

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE
AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

(Reference: Appropriation Bill 2003-2004)

Members:

**MR B SMYTH (The Chair)
MRS H CROSS (The Deputy Chair)
MRS V DUNNE
MR J HARGREAVES
MS K MacDONALD**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

MONDAY, 19 MAY 2003

**Secretary to the committee:
Mr Derek Abbott (Ph: 6205 0199)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

The committee met at 9.05 am.

Appearances:

Mr J Stanhope, Chief Minister, Attorney-General, Minister for Community Affairs and Minister for the Environment

Chief Minister's Department

Mr R Tonkin, Chief Executive

Ms P Davoren, Executive Director, Public Sector Management and Labour Policy Group

Mr A Rice, Acting Senior Director, Policy Group

Mr P Ottesen, Director, Office of Sustainability

Ms C Hudson, Director, Policy Group

Mr N Manikis, Executive Director, Multicultural and Community Affairs Group

Mr P Brady, Director, ACT Office for Ageing

Mr S Rosenberg, Manager, Policy Group

Ms K Fanning, ACT Acting Director, ACT Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Mr A Thompson, Chief Executive, ACT Bushfire Recovery Taskforce

Mr P Gordon, Executive Director, Office of Business and Tourism

THE CHAIR: Good morning Chief Minister. Thank you for attending the estimates committee budget estimates hearings for the year 2003-04. I will start by reading the ritual warning that is to be read to all witnesses prior to giving evidence.

These hearings, which are legal proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, are protected by parliamentary privilege, which gives you certain protections but which also imposes on you certain responsibilities. It means that you are protected from certain legal action, such as being sued for defamation for what you say at this public hearing. It also means that you have a responsibility to tell the committee the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated by the Assembly as a serious matter. Would you like to make an opening address, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mr Chair. Thank you for the invitation to attend today. I and all officers from the Chief Minister's Department will be happy to respond to any questions you may wish to ask and to elucidate information on the budget.

THE CHAIR: We will start with some general questions about the Chief Minister's portfolio and then work our way through budget line items. Before we commence, I was handed a sheet of paper at a function last night—I also heard this on the radio—that purports to be budget estimate guidelines on how to avoid answering questions. Has it been brought to your attention that this document has been promulgated through the public service?

Mr Stanhope: I know of no such document or instruction. It is not an issue that anyone has discussed with me. I would not countenance any member of the ACT public service seeking to avoid, obfuscate or dissemble in any way. All ACT public servants appearing at estimates committee hearings must understand the full range of their responsibilities as professional public servants. I would be seriously concerned if there were a suggestion that any public servant should do other than his or her duty to fulfil those responsibilities.

I have not seen the document to which you are referring, but there is a difference between suggesting that somebody should avoid questions—or someone is being instructed on how to avoid answering questions—and being made aware of his or her responsibilities as a public servant. I cannot engage in a discussion about specifics, Mr Chair, as I am not aware of the document. If I could see the document and I had some understanding about its genesis I might be able to participate more fully. Mr Tonkin might be able to assist the committee.

Mr Tonkin: I, too, am unaware of any such document. People are well prepared for estimates committee hearings; they know the background to the issues; and they answer questions in the way that you described in your introduction.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hargreaves is photocopying the document. Unfortunately, I just got it myself. One the great concerns for me is that there is an ACT Health logo on the top of the document. Of course somebody could have bodgied it up. But it does state that, if you do not want to answer a question, you can simply take it on notice. The implication goes further than that. This is almost a guide on how not to be helpful.

Mr Tonkin: Our instruction to public servants is that, if they do not know the answer to a question, it is far better for them to take it on notice and to find out the answer rather than running the risk of misleading the committee. That is a prudent and sensible posture to adopt. So it is a question of how it is being read. That is the standard guidance that is given. Other guidance that I give to officials is that, if possible, they should seek to answer the question. Taking questions on notice substantially multiplies our workload.

THE CHAIR: While we wait for Mr Hargreaves to return we could deal with the ownership agreement on page 37 of the budget papers.

Mr Tonkin: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I note that the staffing profile for the department this year is 287.14 people and the staffing profile for the department next year will be 287.14 people. There does not appear to be any change in the department's staffing profile. Is that the case? Will those figures remain static?

Mr Tonkin: That appears to be our aim. The budget item states that these are projected figures. However, I would be amazed if that was the outcome. We are not proposing to reduce our staffing. There will be ups and downs. However, that is just a general assessment. I acknowledge that it has a degree of spurious precision. I am not quite sure what the 0.14 of a staff member refers to; it must be someone visiting on a part-time basis. As you would be aware, various people work in the organisation on a part-time basis.

I think that figure is simply an estimate. Overall, we do not anticipate that our staffing levels will change; that is how the level has been expressed mathematically. We can give you further advice about those figures, but we are not intending to vary our staff very much at all. There will be ups and downs across the place, even in a department as small as the Chief Minister's Department, but it will end up as roughly the same figure. Presumably that is what the number runs out to on a mathematical calculation.

THE CHAIR: The paragraph above the chart states that, of these staff, 14.8 were executive staff. Are those the figures for the current year, or are those projected figures for the coming year?

Mr Tonkin: That is in the current year.

THE CHAIR: And how many for the coming year?

Mr Tonkin: It has not changed. The 0.8 refers to one senior executive who works part time.

THE CHAIR: You do not anticipate any extra executive staff in the coming year?

Mr Tonkin: Not at the time that these estimates were prepared. That may change. The figure could vary as we go forward.

THE CHAIR: I refer again to the budget estimates sheet, which the Chief Minister now has, which has numbering on the side of it. That document, which was handed to me at a function that I attended last night, is obviously the first page of a number of pages. The matter that truly concerns me is dot point eight, which states, "Take on notice what you can't or don't want to answer." It concerns me greatly that such a document was circulated, even if it was circulated in jest. Given that neither of the gentlemen have any knowledge of it, would you undertake to investigate that matter?

Mr Stanhope: Most certainly. I share your concern, Mr Chair. If ACT Government departments or officials are suggesting to any public servant that, during estimates, they should not answer questions they do not want to answer, I take serious exception to that. I will ask Mr Tonkin to pursue the genesis and the identity of the author of the document. I cannot do anything more than that at this stage. It is news to me. I have not seen the document, which makes a number of suggestions that are of concern to me. I take the point, Mr Chair.

THE CHAIR: Thanks, Chief Minister. Do members have any other general questions about the Chief Minister's portfolio?

MS DUNDAS: The last estimates committee recommended that there be separate reporting for all officers and that there should be a breakdown of different officers in the multicultural area. The Government agreed to do that. However, I cannot find those figures in the budget papers.

Mr Tonkin: I think that might have related to annual reporting rather than budgetary reporting.

MS DUNDAS: The committee's recommendation related to the budget papers. The Government agreed to do that. Recommendation 3 in last year's estimates committee report states, "The committee recommended that the budget advise of funding and outputs in areas such as the ACT Office of Multicultural Affairs, Office of Women and the Office of Ageing, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit." The government's response was, "More specific outputs for the areas within the group will be

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provided in the next budget.” I cannot find that, so I was wondering whether you could provide me with a page number?

Mr Tonkin: It should be in BP4. We address those areas under community affairs, but we have not picked up the recommendation, which is an oversight.

MS DUNDAS: What page are you looking at?

Mr Tonkin: It is page 42 in BP4.

MS DUNDAS: So will you be able to provide a breakdown?

Mr Tonkin: We will provide you with a breakdown of activities in those areas. You will see references to those single quantitative lines, but I take it that you are asking how much is being spent against each of those areas?

MS DUNDAS: Yes.

Mr Tonkin: In all cases you will see the number one in the quantity lines. That is a policy position that I adopt. I regard it as a complete nonsense to try to predict how many pieces of policy work you can produce in a given area in a given year. You could bodgie the figures to make them exceed that number or whatever. A policy process is going on. You will see that there are separate qualitative and timeliness measures because those areas variously report either to the Chief Minister or to the Minister for Women. So we are interested in working out whether we’re meeting ministers’ requirements in those regards. But we can certainly break the numbers down against these categories that you have asked for, which are multicultural, women, Office for Ageing, et cetera. I apologise. This year’s budget figures were prepared at about twice the normal speed. It is a weak excuse, but we will fix it for next time.

MS DUNDAS: Thank you.

MRS CROSS: I wish to ask a general question about output class 1 and about empire building. One of the issues I intend to pursue throughout the estimates committee hearings is empire building. Minister, has your Government allowed the bureaucracy to indulge in empire building since you came into office? Has the expansion of the public service applied to both the senior executive service and to the service at large? Has there been a significant expansion of the public service since you came into government?

Mr Stanhope: I might give just a general response and then ask Mr Tonkin or the department to give details about staffing numbers in the public service over the last year. The term or expression “empire building” is non-specific. I am not entirely sure how you would define or classify the term “empire building”. It is not a term or expression that I would apply to any aspect of the ACT Government or public service. I think the ACT public service is an incredibly lean machine. Over the past 18 months—the period within which we have been in government—I have constantly been impressed by the output of the ACT public service as a proportion of staffing levels and available resources.

The output and productivity of the ACT public service across the board are absolutely outstanding. We have a very thin public service. One of the issues that makes the

development of detailed policy much more difficult than one would like is that thinness within the ranks of the ACT public service. Of course, we have sought to direct resources to priorities and pressure points as we see them. But I would not suggest that there is any notion or semblance of empire building in the ACT public service. It is not a suggestion that I would accept.

In relation to raw numbers, certainly in response to priorities identified by the government there have been shifts and changes in the numbers of public servants across the board. But as to overall numbers, Mr Tonkin might be able to give you a breakdown of those numbers.

MRS CROSS: Mr Tonkin might like to answer this question, Chief Minister, to save time.

Mr Stanhope: I conclude by saying that I hope we have the answer here today. If we do not we will certainly get for the committee the full range of numbers across all departments.

Mr Tonkin: I make three points in relation to the broad nature of your first proposition, Mrs Cross. Firstly, public servants are there to deliver the services that a government requires them to deliver. As most of our activities are service delivery they involve a number of people. So, generally speaking, if you increase your scale of services you will need more people to deliver them. There is that direction relationship.

Secondly, we work hard to keep down our administrative and overall costs so that we can fund new programs. I am not aware of any evidence of empire building, as you put it. The third point relates to senior executive numbers. All positions that were established, or are proposed to be established, for the senior executive are subject to an independent job-weighting analysis by Mercer Cullen Egan Dell, a company that does that for us. That company assesses whether there is a particular weight for a job.

I have taken the view that it is highly unproductive simply to set a ceiling on senior executives. If the work is there to be done it can be done. This financial year there has been an increase in the number of senior executives. If we take into account the number in Chief Minister's Department, that number has jumped by about six or eight. The reason for the jump is that we include within our numbers at the moment the secretariat of the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, which was established on a short-term basis. From memory, we have put in about another six or seven senior executives to perform that function.

As that function finishes those jobs will disappear. So the numbers will go up and down, depending on need. So, in numerical terms, there has been an increase in the number of senior executives, driven largely by that and by increasing needs. I am just looking across the lines of numbers in some other areas. The figures for health have gone up considerably. Those figures go up and down. In June last year health had 11 senior executives. It now has 14. The figure has been as low as eight and as high as 15. Sometimes you are double posting if people are away, et cetera, so you need to take into account the actual head count. Some of these jobs are notional.

There has been a variation, over time, in the full-time equivalence in the ACT public service. Full-time equivalence means that you take all the part timers, average them out to full timers and exclude those people who work for the government but who are not public servants—they are in some of those other sorts of areas. In 1997-98 the figure was 12,112. That figure went down over the next five years to 11,736, 11,499, and 11,670 and, in 2001-02, the figure was 12,254. Those figures are to be found on page 13 of the State of the Territory report, if you want to look at them more detail.

So the numbers will move around. When we are going through the budgetary process we are careful to establish the needs of particular projects and programs, some of which get up and some of which do not. When we are delivering a program usually a lot of what we do is not just handing out money; it is actually delivering something. We buy the people to do that.

MRS CROSS: How many SES officers did we budget for on 1 July 2001, 1 May 2003 and 1 July 2004?

Mr Tonkin: I will take that question on notice.

MRS CROSS: Do you know the answer to the first part of my question, which referred to 1 July 2001?

Mr Tonkin: We might be able to find that out.

MRS CROSS: What about 1 May 2003? I assume that these are figures that you would know.

Mr Tonkin: Not necessarily. I do not know the figures for 1 May 2003. I have not yet seen the statistics for May 2003. I get a monthly report.

MRS CROSS: But would you know the figures for 1 July 2001?

Mr Tonkin: We should have the SES numbers for July 2001. The figures that I have in front of me are for the current financial year. I get a monthly report on senior executive numbers at the end of each month. I got one for the end of April, but I do not think I have seen it. If I did, it was only in the last few days.

MRS CROSS: But you would know the history of those numbers over the last two years?

Mr Tonkin: I have in front of me the numbers from June last year to April this year.

MRS CROSS: What are they?

Mr Tonkin: They are 123. If the figure for 1 May is the same as the figure for 30 April, which is a high probability, there are 123 positions in the SES. That includes, as I said, all those extra bushfire secretariat positions, which were established and which will progressively disappear as we go through the balance of the calendar year. So that figure will come down by half a dozen or more.

MRS CROSS: Will you come back to me with the other figures?

Mr Tonkin: Yes.

MRS CROSS: Thank you.

MS MacDONALD: My question is directed to both the Chief Minister and Mr Tonkin. In relation to that point, how does the ACT public service perform in comparison to other state and territory jurisdictions?

Mr Stanhope: As I said before—and I think this is a fair comment to make—we are a small, lean and efficient public service that produces outstanding work. We are a public service that is thin, particularly in policy areas. An unfortunate side effect of a determination to be efficient and to keep numbers down is that, more often than not, one of the areas that cops the brunt of stringency measures is the policy area and the delivery and development of policy advice. Governments do not cut service deliverers as readily as they will cut other areas that are seen as more discretionary. As we all know, the politics are different.

I think that the level of service delivered by the ACT is certainly as good as anywhere in Australia, if not better. That is reflected in the national comparisons of service delivery of which we are all aware. The ACT rates extremely high across the board in relation to service delivery. As I said before, having regard to the fact that we are a small jurisdiction and because of the need for efficiencies and stringencies, we are, unfortunately, thin in our policy areas. In an ideal world I would very much love to be able to change that, but I do not think that will be happening fast or in the foreseeable future.

So we will continue to battle on, as we do, even then producing incredibly high quality and timely work that matches work from any other jurisdiction in Australia. But we do not have the capacity to do as much as we would like to do. I think that would also be the view of Mr Tonkin.

Mr Tonkin: I agree.

MS MacDONALD: I probably should have asked how we have performed in comparison to the performance of other larger jurisdictions.

Mr Stanhope: I would not have that advice on a per capita basis. I do not know how realistic such a measure would be.

Mr Tonkin: You get into trouble when you try to do a comparative analysis. The larger you are, the more leaders you have. Take as an example a bus service—a hybrid beast that sort of sits half in and half out of our public service. You can run a large number of extra buses with no more management structure. Once you have that bit right you can go on. So there are those issues. In a policy area you can generate policy for 100,000 people or 10 million people. The nature of policy debates may change, but the exercise is a different story. I think it would be hard to make those sorts of comparisons.

The ACT public service, which is a mixture of local and state governments, is not like the government. The New South Wales government deals with State issues. A vast number of people in local government across New South Wales deal with many of the issues that we deal with, particularly in urban services. There are dangers in such a comparison. We really have to measure it on the basis of whether people are satisfied with the quality of the outcomes. As the Chief Minister said, there is always an endless pile of things to do and there is a queuing effect.

The Chief Minister was kind when he said that things are done in a timely fashion. I wish that they could be done faster, but there is a limit to the number of people and hours and things will queue up. The art is in trying to pick the things that you need to deal with first, second and third, rather than seventh, eighth and ninth.

THE CHAIR: The Chief Minister, in answer to Ms MacDonald's question, mentioned that he would like to see more policy work done. On page 145 of BP3 one of the Government's initiatives is enhanced whole-of-government communications. Can the Chief Minister explain what that is?

Mr Stanhope: Yes. I will ask Mr Tonkin to give you the detail of that.

Mr Tonkin: We are looking at our capacity to deal in policy terms with, and to provide a whole-of-government co-ordinated response to, various issues. The bushfire event made it apparent to us that we lacked a depth of capacity in what might broadly be termed as the areas of public affairs and public information. We did not have the required number of people with those sorts of skills and background, particularly at more senior levels, to handle the sort of pressure we were under back in January and to ensure that we had a coherent, comprehensive process. We did it in an ad hoc way by bringing in people to assist us. We think, overall, that it worked quite well.

We are conscious of the fact that we need that capacity. One of the things we are trying to do at a whole-of-government level is produce an overall presentation of the government's intention and co-ordinate the activities of various departments. That is one of the key roles of the Chief Minister's Department. We think it is important to get the information in the right form, in a coherent fashion, and to present it to the public. That is why the government allocated the extra resources. This is not just disaster related. If we have large-scale initiatives we want to make sure that we get the best presentation of the information without taking away from the scarce and limited resources of departments.

THE CHAIR: So what will the \$250,000 buy the taxpayers in the ACT?

Mr Tonkin: Basically, it will buy them a couple of specialists in that sort of area so we can get that level of assurance. If you take your mind back to 19 January we were bringing in people from outside—short-term contract people, or volunteers in a number of cases—to help us to deal with the media storm. There was a serious risk at that time that the bushfire activities would be distracted by the national media storm. We had other things to do rather than run the top cover. I said in my submission to Mr McLeod that we needed the capacity to deal with that. This fairly small unit will give us that sort of capacity. When we have other things that we want to present or try to explain in a general sense across government that will give us that sort of capacity.

MS DUNDAS: Can you be more specific? You referred to a couple of specialists. How many are you talking about?

Mr Tonkin: Probably two more for that \$250,000. Taking into consideration what we would pay for high-skilled media people, we would get about two people for that sort of money.

THE CHAIR: The January event is an event that we hope we do not see too often in the ACT. The budget papers actually state that it is to strengthen the capacity of the policy group.

Mr Tonkin: The advantage of this is that it is located inside the policy group. You might recall that we already have a capacity there. We want to increase that capacity. If we set up a separate little unit it will have its own administrative function. I am a great believer in integrated models. On occasions those people can do other things, or we can add more people to it. But it would simply be located within the policy group; that would be its organisational location. It would exist within the policy group. We would be able to get information and it would complement what goes on in Canberra Connect—on the web, at the shopfront and at the call centres.

One of the issues that we addressed during the fires was: how do we take operational information and make sure it is expressed in a form that can be communicated across the web, in short information bursts in response to telephone inquiries, as well as putting out press releases? Sometimes the needs of the media and the public can diverge to some extent. So it is there to complement what we have and to do a better job than we have previously done.

MS DUNDAS: Mr Tonkin, what is your current capacity?

Mr Tonkin: I have two people.

MS DUNDAS: So you will be doubling the media group.

Mr Tonkin: I have a SOG B and I have an ASO 6, so we will be increasing the capacity in that area by a couple of people who are more senior than that.

MS DUNDAS: When the budget was released a new slogan was released with it—the “building our city, building our community” slogan—and there will be backdrops and a raft of materials that have been used at a number of other events. How much does that material cost to provide that information?

Mr Tonkin: I would have to take that question on notice. It was not a particularly expensive exercise. My recollection is that it was less than \$50,000 for all that.

MS DUNDAS: And that came out of funding that was already allocated to the media group?

Mr Tonkin: It came out of my ordinary resources.

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MS DUNDAS: Where did the slogan “building our city, building our community” come from? Was it market tested or was it just developed by the department?

Mr Tonkin: We sought advice from a number of organisations, in particular, how to present a message in a certain way. The logos were professionally designed and we sought advice about a number of other things. It is the Government’s logo. Ultimately, the Government chose the emblem that it wanted.

MS DUNDAS: Would you be able to give us a breakdown of the different costs associated with that media group?

Mr Tonkin: I am told that it was under \$10,000.

MS DUNDAS: That includes the development of the logo, the printing of materials and the choosing of the slogan?

Mr Tonkin: The choosing of the slogan was a matter for the government. Presenting the concept and obtaining options, et cetera, cost less than \$10,000 for the lot. The cost of printing the slogans would have been the same as producing the budget papers—it is stuck on it. It does not cost you anything extra.

MRS DUNNE: How did we come up with the slogan?

Mr Tonkin: It is a theme. The theme last year was “Building Canberra’s Future”.

THE CHAIR: The sustainability theme seems to have disappeared.

MR HARGREAVES: At least the slogan is not being displayed on the side of an aeroplane or on number plates. It is not a really powerful message.

THE CHAIR: It is certainly not a slogan that is constantly in people’s minds, Mr Hargreaves.

MR HARGREAVES: It is neither an appealing nor a powerful slogan.

Mr Stanhope: What slogan was that, Mr Hargreaves?

MRS DUNNE: We are talking about the current slogan.

MS DUNDAS: I think it was “Feel the Power”.

Mr Stanhope: We all remember “Feel the Power”.

MRS DUNNE: Last year’s slogan, which Mr Tonkin talked about earlier, was wonderfully memorable. I am sure that this slogan will be equally memorable. My question was: What process did you use to come up with this slogan? Did you go out and market test it, did cabinet sit down and brainstorm it, or was it something in between?

Mr Tonkin: It was not market tested.

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MRS DUNNE: Where did it come from?

MS DUNDAS: You say that the government developed it. What part of government—the executive or cabinet?

Mr Tonkin: Ultimately, everything is a decision of the executive.

Mr Stanhope: The ACT Government took the decision to select the slogan “building our city, building our community.” In coming to that decision we took advice from the Chief Minister’s Department. The Chief Minister’s Department, in the development of the design—and it is an excellent design—took advice from a number of Canberra graphic designers after the selection process. The sign was not market tested as such; it was developed as a result—

MRS DUNNE: I am not talking about the design; I am talking about the slogan.

Mr Stanhope: The slogan “building our city, building our community”?

MRS DUNNE: Yes. Where did that slogan come from?

Mr Stanhope: That is a decision that the government took.

THE CHAIR: Did the government, as in cabinet, or the government, as in the bureaucracy, recommend it to government?

Mr Stanhope: The government, as in the government.

THE CHAIR: So cabinet did not make the decision?

Mr Stanhope: Cabinet decided it eventually, as it decides most things. It was a cabinet decision. Almost all the government’s decisions are taken through cabinet.

MR HARGREAVES: I understood from what the Chief Minister said earlier that the whole process cost less than \$10,000. Has either the Chief Minister or Mr Tonkin any idea how much the “Feel the Power” campaign cost?

Mr Tonkin: I am afraid that it was well before my time. I could take that question on notice.

MR HARGREAVES: We need to compare the costs of these projects. As this is an issue of some moment for the people of Canberra I am sure we are all looking forward to finding out this information.

Mr Stanhope: I would be more than happy to take that question on notice.

MR HARGREAVES: We should not be diverted from the real issues.

THE CHAIR: We might get back to the enhanced whole-of-government communications package. Mr Tonkin, did I hear you say earlier that the budget figures

are an estimate of what you think it will cost, but that the establishments have not yet been put together?

Mr Tonkin: We made an estimate of what we believe it will cost and that is what is in the budget. We will now give effect to that program. Like most other programs that are in the budgets, we make an estimate of what we think they are likely to cost and we then implement them. It is good if I can implement them for less.

THE CHAIR: But is that not the wrong way to go about this? You are saying that you come up with a number and you fit the package to the number, rather than working out what the two, three or however many officers would cost. You then put it in as a reasonable figure in the budget. Are you saying that this is just a figure that was made up?

Mr Tonkin: No. It was not a figure that was made up. We thought about what sort of structure we wanted, we worked out a broad estimate for that structure and we picked a number under that estimate for the budget provision.

THE CHAIR: So what are the positions?

Mr Tonkin: When you look at the scale of the positions you will find that one might be an executive position and one might be an SPO 2-type position. When you run the numbers on that you come up with overheads in excess of \$250,000. We rounded the numbers down to that sort of figure. We went through an exercise and said, "If we are to have this sort of function, what would be its size, the nature of it, its possible composition and its estimated cost?" We did all those things. After going through the budgetary process we formed a view after determining what we would like to have against what we can afford. Obviously, the number in the budget papers is what we can afford. We will seek to achieve our objectives within those resources.

Mr Stanhope: I think one point needs to be made. You would be aware of this, Mr Smyth, as a former cabinet member, although I do not know how your cabinet operated. It is certainly it is fair to say that about 90 per cent of the bids that went before this budget cabinet did not come out as they went in. With all these numbers in the budget it is a little unfair to ask Mr Tonkin whether those are the numbers that went into the cabinet budget process. I can tell you now that I do not know which ones went into that process; I would have to go back through my working papers to establish that.

I cannot put a percentage on it, but it is fair to say that a majority of the numbers that come out of budget cabinet for specific policy initiatives or items are not the numbers that go in. I am sure that is the case in every budget cabinet around the world. The point that Mr Tonkin makes is well put. At the end of the day cabinet will make a decision on what it thinks is an appropriate number in relation to a specific initiative. That advice is not necessarily based on establishment work that may or may not have been done within a department in preparation of the bid.

THE CHAIR: Is it not a flawed process to make up a number?

Mr Stanhope: It is a deeply flawed process.

THE CHAIR: Mr Tonkin said that there is no establishment and that he works to a number that he is given. So it is self-defeating in that you do not actually have what you want.

Mr Stanhope: It is not self-defeating, but it is certainly flawed. It is a fact of life. I will not point to particular initiatives and say, “The department or the line area that developed this budget proposal actually asked for twice that; therefore the proposal, as delivered, is flawed and cannot work.” Most of the numbers that you see in this budget are not necessarily the numbers which the line area, the policy area or the department put to cabinet. Of course, cabinet in tough, tight, economic times makes a decision in relation to every bid, almost never enhances them and almost always cuts them.

MRS DUNNE: Chief Minister, let us say that department X has a new initiative, policy, piece of research or a new program that it wants to implement. It puts in an establishment bid, a resourcing bid and things like that and it then says, “It is a good idea but we cannot afford to spend that much.” You do not necessarily say, “Here is three-eighths or seven-tenths. Go away and implement it.”

Mr Tonkin: Yes, you do. That is precisely what you do.

MRS DUNNE: If we take into account what Mr Smyth said, that makes it an entirely flawed process.

Mr Stanhope: It is flawed; it is quite flawed.

MRS DUNNE: You are not saying, “What do I really need to deliver this basic service?” What you are saying is, “It would not be a bad idea to deliver this service. I do not care what I need to deliver this service; I am going to give you three-eighths or seven-tenths of that”, rather than looking at what is being offered and coming up with, perhaps, a cut-down version—not just in relation to money but also in relation to establishment.

As an example, this is the initiative that you have come up with. You are saying that you would like to start but that you are not asking for the money—I do not know and I do not particularly care. You have roughly translated the figure in the budget papers to two staff. I am trying to plumb, Mr Tonkin, whether or not, in doing that, you have looked at the best possible way of delivering the service, or did you say, “This is as much money as I have, and the devil take the hindmost.”

Mr Tonkin: Let me go through the process. The initiative was developed and costed as part of a budget process that requires all budget bids to be analysed and costed. You establish what sort of structure you want and you determine how much it will cost for the people, administration and so on. You put forward that proposal, which goes through the budgetary process. As the Chief Minister explained, the budgetary process is an art of what is possible. Often it is an art of compromise. You adjust your proposals and ideas to fit in with what you can afford and with the resources that you have.

The job of the public service is then to implement that proposal in accordance with all the variables that come to play inside a department’s budget. That is what we will do in this case. I expect that that money will be fully expended. I am just doing a mental calculation to determine how much it would cost for an executive, plus a senior public

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affairs officer and their overheads. It would be a bit more than \$250,000, but we will adjust the broader margins of the policy grouping elsewhere in the department so that we can achieve the objective.

MRS DUNNE: That \$250,000 does not actually allow any expenditure on materials; it is just for people.

Mr Tonkin: Some minor administrative aspects will be involved, but nothing of a material nature, if I might use that accounting term. So it really relates to overheads. In these sorts of areas we are dealing mostly with inquiries, or we are trying to get information together to present it in a coherent form. An example of that is the excellent document on bushfire recovery. That is the sort of work that such a unit could do. However, that work was done elsewhere by the bushfire secretariat.

We use our normal administrative costs to pull that sort of stuff together. The cost of publication is fractionally separate. That is an example of how it would occur. To be precise, there is no provision in that allocation for any publication or anything like that. It will just enable us to do better, even though we believe we do pretty well at present. We must get that information to the community and to the media in a form that is useful and helpful to them.

MRS DUNNE: Will organisations under the Chief Minister's Department have access to this service?

Mr Tonkin: Absolutely. It is a whole of government asset. That is what it has been established to do.

THE CHAIR: Mr Tonkin, how many public relations officers are there currently in the ACT public service?

Mr Tonkin: I do not know. I would have to take that question on notice. There are not a lot. I know from a discussion that I had recently that one department does not have any public affairs officers at the moment.

THE CHAIR: What department would that be?

Mr Tonkin: Justice did not have anybody.

THE CHAIR: That equates to the information I have. Would you be surprised to find out that the ACT public service currently has a total of 19 public relations officers who are listed in the government directory?

Mr Tonkin: I do not know whether or not I am surprised.

Mr Stanhope: I am not. It is not nearly enough. It surprises me how low it is.

Mrs DUNNE: Is it not something that you should know?

Mr Tonkin: There are many things that I do not know.

THE CHAIR: Why do you suggest that that is low, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: I was just looking at Mrs Carnell's explanation of the "Feel the Power" campaign that cost \$100,000, or thereabouts, to develop the slogan, and the campaign in 1998-99, for which the Liberals allocated \$535,000. So you can see these campaign issues cost money, Mr Smyth. The question that should be asked is whether or not the \$535,000 in the 1997-98 budget for "Feel the Power" might not have been better expended on increasing the numbers of public relations personnel in the ACT public service.

THE CHAIR: I might bring you back to the 2003-2004 budget, Chief Minister, for which you are responsible.

Mr Stanhope: I am just using that by way of example. The \$100,000 you spent developing the "Feel the Power" slogan might have been better utilised employing more public relations personnel.

THE CHAIR: Let us talk about the \$250,000 that you are about to spend.

Mr Stanhope: I just use that by way of example.

THE CHAIR: It is a nice example, Chief Minister. Let us look at the \$250,000 that you are about to spend. Is this an idea that you brought down from the hill where the previous Labor Government set up its animals group? Will this group be doing media monitoring on behalf of the government?

Mr Stanhope: No, it will not be doing media monitoring. If we want some media monitoring undertaken we will use the same arrangements that you used when you were in government, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: Okay. What is it that this group will be doing, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: I think we still have the same contract in place that you utilised for that purpose, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: But obviously it is not good enough. What will these two officers be doing, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: Mr Tonkin has explained that. The government needs the capacity and the wherewithal to ensure appropriate communication on a range of issues. Of course, the example that Mr Tonkin used is quite stark. Following the disaster on 18 January we had a significant communications problem across the public service. Even in relation to the task force we sought to address communications issues that are such a vital part of the government's response to the disaster and the need to ensure that we fully recover.

We have engaged on a short-term contract DPM—an ACT firm, one of the principals of which is Helen Lear—to provide that communications strategy and assistance. I do not know whether Mr Tonkin knows offhand how much we are paying DPM, but it is a significant sum.

MR HARGREAVES: It would not be \$500,000 though, would it, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: No, but in the context of a \$250,000 bid for communications expertise, we are in the process of spending half that amount engaging DPM, a local Canberra communications firm, to provide communication services and assistance to the ACT Government at a time of great need. If we had had an enhanced communications capacity we might not have needed to engage DPM. These are the issues that we are dealing with. This issue will not go away just as the bushfires issue will not go away.

As the communications need in relation to the bushfire recovery process lessens, we accept that there will be a need for high and enhanced communications, at least for the rest of this year and perhaps into next year. It is vital for any government to ensure that residents, constituents and communities are fully aware of what it is doing, the decisions it takes, the programs it runs and the services that are available. That is a vital part of any working democracy.

THE CHAIR: So two officers in CMD, four in Urban Services, two in Health, two in Disability and Housing, three in PALM, three with the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce, one officer with Environment ACT, two with the Department of Education—a total of 19 officers—are not capable of getting the government's message out?

Mr Stanhope: We just employed DPM because we did not have the capacity, using our existing numbers, to get the message out. Clearly, in relation to bushfire recovery, there was an urgent and desperate need for us to ensure that the needs of the communities affected by the bushfire and the needs of the broader community were met. That is what we have achieved.

THE CHAIR: But that is a special one-off case that is being met.

Mr Stanhope: It is not necessarily a one-off thing; it is a good example of a lack of capacity within the ACT public service.

MRS DUNNE: It is a worst-case scenario.

Mr Stanhope: It is a good example of the lack of capacity within the ACT public service to ensure that members of the community are fully informed about all issues of relevance to them. I am concerned about any suggestion that government activities are not being made fully available to the entire community. I do not have a desire to keep anybody in the dark. I do not believe that governments should operate on the mushroom principle that you seem to be espousing.

MS DUNDAS: So up until 18 January do you believe that the whole of government was providing effective media communication to people in the ACT?

Mr Stanhope: We were providing effective communication, certainly, but it could have been better and it will be in the future.

MS DUNDAS: You mentioned that you expected this need relating to the bushfires to continue for the rest of this year and into next year, but the allocation is \$1 million over four years. What other projects or scenarios do you think will be required?

Mr Stanhope: The community should be fully aware of everything that governments do. We need to ensure that the message is clear and that the community clearly understands what services the government is providing and what initiatives it is pursuing. A letter in today's *Canberra Times* criticised me for a lack of communication in relation to gay and lesbian law reform. In future I want to ensure that I am not subject to criticisms for not appropriately communicating or consulting with the community on issues such as gay and lesbian law reform.

That letter, which criticised me quite strongly today, stated that the consultation process was not open or patent enough. When we pursue major proposals such as gay and lesbian law reform—something to which this government is committed—there should not be a feeling after the event that people were not aware of what was going on, that they were not engaged and that they did not know that the government was pursuing such an agenda and that it was determined to bring it to fruition. Across the board there are always issues around communication and the need for the community to be engaged.

As you know, these days a great difficulty and frustration for governments and political parties is a lack of connection—the feeling that nobody is listening and that politicians do not really care what the community believes. As I said before, the strength of any democracy can be measured by the level of connection between the people and the government. That connection is developed through open, transparent and accountable government. That is delivered by people in the media with expertise.

MRS CROSS: I want to follow up a question asked by Ms Dundas as her question was similar to a question that I want to ask Mr Tonkin. Were you aware before 18 January of the need for co-ordinated media communication across all portfolios?

Mr Tonkin: Yes.

Mr Stanhope: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, I note that, following the bushfires, a position was advertised for someone to work with the task force and that that person would “undertake accurate media monitoring of all issues”. Is that just your version of the baby animals that ran for the Federal Labor Government?

Mr Tonkin: No.

Mr Stanhope: Certainly not.

Mr Stanhope: I have explained that the government is interested in ensuring there is full communication with the people of Canberra in relation to the things that it does. I do not see the conspiracies that you see.

MS MacDONALD: I think it is called clutching at straws.

THE CHAIR: The funding will give us two new positions. We note from page 37 of the ownership agreement that there are no projected staff increases. Is this the first of the increases that are not mentioned in the budget papers?

Mr Tonkin: What you see in the ownership agreement is an estimate of the total net outcome at the end of the coming financial year. On the basis of the information that I have at this point, that is a reasonable estimate. As I said in response to earlier questions, there are ups and downs in any given year. So it is not feasible to say that there is a fixed number and that you will be responsible if it does not add up. The churning that goes on inside an organisation in a given year produces variations. At the moment we estimate that our net resources will stay the same over the balance of the year. If that turns out to be incorrect, we will adjust it, but we make an estimate at the beginning of the year.

THE CHAIR: If you look at the ownership agreements for most of the departments you will see that their charts show no change. The chart for the health department is exactly the same. It has the same profile, the same number of males and females, the same number of classifications, the same number of staff at the start of the year as it has at the end, whereas the chart for the Department of Education—which is quite a good chart—is updated when there are changes. Why is it that some departments have far more accurate pictures of their staff profiles when your department just seems to have repeated this year what it had before?

Mr Stanhope: Mr Tonkin explained that earlier and he can only respond to your question so many times. He said that, whilst there will be some movement within the Chief Minister's Department, he did not anticipate at this stage that the numbers would increase or decline from the base or starting figures. That was the answer he gave to your question, which he can only answer so many times. I would like to go back to a point that you made earlier. I was not quite sure what point you were making about the media monitoring position in the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce.

I took the decision early in relation to the bushfires and the need for recovery. The government had to respond immediately to emerging concerns and issues—a vital part of the recovery. The recovery arrangements that we put in place through the task force are an absolute model. You might be aware that other governments are now sending officials to Canberra and to the recovery centre to study the successes of the task force and to observe the recovery process in place in the ACT, which is deemed to have been so successful.

Part of that success was our ability and our continued determination to respond immediately to emerging concerns in the community. One of those concerns was raised again today with a call to the Chris Ullman show relating to insurance difficulties. The task force has in place a group that deals exclusively with insurance difficulties and concerns. I think over 40 residents have approached the task force seeking assistance in relation to the difficulties that they are experiencing with their insurance companies—the very issue raised this morning by the caller.

The task force has had an amazing rate of success. The task force, which negotiates meetings on behalf of householders or insurers, has achieved about an 80 per cent success rate or resolution of insurance concerns. I would be interested to know whether the caller this morning sought the assistance of the task force, because its success rate in relation to insurance matters is quite outstanding. We monitor the media so that we can deal with emerging issues that are expressed through the media so they do not become broad matters of concern to all those who were affected.

MRS CROSS: Chief Minister, given that we are talking about expenditure on staff, the third dot point on page 31 of BP4 identifies \$1.752 million in extra spending for the current budget period as well as \$732,000—another wage increase on top of that—for the budget we are examining, which makes a total figure of \$2.5 million. Is the employment of public servants in the department out of control? A question has been asked about your focus on inputs—in particular the amount of money you have been spending—rather than on outputs. That is what you have actually achieved. Would you say that the creation of more public service positions is about inputs or outputs?

Mr Stanhope: It is about delivering service, so I guess it is about outputs. You suggested that there has been an increase in employment or employment levels in the public service. I will have to get a breakdown of the figures, which I don't think are necessarily that alarming. I will get a breakdown of the numbers, which I will be interested to see.

MRS CROSS: Thank you, Chief Minister. If we are to invest money in people and resources we need to know what we are going to get back for that money.

Mr Stanhope: Sure.

MRS CROSS: What I need from you is not so much a breakdown of the figures; I need to know what are we getting back. What is the quid pro quo?

Mr Stanhope: I take your point. At all times we require enhanced services and service delivery, enhanced product and enhanced quality advice and policy.

MRS CROSS: You have key performance indicators and key performance outputs that will enable you to qualify and quantify it?

Mr Stanhope: Most certainly. It is fair to say that we have formal and informal measures. Every minister does not go just to his formal or tabled statements of performance—though, of course, they are of some interest and they are a great accountability measure. Every minister is constantly monitoring quality and output on a number of measures. We all have a range of subjective indicators to which we look as well.

Mr Tonkin: If I can refer to the specifics of Mrs Cross's question, she is questioning the basis of the \$1.752 million. There are two basic reasons for that. It is actually described in the first two lines of the dot point to which she referred. Let me give you the breakdown. It is due, firstly, to bushfire recovery funding, that is, the cost of funding people in the Bushfire Recovery Taskforce secretariat to the tune of \$1.038 million.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, I read that too.

Mr Tonkin: That is a definable one-off cost. The other primary component is wage increases of \$865,000, which is the direct product of the pay rise which has been paid to public servants. It is not an increase in public service numbers; to put it technically, it is a rise in the unit cost of labour. That is it. So there is no increase in the number of public servants; it is the result of the pay rise.

MR HARGREAVES: Is that the second time in two budgets that provision has been made for a public service pay rise? I seem to recall that there was no such provision in the previous budget.

Mr Stanhope: That is true, Mr Hargreaves.

THE CHAIR: Actually, that is not true, Chief Minister. There was provision in the previous budget for public sector pay rises.

Mr Stanhope: I was answering the first part of the question. My answer to the first part of the question was, yes, it is the second budget in a row in which this government has made significant provision for wage increases. It is not true that there was no provision in the previous government's budget, but it was a miserly provision—I think 3 per cent or less.

THE CHAIR: I do not know whether you are in a position to comment on what was in the previous budget, unless you have been briefed.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, I am.

THE CHAIR: I do not believe we have given permission for that.

MR HARGREAVES: Could I have an answer to my question?

Mr Stanhope: I think it was 3 per cent in an environment where the pay rise that was delivered was 10.5 per cent; such was the shaky and dodgy nature of your last budget. The bottom line was that you did not factor in appropriate provision for a public service pay rise. We know that to be the case in relation to the nurses pay rise, the general public service rise and every other EBA that is currently being negotiated.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, given that we are spending 10.5 per cent more on public servants, what are we as taxpayers getting for it? What is the ordinary Canberran getting as a result of your pay increases? What increased services are they getting?

Mr Stanhope: That is an outrageous question because of what it suggests. You do not believe that the ACT public service has a right to be appropriately remunerated.

THE CHAIR: That is not what I asked.

Mr Stanhope: We found a year ago that the ACT public service, when compared to all other public services across Australia, was down around the 20 per cent mark. We actually have a public service that is committed and that is appropriately remunerated. The government, in acknowledging that, pays an appropriate level of remuneration for the work that is delivered. That will not leach away into the Commonwealth public service which, at the time of the commencement of EBA negotiations, offered 14 to 15 per cent more than you were paying your public servants.

MR HARGREAVES: So you are actually recognising the value of the present public service, whereas before it was perhaps a little undervalued?

Mr Stanhope: You have expressed my thoughts and my feelings on this extremely well, Mr Hargreaves. This government is determined to value its public servants and the public service generally.

MRS CROSS: Let us hope that translates through to crossbench staff, Chief Minister, when you negotiate with them.

Mr Stanhope: This government recognises that it has an ageing public service. It also recognises that its public service is working in a town with another public service that is much larger and that has the capacity to offer a broad range of attractive working opportunities. We were suffering a significant brain drain and a significant loss of talent, and we cannot afford that. We need to maintain the expertise and the corporate knowledge that are a vital part of a well-oiled and functioning public service. I do not think it is wise to get into a debate with me about whether or not the ACT public service deserved its 10.5 per cent pay rise.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, nobody is debating that issue. We also had allocations in our budgets for pay rises. I refer to one of your election documents in which you said, "Taxpayers must get better value for their dollars." What better value for their dollars do taxpayers get from the pay increases that you have given to ACT public servants and nurses? Your own document states that you will negotiate better outcomes for taxpayers. What do they get from this?

Mr Stanhope: I am absolutely staggered, Mr Smyth, that you do not believe there is inherent value in having a public service.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, I have not said that. I ask you to answer the question.

Mr Stanhope: I am absolutely staggered at what you are suggesting. You are suggesting that there is no value to be had in a public service that is paid what it is worth—or paid something approaching what it is worth. Are you suggesting that nurses did not deserve their pay rise, and that there are no better outcomes—different workplace attitudes, different morale and a determination to stay with an employer? The attrition rates that we have suffered in the health portfolio and across the public service generally are a matter of grave concern. Those issues can only be addressed through appropriate terms and conditions of work—not just pay but a range of other family friendly initiatives that we have initiated as part of the package.

An employer needs to do a whole raft of things to ensure that he or she has a work force that acknowledges it is valued, that has high morale, that has a high commitment to the task and that is determined to achieve the outcomes that the government and the community require of it. That is achieved through acknowledging, nurturing, and valuing one's public service and one's workers. That is achieved partly through the pay rise that we delivered. Of course, there is a full range of outcomes, positives and value for the community as a result of that commitment and that acknowledgment of the value of the public service.

A happy public servant with high morale and a commitment to the workplace and to the task at hand will produce better outcomes than one with low morale and no commitment. A public servant who feels undervalued, who lacks work and who is underpaid will

produce fewer results. Public servants who roll up to work knowing that they are not valued, underpaid and that their employer does not value their contribution will not produce the same outcomes or outputs as workers who are valued and well remunerated. We all know that that is a matter beyond debate.

THE CHAIR: So no productivity outcomes were negotiated in your agreement?

Mr Stanhope: Productivity outcomes are evident just in the health portfolio. We should look at those areas that were so sorely neglected previously. When the former government was in office all those people working in radiation oncology—radiologists in particular—were being remunerated at about 25 per cent less than their peers across the border. We have had enormous trouble employing a full complement of radiation specialists at Canberra Hospital. There are enormous productivity or output implications as a result of that. We are actually dragging that back as a result of the packages that we have negotiated. I have no doubt that productivity has been significantly enhanced.

MRS CROSS: Chief Minister, The last dot point on page 32 of the budget papers shows a sum of \$6.435 million that was not spent on the human resource system and another \$1.120 million that was not spent on electronic service delivery. These appear to be fundamental IT purchases that the government perceived, in the previous budget, as critical to achieving efficiency. Given that we are talking about outputs, this is a good way to follow on. Minister, do you believe that you have allowed your bureaucrats to squander money on out-of-control empire building when you ought to have been purchasing IT equipment to allow for a more efficient operation? Or is it that they need the money to purchase Commonwealth land, to the tune of \$4.3 million, as indicated later in the note?

Mr Stanhope: That is a very detailed question, Mrs Cross. I will ask Mr Tonkin to respond to the detail.

Mr Tonkin: Firstly, I refute your consistent comment that there is empire building. There is absolutely no empire building. If you can produce any evidence I would be interested to see it. We have not used money for land purchases which was there for IT. That was provided separately.

MRS CROSS: So where did the money go?

Mr Tonkin: The money did not go anywhere. The money has been rolled into the coming financial year.

MRS CROSS: Why?

Mr Tonkin: We are not yet ready to commit on a personnel system. The process has gone out to tender. An industry briefing was held just recently. This is not really a lot of money in the federal government sphere—it is about \$7 million to \$9 million in total for the personnel system. This is the key payroll and personnel system for the whole of the ACT government, so it is important that we get it right.

MRS CROSS: How long will it take to get it right?

Mr Tonkin: We expect that project to be delivered by the end of 2004-05. We have to go through a process. You shake your head, but we do have to go through a process.

MRS CROSS: Yes, I do shake my head, for Hansard.

Mr Tonkin: We have to specify our requirements and assess the bids that come in. We have a detailed and comprehensive procurement process in the ACT government, which has been developed for a good reason—to give us a proper, structured process. After going through that process we select the right people, the right organisation and the right product. We then have to negotiate it and implement it. So it does take time. It would be nice if we could do it faster, but we would rather get it right than do it faster as it will be the enduring personnel platform for a decade or so.

We have allocated some of the ESD funding to JACS and we have returned the balance to the government. That, in turn, is funding capital projects in the electronic area to the same effect through the central capital budget. So those moneys have not been squandered; they have been transferred to and expended in the appropriate place.

MRS CROSS: So you are saying that the money is there?

Mr Tonkin: The money is there and, under accrual accounting, it moves to the next financial year. One of the great advantages of accrual accounting is that you can identify your requirement going forward and you can fund your project. Instead of being forced to come to a quick and perhaps ill-considered decision at a given point in time by saying, “We must spend the money so let us go and spend it”, you can say—

MRS CROSS: It is not a matter of “We must spend the money”, Mr Tonkin.

Mr Tonkin: No. The point I am making is that when people work out a proposal for a project they say—

MRS CROSS: Some of us are actually IT literate and we understand the system.

Mr Tonkin: If you have money in your cash system you often come to the conclusion that you should spend it before the end of the financial year, otherwise you lose the money and it goes back into consolidated revenue. Accrual allows you to move it across the years. The challenge—and I accept that it is a finely balanced issue at this time for the HR system—is to make sure that it is delivered in time to replace our existing systems, which will become unsupported. That is why we are doing it.

MRS DUNNE: On this subject, what was the original timeline for the project? How far has it slipped, if it has slipped?

Ms Davoren: When we first commenced the project at the beginning of last year we were deeply concerned that our existing HR system, PERSPECT, would not be supported by the provider.

MRS DUNNE: Why is that?

Ms Davoren: It is an old system.

MRS DUNNE: Has it just run out of warranty?

Ms Davoren: Yes, it has just run out. I think there might be one other PERSPECT user in the Commonwealth. It has just dwindled over a period of time. We have had quite real and deep concerns about the sustainability of that system in the longer term. In relation to a process like that, what you would like to do is have a period of proper procurement based on specifications, a detailed evaluation process and also an overlap of systems as you go through to implementation of a new system. You do not want to put people at risk of not getting their pay. So you want an orderly process.

We were quite concerned about the time frame for PERSPECT. We put the bid in for the budget last year in an attempt to try to complete the project by the middle of this year. We all realised that that was quite unrealistic, but we also knew that we had to have a pay system. With InTACT we have extended the life of PERSPECT and our support supplier arrangements.

MRS DUNNE: The original aim was to replace PERSPECT by July this year.

Ms Davoren: Yes, which we knew was unrealistic. It was a risk issue for us.

MRS DUNNE: In the meantime you have managed to maintain the support and you now propose to replace PERSPECT—did Mr Tonkin say—by 2004-05?

Ms Davoren: That is right. We have a detailed project plan which goes through a process of procurement, evaluation, testing of a new system, implementation in test sites—I think we have got six sites over a period of time—and then we go through a process of implementation of a new system across those test sites. There would be duplicated operation, in some circumstances, of PERSPECT and the new system.

MRS DUNNE: With this system are you reinventing the wheel, or are you using something that is currently used elsewhere in the Commonwealth or by large payroll organisations?

Ms Davoren: We are under clear instruction not to reinvent the wheel. Our tender document states very clearly that what we want is a tested product that is commercially available. So we will not be going out and tailoring a product.

MRS DUNNE: Why is it taking so long?

Ms Davoren: It is just a detailed process. We have gone through the process. We had an existing system for over 10 years. We had to go through a process of developing specifications. In any kind of procurement process the specifications are the things that are important because they define what you want and, of course, what you get. Also, in relation to any contract negotiation, it defines what you can ask a provider for and cost. So we went through a process from, say, August last year developing specifications through consultation with agency.

We are looking at a whole-of-government or a service-wide approach for the most part. Some agencies will not be using the new system but, for the most part, it will cover most

of the service. We had to engage with all agencies, so we went through a process of various working parties looking at the specifications for the HR system, the issue about IT and interaction with existing IT, and also issues around change management. This is not just a question of loading up an IT system and pressing a button; it is a big issue of change management and implementation.

We have been working intensively on those issues. We have a small project team within the group, which consists of three project officers and support staff. We have been quite conservative in our staffing requirements, but I think we have managed it in an orderly way. In the specifications in the detailed documentation that we have been able to put to the market you can see the work that has gone into it and the fact that it reflects a service-wide approach. All agencies have been engaged very closely in developing those specifications.

MRS DUNNE: A limited number of programs would be currently in use. We have eight or nine government-type agencies, like the Commonwealth or the states, and some large payroll employers, like BHP or those sorts of organisations. So you are looking at a pretty limited market. Why do we still not have a satisfactory answer to indicate why it has taken you so long to make the decision? What is the cost to the ACT of maintaining PERSPECT for another 18 months or so—very much beyond its useful life?

Ms Davoren: I think that the cost of maintaining PERSPECT until there is a replacement obviously is justified because we need an HR system.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, I do not dispute that.

Ms Davoren: I think the issue really is the time that has been taken. If you look at the way we have approached it you will see that there are plenty of examples of different systems operating. There are also plenty of examples of processes that have driven additional costs in the delivery of those systems. We have tried to develop appropriate specifications and also quite detailed procurement documents, as is required by our arrangements, to deliver a clear statement of our need and to avoid having to try to fix things up after the tender process. If you do not put the work into that pre-procurement process there might be unidentified costs later on.

MS TUCKER: My first question relates to output class 1 on page 41 of the budget papers. I am interested in item (f), the development of a framework for evidence-based research and analysis. I notice that the note states that you have already completed part of the work and that there will be a whole-of-government data management and evidence-based research system. Does that framework deal with how the data is collected?

Mr Stanhope: I will ask Mr Rice to answer that question.

Mr Rice: It will in part. You will see that the note refers to work that is being done with the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services on an integrated data management plan. It's a testbed, if you like, for what we are trying to do and it will help us to proceed. Looking at issues of collection and management will be a big part of it.

How we actually progress this work with the ABS is still a matter for negotiation. It has only become clear to us in the last month or so that this kind of top-down development of a data management framework is an objective that the ABS has to work on with state and territory governments. It just so happens that this is something that we want to do as well. So it is a matter of continuing negotiation between the two of us at the moment.

MS TUCKER: So when you are looking, for example, at areas such as disability or community services generally, you obviously need to be working with the community sector pretty closely to be getting data.

Mr Rice: Yes, that is true. Some of the work that we have done in the last year has certainly demonstrated it is something we have to do. We are doing some work, which you may be aware of at the moment, which is about the relationship between the government and the community sector.

MS TUCKER: Is that the compact?

Mr Rice: No, it is moving beyond compact, really. It would previously have been called service purchasing. Some of that relationship about how non-government organisations do work for us and what they provide can be returned by way of data. We will pick up on some of those issues as well. We cannot do it on our own, so we would certainly be expecting to work with those people.

MS TUCKER: One issue that has come up over the years is that community services need to be resourced to collect data as it is an extra task for them when they are already pretty busy. Is that funded or resourced at the moment in the community sector?

Mr Rice: The answer to that would be that the funding they receive for carrying out the contracts has a component in it for delivering data. I am afraid that that is all it does.

MS TUCKER: It already has a component?

Mr Rice: It does.

MS TUCKER: I was not sure whether it was already in the contracts. The other question I have on the same page of the budget papers relates to the development of a sustainability framework and implementation of sustainability policy. The framework is now in place, so that is done. I notice also on pages 10 and 11 of Budget Paper 3 that the question of implementing sustainability is noted as a priority. There are a lot of good commitments there.

That statement looks as though it is written in a future tense, but I am assuming that it is not. I assume you are referring to how you will achieve good government. You then state, "the government will adopt", so I take it that you are actually doing that now; it is not something that you will do at some time in the future. You will adopt a balanced approach, et cetera, according to the principles of sustainability. You list the priorities, such as the integration of social, environmental and economic factors in decision making, valuing and protecting ecological integrity and biodiversity, taking a whole-of-government approach and implementing the precautionary principle.

When you state that you are implementing sustainability policy—in the note it is a new measure; it is the sustainability implementation phase—I am interested to know how you think the Office of Sustainability is working or will work. I have asked a couple of questions at previous forums. For example, when the Public Accounts Committee talked to the Treasurer about the rates bill, I asked the Treasurer whether that had gone through the Office of Sustainability, but he thought not. I spoke later to the Office of Sustainability and I was told—and please correct me if I misunderstood what was said—that all cabinet submissions or legislation goes to the Office of Sustainability. So it is in the loop in that way.

MR HARGREAVES: This is a really long question.

MS TUCKER: It is necessary that I explain. Basically, the community was told that everything goes through the Office of Sustainability, but it appears that the rates bill was not addressed by that office. I would like to understand the system. How does the Office of Sustainability make a decision about what it looks at? If it decides to look at an issue, how is it resourced to do that? What process would you go through to look at a piece of legislation or a cabinet document? If you make comments—which I am assuming all departments can do about what the government is considering—would you make comments to the government about the legislation? Do the comments of the Office of Sustainability have any greater status than the comments made by other departments, or should they have greater status?

Mr Stanhope: I will ask Mr Ottesen to respond to that question. I state at the outset that the comments of the Office of Sustainability would have weight, as do the comments of all other areas of government. In relation to the example to which you referred, I will ask Mr Tonkin and Mr Ottesen to give you greater detail. In relation to any measure that has revenue implications at the developmental stage, it is not usual for it to be circulated.

Draft legislation, cabinet submissions or budget cabinet submissions that contain revenue measures are not circulated. We do not circulate proposed revenue initiatives across the board. For instance, the point you make about the circulation of cabinet submissions to the Office of Sustainability applies equally to the Office for Women but, similarly, revenue measures are not circulated to the Office for Women either, just as they are not circulated broadly.

MRS DUNNE: I wish to clarify something before Mr Ottesen answers Ms Tucker's question. The rates bill was not circulated in the normal way.

Mr Stanhope: I do not know; that is why I asked. I was just making a point about revenue measures generally. I do not know whether the rates legislation was deemed to be a revenue measure at that stage; I do not have that detailed information. Whilst I have said that we circulate all cabinet submissions to the Office for Women and the Office of Sustainability, I was just making the point that there should be a proviso at the bottom that states, "with the exception of draft or proposed revenue measures". At this moment I don't know whether or not the rates bill was circulated to the Office of Sustainability. I will take advice on that.

Mr Tonkin: It was a revenue measure. As the Chief Minister said, we do not circulate those broadly, for obvious reasons.

MRS DUNNE: Could you expand on your statement, “for obvious reasons”?

Mr Tonkin: If you are contemplating what the revenue measures in a budget might be and you circulate them widely, there is a heightened risk that they might be subject to public speculation.

THE CHAIR: But does that not undermine your endeavours to make the ACT sustainable? The rates bill, from its very essence, has an important impact on the sustainability of the ACT across the board. You would be worried if it was just the Property Council and, say, the builders, but you have groups across the board from ACTCOSS to the Property Council all saying that they think the rates bill is flawed and that it will lead to unfortunate practices, or it will sway the way in which communities see themselves.

Mr Tonkin: You are talking about specifics in the rates proposal. I am talking about the general methodology we use to deal with revenue measures in a budget development context, which is a longstanding practice.

THE CHAIR: So the doubling of the water extraction charge would not have gone to the Office of Sustainability?

Mr Tonkin: It is a revenue measure. We have talked in more general terms. If it is a revenue measure it is going to be charged. Clearly, when we are addressing issues of water policy and the use of the water extraction charge we place an enhanced value on water—something that has been the subject of discussion with the Office of Sustainability and Environment ACT. That budget measure is the product of a policy chain of events, so you have to distinguish it in that way.

Certainly the Office of Sustainability has been fully involved in the development of our water strategy. The use of the water extraction charge as a mechanism for placing an appropriate value on water is part of that strategy. I have sat at the table staring at Mr Ottesen as we have evolved the water strategy, so it certainly is a process. The rates issue is more a revenue measure than anything else.

MS TUCKER: But we were told that the rates bill was not a revenue measure.

Mr Tonkin: Rates is revenue. The general process is that the Office of Sustainability contributes to and looks at developing policies and cabinet proposals. That is the standard side of these, if you like, anomalies to the system. There is an issue concerning the capacity of the Office of Sustainability to contribute across every measure and across every portfolio. Clearly, sensibly, that is not the case. We just do not have the resources or the depth to do that. As I was explaining earlier, there is a limit to how many resources we have in the whole of government and the public service to deal with all the issues. You pick the ones on which you can make the best impact.

We do that through the Office of Sustainability. So its focus is on those measures which have, if you like, a higher value against the sorts of objectives that are set out on page 10 of the budget papers. The focus of the work of Peter and his team has been on getting out and establishing what I think is an excellent framework and strategy and then looking at

issues such as water and other issues. So it is a matter of saying: Where is the highest value to which they can contribute, and that is what they do.

MS TUCKER: So, basically, you are saying that the Office of Sustainability is just making general comments about some pieces of legislation or cabinet submissions.

Mr Tonkin: If you are looking at a raft of cabinet submissions that come forward you will see that a significant number will not have any sustainability aspects to them.

MS TUCKER: That is the very question that I think is of interest. I will not make statements at this point, but you have answered my question. You talked, for example, about water and the water strategy. I notice that you referred on page 11 of Budget Paper 3 to the management of water and said that you are going to be producing a water strategy.

Mr Tonkin: Yes.

MS TUCKER: At the moment we have a proposal to expand the zoo, which obviously has serious implications for water because you basically will have a zoo on a riverbank. When I sought advice on that from the Chief Minister, as Minister for the Environment, I was referred to Ted Quinlan's office to get information on the zoo. I would like to see how the Office of Sustainability is involved in this.

Even if you have not yet developed a water strategy, at some point in time such a critical decision has to include the question of the impact on the water quality of the river for the whole Murray-Darling Basin Commission. What is happening to that proposal? Will it go to the office of the Minister for the Environment and then to you? Who is involved? You state in this document that you have an integrated approach, but I am not seeing it, and the zoo is a good example. What are you going to do in relation to that decision?

Mr Stanhope: You are right in relation to the zoo, Ms Tucker. A number of portfolios are involved and the lead minister at this stage is the minister for business, Ted Quinlan. As I understand it, an application has been made. Mr Tonkin, Mr Ottesen, or somebody from Business ACT might be able to give you more detail about the nature of the application that the zoo proprietors have made to the ACT Government, which was for assistance at a number of levels. Essentially, it involves a request for a business incentive and the granting of additional land on that site.

There are, therefore, business issues involved. At this stage Mr Quinlan is the lead minister. There are, of course, planning initiatives. Simon Corbell and PALM are involved in that insofar as there are issues around the designation of the land. Subject to the decision that the government might take in relation to the application and to the issue concerning the expansion of the zoo—acknowledging that a significant zoo and aquarium are already on the site—it involves environmental issues, for example, the integrity of the river and whether or not the expansion of an already existing zoo is an appropriate land use or an appropriate decision for the government to take.

All three departments are involved at this stage in an assessment of the applications that have been made by the zoo. No decisions have been made. The matter has been considered by cabinet at a preliminary level. cabinet, at this stage, has said that it is not

in a position to make a decision until further significant work has been done. That involves advice to cabinet on a range of planning issues, business or economic issues, and the environmental implications of positively considering the application. Mr Ottesen or Mr Tonkin could refer to the issue that you raised about the role of the Office of Sustainability in a decision such as that. It is still very much in a contemplative stage.

Mr Ottesen: On that aspect we provided advice to Business ACT when the proposal first came in. So that gave me an opportunity to transmit some views. As we are located within the policy group, when we have time and we identify the opportunity, we are able to contribute advice in the preparation of responses for cabinet submissions. But we are not in a position to be able to comment on every one. Basically, we have to identify those where the issues are of greatest relevance and where we can make some sensible comment as a contribution towards that preparation advice.

Mr Tonkin: To come back to the water quality issue that you raised about the zoo, the Chief Minister says that there will need to be a development plan. Before the government considers whether or not it agrees in principal to the proposition, it needs to obtain advice—if the proposition is to go forward—about all the issues and about addressing the sorts of issues that you raise. Are they issues that can be addressed? What sort of satisfaction, level of confidence and safety would we have to achieve to ensure that any such development did not raise the issues of damage, et cetera, to which you are alluding?

Those are all the things that would go into the process. In that context the integrated process would essentially be run by planning, although there would be a crossover here because of its relationship with national land. So the National Capital Authority will also have an interest in this issue. Because of where it is, it is quite a complex set of decisions. But all those sorts of factors—water quality, environmental effect, noise and so on and so forth—will be taken into account in coming forward with advice to the government.

MS TUCKER: Will all that advice be made public and does it come to the Assembly?

Mr Stanhope: I am not quite sure of the decision-making stream or process, but I would have no hesitation in making available whatever advice is received outside the direct cabinet process. I would be more than happy to do that.

MS TUCKER: Including that of the Office of Sustainability?

Mr Stanhope: Yes. As long as the information is not protected by the rules applying to cabinet's deliberations and documents, then certainly, but I will have to have a look at it.

MS TUCKER: So I guess that is the point. As I understand what you have said, you would not be able to release statements made by the Office of Sustainability, because it would be protected, as would be any other comments departments make to cabinet. Is that right?

Mr Stanhope: Yes. There are good reasons for ensuring that we maintain rules and protocols in relation to cabinet's capacity to receive advice from public servants in an atmosphere in which that advice is delivered for a specific purpose—only to advise

cabinet. There are rules around that which are justifiable, defensible and valid. If we accept that that is a fact and it is a position that the government will maintain, I would have to discuss with Mr Ottesen whether there is other advice, or other options or avenues for his advice to be made public.

I have no desire to keep all this under wraps, or not to have it disclosed or made public. To the extent that advice is publicly available, I am happy to have it released. If there is no reason not to make it available, I am happy to make it available. I will have to pursue that to determine whether there is any such advice.

MS TUCKER: Finally, do you think that the Office of Sustainability—unlike normal agencies—should be more independent and not confined in its reporting? Because it is such a priority you state that there is an argument that that office has greater statutory independence.

Mr Stanhope: Perhaps at some stage in the future we might develop an arrangement, or a reporting possibility, so that there is some capacity for an independent reporting arrangement on the government's devotion or commitment to sustainability. At this stage we are developing the sustainability framework. We still have an awful lot of work to do. We acknowledge that we are still grappling with some of issues relating to sustainability. To some extent we are path setters. We are still grappling with the bringing to fruition, or the practical application of much of what we are aspire to achieve.

At this stage we are still seeking to apply the framework. We still have a row to hoe in relation to this issue. At the end of the day, when the government gets to the position where it is able to say with some confidence, "We have developed a framework, we are now implementing or applying that framework and we now stand ready to be judged on our commitment to that framework", perhaps a la Joe Baker, or the Commissioner for the Environment, there might be a prospect—and I shake a bit when I say that.

MS TUCKER: A similar model could be the Commissioner for the Environment becoming the Commissioner for Sustainability.

Mr Stanhope: It is a slightly frightening prospect, Ms Tucker, but yes.

MS TUCKER: I think it is a great prospect.

Mr Stanhope: It is too early for us. You have to give us a chance.

MS TUCKER: But you are reviewing the Office of the Commissioner for the Environment at the moment?

Mr Stanhope: We are, yes.

MS TUCKER: You cannot just put that one off when you are reviewing the office of the commissioner, as it could be the same question. I ask the Chief Minister to take on notice my question concerning the zoo. I would like everyone to know what processes are involved.

THE CHAIR: That is fine.

MRS DUNNE: I would like Mr Tonkin to give me a rundown on the Monash awards, the details of which are to be found on page 143 of BP 3. For each of the out years 2004-05 and 2005-06 an amount of \$166,000 is allocated for what I presume is the ACT government's contribution to a wider national contribution to the Monash awards. Could you just outline what it is and what are its aims? It does not appear to an ongoing commitment.

Mr Tonkin: The Monash awards, in broad terms, are intended to be the Australian version of the Rhodes scholarship, largely. A committee, which is chaired by General Gration, former Chief of the Defence Force, had the view that we needed to provide an appropriate national program of post-graduate scholarships that would give a greater focus to excellence. An approach has been made to the Commonwealth government, to all states and territories and to the business community to provide, essentially, over a period of years, seed money which would then be invested.

MRS DUNNE: So it would become a foundation.

Mr Tonkin: It would become a foundation.

MRS DUNNE: So this is the seed money for the foundation?

Mr Tonkin: This is the seed money for the foundation. We put in an amount of money, which is calculated on the proportion of the population against the target. From memory, the amount for the states and territories was \$20 million. As we are 1.6 per cent of the population, we put in 1.6 per cent of that amount. I am not quite sure where the other states and territories are up to; I think we may well be pretty much to the forefront in relation to this one.

MRS DUNNE: It would be a great shame if the other states and territories did not pull their weight.

Mr Tonkin: It would be a great shame. The government supports it, we have put our money in and we understand that the Commonwealth will be proceeding with its bit. It is now a matter for the other states and territories to get on line. It is one of those good ideas. From a territory perspective, given our demographics, et cetera, we believe that we will have a good chance of achieving success. A lot of scholars will end up coming here to study anyway, so we will get a double benefit.

MRS DUNNE: That leads to a more detailed question about what the foundation proposes to do with the money. Will it be for study in Australia or abroad, or both?

Mr Tonkin: I think it is both.

Mr Stanhope: I think it is eight from Australia and eight from overseas.

MRS DUNNE: Is it like a Rhodes scholarship where you are actually offering scholarships to foreigners?

Mr Stanhope: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: Or you might be bringing a Monash scholar to Australia?

Mr Stanhope: Yes, Mrs Dunne. I understand that that is precisely how it works. I met with General Gration in relation to the Monash awards. My understanding from General Gration is that the Commonwealth and each of the states have committed to the Monash awards. I think the Commonwealth has contributed significantly. Mr Tonkin just indicated to me that the Commonwealth is committing \$5 million to a trust fund. I understand from General Gration that each of the states has made a similar commitment to him to provide funding for a base trust fund, the interest of which will support 16 scholarships a year, which represents eight scholars from Australia and eight from overseas.

MRS DUNNE: So you might have eight overseas scholars coming to Australia and eight of our scholars going overseas?

Mr Stanhope: That is a possibility.

MRS DUNNE: Is it possible that they might study in Australia?

Mr Tonkin: I quote from a press release—which should be a reliable source—which states:

Under the Awards program up to 16 awards will be available each year, eight for Australian post-graduate students to study at leading universities overseas and eight for foreign university students to come to Australia for post-graduate study. The award is aimed to promote potential national leaders in their fields. Recipients are selected on criteria such as academic excellence, leadership qualities and altruism demonstrated through community service.

MRS DUNNE: It is very much the same sort of service.

Mr Tonkin: It is very Fulbright scholarship or Rhodes scholarship in its nature.

THE CHAIR: Did the department breach the Financial Management Act this year, or did it fully comply with that act to the best of your knowledge?

Mr Tonkin: To the best of my knowledge I hope it has, yes.

THE CHAIR: Page 90 of BP3 contains the following statement, “It was determined that previously the CFU was possibly not fully compliant with the FMA.”

Mr Tonkin: I would like you to speak to Mr Harris from Treasury about that. It does not concern the Chief Minister’s Department.

THE CHAIR: I thought I might ask that question of every department.

Mr Tonkin: I have been assured by Mr Hextell that we are pure.

Sitting suspended from 10.55 to 11.21 am.

THE CHAIR: Ladies and gentlemen, we might move to page 41 of budget paper 4, output class No 1.1, strategic policy coordination and development.

MRS DUNNE: I wanted to actually go back to some of the issues that were raised by Ms Tucker in relation to the evidence-based research framework and then go onto sustainability. Perhaps if we get Andrew back. With your indulgence, Mr Chairman, could I ask someone to give a brief précis of what actually you are proposing to do with this evidence-based research framework?

Mr Rice: What we would hope to do is, I guess, do better in the areas of data collection and management. That would be our first objective. We've gone through a number of projects recently where it's clear that we could do a little better. That's probably it in a very broad sense. The Australian Bureau of Statistics has some particular capabilities that can assist in that regard. But it's really about assembling a better collection of information to do our policy work.

MRS DUNNE: Evidence based makes my ears prick. It's a very in-vogue term. In what sense is your data collection and management going to be more evidence based than it currently is?

Mr Rice: I think that's something that we're working through at the moment, but I would certainly see it as being the collection and management of data feeding more effectively into a body of evidence that informs our policy work. It allows us to develop—

MRS DUNNE: What do you understand by evidence-based research?

Mr Rice: I might just defer to Cathy Hudson.

Ms Hudson: I suppose we're looking at the two components which make up the data collection—evidence based is what works—and being more thorough about that. The thing with looking at what works is that it does require a lot of money, I suppose, in terms of resources within the public service or outside. Academics doing work on looking at what are the different types of levels of evidence is one way that you can go, but that's a very intensive-type process. In terms of recent work, there is some work around youth crime prevention that actually gives guidelines in terms of doing literature searches and then saying what are the things that we should be doing to give better value for money in terms of government investment.

MRS DUNNE: I'm just trying to plumb exactly what you are trying to do, and I'm a bit concerned that you might be marrying too many ideas together. It may be that it's not very well expressed here, but it seems to me that evidence-based research is often a review of a program to see whether it works and then to amend that or adjust that. What applications would you see for evidence-based research?

Ms Hudson: Well, the first element, I would say, is evaluation, and that's a program evaluation; whereas looking at an evidence-based framework is not just looking at what you might be doing in one jurisdiction but looking across all jurisdictions. Some of those are long-term analyses and looking at what are the outcomes that you get over time. But the challenge around developing such a framework is this: we know that the social and

economic conditions have changed from 20 years ago, but you can get this great long-term study that gives you an answer that is sort of a lagged answer. Some terms that are now being talked about are not just evidence based but evidence aware; you know what the evidence says but then you take in your local factors to make what you think is the best judgment for where government should be investing. To maximise your outcomes, I suppose, is what—

MRS DUNNE: You have to make some prudential judgments that just because something works in that particular polity it may not necessarily work here. As an example, in the 1980s and 1990s we always talked about the industrial relations successes in Sweden. Everyone talked about that. But those things weren't necessarily translatable to Australia because the social/cultural differences are so great; you might find evidence of something that works in the mid-west of the USA, but is it going to work in Canberra? What you're actually saying is that it's going to be the research that then allows you to make those prudential judgments about how you might adjust that and then there is the process of evaluation at the end.

Ms Hudson: Yes, and a lot of jurisdictions have used the process of trialling, to say, "Okay, this is what we think is the best evidence around this and then we'll trial it in the local context and evaluate that." That helps build your evidence base. But I suppose it does need to start with data first, and it is very good that ABS wants to look at that as well at the same time.

MRS DUNNE: The output measure is: develop a framework for evidence-based research and analysis. What are you planning to do this year?

Mr Rice: What we'd be planning to do in the first instance is work with the ABS on just getting our house in order, I suppose, in terms of collection and management. I think if we're going to get a whole-of-government approach to collection and management there's a lot of marrying-up of processes that need to be done.

You might recall the reply I gave to Ms Tucker earlier about the fact there is some work going on in the disability housing and community services aged thing which is showing us the way that we probably ought to proceed, which is about getting systems in place to collect the information better and manage it. So it's something that we need to do across government to get better policy development and evaluation in agencies. The kind of work we do in the Chief Minister's Department with whole-of-government policies is particularly important.

THE CHAIR: How much is the framework costing? What sorts of resources have been dedicated towards it?

Mr Rice: I just want to make sure I give you the right answer on that. At the moment the Australian Bureau of Statistics' regional office has indicated it will contribute some staff resources. In the policy group of the Chief Minister's Department we actually have some people who are dedicated to demographic work in a broad sense. They would be involved in it, as would other officers in the policy group.

I don't have the answer yet from the ABS as to exactly what they would be contributing in terms of staff resources, but at the moment we're talking really about staff resources.

But it has been something that the ABS has said that they are prepared to support out of their own resources. It's just something that we, as I said earlier, need to conclude some negotiations with them on just how it will actually work.

Ms Hudson: To supplement that: it's not just the demographic staff but it is also some people who have been working on the information-gathering phase for the social plan, addressing disadvantage and youth profiles and understanding what services are out there now. So those people have already, I suppose, tried to do some of that work—and that's good work—but we've also identified we could be doing more in terms of looking at the outcomes that you get out of the money that is spent.

THE CHAIR: So it's being funded from the recurrent funds inside the department?

Mr Rice: That's right.

THE CHAIR: Is it possible for an estimate of the cost to be put together for the committee?

Mr Rice: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MRS DUNNE: On a sort of tangential but related issue—the answer may be somewhere else, and forgive me if I've missed it—what is happening with the *State of the Territory Report*? Is there going to be another *State of the Territory Report*?

Mr Stanhope: At this stage, Mrs Dunne, no decision has been made on that. I think you're aware that we didn't regard it as a priority last year, but certainly there are some advantages from the production of a periodic assessment of how we're performing on a range of indicators. At this stage it's not our intention, but we haven't discounted it for the future.

MRS DUNNE: My recollection of last year's discussion was that Mr Tonkin had said that he thought that it probably wasn't valuable to do it every year.

Mr Tonkin: Well, there were the big issues about the statistical data. Some of the stuff in the documents previously hadn't changed year on year. You've got to get the new ABS data sets out there to show what happens. As we're now getting that data flowing through from the census, it's a chance to have a look at it. But it's a matter of, again, priorities and resources, essentially, but still the door is not closed on the issue.

MRS CROSS: Output class 1.1, strategic policy coordination and development. The targets for this area seem very similar to the achievements in the past. Minister, I refer to (e) and to (j), clearly marked on page 41. Don't you think that it's time to move beyond so much planning and actually do something? How many extra public servants have been employed in this output class since July 1 2002? Minister, (e) is development of information management policies, and (j) is development of the social plan.

Mr Stanhope: I'm not quite sure what the direct question is, Mrs Cross, but I'll take on notice the question about how many additional public servants may have been employed

in this area, although Mr Tonkin tells me he may have an answer to that now. In relation to the underlying thesis that we need to stop developing—I'm not quite sure actually what words you used; I don't want to misquote you, but you used the words "Isn't it time to stop"—

MRS CROSS: To move beyond so much planning and actually do something.

Mr Stanhope: Well, we're doing that. I think planning is important, and I think it's important that we do develop frameworks for pursuing specific initiatives before rushing out and seeking to do things. The example which Ms Hudson referred to earlier, for instance, is very interesting, which is that, I think for the first time in the ACT and perhaps even in Australia, the policy group has undertaken a literature search; and in relation to what works in relation to youth crime it has commissioned the Australian Institute of Criminology to undertake research on the question of what initiatives around Australia and around the world in relation to preventing recidivism in youth crime work.

Of all these programs that exist, that we've undertaken, that are undertaken around Australia and certainly experienced in other jurisdictions, what evaluation work has been done? Now, where's your evidence for which programs work and which ones don't work? Certainly much of what we're doing is being based on the need for us to understand what we're currently doing in the first place. Of the things that we're doing and that like jurisdictions are doing, what works that goes to a commitment which we have to having some evidence to support our resource allocation?

The youth crime work that has been undertaken is quite fascinating, to the extent that one of the very significant findings in the work undertaken by the Australian Institute of Criminology on our behalf was that so few of the programs that are resourced by us and by other governments in Australia have ever been evaluated; and one of the great problems we have is that more often than not we don't know what works.

MRS CROSS: Does the same apply to all the other reviews and planning that's going on?

Mr Stanhope: Well, it does. In relation to the work which the policy group and Ms Hudson are doing in relation to the development of a social plan, one of the other issues here that you've just now raised is that some of the work that we're undertaking is around a demographic study or understanding of our multicultural community, and just recently a paper was published in relation to that.

But the deepest understanding we've ever had of the multicultural community and its broad expressions here in the ACT is such that we now have a range of information and understandings around the non-English speaking background community in Canberra, as a result of which we can better respond to the needs of sectors of that particular community.

The group is undertaking a similar—and this is rigorous work we're doing; these are not sorts of scratchy little—

MRS CROSS: Do you have deadlines, Minister, when the results of all these reviews and planning will come back to us?

Mr Stanhope: Yes, we do. There is a difficulty when you're doing something for the first time. I know there's a frustration always in relation to where the output is, where are the outcomes and how do you justify expending this money. A lot of this work has never been done. We're now doing a whole range of things for the first time ever.

The other work that the group's doing is in relation, for instance, to understanding our indigenous community. We've never done detailed demographic work on the nature of the indigenous community within the ACT, what's going on there, what the impacts are, how the community's made up, what the particular issues are. And it's hard for us to respond in terms of—

MRS CROSS: So the second part of my question—

Mr Stanhope: Just let me finish this, because it's important. It's hard for us to say why we haven't thrown some money at this or that. We're at that stage of maintaining our programs and seeking to identify better what's going on. And these are major pieces of work. As I say, these are not just a couple of loose bits of paper where somebody's jotted down a few thoughts. We're doing a range of major work in relation to disadvantage; we're following up on the work of the poverty task force; we're doing demographic studies of the non-English speaking background community—a broad demographic study of the indigenous community within the ACT.

We've done the work in relation to youth at risk of falling into the criminal justice system. There are some fascinating findings there, and we'll respond to those. We've done the work in relation to the other one that you've highlighted, the development of sustainability framework. That's been completed. Mr Ottesen is out there now working on that. We've got the framework; maybe that's the easy bit. Maybe the hard yakka has now started and is actually showing how we, as a community, pursue a sustainability agenda. A lot of it's about education; a lot of it's about articulation; a lot of it's about leadership. And that's what we're seeking to achieve. But we can't do these things overnight.

Going back to the essential point of achieving some evidence base for the work that we do: it's interesting to note another major piece of work that the policy group has done—the mapping of service. Ms Hudson can perhaps give some more detail on it.

These things are vitally important to this work that we're doing, and I do detect a level of frustration that we're doing this work. But we're doing everything else as well. We haven't stopped our programs or our service delivery provision. For instance, some of the work that we've done in relation to better understanding what we do do, what we do fund, and how we target our funding and our program support is, once again, very interesting and raises a whole range of questions. I'd like Ms Hudson to just briefly talk about the major mapping exercises that the policy group—

THE CHAIR: Briefly please, Ms Hudson.

Ms Hudson: Okay. I suppose in terms of output, there have been probably three people working for at least six months and working with other government departments and non-government organisations to actually track down all the money that is allocated and

spent. One of the key ones surrounding addressing disadvantage will be published pretty soon, I think; it's near the end of that. That's a big body of work. Similar work has been done to support the youth at risk in crime project.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, footnote seven refers to the spatial and social plans and the economic white paper. Footnote eight refers to the multicultural profiles, indigenous demographic profiles and addressing disadvantage project. When will they each be completed? The spatial plan is due for release when?

Mr Stanhope: I can't just remember what the government has undertaken in relation to the spatial, social and economic white papers, but I believe they'll all be published essentially as the Canberra Plan, which brings all three plans together. Work is, as you know, well advanced on each of these pieces of work.

In relation to the economic white paper, Mr Quinlan has received very significant feedback and an additional round of submissions in relation to that paper, but I understand it's his intention to publish that certainly in the early part of the new financial year.

I think that the work in relation to the spatial plan is to be concluded before the end of the calendar year. In relation to the social plan we're proposing within the next few weeks—and I look at Ms Hudson beseechingly—to have a consultation plan, a plan to service the basis of consultation with the community in the next few weeks, and we would be similarly looking to conclude that by the end of this calendar year. That's our plan. All of those plans will come together as the Canberra Plan, and it's our intention that they will be delivered before the end of the year.

But the multicultural profile, the indigenous demographic profile and the addressing disadvantage project that you refer to, that's all work that's been commissioned as part of the development of the social plan. I guess the point I'm making is that some incredibly detailed and valuable work has been done to actually provide us with a significant information base in relation to issues of relevance to a social plan for Canberra.

MRS BURKE: This is a follow-up to Mrs Cross' question to the Chief Minister. Chief Minister, how long has it been since you've actually been in government now—18, 19 months?

Mr Stanhope: Well, it seems like yesterday for us, but probably an eternity to you.

MRS BURKE: Not any more; I'm loving every moment of it. I have a serious concern. I heard you talking earlier about the public service, and we're very proud of our public servants, very proud indeed. I am concerned—I think Mrs Cross alluded to this—in regard to job satisfaction of public servants putting out huge outputs in regard to reviews, development projects, rather than actual implementation of some of these projects. Can I ask you: are you going to move on a little bit quicker with some of these reviews and implement some of the stuff that you've been working on for so long?

Mr Stanhope: Well, I thought that was the answer I just gave, Mrs Burke.

MRS BURKE: You haven't given any timelines; that's my understanding.

Mr Stanhope: We're doing, certainly, some very detailed research and qualitative work in relation to a broad range of issues of fundamental importance, and they are encapsulated broadly within the spatial plan, the social plan and the economic white paper. It's fundamental work that we're doing. It has to be said it's work that's never been done before. This is a two-edged sword, Mrs Burke: this work has not been done before, we're doing it, we're doing it for the first time and, the previous government having not done the work, it's a bit rich to stand up and say, "Look, you're doing too much in relation to work that hasn't been done before, but will you do it quicker?"

MRS BURKE: I didn't say you're doing too much.

Mr Stanhope: "No, we didn't do it; you're doing it; it's never been done before; we wish you'd do it faster or not do it at all." Well, we're going to do this work; we're committed to this work; it's important that we get a much better understanding of the nature of the community; that we identify where the gaps are; and that we do do the work that we're doing in relation to the development of the social plan, the spatial plan and an economic white paper.

Of course, when we talk about an economic white paper, what we're talking about is an industry or economic strategy, something that will take us into the future, something we've never had. The community has not had since self-government an industry plan or an economic strategy as such.

We're developing one in a coordinated way. Similarly with the spatial plan, we're looking at one for the first time, certainly since self-government. The NCDC did some of this work back in the early 1980s. There's been no serious or systematic look at Canberra, a snapshot from space where we can look down and say, "Yes, this is the city of the future; this is what we want it to look like." We're doing that work, and we're consulting. It will be an absolutely vital piece of work when concluded.

But that doesn't mean we're not delivering service; that doesn't mean we're not responding to all the priorities of the community; it does not mean we're not actually meeting all of those other commitments we made prior to the last election in relation to what a Labor government would deliver. We're delivering across the board.

MRS BURKE: Just to quickly supplement that: can you please assure this committee and all your public service that your government will show leadership in expediently implementing the findings of all these reviews and development projects?

Mr Stanhope: Absolutely.

MRS DUNNE: Is that an undertaking, Chief Minister, that, with the outcome of the Canberra Plan, all will be learnt; there won't be any cherry-picking at the end?

Mr Stanhope: Well, the social plan, the economic plan and the spatial plan are strategies; this is a vision; this is a vision of where we want Canberra to go and how we intend to get there over the next 20 to 25 years.

MRS DUNNE: Yes, and when you've got strategies and a vision are you going to do any cherry-picking?

Mr Stanhope: It's a view about where we would like Canberra to be in 25 years time in terms of our commitment to ensuring a vibrant and healthy economy, a vibrant and participative community and a town that we maintain our commitment to and love for in terms of its planning and its development, and all aspects of that.

But we're not looking here at a hundred things that the government's going to do; we're talking here about the development of a way forward in relation to our economy, in relation to the social support and development of a community in relation to the physical nature of the place. And we'll get there by a myriad of routes which are reflected in all of our other policies, because all of those policies, of course, go to make up each of these aspects of the Canberra Plan.

We have a policy in relation to equality of opportunity; we have a policy in relation to ensuring the finest possible education for our children. They're all parts of the community that we want and that we'll continue to enhance. We have a range of other policies and initiatives for getting us there, but the social plan's not going to say, "We'll be doing this and we'll be doing that; we'll be reducing class sizes to this number; and we'll be increasing funding to indigenous people by this amount."

MRS DUNNE: So in what sense will it be a plan?

Mr Stanhope: In every sense.

Mr Tonkin: It's a strategic document.

MRS DUNNE: No, it's a strategy; that's not a plan.

Mr Tonkin: Well, it's a question. You can play, I suggest, Mrs Dunne, semantics, but a strategic plan is exactly what it is. A strategic plan is, by its nature, strategic; it sets directions; it gives an indication of needs and priorities; it provides a framework within which individual programs are then developed. That is the purpose of having it.

One of the documents we're just about to release is the study into disadvantage and poverty. What that study identified was that there were 462 separate programs across government addressing disadvantage and poverty, spending about \$300 million a year. We could buy about 150 different agencies, public, private and community.

One of the issues in doing this sort of work is to say, "Are those programs all producing the optimal outcome? Is there a better way to coordinate some of those programs, et cetera?" That's the sort of sensible analysis that we believe needs to be done so that we get the best outcome on the ground. That's what the purpose of these sorts of documents is.

I come back to one other point raised previously if I may, and that is the suggestion that somehow the policy work is unproductive; when are we going to get on and do things? I'd remind the committee there are lots of departments in the ACT government whose job it is every day, and are out there every day, delivering programs and activities and

producing results for the community. So there's an awful lot of work goes on. The job of the policy group is policy.

MRS BURKE: I don't think I said it wasn't productive, Mr Tonkin.

MRS CROSS: You've got to follow the rules, one of which says, "Don't patronise the committee," Mr Tonkin.

Mr Tonkin: I'm not patronising the committee; I'm simply pointing out what it is that the public service that I lead does.

MRS CROSS: No 10 says, "Don't patronise the committee."

MS DUNDAS: I don't know whether this question has already been asked, but I was wondering if, at what point, we'll see budget papers developed that show sustainability outcomes and measures in their reporting, performance measures based on sustainability throughout triple bottom-line accounting, as was discussed at the last estimates.

MRS DUNNE: And at the estimates for the Treasurer's first Appropriation Bill in 2001. These were things that then the Treasurer said we would be going towards. We don't see it here. When will we see it?

Mr Ottesen: Our approach at this stage, in terms of implementing the framework, which we've now achieved, is to try to focus on the key decision-making steps within government so that we can start to influence policy at the development stage; so that we put in place the right systems; so that we can start to influence the thinking; so that in the end we get more informed decision-making and therefore better decision-making, which more focuses on, I suppose, the three core areas of sustainability—the environmental dimension, the social, and the economic.

The budget, in a way, is part of our process of how can we support the development of budget bids in that process; but in the end, the budget should be an expression of all those decision-making processes, beginning with the corporate and the business planning, and taking it all the way through to the reporting end. So we're trying to actually integrate the idea and the concept into the business of government. That's at this stage what we see as the priority area.

MS DUNDAS: So that's what you're working on at the moment. By the time that we see the 2004 budget, it should be completely integrated into a sustainability framework?

Mr Ottesen: I think that's an ambitious expectation. I think we're going to have to, with the resources that we have and with the challenge that we have, because we're dealing with identifying those decision-making points, and trying to develop the processes that go with that—and this is new, as well; some other jurisdictions are tackling aspects of this as well—try to deliver support in those key decision-making points.

We're also trying to focus on key projects which are emerging in government, and assist with those processes as well; so we're trying to allocate our resources to that as well. So we see it as a process of change that's going to take a period of time, and I wouldn't want to put forward a date to say, at some point in time, it's all drawing to an end.

THE CHAIR: Mr Ottesen, on the question of resources: (h) says, as a quantity output, “implement sustainability policy”. What will that cost, and have resources been set aside? I can’t see, in the initiatives, that money is put aside for that.

Mr Ottesen: We’ll, that’s within our existing budget.

MS DUNDAS: So it will come out of what was appropriated last year?

Mr Ottesen: Yes, last year.

MRS DUNNE: Which is?

Mr Ottesen: \$381,000 for the next calendar year.

MS DUNDAS: For the 2003-04 financial year?

Mr Ottesen: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: And what are the outyears? Just refresh my memory.

Mr Ottesen: It’s the same, it’s just weighted for, I think, inflation.

MS DUNDAS: What has been your involvement in the development of the Canberra Plan?

Mr Ottesen: I’ve been working closely with the project teams which have been associated with that; so each of the three dimensions. Basically, since our existence, because we see the Canberra Plan as an important mechanism for expressing the concept of sustainability as well, we see that concept underpins the development of those three plans.

MRS DUNNE: I think we had a discussion in the additional appropriations back in 2001 about the resourcing of the Office of Sustainability, and Mr Ottesen has just touched on it again. “We would do things differently with different resources.” What we were promised then, when Ms Dundas was on the estimates committee—and I remember being here for the questioning on this subject—was that we would begin by now to see triple bottom-line reporting. We have not seen it.

Correct me if I’m wrong, but there seems to have been a sort of slight change of emphasis. I don’t really have a problem with the emphasis in trying to inform all the policy-making, decision-making areas about sustainability. I think a lot of people don’t get beyond the environmental stuff. I think the Chief Minister said before there’s a lot of educative process going on. At the same time, to get some idea of how we’re going on this, when are we going to start seeing some performance measures that are related to sustainability?

We talked a lot about performance measures in estimates last year, and the performance measures don’t seem to be much more than quantitative measures again this year, for the

most part. So when are we going to start to see that triple bottom-line stuff appearing in performance measures, appearing in the budget papers, in a way that's recognisable?

The reason I'm asking this is that, in a sense, you never really educate public servants, speaking as a former public servant, until you know that your performance is on the line and that it's being scrutinised.

This committee is where the work of government is most scrutinised, but we're not seeing those performance measures. That doesn't then feed back into the public service decision-making process over a number of budgets. It's not going to happen today; it's not going to happen tomorrow—and I don't expect that—but when are we going to start to see the beginnings of it appearing here, so it can feed back through the educative process?

Mr Ottesen: If I might respond in this way: what we're trying to do is target where we see the key decision-making points. Our view is that we should try to get right back as far as we can to the beginning, and I'd say that corporate planning and business planning is a key area. Of course, at that point, if programs identify objectives in there which incorporate sustainability principles, that's the point where you start to have your influence. In the end, the development of budgets should start to reflect that. Likewise, in the cabinet process, procurement process, capital works, allocation of grants, we already have conditions in our annual reports which require reporting against ESD principles. We'll be looking to see to what extent that should be revised and strengthened.

So the budget I see as part of the process, but I can't be explicit and say exactly when and how it's going to manifest itself.

MRS DUNNE: I'd like to put on record that this is the third set of estimates where Ms Dundas and I have asked these questions, and we still haven't actually progressed to getting some sort of definitive timeline about when it will start to appear in budget documents.

MR HARGREAVES: There are plenty more estimates. We can ask them again. There's plenty more to come.

THE CHAIR: And we may have to.

MS DUNDAS: One quick follow-up question to that. You rattled off a list of decision-making areas where you're likely to be, and looking to be, involved. Have you been in any way involved in the Expenditure Review Committee and its process?

Mr Ottesen: No.

MS DUNDAS: Chief Minister, do you see that changing into the future?

Mr Stanhope: Well, the Expenditure Review Committee, of course—as is the production of the budget papers—is the responsibility of the Treasurer, but certainly I have an expectation, as has been explained earlier, that the Office of Sustainability and Mr Ottesen will be involved across government in all of those ways and areas where we can get the optimal value or response, having regard to his very limited resources.

We can't do everything. Mr Ottesen's got an office of three or four, working flat out; we're doing something for the first time; we're setting the pace, nationally, in relation to sustainability issues; we're doing it with a small office, with modest funding; and we can't do everything at once.

But we're working as fast as we can; we've started at the beginning; we've developed a framework; and we'll pursue it to the end. As Mr Ottesen has just explained, it's simply impossible for him to say, "Oh, well, yes, look, we'll crash through and develop a framework for delivering a triple bottom-line budget by next year or the year after." We've got a whole range of other priorities that the office and the government are working to.

MRS DUNNE: On this then, Chief Minister, I really need to ask: how serious are you about this priority? This was touted as a key part of your election platform—and I praise you for that initiative. But the initiative is not going to succeed if, by everyone's admission, the Office of Sustainability is underresourced—\$300,000-odd and three or four staff—is not doing it. Everyone's admitting that you're not making the progress. I don't want to be critical of the Office of Sustainability because I think that they are radically underresourced.

The question that needs to be asked is: is this just window-dressing so you can say, "We're being ground-breaking"? I think that there's a great deal of debate about that. Many other jurisdictions are doing similar things.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, they're following us.

THE CHAIR: I'm not so sure about that. Can we come to the question?

MRS DUNNE: And it's not really the time to have the debate. Are you really committed to this, Chief Minister, or is this window-dressing? There's \$350,000 and four staff. Is this window-dressing? I suspect the answer is yes.

Mr Stanhope: Well, you're being political, Mrs Dunne, and I don't want to get involved in estimates in a political stoush with you around whether or not we're serious. Suffice it to say we're \$381,000 a year more serious than you were.

MRS DUNNE: No, I don't—

Mr Stanhope: Now, let's get political about it.

MRS DUNNE: No, I never criticised you.

Mr Stanhope: You in government showed absolutely no commitment to sustainability in any way whatsoever in any of your decisions, in your policy-making or in your funding of the ACT public service or Chief Minister's Department.

MRS DUNNE: No, I'm actually asking about your initiatives and your platform.

THE CHAIR: Order, members! The Chief Minister has the floor.

Mr Stanhope: Let's get back to taws here. We've established an office—

MRS DUNNE: No, this isn't in your budget.

Mr Stanhope: We've established it within the Chief Minister's Department; we've staffed it with wholly competent and professional people. They've produced a very significant sustainability framework. We're now working and reporting on the implementation of a sustainability policy. We've set the targets. Mr Ottesen and his staff are working across the board on a range of very significant policy initiatives.

MRS DUNNE: But you've just said, Chief Minister, they can't possibly do it; there are only four of them.

Mr Stanhope: Well, we can't do everything. You know that. There were about a thousand initiatives that I'd like to double the funding of across the board, and the Office of Sustainability is one. Name any other policy initiative you want. Just name it and ask me would I like to double its funding. Just name one. Name something. Name the drugs task force.

MR HARGREAVES: They can't find one, Chief Minister; they'll have to be given another five minutes to look it up.

THE CHAIR: Volunteering ACT.

Mr Stanhope: Well, let's get to that as well.

THE CHAIR: I think we might move on, given the constraints of time.

Mr Stanhope: It's a nonsense question to suggest that should the Office of Sustainability receive more funding and resources? Yes, of course it should. Should there be more funding for mental health? Yes, of course there should. Should there be more funding for disability services? Yes, of course there should. Should there be more funding for housing? Yes, of course there should.

MRS DUNNE: We're talking about the Office of Sustainability.

Mr Stanhope: Well, name a policy initiative and ask me would I like to fund it.

THE CHAIR: Order, please, members! We might move onto the last question in class 1.1. Chief Minister, it says that there will only be one whole-of-government policy developed this year. Would you like to tell the committee what that policy will be?

Mr Stanhope: Which is that?

THE CHAIR: No (c) in output class 1.1, Chief Minister.

MR HARGREAVES: Didn't you address this issue before, Mr Tonkin?

Mr Tonkin: I thought I did. Mr Chairman, I draw your attention to the words there. It is a development of whole-of-government policies. That is an activity. There is one activity, which is a development of whole-of-government policies. There will continue to be one activity.

THE CHAIR: Which of course is the point.

Mr Tonkin: That activity is described in the plural.

THE CHAIR: Yes, which of course is the point.

Mr Tonkin: My point is that we have a whole-of-government policy development activity and process that we undertake; we'll continue to undertake it. We've already spent the last hour and a half or more discussing the sorts of outcomes that come out of that activity. I go back to my point that a lot of these quantitative measures in the budget documents are a simple nonsense.

MRS DUNNE: Well, at least we're agreed on that.

THE CHAIR: Before we move to output 1.2: the environment and heritage people are starting to arrive. We've got about two hours to go. I suspect we're not going to get to environment and heritage. We might put it off till the next time the Chief Minister appears, rather than having officers sitting around wasting their time. What we might attempt to do is get through all of the Chief Minister's portfolio today, including multicultural affairs. If members would keep their questions concise, we'll try to rip through 1.2.

MRS CROSS: Chief Minister, one of the commitments that your government made before the election was to look into the establishment of a multicultural centre for the ACT. I look at page 42 of paper No 4 and I'm wondering: in that \$4.476 million is there an amount of money allocated for a multicultural centre, as promised by your government before the election?

Mr Stanhope: No, there's not. And we didn't promise to build a multicultural centre before the election.

MRS CROSS: No, you promised to look into it.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, and we're doing that. Indeed, Mr Manikis and the Office of Community Affairs have, I think, just in the last week presented to government for its consideration a detailed proposal in relation to a multicultural centre, which is yet to receive consideration by either myself or the government.

MRS CROSS: Is it something that, Chief Minister, you would look at committing to and perhaps starting before the next election?

Mr Stanhope: Well, at this stage I'm not making that commitment, Mrs Cross. Suffice it to say that the Chief Minister's Department, through Mr Manikis, has in the last week or two concluded a submission to me, as minister for multicultural affairs. I haven't yet considered it. But certainly, it's a major step in relation to our consideration of the issue

of a multicultural centre for the ACT. So it's a live project. It's a project that's receiving active consideration.

MRS CROSS: Can Mr Manikis tell this committee whether he's recommended that we build a multicultural centre?

Mr Stanhope: No, he can't.

MRS CROSS: I know you do have a commitment to the multicultural community—I'm aware of that—as did the former Liberal government. I know that the former Liberal government went to the election with a commitment to build a multicultural centre rather than just look into it. Given your strong commitment to the multicultural community, wouldn't it be more encouraging for that community to know that that commitment translates into a centre where they can congregate and use for a number of areas rather than continuing to just look into it?

Mr Stanhope: Sure, Mrs Cross. The commitment that the Labor Party made prior to the last election was that we would investigate all options for the establishment, and that's what we're doing. It's what Mr Manikis has been doing; he's been doing that actively. He's now presented advice to me, as the minister, in relation to that, and I will make decisions on the basis of the options that he's presented to me.

MRS CROSS: Can you give me a timeframe, perhaps, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: I'll certainly be responding within a day or two to Mr Manikis, subject to what I decide. In relation to the options that he's presented to me: it may be that I will then take a submission to cabinet, and of course that's something that we'd be doing over the next couple of months. So the matter is being actively progressed, Mrs Cross, and I'm more than happy, once I and the government have made decisions, to let you know what the decisions are that we've made.

MRS CROSS: Can I ask: how much of the money, the \$4.476 million, has been allocated to multicultural initiatives?

Mr Stanhope: I'll ask Mr Manikis if he could respond.

Mr Manikis: We operate that budget from the level of the Multicultural and Community Affairs Group. So we don't have budgets for each of the offices within that group. But what I can do is come back with nominal breakdowns.

MRS CROSS: Great, thanks very much. So you'll take that on notice?

Mr Tonkin: We took that on notice earlier today; we undertook to give you a breakdown.

MRS CROSS: That's point No 8 on the list.

THE CHAIR: Mr Pratt's got a question.

MR PRATT: I've got one now, following that and a couple of others, if I may. Chief Minister or Mr Manikis, can you just confirm how much funding has actually been allocated to the feasibility study for the multicultural centre?

Mr Manikis: That was undertaken as part of the core responsibilities and within the core resources of the Office of Multicultural Affairs, so it's part of the existing budget.

THE CHAIR: How much was spent?

Mr Manikis: Well, I'd need to go back and have a look at that. I suppose \$5,000 or \$6,000, through community consultation.

Mr Tonkin: We don't cost things down like that; it's a task that was given to Mr Manikis' area to go away and do what the Chief Minister is undertaking to do. They've done it as part of their normal policy development.

MR PRATT: How would you quantify the effort put into that feasibility study then? What priority? How much effort? What's the scope of the actual study?

Mr Tonkin: I don't think we can give you an answer to that. We don't run our organisations on the basis of time-based management and costing of activities. That would be another overhead we'd be spending money on.

MR PRATT: Chief Minister, I must congratulate you on the press release you put out over the weekend alerting us to funding going into radio stations, including community radio stations, to talk about multicultural affairs. Of the \$100,000-odd that you've spoken about, I notice that the lion's share is dispersed across 30-odd associations and minor radio stations. But my concern is this—and perhaps you've got a good answer: how do you ensure that enough funding is being made available to the mainstream radio stations, because surely if we're going to get the message out there to the ACT community about multicultural affairs, we need to sufficiently resource the mainstream stations who will get the message out? What are your plans? How do you intend to make sure that we really promote multicultural affairs?

Mr Stanhope: Just by way of explanation, when you say "mainstream", you mean the non-community radio stations, the ABC and 2CC?

MR PRATT: Which have the larger reach.

Mr Stanhope: Well, in terms of the support: I'll ask Mr Manikis to expand on that particular program, the decisions that were taken and how the applications were assessed. Any recommendations were made to me, but it was a process around which I was certainly at arms length and wasn't involved in the development of the recommendations. Mr Manikis might explain the processes that were employed.

But in relation to ACT grants funding being made available to those major commercial or ABC stations, then I think those are really matters for other funders, not for the ACT. Certainly we do support community radio in the ACT, and it's very important we do do that. This particular grants program of course was designed to ensure that different parts

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of the non-English speaking background community in Canberra did have access to some resources to communicate with their own communities within the ACT.

One of the concerns that we were seeking to address was a lack of community connection within communities, particularly where there are continuing language barriers. I think a connection of some sort through a radio program is a particularly important way of ensuring that those members of small communities, particularly where there are members of communities that don't speak English at all, do have an opportunity to receive messages and community information in a language which they understand through the community radio stations, and that's what we're seeking to achieve through this particular program.

But I take the point that you make around ensuring that we do speak broadly to the Canberra community. Issues around multiculturalism and diversity are of course extremely important, and governments achieve that in a range of ways. We achieve it through our standing education programs; we achieve it in terms of the language and culture which our government supports and exudes; we achieve it through the development of policies in relation to racism; we achieve it in relation to a full range of policies around standing against discrimination in all of its forms; and we do it through fostering debates in relation to human rights, even to the extent of contemplating encapsulating human rights within bills of rights. We do it in a whole range of ways.

But a major responsibility of government is around developing a philosophy, a language and a culture that abhor discrimination and that embrace diversity and multiculturalism, and this government does that. But Mr Manikis can give you the detail on our support for radio stations.

Mr Manikis: It was a grants program specifically designed for ethnic radio broadcasters.

MRS DUNNE: Can I just interrupt there, Mr Manikis. Is this the first time?

Mr Manikis: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: So this is new money?

Mr Stanhope: This is another Labor initiative, yes.

MRS DUNNE: I seem to recall a Labor initiative in the contretemps between the Chief Minister and one of his candidates. But this is new money and it's entirely in addition to the \$100,000 multicultural grants program?

Mr Manikis: That's right. It is \$100,000 in addition to the other grants programs in the multicultural area. This is a grants program that called for applications from the community. Applications were received from ethnic broadcasters and the two ethnic radio stations, and there was a process of assessment of those applications by a subcommittee of the Multicultural Advisory Council and the community group that's been set up to advise the Chief Minister. And recommendations thereafter were made to the Chief Minister as to who would get what.

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MR PRATT: What is left over once those allocations have occurred? What has been left over, if anything at all, to perhaps tap into, as I earlier said, the mainstream stations?

Mr Manikis: I take your point. The mainstream, I must say, get enthusiastically involved in, for example, and come on deck with, the multicultural festival.

MR PRATT: Yes, they do.

Mr Manikis: If we're talking about an objective where we want to raise awareness through the mainstream radio stations, for about between three and six months prior to the festival each year, for example, broad radio stations or mainstream—

MR PRATT: All materially self fund.

Mr Manikis: Yes, and talk about multiculturalism and what-have-you. So that's just one means of getting the message across.

MR PRATT: Could you stimulate further in terms of the essential need to get that message out by perhaps allocating some of this funding, or is that not part of your strategy?

Mr Manikis: No. As far as this grants program is concerned, there is a targeted role for that, and it's about reach and addressing isolation in the community; it's about reach for information, government information; and trying to get through to those people who don't speak English and who would otherwise, if it hadn't been for some of these ethnic broadcasters who are voluntarily doing this, not get to hear what's going on around the place.

MRS CROSS: That leads to my next question.

THE CHAIR: If you bring your questions to my attention, it would make life so much easier.

MRS CROSS: Yes. Chief Minister, this year's multicultural festival was a great success—and I should acknowledge that for the record and congratulate Mr Manikis and his department. The concern of every successful festival, particularly one that encompasses and includes over a hundred ethnicities in a city like Canberra is its endurance and it's ongoing preservation. I'm not sure—because we have a bulk figure here in output class 1.2—whether the \$4.476 million includes a substantial amount to keep the festival going because it doesn't say. It would be a disappointment, I suppose, if the multicultural festival wasn't sustained and perhaps money by the government wasn't increased to improve it and to allow for inflation and other costs. Can you tell the committee what you plan to do for future multicultural festival?

Mr Stanhope: I'll ask Mr Manikis to go to the detail of that, Mrs Cross, but certainly the government is fully committed to the multicultural festival, and our determination is to support and enhance it. But Mr Manikis might go to some detail of the funding arrangement, but the government supports it fully and will continue to do so.

Mr Manikis: Yes, the funding is provided in the bottom line there.

MRS CROSS: Can you tell me how much?

Mr Manikis: \$310,000.

MRS CROSS: The same as last year?

Mr Manikis: It was the same as last year and, as I can recollect, the year before. So we've had successful—incrementally—festivals with the same amount of money. As the festival becomes more successful we're getting more interest from the corporate sector as well. We've had an increase from the corporate sector in terms of financial injection, and we've had quite a bit of interest now again for next year. So festivals can become successful. It's not commensurate with increasing government funding for it.

MRS CROSS: But obviously there is a commitment by each successive government, especially for this particular festival. Don't you think it is important that money is increased somewhat, given the difficulty of getting sponsorship and given the demands for money placed on this community since the bushfires, and that the money allocated to the festival increases rather than stays the same?

Mr Manikis: When I say "\$310,000", that's for the festival. There are funds allocated through other programs as well—for example, the multicultural grants program. Communities want to do things for the festival; they apply direct to that grant program.

MRS CROSS: Would you like more money, Mr Manikis?

THE CHAIR: A leading question.

MR HARGREAVES: Go on, say no, Nic.

Mr Stanhope: I understand the point you're making, Mrs Cross, but, suffice it to say, the multicultural festival was very successful this year. The government is committed to it. We believe that the same bottom-line injection of \$310,000 as was provided for this year's festival will be sufficient and adequate and that next year's festival will be bigger and better again.

I think Mr Manikis has touched on the point that success breeds success. A major issue faced by the festival organisers now is actually handling the competing demands for participation. The commitment by different communities to be part of the formal entertainment or festival proceedings is enormous, to the point where many applications are not able to be accepted simply as a result of the crush and the demand by different communities and certainly by the support which many of the embassies and high commissions are now offering. The willingness and the offers that are received by embassies and high commissions to facilitate and sponsor cultural acts or art from their home are of a level which we now have to regretfully decline.

So the festival is successful in a range of ways. The government's made a decision. But let me say that, whilst of course every provider of services would probably like to think that the nature of the task might be eased if they only had access to more money, the

name of the game is doing more with less, maintaining quality, enhancing outputs by being tough and rigorous—

MRS CROSS: Can I just interject, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: Let me just complete by saying that there's no livelier debate within government for more funds. So let me put it clearly that Mr Manikis' area is not out there fighting to death insisting that they can't deliver a better festival next year unless they get more money, because they are not.

MRS CROSS: I understand. When you say, though, "do more for less", you can't apply that principle in this instance and not apply it to the public service. When you say that we have to pay our public servants more—and I agree we should; I think everyone should be paid more—how can we expect this festival to do better for less when we don't expect the same thing of our resources in the public service?

Mr Stanhope: We do; that's a basis on which we operate.

MRS CROSS: No, we don't, because we've just got an increase. We discussed this morning—

Mr Stanhope: And we're doing more and more.

MRS CROSS: In this budget there is 10 per cent, which is great. I think it's fantastic. But how can you apply that principle—

THE CHAIR: But you couldn't detail what that more was this morning?

MRS CROSS: Yes. Why should they have to do more for less? Why? It doesn't work that way.

Mr Stanhope: As Mr Manikis said, because he is actually attracting greater corporate sponsorship. It's in the interest of this government and it's in the interest of the community for the community to get behind the festival. It's not the responsibility of only the government to fund and support things such as a community festival. We look to the community; we look to the corporate sector; we look to individuals to get behind the festival's work. As Mr Manikis just said, they're coming in in greater and greater numbers with a greater and greater preparedness to apply resources to the festival, and the government applauds that.

MRS CROSS: Well, thank god, we've got Mr Manikis attracting it because I don't know what anyone else would have done in that position.

Mr Stanhope: To the extent that we're achieving more for less, it's great.

MR PRATT: Chief Minister, I turn to the funding for aged care liaison officers, which is part of your multicultural policy. The funds were meant to take into account the rising number of older Canberrans from culturally diverse backgrounds and allocating two aged care liaison workers to give closer support to Canberra's multicultural aged community.

In your 2001 pre-election commitment you committed to spending \$150,000 each year in 2002-03, 2003-04 and 2004-05, but in the last two budget papers we haven't been able to find—and I certainly can't find it now—any allocations for the purpose of making those liaison officers available. Where are we at with this?

Mr Stanhope: I'm not entirely sure, Mr Pratt. The issue of aged care liaison is of course an issue for the Minister for Health, and I'm just not up-to-date on funding initiatives within this particular area. Mr Brady may be able to give some information. It's essentially a health funding issue, and I'd have to take some advice on exactly what we're doing.

MR PRATT: Perhaps I can come back.

THE CHAIR: We might come back to that point.

MRS DUNNE: There's a related issue, and that is that there is increasing concern about the need for aged care accommodation and services to particularly people of Asian background. There was an initiative a few years ago for a facility in Kaleen. What progress is being made on that? Is that, again, an aged care issue which we should be asking the Minister for Health about?

Mr Stanhope: I think perhaps Mr Brady can give you an update on that proposal. In the last discussion I had with Mr Ng, progress was being made by the Chinese community in relation to their preparedness. The government of course is more than prepared to render whatever assistance and support we can to the proponents to the Kaleen Chinese aged care village proposal, but it is essentially a matter for the Chinese community and proponents. We're providing the full range of support that we can. But Mr Brady may have an update on that.

Mr Brady: I guess part of that work has been the Planning and Land Management's introduction of a variation to the Territory Plan that enables a broader range of land uses, and my understanding is that is now in place. We have had some discussions with the representatives from the Chinese community—that is, the Office for Ageing and the Office of Multicultural Affairs have—and with the PALM people as well to progress that particular proposal.

MRS DUNNE: But that particular proposal, Mr Brady, has been on the table for three or four years, to my knowledge. Is it likely that the Chinese community is going to be able to turn a sod on this in the near future? And what are the impediments? Is it the Chinese community having to raise the money or are there planning impurities or what?

Mr Brady: You're right, Mrs Dunne. The issue has partly been the proponents themselves in respect of obtaining financial support, but we have done some facilitation, as I've indicated, to try to help progress that proposal.

MRS DUNNE: So there isn't much imminent likelihood of the project going ahead?

Mr Stanhope: Well, that's a matter for the Chinese community. The Chinese community can finance their proposal and then it will go ahead. The record needs to show that the ACT government is not inhibiting the progress with this proposal; we're

facilitating to the greatest extent we can; we're providing whatever support we can. Mr Brady has just indicated that we're seeking to facilitate financing by the Chinese community of the project. The matter is in the hands of the Chinese community. The government stands ready to assist them in every way.

MS TUCKER: In the area of women's policy strategy, in the multicultural demographic profile of Canberra, which was a very interesting document, I didn't see the gender aggregated data. There was some, around employment and mothers birthing, I think. Did the brief for the work, before it progressed, go to the women's section, and was the whole notion of having gender aggregated data considered?

Mr Manikis: My understanding is that the four officers that make up the group were fully involved in the consultations with the authors of that publication prior to it being published.

MS TUCKER: So basically the advice came from the section dealing with women that this was adequate gender analysis in this document?

Mr Manikis: I can't recall what went from the office—

THE CHAIR: Ms Tucker, the Minister for Women will appear on Friday, and perhaps those officers will be available then to answer that more fully.

MS TUCKER: We could follow it up then, yes. This document was produced by this area, so that's why this area should know why the decision was made not to put further gender analysis in the document. That's why I've asked it here. You don't really know?

Mr Manikis: All I know is that the four officers were fully involved in the preamble to the publication, I suppose, or to that consultation, to provide input to the publication.

MS TUCKER: What is the government's position? I know that in the response to the status of women report, one of the recommendations was that you do have that sort of gender analysis go in all work. Is it your view that the demographic profile had enough of a gender analysis in it?

Mr Stanhope: I have to say I haven't developed a view on that, Ms Tucker, but I'm certainly aware of the comments of the Ministerial Council for Women and of Ms Jacqui Pearce in relation to a paucity of disaggregated information. I think perhaps it is an area where the government should be seeking more disaggregation than is available, and it may be that in relation to this particular report we lost an opportunity. I don't know; I would perhaps have to take some advice from the Office for Women.

MS TUCKER: I'm just interested in the rationale; so you could take it on notice.

Mr Stanhope: Well, I tend to think you may have a point, Ms Tucker. It may be that we should be a little bit more aggressive in our requirement or demand for gender disaggregated information or advice, and I would perhaps prefer a discussion with the Office for Women or the Minister for Women before responding fully to you. But as a principle, I think we should be disaggregating wherever we easily can, and, if it's not a question of basically inhibiting a research task that's being undertaken for a more

fundamental reason, then we should be disaggregating wherever we can. You having raised it, I'll pursue it.

Mr Tonkin: I'm advised, Ms Tucker, that the aim of the study was to get as much information as was possible, and no decision was made to not disaggregate where disaggregated data was available. I think, as the Chief Minister was saying, it's a matter of the data fields that are available through ABS. We've extracted all we could out of the material that's available. It goes to actually what base data is collected, and how can you get it out of the system. So the intention was to get as much information as we could across the multicultural community—

MS TUCKER: Using ABS?

Mr Tonkin: Using that sort of data.

MS TUCKER: So if that data isn't available—

Mr Tonkin: If that data isn't available, then we don't have the capacity.

MS TUCKER: If you only rely on the ABS data. I suppose the point I'm making is that then there is further work to be done, working with the local community to break that down again and see what the impacts are for women.

Mr Tonkin: But, again, I don't want you to get the impression that there was any active decision made to restrict the range of data. There wasn't.

MS TUCKER: Well, it sounds as though there was, because you decided to focus on the ABS stats. I understand you made that decision, but then the point would have to be made that—

Mr Tonkin: I wouldn't draw the inference that we were therefore restricting the data down; we were simply getting the maximum data that we could get sensibly, and taking all that we could, and using it that way. It's not as if we said, "Well, okay, we're not going to pick this particular piece of data up." We took as much data as we could get our hands on for the study, sensibly, within the time bounds and everything else that goes on. And that's what you do with this sort of demographic analysis.

MS TUCKER: If we continue to do that, we won't end up increasing our knowledge, unless the ABS actually increases its stats.

Mr Tonkin: Well, we can take the point the Chief Minister is making and say that, nationally, we will be collecting more of this data, and this is part of the dialogue with the ABS.

THE CHAIR: Ms Tucker, I can see a recommendation in this.

MS TUCKER: I don't know whether this is the right area, but I'm interested in—it was referred to earlier—the reviewing of the purchaser/provider model. Is that in this area? I can't see an output for it, but I would have thought it happened here.

MRS CROSS: What are you looking at, Kerrie?

MS TUCKER: I'm not, because I couldn't find it, but apparently this is the right area.

Mr Tonkin: Well, it's one of those broadly based policies.

MS TUCKER: Yes, sure. No, I understand. I thought this was the logical place for it to be.

Mr Rice: Ms Tucker, it's a policy group that's been working on that piece of work over the last six or eight months. We obviously do it in consultation with the community affairs area.

MS TUCKER: I understand from statements that have come out of government that the review that's occurring is in line with principles outlined in the compact. I've been told that it's actually about moving to triennial funding, rather than annual funding, and that that's about as far as it's gone. I want to clarify whether that's the case. In what depth are you looking at the purchaser/provider model when you're reviewing this? Or is it just about awarding the contracts, making them triennial, not annual?

Mr Rice: I'll perhaps make some preliminary remarks and then defer to Simon Rosenberg. We have a draft policy paper out at the moment which canvasses a range of options about improving the relationship with the non-government sector. That issue of funding is incorporated in that section.

Mr Rosenberg: Ms Tucker, you're right. The ultimate aim is to move to triennial funding, but not simply for the purpose of having triennial funding but on the basis of developing funding plans for relevant sub-sectors. So triennial funding would be awarded if there was a very clear planning framework for a particular sector and all other conditions were met. At the moment the objective is that that would be in place for most areas by July 2004.

MS TUCKER: You still basically have a competitive model, though, with tendering by community organisations?

Mr Rosenberg: There's a change to the approach, philosophically and practically, in terms of the previous purchaser/provider arrangement. In fact, the draft policy sets out a number of conditions by which organisations would be funded, and conditions by which they might have to enter into a competitive process. And those conditions for competitive processes are actually quite small.

MS TUCKER: I'll have a look at that paper then. I won't take up time with that now.

MS DUNDAS: Can I follow on from that. Ms Tucker mentioned that the protocols were being developed in line with the compact. Chief Minister, is the government committed to the compact document that the former government developed in terms of the community consultations?

Mr Stanhope: Well, we're committed to community consultations. I don't have the detail in the document in front of me.

MS DUNDAS: It's the government's own protocol for working with community groups.

Mr Stanhope: Certainly. I'm not going to say here I'm committed to every word of a document I don't have in front of me and haven't reviewed for some time, but certainly we're committed to everything that underpins the compact, absolutely.

MS DUNDAS: So the consultations with regards to the development of the new purchaser/provider model are happening in line with the guidelines set out in the compact?

Mr Rosenberg: The consultations and the modes of implementation, yes.

MS DUNDAS: So the timelines that are set out in the compact are being followed?

Mr Rosenberg: Broadly, yes. There was a truncated process, because of the lead-up to the new financial year, for the first phase; but we've given a commitment to the community sector that the consultation and implementation of the second stage will be a much longer process involving a new partnership.

MS DUNDAS: Why was the first phase truncated?

Mr Rosenberg: Well, essentially because of the imperatives leading up to the new financial year. It was difficult to get all the work done in time, so there was a proper period of development before contracts had to be renewed or extended.

MS DUNDAS: And we're talking about the end of this financial year?

Mr Rosenberg: That's right, the coming financial year.

Mr Tonkin: The end of the coming financial year.

MS DUNDAS: 30 June 2003?

Mr Tonkin: 2004. The consultation will be taking place predominantly during the coming financial year.

MS DUNDAS: I was asking about why the consultation that's already progressed was truncated.

Mr Tonkin: This goes to the major service delivery departments who do manage these relationships. The aim is to get as many of them in place as we can by the end of this current financial year; but, noting what Mr Rosenberg has said, there is a need to do a proper process of consultation with the particular providers and so we have, essentially, as I understand it, rolled over a lot of the funding arrangements to the next year.

We're not forcing an outcome with an inadequate process of consultation. So where we can progress it, good. Where we can't get it done under this new philosophical arrangement which goes to the issue of moving from purchaser/provider to a more

partnership based model, we will do it through the coming financial year and their existing levels of funding will be maintained in the interim.

MRS CROSS: But wasn't there already a model of consultation in place that you could have used? Why did you have to go to a new model?

Mr Tonkin: Because we've moved away from the process of having essentially, as Ms Tucker said, a purchaser/provider, a bidding process, essentially a commercial contractual arrangement. That was the previous model. Now what we're saying is: we don't think that is the adequate or the best model in lots of circumstances to deliver these sorts of services. We want a much more joined-up, sharing, partnering-type model. The aim of that is to produce a better quality outcome because we recognise that a lot of these community-based service providers know a lot more about the client population and about service delivery than do a lot of parts of government.

So if you simply go out there and get the lowest quote to deliver a particular service, you may not get the best outcome. If you run a different model, you may get an improved outcome. So we're trying to improve the quality of the relationship, knowing that this isn't something the government does alone; it's something the government does with the community.

MRS CROSS: Did you base that change in opinion on facts or just speculation?

Mr Tonkin: It's based on a considered view—and that's a judgment that's open to governments to make—that such a straight commercial model will not necessarily produce the best outcome in all circumstances. So it's a judgment call.

But also we think that that's the trend that's going on in other jurisdictions, and we're trying to do the best we can with that. We talk actively, as you know, to a lot of our large community service providers. One of the things we've found through the bushfires is how useful it is to get that and maintain a very, very active consultative process which is going forward. It works; I've seen it work.

MS TUCKER: I think the Chief Minister might need to answer this one. I've got two more areas, but this is just on the complaints review mechanism, the review of complaints in the ACT. I understand that the tender had to go out again; there were changes to the tender. That's delayed the whole process. I'm interested to know what that means to the original timeframe that was set.

Mr Tonkin: I don't think that's Chief Minister's.

MS TUCKER: Isn't it? Okay, fine.

Mr Tonkin: It might be in justice, perhaps.

MS TUCKER: I thought it would be in Chief Minister's because it was a policy area.

Mr Tonkin: Lots of areas do policy; I would hate to think that we're the only one.

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MS TUCKER: Well I would have thought it was an all-of-government policy area. To be honest, I think it should be, because it covers all areas. We've had this discussion with Mr Wood. You're telling me it's back in Mr Wood's area?

Mr Tonkin: No, I'm not saying it's back in Mr Wood's area. We'll find out for you who's got carriage of it. I actually, personally, thought it was more likely to be in the justice area.

MS TUCKER: I don't know why you'd think that. It is a whole-of-government issue, complaints mechanisms; it goes right across different departments.

Mr Tonkin: It is being managed by disability.

MS TUCKER: That's what I thought. I was hoping it wasn't, but you're telling me it is. My last area of questioning is around the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policy. Is the Chief Minister available or not?

MRS CROSS: I think he's doing an interview. I think he's outside.

Mr Tonkin: We might just keep proceeding, if you're happy, Mr Chairman. Do you want to keep proceeding or pause?

MS TUCKER: Can someone answer the question?

THE CHAIR: If somebody can answer the questions, it's better to keep going.

MS TUCKER: Some of them might be more appropriate for the Chief Minister, but we'll see how we go. In the annual report last year, it was mentioned—and we're all aware—that a council of elders met for the first time. My understanding of that meeting is that there were five priority areas identified by the united Ngunnawal elders council. I'm interested to know what has been done with that information, because it was a particularly important opportunity to listen to what the elders were saying.

Ms Fanning: Since the main meeting last year, we've established the council to proceed; that was one of the first priorities from that meeting. Education was one of the major focuses from their December meeting. Since that time we've liaised with the Indigenous Education Unit. Actually, tomorrow and the next day are the next meetings of the elders council—they're arriving this afternoon—and a presentation to the elders council will be given, updating the roles of indigenous education workers in the schools, which is one of the areas of concern, and also an update on the involvement of indigenous studies in the curriculum across schools in the ACT.

MS TUCKER: Can the committee have that report?

Ms Fanning: The report? The outcomes of the meeting?

MS TUCKER: That you're going to give to the Ngunnawal elders.

Ms Fanning: The one the Indigenous Education Unit was going to give? We can give that information.

MS TUCKER: Can you get that sorted for the committee?

Ms Fanning: The other part of the education component is that the elders will be negotiating again tomorrow about a greater presence of elders within schools. One of the proposals is for them to, along with the school, each have an ongoing commitment and presence of elders in the schools, not just for Reconciliation Week or NADOC week, but as an ongoing support for the students and the families. In the initial stages, it will be in 10 schools across Canberra but, depending on the elders' availability, as well as the success of that, we will be looking at increasing that.

MS TUCKER: That's good. Can we have the detail, to save time now, provided to the committee? What about the other priorities?

Ms Fanning: Another major priority of the elders council is a farm proposal. The office has liaised with Planning and Land Management and the Asset Management Group within that about possible locations and facilities that would be available for such a farm, as well as looking into funding options around that. We've spoken with the Indigenous Land Corporation, a Commonwealth body who provide assistance to indigenous groups to purchase land to do a variety of things. They haven't actually purchased any land in the ACT or nearby before, but all the information will be tabled for the elders' consideration on whether to buy such a farm.

MS TUCKER: So there's actually a proposal for land—a location?

Ms Fanning: No, there's no proposal for land.

MS TUCKER: Because they've been asked to look at some land already.

Ms Fanning: Yes. There are six options that are available. They have a varying degree of infrastructure. Some of the requirements from the Ngunnawal elders council relate to the site being quite a distance from—

MS TUCKER: Isolated, yes.

Ms Fanning: Yes. So it's a matter of marrying what services are available on the isolated options compared to those closer to town and then what meets the greater need.

MS TUCKER: So that's going to the council tomorrow as well.

Ms Fanning: That's going to the council tomorrow as well, and a representative from the Asset Management Group will be speaking to them on not only what the options are but the next steps in acquiring it.

MS TUCKER: Can the committee have that, too? Thanks. And the other priorities?

Ms Fanning: Another priority was housing, and the work around that has been: one, to link with the ACT homelessness strategy and focus group that is to meet with them on indigenous specific issues. The other is to give them some feedback on the viability study that was conducted last year by ACT Housing, as well as a tender process that

recently went through from ACT Housing on community capacity building around indigenous organisations to provide housing options to the community.

MS TUCKER: Is that five priorities?

Ms Fanning: I have given you farm, education, housing, the elders council. There is one more.

THE CHAIR: Katrina, you're hard to hear. Could you speak up, please?

MS TUCKER: Okay, you can get back to the committee on the fifth priority.

Ms Fanning: Yes, I'll get back to you on the fifth priority.

MS TUCKER: I've got one more on health. It may be a Health area so you mightn't have to put up with it, but it's on the same subject.

THE CHAIR: Be really quick.

MS TUCKER: It is on Aboriginal health issues. Winnunga Nimmityjah have been told they can have a location at Narrabundah, but I understand there's an argument between the Commonwealth and the ACT about who's going to pay for the refurbishment. Because the need is so great I'm concerned that seems to be a rather petty kind of issue when we're bursting out at the seams. Is that an area that this policy area deals with, or do I have to ask Health about that?

Mr Stanhope: No, that is a Health matter.

MS TUCKER: Even though it's a Commonwealth problem.

Mr Stanhope: But you're quite right. We've identified the Narrabundah health centre as available for an extension at the moment in the health service, but I take your point about any dispute or bickering around money. It's unfortunate—I don't know whether I'll call it petty but it certainly is unfortunate—that, in the context always of our determination to see the Commonwealth meet its responsibilities, sometimes these are fights we have to have, but certainly—

MS TUCKER: Meanwhile—

Mr Stanhope: Yes, sure.

THE CHAIR: We might follow this up when the Health Minister is here.

MS DUNDAS: I just remind you of the recommendations, I think, in last year's estimates report, which the government agreed to, to table, when available, the finance options and locations for the multicultural centre. I expect we'll get that soon.

Mr Stanhope: We'll do that.

MS DUNDAS: But also within indigenous affairs, I asked this question in the chamber but didn't really get an answer, Chief Minister, so I'll ask it again. Are quarterly reports on the current state and effectiveness of services delivered to the indigenous community in the ACT being produced, as you said they would be in your ministerial statement of 2001?

Mr Manikis: These reports are not being produced. What has happened since that Chief Minister's announcement is that there's been a lot of work done in capturing the services that are in fact delivered to indigenous people here in the ACT. There has been a working group that's been established which comprises chief executives, the chairs of agency specific indigenous advisory committees and ATSIC as well. That working group is chaired by Iris White, who is the chair of the regional council of ATSIC. What that working group's attempting to do is not only an audit of services but also work out whether what's being delivered is indeed effective. I'll let Katrina talk a little bit more about that shortly.

But this is a very complex area and an area that a lot of work has been put into. There's been the process of the ATSIC elections and also a multitude of reviews with ATSIC as well into the tent embassy, which has unsettled the work over the last few months.

I must say also that at the national level there's a whole swag of work that's been done in this area as well which we in the ACT are enthusiastically participating in, and that is change performance indicators—strategic change indicators for services.

So what we're attempting to do is set the ground work for quarterly reports taking into account at the Commonwealth-state level and also at the same time trying to find out whether individual services and dollars spent on services are actually delivering what they're supposed to be delivering.

Ms Fanning: In addition, the national framework that Nic has spoken about is through the Council of Australian Governments. The working group we also spoke about has agreed that the indicators that they've suggested would in fact be relevant to the ACT and that we should use them. In terms of community input into what those indicators say, not just collecting data that the ACT government wants to report against but that is meaningful to the community organisations, particularly those that are funded to provide services to every community, it will also provide base-line data to show the effectiveness of what they're doing—the retention rates of children in school, the family support work, those types of things.

The process that we've gone through is about trying to link up the reporting so that it's not as happened when we had the *Bringing them home* and deaths in custody reports. We had duplication of reporting, and we're still missing some areas. If it wasn't a recommendation from those reports, we didn't report against it even if it was something as critical as homelessness or housing.

The approach that we are taking has a set standard of indicators which include things like birth weights, hearing impediments, levels of literacy and numeracy, retention of our students through the later stages of high school, which is a fairly big concern across the community as well as within government, and a whole range of drug and substance use issues—to set up base-line data to see where we are now, look at what programs and

services we have through the audit so that this quarterly report will actually show the type of progress that we're making and where the gaps are.

MS DUNDAS: So the intention is still there then to have the production of these quarterly reports. You're doing all the background work to develop them. When will we start to see the reports actually having the data consolidated?

Ms Fanning: Part of the data that we're relying on is being collected through the indigenous social survey. For the first time we'll have ACT specific data. The collection of that data has taken place. I know it was at least happening in March because that's when they came to my house. The information that we're getting back from ABS will be released in September, and we can then incorporate it as our base-line data. That did ask questions about not just how many people might be in ACT Housing but, for our community in private housing, how many bedrooms there were and how many people actually lived in your home—a lot more detail to the information. There was a specific substance abuse form that was separate to those.

There is quite a graded level of information that's going to be available from that and will be provided on an ongoing basis. So once that base-line data is available to us the quarterly reporting will commence after that.

MS DUNDAS: So can we expect a first report in December?

Mr Manikis: Well, certainly in the third quarter. Could I also say that this information will also feed into the COAG exercise and there will be regular reporting requirements there and also in the work that the policy group is doing on the demographics and what-have-you and the disadvantage work that's been done there as well.

MR PRATT: I've got a question again on the multicultural festival. The Chief Minister is back. One of you can bat it. The international travelling festival acts and international multicultural displays that travel around the country tend to stick to the major capitals. Talking to the embassies in this tentative case, clearly if you could attract some of those into Canberra that would add extremely high value to the multicultural festival. Do you spend any of the \$300,000-odd allocated to the festival on bringing those activities then to Canberra? If you do, how do you determine which ones get the priority?

Mr Manikis: Part of our multicultural community of course is the diplomatic missions here in Canberra, and we have had quite an enthusiastic support for the festival since it started in its expanded format. We do hold consultations with the embassies around about July-August each year in relation to seeking from them what they have planned. The international component festival is not programmed but really is reactive to what the diplomatic missions have to offer, and they do take it seriously. There is a core of about 12 embassies and high commissions that really take it seriously and have produced some magnificent events for Canberrans that probably wouldn't have come to Canberra otherwise in the past few years.

Out of the \$310,000, I'd say it's about \$60,000 to \$80,000 that we spend on international acts in getting them here—not so much getting them here, I must say. While they're here, it's making sure the venue is paid for, promotion, transportation, that sort of thing.

MR PRATT: Accommodation?

Mr Manikis: Accommodation. If we looked at the contribution by the sponsoring country—and the government is putting a hell of a lot of money and resources to actually get 50 or 60 of the Peking Opera into town, or the 12 master class acts, the actor from Romania, into town—it's a lot of money in air fares and just getting them to land at Canberra airport, at that point; so the least we can do is look after them while they're here. And it adds quite a few dimensions. Not only is the National Multicultural Festival renowned overseas, in those countries, but also it does give a bit of an edge, a bit of a class edge, to the festival itself.

MRS DUNNE: Just getting back to the multicultural radio grants: I think this is probably a question for Mr Manikis. Do you have any idea how many of the roughly 110,000 people in the ACT who were either born overseas or are first generation listen to ethnic radio?

Mr Manikis: I know that there are around 10,000 that don't speak English.

MR PRATT: 2,000?

Mr Manikis: 10,000. That's an estimate—and I would imagine that the only way quite a few of those have access to getting their news would be through—

MRS DUNNE: I know the rating arrangements aren't sophisticated enough an instrument to pick up who listens to 2XX or to community radio anywhere, but do you have any means of measuring how many people access it, or is this a sort of finger in the wind sort of thing?

Mr Manikis: When you say “finger in the wind” it's what you hear around in the community as well—often, when you go to functions throughout the year, or you go to church. I believe, from my experience, that there are a high number of people who listen to ethnic radio, within that 10,000. But that's not scientific; you're right; we haven't done any surveys. CMS, the Canberra Multicultural Service Radio, 2XX, I'm not aware that they've done any survey. This is all voluntary effort. I'm not sure they'd even have the resources to do a full-on survey.

MRS DUNNE: So the question is: without wanting to appear critical of the intent of the grants, presumably what you're actually saying is the intent of the grants is to allow particular groups to provide information to their community about government programs?

Mr Manikis: No, that's one of the effects or the consequences of having the funding there.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We're going to have to move on.

MRS DUNNE: So just to cut to the chase: is there any way that you can measure the effectiveness of this program?

Mr Manikis: I'd need to have a think about that.

MRS DUNNE: Could you get back to us?

Mr Manikis: Certainly.

THE CHAIR: I've got one final question for output 1.2. There doesn't seem to be any SACS increases. Does the Chief Minister's Department purchase services from community groups? And if so, should there not be an increase in SACS funding?

Mr Tonkin: We don't.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We might move quickly onto 1.3.

MRS CROSS: Mr Tonkin, I might address this question to you. Could you please explain to this committee the costs associated with an SES officer, other than the specific salary package—that is, the costs of office, personal assistant, IT for both, et cetera, and how many extra public servants have been employed in this output class since 1 July 2002?

Mr Tonkin: Well, as far as the last one is concerned, unless someone's got the information, we will take that bit on notice. If we come back to one of the extra costs, other than the package, those costs will vary, depending upon, I suppose, how big their office is. Not all senior executives have their own secretary; often they share. That varies; it's not a one-to-one relationship.

Personal computing depends upon whether you have a computer at home, as well as at work, provided by the government. I think, just running from memory, the costs run at about \$6,500 for a general member of staff to about \$8,000 for an executive, because there's sometimes a second machine. Other than that, it's just the normal overheads.

Again, we don't cost our things right down to say that this person has this particular piece of extra cost, because, I say, in summary, there's the package; there's computing, which is a common cost; support staff varies, depending on the physical structure.

MRS CROSS: Would you like to take that on notice and get back to me with as close and as accurate information as you can?

Mr Tonkin: Well, I think that's about all you're going to get.

MRS CROSS: So it's \$6,000 to \$8,000 per SES officer?

Mr Tonkin: I said the staff. For computing, the cost of computing per staff member is of that order. We went through this with the bushfire secretariat as to how much it would cost to set it up. I think the cost differences were \$6,500 for a non-SES and about \$8,000 for an SES for computing, and that includes all the infrastructure costs, the support costs for computing, et cetera, as well as the equipment lease. For a steno-sec, it depends on what the structure is; so I can't give you a standardised answer on that.

MRS CROSS: Cost of the office and a personal assistant? You can give me those figures?

Mr Tonkin: As I just said to you, not every executive has a dedicated personal assistant.

MRS CROSS: Why don't you work out an average and come back to me?

Mr Tonkin: We'll see what we can find.

MR PRATT: Just following up on that, Mr Tonkin: in the reviews that are being conducted, which are listed there as activities, can you tell us please a little bit about whether you are reviewing the incapacitation and death issues—entitlements, shall we say—for police and Emergency Services personnel? Are the entitlements for police and Emergency Services personnel who either die in the line of duty or are severely incapacitated being reviewed—what their families may get? Can you please tell us something about that?

Mr Tonkin: Well, in terms of the police: I would expect that that's an issue, again, for the Federal Police. We purchase a service from the Federal Police. Remuneration conditions are matters for the federal government, not us. In respect of Emergency Services: I don't know that we are presently reviewing anything of that nature, but Ms Davoren may have some more information.

Ms Davoren: There's no such review under way. Emergency Service workers are covered under the public sector workers compensation arrangements. I could get details as to death benefits under that arrangement, but I'd have to take that on notice.

MR PRATT: Yes, I would like to see, please, what the current entitlements are and what the different arrangements and the different conditions are, certainly for Emergency Services personnel, if that's possible. And no review at all?

Mr Tonkin: No.

THE CHAIR: Under the output under quantity number (i), it says that you're going to implement new fraud. Surely that's new anti-fraud and anti-corruption framework.

Mr Tonkin: Well, it's a matter of opportunity, I suppose. I think it actually is described as that, but clearly the intent is to alert members of the public sector to the circumstances where fraud might be committed.

THE CHAIR: Or opportunities.

Mr Tonkin: With a view to having those circumstances removed or behaviours which might lead to that sort of an outcome being monitored and reported.

THE CHAIR: The Auditor-General, in his recent report, has said that the implementation strategies dealing with fraud/corruption and other improper conduct have consistently been less than effective. What will the government do to respond to that?

Mr Tonkin: I've noted that recommendation in the Auditor-General's report. It is not simply a question of our accepting that we should do as much as we can to have greater awareness and the right sorts of values and principles in place. That's virtually taken as

read. One of the observations of the Auditor-General is we don't know how much fraud is being conducted. Well, that's a bit hard to work out; you know how much you discover because when you discover it you act on it. Would there be some undiscovered fraud? Probably yes. How much? Impossible to say.

All you can do is do the sorts of programs that we're undertaking. We've acknowledged, I think, in our response to that report that we would look to improve that process—that is, beyond education and systems analysis and making sure you've got the right methodologies in place for handling public moneys and managing public assets, there's a limit to what's practical to be able to be done.

We don't accept any fraud. You go to the fundamentals. You say, "What are the principles of that you want to see a public service undertake? How do you promote those and show that they've been done following an action by the leadership groups?" That's about the best you can do, I think.

MR PRATT: Mr Tonkin, can I just return to that issue about the police. I accept the fact that the AFP and federal governments take care of entitlements and conditions of service for AFP personnel, including our own community police as part of that structure. But do you—do we, the ACT administration—have any input at all into reviews of conditions or upgrades, et cetera, for that component who are our ACT police force? And if not, why not?

Mr Tonkin: Well, I think it's a question you should address to the department of justice, because they're the department that manages those; it's more appropriately their responsibility than ours. So I invite you to do that.

THE CHAIR: We'll take it up with the minister.

MRS DUNNE: I have perhaps not so much a question, but what might be taken as my general rant. And that is the one about here we are with measures and, again, we don't have any actual measures of effectiveness. When are we going to be devising measures of effectiveness? We had this conversation this time, this place, last year, Mr Tonkin, and there are fewer measures of effectiveness than there were last year. They aren't actually measures of effectiveness; they're measures of whether the minister is satisfied. But where do we see in the budget papers the measures of the effectiveness of programs?

MS MacDONALD: Just before you answer that, Mr Tonkin: can you also indicate whether there are such measurements which are in place with other government agencies in other states and territories?

Mr Tonkin: I get the drift of your question. I'm not quite sure I can answer that, but I will say that, firstly, it's ultimately a matter for the Treasurer in terms of overall performance measures but, as is being suggested by Ms MacDonald, getting truly effective performance measures is an extremely difficult thing in the public sector. In the private sector you've got a measure; it's called profit; and, generally speaking—although I'm sure accountants can adjust the outcomes—you can measure performance reasonably quantitatively.

If you're running a program, you can run it on the basis of satisfaction, and there are activities across the broader range of the ACT government where surveys are conducted—I know they do that in Urban Services—about the satisfaction of citizens with the quality of various services that are delivered. They're qualitative measures which are good and useful.

When you've got activities in a department, such as Chief Minister's, your client, if you like, is the minister. So the measure is the satisfaction. "Have you met the minister's requirement" is, I would suggest to you, quite a reasonable measure to adopt. As I've said numerous times, I don't think counting works, except in some particular cases where there is a definable output.

But we're open to suggestion as to what other sensible measures can be put in place which will produce reliable data and which don't burn a whole pile of resources in their collection, because otherwise we go through a lot of effort and people fill in forms and do what they are going to do, and we end up with something which is shrunk down to one line in the book; and what does it tell you? What use is it? So I'm giving you a pragmatic answer. I'd love to see better measures of performance.

MRS DUNNE: This may be a better question for the Treasurer, but is the ACT public service doing any work at the moment about more effective effectiveness measures?

Mr Tonkin: I'm not sure that we are as active as we should be, although we come back to the discussion about the triple bottom-line reporting, which, again, is an effectiveness measure.

MRS DUNNE: But we're not getting those, are we?

Mr Tonkin: Well, you will progressively get that sort of stuff. But the final point I'd make is: with a lot of this material, if you wanted something we would try to address in annual reports rather than these sorts of documents, where you can actually get a presentation of what is being achieved against what was targeted within a context, you're restricted under the structures of these things to single lines of stuff, which I don't think advances the art much.

MRS DUNNE: We had exactly this conversation last year and then again during the review of annual reports which, say, the Planning and Environment Committee did. We looked at those effectiveness measures because we were told by you and other officials last year we should go away and look at them in the annual report. And they're not there either. So I'm coming back to the second lot of estimates. I really think that there should be a better answer, Mr Tonkin, than: "Go and look in the annual report, Mrs Dunne." I feel I'm being shoved off here and that there isn't really a corporate approach to coming up with effectiveness measures that mean something.

Quite frankly, yes, I agree with you that the Chief Minister is your principal client in the Chief Minister's Department, but there has to be some other measure, even in the Chief Minister's Department, as to whether or not the policy group in the multicultural area or the women's advisory group are doing their job effectively.

Mr Tonkin: Well, I'm not sure that I would agree that there have to be other measures. What I've said to you is that it is very hard to produce effectiveness measures which are truly reasonable and effective and not just more overhead and noise—and that's a pragmatic answer—and we're always open to people suggesting what would be more appropriate measures. But I do believe that a lot of performance reporting is best addressed in annual reports.

You can have a separate discussion about the adequacy and otherwise of annual reports, at another time, in another place. But I think that's a way of looking at it and saying, "Well, what did you try to do and what have you done in what sort of context?" Then you can have a discussion about that on the merits of the program. At the end of the day, the public service responds to the ministers of the government, the government responds to the Assembly and the Assembly in total responds to the electorate. The performance measures are expressed like that, and it's a cascade effect.

MRS DUNNE: You're saying that you're open to suggestions. Are you running an ideas competition, at least, Mr Tonkin, about how—

Mr Tonkin: Well, I'm open to the suggestions of the committee.

THE CHAIR: Mr Pratt has a final question and then we'll go to class 3.

MR PRATT: Just going back again to the issue of conditions and entitlements for Emergency Services personnel—and I appreciate that there's detail coming: why is there no review at all into the conditions of Emergency Services personnel, given the very strong response from the emergency services community, the volunteer community, particularly, about their conditions, the way in which they work, what they are entitled to, what their families are entitled to, should they in fact die in the process of duty? I would have thought that, given the noises made by the government about supporting our emergency services community, this would have been up on the list of the review.

Mr Stanhope: Well, I think, Mr Pratt, to be fair, there's a major review into the Emergency Services Bureau currently being undertaken by Mr Ron McLeod. I anticipate it to be a very broad and all-encompassing review of all aspects of Emergency Services and its operations and associated operations. At this stage, I don't think it would be particularly productive to launch an additional review into the specific issues that you raise, as important as they are.

But I would be hopeful that certainly, in the first instance, through the McLeod inquiry, all of those issues are pursued in terms of an Emergency Services Bureau and arrangement for the future that we could have full confidence in.

MR PRATT: Given that—and certainly I hope Mr McLeod will take those on board; and I think the terms of reference are probably wide enough—surely these activities here, in terms of public service management and the way we handle our people, are much more precise, and would have been a better vehicle for having a look at the way in which our Emergency Services people are being looked after.

Mr Tonkin: Well, I think, Mr Pratt, as Ms Davoren answered previously, people who work for ACT Emergency services are covered by the same arrangements as the rest of

the public service. One of the other points I would note is that a lot of the people who fought the bushfires in January this year were not from the emergency services; they were from Forests, Environment ACT, Canberra Urban Parks and Places. All of those are public servants, all subject to the same risks and threats as were the people who were in the emergency services themselves. Again, they are treated in exactly the same way.

MR PRATT: But in terms of their role in an emergency, are we satisfied that their conditions of service are good enough? And why are they not being subject to such reviews? What about volunteers? We know that volunteers are not covered adequately. Why aren't the conditions and employment requirements adequate?

Mr Tonkin: Because we have in place an existing arrangement for workplace safety and for compensation and all those sorts of measures.

MR PRATT: And you're satisfied with those?

Mr Tonkin: I have no reason to be not satisfied with those.

MR PRATT: Why are they not being reviewed? If we are reviewing the structure entirely—certainly, in light of January 2003—why did we not consider embracing those workers as well?

Mr Tonkin: I'm not quite sure I can answer any more than I have, to be honest.

THE CHAIR: Perhaps we'll take it up in another forum. Let us move on to output class 3, corporate services, on page 51.

MRS CROSS: This is probably one of my favourites. It goes to the measurement factor. Mr Tonkin, I'll address this question to you. It seems that you were 90 per cent satisfied with the level of service that you received from output class 3. The directors were also 90 per cent satisfied.

Mr Tonkin: That's the target, yes.

MRS CROSS: Which directors are we talking about here? Would you identify some of the areas within the 10 per cent that you were not satisfied with, and would you be able to table the last three quarterly assessments to give the committee an idea of the level of scrutiny applied by you and the directors to make this assessment?

Mr Tonkin: I don't think I can specify the areas of dissatisfaction. The answer is: I can't answer the question at all, I'm advised.

MRS CROSS: Because?

Mr Tonkin: Because, in this output sense, it's a measure of the performances of corporate services providing services to Treasury, and the people who respond to the services are the Treasury officials; so it's a question you should properly address to Mr Harris.

MRS DUNNE: Where do we see the CMD corporate services report?

Mr Tonkin: They're just an overhead to us. They don't produce an output in that sense. When you get to the subtleties of budgeting and what's an output and what's an overhead, a product that the Chief Minister's Department provides is corporate services support for Treasury. Hence it's an output.

THE CHAIR: No more questions for corporate services. Let us turn to class 4.1, bushfire recovery. Chief Minister, I've been approached by several business people who have lost both their homes and their businesses, and they say that, on one hand, the recovery process for the domestic situation has been fantastic, but they feel a little bit left to their own devices in terms of the business recovery. They suggested that perhaps the concept of a case manager for businesses as well might be useful. I was just wondering whether or not the government intends to do more for businesses affected by the fires.

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mr Smyth. I must say that I wasn't aware that there was that concern within the business community, or those affected, about the levels of support and assistance they were receiving. I haven't had that advice. I'd be more than happy, I think, at the outset, to ask Mr Thompson to give a rundown of the level of support. But, certainly, I'm concerned to learn, through your question, that there are some that are concerned or even some that would be interested in a case management approach, the approach which we applied in relation to members of the community more generally.

Mr Thompson may be able to assist the committee, and I'm indeed myself interested in the answer.

Mr Thompson: Thanks very much, Mr Stanhope. I might just say a few words and then hand over to Peter Gordon, from Business ACT. There are a set of assistance measures there, including a \$3,000 grant and assistance with a loan subsidy. We have had various meetings with the business community, and it is very diverse. The full range of businesses that have been affected varies from extremely small businesses, who've been operating essentially out of one room in a house, through to relatively substantial urban businesses. Then of course you move laterally into all those rural leasehold businesses as well.

We've certainly been aiming to plug the gaps, in terms of the needs of those businesses; they are of very wide range. It's an interesting thought that we actually get into case management there as well. That has not been our model in terms of the urban businesses, certainly. But it has to some extent been our model in terms of the rural leaseholders, where a lot of their needs have been able to be met through people working out of Environment ACT. Geoff King is essentially the extension officer, who works with those leaseholders. I think we are probably plugging some of the gaps there. But in terms of the urban businesses, perhaps it's best to hand over to Peter Gordon.

Mr Gordon: The plight of the various businesses that have been affected by the fires has certainly been of great interest to us, and we've been working very closely with them. The concept of providing some business assistance, in the form of mentors or others, business advisers, to try to help through the business recovery process, as opposed to the personal one, is something that was put in place immediately after the fires in January.

We know that the level of take-up from the small businesses wasn't quite to the extent we thought they would have been able to take up, and we've now started a second-stage evaluation, if you like, of what has happened to them. On our books, there are 160-odd businesses that have been directly affected. We're trying to contact them all, see what they think of how we've helped so far, and what they need next. In the next couple of weeks we think we'll be in a much better position.

But the concept of having a case manager and some professional counselling on the business side has recently come to light, and we'll be certainly looking at that in the next little while.

THE CHAIR: I have suggested to the individual that raised it with me that he go and speak to you. They said that, where they were counselled on the loss of their home and the domestic side, it was just fantastic. They found that, on the small business side, they were so immersed in trying to run the business they didn't have time to step back and assess what it is they should be doing. Their recommendation was that perhaps some sort of case worker for the small businesses might be useful. If you're looking at that, that's fabulous.

MRS CROSS: I've got a couple of questions. Firstly, Chief Minister, I will ask you this, but you may have to refer it. I want to know how much money you've allocated to be able to implement the outcomes of the McLeod report, when it is released in September, and how much money you've allocated for the outcomes of the task force.

Mr Stanhope: I will ask Mr Tonkin to respond more fully to that, but my memory—and I do recall having the discussion—Mrs Cross, is that we didn't anticipate specifically outcomes from McLeod; we know there are going to be some. I have absolutely no doubt there will be a cost burden in the implementation of the McLeod report's recommendations. We're aware of that.

I stand to be corrected on this, but my understanding of the discussions that I had with my cabinet colleagues was that, acknowledging that there would be significant potential costs in the implementation of McLeod, we felt that there was nothing to be gained in seeking to anticipate what the recommendations were likely to be. We had a discussion around this, and we thought, "Well, we could put \$5 million in; we could put \$10 million in; we could put \$15 million in, or \$20 million in." At the end of the day we felt it most sensible simply to await the report.

Mr Thompson: Mrs Cross, if I could just amplify a little bit. I think, in terms of the McLeod inquiry: the only provision running into next year is a modest \$100,000 figure, and that was there purely and simply because we had been thinking that Mr McLeod might finish his main inquiry and then there might be a few dribs and drabs of further work the government might actually ask Mr McLeod and Mr Ellis to do just to finish off.

Mr Stanhope: But that's not implementation?

Mr Thompson: No.

MRS CROSS: The \$100,000 is just in case we need to further the inquiry, expand the inquiry?

Mr Thompson: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: Would you anticipate that after Mr McLeod reports there would be a dedicated appropriation bill?

Mr Stanhope: Perhaps. That was our thinking.

Mr Thompson: If I could go on: in terms of the task force's view of the world, that really is encapsulated in the back of this document. We had a pretty thorough-going set of workshops in late April and early May just before the budget was put together at the instigation of the Chief Minister. Essentially, that set of programs you can see there is the view of the task force about what needs to be done.

MRS CROSS: What page are you on?

Mr Thompson: That's pages 20 and 21 of the bushfire document, and that listing there is the view of the task force about what needs to be done both in the budget year we're in and each budget year for the next two years thereafter. So the task force will reconsider that a little bit at a future meeting, but I think I can say with some confidence the task force view is what you see there.

MRS CROSS: On page 41 of budget paper 3, the government does recognise that the reparation activity required following the January 2003 bushfires will have a stimulatory effect on the ACT economy in 2003 and 2004, so far agreeing with Access Economics, but then claims "it will not be significant". Do you not agree with the Access Economics figures? Do you not believe a one-third increase in growth outlook is significant?

Mr Stanhope: I think those key assumptions are assumptions that should be addressed to the Treasurer in terms of the decisions that were taken by Treasury and the Treasurer in relation to assumptions around growth and growth figures, Mrs Cross. I don't want to duck the question, but it really is a question for Mr Quinlan.

MRS CROSS: I accept that, Chief Minister; but, given that we're talking about the bushfire recovery, you've had a very significant role in all this.

Mr Stanhope: I have and we accept that—

MRS CROSS: I thought you might have an opinion.

Mr Stanhope: I have an opinion.

MRS CROSS: Which is valued.

Mr Stanhope: I have an opinion that the reconstruction of the 500 houses and the concomitant purchase by the people that are rebuilding those homes to equip and furnish those homes will certainly stimulate the economy, will quite obviously have an effect on growth and on economic activity within Canberra. I'm not prepared to say, "Well, it's going to be any greater or lesser," or put a number on it, for myself. Mr Quinlan may.

Certainly I'm aware of the work that Access Economics has done and their prediction in relation to that. I think it is the case that they've predicted a higher potential growth over this coming year than the ACT government has forecast. Some of that is related to bushfire activity. I'm aware of the debate, but I haven't had advisings from Treasury on the issue, and I'm disinclined to respond directly.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, in the Assembly in budget week you tabled the document which is the ACT Policing submission to the operational response. On page 2, John Murray refers to a document called the "Recovery process for Canberra's bushfire emergency 18-28 January 2003". Is that document available to the committee?

Mr Stanhope: What document? I'm sorry, Mr Smyth, but which document is it?

THE CHAIR: The ACT Policing submission to the McLeod inquiry speaks of a document called the "Recovery process for Canberra's bushfire emergency 18-28 January 2003". Is that document available to the committee?

Mr Stanhope: I'll seek to have it identified, Mr Smyth. I must say I can't, just off the top of my head, identify what that report is. I'm more than happy to have a look at that.

THE CHAIR: If you read the line before the line that is highlighted Mr Murray says quite clearly that the short chronology drawn in the document that they've submitted to McLeod is drawn from this much larger document.

Mr Stanhope: Yes. I think he refers to it as an attached report. So it wasn't attached to it.

THE CHAIR: It wasn't attached, unless it was unattached to the copy that I've got.

Mr Stanhope: I'll look into that, Mr Smyth. I must say that I'm not quite aware what that document is. It actually says it's attached. I'm more than happy to look into that and certainly make it available to you and all members of the committee if it was meant to be attached and it was overlooked.

THE CHAIR: Because it suggest that there is a full and comprehensive chronology in this larger document and that's something that you've been unable to provide to me. I would be very interested to see that.

Mr Stanhope: Sure.

Mr Tonkin: I think you'll find it's a police document that he's referring to, not a whole-of-government document.

Mr Stanhope: But still it actually says it is attached.

THE CHAIR: No, no the next line there says "which was submitted to the Chief Minister in March". So the government's had since March a document that, from my reading, would be a comprehensive chronology of what happened. I've been asking since February for that.

Mr Stanhope: I think I know which document it is. I'm happy to pursue that, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, there have been a number of television reports, particularly on the ABC recently, concerning the bushfires. In the first of them the presenter raised the question of whether or not the airport had actually offered the government tankers for use in fire suppression. I was wondering were the tankers from the airport, which are high-volume tankers that can produce large amounts of foam whilst in motion, which I suspect would have been useful, offered and was that offer not accepted.

Mr Stanhope: I'll have to take it on notice, Mr Smyth. I'm happy to take that on notice. I don't know the answer.

THE CHAIR: My understanding is that, subsequent to your declaration that no such tankers had been offered to the ACT or turned down, one of the Civil Aviation Authority hierarchy actually wrote to you as Chief Minister and said that that was incorrect. Did you receive such a letter from the Civil Aviation Authority or some other federal body who are responsible for those tankers?

Mr Stanhope: I can't recall that I did, Mr Smyth, but I'm more than happy to undertake a search of my correspondence and find out whether I did receive such a letter.

THE CHAIR: So at this stage you don't recall having responded?

Mr Stanhope: I don't recall it, no.

THE CHAIR: No, you don't recall having responded either, is what I was going to say.

Mr Stanhope: No, I don't. I regret that I don't, but I've received more than a thousand letters on the fire. It may be that I have. I'm more than happy to look into that, but the advice that I've received was in relation to the meeting which occurred in Queanbeyan on the 15th. The advice that I received earlier in relation to that was that no offer of assistance was made that wasn't accepted. In regard to some of the language which continues to be used, and much of the inquiry which the ABC is continuing to pursue in relation to who said what to whom and in what terms at the meeting at Queanbeyan on 15 January, I see Mr Koperberg as late as this morning in the *Canberra Times* confirmed that no offer was made at that meeting which was not accepted. The *Canberra Times* headline on Saturday speaking of rejection, which Mr Koperberg has now confirmed as not the case, is a bit unfortunate.

I suppose it's one of my continuing concerns, of course, Mr Smyth—and we do need to get to the bottom of these issues—that *Stateline* can run a show on Friday night leading the *Canberra Times* to conclude that the ACT knocked back an offer of assistance, for Mr Koperberg then, on further questioning by the *Canberra Times*, not by the ABC or *Stateline*, to say, "No, no, no, I never said that. I at no stage said that any offer that I made was knocked back."

The confusion that's been generated by less than the full story being told really is quite regrettable, and I don't wish to add to that. I have to say it's why my inclination, at all times, has been to let the range of inquiries that we have in place run; let's get all the

facts on the table; and let's allow an objective review of all of the information so that we don't keep having circumstances such as those we've had over the last week, with the ABC, in its news broadcast 10 days ago, defaming me quite outrageously, with a suggestion that I had rejected advice to declare a state of emergency; with *Stateline* still alluding to the fact that a recommendation was made to declare a state of emergency which wasn't acted on for hours, which is also incorrect; with *Stateline* running an interview with Mr Koperberg which led at least to the *Canberra Times*, if not others, concluding that Mr Koperberg was saying that the ACT had declined offers of assistance, and then in today's paper, Mr Koperberg being forced to clarify the record and say, "Well, no, I never said any such thing, and no offers of assistance were declined from the meeting of 15 January." I'm not quite sure what it's a pursuit of by some, but certainly it's not a pursuit of the whole story in an objective way.

So that's my understanding of the meeting of 15 January, and that's my advice. In relation to whether or not I received a letter which says that some offer was made from the airport which wasn't accepted, I honestly can't remember that. So I'll chase the issue, Mr Smyth, and I'm more than happy to respond to you on it. I just simply can't remember. I know there's been discussion—I think I saw it in the media—about some issue with the airport, but I can't remember the detail of it.

MRS CROSS: Chief Minister, like many Canberrans and, indeed, many colleagues in this place, we've all been concerned about not only the effects of the bushfires in our community but, of late, I've had a number of people come to me with conflicting accounts of what happened or didn't happen. Like you, I'm eagerly awaiting the outcome of the McLeod inquiry.

Can I ask you: on the morning of 18 January, were you advised that you should declare a state of emergency or were you advised of that later in the day?

Mr Stanhope: I certainly wasn't advised in the morning, Mrs Cross, and I assume you got that information from the ABC.

MRS CROSS: No. I don't listen to the ABC very often.

Mr Stanhope: I'll just take a second of the committee's time to expand on this.

MRS CROSS: I'm not making a judgment here against you, Chief Minister; I'm putting a question to you about a matter that I've had put to me.

Mr Stanhope: Thank you for the question, Mrs Cross. I'm happy to have the opportunity to expand on this matter. The ABC did, on Thursday week ago, apropos of what I don't know, run a news item that I had refused to act on a recommendation to declare a state of emergency on the morning of 18 January. That is not true. It's false. And I don't know where the ABC conjured that up from.

The matter was alluded to in the *Stateline* program, which was run then that Friday and again this last Friday, suggesting that there was a delay in declaring a state of emergency after it was first raised. I'm not named in the *Stateline* report, but the defamation is just as clear insofar as I am the only person in the ACT who can declare a state of

emergency. It's once again me in relation to whom the suggestion is made for failure to act on advice. And I take this extremely seriously. This is extremely offensive to me.

The matter of a state of emergency was first raised with me at about 2 o'clock on Saturday afternoon at a meeting attended by Mr Tonkin; Mr Keady; I think Mr Thompson; Mr Murray, the police commissioner; Mike Castles; Peter Lucas-Smith; and, I think, probably Ian Bennett, but I can't quite remember.

Mr Tonkin: Yes, he was there.

Mr Stanhope: And Ian Bennett, the Chief Fire Commissioner. That was a meeting that was convened at about 2 o'clock, and that was the main item on the agenda. The discussion, I think, kicked off at about 10 past 2. It was a 20-minute conversation around the law, the legal requirements and the implications of declaring a state of emergency, something that had never been done in the ACT's history.

It took 20 minutes, or thereabouts, from go to whoa. For me to decide yes, a state of emergency was warranted and sign the piece of paper—and I signed the time on the piece of paper, 2.45; that's for a meeting that started a bit after 2, and the documentation was signed off at 2.45—I think that's not bad, for a process for declaring a state of emergency.

We can argue now that it might have occurred earlier. But we then need to go to what is it that the declaration of a state emergency means and was intended to achieve, and I think it's important for me to say here and now, "Certainly, it had the effect of handing responsibility for the management of the territory to the chief police officer." But the case that was put to me, by my officials, for the declaration of a state of emergency, went essentially to the need to empower the police to arrest people who refused to leave their premises.

There's been much play of the fact that there were problems in communicating to the Canberra community the gravity of the situation we faced. The declaration of a state of emergency had nothing to do with communicating the gravity of the circumstances we faced. There's once again been confusion around the intent, or the implications, of declaring a state of emergency prior to the meeting being convened to raise with me the declaration of a state of emergency. The Emergency Services Bureau had already begun to issue its emergency service alerts, which were being run before 2 o'clock on the Canberra media.

MRS CROSS: Do you feel let down at all by any of your senior public servants for waiting till 2 to advise you to declare a state of emergency?

Mr Stanhope: Well, I guess, in retrospect, Mrs Cross, there are a million issues we can look at. Certainly, let me just say this: not only was I not advised before midday to declare a state of emergency, I didn't even speak with a member of the Emergency Services Bureau or any other senior officer or, indeed, any member of the ACT public service before midday. At no stage between 12 o'clock and 2 o'clock did anybody raise with me the declaration of a state of emergency.

My first contact with an ACT official on the day of the fire was somewhere between—I'm guessing, I'm guessing this—12 and 12.30, when I had a telephone conversation with Mr Tim Keady, as I was driving to the Emergency Services Bureau; and that was my first conversation. I decided for myself to attend the Emergency Services Bureau. My memory is that I left my home at about midday, having decided for myself to attend.

MRS CROSS: You'd been home in the morning, that morning?

Mr Stanhope: I'd been at home that morning, and I had a coffee in the morning with my wife, yes, and then I drove to the bureau. On the way to the bureau, I had a conversation with Mr Keady.

MRS CROSS: Mr Stanhope, I don't envy you your position, because I know that, as the Chief Minister of this territory, you bear a great burden, especially with this bushfire situation.

Mr Stanhope: It's a weight, Mrs Cross; it's not a burden.

MRS CROSS: I'm glad to hear that.

Mr Stanhope: I certainly carry a weight; I don't feel it a burden.

MRS CROSS: Can I ask you this then—and this is what I've learnt in my limited time around politics: at times we politicians may be let down by those that are there to serve us. In some cases it could be public servants that may not be as experienced in knowing what to do in dire situations like this.

I have not received my information from the ABC, and I state that for *Hansard*. I've received a variety of information from a number of people in the community —interested parties who've lost either homes or property and even lost relatives. But at the end of the day these people who've gone through a severe grieving process are now angry and they want answers. I know you'll say that's what we've got the McLeod inquiry for, and that's fine.

Are you prepared, if this inquiry shows that there were senior public servants responsible for not warning you in the morning, versus in the afternoon, to take action against those public servants for not carrying out their duties, to the best of their ability?

Mr Stanhope: Well, that is very much a hypothetical question, Mrs Cross, and I'm not sure—

MRS CROSS: You can give me a hypothetical answer.

Mr Stanhope: Well, I can give you an answer. But it is a hypothetical question, and I don't think it appropriate for me to speculate on what those outcomes might be.

But let me say: I understand the enormous loss. I've said it many times, and I really don't perhaps need to repeat it here. I understand the enormous loss that people have suffered. People have, as you say, lost family, friends, relatives. We did suffer four deaths in the

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fire. It's an absolutely dreadful disaster—four lives lost; over 500 homes; the possessions of a lifetime; things that can never be replaced.

Of course people are devastated. This disaster has struck at their very being, their very past. We live our lives sometimes connected to the things around us that we love and that mean so much to us. Enormous loss has been suffered, and those people will be grieving horribly, and will continue to grieve for some time.

I know that anger is a very natural response to grief and to loss, and I know there are some very angry people within the community. I'm aware of that. I face some of the anger from time to time. I am the lightning rod for some of that anger from some of those people. As I say, that's part of the weight I bear.

But I am not pointing the finger at any of my officials. I am not pointing the finger at anybody in the Emergency Services Bureau. I have no doubt that every person within the ACT service and perhaps volunteers as well that were involved in the events of the fire, in the lead-up to the fire and on the day of the fire have, since 18 January, searched within themselves for answers about whether or not they did the right thing; whether they did everything that they could do. I know the trauma and the torture that many of the ACT's servants that confronted the fire, as well, perhaps, as many members of the community, faced and are continuing to face.

Let me just say this: morale's not as flash as it might be within the Emergency Services Bureau right now; morale's not as flash as it might be in the Fire Brigade at the moment. And much of that is to do with the constant searching for somebody to blame, for a scapegoat, that somebody must be deemed to be responsible for this disaster. It's having a debilitating effect on morale, and that's something I can't cop.

I need an Emergency Services Bureau facing from day to day the things that they need to face, and I need a Fire Brigade with the morale and the wherewithal to fight the daily emergencies which they face, and I'm not being assisted in maintaining morale and a spirit by constant attacks on their professionalism and on whether or not they did the right thing and whether they should be hung out to dry.

Mrs Cross, to get to the nub of your question: if at the end of the day McLeod or the other inquiries reveal that officers of the ACT service, wherever located, were grossly negligent, perhaps even criminally negligent, in the discharge of their duties, then of course the government is going to respond to findings or recommendations of that sort, but I don't expect that to happen. I think we have a group of professional, dedicated emergency service officers and fire officers.

I have declared my support for them from day one. I'm not a fair-weather friend. I will stick with them; I will stick up for them as public servants; and I will not just abandon them perhaps to make political life easier for me.

A lot of what's going on is hard. I understand most of it. There's some of it I don't understand. But I understand most of the responses from the community and others. I understand the desperate need for everybody to understand exactly what happened so that we can learn and move on. But I'm not going to be engaged in a witch-hunt. I'm not out there looking for people to blame. I don't want to get engaged in a brawl with

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Phil Koperberg about who did this and who did that. But I also need to defend my officers.

We can't have shows running saying that my officers, or officers of the Emergency Services Bureau, did or said things or refused assistance when all the questions haven't been put, when the obvious implications of the questions that were run and the answers that were broadcast didn't allow the obvious questions to be asked—such as: if Phil Koperberg had that many resources left over after the meeting on 15 January, why didn't he apply them to the fire for which he was solely responsible? The ACT and ACT fire-fighting services were not fighting the McIntyres hut fire. Phil Koperberg was.

Why wasn't that made explicit in these shows that have been running—those sorts of things? It's just unfair.

MRS CROSS: I thank you for your answer.

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mrs Cross. I'm glad you asked the question.

THE CHAIR: It's a good question, and I hope that the McLeod inquiry will answer your last question, Chief Minister: why weren't those resources put to the McIntyres hut fire? It being 5 to 2 and, to give you a break before cabinet, we shall adjourn. I thank you for your attendance and your officers attendance here today.

Mr Stanhope: Thank you very much.

Mr Thompson: Mr Chair, there's one other thing. This is not a bad forum just to make one other observation. I think there were some allegations unfairly made in the media straight after 18 January about the role of the Fire Brigade. I'd just like to record my observation that Ian Bennett was in the room when all of these things were being discussed. I can well and truly recollect hearing Ian talk about the disposition of his units up and around Eucumbene Drive and Warragamba Avenue very much as part of the whole scene. He was not disenfranchised at all.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Thompson. With that, we will close the meeting. Thanks, gentlemen.

The committee adjourned at 1.55 pm.