within CFC that what they have submitted to the NCA will be accepted. I say "have submitted". If they haven't submitted their current plans they will do so very, very soon. There is a level of confidence because of negotiations and discussions that the current plans will be accepted.

There remains a relatively small amount of money in the budget sufficient to cover that low level of planning activity, and now I go into the process ahead of next year's budget of returning that money into the capital works program.

THE CHAIR: So how does the proposal which you are about to put forward, I assume to the NCA, differ from the earlier proposal which, I think, members were briefed about six months ago?

Mr Wood: Yes, the earlier proposal, if we are talking about the same proposal here—

THE CHAIR: There was a briefing over in the north building and a model was shown to us.

Mr Wood: Yes, it was too high. The NCA, and I think a little inconsistently, believed it interfered with the sight lines along Ainslie Avenue. I thought those sight lines might have been destroyed when the new shopping centre was built, but anyway. So it has tended to be squashed and, therefore, the space taken up intruding into the Civic Square is a little more. So it is not as high—that is the broad detail of it.

THE CHAIR: What is the process we use here? Do we take it to the NCA and then out for public comment?

Mr Wood: Yes, I would believe so. I would want to refine my answer on that but there is a process certainly of further comment—notification, communication with the community. I don't think there is any formal step required, but as part of communication I think it would be desirable.

MRS DUNNE: You said previously, minister, that CFC was increasingly confident that what they proposed to the NCA will be approved. If that is the case, can CFC be confident that there will be money in the budget?

Mr Wood: Well, they rely on the next budget process. I will be certainly making my claims for it.

MRS DUNNE: It seems rather pointless to go through all this effort if you are not actually going to build. Is there a commitment from the government to actually build the Link?

Mr Wood: Well, every year we have to redo the capital works program. I have got to get it on the agenda for next year. That is up to me now.

MRS DUNNE: So are you committed to the Link?

Mr Wood: Oh yes. Yes, I am committed to the Link and I am working on the basis that I will put it on my capital works program and expect to see something coming. But you know the process—it has got to be fought for each year.

THE CHAIR: If I can ask another question on a different area about the Downer to Woden cycle path. In the estimates of costs of election promises that the Labor Party put out before the last election it was estimated that the cost of the cycle path would be between \$1½ million and \$2 million. I see that the budget is now providing \$2½ million over two years for the project. Is it any more extensive than the original proposal; and if not, then how was the extra cost accounted for?

Mr Wood: I don't know if it is any more extensive. I don't have the detail of the planning of that. It has got a couple of problematic areas as it traces that route. I would think that further costing is the basis of further examination of what is involved.

THE CHAIR: So I assume that there simply was an inaccuracy then in the earlier costings that were done before the election.

Mr Wood: Well, I don't know whether you would say it was an inaccuracy, Mr Humphries. You would be aware in your previous stints in opposition that you do your best possible estimations of what is needed in opposition but you don't always have all the refinements and all the details that are accessible when you are actually in government.

THE CHAIR: I note that there was some debate about the thing when it was first announced, and we indicated we thought from government the cost was too low to build what you were proposing to build. There may be an argument, wouldn't there, for some sort of independent costing process, perhaps, for election promises in the future?

Mr Wood: Well, yes, that may be. How that would be managed, I don't know. Governments are usually fairly cautious about allowing all those sorts of things to happen.

MR HARGREAVES: Minister, was it true also that there were in fact two costings about at the time? One was that provided by the then government and the other one was by Pedal Power, if my memory serves me correctly. In our considerations of what we would put forward, we felt that the people using it and the methodology that they would employ might be a little bit better to go with than that of the government, which had costed the V8 car race, the Bruce Stadium, Hall/Kinlyside and a series of others. We thought that perhaps Pedal Power might be better.

Mr Wood: Well, you make a good point.

THE CHAIR: As it turned out, the government costing was better than Pedal Power's though, wasn't it?

Mr Wood: Well it may be—I don't know the details of all that costing.

MR HARGREAVES: Was the Pedal Power not something around 2.3?

Mr Wood: About \$2 million, I think.

MR HARGREAVES: About 2.3 if my memory serves me correctly, which is about the same figure, is it not?

Mr Wood: Look, I don't think the difference is all that great. Mr Hargreaves, I think you were much involved in those discussions at the time.

MS DUNDAS: On the road cycling path: the roads to recovery program, Woden Valley on-road cycling that is mentioned on page 190 of Budget Paper No 4 talks about \$600,000 to be spent by June 2004, which is \$100,000 this year and I assume \$500,000 next year. How is that money going to be spent this year and next year?

MR HARGREAVES: Minister, while we are looking, is all of the paperwork on that page on capital works superseded by the update on the budget paper's information? Perhaps we would be better off using that.

MS DUNDAS: I wasn't going to bring that up until tomorrow because it referred to the new department, I thought.

MR HARGREAVES: I don't think it relates to this particular one, but if there are other numbers which have been superseded by this then perhaps we would be—

THE CHAIR: There are some changes to Urban Services.

MS DUNDAS: My understanding was that all the numbers stayed the same.

Mr Wood: If they are republished but the capital works hasn't actually changed.

THE CHAIR: Generally in Urban Services there are some changes, aren't there?

Mr Wood: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The pages in Budget Paper 4 on Urban Services are now superseded by this budget update.

Mr Wood: By that—that's right, yes.

Mr Thompson: Mr Chair, the capital hasn't changed.

Mr Davidson: There is a question about the content of the project—what is in it.

MS DUNDAS: Well, what is the \$100,000 going to spend on this year, and what is the \$500,000 going to spent on next year?

Mr Davidson: The idea is that the first lot, the \$100,000, will be on design, and then the balance of the works will go into construction after that.

MS DUNDAS: Okay. The roads to recovery program is part of a grant from the federal government. Is that right? Has that grant decreased since last year?

Mr Thompson: Well, that is the an interesting story. The subtotal of the funding that the ACT is to receive is \$20 million. That was to be—and Hamish McNulty can help me on the detail—I think originally over four years. Now they have done some “smoothing”, I think was the word they used, which has elongated it to mean it will take a little bit longer. So the level of funding we are to receive in the year we have just ended is a little lower, but it will be then made up in one of the out years. Given that we are incurring a very significant call on our cash this year, because our major project under that program is the Monaro Highway duplication, and that is mostly being built in this year, we will be having to cash manage that this year. But we believe we can do that.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: My question to the minister goes back to some of the Labor Party policies at the last election. Where are you with the public vehicle testing stations?

Mr Wood: We were committed to a review of that process and a review is about to get under way. DUS will handle that review in consultation with stakeholders to see what the outcome of that will be.

MRS DUNNE: Which stakeholders?

Dr Adrian: Colin Adrian, Executive Director, Policy Coordination. The review hasn't started but there is, as you say, a commitment from the government for a review to be undertaken. We will undertake the review this financial year. What we are intending to do is produce an issues paper or discussion paper looking at the pros and cons of different approaches, revisiting some of the history, I guess, in terms of the way in which the motor vehicle inspection stations have operated in the past, the way they are currently operating and views on their performance. We put that discussion paper out in the public arena. It will be widely available.

MRS DUNNE: So you have or you will?

Dr Adrian: No, we will.

MRS DUNNE: Okay.

Dr Adrian: We will put that out, I would anticipate, during the course of this year, get comments back on it and then provide some recommendations to the government on what their approach should be.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. What is the timetable for that, Dr Adrian?

Dr Adrian: The timetable would be to complete the whole review this financial year, but the public consultation part would be in this calendar year.

MRS DUNNE: This calendar year, okay. Thank you. Also there was a view expressed in the Labor Party transport policy to examine charges that relate to large vehicles to ensure that there wasn't an unnecessary burden on large families. How does this minister sit with the increase in motor vehicle registration? It is a classic: if you have differential motor vehicle registration on large vehicles, some of those large vehicles will be owned by people who, per force, need to have a large vehicle because they need to transport more than 2.1 standard children.

Mr Wood: Well, there are those factors, but by and large we prefer to keep the system fairly flat and simple as far as possible. We have not taken any action on that at this stage.

MRS DUNNE: Are you planning to do so or was it mere hollow rhetoric?

Mr Wood: No, we will keep that in mind. We have still a long way to go in the term of this government.

MRS DUNNE: What options could you exercise in that area?

Mr Wood: I wouldn't want to go into those at this stage. It has not been up there in the front of our priority list. We are aware of the background of this. We will be looking at it over the next period. I have not put a time on that.

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MR HARGREAVES: Could I ask a question on the testing station, and you may not be able to answer this one. The Phillip testing station buildings were sold some time ago. I thought that somebody was going to do something with that site. I have not seen anything happen with that site. There seems to be grass growing round the fence and it is a pretty ugly looking spot. Do you know anything about what is going on with that? Were those buildings handed back to land and property for them to worry about or—

Mr Thompson: Mr Chair, it just happens that Julie McKinnon is sitting in the back row. I will check whether Julie has any knowledge.

Mr Wood: Well, it has been sold so it is a bit out of our domain. If it gets to the stage like that shopping centre that was rather neglected, we might take some action. But that would be a matter for leases to do that.

THE CHAIR: Could I ask about ovals? I understand that there has been a transfer of at least the maintenance of ovals from DECS to Urban Services.

Mr Wood: Indeed.

THE CHAIR: There has been much debate in recent years about the number of ACT ovals which are fully maintained and those which are not. In particular, your government has made, at least in the past, comments about wanting to return more ovals to full maintenance. Are there any ovals in this budget to return from low maintenance to full maintenance?

Mr Wood: I don't know that. I don't think so; I don't think there are. There is a number of proposals around the ovals. There is an ovals improvement program with half a dozen items in it, which I could quickly find here. But as to turning low to high or whatever the terms are, no, I don't there are any of those.

THE CHAIR: Isn't that a tad strange, given how much intensity was being attached in recent years by your party to the need to return ovals to full maintenance?

Mr Wood: No, I don't know. We were making comments around a number of ovals—two or three that I can think of. I don't think it is strange.

THE CHAIR: Well is it the expectation that some of the ovals that you yourselves have spoken about in recent years will be returned to full maintenance in the life of this government?

Mr Wood: What ovals would you have in mind?

THE CHAIR: The ones that you spoke about. I recall at the election before last—

Mr Wood: When you say "you", you mean the Labor Party?

THE CHAIR: The Labor Party, yes. I recall that at the election before last Marion Reilly was at, I think, the Weston oval complaining about it not being full maintenance.

MRS DUNNE: I think Evatt as well.

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THE CHAIR: Evatt as well. I think there is some irony there because those were ovals that were actually taken down to low maintenance by the former Labor government. So are you going to restore them in the life of this government?

Mr Wood: I won't give a commitment at this stage. No doubt you will keep reminding us of them.

THE CHAIR: Indeed, I will. So there is no timetable then?

Mr Wood: No.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

MR HARGREAVES: Could I ask a question, Mr Chairman. You know of the Chisholm oval upgrade, minister?

Mr Wood: Yes.

MR HARGREAVES: On the weekend when I was at the shopping centre at Chisholm a person came up and was quite pleased about the idea. But the person didn't know whether the actual relationship was between the government and the cricket club, the government and the Vikings club or the government and both of those entities. Do we know the answer? Who is the leaseholder on the oval?

Mr Wood: I will get the actual answer but I expect it is certainly the government. The cricket club is a part of Vikings. I would think the actual deal might be signed with Vikings but I have got expert advice here.

Mr Davidson: The field has served as the headquarters of the Tuggeranong Valley Cricket Club for many years. The cricket club has a parent club of the Tuggeranong Valley Rugby and Amateur Sports Club. The work is being carried out under the government's capital works program as a joint project and there is going to be a steering committee to conduct the project. But there is some funding to come from the amateur sports club.

MR HARGREAVES: My understanding is—and I have got this understanding from the cricket club, so I am not going to hold it up as being gospel—that they are sort of affiliated with the Vikings and are a completely separate entity in their own right. What I was wanting to find out—and perhaps you could actually find out and just let us know later—is who is the sub-leaseholder on that oval. The concern of the member of the public was that he had no problem if there was an arrangement between the government and the cricket club, but he had a real problem with an arrangement between the government and the Vikings club, because the Vikings, in his words, own half the valley. He was concerned that this was going to be another attempt by that club to obtain sole use of that oval in the same way they did with the Wanniasa one. However, the Wanniasa one, as I explained, was in fact a purchase arrangement—they actually bought the sub-lease off the government, so that was different. But he was concerned about another land grab. So if you could find that out for me, I would appreciate it.

Mr Davidson: We will clarify that.

Mr Wood: We will get back to you.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, on page 197 of BP4 you show that there are cuts to municipal roads maintenance of three-quarters, line marking is cut in half and sign replacement is being cut by two-thirds.

Mr Wood: When you say three-quarters, do you mean of \$1 million or by three-quarters?

MRS DUNNE: No, it is actually in the quantity, so that the kilometres have been reduced from 90 to 20. That is roughly three quarters—it is actually slightly more, I think. You have also got large cuts in sign replacement and line marking. The line marking is reduced from nine kilometres to one kilometre.

Mr Wood: Look at the overall package. Without having the figures in front of me—officers here have them—there is not a great variation between last year and this year. There is a new factor there that a great deal of the money is necessarily being spent on bridge upgrades. Mr Thompson might first give you a little more detail about that.

MRS DUNNE: So the short answer is that this money has been diverted out of road maintenance for bridge upgrades.

Mr Wood: Well, I think you drive over a bridge, don't you? I mean, that seems pretty much like your road surface to me. I would have thought a bridge was part of the road system.

MRS DUNNE: But there are specific things here that you undertake on an ongoing basis. A standard amount of maintenance is built into the budget year on year, and suddenly it is being cut.

Mr Wood: Well, is maintenance of a bridge maintenance or not?

MRS DUNNE: I am not talking about bridges; I am talking about roads.

Mr Wood: I don't think you can separate bridges from the broad program, surely? It is all part of the network.

MRS DUNNE: So what is going to happen with the ongoing maintenance? If you are not maintaining 70 kilometres of road this year, when is that road going to be maintained?

Mr Wood: We will give you the details.

Mr Thompson: I think the starting point for this discussion is, yes, we did conduct some reviews of bridge safety and they indicated that a range of bridges, some 26 I think it is, are below acceptable standards now. As a consequence of that we have been doing some very recent signposting of most of those bridges, and have started a program, or will be starting a program, of rectification of those bridges.

As the minister says, we view those bridges as being very much integral to the whole road network. In light of those investigations, we view this as our number one priority for this year and, as a consequence, you see a very significant increase in the bridge maintenance line as compared with the other road maintenance activities.

I think the important issue in the long run, though, is to recognise that over the next few years you will see quite a significant ramp up in the level of road maintenance in the collective sense—not just bridges but the whole road maintenance program progressively ramps up.

In this year we have just entered, I think the increase in budget was some \$750,000 and the increase next year, from memory, is about \$4 million, \$4.25, and it keeps on ramping up. This is all in recognition that the roads are the territory's biggest asset and over a number of years we have not been maintaining them at a level where we maintain their value.

MRS DUNNE: So the short answer is that the diversion this year is a one-off to address the question of bridges.

Mr Thompson: It is a one-off to address this specific issue. Once we, if you like, receive information that the bridges cannot carry normal 2002 loads, of course we are going to deal with that very quickly and then we will return to a normal program. But because of the increased funding, it will progressively become an expanded program of road maintenance, whether it is line marking, resealing, pavement reconstruction or whatever is needed for those bits of road.

MR HARGREAVES: So you would say that is not a diversion of funds actually; it is just a continuation of the maintenance of a road over water?

Mr Wood: Yes, I think that is a fair way to put it, Mr Hargreaves.

Mr Thompson: Well, it is sometimes road over water and some of them are also road over road.

MR HARGREAVES: Over roads and whatever.

Mr Wood: I don't think you can separate them, really.

MS DUNDAS: Mr Thompson made a point about a whole lot of new signs being put up to divert heavy traffic from roads. A number of those signs are actually diverting heavy traffic through suburban streets.

MRS DUNNE: Through suburban streets—I was getting onto that, too.

MS DUNDAS: Specifically Chuculba Crescent through Giralang, which has chicanes put through it to stop that kind of traffic going through. How long will this upgrade of the bridges take and what is being done to look after the residents of those suburbs that heavy traffic is now being diverted through?

Mr Wood: It is a short-term problem.

MS DUNDAS: Can I just ask what do you mean by “short-term”?

Mr Wood: I hope it is a fairly short-term problem.

MS DUNDAS: Short-term, six months; short-term, 12 months?

Mr McNulty: Hamish McNulty, Director of Roads ACT. Of the bridges that we identified as needing work, 26 are being addressed this year out of the 35-odd bridges. We will implement those works over the next 12 months on those 26 bridges.

MS DUNDAS: So William Slim is a priority?

Mr McNulty: Yes. The priority is being assessed on the strength of the bridge. I don't have the priorities here. But William Slim I think is one of the priorities because that is one of the most heavily used bridges for heavy vehicles.

MRS DUNNE: Can I pursue this, and I thank Ms Dundas for bringing it up. But the bridges on William Slim were signposted a couple of weeks ago. I was advised by the minister's office that part of the problem was heavy vehicle detouring off the Barton Highway during the construction of the road to nowhere.

One of the problems that you have created here is that by diverting trucks of more than 30 tonnes off William Slim you are actually diverting them through Chuculba Crescent. Did Urban Services look at, for instance, diverting them down Kuringa Drive and Southern Cross Drive as an alternative to running them through Chuculba Crescent, which is entirely unsatisfactory. It is a suburban street. It has chicanes in it, it has a school crossing on it and one of the signs is actually posted in such a way that it makes it look like the heavy vehicle detour is up somebody's driveway—I think 196 Chuculba Crescent.

Did Urban Services look at any other alternatives, and if not, will they do it now, because I think it is entirely unsuitable that this is the first day back at school and there are trucks in excess of 30 tonnes going down a suburban street?

Mr McNulty: The detours were negotiated with the TWU, the transport industry as a whole.

MRS DUNNE: What about the residents of Giralang?

Mr McNulty: But if there is a particular problem with Chuculba Crescent, we can have a look at it—I am quite happy to have a look at that.

MRS DUNNE: But surely, Mr McNulty, you must know that there is a problem with Chuculba Crescent. It is not a very wide street and it already has chicanes in it.

MS DUNDAS: And there were problems with trucks on Chuculba Crescent 10 years ago that led to those chicanes being put in place.

Mr McNulty: The issue, I guess, we have to deal with is that if the heavy vehicles can't go down William Slim they will use the most direct route they can around there. We have tried to come up with a reasonable detour which doesn't impose too much additional time and cost to the transport companies, while recognising the residential amenity issue. But it is a short-term thing. We have to try and meet everybody's needs, and we tried to strike a balance.

MRS DUNNE: So did you consider the Kuringa Drive/southern Kingsford Smith Drive option?

Mr McNulty: I can't answer that question. I don't—

MRS DUNNE: Could you get back to us, please?

Mr Wood: We will have a look at that. We will have a look this week at that and see if there is an alternate means of doing something there.

MRS DUNNE: I just point out to you minister that you are now running trucks in excess of 30 tonnes through a suburban street past a school crossing.

MS GALLAGHER: Minister, can I ask a question here about the bridges. It seems to me that since it arose there was a bit of a surprise that this work needed to be done. Why all of a sudden did all these bridges need to be looked at and changed? Did the fact that it does seem like it was a bit of a surprise impact on the way that you are dealing with it with short-term traffic diversions?

Mr McNulty: The problem has arisen because since these bridges were designed the load limits of vehicles have increased substantially. The National Road Transport Commission, in an effort to make road transport more efficient, is consistently raising the maximum allowable weights on heavy vehicles. These bridges were designed for the mass limits that applied at the time, and they have increased significantly since then.

So we took a view that it was obviously time to do a review of the bridges to see what the situation was, given this increase in mass limit. That has highlighted these problems and, as Mr Thompson said, once you are aware of these problems you have to go and do something about it.

MRS DUNNE: Can I go back to the suburban roads that I asked a question about before. The minister rather sort of off-handedly said "roads is roads is roads". But suburban roads usually don't have bridges on them. This is just sort of maintenance of asphalt and line marking in suburban areas where we were seeing substantial cuts.

If Mr Thompson is saying that there are bags of money in the pipeline for roads maintenance, why can't some of that be brought forward if bridges are a priority? Why must suburban road maintenance suffer at the cost of bridges?

Mr Wood: Well, I am afraid the budget is there. It is due to be passed in a few weeks time. I don't think I would want to go back to the Treasurer and say, "Can we change the figures for this year and bring some forward estimates up?" I don't think it is a process we will undertake.

THE CHAIR: Isn't a cut, though, of over 80 per cent in the general road maintenance program going to have significant impact on the quality of those roads? I wouldn't have thought that we over maintain our roads, but I think there is probably a compelling case that we haven't spent enough historically on road maintenance. Isn't a cut, even just in one year, of over 80 per cent just too large to overcome if you are looking at maintaining the quality of these roads?

Mr Wood: Well, I don't know. I certainly agree with you, Mr Humphries. I have sat in cabinets in years gone by—as I am sure you have when you have been given what might be necessary to maintain the roads in their original condition—and no government has ever provided enough money.

A significant cut this year—I believe it is manageable. I believe the program we have come up with and the work that will take place in future years will maintain the roads to the standard they are accustomed to.

Mr Davidson: Can I just ask about the reference to the 80 per cent cut. I don't understand where that comes from.

THE CHAIR: I am just looking at page 197 where you have got municipal roads—

MRS DUNNE: Page 197—you are reducing from 90 kilometres to 20 kilometres.

THE CHAIR: That is about 85 per cent, I think.

MRS DUNNE: It relates to matters of planned maintenance.

Mr McNulty: That is a reduction in the re-sealing of roads essentially for next year. It is not the routine maintenance that gets done—you know, fixing pot holes; the repairs we do every day. This is basically a delay in the re-sealing program only.

MRS DUNNE: But, Mr McNulty, we have heard over the years that you need to keep up the program, you need to keep the timetables going, or you will have deterioration of the roads which you pay for down the line. So when you proposed an 80 per cent reduction in the amount of re-sealing, did you factor in what would be the downstream cost of not doing it this year and waiting till next year or the year after?

Mr McNulty: We have made an assessment of the priorities, given the available budget we have.

MRS DUNNE: No, I didn't ask that question. When you made that assessment of priorities, did you make an assessment about if you forgo this expenditure this year, will it cost more in future years?

Mr Wood: Well, that is the sort of assessment you might make every year. Indeed, I sat in on a cabinet discussion many years ago which was as specific a discussion on roads maintenance that I am sure any cabinet has had in this place. You could make the comment every year about whether the funds we are putting into roads maintenance this year are going to create problems downstream. No government has ever fully funded

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a total roads maintenance program that would maintain every road in Canberra at the level at which it was built. It has never happened.

THE CHAIR: No government has ever cut this deeply into a roads maintenance program.

Mr Wood: In one year, and it will be, I am sure, manageable. If you want to talk in those terms, I think you have got to go back and say we have to increase it many fold in order to fix up all those roads. I drive around rather dangerously sometimes looking at the cracks in the road.

MR SMYTH: A terrible admission from the road safety minister. You will have to stop driving dangerously, Mr Wood.

Mr Wood: When you are minister for roads and whatever you pay very careful attention to the condition of those roads. I am pleased to see there is some funding, for example, for Commonwealth Avenue because it is much in need of work.

MS DUNDAS: Has the cost of diverting heavy traffic through residential and suburban streets been factored into any long-term maintenance programs, as I assume that there will be maintenance for roads that are not used to carrying heavy trucks?

Mr Wood: Like Chuculba Crescent?

MS DUNDAS: After 12 months of carrying heavy trucks.

Mr McNulty: We will monitor the condition of those roads and take appropriate action as necessary.

Mr Thompson: Mr Chair, perhaps if I could just re-emphasise that if this bridge thing had come upon us and there had been no indication of increased long-term funding, we would be very, very concerned. But there are significant increases in the funding for road maintenance. It shows up on page 187 of BP 4. It is about the fourth line down from the top, and it is quite a significant increase. As I mentioned, it increases by \$750,000 in the year we are in and up to 4.25, and then it plateaus out at \$6½ million of increased funding.

MR SMYTH: Mr Thompson, is that the money that the previous Liberal government put in, because we had an asset management strategy that was ramping this funding up, and that is just the money that we put in last year's budget.

Mr Thompson: Well, I don't think it was in last year's budget, Mr Smyth. There was some discussion in about July, I think, last year about putting it in but in fact I think this is the first year it has actually shown up in the papers.

MRS DUNNE: Where is the money suddenly coming from?

Mr Thompson: For this?

MRS DUNNE: Yes.

Mr Thompson: Well, it goes back to the discussion between Urban Services and Treasury which happened in about July last year where it was agreed that it was not on, as the minister said, to have the road assets of the territory in decline. There was a need to ramp up the level of overall maintenance. So that discussion happened in about July. The new government came to power—

MRS DUNNE: July 2001?

Mr Thompson: Yes. The new government came to power and basically accepted those views and so they put it into the new budget.

MRS DUNNE: So this is Treasury largesse?

Mr Wood: It's not largesse at all.

MR HARGREAVES: They are mutually exclusive terms, Mrs Dunne.

Mr Thompson: The government here has had this ongoing challenge. We have road and stormwater assets which, even in depreciated terms, are worth some \$4 billion, and their average life is somewhere between 30 years and 100 years. Even at the 100 years figure you have got to be spending at least 40 million a year to maintain that asset. In fact, it is probably at a higher figure than that. So I think that has been agreed. Given that ramp up, we believe that over a two- to three-year period the diversion of money into bridges, on a one-year basis, is justified and we will still be able to give a good quality result for the overall road network.

MS DUNDAS: Mr Chair, I have another question under capital works.

THE CHAIR: Before we move on, is there anything else on roads specifically?

MRS DUNNE: Not at this stage.

MR SMYTH: Part of your commitment to roads was to develop a long-term strategy. When will that occur?

Mr Wood: You mean a transport strategy?

MR SMYTH: Well, no, I think that is different to your transport strategy. "The government's management of Canberra road system has lacked strategic direction. There is an urgent need to address road funding and the prioritisation of road works." It is in your policy document. "The government has lacked vision and understanding for what the Canberra community wants out of their road system." Is what you have done this year an indication that you, too, lack strategic direction?

Mr Wood: No, I don't agree at all. I think the figures indicate that we are heading in the right direction.

MR SMYTH: Except you are cutting the road funding this year.

Mr Wood: Oh yes. Well we can go back into that, go round the circle, if you like.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Ms Dundas.

MS DUNDAS: My question is about the libraries improvement program. There is half a million dollars allocated to the libraries improvement program for this financial year. How will that money be spent? I am referring to page 212 of budget paper 3.

Mr Wood: It will be spent on a range of programs. I think this is a good initiative. It is overdue. There is a range of work. There is \$350,000 for Erindale but that is a complete refit.

MS DUNDAS: That is a different allocation, is it?

Mr Wood: That is a different allocation, yes.

MS DUNDAS: So none of this library improvement program money is going to be spent at Erindale, I would assume.

Mr Wood: No, I wouldn't think so. I would think that it is for a host of activities around our various libraries.

MRS DUNNE: Does that include Kippax library?

Mr Wood: No, there is additional money, there are other moneys there, reflecting what is to happen with Kippax library.

MS DUNDAS: Where is that money?

Mr Wood: Mr Thwaite can get to Ms Dundas's question. There is not a capital program to build a whole new Kippax library at this stage but there is money to keep the thing on the go.

MS DUNDAS: Could you first of all answer the question about the half a million dollars libraries improvement.

Mr Wood: Yes. There are various programs.

MS DUNDAS: Which libraries, where and what.

Mr Thwaite: John Thwaite, Acting Executive Director, Customer Service and Information. The \$500,000 is for works associated with libraries, particularly Griffith library, and it is after we had conducted some audits in relation to occupational health and safety and a general building audit. So there will be work done to heating systems, fire control systems and sort of access arrangements. So that is principally where the money is going to be spent. Also, part of that money will go to some works at Woden and Belconnen, and a small amount in Civic.

MRS DUNNE: So Mr Thwaite, what is in store for the Kippax library?

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Mr Wood: Well with Kippax there was \$100,000 and \$30,000 was being spent on a study to see what the library ought to do when it is constructed.

MS DUNDAS: Sorry, what were those figures again, minister?

Mr Wood: \$100,000 was in last year's budget.

MRS DUNNE: Last year's budget for a scoping study.

Mr Wood: Yes, and \$30,000 has been spent so far. There is more to come on that.

MS DUNDAS: And that money will be spent on a further continuation of this scoping study?

Mr Thwaite: The study will be looking at the Belconnen community needs and the relationship between Belconnen library and Kippax library.

MRS DUNNE: Will it look at the broader community need of the Kippax/West Belconnen area?

Mr Thwaite: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: So it will look at other community needs as well?

Mr Thwaite: Not other community needs, no. This is specifically in relation to libraries.

MS DUNDAS: When will the outcome be known?

Mr Wood: That is the scoping report?

MS DUNDAS: Yes. Money is being spent on the report. When will the report be available?

Mr Thwaite: The report we expect will arrive around September and that is when some other work is being done in relation to, I understand, community facilities. It think minister Corbell made a statement in the Assembly that talked about September as the timing for that.

MS DUNDAS: In terms of the consultancy and the study that is being funded, specifically are the library needs of young people being taken into account and are young people directly being consulted?

Mr Thwaite: Specifically, the study was to cover all aspects of community, so all ages.

MS DUNDAS: So you can confirm that young people have been spoken to by Libraries Alive?

Mr Thwaite: I can't confirm specifically who has been spoken to, but the brief was to consult with the community, and I would be surprised if young people weren't spoken to.

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MRS DUNNE: Mr Thwaite, can you clarify what is happening with the other \$65,000 that was available for the scoping study?

Mr Thwaite: Not specifically. It has been set aside for studies.

MRS DUNNE: So there is nothing happening with that now?

Mr Thwaite: No.

MRS DUNNE: There is \$35,000 in this current review, which is available in September?

Mr Thwaite: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: And the other has just been salted away for something to do with the Kippax library in the future?

Mr Thwaite: Well, for further studies.

MRS DUNNE: Further studies in relation to Kippax or further library studies?

Mr Thwaite: And Belconnen, and the synchronisation between the two libraries.

MS DUNDAS: Where will that money be spent?

MR HARGREAVES: I have got a question or two on libraries while we are at it. I think, Mr Chairman, that you have one.

MS DUNDAS: Sorry, can we just finish this point?

MR HARGREAVES: Well, it has gone on for a fair while.

MS DUNDAS: We have just unearthed that there is a bit of money still floating around that is going to be used on a relationship study between Belconnen and Kippax. When will that study take place, when will that report be available?

Mr Thwaite: I can't specifically say at this point.

MS DUNDAS: When will you be able to tell us, considering that this money was budgeted to be spent by June 2002.

Mr Thwaite: You specifically asked me in relation to the construction of the library, I believe—about the use of the library.

MS DUNDAS: The minister has told us that a small portion of the money that was allocated in last year's budget with regards to Kippax library has been spent on the Libraries Alive scoping study. We are asking what is happening to the rest of that money?

Mr Thwaite: We will be using that to do further studies.

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MS DUNDAS: What will those further studies be, and when will the results be available?

Mr Thwaite: They are about the need for libraries, the design of libraries, what would be best in the library—computer terminals, those sorts of things.

MS DUNDAS: Time frame?

Mr Thwaite: Time frame—we have got the remainder of this financial year.

MRS DUNNE: But it's last financial year's money. You were able to roll it over successfully?

Mr Thwaite: Yes.

Mr Thompson: Mr Chair, my recollection, and perhaps I have got a faulty memory, is that we kicked off all this work in and around Kippax with at least some expectation that the future of the overall Kippax shopping centre and the various other developments there would have clarified during last year. That didn't occur and that has actually been quite an impediment in terms of us representing the library service, trying to do something useful there for what is frankly a not very good facility. We would very much like to set up a much better facility there but it has been difficult with all the other uncertainty around that shopping precinct.

MRS DUNNE: So does this mean, Mr Thompson, that we actually really need a master plan for Kippax?

Mr Thompson: Well, we certainly need some clarity; I accept we need some clarity.

MR HARGREAVES: You guys can share it between you if you like.

MRS DUNNE: Perhaps you might have to answer this question tomorrow morning, and you can think about it in the meantime: is there a rational prospect of a master plan for Kippax so that we can actually resolve some of the uncertainty about the future of Kippax?

Mr Wood: We will do that with Mr Corbell.

THE CHAIR: I have one other question about libraries. On 9 July the *Canberra Times* reported that the government is circulating amongst its members a plan to use public libraries so all 17 MLAs could meet in public. I take it this is the next iteration of the electorate office idea. Is this plan going to come to all the members of the Assembly, or is this just an internal document that we are not going to see?

Mr Wood: Yes, I think so. I think that might be a question to direct to Mr Berry when the secretariat of the Legislative Assembly is here.

THE CHAIR: They are not actually coming here.

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Mr Wood: I will get the information for you. But it is my understanding, subject to confirmation, that that is being progressed through this building which, of course, has dealings with members; that it is the outcome of our commitment that there will be funds available to hire rooms in our libraries as part of our constituency duties. That is my understanding. I will get back to you with the details. It is not particularly my area, I believe, but I will find out what I can.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

MR HARGREAVES: In respect of new capital works, you have indicated \$385,000 for Erindale library refurb. Can you give me some detail of what that refurb is going to be?

Mr Thwaite: Yes. We plan to do recarpeting. The building is 21 years old so it certainly needs refurbishment. We are looking at a new entrance with an airlock and a new circulation desk. So that is the sort of basic information.

MR HARGREAVES: And you have got?

Mr Thwaite: \$385,000.

MR HARGREAVES: How long is that likely to take?

Mr Thwaite: I would expect that we start design work basically after the budget gets passed, and we then get into probably construction et cetera next year, 2003.

MR HARGREAVES: When the new entrance and circulation desk is in, presumably you will re-route the people through the college backdoor entrance as an interim measure, or will you have other arrangements?

Mr Thwaite: That will be addressed specifically in the construction program.

MR HARGREAVES: Okay. Will there be any disruption, do you think, to the student access to it, given it is a joint use library?

Mr Thwaite: With any construction process there will be some disruption. We will manage that to the best of our ability. As you may recall, Dickson was our most major refurbishment in recent times, and we actually had to close it for a period of time; and the same with Civic. There probably will be some disruption but we have talked about doing some of the work outside the school program et cetera.

MR HARGREAVES: So the idea would be, if at all possible, to have the major building disruption during the Christmas break or something along those lines?

Mr Thwaite: We will do our best to minimise disruption, yes.

MR HARGREAVES: Are Lake Tuggeranong College and Erindale College the only two joint use libraries that we have?

Mr Thwaite: Yes, there are only two.

MR HARGREAVES: Are there any plans to go down that track with further colleges?

Mr Thwaite: The sharing of libraries has certainly been a successful process and if it was possible, yes, it would be good to do more. But there have been no specific discussions in my time in relation to joint use in other places.

THE CHAIR: If there are no further questions on libraries, I think will break for morning tea.

Short adjournment

THE ACTING CHAIR (Mr Hargreaves): Ladies and gentlemen, we will resume.

Mr Wood: Mr Hargreaves, I have got a couple of responses to questions that were asked this morning.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. Before you do, though, I just want to put down a couple of ground rules for this session. I propose that we will have half an hour of further questions on the overview and capital works, after which we will then move directly into the output classes and people can address their questions to those output classes during that time. I propose also to not allow fishing trips, that questions will need to be put and then we will move on in fairness to other members. I know other members have been waiting and they have not had the opportunity to ask questions. So that is the way we will do it.

MRS DUNNE: Fishing trips?

THE ACTING CHAIR: Fishing trips.

MS DUNDAS: You mean finding information and keeping the government accountable?

THE ACTING CHAIR: There will be no conversations with the minister. If you haven't got your questions prepared by this morning then bad luck. They can be put on notice. So that is what is going to happen. At 20 past we will then move into the output classes. Minister, you have some responses.

MRS DUNNE: It depends if we're ready, Mr Acting Chairman.

THE ACTING CHAIR: No, I am sorry Mrs Dunne. You are ruled out of order on that one. Minister?

MRS DUNNE: Well, we will come back later—it is just that simple.

Mr Wood: In relation to use of libraries for electorate offices, it is pretty much as I said. The government has approved a process. The Chief Minister is writing to the Assembly secretariat asking them to write to all the 17 MLAs asking whether they want to be involved in an office arrangement, a meet the MLA scheme, through the libraries. The libraries have been approached on this and they are very enthusiastic about the idea.

THE ACTING CHAIR: I look forward to that.

Mr Wood: Secondly, Mr Hargreaves, I think you asked a question about Chisholm?

THE ACTING CHAIR: Indeed.

Mr Wood: The playing fields are unleased territory land. It is likely that the new building will be covered by some form of sub-lease arrangement with the cricket club but details of tenure for the remainder of the site remain under discussion. In any event, the fields will remain urban open space under the Territory Plan with no exclusion of public access, which will be very different from the Viking Park, which is a different arrangement altogether.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. Members, we will now resume questioning on general questions and capital works. I just remind members that Output Class No 4 is, of course, for another minister—that is why it is missing from your agenda. Also Output Class 2.1, Road Transport Regulation, is actually for Minister Corbell, as I understand it. Is that right?

MS GALLAGHER: 2.2.

THE ACTING CHAIR: 2.2—sorry. And 2.1 relates to the minister who is before us today. Are there questions either of a general nature or in respect of capital works?

MS DUNDAS: With regards to the new administrative arrangements and the transfer of part of the department to a new department, what impact is that having on the Department of Urban Services as a whole?

Mr Wood: It does have some impact, of course. Urban Services has lost housing as a total—that has just gone across as a package, of course. In financial terms, departments where agencies are going have offered up some general assistance to cover the corporate side of the new department and that has involved an amount of money. Mr Thompson can give you some detail, although I think there is still some work, not a lot of work, to be done yet as to the fine detail of how Urban Services adjusts to that.

MS DUNDAS: But not impact on the budget?

Mr Wood: Yes, it will certainly impact on the budget, which would be shown in the new budget papers.

Mr Thompson: I guess you would have to think of this process in two parts. Effective from 1 July all the people directly connected with housing moved into the new department, and that is ACT Housing, the operational unit and the housing policy people. Over and above that the government has taken some decisions about transferring other funding, as the minister mentioned, and we at this stage have not got a final view about exactly what that means in terms of our internal operations as a department. It probably means that we will be looking to transfer about another 10 people out of the Urban Services Department into the new department. The precise mechanism for that hasn't been finalised yet because, unlike, say, the housing policy people or the ACT Housing people, we are not talking about discrete people doing discrete jobs; we are talking about people doing parts of jobs.

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MS DUNDAS: And is all of that reflected in the new document that we got on Thursday?

Mr Thompson: In terms of the money, yes the money is reflected in that.

MS DUNDAS: And that includes those 10 extra personnel?

Mr Thompson: The money figures are in there. We have now got the task of turning those money figures into reality and at this stage we don't have all the details yet. We have had discussions with the new department. They are looking to obviously build up their resources. At this stage their thinking would be that they will be running an advertising process for that and that they would give preference to people applying out of either health or Urban Services. That would be the way you would allow the transfer to occur in a reasonably acceptable way to everybody.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Thank you very much. Ms Gallagher, you have got a question or two?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes. I have got a question about Gorman House. There has been some controversy about it recently. I notice there is some money for upgrade and renewal. Could you just give us a bit of info about what is happening with it and whether there is some resolution of some of the problems?

Mr Wood: Yes, indeed I can. There has been a problem. I think our commitment is demonstrated by \$160,000 of capital assistance for Gorman House. It is a heritage building and it is a pretty old one, and it over the years has soaked up a lot of money. We are prepared to put yet more money into it. So we have done that. There has also been a change in management and a review of what the best way to do things is. For the detail of that I might ask Ms Hillson to give some comment.

Ms Hillson: Thank you. Mandy Hillson, Director of Arts and Cultural Services. We independently engaged an accounting firm to provide us with some advice on Gorman House and the firm has come back with a report. The report recommends that it is a viable and ongoing concern. Particularly they have recommended a way for the board, the new board, to make its payments and actually, within the end of 12 months, have a surplus. The board has adopted the recommendations. It is very clear that it will enable Gorman House to stabilise. It will also give them an opportunity to look at the future. I think the board is very keen to look at its role and how it can re-engage the tenants of Gorman House in a very positive way.

MS GALLAGHER: So the \$160,000 is going to upgrade the building itself?

Mr Wood: Yes.

MS GALLAGHER: And make it meet standards. It is an old—

Mr Wood: Well, it will go some way. I guess it won't be the last bit of capital money that needs to go into Gorman House.

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, sure.

Mr Wood: Without giving any total promises about what might be in next year's budget, though. There is also other money in this budget for capital works, quite a deal of money. Megalo has to move and that is a pretty expensive arrangement. You might indicate what is happening there.

Ms Hillson: At the moment we are looking at a site for Megalo Access Arts at the old CIT at Watson. We are looking at the feasibility of it moving in there, and we have been having some discussions with the current lessees of that site.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Ms Gallagher, is that it?

MS GALLAGHER: That is it for Gorman House. I don't know if someone else has another question.

THE ACTING CHAIR: We will come back to your other question later. Mr Pratt?

MR PRATT: Thank you, I have got a couple of questions for Mr Wood about Chisholm oval.

Mr Thompson: We have answered a couple of those already. Hopefully they are not the same ones.

MR PRATT: No, I don't think so. 370 ks have been allocated in year 2002-03. What proportion of funding are the two clubs, Tuggeranong Valley club and the amateur sports club, contributing to the Chisholm upgrade? I see the project cost seems to be a total of 465. Does that include the two clubs' inputs, or are they expected to contribute to further funding to that project? That is the first question.

Mr Wood: I will pass that question over for the detail.

Mr Thompson: Mr Pratt, perhaps if I can help, and Mr Davidson might have to help me a little bit. Our funding, the ACT government funding, is fundamentally an upgrade of the physical oval, and then in parallel with that we expect the new pavilion to be constructed at the cost of the—I will have to get the language right here—Tuggeranong Valley Rugby Union and Amateur Sports Club. We understand that they will be funding that at a cost of some \$700,000.

MR PRATT: That is the pavilion?

Mr Thompson: Yes.

MR PRATT: Okay.

Mr Thompson: So the subtotal of money to be invested is something over a million dollars, but of that our part is about a third, and the club is spending about two-thirds.

MR PRATT: Okay.

MRS DUNNE: So 370 is for ground works, and the club is paying for the building?

Mr Thompson: Yes.

MR PRATT: Do those works include the construction of fencing right around the oval, as was mooted late last year?

Mr Wood: That was one of the big issues, as we all know, down there. My understanding, and I expect the agreement will show, is that there is to be no high wire fence around the place.

MRS DUNNE: But is there to be a fence like the cricket oval near the Mint?

Mr Thompson: It will be a traditional picket fence.

Mr Wood: It will be a traditional picket fence, perhaps like the one down there on Canberra Avenue. I think I read that full access to the neighbourhood, to the neighbours, to the community, will continue. So it is a picket fence.

MR PRATT: So the government has determined that the community will still have access to that oval, as they currently do.

Mr Wood: Indeed. Yes.

MR PRATT: Okay, fine.

Mr Wood: You would recall the arguments, and there was some concern from the cricket club about the safety of their pitch.

MR PRATT: The pitch itself, yes.

Mr Wood: But quite a number of very good pitches have no particular security around them. I think the cricket club has been pretty cooperative. They have moved the field right back, which is an additional cost, and the picket fence I think would generally solve most of the issues around the place.

MR PRATT: Okay. Finally, why does the Chisholm oval project get a significant amount of funding in terms of the overall million and a half that I think I can see allocated here to facilities improvement? Why does Chisholm get the lion's share of that? Was that the only project proposal worth considering?

Mr Wood: I don't expect so but it stacked up in the end as a very good proposal, with a lot of assistance from a club to finish up. The proposal that I heard reported the need to raise the standard of cricket in the ACT. There aren't sufficient first class ovals and Tuggeranong needed one. I haven't been lobbied by others in the community about other ovals and so I don't know the strength or otherwise of what might be competing claims out there.

MR PRATT: Okay, so theirs was a fairly significant and viable project proposal?

Mr Wood: So it seemed to be—obviously to come up with this funding, yes.

MR PRATT: Right. What assurances have been given by the clubs to meet their end? What sort of agreement do you have in place to ensure that the clubs do meet their commitments in terms of this partnership arrangement?

Mr Wood: Officers will give you the details. I think the Vikings club has a very good reputation—certainly in the case of any involvement by me with them. Whether it is the adventure playground, the oval or anything else, they certainly deliver on what they promise, but I dare say things are also written into contracts.

Mr Thompson: Minister, we will have to come back to Mr Pratt with the details of those commitments. I know I don't have them. Do you have them?

Mr Davidson: No, only the conditions of the contract.

MR PRATT: So I can see a copy of the agreement at some time?

Mr Wood: I don't think that's commercial-in-confidence. I wouldn't see why not, if we can remember to keep you involved in that.

Mr Thompson: Perhaps I could just follow on from Mr Pratt's earlier question. You were asking about the Chisholm oval upgrade, but the line just above that in the budget is the \$1 million of facilities improvement program. We haven't got that fully finalised at this stage but indicatively we are looking at a new toilet and canteen at the Forestry oval in Yarralumla, a new canteen at Cook oval, a new toilet and canteen at Chapman oval, a refurbishment of pavilions in Aranda, Mawson and Reid, training lights at Calwell, and potentially automatic irrigation at Garran oval. So the overall program is not just focusing on Chisholm, it is quite a spread across other Canberra facilities.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Smyth did you have a question? If not, I might just ask a question of the minister, and I am sorry about not giving you notice of this. You and I went down to Calwell oval and looked at the traffic congestion problem. Have the officers of your department been down there and had a subsequent look?

Mr Wood: They haven't yet, but they will be going down shortly.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Thank you very much. Ms Dundas, do you have any questions?

MS DUNDAS: I have a question about surplus properties in the department. There are currently 53 surplus properties, not including commercial and non-commercial properties and miscellaneous properties. Can you explain to me what you actually mean by surplus, considering that these properties include the Gold Creek Homestead at Gungahlin?

Mr Wood: My definition, which will be checked by Mr Thwaite, is that they are not currently used by the government for a specific governmental activity. But Mr Thwaite would be the more reliable reporter there I think.

Mr Thwaite: The definition of surplus property is property not specifically required for government purposes, so I suppose that definition is not quite correct. There are properties like Gold Creek that are being managed by the property unit. Some of those properties will be managed long term and others may be made available for sale or disposal or whatever.

MS DUNDAS: You have, like I said, 53 properties as well as the Hotel Currajong as a non-commercial property, et cetera. I don't want you to tell me what is happening with each and every one, but can you give me some idea what is on the cards for these properties? If they are not being used by government, will they be refurbished to be used by community organisations?

Mr Wood: That is very likely an outcome because there is much community use about surplus buildings.

Mr Thwaite: If I could give an example. The former school at Holder, for example, which is now called the Grant Cameron Centre, is now used by a number of community organisations. It has been refurbished. There has been an audit to ensure that it complies with occ health and safety standards, and there is long-term leasing or renting of that space to community organisations.

MS DUNDAS: So why is it still on this list?

Mr Thwaite: Well, I am saying that it is identified as surplus property. But, yes, we will be looking at changing some of those definitions.

MS DUNDAS: Can you then tell me—and you can take this on notice—how many of these current 53 properties are currently occupied by—

Mr Wood: Pretty well all. There might be a better way of looking at it.

MS DUNDAS: Can you tell me how many and which ones are occupied, and then tell me what is happening to the ones that aren't. I am happy for you to take that on notice.

Mr Wood: Your interest is more in the ones that aren't occupied?

MS DUNDAS: Yes.

Mr Wood: We will come back on that.

Mr Thwaite: There are very few not occupied.

MS DUNDAS: Okay, thank you.

Mr Wood: Do you want the details of the occupied ones?

MS DUNDAS: Occupied community groups, occupied by the school—just a brief description so that there is an idea of what the space is being used for. Thank you.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Ms Gallagher, do you have another question?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, I have a question about the playground safety program. There is money there, there is money in progress and there is money in new capital works. The Auditor-General has made some comments about the playgrounds meeting Australian safety standards. I am just wondering how you go about working out which playgrounds. This money isn't going to fix up all the playgrounds, presumably, around Canberra and I am wondering how you go about making the decision about which ones get the treatment?

Mr Wood: Yes, there is quite a process with that.

MS GALLAGHER: Is it the most dangerous ones that get dealt with first or one—

Mr Davidson: Perhaps if you are asking—

THE ACTING CHAIR: Minister, before you answer that, I have a couple of questions that may actually assist in the process. If I give you the questions, you can do them all in one hit. I understand that, in fact, the maintenance program is in two parts. One is to bring existing playgrounds up to Australian standards, and I was wanting to know how far down the track we were there; and the other one was to maintain the ones that we have already fixed up to the Australian standard. So I also, with Ms Gallagher, would like to know how we are going along with that as well.

Mr Davidson: Perhaps if I answer the second part first in relation to what happens to the way we look after the ones that are okay. All the playgrounds are inspected routinely for safety. Visual inspections are carried out weekly, operational inspections monthly and we do a comprehensive detailed inspection every year, which is also part of the requirements of the Australian standard anyway. Any issues identified out of those inspection processes which require maintenance are attended to immediately.

In relation to the upgrade program, we spent one million and a bit during 2001-02, which leaves 60 suburban and seven district playgrounds to complete. On present day figures, it would cost about four million to do all of that. But we are going to do that progressively. There is 1.4 million in this budget and we are going to spend 500,000 on it this financial year.

It is important to understand, I guess, what we mean when we say these playgrounds don't meet the current Australian standard. It is a bit like the motor car industry, if you like, in that standards change over time and so a car that was safe at the time it was manufactured might not conform to the current standards but it is deemed to be safe. So what we do when we are selecting which playgrounds to upgrade is look at those playgrounds which have features which are the most non-conforming, if you like, and then select those for upgrade purposes.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Davidson, does that include playgrounds at schools—government schools and pre-schools—or is that a different maintenance program?

Mr Davidson: I think they come under a different category.

MRS DUNNE: But that is something that Urban Services is responsible for?

MS GALLAGHER: Education.

Mr Davidson: No, education.

MRS DUNNE: Well, when I put some questions on notice about sandpits, for instance, at pre-schools, they were referred to Urban Services. I thought they were education; they were referred to Urban Services. So who is responsible for sandpits?

Mr Wood: I would have expected education, unless there is some overall safety thing that involves DUS. We will have to have a look at that one.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. There have been ongoing issues with sandpits. There was the issue a few years ago of weed spraying around sandpits and there is also the issue that was brought to my attention by my pre-school that no-one had come to check the quality of the sand, which I have to say was pretty manky when you looked at it. I think it was upgraded after I asked the question.

Mr Davidson: I think what we might be talking about here is that CityScape does work for the department of education.

MRS DUNNE: That might be the answer to the question.

Mr Davidson: While education is responsible for it, the actual work would be done by the CityScape people. So that is the sort of chain.

MRS DUNNE: I see. Thanks for that.

Mr Wood: Okay, we will take that as the answer then, unless otherwise.

MRS DUNNE: So talk to education about manky sand in sandpits—okay.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Mr Davidson, on the same subject, would you be able to clarify something for me please. Budget Paper No 4, page 190, talks about the playground safety program, estimated total cost of \$1.4 million. Under Canberra Urban Parks and Places on page 193 the total estimated cost of the playground safety program is shown at \$1,250,000. And then you are going to allocate \$500,000 also to that. What I am interested in knowing is how come we have got \$1,400,000 on one page and \$1,250,000 on the other one. Perhaps Mr Elvin or Mr Phillips could answer that.

Mr Phillips: Alan Phillips, Director Finance. Just in answer to your question: the capital works program comprises new works and works in progress so you have got the 1.25 million as against the works in progress program with expenditure that has been incurred plus future years. The new works program is the previous amount that you mentioned of 1.4 million.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Right. Is the works in progress, the 1.25, a subset of the 1.4 million?

Mr Phillips: No, it is not. That is works in progress that are still continuing and that has been supplemented by the 1.4 million.

THE ACTING CHAIR: So from the time the initiative was taken, we are talking about a total of 2.6 million?

Mr Phillips: That's right.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Okay. Thank you very much. That answers my question. Members are there any further questions on this?

MS GALLAGHER: Could I ask one?

THE ACTING CHAIR: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: And then I have got some.

MS GALLAGHER: Where is the Woden bus interchange going? There is some money. It is works in progress. This is old money. On page 193 reference is made to "Relocation of Woden Bus Interchange".

Mr Wood: Well, at that price, it is not going to relocate, is it?

MS GALLAGHER: I know.

MRS DUNNE: It's not going very far.

Mr Wood: That's right. Just a minor shift.

MS GALLAGHER: Yes.

Mr Phillips: Ms Gallagher, it is fundamentally design money, looking at options so the government can take some decisions.

MS GALLAGHER: Okay.

Mr Phillips: But you are not going to get much built for that.

MS GALLAGHER: No. I didn't think so. Thank you.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Mr Pratt wants to ask a question about ovals. We will then move directly into output class No 1.

MR PRATT: Thank you. Mr Wood, last financial year there was money allocated in the budget for low maintenance ovals, and that was pretty much spread across Canberra. The funding was split between north and south. For example, Cook and Torrens ovals were apparently brought back to full maintenance.

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We can't pinpoint any similar allocation in the budget now for the same sort of program for those sorts of lower grade ovals to be continued. Are there any plans to bring other low maintenance ovals back to full maintenance? Have you had any presentations from sports groups perhaps to have a look at that?

Mr Wood: There has been comment over the period about some of those ovals. But I think we had this debate a little earlier today. There is nothing in the budget to bring more low maintenance ovals up to high maintenance ovals. Mr Humphries was asking some questions about that earlier.

MR PRATT: Well, I apologise then if I missed that.

Mr Wood: Is that it?

MR PRATT: Yes, that's all. Thanks.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Okay, thank you members. We are going to move into the output classes. The first one will be output class No 1. Are there any questions on Canberra Connect at output 1.1?

MS DUNDAS: I have a quick one.

MR HARGREAVES: I don't believe you, but please ask anyway.

MS DUNDAS: No, it is. It is not in front of me in the budget papers, but I remember seeing this morning that there is an administrative change because Canberra Connect is going to Chief Minister's Department.

Mr Wood: It came from Chief Minister's.

MS DUNDAS: It came from Chief Minister's. Okay. That is all I needed to know.

THE ACTING CHAIR: That was a quick question. Congratulations Ms Dundas. Thank you very much, it is appreciated by everybody.

Mr Wood: I do point out that there is increased money for Canberra Connect this year compared with last year.

THE ACTING CHAIR: It is a generous government, Mr Wood. Output class number 1.2, which is on roads. Are there questions?

MRS DUNNE: Mr Acting Chairman, I would like to ask why the targets for 2002-03 are not in the budget papers but are in fact in the ownership agreement? Is this a departure? Why is this departure here? I would have thought that the average punter doesn't get this distributed? It is not on the Net?

THE ACTING CHAIR : The average punter doesn't get the budget papers delivered either.

MRS DUNNE: They can access them on the Net, Mr Acting Chairman.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Well, they don't.

Mr Thompson: It has been, if you like, a whole-of-government decision to move out of having them all in these papers into those agreements. Perhaps I might hand over to Alan Eggins to explain.

Mr Eggins: Alan Eggins, Executive Director, Corporate, Department of Urban Services. The movements of a number of output measures to the ownership agreement reflects quite a bit of review within the ACT government, partly initiated by the comments of the Auditor-General about the relevance of a number of performance measures which he regards as measures of activity or measures of stock. Accordingly we are taking that advice on board, as have many other agencies, and moved those measures into the ownership agreement, leaving those in BP4 that relate more to the measurable performance of the agency.

MRS DUNNE: So activity like the number of street markings or something like that is not considered a performance indicator?

Mr Eggins: It is not considered a performance indicator in the same way as other measures. Where it merely counts the number of items, the Auditor-General doesn't regard that as a measure of performance; it is a measure of fact—in fact, in some cases, a measure of assets.

MRS DUNNE: For instance, you have taken street markings out of BP4 and put it in the ownership agreement. This might be better a question for the minister, but you can take it as you choose: how are people out in the public able to measure whether you are up or down on performance if it is not readily accessible. I would have thought—

Mr Wood: Is it any less available?

MRS DUNNE: This is not readily available to members of the public.

Mr Wood: Well, I don't know. I don't know how many in the public sector take this on board either in great detail.

MRS DUNNE: I am getting nods from the back of the room from members of the public that they haven't seen these documents.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Could all those members please put your hand up? Those who are not a departmental officer, please put your hand up? One—one out of 20, good score.

MRS DUNNE: But it goes to the point that this is not accessible.

Mr Wood: What I think that says is we might need to promote that more. But I think you heard the answer that it is following generally along the guidelines suggested by the Auditor-General.

MRS DUNNE: So, Mr Eggins, could you give an exposition of what the Auditor-General thinks is an acceptable performance measure?

Mr Eggins : We have a number of disputes on the run at the moment with the Auditor-General about not only what is an acceptable performance measure but more particularly how to measure that to his satisfaction. The change to move a number of those measures into the ownership agreement reflects the view about assets that are reported in their performance measures when they are merely counts of assets.

MRS DUNNE: Of what you own, yes. But actually giving an exposition of what you undertake to do is one form of performance measure. How do you actually measure performance is a very interesting, important and fairly fraught area. But I would have thought that in terms of rolling out the black stuff, which is a lot of what municipal services is, and roads in particular, it would be a reasonable performance measure to say how much you are going to build or how much you are going to maintain in any particular year.

Mr Eggins : And we think most of those measures remain in Budget Paper 4. For example, the lane kilometres of planned roads maintenance still appears as a performance measure in Budget Paper 4.

MRS DUNNE: But not the number of lane kilometres of road barrier inspected or—

Mr Eggins : That actually exist is in the ownership agreement.

MRS DUNNE: But that is not what exists. The inspections aren't there, for instance. On page 197 you have got a whole lot of inspections, for instance, where there are no measures, no targets, for 2002-03.

THE ACTING CHAIR : While you are looking for those reference points, could I point out to members that it appears that the government is picking up a recommendation of the Auditor-General. The Auditor-General will be appearing before the Estimates Committee and it might be a good move to ask the Auditor-General has he recommended that mere efficiency measures come out and effectiveness measures stay in, or what is the story. I think we are likely to see the same questions through the estimates process for almost every portfolio. Perhaps it might be a good move to ask those questions of the Auditor-General and the Chief Minister, who would have carriage of a cross-government issue.

MRS DUNNE: I'll consider that, Mr Chairman.

THE ACTING CHAIR : Mr Eggins, do you want to finish that question?

Mr Eggins : I have nothing further to add.

MR SMYTH: I have a couple of questions on Canberra Connect.

MS DUNDAS: I thought that was 1.2?

THE ACTING CHAIR : Yes, we have moved on from Canberra Connect.

MR SMYTH: I am sorry. I raced down as soon as I heard 1.1 being mentioned.

THE ACTING CHAIR: All right. Well, go for your life, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: I just wanted to know how many services are now being provided online through Canberra Connect?

Mr Thompson: Unfortunately Tom Elliot left once he was told he was finished with.

MR SMYTH: He will be disappointed.

Mr Thompson: Can we take it on notice?

MR SMYTH: They are actually questions I have given on notice that we haven't received answers to at this stage.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Were they within the three days?

MR SMYTH: I believe so.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Can I ask that the minister look into that and perhaps chase it up for us.

MR SMYTH: All right then, and I might reserve the right to bring it back later on the revisit day.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Thank you very much for that.

MS DUNDAS: I have a question on community path maintenance. You also refer in other places in the budget paper to bike path rehabilitation and footpath rehabilitation. Is the community path maintenance the sum of the bike path and footpath rehabilitation money, or is it a different? Is there a third type of path that is a community path?

Mr Davidson: The rehabilitation is from the capital program, which is meant for major reconstruction and/or extension where the path is, say, substandard or it doesn't exist and needs to be added. The figure for the community paths maintenance is exactly that—it is routine maintenance during the year, replacing small cracked sections.

MS DUNDAS: For both footpaths and bike paths?

Mr Davidson: Where they overlap, yes.

MS DUNDAS: So, there has been an increase. If we look at Budget Paper 4, there has been an increase of that money. Can you tell us at this stage how much of that money is going into bike paths and how much of it is going into footpaths? Or is it going to be on a 'who screams the loudest over a broken piece of cement'—

Mr McNulty: It gets divided up according to the priorities and the damage that exists on the particular path. It covers both bike paths and footpaths.

MS DUNDAS: It says that there has been an increase to meet increased community demand. I was wondering where that community demand is being directed. You have increased your budget obviously because you know that there is a need. Where are you seeing that need arising? Is it mostly in footpaths; is it mostly in bike paths; is it mostly north, mostly south? What kind of information do you have to go with the \$90,000 increase?

Mr McNulty: I would guess we would get an equal level of complaint about bike paths and footpaths. You have got to remember that in Canberra they are basically dual use anyway, and it would be equally spread throughout the city. You can't pick one particular bad area. A lot of the problems relate to tree root damage, which we have to deal with, and we come up with ways of dealing with that. But it is spread everywhere—there are no particular locations which are any worse than anywhere else.

MS DUNDAS: I have a different point in terms of cycling. Mr Acting Chair, although this is still on roads, can I change topic?

THE ACTING CHAIR: Still on roads—knock yourself out, Ms Dundas.

MS DUNDAS: On all new arterial roads and on existing arterial roads undergoing significant upgrading, widening or duplication, will you be looking at ensuring that on-road cycle lanes are marked on these new roads?

Mr McNulty: Yes, we do. That is our current practice.

MS DUNDAS: That is the current practice. So it is your policy with all roads that are undergoing upgrading, resealing or repaving to put in on-road cycle lanes?

Mr McNulty: Where that is feasible within the scope of work. If we are working within existing kerblines and there is not sufficient space for on-road cycling, obviously we can't without moving the kerblines. Wherever it is feasible or possible within the constraints we are working in, yes we do.

MS DUNDAS: And you are working to the Austroad standards?

Mr McNulty: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: Have you been in consultation with the community cycling organisations about where it might be feasible or necessary to put on-road cycling lanes that may involve kerb realignment?

Mr McNulty: We are in constant contact with Pedal Power, who would be the premier lobby group for cyclists in Canberra, I guess, and we have ongoing discussions with them about our projects.

MS DUNDAS: Okay, thank you. I have one other question also on roads. It appears that there is money budgeted for quality coordination in roadworks—\$0.99 million. Can you explain to me what quality coordination will do or is?

Mr Davidson: The government has a capital works program from which it creates assets which need to be accepted into the roads asset inventory. The private sector also creates assets through the land development process and a lot of the work that they carry out, which at the end of the day produces an infrastructure asset, is also handed over to the government. It becomes government property. That item there covers the cost of the process that is run in terms of ensuring that the quality of all of those works achieves the standard.

MR DUNNE: Mr Acting Chairman, my question is about car parks. Seeing that you have decided to introduce pay car parking in Belconnen and Tuggeranong, which is currently free, what costs are there involved in the actual implementation of paid car parking and where exactly will it take place in Tuggeranong and Belconnen?

Mr Wood: Where exactly—in those areas controlled by the government.

MRS DUNNE: So all government-owned car parks in Tuggeranong and Belconnen?

Mr Wood: Well—

MRS DUNNE: So essentially everything that is not under cover.

Mr Wood: It is not writ in fine detail at this stage, but that would be the starting point. Not necessarily under cover either because there are other places. Certainly you would know that in Tuggeranong there are some non-government car parks that are not under cover.

MR SMYTH: So will it extend to, say, the Westfields at Belconnen and the Hyperdome in Tuggeranong?

Mr Wood: Within their area?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Wood: They may need to take some action as a consequence, but I use the word “may”. I am not sure how they may react to it but obviously I think it does call for some consideration of both government car parking and non-government.

MRS DUNNE: Have you conducted any consultation with, say, the Hyperdome or Westfield in Belconnen about the impact on the parking that they control?

Mr Wood: Officers have done some work. I have had a slight discussion, I wouldn't say it was a major discussion, with the Hyperdome. Mr MacDonald might go back to your first question.

MRS DUNNE: Perhaps if we can take it from there. How much is going to be involved in I suppose the capital costs of setting up a paid parking infrastructure?

Mr MacDonald: Brian MacDonald, General Manager, Road Transport. The budget for this year has provided \$288,000 in recurrent expenditure and 1.12 million for capital. Just to give you some feel for what is involved, the government actually owns about

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27 per cent of the parking in Belconnen and in Tuggeranong some 21 per cent. So clearly the success of a paid parking regime will mean we will have to work very closely with the private sector in both those particular town centres.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, can I just interrupt, Mr MacDonald?

Mr MacDonald: Sure.

MRS DUNNE: You say 27 per cent of Belconnen. Where are those areas?

Mr MacDonald: Well there is quite a number. Obviously, the main one would be Westfield itself, the Westfield mall, with all the parking it has.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry. Which bits does the government own and control, seeing it is much less?

Mr MacDonald: There are quite a number of scattered car parks. Opposite Westfield, you will be aware of the bridge across the top there. There is an immediate car park there, there is one right next to it, and there are car parks up near Sheppard Ford, near the bus depot, for example. I could provide you with a map.

MRS DUNNE: That would be useful.

Mr MacDonald: They are quite scattered actually.

MRS DUNNE: So does that include the area associated with the Cameron offices?

Mr MacDonald: No, that is a private car park.

MRS DUNNE: That is owned by the building owner?

Mr MacDonald: That is correct. Yes.

MRS DUNNE: So getting back to the cost.

Mr MacDonald: There have been some funds provided on a recurrent basis to allow us to manage the government car parks and, of course, looking at the issue of overspill. Immediately car parking goes into an area, people tend to find other areas, so part of the capital injection is also to do with providing the infrastructure to ensure that the car parks are maintained and there is adequate protection for grassed areas and that sort of thing; also, of course, the capital associated with providing parking meters.

MRS DUNNE: Is this going to be metered parking, voucher parking or—

Mr MacDonald: There has been no specific decision on that. There are a range of options available to us. What we will be doing shortly is engaging a consultant to assist us with the implementation, and very much part of that process will be consultation with the stakeholders in the area. There is a range of opportunities. For example, it could be that Westfield may be able to assist the government with a closed parking area in terms of its boom-gating arrangements. So we could have, for example—

MRS DUNNE: Westfield doesn't have any boom gate.

Mr MacDonald: No, no. It will have boom gates I suggest. When the government puts its own car parking in there will be an opportunity for Westfield in the lower ground area, for example—you are aware of that layout?

MRS DUNNE: Yes.

Mr MacDonald: I would imagine that would be a boom gate facility by Westfield and across the road we could have a partnership, for example, with Westfield to also boom gate it. So there is a range of options. We could have the traditional voucher parking. So there are a whole range of options.

MRS DUNNE: It is one of the things that I suspect really irritates the average consumers. If, for instance, when I go to the pay parking that is run by QIC at the Canberra Centre, I pay for what I use. That is, I go in, I get a ticket, I come out the end and I pay for it. I go over to the government parking over here and I make an estimation. I think I might be two hours or 2½ hours. I pay for two hours, or maybe even 2½ hours. If I am three hours I will have paid for 2½ hours and then I get a fine on top of it. This is a useful way to raise revenue for the government but it is not a particularly useful way of conducting good relations with your consumers.

I know that it is much cheaper to run voucher parking and then have people come along and fine you for over-staying inadvertently. But in terms of building a social relationship with people, I would strongly advocate that you look at boom gating and people paying for what they use. The other alternative is that you think, "I don't know how long I'll be, I'll pay for two hours because I only have a \$2 coin and that is all the change I have," and you only want to stay for half an hour. It just builds up resentment in the community. I think that these are things that need to be looked at.

This \$1.2 million is essentially to buy the equipment to get vending equipment or whatever it is—

Mr MacDonald: And also to provide all the signage and all the bollards and other physical structures to make the car parks secure.

MRS DUNNE: Without the maps we can't really make a judgment about what you have indicated but because all those car parks are quite disparate, do you see that there will be diseconomies of scale? You are going to have to run a little bit of equipment here and another little bit of equipment over there. It is in fact going to be quite expensive to set up in terms of capital works and to administer on an ongoing basis. What proportion of the revenue in, say, the next three years will be consumed by administration and the set up?

Mr MacDonald: Whilst I indicated that the government has in Belconnen, for example some 27 per cent of the parking area, it doesn't yet follow that we are going to necessarily put meters into all of that 27 per cent. We may still choose to have time-limited parking arrangements. But certainly the areas that are close to the major shopping centre, where there is a lot of pressure on the parking at the moment, are obviously the

areas where we would be wanting to put the meters in. They are the areas that are largest and would not suffer from the diseconomies of scale that you were referring to. We would obviously be looking at the other private parking and we wouldn't want to have a detrimental effect in relation to the traders in the area and the way in which their customers normally deal with them.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Ms Dundas, you have got a question.

MS DUNDAS: To continue on the subject of parking, what will be the hours for pay parking in Belconnen and Tuggeranong?

Mr MacDonald: The hours have not yet been determined, but we would take as a guide the arrangements in Woden. We are looking at that as a starting point.

MS DUNDAS: Will there be extra bus routes put on during those hours?

Mr Wood: That is a good point to make. Simon Corbell is working on transport strategies and that is one of the issues he will be considering. Our comments have always been that in particular this is one means of trying to get people onto buses, and so they are not just words. As well as looking at meter and voucher parking, he will be looking at what might be done with buses.

MS DUNDAS: What is the time frame for this?

Mr MacDonald: By about March of next year we will have Belconnen in place and by the end of the financial year, Tuggeranong.

MS DUNDAS: And so we will know by then whether or not there will be new bus routes or extra bus routes operating at the same time. Also, in the budget papers there is an increase due to parking fines. Is this due—

MRS DUNNE: If people are going to overstay their voucher, well they are going to get fined, aren't they?

THE ACTING CHAIR: Can I just interrupt for a second please, members? I will allow this question to go on, but can I ask you to address your attention to the output classes. This one should normally be in 2.1, which we will come to. I will allow this question now, but if other questions are not on the output class I will have to ask you to wait till that comes up.

Mr Wood: You might be referring to the speed cameras.

MS DUNDAS: Possibly, yes, or fines I believe.

Mr Wood: We carried on the program of the former government and installed extra speed cameras and extra red light cameras, but because there are more of them out there, there has been an inability to process all the film, so there is an extra cost of processing that film.

MS DUNDAS: Well, just to follow on: if there is more money to come in from parking fines once the new parking system is established in Belconnen and Tuggeranong, will that money be spent within Urban Services or will it go to consolidated revenue?

Mr Wood: Someone will answer that, but the comment I just gave you a minute ago wasn't in respect of parking fines.

MS DUNDAS: Yes, I understand that.

Mr Thompson: The parking fines money is territorial revenue. It simply goes straight back to Treasury.

MS DUNDAS: So there is no way of targeting that money towards more bus routes, better bike path maintenance et cetera?

Dr Adrian: Colin Adrian, Executive Director, Policy Coordination. There is no direct nexus, if you like, between traffic fine revenues and, say for example, bus initiatives. But I guess that would be an issue that the government would have to address in a budget context. But, no, it goes into territorial revenue; it is not part of Urban Services.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

MR PRATT: Minister, I am extremely concerned about Lake Tuggeranong College and the impact of the paid car parking proposal for that particular area. Will there be adequate free parking given to staff and students at the college? Is there a provision planned to be put in place to at least firewall those people attending that particular college?

Mr Wood: Indeed, and I think we have all been aware that Lake Tuggeranong College is the one government educational institution in Canberra that has never had parking provided. As this proposal emerged I did give the commitment that we would find non-free parking for those who attend Lake Tuggeranong College in much the same order that other colleges would have. We have not determined the size of the car park, or indeed exactly where it will be. But, yes, we have given that commitment to the college, to staff and students, that we will find an area for parking.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Minister, you did mention the words "non-free". I presume that was—

Mr Wood: Did I say "non-free"?

MR PRATT: You said "non-free".

Mr Wood: No, I think I was actually correcting myself. I was going to say "non-paid", and then I said "free", didn't I?

MRS DUNNE: Yes, "non-free".

Mr Wood: It is free parking. Thank you for expressing that point.

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MS DUNDAS: I thought Steve asked about Lake Ginninderra College in Belconnen.

MR PRATT: No. Lake Tuggeranong.

MRS DUNNE: Well the same will possibly apply to Lake Ginninderra.

MR PRATT: But you could ask the same question, though. Is there going to be an impact on Ginninderra as well, and will there be the same provisions provided perhaps?

Mr Wood: Well, there may be, but an area for parking has been built at Lake Ginninderra College. Now, it may not be sufficient but I haven't and I won't today give a commitment beyond Lake Tuggeranong because I am told that has four parking spots on site. So that is obviously the stand out college that hasn't had that arrangement.

MR PRATT: I have seen comments made that Tuggeranong will only require 30 car spaces. I would take issue on that.

Mr Wood: No. There are about 90 staff, aren't there?

MR PRATT: At least that, and if you look at any college parking it is in the order of 100 plus.

Mr Wood: That is the order that we would be looking at, I would think, but I won't give any definitive figure.

MR PRATT: Okay. Will the cost of college parking be passed on to the department?

Mr Wood: I would be negotiating with the department for that to occur but I have got some discussion yet.

MR PRATT: All right. I will need to find a budget provision for that.

MR SMYTH: So, in other words, the department of education will be paying Urban Services for parking?

Mr Wood: I won't say that at all at this stage. I will be talking to education.

MR SMYTH: So one of the things—

Mr Wood: We will see what the outcome is. We haven't had this sort of situation before, so I won't tie myself down. I certainly can't tie the education department down as to how it will be costed.

MR SMYTH: So you are considering diverting education dollars to car parking?

Mr Wood: No.

MR SMYTH: So the money that goes to education will be diverted to Urban Services?

MRS DUNNE: Is that beyond the school gate or inside the school gate?

THE ACTING CHAIR: One question please.

Mr Wood: I think it was an omission when the college was built and the education budget would have paid for every other car parking spot in education around the town as their facilities were constructed.

MR SMYTH: But in the process—and you may have been planning minister at that time—surely it was recognised that, given the site and the site constraints, one of the areas I understand they are looking at for the possible establishment of a car park is in fact the only flat area that the college has for PE. My understanding of the logic at the time was that it was always assumed that they would have access to free parking across the road. Why can't you give us that confirmation now that they will always have access to free parking and that education dollars won't be spent on parking?

Mr Wood: I think it is a reasonable thing to talk to education about it.

MR SMYTH: Well I don't think it is reasonable at all. What I am hearing is that, because applications to move schools are processed in the next term, some teachers at Lake Tuggeranong are already saying that they will transfer out of Lake Tuggeranong College because they will not pay for parking. The way to end that sort of speculation and the disruption your government is causing is to rule it out today.

Mr Wood: Are we talking about two different things here? I have said there will be free parking attached to Lake Tuggeranong College. I thought we were, a minute ago, arguing about whether the funding for that could come from education or Urban Services.

MR SMYTH: Well, I would like you to rule out that it will come from education. I don't believe education dollars should be spent on parking.

Mr Wood: That is not the argument that teachers might have to pay. The commitment has been given that it will be free parking. Teachers and students won't be paying for their car parking spots. Now, whether there will be enough spots for absolutely everybody, as at other colleges, I can't guarantee at this stage. There are some problems to be worked through—access and control and issues of that nature.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Mr Pratt and then Ms Dundas.

MR PRATT: Can those clarifications be made fairly quickly, given that teachers and even parents of students may be making decisions soon about schooling arrangements for next year?

Mr Wood: I am a bit confused here. Teachers and students will not have to pay for parking. There will be reasonable size car parking facilities made available.

MRS DUNNE: But you just said, minister, if there were overflow problems. Well there were overflow problems.

Mr Wood: There may be some.

MS DUNDAS: There is everywhere—Dickson, Phillip.

Mr Wood: I can't rule out to the last degree. I don't know what the arrangements are at Hawker College. I think there is probably some overflow parking at Hawker, Lake Ginninderra. As I visualise it, I think Dickson College seems to have very large car parking areas. We have not determined the number. Mr Pratt said of the order of 100 or so. Well, that would be my thinking at this very early stage, and I think that is an entirely reasonable approach to take.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Right, Ms Dundas.

MS DUNDAS: Back to Belconnen and car parking: will your discussions include the type of parking that will be within the Belconnen pool?

Mr Wood: That is initially a planning issue but it would certainly encompass that as well. The Belconnen pool, I anticipate Mr MacDonald, would be as much a part of that environment, that area to be considered, as any other part there.

Mr MacDonald: That is correct.

MS DUNDAS: So it is quite possible that the parking at Belconnen pool will be paid parking?

Mr MacDonald: It hasn't been determined yet. It think, looking at its location, it is not as critical as the other sites closer to Westfield. So we still haven't really determined. It for the consultancy to work out, again in cost-effectiveness terms, where the actual meters should go; whether it should be time limits in other areas and that sort of thing.

MS DUNDAS: So also out of the priority area would be the parking behind the pink ten-pin bowling alley and McDonalds which is used as overflow from Lake Ginninderra College. That isn't on the high priority list?

Mr MacDonald: Although that parking area for a start is not government car park.

MS DUNDAS: Would the parking that goes with the Belconnen pool be government or owned by the private operators that are running the pool?

Mr MacDonald: I don't know personally.

Mr Wood: I couldn't answer that. We would have to check that through with planning. I would suspect it would be part of the pool, but that is not a definitive answer.

Mr Thompson: Ms Dundas, my recollection—and I have seen the plans once or twice—is that the developer has some obligations to provide some amount of car parking as part of the development. Now, I can't recall the exact amount.

MS DUNDAS: Okay.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Are there any more questions on 1.2?

MRS DUNNE: I have still got some car parking questions.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Okay.

MRS DUNNE: Getting back to the physical car parking in Belconnen, can you rule out, minister, that the parking that is currently associated with Lake Ginninderra College will be considered for metered parking at some stage in this program?

Mr Wood: I would certainly think so, yes. On site, that would be controlled by the—

MRS DUNNE: That is considered the property of education?

Mr Wood: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. Thank you for that. Really, I suppose a fundamental question—and I probably should have asked this one earlier in the piece—is did you do any analysis of the reasons that people park in Belconnen and Tuggeranong before you decided to implement a fee?

Mr Wood: There has been a long history attached to this, and it dissatisfies some and satisfies others. I suppose parking has been pretty well examined across the city for a very long time, and Mr MacDonald might give you the background. When this happened I had a letter from someone who leaves the bottom end of Tuggeranong at about 7 am in order to get a car park at Belconnen where she works. I think that outlines the problem—that having to do that says we have got to do something to get things on track. That is an all-day park. She works there. People claim they can't use buses and I know all the arguments behind that. But these are long-term problems that do at some stage need attention.

MRS DUNNE: But what you have actually said is that you haven't done any analysis.

Mr Wood: No, I didn't say that.

MRS DUNNE: You don't know how many people, for instance, park in the government car park outside Woollies and Coles in Belconnen to do their grocery shopping. I can tell you, as a mother of five, that I am not going to catch a bus to do the grocery shopping. Do you know why people park there? Do they park there all day and go to work, do they park there all day and catch a bus into Civic or Woden, or do they actually go there to buy their groceries or their household consumables?

Mr Wood: They go there to buy their groceries if they can get a park there, and that's the key question. Can you guarantee you can get a park outside there at 3 o'clock in the afternoon? That is one of the issues.

MRS DUNNE: Perhaps on Saturday afternoon on pay week it is a bit stressed and you might have to spend five minutes looking for a car park or you might have to walk an extra 50 metres or something. But are the people who are going there on Saturday afternoon to do their household shopping going to be charged for parking in government car parks?

Mr Wood: Well—

MRS DUNNE: I mean, this seems to militate against a transport strategy.

Mr Wood: The area—

THE ACTING CHAIR: Order! The minister can answer the question.

Mr Wood: Look, I'll pass to Mr MacDonald to give the detail, but as I understand it the area you are talking about is actually Westfield's car park, is it?

MRS DUNNE: No.

Mr Wood: Is that the area on the flat underneath the bridge?

MS DUNDAS: Are you talking about across the bridge?

MRS DUNNE: No, I am talking about the bit outside Woolies and Coles.

Mr Wood: Just right outside the supermarkets, yes.

MRS DUNNE: My understanding—and I have been told this for many years—is that this is government car parking; it is time limited.

Mr Wood: It is government, yes.

Mr MacDonald: That's right.

Mr Wood: Mr MacDonald might give some more background.

Mr MacDonald: I think, firstly, I should say that we do conduct annual parking surveys so we have a feel for the pressures that are occurring throughout the city with the car parking. We have an understanding of those areas that are used as commuter car parking, and that has been part of the problem for Belconnen. The commuter car parking has been gradually increasing and causing a lot of pressure, and the minister gave you an example earlier of people trying to get to work and park all day. We feel as part of the transport strategy that we need to be looking at commuter parking particularly. We are obviously trying to ensure that the people who are wanting to shop and to be there for an hour or two are not penalised; but to have the pricing signals there for the people who choose to park all day long in what is probably fairly valuable land around the shopping centres.

MRS DUNNE: Mr MacDonald, do you have any idea, though, whether people are commuter car parking, whether they drive to work from out of Belconnen into Belconnen. The minister gave an example of someone who drove to work from Tuggeranong, and that is a reasonable exposition of commuter car parking. Are there people who live in west Belconnen or somewhere who go in and essentially park and ride?

Mr MacDonald: In the surveys we haven't tested that particular proposition. They would just be looking at simply the use of the car parks and those that are there all day long versus the short-term parking.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. So the answer to my original question is that you don't really know?

Mr MacDonald: No, I don't.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, thanks. And there was no discussion about whether or not we should find out before this is introduced, minister?

Mr MacDonald: I think it is also a question of getting some consistency across the city with our parking arrangements. We have Woden and we have Civic. All those areas have got paid parking. In implementing a sustainable transport strategy we need to think about the pricing signals we are sending people and it seems inconsistent to not have at least some charging in Belconnen to let people think about the use of the private car rather than those short journeys and things.

MRS DUNNE: I think we could argue the toss about that, but this is probably not the venue for doing that. On the subject of "we have already got it in Civic and Woden so therefore we should have it in Belconnen and Tuggeranong", when do you propose to do it in Gungahlin?

Mr Wood: That is not on my agenda—I don't think so; there is a long way to go in Gungahlin yet.

MRS DUNNE: What is the essential difference?

Mr Wood: I don't think there is anything like the pressure. I have stopped by Gungahlin on any number of occasions and the car parks are well used but I don't think they are saturated. They tend to be used for shoppers, which is fine. They are not significantly used for all day workers because there is not much around the place.

MRS DUNNE: Because there is no work there. Okay. And people don't park and ride from Gungahlin. So there is nothing in your parking structure, although it is not fully thought through, that would discourage people from commuter parking but not unduly penalise families who go and do their grocery shopping?

Dr Adrian: At Gungahlin?

Mr Wood: No, in general.

MRS DUNNE: No, in Tuggeranong and Belconnen.

Mr Wood: Well, that is the balance we would like to work out. We would like to be able to work that through—finding commuter parking, and you remember the problems around Civic years ago. We have to try to work this through, so we allow some commuter parking but the shoppers still around those major centres are a key part of the arrangements.

MRS DUNNE: I also notice that there has been some discussion about paid parking in Barton, which is essentially an issue for the NCA. Have you had discussions with the NCA about paid parking in Barton?

Mr MacDonald: Yes, we are.

Mr Thompson: Yes, perhaps I might move up on that, Mrs Dunne. Yes, the Barton/Parkes area is a problem, and it is a problem to both the Commonwealth government through the NCA and ourselves, and it has been free there. They find themselves even more at the sharp end of people driving to work and occupying all the space very early in the morning, and they have been looking around at ways of, if you like, increasing the capacity of car parking there in a cost effective way.

In the end the NCA believe that the appropriate way to deal with it is for us to institute a regime of paid parking on the streets, which they believe will provide the impetus for some form of off-street structured car parking to be built and funded. They haven't yet decided exactly what mechanisms they would adopt there, whether it might be a government car park which they would then have operated by one of the commercial companies or whether they might simply provide encouragement to one of the commercial companies to build.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, Mr Thompson. Where is there scope for parking on the streets in Barton?

Mr Thompson: The parking on streets is a matter that we deal with but it would then provide, if you like, the trigger, the impetus, for commercial operators to build much bigger off-street car parks.

MRS DUNNE: The questions is where in Barton or Parkes can you legally park on the street?

MS GALLAGHER: Any street.

Mr Thompson: A vast number of streets there.

MS GALLAGHER: Yes, Brisbane Avenue; all over the place.

MRS DUNNE: Brisbane Avenue. If you are going to start putting restrictions of some sort and policing on street parking, what is going to happen with the people who actually live in Barton or Parkes—the residential streets, of which there are a few and which are under a fair amount of pressure from overflow parking? Are you going to address that or is there going to be paid parking on the suburban streets, the residential streets?

Mr Thompson: We haven't worked out that detail yet. The solutions there will, I imagine, be similar to the solutions that have been adopted in Reid, Braddon and Turner, where there is a mixture. In some areas there is a prohibition on daytime parking but you can park after hours. Those sorts of solutions seem to work in these inner north suburbs and I would imagine something similar might well apply in Barton.

MRS DUNNE: So you are taking account of the impact that overflow parking is having in Parkes and Barton on residential streets?

Mr Thompson: Well, yes. As I say, it is under intense pressure and there is no extra capacity there. The only way to get the extra capacity is to find ways and means of funding some substantial off-street car parks.

MR SMYTH: There is a large amount of on-street parking in Barton; but there is less on-street parking in Parkes. So what is the answer for Parkes, given that it also caters for the national icons like the library and the gallery. Is it the intention that people will pay for parking there?

Mr Wood: Well, it is still very early days. I think we have probably had one or two conversations with the NCA.

MR SMYTH: Well, no, it is not early days. We have been talking about this for years. I might just say that as minister I resisted, certainly in Parkes.

Mr Wood: Yes, all right. But to the best of my knowledge this is the first occasion that the NCA has actually indicated it may need to do something.

Mr Thompson: It is very clear to us that we will have to have definite on-street paid parking in Barton.

MR SMYTH: Which is different to Parkes, though. Parkes is a very special place. For instance, access to the National Library, access to the Gallery; a lot of students use the Library, for instance, for research; places like that. Are we putting another impost on people coming to the nation's capital by then charging them to visit the attractions, the national icons, that they have already built and paid for and maintained through their taxes?

Mr Thompson: Our role in Parkes, if we have any role, will be very limited, and it will be to assist, if you like, the Commonwealth in managing some very heavy peak loads in those areas that they are confronted by at times when all those car parks are full. We are trying to work out ways and means of dealing with that. What do they do? Do they sink some capital money into the construction of a structured car park or do they send some pricing signals to encourage turnover? We don't have the final answers there yet.

THE ACTING CHAIR: That is the NCA's decision, though, at the end of the day, isn't it?

Mr Thompson: Essentially in Parkes it is their call. But it will be really just to work in concert with them in Barton.

Mr Wood: With Commemoration Place they have just added to their parking problems, I would think.

MRS DUNNE: But that means—and I suppose this is an issue for this government and possibly not you minister, but more Minister Corbell—that if you are going to send a pricing signal and make it expensive to park all day in Parkes or Barton, you are going

to have to provide more bus services and more out-of-hours buses. I can't imagine Treasury officials or finance officials putting together the budget and then catching a bus home at 1 o'clock in the morning. These are the things that you have to take into consideration.

THE ACTING CHAIR: The bus stop outside the Albert Hall is chock-a-block full of Treasury people catching the bus home.

MR SMYTH: But the special case for Parkes was that at least there are no shopping facilities. If you work in a public service department or one of the national attractions in Parkes you are actually disadvantaged because you are in isolation. You are away from all shopping, I don't think there are any gym facilities, there is only one restaurant and there are a number of smaller cafes in the facilities themselves. But there must be a special acknowledgment that Parkes, by its very nature, is different to the rest of Canberra.

Mr Thompson: Yes, there has to be that. But equally—this is just a quick anecdote—an NCA official told me that they have just moved their office right smack dab into the middle of Parkes and they don't go out at lunchtime because if they do they lose their car parking spot. They are saying that there has got a better way than this. If they get in early they leave their car in the spot because if they move it they get back from lunch and they have got to park yonks away. So we have got to work out better ways.

MR SMYTH: Are there guidelines on how we determine parking? I think Mr MacDonald said that the parking at Tuggeranong and Belconnen will be based on the Woden regime. Do we have a set of guidelines on how we determine what time limit is appropriate and what charge is appropriate?

Mr MacDonald: Well, we do want to take into account the retail facilities and people's access and use, so we are trying to structure the parking around long stay versus short stay and pricing accordingly. The same occurs, as you are aware, in Woden and other parts of Canberra where the pricing is in some cases to discourage short-term parking and in other cases to encourage long-term parking.

Mr Thompson: Mr Smyth, essentially the model is: close in to commercial and retail facilities, short-term parking and relatively high charges, whether it is for on-street or off-street; and then, as you move away, graduated into long stay and lower cost charges. That is exactly the model that applies here in Civic.

MRS DUNNE: So what would one expect to pay to go and buy your groceries at Coles or Woolies at Belconnen and park—

Mr MacDonald: It could be that it is nothing because Westfield, like most of the other large retailers, have a policy of first two hours free of charge.

MRS DUNNE: So actually what you are saying, Mr MacDonald, and what you have said previously, is that you expect that it is almost inevitable that the Hyperdome and Westfield shopping centre will introduce pay parking into the areas that they own?

Mr MacDonald: I think they will have to in terms of discouraging long stay parkers from being there. They don't want, for example, staff necessarily parking in the prime sites close to the shops for their own customers so they will be wanting to put in place a pricing regime which might encourage people to be there for two hours to do their shopping. If you want to stay for three, four, or maybe all day, you pay the appropriate charge.

MRS DUNNE: You said before that there hasn't been any discussions with the Hyperdome or Westfield?

MR MacDonald: There have been some preliminary discussions but I am just perhaps referring to some models which already exist in Canberra—for example, I think Woden has two hours free. So I would imagine they would have similar policies in trying to encourage shoppers to be closer to facilities and longer-term stay people paying for what they use.

MRS DUNNE: I asked whether there has been any analysis of people's parking intentions. There hasn't been any analysis and there isn't really any analysis of what the cost, the impost on families, will be for parking. It is like death and taxes—you pay for parking.

Mr MacDonald: It depends on people's choice in the use of the parking facility. If you are a short-term stay you probably won't be paying much at all. If you choose to park there all day, you probably will.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Have members any other questions on output 1.2? If not, we will move to output 1.3. Do members have questions on output 1.3?

MRS DUNNE: I do. We got distracted because I think the Acting Chairman got a bit excited about people asking too many questions about landfill. So I will come back to my questions about landfill. Mr Thompson was starting to give an—

THE ACTING CHAIR: I don't think anybody understood that. Would you like to go through it again so that even those people asleep can wake up and find out about it?

MRS DUNNE: Okay, Mr Acting Chairman. When Ms Dundas and I were asking questions and we were so rudely interrupted by you, we were halfway through some discussion about landfill, and Mr Thompson was doing a wonderful sort of aerial exposition of what the cut would look like. I really wanted to get to this question: sometimes we talk about tonnes of waste and sometimes we talk about cubic metres. Does a cubic metre roughly relate to a tonne?

Mr Thompson: Once it is compacted, roughly one to one. When it is loose in the truck, no way. It is a lot less, but compacted—

MRS DUNNE: But by the time it is in the ground and squashed down.

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MS DUNDAS: Mr Thompson, you indicated that the \$2.4 million for the trench was one part of a two-stage process. The first stage is to tunnel out the trench. Can you please explain to me what the second stage of the process is and how much the second stage will cost?

Mr Thompson: As you say, the first stage is to excavate and shape up this thing called a cell, which has this peculiar shape because it is on the side of a hill.

MS DUNNE: Is it like a parabola?

Mr Thompson: Yes, roughly half a parabola. The \$2.4 million is for that purpose. It is a substantial excavation and, as I indicated earlier, it will buy us about 800,000 cubic metres of storage. The second part of that, which will be the subject of a second budget bid, is to install a so-called liner. In previous times it would have been a clay liner. We are now looking more at a synthetic plastic sort of liner to ensure that with what we put in there you don't have any risk of leechate, of ground water leeching into the underlying aquifer. So in sum total, the total investment in that first cell will be something over \$4 million. I don't have the precise figure with me.

MS DUNDAS: Just to follow up on that: so the extra \$2 million will need to come through another budget bid.

Mr Thompson: That is right.

MS DUNDAS: Will the hole be useless if that budget bid is unsuccessful?

Mr Thompson: Well, I will put it a different way.

THE ACTING CHAIR: They would dig another hole and fill that one in.

Mr Thompson: No, it is actually quite serious because the current cell, if you like, based on current projections, fills up early in 2004. Once that is full, and given that we have shut down the West Belconnen landfill, we would have a serious problem. So the far more important issue is to make sure that we finish off this new cell so that we have got a place to put our garbage beyond 2004.

Mr Wood: It is imperative.

MS DUNDAS: So you are pretty confident that cabinet will approve the extra \$2 million for the lining?

Mr Wood: I would reckon. I think it is a package.

MS DUNDAS: We will chase that up at the next estimates then.

Mr Thompson: It will be an absolute top priority for us for next year's budget.

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MRS DUNNE: On present rates of filling, that is about four years worth. So that is about a million dollars a year for storage. I think Mr Davidson was saying before that we have been going gangbusters in reducing the amount of stuff that is going to landfill but now we are plateauing. Do you have any idea how long that plateau is?

Mr Wood: Not very long, we hope. I think greater attention to the commercial stream might get us on the climb again. It gets increasingly difficult as we go along. But you raise a problem for us—it does mean we really have to accelerate our efforts.

MRS DUNNE: And it seems from the figures that Mr Davidson was giving us before that putrescible waste is one of the biggies at the moment.

Mr Davidson: It is one of the areas which went up and it is one of the areas that we are addressing now.

MRS DUNNE: Putrescible waste is something that ideally shouldn't be going to landfill because you can do something useful with it. But we are stuck in this technological hiatus. And this leads me on to my next question. What happened with the worm farm?

Mr Thompson: The short answer is it got sold.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, and it doesn't operate any longer.

Mr Davidson: I think it was eventually non-viable and it was taken off.

MRS DUNNE: Why was it non-viable?

Mr Davidson: I think it was because of the quantities that were involved, and then the new opportunities that have been coming onboard with operations like Corkhills that can take that sort of organic material and turn it into a larger scale compost.

MRS DUNNE: But don't we have a problem in that we have a lot of things going? We have got the Corkhills' compostable stuff, which is laudable and is quite a good venture. But if we go down the new technology stuff you put everything in one end and churn it around and sift it several times and take it out the other end. But having a separate stream for garden waste like the Corkhills process actually militates against the new technology stuff working particularly well.

Mr Davidson: The technologies for streamed waste are working much better at the moment already than the technologies for unstreamed waste. So in relation to compost, that process is fairly well developed. So our efforts there need to go into convincing the generators of the waste to stream it, so that it can go in and be handled by the technologies already available. That leaves us with a residual waste, if you like, a mixed waste, which is where we are still waiting for the technology to come up to the point where we can afford it.

MRS DUNNE: You have got mixed waste, you have got putrescible waste and people who don't separate at source, and then you have got a whole lot of other stuff in there which is not compostable and not biodegradable. If you are taking out a whole lot of stuff downstream—you are taking out all the garden waste and all the paper and those

things—and if you go into a high tech solution like the one that they are using at Port Stevens, for example, doesn't that mean that the system would be less efficient because you have actually got less organic waste to come out of the system because you are putting less organic waste in at the beginning?

Mr Davidson: That is right. It is a question of balance.

MRS DUNNE: All the good work that we have done on educating people over five or 10 years to sort at source, which we do quite well domestically, might be undone because the next generation of technology might say, "Just whack it all in one big bin and put it into a tumbler." Is that the way forward, or don't we know?

Mr Davidson: Well, we don't really know. We are still evaluating the options.

MRS DUNNE: What are the other options, apart from the big tumbler?

Mr Davidson: There are processes like gasification to produce energy.

MRS DUNNE: Is that sort of biomass?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: But if you have a system like that, what goes into the system? Do you have to sort out? You can't put tins, PET bottles and plastic and stuff like that into your biomass technology.

Mr Davidson: We have already got those sorts of processes in place. One might conceive of a reprocessing plant that addresses the residual from the first process.

MRS DUNNE: I will need a briefing rather than asking that question.

Mr Thompson: Mrs Dunne, I understand what you are saying but I think if you stand back and look at the total waste stream, it seems to work best when we can get as much separation as possible at source. So keep building rubble right out of the normal waste stream. Send it off to wherever—down to Pialligo. Tyres, keep them out of the general waste stream—send them off to another destination and so on. I think in the end we will do best by doing as much as we can at source and then having the minimum amount going into this high tech thing, whatever it is—the tumbler or whatever. I think that is the way it will land, but we don't know for sure yet.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Mrs Dunne, how many more questions have you got? I am trying to work out where we are at.

MRS DUNNE: I have just got a couple more questions on waste.

THE ACTING CHAIR: How many?

MRS DUNNE: How is the building waste stuff at Pialligo working? Mr Davidson said before that building waste to landfill was down.

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: So does that mean that there is more going on out at Pialligo, and what sorts of things are recycled these days at Pialligo?

Mr Davidson: A range of building materials. They seem to be concentrating on concrete, brick—

MRS DUNNE: Gyprock?

Mr Davidson: Yes. Timber also, which goes to a range of places. I am not sure that site at Pialligo actually specialises in timber, but they do have out there facilities for re-processing brick and concrete.

MRS DUNNE: And the concrete becomes road base?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: “Policy and Planning” and “Contract Management and Commissioning” have been rolled into one new line item of “Policy and Planning, and Contract Management and Commissioning” and have subsequently received a budget allocation less than what was spent in the last financial year between those two components. And those two components also substantially overspent almost \$500,000 from their budgeted allocation. Can you explain what is going on there.

Mr Wood: Yes. I will pass that down the line.

Mr Davidson: Policy and planning: that is the 1.27 outcome this year to the 1.4 outcome targets this year?

MS DUNDAS: Yes. There was a target of 1.2 and an estimated outcome of 1.4 for policy and planning. There was a target of one for contract management and commissioning and an estimated outcome of 1.3. So together there was an overspend of something like \$500,000, but when they are both combined there is a reduction from that.

Mr Davidson: It is a reallocation of funding between those functions and the domestic collection, the kerbside garbage and recycling services. It is a reallocation of funding within those items.

MS DUNDAS: So the money has gone from the policy and planning end to specifically domestic collection services?

Mr Davidson: Yes, that’s right.

MS DUNDAS: And the no waste 2010 rethink, is that happening under the policy—

Mr Davidson: Sorry?

MS DUNDAS: The rethink or re-evaluation of the 2010 progress.

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: That is coming out of the policy and planning, and contract management and commissioning budget?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: Okay. Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: The next item is development control measures. What exactly are development control measures in this context?

Mr Davidson: There is a group of people in ACT No Waste that look at issues like the waste management plans for demolition and development proposals. There is a process for new development proposals to come through there, so that the waste management arrangements within the new developments are being satisfactorily handled.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, I see.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Is that for waste or recycling?

MRS DUNNE: I think we have just about done that one to death, haven't we?

MS DUNDAS: Finished with the rubbish.

THE ACTING CHAIR: Can I get a feel from members about the number of questions for Canberra urban parks and places?

MS DUNDAS: Yes, I have a question.

MRS DUNNE: I have got a few.

THE ACTING CHAIR: If you have got a series, I am going to suggest we break for lunch rather than interrupt the flow.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, that sounds like a good idea.

Resolved:

That, pursuant to standing order 243, the committee authorises the publication of evidence and submissions received by the committee during this hearing, together with any supplementary material arising from the public hearing.

Luncheon adjournment

THE CHAIR: I understand that we are to start at output class 1.4, municipal services. Are there questions of the minister or officials about Canberra urban parks and places?

MS DUNDAS: Yes. A whole lot of programs have been rolled into horticulture, cleaning and asset maintenance as a new program, which again then sees six programs being rolled into one program and the subsequent decline in overall allocation. Could you please tell me within that new allocation how much money is going to be spent on the weed hit program?

Mr Davidson: 50,000.

MS DUNDAS: So it is staying at the same amount?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: So can you tell me which programs are actually having a decrease in funding to meet the overall almost \$1 million decrease in funding for those six programs together?

Mr Davidson: It is primarily the end of the lakesmart program, which was a two-year program to do some work around the foreshores of the lakes—250,000.

MS DUNDAS: So that program is now finished?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: So does that mean that things like the water weeder out at Lake Ginninderra, the thing that goes round and cuts the weeds off below the water surface and keeps the water flow going, are going to be maintained on the lake?

Mr Davidson: Yes, the normal maintenance of the lakes will continue. This was just a special program aimed at some specific improvements around the lake foreshore.

MRS DUNNE: So that things like the streetsmart program are going to essentially remain but be renamed?

Mr Davidson: What we are endeavouring to do with things like the streetsmart program is work them into our normal maintenance regime, the idea being that initially it was aimed at catching up with backlog, and that has been substantially done. In the meantime, we have incorporated a lot of our work into our current specifications, and now it is happening as a routine.

MRS DUNNE: So you are confident that there won't be need for catch up?

Mr Davidson: Fairly confident, yes.

MRS DUNNE: Fairly confident. Okay. So that all of the stuff that was packaged together as the look of the city is being packaged in here under horticulture, cleaning and asset maintenance? That is all of that and a bit more?

Mr Davidson: Yes. In relation to parks, yes.

MRS DUNNE: So are there any other bits?

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Mr Davidson: There was a component of streetsmart which addressed roads as well. The same thing is been done there.

MRS DUNNE: And does that include stuff like the painting of barriers?

Mr Davidson: And the bridge rails, yes.

MRS DUNNE: So that is the stuff that is in roads?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: And that is still there?

Mr Davidson: That is built into the maintenance of applications now.

MRS DUNNE: So there's still an ongoing program of taking the rust off the barriers and those sorts of things?

Mr Davidson: Yes. We have got an asset management plan and that is included in it.

THE CHAIR: Graffiti removal from private property will be part of that horticulture, cleaning and asset maintenance. Is that continuing?

Mr Davidson: Yes. That program is continuing.

MR HARGREAVES: Could I ask: what is happening with Namadgi National Park management? I understand there was some—

MRS DUNNE: That is not under this one.

MR HARGREAVES: Is that the wrong one?

Mr Wood: Yes, I think that will be under Environment ACT.

MR HARGREAVES: Okay, fine, I can wait for that.

MRS DUNNE: If we are going to be really precise.

MR HARGREAVES: I wasn't sure whether it was in urban parks or whether it was in environment.

THE CHAIR: Are there questions on output 1.4? If there are not, I would like to exercise the prerogative of the chair and go back, if I could, to the financial statements. I have a couple of questions about those.

I am looking at page 8 of the revised Urban Services statement. The notes say towards the bottom of that page, in describing the changes in the government payment for outputs, that there has been a conversion of injection for operations to government payment for outputs of \$9.193 million. What is the reason for that conversion?

Mr Thompson: I guess you have got to go back some five years, Mr Humphries, when injections for operations were, if you like, introduced into the budget model and essentially they were there as an encouragement for departments to improve their efficiency. We did run a program over a number of three to four years when we initiated a range of efficiency improvements, including the market testing of a range of our service provision. We got through to, I guess, last year and we had largely—we hadn't completed it—completed that program. We believed, and we were able to persuade Treasury, that the likelihood of us achieving any more efficiency in that way was extremely limited. So after some debate it was agreed to, if you like, take the notion of injections for operations out of the equation and simply replace it with more conventional GPO payments.

THE CHAIR: Is that taken out of the equation across the board or just in respect of this particular statement?

Mr Thompson: I believe it has been taken out across the entire Urban Services set of portfolios.

Mr Phillips: I think it has been taken out across the board, with impacts upon the Urban Services financials, and they include the flow-through payments to ACTION. So we pay 40 odd million to ACTION as service purchase payments, and there was an injection for an operation component in that, and that has now been rolled up into the total service payment that is made for the authority.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. Similarly on the next page—about two-thirds of the way down on page 9—there is a reference to an increase in user charges, ACT government, and an indication that the increases are due primarily to revised assessment of work undertaken within the department's fee-for-service areas of \$967,000, partially offset by transfers. What sort of fee-for-service areas are we talking about there, and why the change, the revision?

Mr Phillips: One example of that: quite a large number is with the recreation ovals or sports grounds and ovals coming into the department. They in turn charge out education and other users for the maintenance of those ovals, and they come through as user charges on our books.

THE CHAIR: Okay. But you have had the ovals simply transferred into the department. This statement in fact says it is an assessment of work undertaken. So it sounds like there has been some revision of the way in which user charges work within the department, not merely as a result of transfers. What would you say?

Mr Phillips: It is not an issue of an assessment of work. It is basically the underlying components that have changed.

THE CHAIR: All right. Finally on the next page, about the middle of the page, there are a few other points where this is referred to. Reference is made to adjustments of the amounts allocated for administrative expenses by the revised CPI to 2.5 per cent. The government is using, I think, 2.9 per cent as the CPI adjustment for increase in rates for

this year, but this would suggest that you are using a 2.5 per cent figure for the increase in expenses. Is that the case?

Mr Thompson: That's correct.

THE CHAIR: Why is there a difference between the amount you are taking in? You are assuming a higher rate of inflation for the money you collect than for the money you are spending. What is the rationale behind that?

Mr Thompson: The out turning of the budget and also reflected in the expenditure for the department and other agencies, based on the 2.5 I think for the expenditure and 1.3 per cent for salaries. That is basically a mechanism to provide some additional funding in out turning the forward years. The basis on which the adjustment has been made to the rates would be, I suspect, determined on a different set of criteria.

THE CHAIR: The Commonwealth Treasury is estimating inflation for this present financial year to run at 2.75 per cent. So have you had advice from ACT Treasury that you should expect inflation to run at 2.5 per cent in the ACT?

Mr Phillips: The only figures we have worked on in determining our future year budget allocations is the 2.5 per cent for expenditure, which covers a range of items related to the department's activities.

THE CHAIR: But you wouldn't have a different inflation rate to other departments, presumably. There is no reason that inflation affects you differently to anybody else, is there?

Mr Phillips: Well, in fact, if you looked at the individual components of our expenditure and the components of other agencies, there would be, as I say, many variables that would determine whether in fact those particular expenditure items are moving by 1 per cent, 2 per cent, 3 per cent; whether there is a growth factor involved; if it is related to horticultural and service contracts and the like. It is very much a broad inflation factor that has been built into the estimates.

Mr Eggins: The mix of admin expenses and salary expenses between different agencies can differ and therefore the total adjustment for price indexation will differ between agencies. But Treasury dictates or determines that the allowance that will be factored into agency budgets is 2.5 per cent for this year for admin expenses.

THE CHAIR: For agency budgets—you mean across the board?

Mr Eggins: All agency budgets, yes.

THE CHAIR: So the inflation rate you are working in is the same for all the agencies, is it?

Mr Eggins: Yes.

Mr Thompson: That is our understanding.

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Mr Eggins : For the adjustment of agency budgets, yes. If there is another mix that is necessary to establish the impact on residential rates, for example, that would be something for the Treasury to determine.

MR HARGREAVES : You just said it was 2.5 per cent just on admin expenses. Is there a different treatment for salaries and wages?

Mr Eggins : Yes there is. At the moment there is an allowance of 1.3 per cent in agency budgets for salary increases for this year.

THE CHAIR : But they are salary increases as opposed to whatever is necessary to keep abreast of inflation. Are you saying that you adjust only for 1.3 per cent for wages, not for inflation plus 1.3 per cent?

Mr Eggins : Against the salary items we are allowed a 1.3 per cent increase for anticipated wage increases.

THE CHAIR : So it is lower than the inflation rate that you are working on?

Mr Eggins : That is correct.

Mr Thompson : That has been the model for about the last four or five years, roughly.

THE CHAIR : Okay.,

Mr Eggins : That is generally in line with the enterprise bargaining agreements that cover the Urban Services workplace, which for the most part are currently offering about a 1.5 per cent per annum wage increase.

THE CHAIR : All right. Let us move to output 1.5, information and libraries. Are there any questions regarding information and libraries?

MS DUNDAS : I was wondering why the projected number of patrons and library loans is not projected to increase in this financial year and is in fact down from the estimated outcome of last financial year?

THE CHAIR : According to the figure in front of me, it is not, Ms Dundas. Are you looking at the revised—

MS DUNDAS : I am looking at the number of public library customers, budget paper 4. Is it being revised?

THE CHAIR : Mine says last year was 1.8 million and this year's target is 1.8 million.

MS DUNDAS : The targets are the same but the estimated outcoming budget has a fall—1.78 million, which is down. I am wondering why they are staying the same. Are we not projecting an increase in users of our public assets?

THE CHAIR : Are the figures the same for both sets of documents—for the revised figures as well as the old ones?

Mr Wood: My advice is we believe they are.

THE CHAIR: So, Ms Dundas, you are saying that the number of public library users was lower last year than was targeted.

MS DUNDAS: And the target remains the same for this year. I am also asking about public library loans, which has met the estimated outcome, met the target for last year, and remains the same for this year.

MRS DUNNE: Whereas Internet access is targeted to be up.

MS DUNDAS: Are we expecting no new people to use the library?

Mr Thwaite: I am advised that customers increased by 102,000 in 2001-02 to 1,776,000 and the target was 1.8. Loans increased by 104,000 to a total of 2.506 million, and the target was 2.55 million.

MS DUNDAS: Can you table for our information those revised outcomes, because in the budget papers we only have estimated outcomes. If they are the final outcomes, can you please table them?

Mr Thwaite: I am happy to.

MS DUNDAS: With those figures in mind, why in view of the number of loans is the target still only 2.55 and the number of customers is 1.8? Are we not expecting an increase of people to use our libraries, and if not what are we doing about that?

Mr Thwaite: In the past loans have fluctuated between 2.4 and 2.5 million, and so it is in effect the same. The numbers have increased this year compared to 2001 but are below previous targets. That is despite an increase in population.

Gungahlin Library was seen as a way of increasing numbers but more people have actually used that more for convenience sake. We have also found that people have been using the Internet more to actually access information. So they are doing their own research. They are getting information that is in fact available from our site instead of actually visiting the library. So numbers are actually not as high as we would like.

To address that we are doing more promotion. There are targeted programs, particularly for children. You would have seen in the recent school holidays that we had specific programs. We have advertised and we are doing a fairly extensive consultancy addressing the needs of older persons. We are doing a long-term strategy to address that. So that is all designed to increase our services and target particular groups.

MS DUNDAS: Is there any way of knowing how many people are getting information from the ACT government library website?

Mr Thwaite: Yes, we can do it by hit rates; we can measure that, yes.

MS DUNDAS: And so you have seen with those figures an increase?

Mr Thwaite: That is a general increase. Every year it goes up.

MS DUNDAS: Are you thinking of using that as part of your quantity measures? If we are seeing individuals through the door dropping but an increase in rates of actual information being accessed through the Internet, is there any way that that can be incorporated into the quantity measures? Has that been looked at?

Mr Thwaite: Yes, it is in there.

MS DUNDAS: There is Internet terminals hours of use.

MRS DUNNE: That is people who come into the library, though.

Mr Thwaite: I would need to actually give you a more specific answer on that because, while there are measures, your question was about the actual library website.

MS DUNDAS: So that we do have a best picture of how people are accessing information that the ACT Library system has, either through the Internet or through actually physically walking into the library.

Mr Thwaite: Yes or using the customer information centre.

MS DUNDAS: Yes. How do we get that picture is basically my question.

Mr Thwaite: I would need to get you a specific answer on the use of our website. I don't have that in front of me. But certainly there is a measure that we can provide to you.

MRS DUNNE: I will just press the performance measure button again. Given the exposition given this morning by Mr Egging, I can understand why we don't have linear measures of heritage collection, and I'm cool with that. But I would have thought the number of public library reference inquiries was one of the large number of indicators of how much work was done in a library. Why has that one been taken out, John?

Mr Thwaite: Because the libraries have built in the ability to self reference. In part my answer to Ms Dundas' question covered a little bit of that—that people are actually taking their own action through checking the website, checking the catalogue in the library et cetera and not—

MRS DUNNE: And there are not as many references to the reference librarian.

Mr Thwaite: That's right.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. I still have reservations about taking it out. It is actually indicative of a change in the way we use libraries and it would be useful to know that—so that you know how to use it as a management tool; if you know that people are approaching libraries differently you provide them with different services.

Mr Eggins: Another of the reasons for removing that particular measure was the difficulty we had in satisfying the Auditor-General about the accuracy of our measurement of it. The traditional way was to have the librarian note a tally sheet each time an inquiry was made. The Auditor-General finds that as an unacceptable way of measurement because he believes it is open to abuse or fudging of figures.

MRS DUNNE: That is a valid point. Thank you for that.

THE CHAIR: If there are no other questions on output 1.5, that is the end of output class 1. We will move to output class 2.1, Road Transport Regulations and Services. Could I start with some questions—I think this is the right place to ask them—about the target for fees and fines in Urban Services this year. I see parking and traffic fines are expected to total \$19.3 million. It is about 10 per cent of the total fees and fines target across the whole of the government. What increases are we expecting this year from fees and fines from speed camera and red light speed cameras?

Dr Adrian: There are essentially three components to traffic fines. There are the traffic infringement notices largely through AFP, a small amount through court receipts and then also traffic fines through fixed and mobile cameras. If you look at the estimated outcome—

THE CHAIR: Where are you reading from, Dr Adrian?

Dr Adrian: I think we did it earlier this morning. It is under territorial revenue.

THE CHAIR: Budget paper 4 or 3?

Dr Adrian: It is budget paper 3, I think.

MS DUNDAS: I think budget paper 3, page 95.

Dr Adrian: Sorry, it is in BP 3. Just as a point in clarification if I could, I think the 19.3 million that you mentioned as being transport output is the cost of all of the programs associated with transport. You need to look at the expenditure on behalf of the territory financial statements which are on new page 15, and that gives you the total take for taxes, fees and fines.

MS DUNDAS: It is getting confusing, isn't it?

MRS DUNNE: New page 15?

Dr Adrian: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So taxes, fees and fines in Urban Services are \$101 million?

Dr Adrian: That is correct.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I took it from other figures that the traffic and parking fines component of the \$101 million was about \$19 million. Would that be right?

Mr MacDonald: The estimated outcome this year for traffic fines is \$10.7 million. And for parking fines the estimated outcome is \$6.8 million.

MS DUNDAS: Page 95 of Budget Paper No 3 has those figures in it.

MRS DUNNE: But that doesn't marry with what is in BP2, on page 9. I say that just to be really confusing.

Mr Phillips: I think they do. There are a few other additions like forwarding post fines that come through and are not collected by Urban Services. The fines we collect go through to central Treasury and there are other fines that come through from justice.

THE CHAIR: According to table 5.2.7, court fines are only \$250,000 and other fines are \$377,000.

MS DUNDAS: I think the difference is that budget paper 2 talks about what is happening in 2002-03 and we were just getting figures for what happened in 2001-02. There was just a bit of confusion about years.

MRS DUNNE: Thank you. I apologise for that.

THE CHAIR: So total fines revenue was \$19.9 million, according to the table in budget paper 3.

MS DUNDAS: For 2002-03.

THE CHAIR: That is right. What component are you expecting of that, if any, from speed cameras and red light cameras?

Mr Eggins : For the speed and red light cameras the total is 7.8 million.

THE CHAIR: That is a sub-component of traffic infringement fines, I assume.

Mr Eggins : Of traffic fines, yes.

MS DUNDAS: Out of 12.1.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Eggins : And it compares with 6.3.

MRS DUNNE: So that is up \$1.5 million.

THE CHAIR: What is the reason for that increase?

Mr Wood: I guess it is the increased number of speed cameras around—the mobile speed cameras.

Dr Adrian: It is the full year effect of the additional fixed cameras that were introduced last year.

MRS DUNNE: So is that just the effect of fixed cameras?

Dr Adrian: That is what the increase would be, but the total includes the nine fixed cameras and the four mobile vans as well.

Mr Thompson: In relation to the fixed cameras, if you recall, we introduced the first ones in Australia, which were speed and red light. We worked on the initial assumption that the offences would be broadly 50/50 between red light breaches and speed breaches. Well, we were wrong. Speed breaches are a lot more frequent, and inadvertently we are raising more revenue. We didn't set out down that path but I think the ratio—Brian MacDonald would have the ratio—is about 10 to 1.

Mr MacDonald: Sorry, I am not sure on that.

Mr Thompson: There is a higher ratio of speed infringements, and I think that for the last couple of years we have tended to underestimate that item. We hope now that we have actually picked up behaviour on the road and we hope that we have now got a more accurate revenue figure.

Mr Wood: And that was a concern for me because I don't think enough people in the community knew that those red light cameras were also speed cameras. So I asked the *Canberra Times* to run a story I gave them, to let people know that there are both. We also installed some additional signage to point out that these are red light and speed cameras.

MRS DUNNE: Is there any planning for any more fixed or mobile cameras?

Mr Wood: No, not by me.

MS DUNDAS: Are you expecting by 2003-04 there will be a decrease in revenue from fines because everybody will get the message and slow down?

Dr Adrian: That is what is built into this.

Mr Wood: We hope so, yes.

THE CHAIR: What is the philosophy of balance between these devices as speed reduction exercises and revenue raising ventures?

Mr Wood: Well, I don't know. I will give you your words back. I don't remember what your words were particularly, but I think the former government's rhetoric was principally that especially the fixed ones are installed on intersections where there are too many accidents, and it is designed to reduce those accidents by discouraging people from running the red lights and, indeed, to drive through at the nominated speed.

Dr Adrian: It might be worth Mr MacDonald just going through some of the survey work that we have been doing in monitoring the impact that it has had on both speeding and red light offences.

Mr MacDonald: I might just start by saying that the mobile vans are on actually 52 of the roads in the ACT. Those roads were chosen on the basis of their speed and crash records, and that road system has been developed by a committee involving NRMA and officers within the department and within the AFP looking at what are the best sites to address the road safety issues. So it is not about revenue raising; it is about how to try to minimise crash rates and reduce speed on the road network. That network will be reviewed on an ongoing basis to make sure we have got all the, I suppose, highest risk roads, if I can put it that way. Similarly, with the nine fixed red light speed cameras, they were also done on the basis of crash records at intersections. So we have found the nine highest incident intersections and put the cameras in those locations.

We have had some reports to date on the results of both the mobile and the fixed camera sites. We have found speed reductions on both the road network and at intersections, and we have had some reduction in crash rates, although it is very early to tell with the crash records because of the short time, relatively speaking, that those cameras have been in place. So we are looking at future reports to help us understand better about the success or otherwise of those cameras.

MRS DUNNE: Was the one on the corner of Southern Cross Drive and Coulter Drive the first lot that was put in?

Mr MacDonald: That wasn't one of the first three.

MRS DUNNE: It wasn't the first one?

Mr MacDonald: No, it was in the second round. We had three waves of three, if you like.

MRS DUNNE: The first round was the Barry Drive/Northbourne?

Mr MacDonald: Northbourne/ Barry Drive—that's right.

MRS DUNNE: For the ones in the first round, can you tell yet Mr MacDonald whether there has been any substantial crash reduction? What sort of base figure are we looking at? How many crashes a month are we seeing, say, in the Northbourne/Barry Drive one?

Mr MacDonald: I am sorry, I don't have those figures with me. We could make those available to you and indicate what the crash records were beforehand.

MRS DUNNE: Okay.

Mr MacDonald: But, again, the period of time we are talking about here is quite small in terms of the volatility of crashes around Canberra.

MRS DUNNE: But that one has been there 18 months, two years.

Mr MacDonald: It is only about 18 months.

MR HARGREAVES: Can I ask a question about the impact of the police using their radar guns. Is the revenue that is collected from that included in the same collection?

Mr MacDonald: It is.

MR HARGREAVES: Have you got a feel for how effective that scheme is versus the speed camera vans?

Mr MacDonald: Not really. I am not aware of any sort of research into the police surveillance. We certainly did some measurements before those vans were put on those streets and before the fixed red light speed cameras, so we have some base data to compare it to. I am not sure what the AFP have in relation to their own intelligence for the monitoring of speed around Canberra.

MR HARGREAVES: Are you aware of whether there has been a reduction or an increase in the number of occasions the police are out there as a result of the introduction of the speed cameras?

Mr MacDonald: The anecdotal evidence from the police is that people are slowing down, particularly on the roads which have been posted as being speed camera sites.

THE CHAIR: That wasn't the question he asked. If I might provide an answer, my impression is that there is much less police activity now that the cameras are in place. Would I be wrong in saying that?

Dr Adrian: I guess the measure for us that we monitor is the actual traffic fines coming in from the AFP, and they have decreased. But I guess you would have to direct to them the question in terms of the frequency with which they police those areas. But the level of fines from that source has decreased.

MR HARGREAVES: Has that level of fines increased or decreased?

Dr Adrian: Decreased.

Mr Thompson: But you have got to recognise that that could be for one of two reasons. It could be because they have got less presence on the road or it could be because driver behaviour has now modified itself. So they might be spending the same number of hours but just picking up less offenders.

MRS DUNNE: We probably need to ask the AFP that question. Minister, just on the question of the mobile vans: your colleague, Mr Hargreaves, said back in October last year just after the election that the Labor government was acknowledging that they were a revenue source and that the Labor government would be doing all that it could to make these revenue raisers more visible—that you would be doing away with the maroon and the green vans; and that all vans would be white and that they would be better signed. Has that happened?

Mr Wood: Well, certainly I indicated the signage has improved at various points with respect to the static camera. With the mobile cameras, I haven't at this stage taken any action. I couldn't tell you what the colours are at the moment.

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Mr MacDonald: We actually have some more vans on order to replace the existing vans. All those vans are white and we have signage to go on top of the roof. You can see the van from quite some distance away, so there is no excuse to get caught.

Mr Thompson: And these new vans are somewhat bulkier, so they will be a bit more visible. They are a Mercedes van rather than a Tarago.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you very much for that.

Mr Wood: People do listen, Mr Hargreaves.

MRS DUNNE: White Mercs with signs on roofs.

THE CHAIR: So you have got no plans to purchase any more cameras, but you are buying more vans?

Mr MacDonald: Replacing existing vans, yes.

Mr Wood: Replacing vans.

MRS DUNNE: So they have got to the end of their lease, have they?

Mr MacDonald: That's right.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions about road services?

MS DUNDAS: I have a question—I am not sure if this is the right place to ask it or even if it is a question at all.

MRS DUNNE: I am sure it is a question if you have got a question mark at the end.

MS DUNDAS: Is the ACT provider of compulsory third party vehicle insurance selected by tender?

Mr Wood: No.

Mr MacDonald: We wish it was.

Mr Wood: We wish it was, yes. It is selected by the process of who will put their hand up.

MS DUNDAS: And NRMA is the only one?

Mr Wood: It is the only one. We would wish it was otherwise. I am sure all governments would wish it was otherwise, but it is not the case.

MS DUNDAS: Have you explored being able to get other insurance providers?

Mr Wood: Yes, indeed. There have been words said about that from our side in the past and we have been trying to find more competition, trying to do something there. Mr MacDonald can fill you in on the details.

Mr MacDonald: There has been a number of reviews over the years to try and look at how we might increase competition and in some ways improve the premium rate. For your information, the reviews were conducted in 1972, 1977, 1984, 1987 and 1994. We were looking at doing a further review. We had spoken to a range of stakeholders about what they felt of the current scheme and, as you mentioned, the lack of competition was one of the issues that was raised in those discussions.

We looked at how we might introduce that competition and one of the issues is whether the ACT was prepared to model its scheme on New South Wales. Now, the New South Wales scheme, as you are probably aware, has many capped benefits. It is a scheme that targets young people and older people particularly in higher premiums. The view is that the ACT scheme is a fair one and it is a stable scheme, which can't be said for New South Wales who have had some problems with their schemes in recent years. For that reason, we have decided not to do yet a further review at this point. We have had that consultation process and we think on balance people are generally satisfied with the ACT scheme.

MS DUNDAS: I have two follow up questions then. Is it part of the agreement you have with NRMA that Urban Services sends out the renewal forms rather than NRMA? Is that a cost that you wear or is it part of the agreement?

Mr MacDonald: It is probably for customers' convenience more than anything that we process it through motor vehicle registry. You may recall that in the past we did have a choice of CTP provider and at that time the green slips were available. You can choose at the motor vehicle registry anyway, so we were providing that service of both the schemes at that time.

MS DUNDAS: But because Urban Services sends out the renewal notices, that would be a reduced cost to NRMA; they wouldn't have to do it. Can that then be passed on to the consumer who has to buy third party insurance?

Mr MacDonald: Can I put it to you this way: every year we do a review of the NRMA's proposed premiums. We have an independent actuary looking at all those costs and factors and those arrangements you are referring to are sort of taken into account in determining what a fair and reasonable CTP premium might be. So it is subject to independent scrutiny. We don't just let them charge whatever they want to charge. We have to make them justify that fee increase, if there is going to be one.

MR HARGREAVES: So you are suggesting that it is possible that if people had to get their green slip from the NRMA's office they would suggest that was admin charge and that would be one of the reasons they would ask for an increase in their premium?

Dr Adrian: Correct.

MS DUNDAS: Has there been, again, discussion with NRMA or the independent auditor about pricing in regards to getting concessional rates for pensioners?

Mr MacDonald: No, there hasn't.

MS DUNDAS: Is that a discussion we would be looking at having?

Mr MacDonald: We do have concessions already on our motor vehicle registration charges. As you are aware, if you are a pensioner you get a 100 per cent concession, and for seniors a 10 per cent concession. So the government is already doing its bit. In terms of the private provider, I am not sure whether it is appropriate that they get into such a scheme really. We could explore that one but it hasn't been explored to date.

MS DUNDAS: Okay.

MR HARGREAVES: I would like to explore the concessional matter particularly—the one for seniors; that is people over 55. The 100 per cent one is people who are fully retired but the 10 per cent reduction is for seniors, is it?

Mr MacDonald: People who have got a seniors card.

MR HARGREAVES: What happens if you have got one partner in the family that has got a seniors card and the other partner doesn't and they jointly own the vehicle?

MRS DUNNE: Well, you'd be a mug, wouldn't you?

MR HARGREAVES: Well you can't transfer it out without an administrative charge, so you would negate that. So you wouldn't be a mug.

MS DUNDAS: Unless you get divorced.

MR HARGREAVES: I'd like to know because it is coming up fast.

MRS DUNNE: I see: nothing like a bit of self-interest. Can I ask you a question about learner driver competency tests. There is no target in the budget or in the ownership agreement. What is the target or aren't we going to do learner driver competency tests?

Mr MacDonald: We certainly do them. It's a question of whether we try to measure the number of tests that we are doing. What I think is more important is we look at the audit of those tests so we have got some reassurance about the veracity and the reliability of those testing arrangements.

MRS DUNNE: So where is the information on that?

Mr MacDonald: I think you're looking at Budget Paper No 4.

MRS DUNNE: In 2.1 of BP 4.

Mr MacDonald: 2.1, yes. So the learner driver competency test is a discontinued measure, and we had discussion earlier today about the reason for that.

MRS DUNNE: Yes. I don't agree but we can keep having a discussion.

Mr MacDonald: Yes. I would say to you that the number is probably the same as it was last year.

Dr Adrian: The audit is the fourth dot point.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry?

Dr Adrian: The quantity measure is shown under output 2.1. The fourth dot point is the audit of driver licence testing providers.

MRS DUNNE: That is the private providers, not the people who are employed by DUS? Is that right?

Mr MacDonald: This is the audit of the people who are private sector providers essentially.

MRS DUNNE: But there is no performance measure of any sort for the DUS-provided testing?

Mr MacDonald: Our service level agreements pick up the internal arrangements, I guess, and there is a review of our own staff.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, where is that? It's not there?

Mr MacDonald: No.

MRS DUNNE: Is it in the ownership agreement, and what are the measures?

Mr MacDonald: No. We have a service level agreement with road user services for a range of the sorts of services we are looking at here. We have basically purchased 500 audits of the learner driver instructors, if you like, and so some of that 500 could go towards our own government inspectors. Is that what you are referring to; is that your question?

MRS DUNNE: If that is the case, that some proportion of those 500 audits would be for the people out of road user services, I am satisfied with that. But I am still not entirely convinced, Mr Egging, of the merit of taking out those sorts of measures.

Mr Egging: In the case of learner driver competency tests, I think the Auditor-General's view is that that is a measure of activity, not a measure of the objective of the program.

MRS DUNNE: So what would be a better measure?

Mr Egging: The program objective is to have safe drivers. Just counting the number of tests you conduct doesn't give you a measure of how safe the drivers are.

MRS DUNNE: But perhaps a better measure might be the number of people who pass first time.

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Mr Eggins : Indeed, yes.

MRS DUNNE: And the number of repeats. Are you looking at those sorts of measures?

Mr Eggins : They will be, yes, considered in the future.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. That would be good.

THE CHAIR : Are there any further questions on road transport regulation services?

MS DUNDAS: I have one question on the evaluation of the 50-kilometre an hour speed limit trial. I know the report isn't due until early next year, but has there been any consideration or costings done on actually painting the speed limit on the road as opposed to signs?

Mr Wood: That has been put to me before. We haven't taken up the option but it remains under consideration. It is something you see in other places and I think there are some measures that make it a little more difficult to get lots of them, but it is something worth thinking about. I haven't removed it from the agenda. But we haven't proceeded with that yet at this time.

MS DUNDAS: Is it something that will be considered in terms of next year's budget when we have the outcome of the trial?

Mr Wood: I don't think it is necessarily tied into the trial or the outcome of the trial. It is something that could be done at any time.

MS DUNDAS: And so you are just considering it, but it won't happen this financial year?

Mr Wood: We had considered it and we didn't move on it. But it has got some merits so it is still there and in our mind. It is not a very definitive statement, I know, but that is about it.

THE CHAIR : I don't know if the department or you, minister, have seen the submission from Weston Creek Community Council for the 2002-03 budget.

Mr Wood: I haven't.

THE CHAIR : There is no flash of recognition. It was part of the government's budget consultation exercise and I hope somebody in your department has looked at it.

Mr Wood: It is there somewhere.

THE CHAIR : They have made a submission that the on-ramp to Tuggeranong Parkway coming off Cotter Road needs to be upgraded to reflect the failure to meet the Australian design standard as it presently stands.

Mr Wood: I was aware of that issue, yes.

THE CHAIR: Is that going to happen?

Mr Wood: It has been noted, I guess.

Mr Davidson: I can't actually say it is going to happen. I think the issue that is being referred to is that the distance from the end of the ramp to the start of the bridge on the Tuggy Parkway is too short to fit in a merging lane which meets all of the current criteria that are set out in that standard. So in order to extend it we have got to widen the bridge, which is a major undertaking.

THE CHAIR: But the lane doesn't go as far as the bridge. It stops 100 metres short of the bridge anyway, doesn't it?

Mr Davidson: I am not sure about the details.

Mr Wood: It does, yes.

Mr Davidson: I am not sure whether or not they have built an "improve it as much as we can" sort of solution into a future works program.

Mr Wood: But it is a source of accidents, which are a continuing worry.

THE CHAIR: Just while we are on the Weston Creek council's submission, they have made a number of suggestions or recommendations in respect of Urban Services. I might just run through them and you can indicate whether you understand whether they are going to be taken up or not. They requested that bicycle paths be examined and funds made available for the Mulley Street bicycle path reconfiguration in Holder. Is that going to happen?

Mr Wood: We will get back to you on that. I am not sure it is.

THE CHAIR: You might get back to me on these other things as well. They requested the on-road bicycle path on Streeton Drive be commenced as soon as possible. I gather that is somewhere in the pipeline.

Mr Wood: Yes.

THE CHAIR: They requested that the footpath between Chapman Primary School gate and Streeton Drive be rebuilt; that the Waramanga and Fisher shops receive further improvements to paving to remove trip points, and to upgrade access ramps for wheelchair, stroller access, so as to increase the amenity of the shops and reduce the government's liability.

I have already raised with Mr Quinlan the doubling of the size of the Arawang netball car park—the car park in Stirling for Arawang netball. I also refer to the suggestion that there should be the installation of bollards to prevent vehicle access; the construction of a concrete footpath and grass and tree planting at the oval on Streeton Drive in Stirling; and, finally, that Actew be provided with additional funding so that when servicing and replacing lighting in Weston Creek they do so with yellow sodium lights, not white lights. You might like to get back to us with the department's plan of action on those.

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Mr Davidson: There are a number of items there for which we have categories of minor works, but I am not in a position to say which of them have been included and which have not.

THE CHAIR: You can't now or you—

Mr Davidson: No, I can't.

THE CHAIR: But if you take that on notice, will you able to let us know whether they can be done?

Mr Davidson: Yes.

THE CHAIR: All right, thank you. Are there any further questions on road transport regulation services?

MS DUNDAS: I have got a question that is part of 2.1 and 2.2.

THE CHAIR: All right. We will give it a go—suck it and see.

MS DUNDAS: It is a nice bridging question. My question relates to deregulation of the taxi industry. Has the government made a decision on the outcome of the ICRC report?

Mr Wood: No, not yet.

MS DUNDAS: When will the government make a decision?

Mr Wood: Mr MacDonald and I and others are working away on this. We are aware of the intense interest in the taxi industry and elsewhere about it, but it is no easy task I think, as others before us have found. When? We would wish to be in a position to advise the community reasonably soon. Obviously cabinet will have to be informed.

MS DUNDAS: The last time I heard “reasonably soon” from a minister, he announced it the next day.

MRS DUNNE: I was thinking that.

Mr Wood: This is not being announced tomorrow.

MRS DUNNE: Good.

Mr Wood: I would say a couple of months. It might be a little sooner than a couple of months or it could be some time.

MS DUNDAS: I don't want an outcome from cabinet to be pre-empted, but if deregulation is followed is there any money in the budget for compensation for taxi drivers and the hire car industry?

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Mr Wood: That is a question of the total consideration of it, and it is one of the considerations, perhaps the major consideration, we have. So it will all be attached to the same cabinet decisions.

MS DUNDAS: Do you have any estimation on how much compensation will cost?

Mr Wood: Yes. I suppose the ballpark figure would be about \$250,000 times 210 cabs or something.

Mr MacDonald: As a maximum you are probably talking \$60 million—taxi and hire cars.

Mr Wood: Yes, that is the ball park figure.

MS DUNDAS: And that is \$60 million that, if needed, could be pulled out of where?

Mr Wood: We are not going down this path. That's the dilemma, that's the problem, that is presented to the government.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have a question about the Charnwood skate park, and I know that it is not to do with this program.

MRS DUNNE: I suppose it goes back to Canberra urban parks.

Mr Wood: We can answer it right now, if you like.

THE CHAIR: All right. I will ask it anyway. Belconnen has presently one skateboard park, as you know, close to Lake Ginninderra College. The government has decided not to proceed with the other skateboard park that was proposed at Charnwood. Is that because other proposals are being designed to accommodate the needs of adolescents and young people in that part of Belconnen, or is it simply that it has slipped between the cracks?

Mr Wood: It hasn't slipped between the cracks. A commitment was there earlier which we examined and we decided that in the tight capital works program it just didn't make the grade.

THE CHAIR: All right. Are there any programs or projects in your portfolio to address the recreation or sporting needs of young people in that part of Belconnen?

Mr Wood: I don't think the list we read before had anything in particular there. I can't, off the top of my head, come up with an answer that will give you a couple of capital works items.

Mr Davidson: There is the range of sporting ground improvements—

Mr Wood: They are ones that you read before.

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THE CHAIR: And which ones of those are in north Belconnen?

Mr Davidson: I couldn't give you that.

Mr Wood: We will find them again. They have been read out at any rate; they are on the record somewhere.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I will have a look for those.

Mr Wood: Cook, Aranda.

THE CHAIR: Southern Belconnen, yes.

Mr Wood: There is a new canteen and a store at Cook, and a refurbishment of the pavilion at Aranda there. They are not new facilities, so much as improving what is there.

MRS DUNNE: There is nothing new for young people in west Belconnen?

Mr Wood: Not in the way of capital works programs.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Chairman, while we are on 2.1, we touched this morning on the review of looking at the possibility of reopening the testing station. There was also foreshadowed to be a review of the roadside testing services.

Mr Wood: Yes, that was all wrapped up in that answer.

MRS DUNNE: There is going to be the one big review of vehicle testing?

Mr Wood: Yes. Go back to that answer earlier today and it is all part of that.

MRS DUNNE: And I assume that it is not just the vehicle testing station and the vehicles older than five years but also the random searches, random inspections, on the side of the road and in carparks?

Mr Wood: Yes, it is vehicle testing.

MRS DUNNE: And car park testing as well. Okay.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions on output 2.1? If not, we will proceed then to output 3.

MS DUNDAS: What about output 2.2?

THE CHAIR: That is to be dealt with tomorrow. Sorry, it will keep. It will be even better tomorrow as a result of waiting. Are there any questions on environmental management and regulation?

MRS DUNNE: Minister, you announced the grants program last week?

Mr Wood: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: How much money is in the grants program this year, and does it represent an increase over time or is it essentially the same?

Mr Wood: In the first instance, it represents a change in that various bodies have been provided with three-year funding.

MRS DUNNE: That is the introduction of triennial funding in the environment grant?

Mr Wood: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: And who receives those?

Mr Wood: RSPCA, Conservation Council and the Environment Centre. There remains a package of about \$150,000 or thereabouts for the variety of grants that we announced last week.

MRS DUNNE: What was that figure again?

Mr Wood: About \$144,000.

MR HARGREAVES: We seemed to have jumped into 3.2.

THE CHAIR: That is the next program.

MS DUNDAS: 3.1.

MR HARGREAVES: No.

MS DUNDAS: 3.1.

MR HARGREAVES: 3.2 refers to the environment grants program. Can I now ask about Namadgi National Park?

MRS DUNNE: No, but you can ask that in 3.2.

MR HARGREAVES: That is right. You asked a question about the environmental grants program under 3.2, so I will do it.

Mr Wood: I will follow the directions of your chair about whom I should respond to in the first instance.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Are there any questions strictly under 3.1?

MS DUNDAS: I have a question on tree protection. You have got a time line under 3.1, so I will stretch it. Have you budgeted for a review of the interim tree protection scheme, considering that we have had a lot of public concern about how the scheme is working and where it is failing?

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Mr Wood: We are doing a review. In fact, I don't think it is too far from being in the public domain. It will be out there shortly for discussion.

MS DUNDAS: How long is "shortly"?

Mr Wood: Pretty shortly.

MS DUNDAS: Tomorrow or—

Mr Wood: No more than a month. It has been a fairly complex task and I think the introduction of the scheme has raised a lot more issues than we considered at the time.

MS DUNDAS: I have more on 3.1.

THE CHAIR: Go ahead.

MS DUNDAS: I refer to the greenhouse strategy, which is also under 3.1. Has any money been allocated to implementing new initiatives arising from the review of the greenhouse strategy, which is, I think, due to be completed by the end of this calendar year?

Mr Wood: The review is still under way. So, arising out of that, I don't know. There have been a number of strategies you would have caught up with as we announced them.

Dr Cooper: Maxine Cooper, Executive Director of Environment ACT. No, there is no initial new funding coming out of the review. What we are doing is we are actually doing the review first. But, importantly, there are additional funds available for things like the solar hot water, the cavity wall insulation, which will actually add to the benefits in terms of our reduction in greenhouse emissions.

MRS DUNNE: So, Maxine, the cost of implementation of the greenhouse strategy on page 209 of BP4 is independent of the review and doesn't take into account any new initiatives?

Dr Cooper: What has happened there is we have not spent all the money that we had planned on spending and some of the program, as you would appreciate, goes a bit slower when you are dependent upon community uptake. Some of the programming that hasn't gone as fast as we would like was our travel blending; our commercial building energy performance contracts are going a bit slower; with the water tune-up program, we haven't had the uptake in the community that we had expected; and some lighting upgrades.

MRS DUNNE: So this figure of 1.03 million in the targets, which is only 708,000—

Dr Cooper: That accounts for a suite of—

MRS DUNNE: That is just ongoing, already planned for, implementation.

Dr Cooper: Correct.

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MRS DUNNE: Is the review money in that?

Dr Cooper: No, there is no new initiatives in the review.

MRS DUNNE: No, sorry, for the actual conducting of the review?

Dr Cooper: Yes, the review money will be taken out of that.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, that is there. And then new initiatives will have to come back separately?

Dr Cooper: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: What happened to the money that wasn't spent in the implementation of the greenhouse strategy?

Dr Cooper: It has been carried over and will be spent. So all the programs are committed to and they will be—

MS DUNDAS: I will do the sums in my head. There was a budgeted outcome of \$1.03 million for 2001 and we only spent \$700,000, and so the money has been rolled over, you are saying, to 2002-03 where we are still only looking at spending \$800,000. So is the government then only putting in \$500,000 this year and that extra \$300,000 from last financial year that wasn't spent is what is taking us up to \$800,000?

MRS DUNNE: Why isn't it 1.3 this year rather than 1.0? In short, is that the question?

MS DUNDAS: Yes. If the money is being rolled over—

Dr Cooper: That is right. The monies there will be spent next financial year and that is included in the figure of \$811,000.

MRS DUNNE: Last year's budget was 1.0. Why is it only 0.8 this year?

Mr Thompson: A number of those programs, like the water tune-up and so on, weren't a program per year; they were designated for a set time.

Dr Cooper: For a set time. We have got a few programs—for instance, the ones that come to mind are the wall insulation is \$1.12 million over three years—that are for a limited time.

MRS DUNNE: I see, okay.

Dr Cooper: Sorry, it is not annually, an annual program.

MS DUNDAS: So we were only ever going to spend this financial year, 2002-03, around \$500,000 on the implementation of the greenhouse strategy?

Dr Cooper: That is right, and what you may find is that out of the review of the strategy new initiatives may come forward, in which case they will inform or will be considered in the future rounds of budget bids, not the next financial year but possibly ones thereafter.

MRS DUNNE: Maxine, what did Environment ACT do about the uptake of the water tune-up program?

Dr Cooper: We engaged in further promotion, and we have also been actually looking at that program in terms of people's behaviours to see if we are targeting the right markets.

MRS DUNNE: And does it include going out into government housing and addressing issues of water efficiency?

Dr Cooper: No, the public housing one is funded separately. This one is based on the community.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, so where is the funding for the public housing? I can understand why it might be funded out of the housing maintenance budget.

Dr Cooper: It is in the housing budget.

MRS DUNNE: What sorts of linkages are there between Environment ACT going out and encouraging people to put on smart shower heads or those sorts of things and what is happening in the housing maintenance budget?

Dr Cooper: The staff, through the strategy, actually work on a suite of proposals and they integrate it across there in terms of their initiative, so that similar messages are getting out to both the communities.

Mr Thompson: Some time ago there was, if you like, an assessment of the overall budget spend of the ACT government on greenhouse initiatives, and that picked up all the money that passed through Environment ACT. The other big lump, and it was significantly bigger, was the monies that were passing through ACT Housing in terms of roof insulations, shower heads and the like.

MRS DUNNE: Have you done the shower head stuff through the ACT Housing stock?

Mr Thompson: I don't think it has gone all the way through. I think it has just been one of these replacement programs where they have been progressively looked at. For the shower heads I think it is on a replacement basis, whereas I think for the insulation they targeted older stock which they were going to hang on to, if you get my drift there. There is some stock they saw themselves disposing of, but other older housing which had no insulation they have consciously gone into. My memory is that that was some half a million dollars per year for two or three years, so it was quite a significant investment.

MS DUNDAS: I would like to follow up on greenhouse. I know that greenhouse gas emissions data is not updated every year—it only comes out every three years. Are you working on your own ACT government performance measures so that we can see in the budget papers how we are going in terms of our greenhouse gas emissions?

Dr Cooper: Yes, you have hit on one of the issues that are currently under the review that we are currently doing. You are spot on. Yes, that is something we wish to streamline so we can segregate out the two.

MS DUNDAS: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Gallagher, did you have a question?

MS GALLAGHER: Yes. I am interested in knowing whether Environment ACT is looking at anything to do with wood smoke?

Dr Cooper: Yes, we are.

MS DUNDAS: And is it anywhere in the budget or is it something—

Mr Wood: It is an issue that I acknowledge we should get to more, especially as I am a Tuggeranong resident. One of the issues we are looking at is whether we will make a budget bid for a scheme to replace older and less efficient wood-burning stoves and the like. That operates, I think, in New South Wales.

Dr Cooper: Correct, minister.

Mr Wood: We will look at that model. We will see if we can find some capital funds for that.

MS DUNDAS: So for next financial year?

Mr Wood: That would be a bid. You can see how successful I am, can't you? That would be a bid I would put in for the next grants program. It would be somewhere in there. The measure of how we are going in greenhouse will, I think, help in the case that I will mount.

I am also interested in finding perhaps more accurately the extent of the problem. It is interesting to note that the medical profession is now talking about this issue. I haven't heard that before from that profession. I have heard it certainly on many occasions from people, but now to have the AMA come out and say it is a problem really does put it on the agenda.

MS GALLAGHER: There was a program where on particular nights there was some message put out of "no burn". Does that continue?

Mr Wood: I have heard it. I am assuming it is continued.

Dr Cooper: Yes. It does. There was a notice put out on the 3rd, 4th, 5th of June and I think last Friday week another one was put out. So there have been about four. And that is certainly a program that we are still implementing.

Mr Wood: It remains of concern to me to see, as I did again this morning and every morning, a number of chimneys belching smoke in excessive amounts. So obviously there is a lot more to be done yet just on education. But I don't think education alone will be an answer.

MRS DUNNE: There are a couple of related issues here, Maxine. At one stage there were inspectors in the environment management area who had the capacity to go out and knock on people's doors and provide advice. Is that still extant?

Dr Cooper: Yes, my understanding is it is. We still have those inspectors and they still do go out and deal with issues in terms of the complaints and also trying to explain about burning the right fuel.

MRS DUNNE: In respect of burning of right fuel—and I don't expect you to be able to answer this off the top off your head but I will be impressed if you do—I notice that there is increasing advertising on TV of briquettes as a companion fuel. I was wondering whether Environment ACT had a view on the efficacy or otherwise of burning briquettes as companion fuel?

Dr Cooper: We will take that on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. Thanks.

Mr Wood: And I am still impressed.

THE CHAIR: Could I ask a question about the tree protection program. I realise that there is a review going on but what is the state of play with the number of trees that have gone through interim system as it now stands?

Mr Wood: About 3,000, isn't it?

Dr Cooper: Yes, 3,136 in the last 12 months. The scheme has actually been going for about 15 months and there are about 150 more. But we have actually, if you are interested, analysed 3,136. Of those 3,136 we have given approval to 87 per cent.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, to be protected or to be chopped down?

Dr Cooper: No, to be removed—for removal.

THE CHAIR: Is this whole trees or including parts of trees?

Dr Cooper: No, whole trees. So that is high. That indicates to us some areas where we can sharpen up the final legislation. It is interesting that those approvals—tree removals applied by the suburbs—vary enormously. In the Belconnen area you have got around about 700, Gungahlin 50, inner-north around 400, inner-south around 400, Tuggeranong around about 350, Weston 300 and Woden Valley 350. It indicates to us that there are specific pressures in different areas, and in responding to any changes in the new legislation we need to take those into account.

Although in that inner area of the south and the north a lot of approvals have been given to remove trees, it is not necessarily because of development. Development pressures only account for about 7 per cent of the removals. A lot of the trees are diseased or termite-infested—around 20 per cent; trees that pose an unacceptable risk to public safety and might have a big crack in them and are about to go, 14 per cent; and the trees that are showing to cause, or threatening to cause, substantial damage to a building—in other words, the trees actually have often become obese; they are old and big and obese—about 30 per cent.

So you can see the dynamics that are happening in those inner areas. A lot of those trees are actually what we would consider forest trees—trees that were originally planted because that felt right, the right thing to do. But as a forest tree, they are quite out of context in those inner areas. So we are looking at how to sharpen up the final legislation to hone in and both retain the bush capital but also allow for some of those trees that we give approval for to come into some more automatic process to relieve the frustration in the community. And quite a few of those are potentially—

Mr Wood: It has raised very interesting questions. What is your current figure per cost of tree removed for the protection?

Dr Cooper: Per cost of tree: it costs us around about \$176 per application process in staff time; \$115 per tree that that we actually assess; and it is costing for the trees that we protect around about \$2,000 per tree.

Mr Thompson: These are big figures.

Mr Wood: When you put that in the context of 87 per cent of applications being approved to remove the trees, it makes us think about how we can refine the system. We want to protect trees but there is a lot of work to be done to do better.

MRS DUNNE: Maxine, is there a breakdown of types of trees—exotics, natives?

Dr Cooper: I don't have that with me but I could certainly try and get it. One of the things is that a lot of the natives are still very, very large for the inner areas. But we can get you that figure. Would you like it?

MRS DUNNE: That would be good, thanks.

THE CHAIR: I am sure there must have been prosecutions launched against people who removed their trees outside the terms of the legislation?

Dr Cooper: We actually did an audit around about six months ago, and one of the terrific things about the Canberra population is there was only one tree that seemed to have been removed that shouldn't have when we refused it. So the compliance rate is very high, and we are looking into that issue at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Was that a case of someone who had applied to have a tree taken out, was refused, and then knocked it down anyway?

Dr Cooper: That is right.

THE CHAIR: There must be other cases, surely, of people removing trees without having prior approval to do so.

Dr Cooper: We haven't got records of that because it is a very hard thing to track, but we have some people informing us that that does occur. But it doesn't appear to be that high, or otherwise our phone would run a lot hotter I think from neighbours complaining.

Mr Wood: We get lots of comment from neighbours if they know a tree is about to go, or on the other hand if a tree ought to go.

THE CHAIR: The lesson there is don't tell your neighbours you are going to chop a tree down. I take it, though, that there would be cases where this was happening. If a tree was removed illegally then you people would be advised of that fact?

Dr Cooper: We are contacted. It is a very difficult issue to then go and prosecute. You have got to have some evidence. Sometimes it is hard to find that evidence. So we go and talk to the neighbours and we do go and talk to the people who allegedly have removed the tree, but there are very few cases.

Mr Wood: You might indicate the cases that have been appealed.

Dr Cooper: I think we have only had about half a dozen and in all but one of those the verdict has gone our way in terms of the decision that we made; it was supported at the AAT.

MRS DUNNE: In respect of process, I presume that a licensed, a registered or a recognised tree feller would need some sort of evidence that he is allowed to fell a tree, that it meets the parameters—XYZ tree contractor is not going to fell it if there isn't a piece of paper there. Is that one of the principal ways of policing it?

Dr Cooper: And we generally have a strong relationship and we know who the various tree doctors are, yes.

MRS DUNNE: You don't find many people who sort of say, "Look, I really think that tree should go, and go and cut down a 30 foot tree without an expert doing it?"

Dr Cooper: No, most people are actually very civic minded. We have even had cases where the staff have gone out and had a look and said, "This situation is an emergency. We recommend that you get a tree lopper in now and take it out, and then notify us that it was a dangerous tree and had to be treated as an emergency situation." So they are much more supportive and compliant than the reverse.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, good.

Mr Wood: I think that is a fair point to remember, too—that Canberrans like their trees.

THE CHAIR: Indeed. Are there any further questions on 3.1?

MS DUNDAS: Yes, I have got one on water policy. I understand that water policy management is actually spread across a number of different areas. I was wondering—and you can take this on notice—if you can tell me how much money will be spent this year on water policy development and sustainable water management, and how it is broken down between Environment ACT, PALM and other agencies? Would it be possible to give me a comparison with last year. That question can be taken on notice for the *Hansard*.

I have another overview question. You put out a number of press releases over the month of June that resulted in about \$1.5 million being allocated over three years to increasing on-ground parks management, a reliable scientifically-based natural resource information management system, strategic review conservation policies and to support community partnerships. Over three years how is that \$1.5 million going to be spent, and how much will be spent on each of the four items that I have just mentioned?

Mr Wood: Dr Cooper, I will let you do the breakdown. I haven't got the figures in front of me. You would have a bit more detail.

Dr Cooper: The breakdown—and I will give you the macro figures first—is: for the year 2001-02, \$250,000; for 2002-03, \$500,000; for 2003-04, \$500,000; for 2004-05, \$250,000. There were four elements: extra resources for the ACT Parks and Conservation Service, an integrated nature conservation plan, implementation of strategic species and communities management, and establishment of an Environment ACT community sport and education program. Although they are in four components, some of the areas, as we would wish, absolutely integrate and overlap, so it is not quite siloed allocation of funding.

But we have been able to do something in the first instance. For instance, last financial year we had 135K going into Parks and Cons for more presence in the field. We have actually been able to generate 183 hours per week of additional ranger time. The way to do that is not to employ more rangers. That may seem ironic, but what we have actually done is relieved rangers of office duties and menial field tasks so that they can actually focus on the core ranger activities.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, Maxine: what was the number of hours and over what period?

Dr Cooper: 183 hours per week has been freed up. To do that we have employed nine staff on some contract basis to do, if you like, office work and another four to do some field work that the rangers—

Mr Thompson: Roughly 4½ to five effective extra field staff.

MRS DUNNE: So this is the eight extra rangers that were in the budget?

Dr Cooper: Yes. The objective is to get the rangers out there in the field doing ranger activities rather than sitting doing computer-based reporting. So that has been our approach on that. Next year we are spending a figure of \$194,000 on that particular similar program, keeping it going.

MRS DUNNE: And so that will still be 183 hours per week?

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Dr Cooper: No, I would hope for 194. I haven't calculated the hours. We would get a bit more than that—we shouldn't get any less. And also, too, it is not per week necessarily—that is an average. We are also putting on more staff in terms of seasonal needs.

In terms of the integrated nature conservation plan, we have spent 25K last financial year, and that goes in terms of the strategic species communities management planning that we are doing. The next year we are looking at spending 94,000 and on that we employ an officer full-time to actually bring all the different levels of data together so that we can actually develop that integrated nature conservation plan.

As well as that, and importantly, 42K will be spent on integrated species management, particularly the review of things like the action plans, and action plan 10 which has been topical because of the woodlands. Also, importantly—and this is a message that we have heard from the government—we want higher profile for education extension work, and we would be putting 60K into that area.

In our area that we refer to as business development and marketing, last financial year we put 14.5K into things like a World Environment Day display, and it is a display that can be re-used over and over again for anyone who saw that. We have also been recruiting for the education officer, which we think is an important role for the next coming financial year. And in the next financial year we are spending 117K focusing purely on conservation education work.

MRS DUNNE: So that's in 3-4?

Dr Cooper: Coming into 2-3—no, the next one; the one we are currently in. Sorry to confuse you.

MS DUNDAS: Ending 2003.

MRS DUNNE: 2003. How much was that, Maxine?

Dr Cooper: 117. Coming up soon you will see things like: kangaroo awareness campaign, living near the bush, living with magpies. There will be a whole lot of those kinds of programs that we haven't been able to have and that we have now got up and running.

MRS DUNNE: Love your road kill programs.

Dr Cooper: With a foot on the brake.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions on output 3.1?

MRS DUNNE: Just before we finish, that obviates my question about where are the eight extra rangers. There aren't eight extra rangers, there is more ranger time.

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Dr Cooper: There is more ranger time. Rangers are very expensive items. You can't just employ a ranger. You have got to have the vehicle and all the infrastructure to go with that person. So it is three times what it would normally cost you to employ a staff person, because of the field support base that needs to go with them.

Mr Wood: I might point out that there is also some additional money yet to come as a result of negotiations around Transgrid.

MR HARGREAVES: Can I pick up a question about Transgrid?

MRS DUNNE: Can I just finish on the rangers before we go to Transgrid. Can I put on the record that I think that it would have been better, minister, if you had been more up front about your being smarter with the number of rangers rather than saying that we had eight extra rangers.

Mr Wood: Okay. We will be sophisticated.

MRS DUNNE: Thanks.

MR HARGREAVES: You have got 186 hours a week. We could talk about full time equivalence and all the rest of it but I think the issue really is the effective use of ranger time, which is the point you are trying to make and which is good.

MRS DUNNE: No, I don't have a problem with that.

MR HARGREAVES: On the Transgrid issue, I understand that that issue has been settled. Is there a budget provision, because I can't find it.

Dr Cooper: What has happened is that sum of \$350,000 is coming from Transgrid. They have paid us 120,000 to cover the costs that we incurred. The remaining 230,000—I think I have got the maths right—will be coming in the near future. But what they have asked for are specific projects. Those specific projects at the moment are being spoken about with some key community groups. It was a community environmental grant from Transgrid to the ACT and so we thought it appropriate to liaise with some key groups in terms of what they think the money should be invested in as well as, of course, taking directions from our minister.

Mr Wood: So as to Mr Hargreaves' question, it is not in the budget yet?

Dr Cooper: No, it's not.

MRS DUNNE: And the money is still in Transgrid's bank account?

Dr Cooper: 230 is, the other costs are not. But we have letters from them of commitment, so we don't envisage any problems.

Mr Wood: And that other money isn't with us, is it? It's gone somewhere else, has it?

Dr Cooper: It has gone to cover costs and it has also gone to, for instance, pay some of the legal fees and all of that. So it has certainly gone to where it should be put.

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MR HARGREAVES: With the community activities, how long do you expect that first part of the process to conclude?

Dr Cooper: We hope to be able to discuss with the minister within the next week and a half some recommendations from the community groups in that regard.

MR HARGREAVES: Whatever recommendations come from the community groups and are agreed by government, will they be a thing to be paid for by the government and reimbursement sought from the Transgrid bank account, or do you think we will get Transgrid to pay for it?

Dr Cooper: Transgrid have indicated they will send the cheque ASAP as soon as we have a letter from the minister saying where the monies will be committed.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: Transgrid doesn't get any kudos for this, do they?

Dr Cooper: That is not in any part of the agreement.

MRS DUNNE: They are not going to be the Transgrid environment—

Dr Cooper: No.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. Transgrid is well and truly scarred by this experience?

Dr Cooper: I think Transgrid have learnt a lot. At the senior levels in management they have certainly been very diligent in ensuring all their processes have been fully reviewed.

MR HARGREAVES: I am sure the con council will make sure that that is upheld, too.

Mr Wood: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Okay, I think we will finish 3.1. After afternoon tea we will return to 3.2.

Short adjournment

Mr Wood: Mr Chair, I have been advised that briquettes are good on two grounds environmentally. First of all they burn quite cleanly, so that is good. Secondly, they use waste wood products, which gets that out of the stream, too. So by all means use briquettes.

MR HARGREAVES: Can I follow up on that? There are experts in the room. I understood that they came from brown coal at Yallourn. Is that wrong?

Mr Wood: They used to be. When you and I went to school, John, we were taught that.

MR HARGREAVES: A little bit more recently, minister, I went through that big hole in the ground. There is a very, very large hole in the ground and as I understand it there is a great seam of brown coal that stretches all the way from Victoria right through New South Wales and into Queensland, and one of their big things is brown coal.

Mr Wood: Well, we had better specify which brand to use. But, yes, I don't think they are used extensively outside Victoria, and maybe not even extensively in Victoria—I don't know. But they are not the ones we are talking about.

MRS DUNNE: So they are okay?

Mr Wood: Yes, because they use waste wood products and they burn quite cleanly.

MRS DUNNE: I got the impression they must burn hot and so therefore you should get reasonable combustion.

Mr Wood: Okay.

MRS DUNNE: So it is all right for me to use them?

Mr Wood: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We are on 3.2—Nature conservation and land management. Are there any questions of the minister about that?

MS DUNDAS: This will be completely different. The Conservation Council has been calling for three new positions to ensure enforcement of the Environment Protection Act, and I understand it was in their submission. I can't see any money for that. Is this an initiative that we are wanting to take up?

Mr Wood: Well, it is one I would give favour to. I think we need more positions in that area. So I will state my position. In fact, I think there are fewer positions now than we had some years ago. As to what we can do in the next year, Dr Cooper might indicate.

Dr Cooper: What we are doing at the moment is looking towards a review of the EPA area, and that has already commenced. As you would appreciate, any staffing levels need to be matched in terms of needs and so we are certainly doing that review to help give us a position to put to the minister that is an informed one.

MS DUNDAS: What is the time frame for that review?

Dr Cooper: We are currently looking at the staffing components over the next few months.

MRS DUNNE: So that review of the environment protection legislation is the statutory one built into the—

Dr Cooper: No, it is in two parts, Mrs Dunne. The first part is to do with the commitment that the government has made to review the EPA staffing levels, so we are doing that first. Then next year, to fit statutory time frames we are actually doing the

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EPA review under the legislation. So we are marrying the two rather than duplicating. But the first one is definitely about the resourcing issue.

MRS DUNNE: Isn't that the cart before the horse, though?

Dr Cooper: No, not the way we are doing it. At the moment, we are certainly streamlining in terms of current practices and current needs, as well as looking at what future changes may be needed.

MRS DUNNE: Across the range of regulatory work that you do, have you looked at broadbanding or multiskilling your inspectors to have a more effective presence?

Dr Cooper: You have hit on one of the issues that we are looking at in terms of the staffing review. That is certainly one of the issues that will be considered.

MRS DUNNE: So that you wouldn't have someone who was a noise inspector and somebody else that used to be noise, chemical, air and water—people who did different things in different silos? You are trying to break down those—

Dr Cooper: We already try to do that but we will be looking further to where we can even break down further any silos that may exist, realising, of course, that every human has a threshold and they can only take in so much.

MS DUNDAS: In terms of your measures of output, on page 211 of budget paper 4 you talk about the provision of support for park care, land care, catchment and volunteer groups. It is in terms of number of groups supported and number of park care groups activities supported. What is that support?

Dr Cooper: In terms of the number of groups, it is to do with things like tree planting. They take on board the weeding programs. It is those kinds of actual hands-on activities.

Mr Wood: Trucks take stuff away and that sort of thing.

Dr Cooper: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: And staffing hours?

Dr Cooper: Yes, and the staff go out and they help with some of the training and the coordination between groups and setting up for them some of the meetings and things like that.

MS DUNDAS: Does Environment ACT also provide administration for these groups?

Dr Cooper: No. There is not administration as such. These groups are very hands on, so it is not like cons council or somebody like that where there is a lot of administration.

MS DUNDAS: Can you tell me why the number—

MRS DUNNE: It has fallen from 800 to 700 or 900 to 700, depending on—

MS DUNDAS: Yes. It is explained as “due to anticipated market demand”. How do you get that figure?

Dr Cooper: What sometimes happens is some activities are combined. For instance, they may actually have an activity that involves tree planting and weeding and you may actually combine that rather than treating them as two activities. It depends a lot upon how the groups actually were to operate. What the staff have found here to reduce them by this amount is that a lot of those groups actually wish to combine to do one activity, which actually probably is two or three other activities, rather than having them on separate days.

MS DUNDAS: I was going to ask a question about the solar hot water rebate scheme. I understand we appropriated money earlier in Appropriation Bill (No 2) for the solar hot water rebate scheme. Can you explain since that time, which was December, I think, how many people have been able to take up the scheme?

Dr Cooper: Yes. An allocation \$100,000 was made for that, as you may well know. Since that time 49 householders have taken up the offer with a subsidy of specifically \$37,720. So we are not spending all of those funds. If you like, the initial take-up is often slow in these and then they accelerate.

MS DUNDAS: How much are you spending on advertising the scheme to help the take-up?

Dr Cooper: I will have to take that question on notice. I am not sure exactly how much. Sorry, it is \$8,000.

MRS DUNNE: Is that mainly newspaper advertising? There was a lot of newspaper advertising when the scheme was introduced.

Dr Cooper: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: It is mainly newspaper advertising?

Dr Cooper: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: Can you tell me how many people you expect to take up the scheme? I think we have committed \$1.1 million to fund the program to April 2005. Yet if the average rebate is about \$750 and there are approximately 500 rebates a year, that will actually average out at \$1.125 million. So it is more. Do you have an estimate of how many people you expect to take up the rebate?

Dr Cooper: I haven't got that figure in front of me, but the figure of \$1.12 million over the three-year period is estimated to be fully used by the staff. So I can come back with the actual numbers of households rather than people.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, Maxine, I was otherwise distracted. So far what is the take-up rate like?

Dr Cooper: The take-up rate is a bit slower than we had hoped but it is still pretty healthy considering it has only really been going for a matter of months since April. April, May and June are a slow time of the year. We have had 49 households take up the offer and therefore we spent \$37,720 plus the \$8,000 on advertising.

MS DUNDAS: With the \$8,000 that you are spending on advertising, how much of the money that you have budgeted over the next three years, the \$373,000 per year, will actually go on the rebate and how much will go on advertising and administration?

Dr Cooper: I haven't got that figure in front of me but a prudent way that we would move is we would advertise to the degree that is needed rather than have a specific set advertising program over the three years. So we will spend this \$8,000, we will assess what we are doing with it and whether it is having an impact and then adjust the campaign of advertising according to the need.

MS DUNDAS: Okay. Minister, we touched on this earlier, but has there been any thought about how people on low incomes or public housing tenants could be able to participate in the solar hot water scheme?

Mr Wood: No, not so much in this scheme. ACT Housing would need to attempt it from its own resources. I couldn't off the top of my head tell you how many ACT Housing properties have solar hot water, or even gas to that measure. Perhaps when I come back tomorrow we might know those figures.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, are you looking at other smarter ways of getting solar hot systems onto people's houses? I have been critical. I don't have a problem with schemes to get solar hot water systems onto houses but this one is a sort of pretty blunt instrument and won't really penetrate the market, particularly.

Mr Wood: If there are smarter ways, by all means I am open to all the advice I can get. We have got the allocation there and we certainly want to spend it. I couldn't offer a better way at the moment. Please help.

MRS DUNNE: So you are open to suggestions?

Mr Wood: Yes, indeed.

MRS DUNNE: This would be something you would probably have to do in partnership with someone like ActewAGL. Would you consider a scheme whereby people, rather than getting a rebate up front, had a lease arrangement so that you put the system on your roof and you pay in your electricity bill—

Mr Wood: To avoid that capital cost?

MRS DUNNE: To avoid the capital cost. The capital cost is a big impediment to an average family who are looking at replacing their hot water system. You have to be pretty committed.

Mr Wood: Actew is very interested in conservation, energy conservation. We could talk about that. I think we should talk to ActewAGL about gas and gas heating, which also compares pretty well. By all means, we can do those things.

MRS DUNNE: Okay.

MR HARGREAVES: Can I go down that track just a little bit. Minister, you would be probably not aware but there is a bloke in Tuggeranong who has invented a cover cupboard for hot water systems.

Mr Wood: A cover?

MR HARGREAVES: A cover in the form of a cupboard to suit external water heaters. He has had it tested by the CSIRO, which has found it is efficacious. He has sought assistance from ActewAGL, who have said it is a great idea but they are not in the business of producing and marketing things like that.

The figures that he has quoted to me, backed up by the CSIRO testing, indicate a saving of about \$200 a year on the hot water bill. It also reduces greenhouse gases because of the nature of installation. I was wondering whether or not Environment ACT are aware of that particular item.

Mr Wood: Well, I don't know if it is your nominated person or not—

MR HARGREAVES: It is called Enviroinsulator.

Mr Wood: I don't know if this is the one but certainly we have been looking at the visual effect of solar hot water systems as they fit into the neighbourhood. Dr Cooper might give you an update on that.

Dr Cooper: I haven't got the numbers. Some of these are viewed as being intrusive by people who have them on the front of their houses. So what we have done is allow some additional monies for a rebate scheme for covers for those that are in heritage precincts that face the street. I haven't got the actual figures on the uptake, but the policy is clearly there that in those areas because of heritage we do wish to have them covered.

MR HARGREAVES: Could I ask you to give me the details of how one contacts somebody about that? If I was willing to do that for my hot water system, which I don't because it is inside the house, who would I contact to seek information about that?

Dr Cooper: Yes, I will certainly do that.

MR HARGREAVES: If you are not aware of the particular nature of this cover that this gentleman has invented, I can give you the details of that. It is a non-intrusive cupboard system.

Mr Wood: Has he got various colours?

MR HARGREAVES: Can do.

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Mr Wood: Which is what you need to have it fit in.

MR HARGREAVES: Indeed.

MRS DUNNE: Are we talking at cross purposes here?

MR HARGREAVES: No.

MRS DUNNE: I think Maxine is talking about something that makes the on-roof collector look unobtrusive and you are talking about insulating.

MR HARGREAVES: No, I am talking about the ones that are on the ground outside the house.

Dr Cooper: Sorry, I apologise.

MR HARGREAVES: No, it is another issue.

Mr Wood: We have been on the roof.

MR HARGREAVES: Yes. We will now come off the roof, if you don't mind.

MRS DUNNE: Perhaps the Treasurer's R&D grants can come in.

MR HARGREAVES: We have gone down that track. As a matter of fact, the government actually did give this gentleman \$80,000 to develop some stuff on it. A lot of houses in the ACT have these systems outside the house and I understand that this sort of invention which costs \$400 each, if brought to the attention of Environment ACT, will apparently save people \$200 a year, and if it is going to reduce greenhouse gases it seems like a reasonable idea. I will just jot down the details and ask you to have a look at it. Thank you for that.

THE CHAIR: Could I ask a question about Namadji National Park? Your party, minister, was very critical when entry fees were placed on the park. Is it your intention to remove those entry fees in Namadji?

Mr Wood: No.

THE CHAIR: It was Tidbinbilla—sorry.

Mr Wood: You are talking about Tidbinbilla. I understood you to mean Tidbinbilla. No, that will stay.

MRS DUNNE: It has generally been well accepted?

Mr Wood: I haven't asked that question but it is a bit much to dismantle now.

THE CHAIR: I see. It would be very easy to dismantle, actually. Can I ask a question about output 3.2. A very large number of the measures referred to there are being transferred to the DUS ownership agreement. Why is that?

Mr Thompson: Perhaps if we get Alan Eggins just to run over that again.

Mr Wood: Once more with feeling.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, was this done this morning?

Mr Wood: Yes.

THE CHAIR: It's all right. I will read the transcript.

MRS DUNNE: But I will continue to comment on the ones I think that should be here. On the weed strategy, we have got an increase of 20 sites this year but the same amount of money. How are we going to do it smarter?

Dr Cooper: I am just trying to find the page.

MRS DUNNE: 211, BP4.

Dr Cooper: I have got some notes on that. That is because it is the number of sites, not necessarily any indicator of the actual hectares.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. In that case, Mr Eggins, perhaps a better indicator might be the number of hectares treated for weeds each year.

Mr Eggins : Certainly better than the one that is there.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, I know. Maxine makes a very good point that number of sites isn't actually very accurate. So how many hectares are we looking at doing this year compared to last year?

Dr Cooper: I would have to come back to you with that figure. But I would imagine, given the budget that we have got, it would be roughly the same.

MRS DUNNE: So there is the same money that has been there for two or three years previously?

Dr Cooper: Yes, in capital works. We have got \$150,000 for this financial year, and that was the figure we had last financial year.

MRS DUNNE: And then there is the other weed money that is in Canberra Urban Parks.

Dr Cooper: That's in CUPs—the \$50,000 that was mentioned earlier today.

MRS DUNNE: So you will get back to us with the actual areas?

Dr Cooper: Yes.

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MRS DUNNE: Also I would be interested to know—and this might be something that you need to take on notice, Maxine—whether you have target weeds and what are the sort of priority programs at the moment?

Dr Cooper: Yes, we do, but I haven't got those in my head and I will come back to you. But we certainly do have target weeds and priority areas.

MRS DUNNE: In addition to the actual eradication programs, are there other programs—and this goes across both Environment ACT and Canberra Urban Parks—that are aimed at cutting down the spread of these weeds? Needle grass is a problem and one of the issues that has been raised with me is a comprehensive washing down of equipment between infected and non-infected sites and roadside slashing—those sorts of issues. Do you have an active program for preventing the spread of weeds by way of washing down? Do you slash from clean areas into dirty areas rather than dirty areas into clean areas?

Dr Cooper: Yes, they have what they call standing operating procedures for dealing with some of those, and I can come back to you and give you details on what we actually do on those. Also, importantly, we have programs to do with good neighbours so the weeds actually don't escape from domestic gardens into the reserves.

MRS DUNNE: Or out of ACT forests into the reserves.

Dr Cooper: So they don't escape from anywhere. So I am happy to come back to you on that.

MRS DUNNE: The other thing is: is there a regular review of the standard operating procedures to see whether they are adequate?

Dr Cooper: Yes, there is. I announced that.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, thank you.

MS DUNDAS: Regarding public education, public awareness: what are you doing over the next financial year to promote public education awareness of the environmental schemes and legislation that affect environment in the ACT

Mr Wood: Education broadly? I don't know if we have an officer at the moment. We used to have an officer some years ago and we are looking to get back into that field. We may well be employing one shortly. "Shortly"—there you go again.

MS DUNDAS: But what will they be doing, and will they be given sufficient resources? One person can do only so much, as we have already discussed today.

MRS DUNNE: \$14,500.

Dr Cooper: What one person can do is actually be a focus for, if you like, partnering both within Environment and other arms of DUS as well as the community. At the moment, what we have found through an analysis of our education is that it has been very fragmented. So a bit of a person in different areas will be doing a bit of education.

We are of the opinion that, given the new grant of \$1.5 million over the three years and a key component of that being education, to focus some of the activities into this particular person will achieve greater results than having the fragmentation that we have currently got.

I mentioned earlier that you will see things like kangaroo awareness; you will see coming out over the magpie season an awareness about educating for magpies rather than just taking magpies away from the sites. So there will be a suite of things that we are looking at for this particular role that the community has been asking for.

MS DUNDAS: It will be the role of that officer to implement those programs?

Dr Cooper: No, it will be the role of that officer to develop them, and then with the support of other areas—for instance, the rangers that now should be out and about more often with them, EPA officers—it will be with a suite of people to implement. It will be this person's task to focus on the outcome that is needed and then develop the strategy for getting it out into the community.

MS DUNDAS: Will there need to be specific funding for the programs that the education officer creates, or will any cost of the outcome of the programs be run in the line areas?

Dr Cooper: It will be run in the line areas at the moment—that is our way of thinking. Often what happens with education is it is not necessarily the need for more funds, it is the need for the focus of some of the current funding.

MRS DUNNE: With Namadji, minister, how are we going with the negotiation and development of the management plan?

Mr Wood: It has been worked through with the Namadji board. Dr Cooper might tell us in more detail.

Dr Cooper: What we did earlier this year was we put out a paper on issues. We spoke to the community about “What are the issues you wish to see in the management plan” and they came forth with a suite of issues that they want addressed in it. We are currently addressing those issues. We are currently working with the interim Namadji board and we anticipate being able to go out a bit later this year with some draft material on some of the content of what those issues actually mean from a management perspective.

Also importantly, this year Kosciusko are developing their plan of management. So being a member of the Alps, we are making sure the practices we put into place in our management plan are ones that are complementary to New South Wales.

MRS DUNNE: Can I have some feedback on how the interim board is working. Is it fully manned?

Dr Cooper: I think the interim board for where we are at in our moment in history is very successful. You would appreciate that with the interim board you have two sets of values coming forward in that you have got the indigenous values and then you have got the scientific values. Recently we have just appointed a co-chair, a Mr Jeff Butler, to

support Matilda Halse. So we now have the two chairs. We have had the one meeting with the new co-chair, and unfortunately for that meeting, Ms Halse was away. But I think in terms of the first major step for a board like that is working out their working arrangement, and they have certainly done that. Now we are just moving ahead in terms of some of the science application as well as some of the cultural issues. Some of the cultural issues have to do with things like the employment of the indigenous people, and we have certainly been working with the Chief Minister's Department on that and over the next year looking to have two ranger-type positions focused for indigenous trainees.

MRS DUNNE: In Namadji specifically, or across the service?

Dr Cooper: Across the service. While we would like to focus on Namadji, sometime some of the issues there to do with cultural background need to be taken into account. And as you would appreciate, anything to do with this board is not looking in the next two or three years—we are actually looking at where the ACT will be sitting in 30 years.

MRS DUNNE: Okay.

THE CHAIR: Do you have any more questions?

MRS DUNNE: I have got lots more questions. We have got the rolling review of the established action plans. Are there any action plans outstanding that need to be finalised rather than reviewed?

Dr Cooper: To my knowledge, we have got a rolling review, and we are certainly looking at reviewing action plan No 10.

MRS DUNNE: That is in the current program?

Dr Cooper: That is in the current program. Of the 24 it is one of the eight coming up for consideration in September.

MRS DUNNE: Are there 25, 26 or 27 in the offing?

Dr Cooper: To my knowledge, no.

MRS DUNNE: We are sort of completely action planned out?

Dr Cooper: I wouldn't say we are action planned out. I am actually trying to think of the one species. Ginninderra Peppercress I think is one that will be a new action plan. That is the only one I can think of, and that is a new species.

MRS DUNNE: That is out in Lawson somewhere?

Dr Cooper: Out in Lawson—the only place in the world. So I think it does warrant its own action plan when it is that special.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. With the introduction of the rural leases coming up, how are you progressing with the introduction of property management? What are they called these days?

Dr Cooper: Land management agreements. I will get my notes on that.

MRS DUNNE: How many are done and how many are outstanding, because that has an implication for when the leases can be finalised?

Dr Cooper: From memory there are 67. I will just find my notes, if I may; I will try to answer that from memory. I think since 1999 we have 67. There is a five-year review program. We are not into that five year, but on a regular basis our parks and conservation officers deal with the lessees and work through any issues that they have.

MRS DUNNE: The threshold question is: have the 67 or whatever land management agreements been finalised in the first instance?

Dr Cooper: Yes, they have.

MRS DUNNE: So that there is no hold up there with the finalisation of 99-year leases for those people who are eligible?

Dr Cooper: No, there is not. We are just rolling through them, and 67 is correct.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, thank you. I think that just about does it for me.

THE CHAIR: If there are no further questions on output 3.2, we will proceed to heritage, 3.3. Are there any questions?

MS DUNDAS: Can you please tell us what are the measurements of management of ACT heritage assets? There was a target of eight, an output of seven and a projection of seven. Can you tell us what those assets are, and what was the one that went missing?

Dr Cooper: I can tell you the one that was transferred.

MS DUNDAS: Transferred.

Dr Cooper: We didn't lose any; no, we definitely don't lose our assets.

MR HARGREAVES: They will turn up sooner or later.

Dr Cooper: We actually transferred the Old Canberra Brickworks site over to Land and Property to look at how that particular heritage asset may be integrated into some form of development package.

MRS DUNNE: I thought it was the Duntroon dairy that had gone AWOL.

Dr Cooper: No. But I will have to come back to you on what are the other eight. Wait there—I can do it now. Albert Hall, Yarralumla woolshed, Tuggeranong homestead, Tuggeranong schoolhouse, Duntroon woolshed, the Civic merry-go-round and the Carousel organ.

MRS DUNNE: So what has happened to Duntroon dairy?

THE CHAIR: That was mentioned.

MRS DUNNE: No, that was the Duntroon woolshed.

Dr Cooper: Duntroon woolshed. We still actually do have the dairy but it is actually not part of the heritage management area—it is part of Parks and Conservation.

MRS DUNNE: Why?

Dr Cooper: I will have to come back to you with that answer.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, thanks.

MR HARGREAVES: You are talking about heritage places. Every now and again some of these places just fall down and go to dust, and all really that remains is the stand of trees that were planted around them. I believe that such a place is Athllon homestead, which is located just behind the current Gowrie scout hall. That is my understanding. In fact, on some of the road maps, the block and section maps, there was a little dot which said Athllon homestead. When I went looking for it I found a stand, I think, of poplars or something like that, a nice square and a few little bits of brick and things like that behind it. What happens when you come across something like that?

Mr Wood: What, the recognition of the trees?

MR HARGREAVES: Not so much the trees but the fact that originally there was a significant building, I guess, on that land after which we have named the road that leads to where it used to be. Are you aware of that, and if not would you check it out? Could you tell us what you would normally do if somebody says to you, “By the way, there was this thing here and if it was still standing there would probably be heritage in it.”

Dr Cooper: It is not just the physical building, it is actually the activity that occurred at the site. So we would certainly look at the significance of that site. We do list sites, so I will go and check with our heritage unit to see if that is a site that is already listed, and I will come back to you.

MR HARGREAVES: If you would, and if it is could you let us know what we can do to actually preserve it. I think what will happen is it will eventually disappear together, because there are no signs up or plaques or anything like that to note what it was. If it is not listed, could you let us know what, in your opinion, ought to be done about it, if anything?

Dr Cooper: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: On the issue of what is on the heritage register, Maxine, there doesn't seem to be anything in the measures on page 213 about the number of listings. I gather that there is a program of work. Wearing my other P and E committee hat, there is a program of work listing a whole swag of things that are on the interim register. There

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doesn't seem to be anything in the measures there that reflects that. Can you let us know what the program is, and how many are supposed to be coming up?

Dr Cooper: Yes I will. We are actually clearing a backlog of them and I am aware of a figure of something like \$193,000 we have actually got allocated for that task.

MRS DUNNE: On behalf of planning and environment, can you make it simple?

MR HARGREAVES: Is that the Aboriginal sites, heritage sites? There is apparently some work being done. There are a couple of hundred of them, as I understand it.

Dr Cooper: That's right. I believe what Mrs Dunne is talking about is in addition to the ones I think you are talking about. So, yes to your question but also yes to Mrs Dunne's, and I will get the details.

MR HARGREAVES: Thank you.

MS DUNDAS: On a side point to that, one of the measures for this year was the preparation and introduction of new comprehensive heritage legislation. Has that been introduced or did I just miss it?

Mr Wood: It is coming. Another one of those—soon there will be the—

MS DUNDAS: Not tomorrow. August? It has to be tabled so it has to be a sitting day.

Mr Wood: We will put out a draft, which is a further draft from what the former government did. I don't think it is too far away, is it?

Dr Cooper: No, within the next two months.

MRS DUNNE: So that would be a draft, an exposure draft?

Dr Cooper: A draft exposure bill.

MS DUNDAS: The cost of administering heritage assets and the delivery of heritage services are both measures that are going to be discontinued. Can you explain? I don't mean to ask Mr Eggins to give the same spiel again, but they do look like they are quite worthy measures of actually reporting how much money is spent in terms of heritage asset management. Why is that measure specifically being discontinued?

MRS DUNNE: At least for variety's sake, somebody else asked the question.

Mr Eggins: I can offer a commentary. You will note that 2001-02 figures appear there, and they add to the total cost line at the bottom. I guess it is a matter of opinion as to what value there was in having two lines rather than one for quite a small amount of money.

MS DUNDAS: So you don't see any benefit in separating out administration from actual services?

Mr Eggins : They are measures of costed inputs. It would be better if we could develop some meaningful costs of the objectives or outcomes of the heritage program. That is particularly difficult because we are talking about things that happened over many, many years. So we are actually developing a relevant year-on-year measure. It is quite difficult in this area.

MS DUNDAS: Has this been done in conjunction with the work that should be done by the Office of Sustainability in terms of triple bottom line measures of accounting?

Mr Eggins : We would be happy to take advice from any corner about the appropriateness of measures in this particular area.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: I think where we are getting to, Mr Chairman, is somewhere along the line of making some recommendations about what this committee thinks are appropriate measures.

MR HARGREAVES : After we hear from the Auditor-General to justify himself. Can I ask you a question about the Canberra School of Music? I understand—and I used to work there—that the Manuka premises are now a mothercraft centre. Is that a listed premise?

Mr Wood: I don't think so.

MR HARGREAVES : There is some waving going on at the back.

Mr Wood: The status of the Manuka building—the old jazz school, which is now something different. I don't know whether it is —

MRS DUNNE: I think that is an arts question, isn't it?

MR HARGREAVES : Well, there is a heritage—

Mr Wood: It is the heritage status of the Manuka building that you are interested in.

MR HARGREAVES : I am interested in whether or not it was given to the ANU when they got the School of Music; if not, who owns it, is it heritage listed, and what are the plans for it if it is?

Mr Wood: That is a bit of the history of it. We will see how far we can go.

Ms Hillson: Mandy Hillson, Director, Arts and Culture Services. It is now called the Manuka arts centre. It is now a DUS asset. It always has been a DUS asset but the use of it has been transferred to us for new uses. I am not quite sure whether part of that building has any heritage status, but we certainly will be consulting very closely with our heritage colleagues to get some advice when we actually do the redevelopment that is required.

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MR HARGREAVES: Okay. My information—and as I said, this stems from when I used to work in that building—was that the mothercraft centre and the garage at the back were about 1920s. The rest came on in about 1963 or 1962—about that period of time.

MRS DUNNE: They are inspiring pieces of architecture.

MR HARGREAVES: Well, I can tell you, from the top of the mothercraft centre you can get a great view of the cricket from Manuka oval, as I have. But I am interested. When you say it is an arts centre, is that a permanent arrangement?

Mr Wood: Yes, for the next 20, 30, 40, 50 years or something.

MR HARGREAVES: Okay. I had heard somewhere that the heritage people themselves were interested in going to that place. But that might have been a wild corridor rumour.

Mr Wood: I haven't heard that. It is a bit late, I would think.

Ms Hillson: Just in terms of future use, we have Photo Access settled in there quite well at the moment and plans for Artsound FM to move into there. I think we are discussing with them now what their user needs are.

MR HARGREAVES: Great. Thank you.

Mr Wood: And money in the budget to make that transfer.

MS DUNDAS: I have one last question on heritage—it depends on how the answers go. Mention was made earlier that the Gold Creek homestead is a property being listed as a surplus asset. Are there any plans for it to be transferred or to be considered as a heritage asset?

Mr Wood: Well, there has been consideration given. I don't know what the current position is.

Ms Hillson: In terms of transferring the asset to heritage for heritage to manage as an asset—

MS DUNDAS: For it to be seen as a heritage asset as opposed to a government surplus asset.

Dr Cooper: If I could just explain: we have got a large number of heritage assets. So we view a heritage asset in the broader sense of protection versus necessarily just having it to own and manage yourself.

MS DUNDAS: Is the Gold Creek homestead considered as part of one of those broader heritage assets?

Dr Cooper: I would have to go and check. Can I check and come back to you?

MS DUNDAS: Yes, please do.

Dr Cooper: I would like to emphasise to the committee that the heritage unit is fundamentally about protecting heritage, not necessarily about deciding which particular pieces should go into public ownership or shouldn't. That is really a much broader government policy decision. But the principle of heritage protection is about protecting whether it is in public or private ownership.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions on heritage?

MRS DUNNE: No.

THE CHAIR: Okay. We will move to output class 5—fee-for-service activities. Are there any questions on this? I have one quick one. I notice that the target for this year for the number of plants sold from the Yarralumla nursery is down. Why would that be?

Mr Thompson: In terms of the number of plants—

THE CHAIR: Sorry, I beg your pardon: the number of plants grown is down from the target for last year.

Mr Davidson: Is the question why is it down?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Davidson: Simply because the take-up of the entitlement has been slower than expected.

THE CHAIR: Right. Is this because people aren't aware of their entitlement to free plants?

Mr Davidson: No. As far as I know, it has been quite well advertised. People just aren't taking it up quite with the enthusiasm that they used to.

THE CHAIR: Let me ask you a candid sort of question. Is it necessary to have a free allocation of plants any longer? This would be the only place in Australia where it occurs, I assume.

MR HARGREAVES: They are chopping them down, now.

Mr Wood: I think everybody likes the idea. It is part of the green city. I thought all bodies were in favour of it. I think there was an occasion once, and I wouldn't know which government it was, when there was a suggestion not to make it or perhaps—

MRS DUNNE: I think that was the razor gang.

Mr Wood: Perhaps various Treasuries to various governments raised that issue but all governments have knocked it over.

THE CHAIR: Okay.

Mr Wood: We sometimes hear the same things that you have heard.

THE CHAIR: Are there any questions on fee-for-service activities?

MS DUNDAS: I again have a question about surplus properties. The list of surplus properties that is in the Department of Urban Services ownership agreement refers to a number of commercial office accommodations—Callam offices, the Mort Street north building, North Building, Dame Pattie Menzies House, Macarthur House. Are they ACT government-owned properties?

Mr Wood: Yes.

Mr Thwaite: Yes.

MS DUNDAS: And are they currently occupied properties?

Mr Thwaite: Yes—all 100 per cent occupied.

MS DUNDAS: Including those five that are listed as surplus?

Mr Thwaite: No, they are not surplus.

Mr Eggins: No. There is an error in the, I guess, descriptive information on that page. You will note that about a quarter of the way down the page there is a surplus properties heading, notwithstanding that the whole page is declared to be surplus.

MS DUNDAS: So that is the difference. Okay. Thank you. That makes sense now.

Mr Wood: Someone has got a keen eye there.

MS DUNDAS: I understand everything about surplus properties.

Mr Wood: You have got a keen eye.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Are there any further questions on 5.1? Are there any questions on 5.2—Property?

MRS DUNNE: I have a question on property. Looking at the surplus property list, I notice that the Karma homestead in Hawker is listed as a surplus property. Was that not sold? It was certainly advertised for sale some years ago—two or three years ago.

Mr Wood: Which property?

MRS DUNNE: Karma homestead.

Mr Thwaite: Karma, which is behind Hawker. I know it well. It is currently still being rented.

MRS DUNNE: It is still being rented. It was advertised for sale at some stage, John, wasn't it?

Mr Thwaite: Yes. I understood that there was a plan to use it for sort of vineyard purposes or something like that, which never eventuated.

MRS DUNNE: It has a lot of limitations on what you can do because it has got native grass on the downhill side. Okay. And the 2XX radio mast. Is that the one at Kaleen?

Mr Thwaite: The former 2XX radio mast is the one on the southern side of the Barton Highway.

Mr Wood: So it is Kaleen around there?

Mr Thwaite: Yes, Kaleen.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions on output class 5? If not we will move to output class 6—Housing assistance. I think the new budget paper has output class 6 as arts and cultural services.

MRS DUNNE: It used to be seven.

THE CHAIR: It used to be seven; it's now six.

MRS DUNNE: Okay.

THE CHAIR: I don't know where seven has gone, but anyway.

MRS DUNNE: At page 228—

THE CHAIR: We are looking at this new thing on page 61. We should stick to the new one, I think.

MRS DUNNE: They seem to be the same.

THE CHAIR: I have just a couple of questions about policy on cultural funding, Minister. One of the things that your plan for supporting the arts states is that there is concern that funding may often be spread too thinly and therefore you wanted to ask the Cultural Council, which you recently reconstituted, to consider the principle "fund less, fund better". Has the council actually begun the work of implementing that policy, and if so, what is the nature of the instruction you have given it to be able to do so?

Mr Wood: I met the council and raised that issue with them, and invited them to make any response they saw necessary. So amongst the range of their considerations, I anticipate that is on their agenda. I expect it is.

THE CHAIR: So what is the process from here? Are they going to make recommendations to you?

Mr Wood: They will consider that and come back to me.

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THE CHAIR: And then you will, what: indicate, on the basis of your consideration of that and other things, a new approach towards funding?

Mr Wood: If there is to be a change, if they recommend a change, I would then examine that and make some statement.

THE CHAIR: All right. So you are saying if the council doesn't recommend change, you won't necessarily make any?

Mr Wood: I would think I would be unlikely to make changes in that area if the council didn't recommend it.

THE CHAIR: Right. Are there plans for discussions with the broader arts community about that principle or that concept?

Mr Wood: I don't know. I would expect there would be but the way they do it would be a matter for them, and it is certainly something I will talk about with them further.

THE CHAIR: So the principle isn't at work at the moment with respect to funding; it is simply an idea.

Mr Wood: Not with our current funding, no. But they will be coming back in due course. I think the arts grants applications have closed. So as part of their consideration, if they wish to move quickly, they will come back in the recommendations they make, and then they could, in that sense, make some recommendations.

THE CHAIR: If there is potentially no decision coming out of this process, is there some way of us knowing when we have reached the point where a decision is or isn't going to be made?

Mr Wood: Probably, yes, there would need to be.

THE CHAIR: So you would make a statement of some kind?

Mr Wood: Yes, I would certainly do that.

THE CHAIR: Okay, all right.

MRS DUNNE: Where are we in the grants cycle at the moment?

Mr Wood: Applications have closed—at the end of last month, was it? Where are we now? Pretty early in it, I would expect.

Ms Hillson: The peer assessment committees of the Cultural Council have started to meet. The first one off the rank is the Visual Arts Committee.

MRS DUNNE: I actually don't need that level of detail. What I am trying to get at is: if you are going to change the regime, it won't be for this round of grants, seeing that applications have already closed.

Mr Wood: I would leave it more open than that because what the Cultural Council is going to do is come back with its recommendations on the grants. They may make the long list of recommendations that they did last year and this has been fairly traditional. They may shorten that list somewhat. I would examine that when it comes through for my signature at the end of the process. But there might be a deliberate consideration as well of an approach to examine the “fund less, fund better” concept. But I am not precluding what they might bring back to me; it is open to them.

MS GALLAGHER: Minister, I notice in the costs at the bottom of that table on Budget Paper 4 there are substantial increases in the cost of cultural program activities and cost of art activities between last year and this year. Is that because there are a lot more activities to be funded or that the cost of the activities that you are funding has increased a lot?

Mr Thompson: The 01-02 figures are the values that occurred once arts had joined Urban Services, which is approximately a seven-twelfths of the year figure.

MS GALLAGHER: Seven months—

Mr Thompson: Yes, they joined in late November.

Mr Wood: That figure looks very good, but I do also point out that this has been a very good year for the arts.

MS DUNDAS: Just to follow that up: in Budget Paper 4 that was circulated on budget day the cost of arts activities for 2002-03 is \$5,487,000 whereas in the revised budget papers we got last week it is \$5,120,000. Is that a typo or where has that money gone between budget day and today?

Mr Phillips: I think I can explain that. With housing moving out of the department, across all of these outputs there is an amount of money related to the overheads for all of the services that are provided to the various businesses.

MS DUNDAS: So housing provided overheads to arts?

Mr Phillips: Because housing moved out of the department that amount of overhead had to be distributed over the remaining outputs of the department and that has bumped that figure up a bit.

MRS DUNNE: No, it is bumped down, isn't it?

Mr Phillips: Down, sorry. It is just the adjustment in the allocation of those overheads. They cover the office of the chief executive, executive directors, business, finance, communications, HR, personnel. It is just how those overheads are distributed.

MR HARGREAVES: To save me the arithmetic, you were just saying that the 2001-02 figures were seven-twelfths. Does the 2002-03 figure represent twelve-twelfths or is it an increase/decrease on that seven-twelfths?

Dr Adrian: The total figure also includes the increase in the recurrent funding for arts and cultural service activities, and that added up to I think about \$1.31 million in the budget. So it is a mixture of the fact that arts and cultural services was transferred to Urban Services late last year, but in addition to that there is the increase in recurrent funding in this year and the out year before it.

MR HARGREAVES: Is that the increase for the Institute of the Arts?

Dr Adrian: Part of it. \$800,000 of it is part of that \$1.31 million, yes.

MR HARGREAVES: All right, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Could I ask about the \$800,000 for the Institute of the Arts. I see that that is designed in part to meet more outreach programs. Can you describe what sort of outreach programs and how it will work?

Mr Wood: The sorts of programs that we will sign up to—and that hasn't been done yet; the officers are in consultation with NIDA—are the continuing music program in a couple of our schools, public concerts, some support for the orchestral program perhaps, and in particular open art courses that they run. We are looking to do some of that innovation stuff and get art and new media into public places, maybe using that screen in Civic. They are items of that nature.

THE CHAIR: Will there be a purchase agreement of some sort or something like that that will come forward eventually?

Mr Wood: There will be an agreement that we will sign onto with them.

THE CHAIR: Will that be tabled in the Assembly?

Mr Wood: I don't see why it shouldn't be.

THE CHAIR: All right. In Budget Paper 4 it is suggested that about \$31,000 in arts grants funding allocated for last financial year had been rolled over to this year. It seems to be a rather large amount not to have been spent last year. Is there any reason for that rollover? Obviously it is rolled over because it has not been spent, but why has it not been spent?

Ms Hillson: Occasionally there will be a grantee that will return the funding or won't actually take up the grant, and this is what has happened this time. So, hence, you don't actually realise until fairly close to the end of the year that that is going to happen.

THE CHAIR: Right. Okay.

Ms Hillson: But it doesn't happen very often.

MR HARGREAVES: I bet it doesn't.

THE CHAIR: No.

MR HARGREAVES: You could give it to the Tuggeranong Festival. They would have it.

THE CHAIR: What sort of initiatives are covered by that item—arts and other initiatives, the \$350,000 this financial year for innovative projects, development of a cutting-edge initiative and so on. I couldn't find much in the budget papers about those things. What are they all about?

Mr Wood: There is a deal of discussion yet to take place with that. But we think some of it will go to major arts organisations. That is a distinct possibility. Youth music, community art centres. We would look at the cutting-edge program, which was a good program, Mr Humphries. We would look at doing something there. We would be looking at public art. It is just giving us a little more flexibility. You know how tight it has been. You have got your grants program and not much else and this gives us a bit of flexibility. One of the good things about this, as you will notice, is that if you look into the out years the amount of money increases quite significantly up to \$500,000 or so. So it is a growth program as well. That is one of the reasons this was a very good arts budget. And we wrote some capital works into it as well on a regular basis.

THE CHAIR: What is the public art program like at the moment? Is there a quarantined amount each year for public art?

Mr Wood: No, I haven't got a quarantined amount. We want to discuss just what happens there.

THE CHAIR: But you would expect that with this extra money there would be a reasonable chance of maintaining, if not increasing.

Mr Wood: There is also \$80,000 as part of Civic City Walk.

MS DUNDAS: The City Walk sculpture program. On the public art program, and you have just said you have got the \$85,000 for the City Walk sculpture program: is there any thought being put into spending money on public art outside of Civic?

Mr Wood: Yes. A bit more thought, though, is yet to come. We who live out in the sticks are interested in it but I don't think I can provide you with any detail at the moment.

Dr Adrian: If I might just make a comment. One of the priorities that has been identified by the Cultural Council is actually to have a look at the public art program and, in particular, the potential sources of funds for that program. You can look at other jurisdictions and certainly some examples overseas. Rather than have a program where you would have to seek additional capital works funding each year, you can look at other processes for getting public art funding. It can come through third parties. It could come from the private sector, for example; it might be a partnership arrangement within the private sector. You can look at some levy arrangements where you dedicate a certain proportion of the capital works funding each year for public art funding.

In fact, different models—a surprising number of models—are used in other jurisdictions in Australia and also overseas. So the Cultural Council is actually looking at that and seeing whether you can get a better approach and perhaps a more consistent approach over a number of years, and also a bigger bucket of funding for public arts funding.

MS DUNDAS: With regards to the City Walk program, do you have any idea about who you are going to commission? Has it gone out to tender yet?

Mr Wood: I don't think so.

Ms Hillson: No, it hasn't, but there is a process, a very open process, that is used. It is usually advertised, so it is an open tender process.

MS DUNDAS: Do you have a commitment to use a local artist?

Ms Hillson: We haven't had that commitment in the past. Our local artists, however, generally get fairly good representation in the art work. But it does depend on the nature of the site and whether the skills and expertise are within Canberra. But generally the local artists haven't had an issue with that because they generally have a high level of success.

MS DUNDAS: I have a similar question in respect of the Centenary of Federation monument. Again, that is due to be completed by June 2003. Has that been commissioned yet?

Ms Hillson: I understand that that is a project which has been caught up in the design competition related to City Hill—is that right?—and it is actually being driven by Planning and Land Management. The monument or the art work will be incorporated into that work. I am not quite sure about the extent to which PALM is managing that process, but that is certainly caught up in the whole design process.

MS DUNDAS: So, in terms of whether or not, again, it will be a local artist, that is a question for PALM?

Dr Adrian: Yes. That money, in fact, is part of that rollover money that we were discussing earlier in the capital works program.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions about arts or cultural services? If not, we will call the representative from the Cultural Facilities Corporation. Could I start by saying that obviously the Cultural Facilities Corporation has updated plans for the Link with respect to the application which is to be made soon to the NCA, which the minister mentioned earlier today. You mentioned, minister, that because a flattening requirement by the NCA it was likely that the Link proposal would have to be pushed out further into Civic Square. Could I ask: is the NCA comfortable about taking up more of Civic Square or is there an issue about having to remodel the proposal extensively to accommodate concerns about both the height and the extended encroachment into Civic Square?

Mr Wood: We had this discussion in part this morning and we have held over some detail for Ms Elvin to explain, including if the plans have yet gone to the NCA, or are they yet to go. Could you give as much background as you care to, Ms Elvin.

Ms Elvin: I am Harriet Elvin, Chief Executive Officer of the Cultural Facilities Corporation. Because of the height restrictions imposed by the NCA, we are now looking at a design that includes an element of the design coming out into Civic Square. You may have had an opportunity to see the model that we were using in recent rounds of public consultation. I think a number of the members present were included in that consultation. I do have with me plans that give an indication of the nature of the shard that is coming out into Civic Square. Certainly, the indication we have had from the NCA is that they would approve that in principle. Obviously, we now have to put the detailed plans in and negotiate the details of that design.

THE CHAIR: How much more space in Civic Square is taken up in this iteration than in the previous one?

Ms Elvin: I am sorry, Mr Humphries, I don't know what you mean by "the previous one".

THE CHAIR: I assume this is a different plan to the one that we saw about six months ago in that briefing that was given to us in the North Building.

Ms Elvin: This should be the same design as you have been briefed on. This was originally a slightly more elongated protrusion into the square and we did pull that back after discussions with the NCA and the Australian Heritage Commission. So this is the likely area of the design that the NCA would approve. Obviously, they won't commit themselves until they have seen the detailed plans.

THE CHAIR: I am asking the question because I thought that the plan that we saw encroached too far into Civic Square. It's a personal assessment. Are you saying this plan still encroaches to that same extent into Civic Square as the one for which a model was built before?

Ms Elvin: Yes. I am just trying to recall which model you have seen. This should be the same area of encroachment into Civic Square as the model that you saw and Ms Dundas saw and so forth.

MS DUNDAS: Can I also follow up on the Link. These plans indicate the Women's Information and Referral Service still being located on the library level. I understand through public hearings that the Women's Information and Referral Service attended the other day that they weren't that interested in being on that corner of the lower ground floor. Have you had further discussions, and is Mr Thwaite still here possibly to answer this question?

Mr Wood: No, he's not.

Ms Elvin: He would need to answer that in detail. I think they are no longer part of this.

MS DUNDAS: And that doesn't impact on your design in any way? You will still have space there—it is just about who will be using it?

Ms Elvin: That's correct, yes.

THE CHAIR: Could I move on to a general question about the Canberra Museum and Gallery. I realise there will be an annual report out fairly soon but what are the attendance figures looking like at the moment?

Ms Elvin: I can tell you exact attendance numbers for the year just finished, if that would be helpful.

THE CHAIR: It would be helpful, thank you.

Ms Elvin: For the financial year 2001-02, CMAG had a total of 69,380 visitors. That is split into two figures. One is on-site visitors, which was just under 48,000, and 21,500 visitors to touring exhibitions. We have had a major Mandy Martin touring exhibition inflow which did start at CMAG and has since done a lot of regional touring.

THE CHAIR: How do those figures compare with the previous financial year?

Ms Elvin: I am not sure I have got the previous financial year's figures with me. I will just check.

THE CHAIR: Do you understand them to be higher or lower than the previous year?

Ms Elvin: I think the touring exhibition figures would be higher and the on-site figures slighter lower. But I can check that and give you the details if you wish.

THE CHAIR: So we had a touring exhibition in the last financial year as well?

Ms Elvin: We did. The one that was touring then was the childrens exhibition, Hidden Forest, which again started off at CMAG and then did a lot of regional touring.

THE CHAIR: Ms Dundas, do you have another question about the Link?

MS DUNDAS: It is about the Cultural Facilities Corporation. Can you explain what cost \$682,000 in other expenses that blew the 2001-2002 budget?

Ms Elvin: This was the estimated outcomes—is that what you are referring to?

MS DUNDAS: Yes. There was a budget of \$58,000 of other expenses and an estimated outcome of \$740,000.

Ms Elvin: That is right, yes. That increase relates to Link and library projects expenditure. At the stage where we prepared this estimated outcome, we thought we would have to write off those expenses. But the advice we have since had from our auditors is that, based on the documentation that they have seen, the minister's comments in *Hansard*, and the minister's written authorisation for us now to lodge the development works approval with the NCA, those amounts should not be written off. The project is active. So, in fact, the completed financial statements won't actually show that amount of \$682,000 as being written off. It will remain as a capital work in progress as opposed to being written off.

MS DUNDAS: Will you be able to advise us then what the actual estimated outcome of other expenses is and, hence, what the operating result for the corporation is?

Ms Elvin: The other expenses should come down to the budgeted level with the removal of that amount. In our year-end accounts we are actually bringing to book various items that will mean that we will end the financial year in a better than budget situation. There are a number of items which are sort of year end or one-off or abnormal in some way. For example, we have an amount of GST that is to be reimbursed to us from the Taxation Office. So that will be brought onto our books at year end. The combined effect of those items will mean that the overall outcome for the corporation, the operating result, should be better than budget. That, of course, will be reported on in our annual report.

MS DUNDAS: Okay. I will keep an eye out for it there then.

THE CHAIR: The program for the Canberra Theatre Centre for this coming year: obviously, you are just developing a program for the next calendar year.

Ms Elvin: Yes.

THE CHAIR: This year's attendances have been at the expected or higher levels?

Ms Elvin: I think they have been higher than we targeted. We have had a good year not only in terms of our own venture programming but also in terms of venue hirers—quite a number of major venue hirers, particularly recently; this winter period tends always to be the strongest time of year for theatre, as you are no doubt aware. I can certainly get you the figures to the end of the year just finished, if that would be helpful, for theatre attendances.

THE CHAIR: That would be helpful, thank you.

Ms Elvin: The Canberra Theatre Centre achieved 189,836 patrons for the year, and that is obviously split between its various venues.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions of the CFC? If not, thank you very much. We move next to ACT Forests. Do you have a question on notice, Ms Dundas, to the Commissioner for the Environment?

MS DUNDAS: I was going to write it down.

THE CHAIR: That's all right; that's fine.

MS DUNDAS: And then do I give it to you?

THE CHAIR: Give it to me or Judith Henderson. Regarding the fires of last Christmas, have you made a decision yet about tree planting around the lake, and what species might be replanted later? That might not be a forest question.

Mr Wood: That is not in our province. Mr Bartlett could no doubt tell you. I believe I saw an NCA statement on that somewhere, a media statement, that part at the top of the lake is NCA territory.

Mr Bartlett: Tony Bartlett, Director of ACT Forests. As the minister said, the ACT government has indicated that they don't intend to replant the area around Lady Denman Drive with pine plantation, and the National Capital Authority is responsible for determining what species will be planted there. Alan Thompson wrote to NCA I guess around about—

Mr Thompson: I think it was February.

Mr Bartlett: Saying that was the arrangement and that if necessary ACT Forests would be willing to act as a contractor to prepare the site and to arrange for the planting of the trees, given that we have got people planting trees in the other part of the plantation, if NCA indicated to us what they wanted to have done. To this day we haven't had any formal response from the NCA.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Bartlett, is that all the land between, say, Scrivener Dam and sort of bounded by the parkway, except for the zoo bit?

Mr Bartlett: That's right. North of Scrivener Dam—all the land between the lake and the parkway.

MRS DUNNE: How much land is there?

Mr Bartlett: I haven't got the figure with me but it's around about, from memory, 30 or 35 hectares; something like that.

MRS DUNNE: Has all the clearance there been finished?

Mr Bartlett: The clean-up is almost completed. I think there is a bulldozer still there, just pushing the last amounts of debris into heaps, and then we will burn that debris when we get a suitable day, which may not be until the spring time.

MRS DUNNE: You are starting this winter the replanting of the rest of—

Mr Bartlett: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: So is that under way?

Mr Bartlett: The re-planting of the Stromlo plantation, the area that was burnt, started about three weeks ago. At this point in time we have got about 30 per cent of it replanted, and probably by I think the second week in August we should have all of it replanted.

MRS DUNNE: All of the stuff that is ACT forests will be replanted by the end of August?

Mr Bartlett: That's right, yes.

MRS DUNNE: All just going under *Pinus radiata*?

Mr Bartlett: That's right.

MRS DUNNE: I think you may have said to me at some stage—I think it was said here in estimates the other day—that as a result of the fire there would be some re-thinking of the way that various roads and other things ran in the forest, and that is all being done at this stage as well.

Mr Bartlett: Yes, that's right. As we were preparing the areas for replanting, we re-aligned about four different roads in that plantation area to get the roads in a line that we could actually defend in the event of significant wildfires again. So there are more roads now that run in a direction from north-west to south-east than there were before. So all that work has been done.

MRS DUNNE: Before they used to run sort of east-west?

Mr Bartlett: That's right.

MRS DUNNE: And the prevailing winds come from the south-west.

Mr Bartlett: The worst fire weather comes from the north-west to the west quarter. At Christmas time the winds were just north of west.

MRS DUNNE: I see, yes. If they are running sort of east-west you don't have any lines that you can stand and defend, and that is the problem.

Mr Bartlett: That's right. We were able to use some lines in the plantation during the Christmas fires, but there were some others that weren't adequate to put fire crews in there safely.

MRS DUNNE: When you have got such a large area—was it 160 hectares or more than that?

Mr Bartlett: We had 500 hectares burnt.

MRS DUNNE: 500 hectares. When you have got that much area all at the same stage of planting as you have now, what sort of potential soil erosion problems do you have, and how do you address those?

Mr Bartlett: Fortunately, it has been fairly dry this year. You will notice if you drive around there that in the site preparation operations we have actually created rip lines, and these rip lines go pretty well around the contour. Little mounds have been created all through the plantation, so that stops any major soil erosion. If we were to get heavy rain, say on the face of Greenhills West, which is the steepest part of that plantation area, the water couldn't run all the way from the top of the hill to the bottom without running into that—

MRS DUNNE: So you did put in contour lines.

Mr Bartlett: There is contour alignment.

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MRS DUNNE: Has that been done by the National Capital Authority in the bit that they are responsible for?

Mr Bartlett: No. Down the bottom we are still waiting for instructions from them as to how they want that area to be prepared. So all we have done is push the debris up into heaps.

MRS DUNNE: So there is no soil erosion mitigation in that area close to the lake at this stage?

Mr Bartlett: Nothing has been put in place there. We have offered to rip that site for them if they tell us how they want it done, but they haven't come back to me.

MRS DUNNE: Minister, as the minister responsible for the whole range of environment issues, do you think it is time to take up with the National Capital Authority that they should be doing some work there?

Mr Wood: Yes, I take your point.

MRS DUNNE: As a result of the fires, apart from the reconfiguring of the roads and things, were there issues related to bushfire field management that need to be addressed?

Mr Bartlett: Right at this moment we are in the process of complete—

MRS DUNNE: But there is no fuel—

Mr Bartlett: Sorry, are you talking about Stromlo?

MRS DUNNE: Just generally.

Mr Bartlett: Generally across the plantations and also in fact all the public land in the ACT we are in the process of a complete review of the bushfire fuel management plan, and that is expected to go out for public consultation during the month of August. As part of that complete review we have had a really good look at where the threats are to any assets, whether they are built assets or plantation assets, and we are trying to develop appropriate field management strategies that relate more to where the real risks are. So what people will see when that draft revised fuel management plan comes out is a plan that is significantly different from the current fuel management plan.

MRS DUNNE: And when will that be, Mr Bartlett?

Mr Wood: Pretty soon. I saw what was nearly a finished copy the other day. Pretty soon.

Mr Bartlett: In fact, I was at a meeting with the emergency services people this morning. We were working through, just trying to get agreement on, the final parts of the draft. As I said, we expect that within about two to three weeks it will be out for public comment.

Mr Wood: We are going to keep you busy in the next couple of months, aren't we?

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MS DUNDAS: I expect everything out on Friday. Can I just follow that up. We had a discussion when we did Appropriation Bill (No 3) about the high take-up of the redundancies that happened more quickly than expected. How has that been progressing with the new staff changeover, the new staffing structure that was being implemented? How is that going?

Mr Bartlett: About two weeks ago, before I went on leave, we had two staff—

MS DUNDAS: You went on leave?

Mr Bartlett: Yes. We had two staff who were still in the career assistance unit. Of the rest of the staff, 23 took voluntary departure packages, one found a new job in ACT Cemeteries, and there were two left at the career assistance unit. My understanding, although I haven't actually seen the paperwork, is that the remaining two agreed to take voluntary packages during the period that I was on leave, and so there will be no former staff left in that.

MS DUNDAS: And how is the new structure going?

Mr Bartlett: Good. Just to put it in context, this year as a result of the fire our operational program to replant forests is twice what it was budgeted and programmed to be. We originally were planning to establish 600 hectares but with the 500 hectares from the fire we went up to 1,100. We have achieved that program with the new team of people by only needing to put one additional person on. So the calibre of the team that I have now got is very high.

MS DUNDAS: As part of that restructure there were also plans to implement a new board of management, and when we did Appropriation Bill No 3 that was still in very much early stages. Where are you at now with that?

Mr Bartlett: The five people on the board have been appointed and the first meeting of the board is on Friday.

MS DUNDAS: Can you tell us the members of that board?

Mr Wood: I couldn't.

Mr Bartlett: I can. I have got it right here.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

Mr Thompson: Whilst Tony is getting that, it is worth pointing out that the chairman of the board, Gordon Davidson, is sitting over there in the white shirt.

Mr Wood: And I do recall we searched hard for some women.

Mr Bartlett: There are two women. The names of the people are: Mr Gordon Davidson, and he will be the chair of the board; Dr Ryde James, who is an expert from Australian National University in pine silviculture and plantation management; Mr Peter Williams, who comes from the corporate sector; Ms Lesley Piko, who is has experience on

boards—I think she has been involved in TotalCare, ACTTAB and the Tourism Advisory Council—

THE CHAIR: She's an accountant, isn't she?

Mr Bartlett: Yes, I think so. And Ms Jennifer Anderson, who has been a company secretary of CSPM Ltd for 12 years. She has also got a commercial background. So three of the appointees have got commercial/legal backgrounds, one in plantation management, and one from the government.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Bartlett, where do you see ACT forests being in three and five years time?

Mr Wood: I have just got to mention—and I will put him on the spot—that in my first briefing with Mr Bartlett he said he was going to get forests into the black. My next meeting was driving through all the black.

MS DUNDAS: That was funny.

Mr Wood: Well, it was real too.

THE CHAIR: If they were in the red they would be falling into the black though, wouldn't they?

Mr Bartlett: We will definitely be out of the red—I can assure you of that. I don't really want to be more in the black like we were last Christmas. The vision is to produce or to achieve a business where the commercial operations are profitable on a sustainable basis, where we have improved environmental outcomes, and where we also improve some of our social outcomes.

When you read below the budget papers that are before you will see that next year we are programmed to make a profit of \$1.169 million. When you take away the contribution that is made just from growing trees, we will actually for the first time ever make a real profit off our commercial operations of around about \$160,000. Gradually that profit will start to increase over the next decade quite substantially.

The major issue that we have got left to deal with in terms of how to improve ACT Forests from a commercial point of view is that the forest plantations have been so poorly managed over the last 10 to 20 years—it really does go back that far—that some of the stands now simply aren't capable of producing the quantity of logs that they could produce if they had been better managed in the past. So it will take us time to get them back into their full productive capacity. But there will no longer be a year from here on in where ACT Forests loses money.

MRS DUNNE: So even taking into account the loss of 500 hectares during the fire?

Mr Bartlett: That is correct, yes. We can still achieve positive cash flow results from the commercial forestry operations.

Mr Wood: And you are collecting insurance from that fire.

Mr Bartlett: That's right. If you look on page 243 you will see that it shows an expected operating result this year of \$3.3 million. A fair part of that is the contribution from the insurance money that we got from the burnt forests. In one way you might say that is a great operating result for this year, but it is not really a good outcome from a plantation's point of view.

MRS DUNNE: No. What aspects of the asset are you saying were badly managed over 20 years? Apart from ripping things out faster than people could replant, what else has gone wrong?

Mr Bartlett: There are three main aspects from a commercial forestry planning point of view. The first is that there was an over-concentration on clear falling—that, is cutting the older stands down—and not enough work on the thinning. So that put the balance of our log production out of kilter. The second element really is that a lot of the younger stands were not properly thinned or fertilised or given all the necessary treatments, so a lot of middle-aged stands are of fairly poor quality compared to if they had been properly managed. The third and perhaps most serious issue in the long term is that some of the areas that were cut down weren't replanted, so there is a backlog of replanting.

We have got programs in the new business plan to address each of those. Some of them can be addressed faster than others. If an area that is 15 years old has been poorly managed, you can do some things to fix it up but you really have to wait until that area is cut down and replanted and start better management in the future.

MRS DUNNE: If something should have been planted 15 years ago and wasn't, you can't make it grow faster.

Mr Bartlett: We could start replanting again this year, but we can't fix up something that happened 15 years ago.

MRS DUNNE: Right. I think that's about it.

MR SMYTH: I have a question on forests, and it might be more for the minister to answer. The zoo has asked that, given that the forest has disappeared, which is unfortunate, they might be able to expand their boundaries. How are negotiations—we have had chats on this before—going on that?

Mr Wood: There are negotiations going on through Mr Quinlan's area with that. They seem to be taking some considerable time. In view of that time, I have indicated to Forests that they should carry on their planting program as they see fit.

MR SMYTH: Why is it going on through Mr Quinlan's area? Is it not Forests or perhaps leasing?

Mr Wood: No, it is a business-cum-tourism thing. There is an assessment there of the viability of the project and someone may assess somewhere whether you want giraffes looking down at you as you drive along the parkway or something like that. But that may

continue. I can't answer questions on that, but Mr Bartlett does need to get on with the planting as he sees necessary.

Mr Thompson: Our view is basically that we have finished the site preparation and we will carry on with the planting because we have got the team here. But before we actually get into that immediate bit of land, we will contact Business ACT and check what the progress is.

MRS DUNNE: If there are successful negotiations with the zoo to expand the zoo and you lose 50 or 100 hectares or whatever, where would you go to make that up? Presumably you need to have compensation for that somewhere. You will need to plant another—

Mr Wood: It is essential to make it up.

Mr Bartlett: That's right. One of the things I would be looking for is a commercial return for the land. I am not precious about the actual spot of land but I do need to maintain a viable plantation estate. So we would be looking to try to find—

MRS DUNNE: So you need that acreage.

Mr Bartlett: That could either be found in one of two areas: existing ACT land that is perhaps further away from the city that might be able to be made available or we could use the money to buy or invest in putting trees in land that is outside ACT.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, so put a plantation on private land.

Mr Bartlett: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: Sorry, I have another question. There are a couple of patches of native forest, one out at Cowan and one up between Woods and Pierces Creek. At various stages there has been discussion about taking those out of the management of ACT Forests and putting them with parks and cons. What progress has been made or where is that?

Mr Bartlett: Certainly in the three years that I have been here there has been no further work on that. I would maintain that those areas are managed for their conservation and protection reasons but they are located intimately as part of the plantation estate and it doesn't make sense to excise them from the plantation estate.

MRS DUNNE: They are all essentially landlocked?

Mr Bartlett: That's right. ACT Forests actually has about 10,000 hectares of native forest in its total estate of 26,000 hectares, so it is not just those two. Most of them are tied up intricately amongst the plantation area.

MRS DUNNE: But they are not managed as forestry ventures?

Mr Bartlett: No, they are managed for their conservation heritage values.

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MRS DUNNE: Okay. So in that case there is a concerted program of dealing with pine wildlings and things like that?

Mr Bartlett: Absolutely. In the last budget year we actually controlled some pine wildlings in one of the ones that you were talking about, in the Cowan forest area escarpment. We started a program out there and in some other areas of native forest as well.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, okay. And that is part of your ongoing weed control program?

Mr Bartlett: That's correct, yes.

MRS DUNNE: There has often been over the years criticism of ACT Forests weed management. Is there an increased emphasis on weed management?

Mr Bartlett: There certainly is. From this budget year we have just finished, when you see the annual report you will see substantially increased program outputs in the weed and wildling area as a result of the CSO funding that is now in the budget to achieve those programs.

MRS DUNNE: Okay.

Mr Bartlett: And that rolls over into the next year as well, or the remaining years.

MS DUNDAS: Can you inform us how the boboyan pines management is going? It is one of those areas that has been badly managed over the last 20 years, and I understand that the idea is to just fell it as fast as possible.

Mr Wood: You have seen it more recently.

Mr Bartlett: We worked down there on the harvesting or the clear falling removal of produce until it got too cold and wet, which I think from memory was about the end of May or so, and we have given an indication that in the spring we will go back there again. We are aiming to complete all the clear falling of those plantations by about March, I think, so that the remaining area could be replanted in the following winter.

MS DUNDAS: Have you made a decision yet on how you are going to replant—either through hand or through scatter planting?

Mr Bartlett: That is not my area.

MRS DUNNE: It becomes a parks and cons issue?

Mr Bartlett: It is already Environment's land. We are just acting as the contractor to clear the pines off it.

MS DUNDAS: Yes, thank you.

MR SMYTH: What is the future of Melrose pines, given that it has been burnt so many times and badly managed?

Mr Bartlett: Would you like to buy it, Brendan?

MR SMYTH: What price, Mr Bartlett? Is that an offer? I'll take it now.

MS DUNDAS: You are earning enough to buy a pine plantation.

MR SMYTH: No, no—it burnt down at Christmas.

Mr Bartlett: Melrose pines really, as a commercial entity, is too small a patch of pines to have a long-term future I think. I think it is an area that we need to have a look at over time because it is not a commercially viable unit. And it has got this problem that someone desperately wants to burn it down.

MR SMYTH: Doesn't want it as pine trees, yes. It must ruin their view. How many houses can I put on it? Just one? I'll come and talk to you later about it.

MR HARGREAVES: You can put a cotton plantation on it.

MS DUNDAS: Just do a draft variation.

MR SMYTH: Ancillary use—we will turn it into an arboretum and put a nice house at the top of the rise.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne, do you want to ask some questions of a general nature?

MRS DUNNE: Yes, I have a couple of questions of a general nature. I should have done this this morning but I got distracted in an altercation with the Deputy Chairman about whether we should stop or not.

MR HARGREAVES: Well, just get on with it.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Wood, I have a couple of questions and I think that the answer is that most of these will be addressed tomorrow under the Minister for Planning. Capital works, including Gungahlin Drive, is listed for tomorrow, but I just wanted to get an indication from you if I could. What are the administrative demarcation responsibilities for Gungahlin Drive at the moment? It is listed for discussion tomorrow but most of the work seems to have been done by ACT Roads.

Mr Wood: Mr Thompson will build it as soon as it gets ticked off. That's accurate?

Mr Thompson: Yes, that's quite accurate.

Mr Wood: So when he gets told "go ahead", he will go ahead. But, of course, you have seen a lot of the preparatory stuff thus far.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, but I really wanted a reasonable sort of demarcation. At the moment there are sort of policy issues being run by Mr Corbell. Interestingly enough, most of the policy issues are not planning issues but seem to be road issues, and I just wanted to see what sort of demarcation there was.

Mr Wood: Well, I think they are pretty well tied up with those planning issues.

MRS DUNNE: But most of the consultancies and stuff have been run by Roads ACT?

Mr Thompson: Yes, they are Mrs Dunne. The complication with the project is that there is a significant planning component both in terms of territory planning and Commonwealth/NCA issues, together with the move of the project out of planning phase into the preliminary design, detail design, construction phase. At this stage we are in this blend of activities and at the government level it has been decided that Minister Corbell should continue to be the minister with carriage of it. However, because we are moving out of this planning phase into the design phase, we have made a call within the department that the part of the department with primary carriage should be Roads ACT. But we have a steering committee which also involves planning and environment, because there are quite significant planning and environment issues. And so, we are progressing on that basis.

Now at a point—and I won't give you a chronological time—but once we are through the major planning issues, both territory and Commonwealth, then I would imagine government would take a decision that it becomes purely an Urban Services issue.

MRS DUNNE: Minister are you kept abreast of the issues that are going on in relation to planning?

Mr Wood: Yes, indeed.

MRS DUNNE: In that case, when did you know that the Gungahlin Drive extension couldn't be built on budget or on time?

Mr Wood: Well, at the same time as Mr Corbell knew. I would expect around that time.

MRS DUNNE: So when was that?

Mr Wood: I would want to go back and have a look. It became apparent fairly late in the process.

MR SMYTH: How late would that be, though?

Mr Wood: Well, look, I'm not going to answer questions here and then you are going to ask the same questions tomorrow.

MRS DUNNE: No, actually what I am asking is when did you know? If you want to check your diary and get back to us, that's fine.

Mr Wood: I'll do that. Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: So, Mr Thompson, does that mean that you will be here tomorrow to answer questions about Gungahlin Drive?

Mr Thompson: Yes, I will be here as Mr Corbell's planning department head.

MR SMYTH: The community mentoring program has now finished and there was great to do about it last week. I think you gave some awards to the most successful program. Why has that finished if it has been so successful?

Mr Wood: I am not sure that it has finished. I will check my data. Unless I am mistaken, I think it will carry on. I know that I said to some people, "I'll see you next time." I hope I haven't misled them.

Dr Adrian: Funding for what was called the community mentoring program has finished, and it was finished at the end of last financial year. There is a new program of activity that still comes under that general heading, called the community development program. I think there is \$500,000 this year and next year. As a part of that, community mentoring, certainly given its success, could be picked up as one of the potential projects. So it won't be a separate program in its own right, but as part of our evaluation of what sorts of projects might be supported under that community development program, community mentoring could be one of those.

MR SMYTH: So at this time the contract that was signed in 2000 has finished, there is a half million dollars in this year's budget to continue those social capital projects that we started, but you haven't decided on which projects will continue or which projects will be in the next round of funding?

Dr Adrian: That's correct, and it's 500 for this year and the next year.

MR SMYTH: Could you refresh me as to what it was over the last two years?

Dr Adrian: I think—

MR SMYTH: There is bits of nodding behind you—the font of knowledge might be there. I am sorry, I meant to ask this question this morning.

Dr Adrian: I could be corrected but I think the total might have been something in the order of \$750,000 in a previous year.

MR SMYTH: If you could check, that would be fine.

Dr Adrian: I will give you the figures. We actually have a steering committee within the department that is looking at the whole issue of how we might advise the minister on the expenditure of the two lots of \$500,000.

THE CHAIR: Are there any further questions of Minister for Urban Services and Minister for the Arts? If not, I thank him for his attendance.

Mr Wood: Mr Chair, before we close I would like to refer to a couple of notes that I have in front of me. Off the top of our head, when we were asked for a costing of how much it was for each tree saved we were given a figure of \$2,000, but they went away and did some sums and it is probably closer to \$1,000 for that 13 per cent of trees that have been saved.

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I think we understood the correction about eight extra rangers, but we were talking about more field presence, and the eight came from somewhere else. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for your attendance and we will see you tomorrow afternoon, I think.

Mr Wood: Yes, indeed. With a whole new department.

The committee adjourned at 5.37 pm.