



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES

(Reference: Appropriation Bill 2005-2006)

Members:

MS K MACDONALD (The Chair)
DR D FOSKEY (The Deputy Chair)
MR R MULCAHY
MS M PORTER
MR Z SESELJA

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY 25 MAY 2005

Secretary to the committee:
Ms S Leyne (Ph: 6205 0490)

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 9.34 am.

Appearances:

Mr John Hargreaves, Minister for Disability, Housing and Community Services, Minister for Urban Services and Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Department of Urban Services

Mr Mike Zissler, Chief Executive

Mr Alan Galbraith, Executive Director, Customer Services and Information

Mr Hamish McNulty, Executive Director, City Management

Mr Alan Phillips, Director, Finance

Mr Gordon Elliott, Manager, Corporate Budgets

Ms Karen Greenland, General Manager, Road Transport Policy

Mr Steve Ryan, Acting Executive Director, City Operations

Mr Chris Horsey, Manager, ACT NOWaste

THE CHAIR: I will commence by reading the card that must be read to you. You should understand that these hearings are legal proceedings of the Legislative Assembly, protected by parliamentary privilege. That gives you certain protections but also certain responsibilities. It means that you are protected from certain legal actions, 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.

I ask each officer, on coming to the table, to state their name and the capacity in which they are appearing. Please identify clearly any questions you are taking on notice. It is then your responsibility to check the transcript and respond to the questions. Responses to questions taken on notice are required within five full working days. The transcript will be emailed to the minister and the departmental contact officer for distribution to witnesses as soon as it is available.

The proceedings are being broadcast to specified government offices and the media may be recording proceedings and taking visual footage. I ask all officials and members to ensure that their mobile phones are not used in this room. In fact, please turn them off.

We will follow the order set out in the detailed daily program. As chair, I will try to ensure that we adhere to time frames. I remind members and witnesses that we have limited time, so please refrain from entering into argument and debate as much as is humanly possible for politicians with political egos. Last Friday, we ended up having a bit of a rabble going on. I will not tolerate that today. I understand that people from different political parties have different points of views but, as much as possible, I will be maintaining order at these proceedings. If I feel it necessary, I will stop the proceedings until we have all calmed down. Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement?

Mr Hargreaves: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Firstly, I would like to welcome the appointment of Mike Zissler to the position of Chief Executive of the Department of Urban Services. He is seated to my immediate right. Mr Zissler is very enthusiastic and energetic. He has shown great professionalism and leadership since taking charge of the

department in December of 2004. I look forward to working with him and his management team in the coming years. We are in for a roller-coaster ride.

You will note that there were significant structural changes in the department following the administrative arrangement orders of 4 November 2004 which resulted in the transfer of environment, arts and heritage to the Chief Minister's Department. This has meant that these outputs have been discontinued for DUS reporting purposes and are shown in the budget paper No 4 appendix. In the coming years, we will see further significant changes to the Department of Urban Services.

It has been well documented that a range of savings measures will be implemented during 2005-06 and the forward years across most ACT government agencies. As a result of the nature of our government's structure, the Department of Urban Services is charged with fulfilling the role of a municipal council as well as a state department. Canberrans expect and deserve the best municipal services in Australia, and they also deserve value for their money.

With this in mind, the department is embarking on a significant review of its internal structures with a view to streamlining corporate service delivery and removing duplication of effort by abolishing the purchaser/provider model and internal trading. The significance of that is the removal of the purchaser/provider model. In terms of significant restructure, in terms of attitudinal management change, internal trading is the bit ticket item. I believe that there are significant changes to be made that will result in not only cost savings, but also efficient service and value for money for Canberrans. At this time, Mr Zissler and his team have already made considerable progress with this process, which is involving extensive consultation with staff, unions and key stakeholders.

As well as this restructuring, the budget provides many strategic and operational highlights for the department that will be pursued through 2005-06. You may recall that urban services received supplementary funding through the earlier second appropriation bill to assist with the urgent removal of trees damaged by the bushfire. These trees are largely on rural roads and presented a safety risk for passing traffic. Substantial work has already been completed on Mount Franklin, Brindabella and Bendora roads.

The bushfire recovery program continues, with the budget providing additional funding for remedial stabilisation measures on embankments and road verges on a number of the territory's rural roads. These essential works are required to stem the effects of significant erosion and will assist in protecting the natural environment and help improve road safety for users of our rural roads.

There has also been a need to remove a number of dangerous trees that have died within the territory's urban environment due to the impact of the ongoing severe drought conditions. The government has provided an additional \$500,000 for this initiative, which will decrease the potential risk of injury or damage to the community. The street tree maintenance program also has been increased to ensure that trees have the best possible chance to survive using a program of preventative maintenance. The department will also receive additional funding for an expanded footpath maintenance program, particularly within our older suburbs. This funding will enhance the existing repair program for what is an ageing asset in many of the suburbs.

At this point, I wish to underscore that this budget is an incremental budget. It is not a zero-based budget. It is an incremental budget, and the figures contained within it actually build on amounts of moneys that have been given in the outyears of previous budgets. So, when we look at the numbers in the budget papers, we need not assume that they are the only amounts of money that have been provided to any particular program. It is worth asking whether there is an ongoing allocation as part of the department's base funding. If the committee is curious about that in a specific instance, we would be happy to oblige with an answer. The budget also recognises our expanding suburban infrastructure by providing funding for additional kerbside garbage and recycling services where our contracts are linked directly to the number of services provided.

It has been a productive year for capital works with, among other things, the near completion of the city walk west stage 1 project. If committee members have not seen it, I invite them to go over and take a look at it. It is nothing short of magical. It has transformed that part of the immediate west from Northbourne Avenue at the intersection of Moore and Alinga streets, particularly that stretch between Marcus Clarke and Moore streets. It is going to be an incredible addition to the rejuvenation of the West Row street precinct.

We have also, of course, nearly completed the Kippax library. The 2005-06 capital works program continues the government's commitment to the city's road network. Funding is provided for the main construction contracts for the Gungahlin Drive extension, while the Fairbairn Avenue and Pialligo Avenue upgrades also will be completed.

The federally-funded roads to recovery program will continue with a further \$20 million being provided over the next four years. This funding will be used to upgrade several rural roads including, Boboyan Road, Sutton Road and Tharwa Drive. You may note that the budget only identifies \$13 million for this program. I am pleased to announce that, as part of the commonwealth's budget, the ACT is to receive an additional \$7 million over the coming four years. Officers of the department will work closely with our federal colleagues to identify suitable projects for this funding. I look forward to announcing those projects in due course. I do acknowledge the role of the commonwealth government in the roads to recovery program.

The \$9.8 million capital upgrade program will ensure that the city's infrastructure continues to be improved. Funding has been allocated to a wide range of assets, including pavement rehabilitation for Northbourne Avenue, traffic and streetlight improvements, continuing the armour cable replacement program, improvements to the Belconnen library, playground safety enhancements, the refurbishment of the Belconnen lakeshore, improvements to sporting facilities and additional funding for the community paths networks.

There will be significant challenges over the coming year, but I am confident that the dedicated staff of the department will continue to provide the community with the high-quality services they rely on every day. On that note, I conclude my opening comments and welcome the committee's examination of the department. I will be happy to answer the committee's questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. It is not mentioned on our program for today; but, as you would be aware from Friday, we normally open with overview statements in relation to capital works.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I will do that, as is normally the case, and then we will move onto the output classes. Minister, were you informed as well that we would not be requiring the public cemeteries board later in the day?

Mr Hargreaves: No, I was not, but I am grateful for the committee's consideration on that one. Thank you very much. I appreciate that a lot.

THE CHAIR: We could not think of any questions.

Mr Hargreaves: The last couple of years, Madam Chair, we have gone down the track in private cemeteries—the ultimate dual occupancy, I might say.

THE CHAIR: We do not need to talk about it. Hopefully, that will give us five extra minutes. Dr Foskey, do you want to start the questioning?

DR FOSKEY: I will start the ball rolling. I imagine there is plenty of meat in this one for people to follow up.

Mr Hargreaves: Can I have the page reference, please?

DR FOSKEY: You might not need it for this one. What percentage of the cut has been made in the allocation for urban services for this year and future years? It does look as though the cuts for future years are significantly higher, while this year the cuts are in line with those of other departments. So, if you could explain that, and also how it translates into staff losses.

Mr Hargreaves: Certainly. Dr Foskey, there is actually a two-fold approach to this. I am not going to answer your question in terms of a percentage because people can do the arithmetic themselves, but can I just put it into perspective? Well, bad luck. It is not fair. You have staff, the same as I do. Are we talking about the \$10 million over the outyears?

DR FOSKEY: Yes.

Mr Hargreaves: Let me explain that there needs to be a sharpening of administration through all departments. I will get Mr Zissler to walk you through a bit more of the process in a second and he will give you some detail that I am sure you will be interested in, but we need to sharpen it up. We need to say, “Is there duplication?” I mentioned in my opening remarks that the purchaser/provider model is dead and now a customer of the cemeteries board. So too, in fact, is the notion of automatic internal trading. We are not interested in having a duplication of administration for its own sake. So, when we were discussing what restructuring would happen within the department, we concluded that the savings that we could generate would actually form two parts.

The first part is a known target of savings that we would be prepared to sign off on, and

that is the \$10 million that you see in there. We also know that, unless you have done a restructure, you have not got an idea of the actual completed amount of the savings or, to put it another way, redirected resources. We believe that the restructuring that is under way at the moment under Mr Zissler's stewardship will yield greater than those figures. But those amounts of moneys that are actually recouped in terms of people and dollars will be put to the sharp end of the service so that we will have more people doing the actual day-to-day jobs over and above that figure.

We also need to consider this in the context of a process that does not happen overnight. What has been the case in the past, and I am not labelling any colour government here because I know that it was the case when the commonwealth government had responsibility for the ACT and it happened under both colours of regimes, is that restructures were given from the top. They were shaped by an executive committee and imposed upon the staff. This is not the process that we have engaged in this time. Mr Zissler will go through the detail on how that will be, and I think you will applaud the process at the end of that.

Those are the two points of focus. We are not regarding it as a percentage cut, because we do not accept—and DUS, I think, is probably the only department that this applies to—that the level of resources is a good starting point in the first place. Our restructure, I have to tell you, was commenced before the cabinet consideration of the need to find savings. What we had intended to do, had there been no cuts, was to return that dividend to government in any event. I will ask Mr Zissler to give you some detail because I am very impressed with the process so far.

Mr Zissler: Thank you for the question. As the minister just alluded to, since late last year, when I took over the portfolio, we have been looking at restructuring the Department of Urban Services. There are a number of key drivers to its current financial and organisational structure. In the mid-1990s purchaser/provider was established and, while it drove some economic reform at that time, purchaser/provider also had some bureaucratic inefficiencies built into it. Over time those inefficiencies had accrued, I suppose. To be quite frank, purchaser/provider created an environment of competition inside an organisation that should have been working cooperatively.

For example, we currently have seven operating divisions inside the department. Some of those are purchaser divisions and some of those are provider divisions. Between them they have created a fairly large bureaucracy around internal transactions where people sit on each side of the ledger and count the widgets in terms of service delivery, but also the dollars and funds transferred internally. The other challenge with that model is that when people sit down around the table, the seven heads of those divisions, they are basically working in a competitive environment. They are competing for resources, finances and money. So, when it comes to strategic decision making, that gets challenged when people are competing for money.

The proposed restructure, which will come into place as of 1 July, is basically the result of four or five months work with the staff and the unions towards a productive future for urban services. As the minister highlighted, one of the key tenets of that is that we have abolished the broad management style, which was around a federation of business model, and we have also abolished internal purchaser/provider. We will, of course, continue to purchase services external to the ACT government services. This takes us

from seven divisions down to two major networks, or two streams. Immediately you will see that we go from having seven executive directors down to two executive directors. That cascades through to the next layer of management as well, which will be very heavily streamlined.

The second major focus has been around corporate services. When you have seven separate divisions, they all have their own corporate services embedded inside there, as well as a central corporate services division. This was particularly inefficient. Inside each division you have finance people, human resources people, business managers, quality control managers and the like. By streamlining the corporate services into one of the single networks, there is a large opportunity there for people to be redeployed and used elsewhere. The major theme there is about getting resources into core delivery areas. Some of our challenges are about making sure we have enough people to do the right things for the community.

What will be the impact of that? Over the next four years we have to make a saving of \$2.3 million next year and then \$10 million per year thereafter. They are numbers we calculated. We made those numbers, and they are the ones we presented to cabinet for the budget process. They were not a percentage driven back to us. Indeed, I think this exceeds the percentage saving driven back to other agencies. In terms of staffing numbers, we currently have 1,086 full-time equivalents. We have actually more heads than that, but 1,086. In line with our ownership agreement with the government, that will reduce to 1,006, a net reduction of 80 full-time equivalent positions.

MR SESELJA: Is that over 2005-06?

Mr Zissler: Correct.

MS PORTER: My question is in relation to this restructure. On page 223, under the highlights, there is reference to the restructure of the department. It mentions that one of the highlights to be pursued in 2005-06 is the creation of a network to further improve customer service and better engage the community in service delivery and design. I was just wondering, minister, if you could enlarge on that, please, in the way that you perceive that this will—

Mr Hargreaves: I will ask Mr Zissler to respond to you, if you like, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: That is fine. Thank you.

Mr Zissler: When we sat down and looked at the strategy for the restructure of urban services, one of the key issues that came forward was the nature of the community engagement and how we respond to community requests, and indeed complaints. Coming out of that workshop we had 19 themes. One of those was around stakeholder and community engagement. As we go forward through the restructure we will have a community engagement team. They will be handling both how we work with and engage with the community, how we handle both complaints and compliments—because we do receive compliments, let me assure you—how we deal with those. So it is really about getting back to the grassroots.

As you can understand, a lot of the issues about urban services are silent. They are

behind the scenes. When people have their bins emptied every week, no-one is too fussed. When they see the grass cut in the reserve, people are fairly happy about that, but no-one is too fussed. When a bin does not get emptied, it becomes very personal and they ring and make a complaint. When the grass is too long or something happens in a playground, they ring and let us know. We need to work much closer to the community so that they know what we do and we can better service their needs.

The community engagement unit will be working through our community consultative committee around how we better engage and deliver on those expectations. We are just trying to be more responsive and proactive than we currently are at times when, of course, we are very reactive to matters in the paper and matters that get raised in this place.

MR SESELJA: Of the 80 jobs that are going to be cut in urban services, how many are likely at this stage to be redundancies?

Mr Hargreaves: I beg your pardon, Mr Seselja?

MR SESELJA: Of the 80 that will be cut, how many are likely to be redundancies in 2005-06?

Mr Hargreaves: Firstly, I would like to reiterate what I said last Friday. There will be no involuntary redundancies from the department. Redundancies are but one tool that is available to the project team. There is a range of others. We cannot answer the question, and I am not sure I can dodge it either. We will not know the answer to that until we know exactly how many people will want it and for whom opportunities elsewhere do not exist. For example, if we find that we have a middle manager whose job is to go and we can give that middle manager an interview in isolation in another department, we would rather do that for them so that they can have a career progression, rather than saying, "Here's the dough. See you later."

Further, there are opportunities where people may—how can I put it—change the nature of their work. An individual may, for example, go from high-level blue-collar work into white-collar work, but another person in a white-collar job might go to another department and redundancies do not apply. We also need to understand, and I will see if Mr Zissler can actually give you a number, that there is a natural attrition rate anyway. What that means is that the project team will manage that attrition rate along the lines of the things I just mentioned.

If, for example, the natural attrition rate in white-collar workers actually affords a job availability and someone at the senior levels of the blue collars wants to go into that job, we can actually effect the thing there at absolutely no cost out of the redundancy pool. Until the exercise of staff consultation and restructure is done—and Mr Zissler indicated it would take about five months from when he started, I have to say, not from now—we will not know the mix of how that will happen. I am not trying to duck your question, Mr Seselja. It is just that that is the way it has to be.

MR SESELJA: I am just trying to get an idea because Treasury has told us that there will be 260 redundancies across the service, with natural attrition possibly to take more away. We are just trying to figure out where these redundancies will be coming from,

and it does not seem like we are getting anything that adds up to 260.

Mr Hargreaves: No, you will not, and largely it is because the redundancies are actually done in consultation with individuals. Unless people stick their hands up, we will not know from which part of a department they will come. We have made provision for that number so that, if none of the attrition actually took care of that, then we would have access to those redundancy funds. I cannot tell you the areas from which they are going to come or the classifications from which they will come until we have gone through the exercise.

MR SESELJA: But you would have an idea of the numbers, if not from where, given that Treasury said 260 across the service.

Mr Hargreaves: We have said the 80-odd is the amount of staff reduction.

MR SESELJA: Yes, that is reduction.

Mr Hargreaves: Now, whether or not the staff reduction actually is through attrition, redundancy, transfer to another department or a combination of those three will reveal itself when the exercise is completed.

MR SESELJA: Will there be a general opportunity for people to put their hands up for redundancies?

Mr Hargreaves: I will give this to Mr Zissler. I do not have an objection to that, but it is not a case of seeing all the good people go and all that sort of stuff, which is often the case. What we are talking about is a staged restructure. I have to emphasise a little something that Mr Zissler touched on because he did not crow about it that much. The construction of the two streams has been done in consultation with people from the very bottom. I have actually been around to probably 40 or 50 per cent of the department and spoken to people. Mr Zissler has gone around to almost all the department and spoken to people at every level. We have spoken to the staff in the contemplative stage of the restructure, and that is the important part. It is the contemplative stage.

So the staff at all levels, be they executives or be they people on lawn mowers, have had an input to what the restructured organisation will look like. They then have to make decisions themselves about whether they want to be in the team or out of the team. If they want to be in the team and it is okay, fine. If they do not want to be in a team, we need to see whether the natural attrition and the netting off of that can pick it up or whether we need to have access to the redundancy pool. But, again, it is largely their choice. Do you want to add something?

Mr Zissler: Absolutely. Just to reiterate, the restructure program started out, in essence, with the deputy chief executive officer and me. There were two of us. We quickly involved the senior executive team, which became five and seven. We set a steering committee up, which involved unions and staff, which came to 15. We then went through those project groups I mentioned, which involved another 50 staff. We have now consulted with over 300 staff through direct focus groups that are built on the restructure.

In terms of potential redundancies, we have natural attrition in many areas at different

levels. It ranges between about eight and 15 per cent. As you recognise, urban services is very multifaceted. We have grass cutters, dog handlers and tree cutters. As well, we do things like Canberra Connect and IT, with desk-based people. Certain areas have higher attrition, just due to normal events, than others. We are quite comfortable with the number 80. We think there are a number of techniques, natural attrition, the opportunity for redeployment and the opportunity for retraining. There will be opportunities for people who wish to consider part-time work. There will be opportunities for people to job share and, indeed, for people to job swap.

We will be building that package together around a careers advisory unit, which will involve specialists from the HR-IR area. As it becomes apparent that someone's position is surplus to requirement, they will be offered the opportunity for all those things. Of course, the last one in all of this is voluntary redundancy, and so we will work our way through that with people. Voluntary redundancies will not be at call to all staff. There will not be a general letter out there. It will be position-by-position, area-by-area, giving people all the opportunity to make choices.

THE CHAIR: Mr Zissler, that brings me to the standard question that I have been asking of all agencies. I did speak to you about it a few weeks ago. So it will not be a surprise to you that it is a matter of interest to me. It is the issue of offering part-time work to those people who are on full time where there are savings to be made and there is accommodation to be made for family-friendly practices for people who have young children, not just mothers, but fathers as well who wish to spend a day or two at home with their youngsters.

Mr Zissler: Indeed.

Mr Hargreaves: What about grandfathers, Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: I would not want to see grandfathers and grandmothers discriminated against either, minister, if that is their desire.

Mr Zissler: We are working through the restructure, which is about the organisational structure. Key to that is changing some of the cultural values. We have some cross-cultural work we are doing. We have established a women in DUS working group. Apparently women are underrepresented in a 50:50 ratio. As you know, many of our core industry-type labour is around engineering and blue-collar workers. So we have women in DUS reference group. They have now run focus groups. We have run whole day sessions looking at how to improve the workplace for women, but also around part time, maternity leave, all those usual contentious issues around that. Certainly in there is promotion of flexible working hours. It is part-time hours and also that job-sharing, job-swapping arrangement. Currently, one of our senior managers, who is a young single mother, works part time from home and part time in the office in a hot desk arrangement. She is very pleased with that outcome. She is one of our examples of us going forward.

Secondly, we are looking at people with disabilities. The reference group is only in its embryonic stage. But, again, recognising the important community value of having people of all types of backgrounds working in urban services, we have an embryonic group around people with disabilities. That is just picking up a head of steam at the moment. But, as you know, the government's policy around graduate recruitment next

year will be 50 per cent of people with disabilities. Again, that would be around work force design and workplace design, not just the physical access issues. It will be around how people work part time, job share, job swap. I could repeat myself. That is a cross-cultural change we are trying to instigate as well. These do not happen overnight. Cultural change takes significant time.

THE CHAIR: I do appreciate that and I appreciate the fullness of your answer. I know that you are aware of this, but I would, of course, say that parenting is not just a woman's issue. I know you were not suggesting that.

Mr Zissler: No, absolutely not.

Mr Hargreaves: It is a grandparent's issue as well.

THE CHAIR: I appreciate the issues that the department faces in terms of the representation of men over women in a lot of its areas.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, can I highlight something? With this business about having to make savings and things like that, often that is the bit that hits the news. It is the cuts that are the big-ticket item and that is what we think about. But, in fact, what we are about within DUS—as I indicated earlier, we started this process before the budget process had occurred; so I think I need to record some credit to the department outside the budget process, which is actually reflected a bit in these estimates—is that we realise that we could no longer sustain the management and the administrative way in which the department was delivering services. There were, in fact, instances where over administration, if you like, was getting in the way of quality service delivery. So there was an imperative for us to change, a management organisational imperative.

What the department actually did in the process was, firstly, agree that that change had to be cultural within the department and pick up the way in which people who were working in it were valued and were doing it. You cannot do that by imposing structures and you cannot do that in isolation of their lives generally. We actually looked at it and thought that, if we were going to have a massive cultural change in the organisation, we had a golden opportunity to go back to taws and say to the people that we have to save one FTE in a particular area. If members of the staff say to us, "I'll tell you what: if I go part time and this other person goes part time, we can share one job and between the pair of us we can do those two jobs easy as," we are going to say, "Let's sit down and do some talking because that sounds good to us."

So we have that opportunity, actually, to effect those management and cultural changes and actually introduce a family-friendly workplace, to get rid of the disabilities and all those sorts of things. But overlaid on that is the organisational cultural change. You can put in as many quotas as you like and say we have to have a 50/50 work force of men and women, but if we do not have the culture where the people actually involved in it accept that and want that, it is not going to work. I just want the record to show that this is going to be the success of the process and Mr Zissler has done it.

THE CHAIR: Yes. Thank you for that, minister. Minister, could I ask Mr Zissler whether he would care to comment, too, because it is my perception, and I certainly believe it to be the case, that most positions within the ACT government service are

actually advertised on a full-time basis. There are not many that are advertised on a part-time basis. You are talking about a cultural change within the department. We have got to talk about cross-agency change in terms of looking towards the option of having positions being part time, and that may only be for a certain amount of time. There will need to be flexibility in changing that along the way.

Mr Zissler: Part of the restructure of the business units, but also the way we provide our HR and IR advice, is around looking at job design and the way we recruit and retain them. Part of the women in DUS program, as identified in our job descriptions and the way we advertise full time, part time tends to put women off applying for certain jobs. So we are redesigning our advertisement structure so that it allows women to feel comfortable about applying but also highlights that there is no definition around full time or part time or how it might be undertaken. It is just that we are looking for a set of skills to deliver on a set of outcomes. Likewise, working with a disability group, we are putting very specific words in there about encouraging people from a disabled background to apply for those positions. We will build on that over time, recognising that there are two streams. There will be other matters we have to build in there as well.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, you might like to take this up with some of the other committees or even think about the context of the report, but something just occurred to me. I have been involved in recruiting staff for 40 years or so, but we never have a proper conversation in the job interview situation. We talk to the people about their qualifications to do a certain job and all that sort of stuff, but we do not have that conversation around how the job could be effectively delivered by the person applying for the job. Maybe they have some concepts in their mind that could make that job be performed in a different way. But we do not actually explore that. Perhaps, on a global governmental level, we need to start saying that our recruitment practices ought to be about not only our preconceived notion of how we want to deliver the outcomes for that position, but also having a conversation with applicants around whether they disagree with that and if they have a better way of doing it.

Mr Zissler: If I might add: in that job redesign, the whole recruitment process is being reviewed as well. We have looked at the interview process, which often is adversarial and detrimental to the people. So we are changing the recruitment process. The merit principles will apply. However, we are looking much more at people's capacity and potential to deliver on the outcomes, not just on the way they present their CV, what they wear then they walk into the room and what they might say to a set of fixed questions.

MS PORTER: Minister, this all sounds very interesting. I am just wondering about people from linguistically or culturally diverse backgrounds and also indigenous people and whether you have put them into the mix of thinking about how the jobs are advertised and those kinds of things.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. The short answer, Ms Porter, is yes. When we look at people applying for a job, we are looking at the people applying for the job. We are interested in introducing structures that remove any notion of discrimination or disadvantage. So, yes we are. Incidentally, as to the phrase "culturally and linguistically diverse", the feedback I am getting from the multicultural community is that they prefer the term "multicultural community". They do not like "culturally and linguistically diverse" because it stigmatises them. That is the feedback I have had as recently as the middle of last week.

MS PORTER: That would be a bit of a relief. It is always hard to say.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, agreed.

Mr Zissler: It is worth noting that within urban services, particularly within Capital Linen Service, we have something like 26 different languages spoken on the floor, of which 16 are primary languages. It is a very large culturally-backed ethnic mix. We have a number of strategies for that work force, particularly around OH&S, because, of course, the laundry is a factory and it has its own relative risks and dangers. So our staff are very well versed in working in that environment. Yes, there will be targeted focus programs. I suppose we are just trying to go one step at a time.

MR MULCAHY: I have some questions on capital works and highlights.

Mr Hargreaves: Can you give us a page reference, please?

MR MULCAHY: Budget paper No 4, page 212, as it relates to road cycle lanes. My question relates to the \$500,000 that has been provided there for cyclepaths to be completed in June 2006. Could you indicate to the committee in a little more detail what the funding is being used for. It is obviously to do with the construction of cyclepaths, but what new paths are planned? Can you provide any data on usage levels of the cyclepaths? Do you have plans to survey usage levels?

Mr Hargreaves: I will ask Mr McNulty to give you the detail on that, Mr Mulcahy, because he is aware of it.

Mr McNulty: In terms of the \$500,000 in the current year's budget, that work is part of the sustainable transport plan which we are providing on behalf of ACTPLA. We will be discussing the projects with them. I am not sure whether those projects have been identified finally yet. In terms of usage levels of the cyclepaths, now that there is a sufficient amount on the road, we intend to do surveys this year to establish that.

MR MULCAHY: Establish usage levels?

Mr McNulty: Yes.

MR MULCAHY: In arriving at your \$500,000 figure, if you are not sure what you are going to be doing with it, how did you work out that figure? Is that just an estimate?

Mr McNulty: It was part of the government commitment to provide a certain amount of funds.

MR MULCAHY: Just \$500,000 and then you will work out what it is going to be used for later.

Mr Hargreaves: No. What we are talking about is kilometre after kilometre after kilometre of paths. It is reasonable, I think, that the government allocates out and works to a certain amount of maintenance when you consider that it is responsive maintenance as well as preventative. We cannot necessarily be aware, for every square inch of those

kilometres, of what the response is going to be. Mr McNulty, what is the base figure for cyclepath maintenance?

Mr McNulty: In the current financial year, we have spent about \$3½ million on the maintenance of community paths.

Mr Hargreaves: What we are talking about is a further \$500,000. You have to consider this in the context of \$4 million being expended on cyclepath maintenance. When the government says that we have all of these kilometres to do, it is, I believe, reasonable to allocate a number, a round-figure number. The government saw fit to include \$500,000 this year. I do not think it is appropriate that we have to allocate every \$5 note out and then say, “This is how much we want.”

MR MULCAHY: Is that for construction or maintenance? You mentioned maintenance. Then Mr McNulty, I thought, said capital construction. Which is it?

Mr Hargreaves: The \$500,000 is for the construction of the missing link bits—I think I have had representations from you on this issue—where your path will wander off down the track and disappear; and then it will reappear a little bit later on down the track. It will be something like 100 metres or something of dirt. It is those links that we will be going and applying money to.

MR MULCAHY: I am not sure whether this question will be for you, minister, or Mr McNulty, but it was discussed at some length yesterday with the minister for transport. In relation to the survey and the safety issues, I am looking in particular at Roads ACT’s report where, in referencing the Woden to Dickson on-road cycling project, it has been declared that the cycle lane will not continue across entry ramps and cyclists will be required to give way to entering traffic. The provision of green pavement treatment at entry ramps was considered to present unacceptable risks to cyclists. Various reasons are printed there.

This is the issue that I hear raised most frequently. It is one that troubles us. It is not an issue so much of whether you like cycle lanes; it is the concern at the freeway-style design of roads we have in Canberra where you have these exits ramps that intersect with the cyclepaths, with relatively high-speed traffic, sometimes in 80-kilometre zones, although I see you have made some reductions to 70. The very issue that is identified in the Woden to Dickson project is that motorists may have to look over their shoulder and may find themselves having to come to a halt in the middle of fast-moving traffic. It is a real issue that I think a lot of people will legitimately raise. Is that going to be addressed, or are you going to examine that? Do you know whether it exists anywhere else in Australia, where this sort of scenario plays out?

Mr Hargreaves: I will get Mr McNulty to talk about other places in the country. But let me put this to you just to clarify it a bit for you: the survey is not the only yardstick we use to determine whether or not a given policy or process is efficacious. On the issue of the commuting cycle lanes—because that is what they are and this is the one we are talking about—we had, as you would know, strong representation before the 2001 election to come up with an on-road cycle facility for people wanting to commute to work. We made that commitment in the 2001 election campaign and have delivered on that promise. We have, with the experience of hindsight, seen that the cyclepaths are

doing just what they were designed to do; they are producing the goods. We are seeing an increase in the number of people who are doing it. You can anecdotally see that.

I have conversations—I think it is every six months on a regular basis but as required, if needed—with Pedal Power particularly and other cyclist groups if they want to do that. We talk about those sorts of issue that you raise here about, for example, the need to stop and get off your bike and walk across a set of traffic lights instead of being able to ride across that intersection. That is one that they believe ought to change. We look at those suggestions from Pedal Power constantly. As a result of the survey that Mr McNulty is doing, I will be considering the results of that survey in concert with a whole stack of other pieces of information that I get.

MR MULCAHY: It is possible that the initiative that you have taken here in the Woden to Dickson area will be extended into the other areas, to avoid this risk continuing.

Mr Hargreaves: I will be looking at the issue. I am not going to pre-empt any conclusion on that, but certainly we will be looking at it. We need to look at it in two ways. One is that we have retrofitted a lot of our cyclepaths. The problems are already there, if you want, in terms of the intersection, the planned lane which the intersection relates to, the footpath and all that sort of stuff; so we have to look at retrofitting our own thinking around that. When we actually put in new cyclepaths as part of a new road development, then we need to make sure that those concerns that we have had to try to overcome in retrofitting are addressed at the time the road is actually designed. We will be taking all of that on board.

MR MULCAHY: I have another question on highlights, but you might want a supplementary on those cycles.

THE CHAIR: There are supplementaries on that from me, Dr Foskey and Mr Pratt. Minister, this issue was the topic of a conversation with Mr Corbell yesterday. It seems so long ago now. Minister Corbell did not shy away from having the conversation but there was agreement that we would revisit the conversation with you today because it does fall within your portfolio. The comment was made by Mr Corbell that part of it is about getting motorists to accept the legitimacy of cyclists as road users. I am sure it is no secret that I am supportive of the on-road cyclepaths because of the party that I am a member of.

Mr Hargreaves: I am pleased to hear it.

THE CHAIR: A few weeks ago, I was driving home and there was a cyclist on one of the on-road cyclepaths. In fact, he was almost on the road because he was riding along the white line and veering occasionally into the left-hand driving lane almost in front of me. I almost knocked him over, through no fault of my own. When I mentioned this yesterday Mr Corbell said there are bad cyclists just as there are bad motorists out there.

Mr Hargreaves: That is right.

THE CHAIR: I was talking about a need for some sort of leaflet campaign where we could enlist the assistance of Pedal Power in terms of both sides taking responsibility for their driving and riding behaviour.

Mr Hargreaves: Thanks, Madam Chair. You raise a very valid point. I was, as you may recall, the person who, as shadow minister for urban services, promised the on-road cyclepaths. I was, when I was on the back bench in the last period, following it with some interest. The point you make about motorists having to accept the fact that cyclists are entitled to a slice of the road anyway is quite valid. They need to do that. It has always been that way. There is no hypothecation between one's registration costs or one's fuel costs with a right to have sole usage of a road. The road, in fact, is a communication infrastructure for everybody, whether they be pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, cars, trucks, buses—all but light aircraft.

Can I say, though, that that responsibility that we are asking motorists to assume—and there are letters to the editor constantly saying, “Get these people off the roads”, which is because these motorists are not accepting of the fact that these people have a right to go there—has the reverse responsibility as well. The example you point to is the sort of thing that I observe myself. In fact, going over Commonwealth Avenue bridge just a couple of nights ago I observed exactly that. What this cyclist, dressed in screamingly coloured lycra, was doing was actually pedalling on—

THE CHAIR: I am sure it was painted on him.

Mr Hargreaves: It was tattooed on, I think. The thing was that this cyclist was not only riding in the middle of that lane, not on the left-hand side of it but, as you say in your example, on the right. I do not know whether that person was of American persuasion or not but these people can be persuaded, in fact, to either cycle in the middle or the left-hand side of that thing.

As I mentioned a minute ago, I have conversations with Pedal Power quite regularly. One was last week. That was one of the issues that we brought up. They brought up a range of issues. We brought up how can we get the message through. There are two sets of cyclists out there that commute. There are people who are serious cyclists and, in fact, use it as a sport; so they are members of clubs and this sort of thing. You can get to those people through the media activities that you are talking about. Pedal Power are happy to put it on the website and put it in their published stuff to get these people to do these things.

I confess to you I am struggling with a way to get to the second group. I think, if we put a media campaign out there, we will have limited success. But it is something that we pursue with Pedal Power and other cycling advocacy groups and say, “How do we do this? How do we get the cultural approach?” Cyclists on the recreational shared paths have got a nice white line down the middle of it, but people are quite happily sitting on the left-hand side of the path. If the white line disappears they still sit on the left-hand side of the path. When they go down the cyclepaths down the main road, they do not. It is a challenge for us and we accept the challenge. But we are not sure of the solutions ourselves.

DR FOSKEY: I raised the issue of bike paths versus cycleways yesterday as well because I am concerned that the cycleways serve one kind of cyclist. I have conversations with Pedal Power too and I am aware that—

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, we accept that.

DR FOSKEY: Peter Strang admits that it is the cyclist who likes to put on the lycra—and they are like motorists; the cyclists are of every kind, as some people will appreciate—who wants to go very fast. The cycleways are good for people who want to ride fast. The bike paths have the odd bump and there is the walker and so on; it is a little bit hard to scream along. I think that lots of people, like me, are a little bit nervous about using the cycleways, but I like to ride my bike. I am just plugging for the continued maintenance and installation of bike paths. I think there are lots of people who would ride their bikes to work, because there is a growing consciousness about health and other issues related to it, if they felt that safety. I am talking about the middle-aged person, the young person, the parent letting their child ride. I don't know that that many parents would encourage their children to ride on the cycleways at this point. I am just speaking very subjectively here.

Mr Hargreaves: That is good.

DR FOSKEY: One question is: will the government pay attention to the need for maintenance and extension of the off-road bike paths? Could you just explain why only \$1.2 million of the election promise to spend \$2.2 million in the coming financial year, to improve bike paths and walkways was appropriated?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, I can.

DR FOSKEY: You have answered that already, while I was out of the room.

Mr Hargreaves: No. The \$500,000 is to provide the linkages. You can be trundling down a road and then it will disappear before it pops up again 100 metres later. We are going to do that joining up. So that extends the cyclepath network. In response to your opening observations: some of the conversations we have been having with Pedal Power are about how we can adjust the safety of the cyclepaths at night and through visibility issues.

We were talking about a couple of instances around Alexandrina Drive, where the path comes seemingly out of the blue and meets a road. We can't just put a barrier up there or the cyclists will go flogging straight into it because, in the dark, there is not necessarily lighting. So we need to have a lighting solution; we need to have a visibility solution. We have enjoined Pedal Power to come and identify some of those spots and do something about them. We are aware that that is an issue where there will be a contest of wills between the cyclist and a motorcar and we know who is going to win.

In relation to the points that you make about the ordinary enjoyment of walking along there or riding along there and being passed by somebody doing 100 kilometres an hour along there, being frightened by the bell if they don't ring it sufficiently far removed from you, the position of lights on the bikes as well: those issues are the very issues on which we had conversations with Pedal Power in a meeting we had last week. We are now applying our minds to that.

With respect to the dollars: the point that I made to Mr Mulcahy, I think it was, was that we have increased our allocation for cyclepaths provision by \$500,000. I am just advised

that that figure is incorrect; it is \$665,000. You need to consider that that is on top of the base figure of over \$3 million. So, all up, our recurrent resource attention to this particular issue is in the order of \$4 million. I have to say to you, in this climate of economic drought, that I think that is a very generous provision. I accept people would like to see more than that. But all I can say to them is, "We have given you \$665,000 over and above, in excess of, \$3 million." We are committed to the program. These are tough times; they require tough decisions. And I have made them.

DR FOSKEY: Just one supplementary to that: has the Canberra cycle route map been updated?

Mr Hargreaves: I don't believe so, no. If we are going to be really successful in putting up those little linkages, you might like to wait until we have done that.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, exactly. It is an ongoing process. Perhaps people could print it from the.

MR MULCAHY: Minister, you revised that answer from \$500,000 to \$665,000. I am trying to find that.

Mr Hargreaves: The \$500,000 is capital, and the other is recurrent.

THE CHAIR: That is possibly a good suggestion of Dr Foskey's that the updates might be able to be done on the web as an intermediary. I know I would like to be able to print off some cyclepaths.

Mr Zissler: That could happen.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. We will take it on board. We will take that suggestion on board, Madam Chair. Thank you very much, Dr Foskey, for the suggestion.

MR PRATT: Minister, during the examination of annual reports, I ran a couple of examples past you of near accidents. I don't need to go through all that stuff again. The \$3.665 million spent is, as you quite rightly say, fairly generous for a concept which we support. The on-road cycle system is here to stay. But for that amount of money, what analysis had you done when you determined the way that you would lay down this plan? What analysis has been ongoing since to determine usage? I have heard Mr McNulty say that you are going to analyse usage through this year. Has there been any analysis done to date in terms of determining the plan itself and, secondly, what people think about that plan?

Mr Hargreaves: Firstly, you have the two types, as you know. The first is the on-road stuff. That was a commitment on the part of the government. It was a government decision in response to requests from cyclists to have commuting. Our policy decision was to do firstly from Downer to Woden; then it became Dickson to Woden because that is a commuting figure. Also, we undertook to do some retrofitting when funds were available and to include those provisions as part of the planning process for new arterial roads. That was done as a government decision in response to representations, predominantly to me, by people like Pedal Power and cyclists groups.

With respect to the cyclepath network: we are developing a strategy at the moment about where those things should be laid down. You have to understand, too, that, with the emergence of new suburbs, we don't do things in isolation; we have to do things in concert with the planning authority, because they will lay out a suburb for us. They lay out the streets. They tell us where bus routes are going to go so we know which streets are 50 and which streets are 60, which streets have odd intersections and those sorts of things. We do that in concert with those people. When we are talking about where we want more cyclepaths to go, the strategy of doing that is being developed at the moment.

I don't want to duck your question, but I just don't have a fulsome answer for you. Can I suggest to you that you raise that issue at the annual reports hearings next time and that will be done. We will give you a copy of it, anyway. In fact, I am quite happy to give you a copy once it is concluded, out of session.

MR PRATT: In terms of analysing how this plan is being implemented and how it has been accepted, what meetings have you had and when have you had them? We have heard at this forum that you have talked to Pedal Power to see how things are going. What meetings have you had and how often with motorist lobby groups like the NRMA and other community motorist representative groups to ask them how they think the rolling out of this plan is going in terms of safety?

Mr Hargreaves: Are you talking about the on-road cycle commuting one?

MR PRATT: The on-road cycle plan only, yes.

Mr Hargreaves: I have been minister now for seven months, I think, bordering on. I have had three meetings—I could be wrong on that; it might be two—with the NRMA Road Safety Trust, with David Piper and Phil Newton before he moved. I have said that we have regular meetings with them. I don't only speak about on-road cycling with the NRMA Road Safety Trust, either. We talk about general road safety and road safety training for motorcyclists; we talk about compulsory third party; we might talk about a whole range of motorist-gear things. I have even had conversations with the NRMA over the involvement of the scooters that people with disabilities use. It is part of a conversation. If you say how many and when, I can't answer your question.

But let me say that I have had at least two meetings, from my knowledge, and maybe three. I have had the same number of meetings with Pedal Power. I have had at least three meetings, one formal and two informal, with the Cyclists Rights Action Group, which covers their perennial issue of motorcycle helmets but also road safety issues, bike path safety issues with regard to commuting cyclists, and bike path cycle issues around safety. As you would know, their major issue is whether or not one should be compelled to wear a helmet and around that whole issue is the question of safety for people on bikes.

That gives you a flavour for the involvement. I do not think that is too bad over seven months, quite frankly. By the way, I have just been handed a reminder that I had a meeting last week with the Motorcycle Riders Association. The original reason for the meeting was the spate of motorcycle accidents that we have been experiencing lately. That was predetermined, but along the way we also talked about the relationship of motorcycles on our major arterial roads with regard to motor vehicles of varying sizes,

because the vision of motorcyclists and cyclists is different according to the size, as you would know.

I know from my own experience in my youth. I had an accident which was caused by a motorcar but which involved a bicycle, with me veering to the left to avoid a collision and hitting a bicycle, when I was a kid. The whole conversation revolves around those sorts of things, yes. Incidentally, that accident I was involved in happened at about three or four kilometres per hour.

MR PRATT: Specifically with respect to the rolling out of the on-road cycle lane plan, can you qualify what kind of feedback you have had from motorist groups about how they feel this plan is going?

Mr Hargreaves: I have had no negative feedback from those professional groups. I have had, the same as you, the observation of people who just do not like it, people who want to be selfish on the roads. I have had that feedback through the letters to that illustrious journal the *Canberra Times*. Because it is in that journal, it must be true. But I have to say to you I have not had, to my knowledge, one email since I have been the minister from anybody saying, "Get the cyclists off the road."

MR PRATT: Have you canvassed those groups about how this plan is being rolled out and the impact on general traffic?

Mr Hargreaves: There is a reality. The reality is the government is committed to that program. That is what we have delivered. It has been part of our policy now for possibly five years and it continues to be part of that policy. If the people of the ACT do not want us to continue to do that, they can make their observations known at the ballot box.

Meeting adjourned from 10.44 to 11.00 am.

MR SESELJA: According to page 239 of BP4, \$86,050,000 has been budgeted to date for the Gungahlin Drive extension. Does that take into account the ongoing delays due to the legal challenge?

Mr Hargreaves: As best as we can figure it. The additional moneys provide for two factors. One is the price inflator over time, which you would expect. As you know, you put in the current day prices when you originally appropriate funds and, as the price escalates over time, you then make provision in the outyears along the way.

MR SESELJA: Except for dragways.

Mr Hargreaves: I can remember the Liberal Party putting forward \$32 million for that road and it was going to be a 16-lane highway with a flight path up the guts of it.

MR SESELJA: It would have been very efficiently done.

Mr Hargreaves: It was the airport right up the guts of it that I had a problem with. The other thing, of course, is that we have incurred court costs because of the delay, as you would appreciate. Essentially, the changes in project scope since October 2003 have been \$1.3 million. This is part of the \$16 million increase. It's had to have additional

landscaping of \$1 million and an increased level of archaeology and biodiversity assessment of \$300,000. Can I talk about the landscaping for the benefit of members of the Australian Greens? Is that the correct title of your party, Dr Foskey?

DR FOSKEY: That's the title of the national party.

Mr Hargreaves: No, that's not the National Party; that's the Greens.

DR FOSKEY: The Australian Greens.

THE CHAIR: Come on, guys! Don't do that to me.

Mr Hargreaves: If you walk the track where the road has gone through—we won't open it, it's a dirt road between Gungahlin and the interchange, although I'm very tempted to give people at least some access—you will see trees popping up along the side. Some are self-propagated stuff, but a lot of them are plantings that our people have taken from the trees in the adjacent bushland, where we have had those species self-propagate through seeds hitting the ground and coming up of their own volition.

We have taken them from there and put them in situ beside the road so that the species of trees that will line the route will be the same as were always there, given that that particular part of the world has been the subject of regrowth and was not native forest anyway. But, to make sure that there's a consistency in the shrubbery and that there are no Knights of Ni jumping out, we will put those trees back. The cost changes for contracts already let due to delays and increased risk, which I'm sure you're interested in, Mr Seselja, are \$2.75 million and the delays costs paid to the contractor of the preliminary works contract as a consequence of continued legal challenges and court injunctions are \$250,000.

MR SESELJA: Is this estimating when the final legal challenge might finish or just the delays to date?

Mr Hargreaves: Known costs. Increased costs for the preliminary works contract as a consequence of a heated market, protracted delays caused by legal actions, the extended contract period, an increased level of risk associated with the contract, for example, the need to hire security for the site at a cost of \$40,000, \$1 million. An extended site management team contract of some 14 months with a revised completion date now likely to be September 2007, legal processes willing, rather than June 2006, as included in the current contract, has cost us \$1 million.

Additional costs associated with the relocation of major services were another \$500,000. Some of those services were as a direct result of consultation with the affected community around it. The people in Aranda had a conversation with the government and part of the route was changed, if my memory serves me correctly, just down the Caswell Drive area. That didn't come free; we had an additional cost for that.

The assessment of the current tender market—that is your price escalator, in a sense; how much is a contract worth out there—cost us an extra \$7 million. A contingency allowance based on a risk assessment of variation of the construction contract due to variations in prices and quantities, which is a standard rise and fall clause in the contract,

was another \$5 million.

We are praying—praying—that the Federal Court judgment will end it. There is no guarantee, of course, of that. Every citizen is entitled to equal access before the law. So, if this group wished to dig into their pockets even more deeply and then take us to the High Court, they would need to apply for leave to appear. The High Court has to grant that leave. That would be a delay. As every month goes by it costs us money. I'm hopeful that this will be the end of it, but I don't know.

MR SESELJA: So the September 2007 figure is based on its ending in the Federal Court. Okay. If it goes to the High Court—

Mr Hargreaves: And so long as the drought isn't broken to the tune of six months of wet weather.

MR SESELJA: Given that it has been delayed significantly, what consideration is being given to the need for duplication, given that there is going to be one lane initially? Is there any forward planning for when the people of Gungahlin might see a two-lane extension, two lanes each way?

Mr Hargreaves: Right now, Mr Seselja, we just want to built a bloody road. I'm not even thinking of anything beyond that. I'm more worried about just getting on and building it. At the moment, we are letting contracts as much as we can in preparation for that. I think tenders close in a couple of weeks for another major part of the construction project and we are, in effect, doing as much work as we can which is not affected by the legal challenge and we are also putting out the request for tender for those parts of the work included in that distance that is under appeal, if you like, to the stage where the administration of that, where it would take a number of months to conclude, we actually get out of the way so that when the green light is given we will go, "Bulldozers, start up, on your mark, off you go," and we would see the bulldozers flogging down the highway.

MR SESELJA: To summarise, there are no plans to look beyond and look at duplication. At this stage, there will be a one-lane extension for the foreseeable future, once it's finally built.

Mr Hargreaves: You may very well say that, Mr Seselja. I couldn't possibly comment.

MR MULCAHY: Minister, will the legal process that you are going through, if you are successful, give you a capacity to recover any costs associated? Did you apply for security of costs when these groups took legal action to suspend the GDE process?

Mr Hargreaves: You must understand, Mr Mulcahy—I'm sure you do, but just for the record—that this is not the ACT taking on Save the Ridge, This is Save the Ridge taking on the federal government and we are a joint party to it. We are not the major player in this out of three. We are joint parties with the NCA, but it is their legislation which is being challenged, not ours. We have required at each of the two steps so far for there to be cash lodged with the court. I think its up to about \$70,000. Is that all ours or half ours?

Mr McNulty: The \$70,000 from the two court cases is half ours, half the NCA's.

Mr Hargreaves: That means that we've got \$35,000 sitting in the bank with the court. It's costing us a heck of a lot more than that but, in considering whether to look for some sort of threat of application of a penalty, we recognise that it is a citizen's right to challenge administrative decisions taken by its government in a court of law. Whilst we might think this is disruptive to the program that we want to deliver for the people of Gungahlin, it is really inappropriate for us to determine whether something is vexatious or not. That is up to the court to do. We will be seeking those funds that have been deposited. I have not got the faintest idea—Mr Seselja may know—about how much one would be required to lodge in the event of a High Court challenge. I imagine it would be a tad higher than it would be for the Federal Court.

MR SESELJA: I have a feeling that they will probably raise it.

Mr Hargreaves: Essentially, we are asking for that surety and we not asking for just a gentleman's word on this issue, either; we are asking for cash to be deposited with the courts. At the moment, the Save the Ridge people have been able to raise the \$70,000. I do not know how deep their pockets are or how deep the pockets of their backers are, and I wouldn't want to speculate on that, but they can rest assured that if they take the challenge past this one we will be seeking a similar lodgment every time we go to court.

MR MULCAHY: Just supplementary to that, do you have any idea who the organisations are that are supporting them, apart from Save the Ridge? Are there any political parties backing this litigation?

Mr Hargreaves: I understand, without specific detail—and I think that it is tempting to go to specific detail under the guise of parliamentary privilege, but I am not going to do that—that it is a number of individuals who each have deeper pockets than mine and a couple of groups concerning themselves with conservation issues in this country.

THE CHAIR: Can I bring the questions back to the budget itself, not speculation on who is financially backing Save the Ridge?

MR MULCAHY: Chair, the point is that the minister referred to budget blowouts because of litigation.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy! Mr Mulcahy!

MR MULCAHY: Let me respond, chair. You talk about letting people finish.

THE CHAIR: No, I have actually ruled on this and I would like to move on.

MR MULCAHY: Have you ruled that this does not relate to the budget for the GDE?

THE CHAIR: No, I am saying that the GDE is relevant, but speculation on who are the financial backers is not relevant.

MR MULCAHY: It is, because the legal action is costing the government money and, so long as it continues, it is costing the government a lot of money.

THE CHAIR: That is a long bow to draw, Mr Mulcahy. Let's move on. Do you have further questions on the GDE?

MR MULCAHY: I have questions on the highlights, page 223.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter has a question and I think that Dr Foskey has other questions and I would like to go to them first.

MS PORTER: In budget paper 4 at page 239 and budget paper 3 at page 225, I note that additional capital funding has been allocated in the form of \$700,000 to ACT libraries. I was wondering if the minister could tell the committee what this funding will be directed toward and how it will help maintain this important community service.

Mr Hargreaves: The library service is an important element of the government's commitments across a wide range of initiative areas, including for the young, the aged, the disadvantaged and the disabled, as well as providing a strong social benefit to our community. As an aside, I have visited the libraries. I was down at the Griffith library and they have this great initiative. They have a youth room and it has murals painted by people all over the place. They have furniture and they have CDs, DVD equipment and all this sort of stuff where young people can actually congregate in the context of a library and enjoy those sorts of library environments that we used to as kids. The only problem is they cannot get in to use it because all the old folk around Griffith have taken it over. The old folk of Griffith have a really great facility for themselves to use in the library, with the provision of the young people's murals, which is fabulous and which shows the success of the way in which the Griffith library staff have actually reached out to and into that community.

In the 2005-06 budget the government announced \$700,000 for renovations at the Belconnen library. These renovations will improve the public amenities of this very popular and well-utilised library for the benefit of all patrons including, of course, younger and school-age patrons. You would be aware, Ms Porter, of the other significant initiatives the government has currently committed funding to, including the new Kippax library, which is due for opening, hopefully, in late July. I was there recently and I thought that the building progress was looking about as on target as it could be. The new Civic library is part of the Civic link project.

Of course, there are the mobile libraries, the second of which was recently launched at the Lanyon markets. These mobile libraries, in particular, are a significant initiative to expand services to elderly Canberrans and others experiencing difficulties with access to our facilities in Tuggeranong, Erindale, Griffith, Civic, Dickson, Belconnen, Kippax and Gungahlin. In 1997, the then Liberal government was considering closing down that service and Friends of the Erindale Library kicked up a big fuss. Very wisely, the government of the day responded to community sentiment and did not. We have taken the big library bus and turned it into two smaller buses. These smaller buses are incredibly equipped. They have computer equipment and disabled access. A ramp actually comes down out of the bus and people can go up inside it. It has computer access and DVD access as well as books and it actually tackles very effectively, in my view, social isolation out there in the suburbs.

The government also continues to explore and implement innovative services, including

internet access, as I mentioned just a minute ago. You can get that at a library. I will be interested to see how the new network of technical aids for the disabled works, the arrangement they have with Telstra is that if you are elderly, disabled or whatever you can get access for \$5.50 a month. I give you this information, members, for passing on to your constituents, because I know we all have them in that category. We might pay \$30 a month or more for internet access. Technical aids for the disabled has negotiated \$5.50 a month access for people who are disabled or elderly and, of course, they can access it for nothing at their local libraries. If you want to assist your constituents by bringing them into the computer age, you can let them know about those two initiatives.

In the coming year the government will also be delivering on two of its other election commitments: the establishment of a community advisory body for libraries and a legal deposit of all ACT government-published material with ACT libraries. Lots of people out there think that as soon as we do a report or something like that it automatically pops up in libraries. It does not, but it is going to. The revitalisation of the public libraries collection continues to be a high priority for the government and, whilst no additional funding was allocated in the 2005-06 budget, funding was brought forward in the second appropriation to commence the revitalisation of the collection.

We recognise that the libraries are an evolving thing. We have some challenges ahead of us. We have archival challenges. We have heritage collection challenges. We have access challenges, whether or not the public libraries in the community are in the right spots and all that sort of stuff. Then we have technological advance. It is really pointless having a whole stack of items in the collection on cassette if you have not got a cassette reader. So we need to be aware of those developments and we are moving forward in that sense.

MS PORTER: Minister, I have a quick question about the Belconnen town centre library. You mentioned the refurbishment there. How is it going?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Galbraith is across that one.

Mr Galbraith: The Belconnen refurbishment is coming up in the coming year. We have done some preliminary planning on what is required there to improve facilities, especially for the community in respect of toilets and those sorts of things, but we have not actually started the work there. That is for the coming financial year.

MS PORTER: When will it start and how long is it anticipated to last?

Mr Galbraith: It will be completed during the year, we expect. It will be started early in July and I think completed by the end of that current financial year. It will take some time to do that work.

MS PORTER: So, whilst this is happening, will there be any inconvenience to the customers?

Mr Galbraith: No, there will be alternative arrangements made and staging of the work so that this will be minimised, which is one of the reasons that the length of time required is at that scale.

Mr Hargreaves: That is, of course, all hinging on the fact that the budget passes the Assembly, Madam Chair. If, of course, the budget gets bounced by the Assembly and is not passed, there will be no funds available for the Belconnen library.

THE CHAIR: That is speculation.

DR FOSKEY: I want to ask a supplementary question before I ask a substantive question.

Mr Hargreaves: That is a good way round. I like that way round.

DR FOSKEY: I am interested in the impact of the increasing cost of electronic communication services that the libraries are increasingly providing as a service and also connection to electronic databases and so on. I know that in university libraries this is causing a huge headache in terms of the balance between paper purchases and the fees—

Mr Hargreaves: Non-paper.

DR FOSKEY: Yes. I suspect that that is a question that I need to ask on notice, but I would be interested to know if this is an increasing challenge for the library services.

Mr Hargreaves: When I visited the Griffith library particularly—I have visited others, but when I visited it particularly—I had a chat with the acquisitions people and it is not simple to say that, as the paper acquisitions go down and the electronics go up, there is a balancing act there. In fact, the bigger challenge for the libraries is within. We give them a global budget. It is a bit like the repair and maintenance budget; we do not actually give them a specific amount based on what they are going to do. We give them a provision.

What happens is that the connections that the libraries individually have and feed into the central point at Griffith show us the movements of the demand for materials, whether it is the cost of internet access, whether it the cost of DVDs and CDs, whether it is old tapes, whether it is cassette tapes, whether it is books, whether it is other forms of non-electronic library material, such as films, pictures, albums of pictures and those sorts of things. That moves as our society moves. We allow the library to be responsive in that way.

I do not want to dodge your question in terms of giving you a number. All I can do for you, and I am happy to do so if you want, is arrange a visit for you to the Griffith library and you can see it for yourself. You will see exactly what I mean about the response. One of the other ways in which we do it is we have a home library delivery service. Once upon a time that home library delivery service was for people who were stuck at home because of old age, disability and all that sort of stuff and it was usually books of a certain genre. It is not any more. We are now getting books with large print for people who are a little bit hard of sight. We are getting cassette or CD books for people who do not need to read.

We have a whole range of different applications of literature, sound and that sort of thing, for people. We also have a virtual library site for people to get in contact with us

in addition to that. All of those contact mechanisms show us the change in what people want from the libraries as we move from a totally paper library, which was my haunt as a kid at the Victorian state library in Melbourne, into what will ultimately be a totally electronic and computer age. It evolves and I do not want to put a number on each type because that might be wrong in nine months time.

DR FOSKEY: Okay, that was the supplementary. Have we moved onto the outputs, chair?

THE CHAIR: No. I am planning to get us to the outputs in about 20 minutes.

DR FOSKEY: Okay. I will not ask those questions yet. I will just ask you about the sustainability indicators. Does urban services have any comments on the new sustainability indicators?

Mr Hargreaves: On what page is that, Dr Foskey?

DR FOSKEY: They are dotted throughout, starting at page 227 with strategic indicators and sustainability indicators. They are different from department to department, which is why I am asking this question.

THE CHAIR: What is the nature of your question, Dr Foskey?

DR FOSKEY: My question is: does urban services have any comments to offer about the new sustainability indicators? Have you had any feedback on them?

Mr Hargreaves: No.

DR FOSKEY: Turning to unspent funds in the current financial year, could you please tell me—

Mr Hargreaves: What page is that, Dr Foskey? I don't have a global comment to make on unspent funds. If you direct us to an example, we will be happy to address it for you. Would you like to put that question on notice, Dr Foskey? We're happy to address it, if you have a specific figure.

DR FOSKEY: Okay. Usually I have been able to gather answers.

Mr Hargreaves: If you can't find them now, we will deal with them on notice.

THE CHAIR: I will go to Mr Mulcahy and come back to Dr Foskey on that question. Dr Foskey might be able to ask questions under the output classes, if necessary.

MR MULCAHY: Minister, I have a couple of questions on the highlights. The first one is on page 223 of BP4. One of the areas you have cited there is about improving your billing and receipting options for electronic payments. Do you have at your disposal data on outstanding fines that are more than 90 days beyond the due date for payment and are not being contested, of the dollar value of fines that are overdue?

Mr Hargreaves: We have a whole heap of different areas where fines apply, as you might appreciate, going from parking through to libraries. Could I take that one on notice and get you a figure? Mr Mulcahy. I am informed that, with the speed that Mr Phillips is noted for, we have an answer for you.

MR MULCAHY: Excellent.

Mr Phillips: The answer to your question on library fines—

Mr Hargreaves: No, just fines.

MR MULCAHY: No, fines generally. I am talking about speeding, parking—all sorts of fines. How much do you have outstanding as debtors that are more than 90 days overdue and that are not being contested?

Mr Phillips: That would require a bit more searching.

Mr Hargreaves: We will take it on notice. Thanks.

MR MULCAHY: The second part, minister, under “2005-06 Highlights” is “expanding the footpath maintenance program, particularly in older suburbs”. I was pleased to receive some correspondence just this morning from you dealing with some of the issues that I have raised about Kingston, particularly the issue of lighting. You talk about replacing faulty cabling and globes in Kingston, Forest, Barton and Red Hill. A related issue is that overhanging trees restrict lighting. I am constantly hearing from older residents particularly that the trees need to be trimmed back or cleared because people cannot see where they are going and there is a risk of their falling. I have also received reports from younger people that they have been attacked in these areas, particularly in the Forest-Manuka precinct. Can you tell us what you are going to do to address this issue, as it does come up regularly?

Mr Hargreaves: That particular issue is easy as, Mr Mulcahy. Anecdotally, a street lamp across the road from my house was completely covered by cotoneaster. All it did was glow vitally in the dark, not unlike my goldfish. I anonymously rang the Canberra Connect number because I did not want any pressure. A week later there was an urban services truck parked nearby. I thought, “You beauty, they are going to go and trim it,” but they went away. A week later the people who owned the cotoneaster came out and trimmed it. What happens is that, when we receive a specific report, we send a ranger out. If there is a danger, we get the shrub trimmed ourselves or tell the person who owns that particular shrubbery to remove it.

THE CHAIR: Minister, there are two things about that: firstly, you scared the living daylights out of Mr Zissler; he was worried that there was no follow up call. Secondly, don't you know that, when you ring that number, a big light lights up. It says: “Minister ringing. Attend to at once.”

Mr Hargreaves: I am very pleased to be able to improve the lighting in the switchboard office, Madam Chair.

MR MULCAHY: Chair, I understand that you want to do outputs at quarter to 12. There

are people in the gallery who have been here all morning. I am anxious to raise a matter under 1.3 as these people are in business for themselves and have an interest in this issue. Is it possible for us to address one area under output 1.3 now?

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy, I would have appreciated you giving me a heads up that that is what you wanted to do. I am not necessarily going to look favourably on people springing things on me. I appreciate what you are saying. If it had been raised with me beforehand I would have quite happily entertained it. I will have a think about it. I understand Ms Porter has a supplementary question on the first question you asked even though it has been taken on notice. Mr Mulcahy, I am not attempting to stifle the discussion. But you have to understand that it would have been helpful if you had let me know.

MR MULCAHY: Can I just comment on that?

THE CHAIR: No. Ms Porter can ask the question and then I will give you a ruling.

MS PORTER: Minister, the first question Mr Mulcahy asked you mentioned the online payment. I note that in budget paper No 4, page 238, and in budget paper No 3, page 167, reference is made to the redevelopment of the online payment forms being undertaken. Could you expand on the reasoning behind and the extent of that? What funding has been allocated?

Mr Hargreaves: I will ask Mr Galbraith to answer that question because he knows everything that anyone would ever want to know about it.

Mr Galbraith: We use online forms extensively for the payment of government services. The system that is in place is quite old now and desperately needs upgrading. It is quite hard to make changes with new fees coming in place and with changes to other services coming onto electronic payments. The redevelopment system allows us to reduce the overall operating cost of the form system and increase the online services we are providing to the community. That is the main driver for the redevelopment.

MS PORTER: What amount of funding has been allocated?

Mr Galbraith: I just need to check the current funding.

THE CHAIR: Has that been answered?

MS PORTER: No—nearly.

Mr Galbraith: The funding that has been applied in the current financial year—page 238 of budget paper No 4—is \$487,000. Just to give you a little bit more information, the project will provide for replacement of over 66 electronic forms on the Canberra Connect website. These forms allow the community to pay their bills over the internet and validate the payments for all the departments that we provide services for through Canberra Connect. They are used by our call centre staff as well as by people accessing them on line. We have something like \$40 million worth of government payments coming through by way of those forms. It is important that we make sure we have those facilities current and available to the community and the securities in place

for those payments to occur online.

MS PORTER: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Members and minister, I am happy to move to output class 1.3 to deal with this issue. I ask members of the committee and visiting MLAs to the committee to keep in mind that if there is an issue that they wish to raise, all they need to do is flag it with either me or the secretary of the committee. I am happy to entertain those requests. Mr Mulcahy, it might help if you listened to this.

MR MULCAHY: I can hear you.

THE CHAIR: This is not about stifling discussion, questions or scrutiny of the budget. I am happy for matters to be entertained and discussed. Members in the gallery should be aware as well that the estimates committee has a tight time frame. We are happy to discuss issues that members of the committee want to raise from time to time, which relate to members in the gallery. All I am saying, guys, is that it would be extremely helpful if you raised these issues with the secretary or me beforehand. Also, I have been given a little bit of information about this. I understand this is about concrete recycling. Am I correct about that?

MR MULCAHY: It is the Parkwood Estate.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, I have to confess a couple of things. Firstly, the way in which the estimates hearing was conducted last Friday in terms of its timing was that we did “General Overview” and “Capital Works” in the morning and the output classes in the afternoon. It was a judgment on my part that we would probably not get to output 1.3 until the afternoon. I have therefore allowed the manager of ACT NOWaste to come this afternoon. I did not want him to sit here all morning and wait. Firstly, there is a lot of detail in 1.3, not counting Parkwood, and we will not be in a position to respond to anything but general questions.

Secondly, with respect to Parkwood, I have no intention of discussing individual company issues in the context of this forum. We are happy to discuss the issue of policies for certain types of recycling, but I am not going to be talking about any issues such as the estate or leasing arrangements to do with the estate. All of these things are ongoing projects as far as my department is concerned. I have not been given a conclusion and will not be pushed into commenting on them in this forum. I do not know whether we will be able to be of much assistance at this point.

THE CHAIR: I appreciate what you have just said, minister—that is, you are only able to answer questions of a general nature. It is quite fair for you to have believed that we would not get to output class 1.3 until the afternoon because we had not been given any advance notice that the officials would be required. But I am sure that you and your officials will do the best you can to answer questions as they relate to the budget.

As I have said, I have no problem with this issue being raised. It is part of the job of this committee to scrutinise the budget. Yesterday we spent half an hour on an issue that was nothing to do with the budget as such. I will be listening carefully, members, to the questions that are asked. If I feel that we are digressing, I will be attempting to steer you

all back on course.

MR MULCAHY: Just on the scheduling, chair, I note that output class 1, municipal services, was to be addressed this morning.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy, do you want to waste more time talking about this?

MR MULCAHY: I just want to make a very valid point that if the committee schedules hearings then obviously we want to ensure witnesses are available for the times in which those things are scheduled.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, I have already indicated to the committee through your good offices that it was my call that the officers would not be here at this time, based on what I understood we would probably get to. I have no criticism of the committee's process in this sense. It is somewhat regretted that the chief architect of our NOWaste strategy is unavailable; some other part of the department could probably deal with it. The NOWaste strategy in the ACT is one of the flagship initiatives of the ACT government; it is a flagship thing. The officer who drives that particular initiative is rapidly gaining an international reputation for this. This committee and I, I advise respectfully, would be remiss in not having him present when we go through detailed questions.

MR MULCAHY: Could we resolve this? I was not aware that you had notified the chair that the person would not be available.

Mr Hargreaves: I had not.

MR MULCAHY: I thought you said it was through the office of the chair. Let me solve this. There is not much point in continuing the questioning if we do not have the officer available. We will have to move this item to this afternoon and then we can raise those issues.

THE CHAIR: In relation to the point that you made about what is on the detailed timetable, I did make the comment this morning, Mr Mulcahy, that normally we deal with overview, outputs and other things. This item is not listed on the detailed timetable, which is the way we normally deal with it; that is what we have been doing. I believe its not being listed has been an oversight. The timetable is a general guide. We cannot put down exact times that we will get to things but we do try to give officials a bit of an idea of when we are likely to get to them.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, I was just thinking: to facilitate Mr Mulcahy. As I said before regarding issues surrounding the west Belconnen area, there are some questions that I will respond to but some that I won't. It might be of some help if Mr Mulcahy gave us the questions and then our officers can get the detail and have it available. It might even short-circuit this afternoon's questions.

MR MULCAHY: I am aware of the capacity to put questions on notice, chair and minister. I do not think it will be so much a matter of the research required but a matter of seeking your views on the broad policy objectives you are pursuing.

Mr Hargreaves: In that case, that is fine.

MR MULCAHY: I think you will be able to handle them more than adequately, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: I am happy to wait for the ambush then.

THE CHAIR: Let us move back to “General Overview”, “Highlights” and “Capital Works”. I would like to finish up at about 10 to 12, if we can.

MR SESELJA: Thank you, chair. I have some questions about graffiti.

Mr Hargreaves: I can see the writing on the wall now.

MR SESELJA: Minister almost \$3.5 million has been spent over the last 3½ years on graffiti removal. Does this include the cost of graffiti removal from private property as well as public property?

Mr Hargreaves: It includes public property. It includes private property where the private property borders on public reserve.

MR SESELJA: So where it borders on reserves.

Mr Hargreaves: I will give you a pictorial example. You would know the Chifley shops.

MR SESELJA: I know the Chifley shops but not particularly well.

Mr Hargreaves: You would know that there is a stretch of parkland that goes from Eggleston Crescent upwards. There is private property there with fences. The graffiti on those fences borders public land. We will remove that at public expense.

MR SESELJA: So it is not about visibility as such from public land; it is whether it borders public land?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, that is right. If you have a look down the alleyway near Blades or John Hanna’s stores, for example, you will see a most magnificent mural on one side of the building, up one side of the wall, which has been sponsored by Blades. We congratulate Blades for that initiative. On the other side of the wall there is no offensive material, but it is grubby and horrible. It can be seen from the footpath as you walk by. It is the responsibility of the building owner to remove the grime from that wall. It is not the responsibility of the ACT taxpayer.

MR SESELJA: You could see the writing on the wall?

Mr Hargreaves: You just can’t read it.

MR SESELJA: The graffiti Mr Bruford was responsible for was on private property but it was cleaned up. Would you be able to tell us about that?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it was on public property and, more importantly, it was offensive.

MR SESELJA: That was public property, was it?

Mr Hargreaves: Which bit are you talking about? Mr Seselja, if there is graffiti obvious to the public domain—I don't care if it is on a tree—if it is racist, depicts violence, is sexual in nature or has offensive language, we will remove it. It is arguable whether or not an electricity substation owned by ActewAGL is on public property. We will remove it from that if, as I say, it is violent, racist or sexual in nature or if it incites any of the aforementioned. The graffiti that you refer to had a stencilled picture of a short person carrying a gun and aiming it at a sweet little bird. That is a violent depiction so we removed it.

MR SESELJA: What is the usual timeframe for removal of graffiti after urban services becomes aware of it?

Mr Hargreaves: If it is in the categories to which I have just referred, we will send somebody out within 24 hours with the intention of removing it. Every now and again there is some confusion about the address. The rangers then go out and check. If they find something at another address they will remove it. In this instance, the rangers were sent to an address in O'Connor, if my memory serves me correctly, but then discovered that it was in Ainslie and attended to it. Ordinarily, we have a policy of removal of graffiti within 24 hours of its hitting the deck, which is what we try to achieve. I have forgotten the percentage of achievement but it is huge. I think it is a week in Sydney.

MR SESELJA: Are you able to get us the figures on the percentage of achievement within 24 hours?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. Hang on a sec; just hold on to the thought. Although less than two per cent of the reported graffiti is offensive, in more than 80 per cent of all reported graffiti incidents, the graffiti is removed within 24 hours. The remainder, with the odd exception, is removed within three days. The contract that we have—

MR SESELJA: That is the offensive graffiti?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. Remember that we do not have our blokes running around doing it; it is a contract. That contract requires 95 per cent compliance and that is being achieved.

MR SESELJA: What is the timeframe for cleaning up non-offensive graffiti?

Mr Hargreaves: Three days if it is public. In the case of a business, however long that particular business wants to have that stuff sitting on their wall. If they want to pay for it they can remove it in 24 hours. There has to be some shared responsibility about the look of the city here.

MR SESELJA: Does that shared responsibility include graffiti artists or vandals cleaning up their own graffiti?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it does.

MR SESELJA: Did Mr Bruford clean up his own graffiti or has that been cleaned up for him?

Mr Hargreaves: You would have to ask the magistrates that, Mr Seselja. Mr Bruford is, firstly, not employed within this place and, secondly, that matter is the subject of a judicial decision. I am surprised a lawyer would ask that question.

MR SESELJA: It has already been resolved.

Mr Hargreaves: You already know the answer, so why ask me?

MR PRATT: The legal—

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Bruford has sent us a cheque for the removal of the graffiti.

MR SESELJA: He has sent you a cheque for the removal? Was that a court order?

Mr Hargreaves: If you had followed the reports in the paper very closely—I am sure you would have had researchers doing that—you would have noticed that, upon apprehension, he offered to do just that at the time.

MR SESELJA: It seems his response was much more responsive than the Chief Minister's in this circumstance.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. He is a very pleasant young man.

MR SESELJA: I have no doubt.

DR FOSKEY: I just want to go back to the question that I flagged before. At page 238 of budget paper No 4, under there is a list of rollovers in capital works. Page 237 indicates some areas of savings.

Mr Hargreaves: Where is that? Sorry, Dr Foskey, I missed the second bit.

DR FOSKEY: Page 237.

Mr Hargreaves: For the savings, yes.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, “2005-06 Budget Technical Adjustments” plus “General Savings”, which I assume have already been alluded to.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, we have answered that.

DR FOSKEY: I am interested in the savings in “ACT NOWaste Garbage and Recycle Bin Finance Lease Finalisation”.

Mr Hargreaves: Dr Foskey, can I ask you to ask that one in the context of 1.3?

DR FOSKEY: Yes, okay.

Mr Hargreaves: You have other capital works questions that you wanted to ask.

DR FOSKEY: I am still interested in hire car reforms.

Mr Hargreaves: Whereabouts is that?

DR FOSKEY: I refer to hire car reforms, which is above budget technical adjustments on page 237 of budget paper 4, and also to capital works rollovers on page 238. As we are talking about underspending I wanted to check which programs have suffered and which programs will be rolled over until next financial year.

Mr Hargreaves: I will ask Alan Phillips to explain the hire car reform savings. You have to remember that the amounts of money we are paying to hire car owners of those plates will commence on 1 July. There was a second appropriation to top up funds and they will be given an amount of around \$120,000. That will commence on 1 July, as that is when the money will become available. I have been informed that the other hire car reforms are all tied up with the imperative of the ACCC to reform the taxi industry.

Members might recall that we were going to conduct taxi auctions. We were going to auction the plates at 90 per cent of their value and, depending on the take-up rate, we were going to repeat that process later, or auction the plates at a further 90 per cent of their value until we were down to nothing. The figures in the periods 2006-07 to 2008-09 reflect the effect of not proceeding with that project. The member referred also to capital works rollovers.

The Gungahlin Drive extension rollover amounted to \$7.244 million; Fairbairn Avenue upgrade \$1.659 million; Sutton Road upgrade \$204,000; Mugga trench \$1.187 million; Amaroo infrastructure stage three \$458,000; heavy vehicle bridges stage three \$500,000; Pialligo Avenue upgrade \$100,000; Moore Street health building \$400,000; and the forward design for Majura Parkway \$600,000.

The North Building refurbishment was \$514,000; Grant Cameron Community Centre \$85,000; and the bike racks on ACTION buses announced in today's paper by the minister, which will be proceeding, \$145,000. We returned to budget \$2.550 million for neighbourhood improvements that were not carried out.

DR FOSKEY: How would your department tackle a problem such as Tharwa Bridge, which was recently declared unusable? Constituents in that area expressed concern about the fact that work required to replace the bridge would not be done. How would the department tackle a problem like that when the budget has already been set? Obviously it would be a fairly expensive proposition to fix or replace the bridge over the Murrumbidgee River, but it is a crucial access question for residents.

Mr Hargreaves: Last night I attended a meeting of about 100 people from Tharwa Village and the surrounding neighbourhood to talk about the bridge. I note for the record that I was the only member of the Legislative Assembly present in the room. Despite the fact that opposition members indicated to the community that they would be there, they were notable by their absence. It was established that the bridge was unsafe because of wood rot, or the presence of white ants in the wood.

Even though the bridge has cement supports the white ants had damaged its timber structure. It is difficult to establish the presence of white ants when one is up to one's waist in water. So the routine annual inspection of the bridge did not reveal the extent of the rot or the presence of white ants. A detailed examination of the bridge revealed that the problem existed. After a proper and thorough technical assessment of the bridge we found that the rot was present in many more places than we had first thought, so the bridge was closed as it was established as being unsafe. From the information given to me today, I understand it might be possible to reopen the bridge for light pedestrian access by, for example, children.

That bridge, which was built in 1895, has been neglected since 1927 by successive governments. Governments did nothing other than a bit of maintenance and white ant prevention here and there. We are talking about a bridge that is well over 100 years old. One would expect timber of that age to fall off anyway. The issue of concern for the people of Tharwa was access across that river. The government undertook to carry out some maintenance and to provide access to that community in the quickest possible time frame.

The government has two options available to it. However, before I mention those options I would like to indicate to members the reason that I arranged the meeting. I wanted to meet with members of the community, so I arranged the meeting in partnership with Mal Jeffrey, a community leader in that area. I wanted to talk to people in the community at the contemplative stage rather than when the government had already arrived at a decision and imposed that decision on the community.

I attended the meeting and gave members of the community updated information relating to this issue. I told them that if we were to put a low level crossing over the river we would run into a bit of trouble with Environment ACT, that there would be an interruption to the river flow and that that would have a detrimental effect on fish life. I also advised them that it would take at least three months and cost between \$500,000 and \$600,000. The alternative to that proposal would be to strengthen the existing bridge to enable it to take light vehicular traffic. That option would also take at least three months and cost between \$300,000 and \$500,000.

I rejected the idea of a gravel-based causeway across the river because of its environmental effect. I knew that if I accepted that option, on Thursday or Friday Environment ACT would make me withdraw it, so it really was a pointless exercise. I advised the people of Tharwa that the minimum time frame would be three months and that we would complete the project as quickly as possible. We also considered completely replacing a bridge of historic and heritage importance to those living in the village.

The bottom line is that that bridge is going to fall down. If we were to replace the rotten spans and trusses on that bridge it would require timber being brought in from northern New South Wales. It would cost between \$5 million and \$8 million and take about three years to build. It would also involve us in ongoing maintenance of \$40,000 every year for a few years with no guarantee that in three or four years time something else would not surface somewhere else and the bridge would drop. That is one option.

The other option would be to build a bridge parallel with, or at least in close proximity to, the present bridge—a bridge that is sympathetic to the village environment and to the cultural and heritage nature of the village. Such a bridge could be constructed of cement or steel. My preference would be steel but I am not technically competent in that area. The bridge would be roughly the same design as the existing bridge, so the visual approach to the village and its integrity and heritage values would be maintained.

The time frame to construct such a bridge would be about two years—a year shorter—and it would cost between \$3 million and \$5 million. The preference expressed by the majority of villagers at the meeting was to strengthen the existing bridge and create a parallel new one, given that the old one would have a life expectancy of three years, if strengthened. That decision was not unanimous but it was a majority decision. We undertook to go back to the community when we had synthesised the information that had been given to us. Before the meeting commenced I said that the government was not committed to either option, and I reiterate that statement.

The member also asked me where the government would get the money from for that project. She will see in the budget a figure relating to rollovers. The government has in place a bridge-strengthening program. Within our total ACT roads budget is a program for bridge strengthening. As the load bearing standards for bridges in Australia went up we have had to assess all bridges in the ACT and put in place a bridge-strengthening program to bring them up to standard. We can redirect funds into that project, at least to provide for the preliminary planning stage.

Members should remember that option A is a three-year project and option B is a two-year project. I will take those options to cabinet. We will have to find the money from within the budget. I do not know yet how much that project will cost. If our estimates are out, God help us; we will then have a real problem on our hands. We can solve those problems because the Labor Party, and not the Liberal Party, is in government.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy will ask a question and we will then move on to output classes.

MR MULCAHY: Minister, in your highlights you refer to new speed camera initiatives for three additional cameras.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. There will be one outside your house, Richard. It will look like a letterbox, so you should be very careful.

MR MULCAHY: The budget reflects that as a result of those initiatives you expect to increase revenue by about \$1 million to \$3 million this fiscal year. At this stage where do you intend to locate those three additional cameras?

Mr Hargreaves: One outside your place, one outside Zed's place and one outside Steve's place.

MR MULCAHY: I am assuming that that was not a serious response. You have projected a \$1 million or more increase in revenue every year. Has the department established whether those speed cameras are working effectively to reduce the road toll

and to impact on speeding motorists? We have often heard people saying that they are nothing other than revenue raisers.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, they are.

MR MULCAHY: It appears to be difficult to locate those cameras in areas where they are needed most—those areas in which local people are complaining. You said earlier that they were revenue raisers. I thought primarily they were a road safety measure.

Mr Hargreaves: You know what thought did! Neither the department nor I determine the location of speed cameras; a road safety committee does that. That committee comprises representatives from the Australian Federal Police, the NRMA and the Department of Urban Services. They determine a list of localities based on crash records, the safety of the positioning of vehicles, and a number of other issues. That committee, which is totally independent of government, advises me of the locations.

You might recall that not long ago I authorised 10 new locations and they were advertised in the *Canberra Times*. The committee advised me that we should expand the locations, so I amended the regulations under subordinate law. I did not determine where those cameras should go. Members should understand that that includes one mobile speed camera and two red light speed cameras.

The committee advised me from a road safety perspective that static red light speed cameras were found to be the most effective. Though I do not have the numbers in front of me, they have achieved a reduction in speeding. Members would be aware of the cameras at the Barry Drive-Northbourne Avenue and Melrose Drive-Hindmarsh Drive intersections. The number of rear-end collisions and the number of people running red lights have dropped. Funnily enough, the number of people speeding through intersections has not dropped. As a road safety initiative the positioning of red light cameras at intersections is having an effect. It is reducing the opportunity for people to injure themselves at those dangerous intersections.

Under the former Liberal regime, mobile speed camera vans of every colour were parked on the sides of the roads. I am not bagging the program at all because this government picked it up and enhanced it. The concept was that if you thought a speed camera was going to be there you would slow down. That was the rationale for having different coloured vans on the side of the road. But the locations around town were still defined. So if someone arrived at a location that he or she knew to be a speed camera zone and a van was parked on the side of the road there was a pretty good chance that there would be a mobile speed camera. That did not do anything to slow people down.

We decided to use only white speed camera vans and to put up more signage indicating that people were travelling through a speed camera zone. We ensured that the signage was located on the top of the truck and that it reflected the speed at which people should be travelling. As a result, the number of people who were speeding dropped but a small percentage of people continued to speed. I have no explanation other than to say that we clearly have to divorce the revenue aspect of speed cameras from the road safety aspect. It is wrong to put the two together.

From a road safety perspective we have stopped more people from speeding. We have

addressed the culture of people travelling 10 kilometres over the speed limit on our roads. That is our target. Those people who are hell bent on speeding will probably travel much more than 10 kilometres over the speed limit. From a revenue perspective nobody has to pay a penny for going through a speed camera; it is a voluntary contribution. Those people who break the law by exceeding the speed limit pay a voluntary contribution to our coffers if they go through a speed camera. It is up to the motorist. If motorists do not speed they pay nothing. It is as simple and straightforward as that. I make no apology for the fact that it is a revenue-raising exercise. If people do not want to contribute to our revenue they should not speed.

MR MULCAHY: I have two questions related to the minister's answer. These cameras appear to be located on fairly straight and open sections of our roads. Does the committee ever look at that revenue-related aspect?

Mr Hargreaves: No, it does not. It bases its decisions, to recommend or otherwise to me, purely on crash records and speeding. As kids we used to run over the orthometers that were used to measure the speed of vehicles. The committee uses that sort of device as an indicator that a constant stream of traffic is travelling 10 kilometres over the speed limit. It then recommends to me that a camera be installed over that stretch of road.

MR MULCAHY: Are there any unintended consequences? You gave me some data relating to some of the intersections. It is purely an observation, but there appears to be a constant sea of glass at Hindmarsh and Yamba drives, and there have been some serious accidents in that area over the past two weeks. Are behavioural changes causing those accidents? For example, are people panicking, hitting the brakes and having an accident? Is there any data to support that possibility?

Mr Hargreaves: Anecdotally we understand that when a red light camera is first installed at an intersection, within the first couple of weeks there is a bit of that. People are not observing the rule that they should travel a certain distance from the driver in front of them. They should not worry about being three car lengths behind; they should worry when they are travelling so close that they have only three seconds within which to stop.

People are not doing that. They decide not to go through a red light—not because it is illegal or because they might have an accident—but because they might have to pay \$162 for the privilege. So they slam on their brakes and the person behind them goes up their backside. After a few weeks they become aware of the red light camera and the problem goes away. They start to respect intersections a little more and fewer people are fined for going through red lights. As we have had red light cameras in the city for some time I expect to see a lessening of these offences. People know that they are there and there will be fewer offences.

MR PRATT: Minister, you said that the road safety committee uses black spot data, et cetera, to determine where to locate mobile speed camera cars?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes.

MR PRATT: Given the strong anecdotal evidence that during peak hours a number of cars are travelling at 60 kilometres an hour through suburban roads and past schools, and

that hoons at night are travelling at more than 60 kilometres an hour along some of our through streets, why do you not ask the road safety committee to start deploying cars in those areas to supplement policing?

Mr Hargreaves: I am pleased that the member asked me that question as it gives me an opportunity to get something into the public arena. Legislation that was introduced by the former regime required certain defined things to be gazetted. On becoming the responsible minister I thought we needed a better response. If we are using these speed cameras to achieve attitudinal change, even if we put a van on the side of the road with no camera in it to make people slow down, I need the freedom to be able to place them anywhere in the ACT to respond to issues that have been raised by the community. I refer the member to an example of which he would be aware as we have both received representations on the issue, that is, Ellerston Avenue in Isabella Plains.

MR PRATT: You bet.

Mr Hargreaves: I got members of the community living on Ellerston Avenue to go to the police station to talk about a policing regime. Ellerston Avenue was not high enough on the list of roads in the warrant system to justify the placement of speed cameras in that area over and above other areas, given the restricted number of speed camera vans that we have. I require the police or urban services to indicate to the committee that there are repeated reports from the community that a road is being used as a racing area and that that road should be put on its list for six months and taken off the list when things slow down. I believe we need to be able to do that.

I have asked the department to establish what the necessary legislative changes are. I think we require a change to the act and not just to the regulations. I have asked the department to instruct me on that issue and I will then introduce the necessary legislation. I am sure all members would support that approach. I have also asked the department to look at defining the whole of the ACT as a speed camera zone. I need advice from the committee and the NRMA Road Safety Trust in relation to that issue.

In future anyone approaching the ACT would see a sign up stating that the whole of the ACT was a speed camera zone and that anyone wanting his or her picture taken could have it done anywhere. That same committee would determine the localities of the speed cameras, but not within a gazetted list, which is the way it is done at the moment. I believe that the present way of doing things is inadequate. People become accustomed to the location of speed camera vans.

People travelling down the parkway and around Black Mountain peninsula to go to work know where the speed camera vans are located. Anyone who constantly speeds would slow down for 100 metres and they would not be fined for anything. So the government has those two approaches. I want to do this in two stages rather than in one hit because I want to include members of the community in this project. I do not want people saying that the government is just out to obtain as much revenue as it can. We must implement a total package.

The first stage is for the government to define that the road safety committee can put speed camera vans anywhere it likes in the ACT. It would take time for such legislation to be drafted. I would rather go through a staged process, as it would be easier to

introduce legislation of that sort in the Assembly.

MR PRATT: To what extent would you seek to draft legislation to give you, the minister, the ability to have a strong say in the matter? How quickly and how often would you redeploy those camera cars?

Mr Hargreaves: I can answer that question in simple terms: absolutely none. I will never agree to a minister being able to deploy vehicles at whim. In that way the project would be used 110 per cent as a revenue raiser. That would mean that there would be a temptation for the minister of the day, regardless of his or her political persuasion, to use a project inappropriately. It is essential that those vehicles be placed on the basis of crash records and speeding. Those who should rightly be making such decisions, independent of the government, are the experts: the police, the NRMA Road Safety Trust, which gives us input from the independent community, and the road safety people in the Department of Urban Services. I do not want anything to do with it and I want to ensure that the legislation prevents it.

MR PRATT: You said earlier that speed cameras are a revenue raiser. I think you are right, so that is a moot point. Surely you need a stronger set of powers to be able to talk to chief police officers and urban services about your priorities.

Mr Hargreaves: I have the power at the moment to suggest these things, and I have done that in the past. However, I have no more power than you, as a local member. I think it should remain that way. It has to be understood that politicians should not be the ones to place these vans; it has to be done by experts. We know that some people will say it is the government's intention to make revenue out of it. It would be delightful if we did not make revenue out of it, but that is always going to happen.

It should be remembered that we do not have 1,000 vans; we have only a certain number of vans. So our priority ought to be the saving of lives, in the knowledge that we are also going to receive revenue no matter where we put those vans. I do not want to be involved in that. I think it would be better if the independent committee made those decisions. The other issue is that I would know where not to go.

DR FOSKEY: One issue that has been raised with me by a constituent of mine is that there seems to be an understanding on an approach to a traffic light that it is not necessary to stop at an amber light. There is a tendency for people to believe that an amber light gives them long enough to get through the traffic light, which is contributing to accidents at traffic lights. I am not sure how one is supposed to deal with that problem. The attitude of people seems to be, "I will just take as much as I can get. I will push the envelope as hard as I can", rather than, "That amber light means it is time for me to stop."

Mr Hargreaves: A person has to have his or her back wheels over the line when the light changes from amber to red. There is a time delay between the changing of the lights between amber and red, and amber and green. So a person has to have his or her vehicle over the line when the lights change. People who are about 50 to 100 metres away tend to gun it when they see the lights change from green to amber.

If they get through the intersection and their back wheels are not on the line when the

lights change from amber to red they get away with it, but they will not get away with it forever. Quite a few people have gone through the lights and they have been pinged for speeding through a red light. They get a decent sized fine for doing that. I was thinking about putting fixed speed cameras on bike paths to catch those people you were talking about earlier.

DR FOSKEY: The ones in lycra?

Mr Hargreaves: I will not put lycra on speed vans. I thought I would fix a speed camera to a pole to catch those horrors.

MR SESELJA: Following Mr Mulcahy's discussion with you about intersections, you said there was anecdotal evidence to show that a number of crashes had occurred a few weeks after the introduction of speed cameras. Are you able to provide the committee with statistics relating to those incidents 12 months after the introduction of red light and speed cameras at intersections?

Mr Hargreaves: To show what?

MR SESELJA: To show whether crash statistics have got better or worse, and by how much.

Mr Hargreaves: I will take that question on notice. You would have noticed over time that driver behaviour at Antill Street and Northbourne Avenue changed. I do not have specific statistics relating to that issue. However, I will obtain statistics relating to static red light speed cameras and table them for you.

MR SESELJA: With a view to demonstrating the changes that have occurred?

Mr Hargreaves: You will have to look at the statistics and extrapolate that information yourself.

MR SESELJA: I would be grateful for anything you could provide to achieve that end.

Mr Hargreaves: I will obtain all the statistics that have been collected by my department. We collect those statistics and hand them over to the road safety committee, which says that you can put up red light cameras, take them down and put them somewhere else. Thus far they have not told us that.

MR SESELJA: I would be most grateful for those statistics. If members of the community are concerned about a particular stretch of road on which a number of people have been speeding what process would they have to go through to have a speed assessment carried out?

Mr Hargreaves: All they have to do is ring the Department of Urban Services, Roads ACT, through Canberra Connect. The department would then be able to advise them the last occasion on which something like that occurred. We operate on a road warrant system. The top 300 streets, or something like that, are on a list of dangerous roads. The last time I heard, Ellerston Avenue, for example, was about 163rd on that list.

Someone might ring up and say, “My street is being used for road races and all that sort of thing. People are constantly speeding on the road. It is not people from outside the neighbourhood; residents are actually travelling 10 kilometres over the speed limit.” When we receive such a call we say, “The last time we checked your street was on such and such a date, and this is the story.” If the constituent is happy with that no further action is taken.

If we get a spate of problems occurring, such as the incidents that occurred recently, traffic engineers go out there, put the liquorice back on the road, have a look at it and we then advise constituents about what is happening. People sometimes believe that drivers are speeding repeatedly in a 60-kilometre zone when they are not. When we do the testing we find that the average speed is about 56 or 57 kilometres an hour over a certain period.

We define that there is speeding but that it occurs at a specific time on specific days of the week. Our approach is then to get a police patrol to sit in that area for a while with a radar gun. So it is a partnership arrangement. If people have problems I encourage them to contact the department. We might not take action the next day but we will certainly take action within the next couple of weeks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy, do you wish to ask a supplementary question?

MR MULCAHY: It is a minor point that relates to a technical question. I again refer to the intersection issue. Is there a designated time of change when traffic lights turn from green to orange to red? Is that based on the approaching speed of traffic? I am talking about Hindmarsh Drive and Yamba Drive. There are 80-kilometre approaches on either side of those roads. I have observed that because it is fairly tight—I think there is a four-second change or thereabouts—people are making incorrect judgment calls. I am concerned about that issue.

Mr Hargreaves: We employ a national standard. For the information of the member we have an office within Roads ACT and the guy that we employ uses a computer to define the distance between traffic lights and when they are going to go green, red, orange and all that sort of stuff.

MR MULCAHY: Is that reflected on approach to the speed zone?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. That can be changed to reflect peak hour traffic, whether it is an arterial road and whether it is a crossroad approaching an arterial road. It is all configured so that we can best manage it. People who are doing the speed limit will get a straight run through. As you well know, it does not always work but it works on most occasions. All the technicalities governing the control of traffic lights, computerised traffic light control, is done through national standards.

THE CHAIR: We will break for lunch but, before we do, I assume we will be dealing with output class 1.1 after lunch. Does anybody disagree with that assessment?

MR SESELJA: I am happy to move on to it but I do have other general questions. If we have time after the output classes I would like to go back.

THE CHAIR: If we have time I would be happy to go back, but I do not like our chances.

MR SESELJA: If the opportunity arises I would be happy to revisit those issues.

MR PRATT: If there is time later I would also like to refer to some general issues.

THE CHAIR: If there is time.

Meeting adjourned from 12.27 to 2.03pm.

THE CHAIR: Mr Zissler, I understand that you have a correction and an answer to give the committee?

Mr Zissler: Yes, please. This morning we had a question on the Belconnen library. Mr Galbraith provided some of the information, but there were some technical inaccuracies due to lack of information. I would just like him to clarify that information.

Mr Galbraith: I will provide some additional information on items I spoke about this morning. In the current transfer year we have had a budget of \$241,000 to be spent on refurbishment work at the Belconnen library. The work involved addressing disabled access, public toilets and refurbishing the badly deteriorated community room. It has now been completed.

The second point is about the \$700,000 that is in the budget for this financial year. It involves the undertaking of some general work to address accessibility, safety, amenities and efficiency from an OH&S perspective, primarily to the current building codes. Basically, that work is not only for the accessibility, safety and clear lines of sight in the regions behind the toilet areas, which are barricaded off at the moment, allowing staff to keep an eye on those areas, but also for disabled access, bringing it up to the building code by reducing high shelving, and relocating the children's area to a more open public area.

Also, general OH&S work, as I mentioned before, involves looking at counters and those types of areas. The current furniture, particularly study tables, is inefficient and we are replacing a large amount of that furniture. We are also making some general improvements to mechanical services and increasing the internet facilities, including the provision of a number of additional computers for access to the internet at that particular location.

MS PORTER: Thank you very much.

Mr Zissler: One of the questions this morning was about the number of 90-day due fines, both parking and traffic fines. The data we have is that the number of outstanding parking fines due at 30 April this year is 54,262. The dollar value is \$4.38 million. I need to point out, though, that 90-day due is not terribly useful because once you receive your fine you are allowed 28 days, roughly, to pay it. People then have the chance to come back and appeal it. They then get a second notice before they go to a third and final notice and often pay it at the 90 days. It is not a terribly useful measure. Likewise with traffic infringement numbers—43,775 with a value of \$9.99 million—if the process is

90 days it does not mean a terrible lot to us.

THE CHAIR: So I am not the only person to leave things till the very last moment.

Mr Zissler: Absolutely.

Mr Hargreaves: There is another aspect to it as well. If, for example, you are pinged by a speed camera or a red light camera, you may not be the driver; somebody else may be driving the vehicle. In this instance, the owner of the vehicle provides a statutory declaration to the RTA, which then reissues the penalty. The penalty still applies to that vehicle, but it is going to hang in the sky for up to two months because the second person receiving the penalty gets another 28 days to apply. If they appeal, it goes on again. So there is that variation.

MR MULCAHY: I did say in the question “more than 90 days that were not being appealed or disputed”, so it is those who have not—

Mr Hargreaves: Sorry, I did not hear that bit.

MR MULCAHY: So that is the distinction.

Mr Zissler: We can come back to that.

MR MULCAHY: So that we can look at those who, obviously, are not paying their fines within the specified time as opposed to those who are arguing the toss.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, we also need to remember this against the background that, if people just plainly refuse to pay the penalty and the fine just sits there, they lose their licence. We do not mind doing that at all. What happens is that they lose their licence but still have the debt. Losing your licence does not remove the debt. In fact, they can have the licence reinstated once they pay up. There are a certain number of people in that group. We recognise that it is an historically large figure. I can remember asking the same sorts of questions when I was in your position in these estimates and wondering what on earth was being done about it. I cannot remember which government introduced it—whether it was yours or not; it does not matter. The RTA are getting tough about it and removing registration and licences as part of that process.

Mr Zissler: We also have a number of challenging areas with interstate people and, of course, with diplomatic people—the DC and DX plates. You can try to prosecute them through small claims but you will never succeed.

MR MULCAHY: It is too hard, yes.

Mr Zissler: We have a large amount of money outstanding but, to be quite frank, you will never get it.

MR MULCAHY: No. You would be able to extract those who are not disputing the fine and who are just dragging their feet.

Mr Zissler: Are you saying that there is one in actual dispute?

MR MULCAHY: No, the ones that are not in dispute, not appealing it or saying that somebody else drove the car.

Mr Zissler: Okay.

Mr Hargreaves: They are not necessarily the people who are dragging the chain per se. There may be a variety of reasons why they are doing that.

MR MULCAHY: I understand that, yes.

Mr Hargreaves: We just need to clarify the point that the ones that we have been notified are in dispute, either through the courts or through dobbing somebody else in, are in a sense bad debtors to the state.

MR MULCAHY: Could we also get the dollar values on the outstanding diplomatic infringement numbers?

Mr Zissler: Yes, absolutely.

MR MULCAHY: It would be fascinating.

Mr Zissler: It will be fascinating, yes, but not really very useful. I am happy to provide those.

MR MULCAHY: Fascinating nonetheless. I would shake them into paying a few fines.

Mr Zissler: I could give you the DC and DX numbers now.

THE CHAIR: I am sure Mr Mulcahy is not the only person who would be fascinated by useless information.

Mr Hargreaves: I think the first attempt taken to recover those fines from the diplomatic corps was taken by St Paul in his role as a taxpayer. We have not had much success since.

Mr Zissler: For the DC and DX plates, which are fundamentally diplomatic, in parking fines we have 538 outstanding worth a total of \$55,000. In the traffic offences we have 317 worth \$109,000. That is the diplomatic numbers—both DC and DX plates.

Mr Hargreaves: If members of the committee can come up with a way of extracting that dough, we would be absolutely delighted to hear it.

THE CHAIR: I think that is too big a challenge for this committee. I am not going to ask it of the committee members, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: We thought of writing to the Prime Minister and saying that an act of grace payment to us on the part of the feds would be appreciated, but we also thought that they would not be going to wear that.

Mr Zissler: I must clarify that the due date is 30 April. This date is always a number of weeks out of date. That is the total diplomatic numbers, not necessarily 90-day due, but not by the due dates.

THE CHAIR: We will move on to output class 1, which relates to municipal services, and start with output 1.1, concerning customer services and information.

MR SESELJA: I have a fairly simple question about libraries. The performance indicators—

Mr Hargreaves: Could I have a page reference, please, Mr Seselja?

MR SESELJA: Sorry, BP4 at page 232, customer satisfaction with library services. The target for 2005-06 is 80 per cent.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it is pretty good, isn't it?

MR SESELJA: It is not bad. In the 2004-05 budget the measure was 90 per cent. Why has the target been reduced?

Mr Hargreaves: Good question; excellent question. Why has the target been reduced? One of the reasons we reduce targets is that sometimes you get a regular underachievement over a number of years and naturally there is an unreal expectation. We have to remember that the city link library was not received necessarily by a lot of people as being the most positive move for libraries for those interested parties. On the other hand, other people understood that literature is part of a cultural approach. It was quite correctly put within a small time cultural precinct within the city area to link it to things such as the Canberra Museum and Gallery. For a while there was a difference of opinion as to whether the library itself would be a repository for newspapers for people to read once they got off the bus or whether it was going to be part of a library collection.

We have many decisions to make about the collection and many challenges, of course. We need to consider our role in terms of electronic access for business people and the positioning of the heritage library collection and whether it would be appropriately placed within that precinct. What we are seeing is an increase in satisfaction with the mobile library and the home library service. We saw a distinct lack of satisfaction in the old Kippax library because of its infrastructure. I am anticipating that, once the Kippax library comes on line, Belconnen library is sorted out and the city link library system comes on line, we will see an increase not only in customer satisfaction but also in the target.

MR SESELJA: There is a public servant itching to add something.

Mr Hargreaves: He is just agreeing with his minister and waiting for the next question, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: We are not expecting the quality to fall. We are not going to increase the target to 90 per cent, given that you have just said that you are expecting the quality to go up.

Mr Hargreaves: I am giving it due consideration, yes.

MR SESELJA: The quality of library services is not going to fall.

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely not; in fact, we are reaching ahead so fast that I might suggest to you that the people determining the targets have not caught up with the developments yet.

MR SESELJA: Do we have the figures for 2004-05? Has that survey not been conducted yet? Is that why it shows “n/a” for estimated outcomes?

Mr Galbraith: The reason it shows “n/a” for those estimated outcomes is that it is a new measure. In the appendix on page 47 the public libraries, the Assembly library and government libraries are spread out. The new measure encompasses all library services, so we do not have a combined indicator for those previous years.

Mr Hargreaves: We know what great service you get from the Assembly library so we will whack it up.

MR MULCAHY: I have one or two questions in relation to page 232 of BP4 and the updating of the collection. One item refers to the percentage of the library collection less than five years old. It looks to me to be roughly, if you can average these things, about a six per cent turnover or introduction of new volumes. This may be more of a question for one of your officers, but is that match comparable to capital city libraries in terms of the acquisition of volumes?

Mr Hargreaves: The Melbourne state library, for example, has volumes dating back to the 1800s. It is an archival collection as well as a responsive collection. I do not think there is any merit in comparing the ACT libraries with a capital city library per se. We would be better off comparing them, I think, with a very large city municipal library such as Geelong, Newcastle or Wollongong—that sort of area. Again, you would have to bear in mind the fact that, firstly, Canberra is a much more literate society than that of any of those cities.

THE CHAIR: Although they may dispute it, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: They can dispute it as much as they like, but I will be standing in the middle of their streets telling them. The other fact is that the people of the ACT are predominantly white-collar workers who are used to using electronic means in their daily lives, so they are moving more quickly towards electronic access to library materials.

MR MULCAHY: Right. But back to the question, minister—

Mr Hargreaves: We can do this all afternoon, Mr Mulcahy.

MR MULCAHY: Yes, I know. Minister, I am keen to know if you have a national measure. We discussed this with Friends of the ACT Library Service.

Mr Hargreaves: I do not.

MR MULCAHY: You do not have any standards in terms of the volume—

Mr Hargreaves: I would not apply a national measure to this. I am not interested in doing it.

MR MULCAHY: Nothing for local government. We are on our own.

Mr Hargreaves: I am more interested in what the people of the ACT think they need from their library service. We know, for example, that our mobile library service, which comprises two vans now, is particularly responsive and has been embraced by the people of the ACT. They think it is brilliant. There is state-of-the-art stuff in the vans. We are leading the country with that sort of stuff. It is not what you would get in, say, very large rural cities like Orange or Dubbo. Those sorts of mobile libraries are big vans with books in them; ours is not. Ours is disabled responsive. It has electronic access through the internet, DVD and materials for the blind. It has a complete collection in one vehicle. It is not doing us much good to compare ourselves with others.

MR MULCAHY: You talked about consulting people. The people from Friends of the ACT Library Service who spoke the other day are keen to have more input to the library. I know there is a limitation on how many groups you can consult and how often. Do you have regular scheduled meetings or do your officers set up a scheduled arrangement with the Friends of the ACT Library Service?

Mr Hargreaves: I had a meeting with Friends of the ACT Library Service two weeks ago. We discussed a range of things. Their own particular take on the city library has been played out in the media quite extensively over the last couple of years. They did make a very valid point to me—that is, as they are representative of a particular group, sometimes they are a bit more locally focused, like the friends of the Erindale library, and sometimes they are more widely focused. We have arranged to have discussions with them quite readily along the way, particularly about the city library and what we are going to do with the collections there. We need their advice on that.

They are very good for us to talk to, to reach out to the reading public. I have undertaken to have discussions with them, regularly if they need it. But, more importantly, as a development pops up, as a certain target point in the time tunnel pops up, we will be including those people in the process. I do take the point you were making by implication that we need to have relevant consultation with these people and that it needs to be focused. I think that particular group is a focused and relevant group and I have undertaken to deal with them.

THE CHAIR: There being no further questions on 1.1, we will move to 1.2. I will ask a question that is particularly topical today, minister, because it relates to Phillip oval. On page 238 of budget paper No 4, under the heading “Capital injections” and the subheading “2005-06 budget policy adjustments” there is a reference to a Phillip Oval refurbishment of \$1.7 million. We are going to be injecting \$1.7 million into Phillip Oval. I am curious to know what work is going to be carried out at Phillip Oval. I take into account that refurbishment of Phillip Oval has come up at previous hearings of estimates committees. I remember asking the Treasurer how much it would take to bring Phillip Oval up to a standard whereby AFL at a high level could be played there. His answer was “heaps”. I am curious to know what the \$1.7 million is going to be spent

on.

Mr Hargreaves: I congratulate the Treasurer on clarifying what “heaps” means. It means \$1.7 million. We need to understand in the context of Phillip Oval that it has not been a functioning oval for some time. The vandalism there has been totally unacceptable and nobody would suggest otherwise. But we need to understand that, in the context of disruption, it has not disrupted anything; it has just been a right royal pain.

I note that the Masters Group that operate out of there have not been paying rent, so we will be having a chat to them about that fairly shortly. The \$1.7 million work will involve the replacement of the obsolete irrigation system and re-establishment of the quality turf playing surface and the turf cricket wicket. We are talking about a substantial refurbishment of the actual playing surface. There is to be refurbishment of the main grandstand and change-room building, a secondary eastern change-room building and the former club building. Anybody who has had a good look at the eastern change room would think that there are better facilities in a phone box. We have needed to do this work for some time and this is an opportune time to do that.

There will also be refurbishment of the match lighting system. One of the reasons night games are not played at Manuka Oval is that the lights, firstly, impinge upon the people who live nearby and, secondly, impinge on the heritage nature of the oval. So, if we want to play night football here and attract the Kangaroos and other teams into town for night football, we have to have the lights up. We will be restoring the landscape surrounds, including the removal of hazardous seating, dilapidated signs, sheds and other hazards that are there. There will be the removal and trimming of suspect trees and overgrown screen plantings. Because it has been a derelict site for some time, mother nature has gone ape and we will be looking at that. We will be reconstructing the perimeter fence and the gates. The gates are pretty rotten, as evidenced by the ease with which people got into those premises last night and took to the place with a sledgehammer. So that needs to be addressed. Also, people would know that in one of the corners there is a beach volleyball court and we are going to be reconstructing it. That is what you get for \$1.7 million.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I understand Mr Seselja has a supplementary question on this issue.

MR SESELJA: Yes, just some clarification. Are you suggesting that the upgrade of the lights is with a view to bringing teams like the Kangaroos to play at Phillip Oval for night games?

MR HARGREAVES: What we are saying, Mr Seselja, is that without the lights we have not got a prayer of being in the bidding game.

MR SESELJA: The Treasurer seemed to be suggesting that there were no medium-term plans to bring anything other than local stuff to Phillip Oval.

Mr Hargreaves: That is quite right. It is pointless him even thinking about it unless those lights are there because we have no venue to attract these teams anyway. We need to remember that in the refurbishment of Phillip Oval we are providing a football facility for the future. That enables us to get in a game should we so decide. We have to

remember that the environment has to be right within the AFL commission for that conversation to occur. While ever we do not have facilities that are of such a standard to attract these first grade teams, we are not even in the conversation.

MR SESELJA: There might have been some confusion on my part. I think the Treasurer did say that it would not be until he retired. I guess he might retire sooner than we had expected.

Mr Hargreaves: It is a bit of a race between which one of them does that and whether or not Mr Mulcahy becomes Chief Minister. I am absolutely looking forward to the day when I see you in the leadership chair, Mr Mulcahy, and having at least one of your colleagues on the front bench with you.

THE CHAIR: Minister! Everybody has been doing very well. Keep it up. With some of the local competitions, would there be a demand to play night matches on their part?

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely. One of my visions is that we will be able to promote women's Australian rules football nationally to take place here in the ACT—it is a real wish. We have had some magnificent advances with the grand final now being played at Manuka Oval. If we can perform as well as we have over the last couple of years in the national competitions, then we will be able to attract the actual national championship to the ACT. That lasts over a two-day period and includes a couple of night matches. We cannot do that at the moment. If we are trying to advance the aspect of women's football, then we need to have those facilities available to us.

Additionally, of course, people do training at night-time. We do not have enough night training facilities available for the top-flight teams in this town. If, for example, the Weston Creek team decided to have that as their home ground, they would not have a training facility for that. The masters are the same. When the masters are gearing up for the competition at the end of the year, they need to have those sorts of facilities. We do not have them available to us.

DR FOSKEY: First of all, I need to check whether I can ask this question here. I am not clear where tree planting alongside roadways comes in. Does that come under roads and infrastructure or parks?

Mr Hargreaves: Outcome 1.4, Dr Foskey.

DR FOSKEY: Even if they are alongside roads.

Mr Hargreaves: Even if they are alongside roads; in fact, even if they are in a pot plant on the side of the road.

THE CHAIR: We will now move to outcome 1.2.

MS PORTER: Minister, you referred in your opening remarks to trees and slope stability and there is mention on page 166 of budget paper 3 of a slope stability safety program. Could you give the committee more information about that program? I am sorry I missed your explanation when you made your introductory remarks.

Mr Hargreaves: That is not a problem, Ms Porter; I am happy to talk about that issue. I might give you the information that I have and then ask Mr Zissler or Mr McNulty to expand on it for the benefit of members. We are talking about post-bushfire recovery in rural areas. The fires impacted significantly on the stability of road cuttings by destroying vegetation and ground cover in rural areas. Subsequent rain caused significant erosion of the denuded soils and that has led to soil slips and rock falls of the road surface into the table drains. Articles about those issues have appeared in the press in recent times.

Following those events, three roads were partly closed as a result of safety concerns about the stability of some of the batters for road users. These roads included Apollo Road, Paddy's River Road near Murray's Corner and Corrin Road, which was closed at the park boundary because of dangerous trees. Remedial works have been carried out on these roads, with Apollo Road and Paddy's River Road reopened. Since the initial slope stability works were carried out, other areas within our rural road network have been identified as having similar problems. Geotechnical engineers have been engaged to provide advice in relation to the following problem areas to which I referred earlier: Bendora Dam Road, Uriarra Crossing, Brindabella Road 1.1 kilometres uphill from Condor Creek, McDonald Hill, and Boboyan Road 800 metres south of the Glendale crossing.

Fitzs Hill has also been identified as an area of concern. People who have wandered over the road past the Namadgi visitor centre and headed off towards the park would have gone over Fitzs Hill. The geotechnical engineers have been engaged to provide advice but a report has not yet arrived. These geotechnical investigations have been undertaken to determine the extent and costs of appropriate remedial measures to stabilise the batters on these roads. The final reports have recommended a range of batter stability measures, such as shotcreting, rock anchoring, meshing, flattening batters, protective fencing, boulder removal, revegetation and other works. It is not just a case of propping them up and going away. I did not realise the extent of the technical expertise required in relation to these issues. I thought all that one did was put some chicken wire on the side and run away, but it is a little more complicated than that. I will ask Mr Zissler or Mr McNulty to expand on that. Mr McNulty, who is an expert on slope stability, will give you the benefit of his expertise.

THE CHAIR: Where do you go from there, Mr McNulty?

Mr McNulty: I am struggling. I do not know what else I can say to add to the minister's good answer.

Mr Hargreaves: Tell them what all those technical terms mean, Mr McNulty.

Mr McNulty: I will refer to some of the techniques to which the minister referred. Shotcreting basically involves spraying cement against the cutting to hold everything in place. Rock anchors involve drilling a hole, sticking a bolt in the hole, grouting that in place and stressing it on the rock wall. If you have ever gone down the Clyde Mountain you would have seen classic examples of meshing. They put steel mesh right over the rock face to hold the rocks in place. Sometimes they place fences at the bottom of slopes to secure smaller rocks. When a problem is not quite so bad you can cut back the slope so that it is less steep and stuff does not fall out or you can take out individual rock nests.

You can choose one of those techniques, depending upon individual situations. You use different techniques for very steep slopes from the techniques that you use for flatter slopes.

MR PRATT: I would like to return to cycle lanes, BP4, 212.

Mr Hargreaves: You love these lanes, don't you?

MR PRATT: I just love them. I would love them more if they were safer.

Mr Hargreaves: They are really quite safe.

MR PRATT: When the system was deployed on Northbourne Avenue the lanes were narrowed. The minister should correct me if I am wrong but, as a consequence of that, speed zones were reduced.

Mr Hargreaves: You are wrong.

MR PRATT: Do you anticipate that more zones will have their speeds reduced as you extend the system further?

Mr Hargreaves: There is an overall approach to road safety in relation to all these roads. If we change anything on those roads, for example, the configuration of the roads, or we put in a cycle lane, or we direct traffic volume onto a road from somewhere else, we would be doing that to try to eliminate rat-running on those roads. All manner of traffic calming measures are examined to establish the best way of doing these things. This is just part of that process. I know that the member is often in Tuggeranong, so I am sure he would be aware of the recent Gaunson Crescent rate-race over the hill. That was a 60-kilometre an hour rat-run but people did a bit more than that. Anyone travelling down Langdon Avenue or Gaunson Crescent will now come across a maze of roundabouts and raised platforms.

MR SESELJA: You can drive over those roundabouts.

Mr Hargreaves: You can, but if you drive over them too fast you will lose an axle or wreck your car completely. I am glad the member raised that issue. Since the introduction of those measures there has been an incredible reduction in the number of people using Langdon Avenue and Gaunson Crescent as a shortcut to Sulwood Drive.

There has been reference also to the introduction of speed limits on those roads. The cycle lanes were partly the reason for introducing those speed limits. We take into account total safety aspects on every road. For example, we consider whether the remaining width of a road still meets Australian standards and whether we need to adjust those widths. So we take into account the total package; it is not just cause and effect.

MR PRATT: Are we using Parramatta Road, Sydney, lane widths as the Australian standard benchmark?

Mr Hargreaves: No.

MR PRATT: We are getting pretty close to it.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, except that we do not have the same number of car yards on Northbourne Avenue as there are on Parramatta Road. We apply Australian standards to all roadworks in the ACT.

MR PRATT: Do you rule out the possibility of reducing speeds on other arterial routes as you roll out more on-road cycle lanes?

Mr Hargreaves: We will examine the safety of roads whenever a cyclepath is rolled out to ensure the safety of those who are using the roads, whether they be pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, car drivers, bus drivers or truck drivers. We will ensure, in the context of Australian road rules and design rules, that the roads, and the speeds that people travel on them, are safe.

MR PRATT: I refer to the safety issues we have heard about today. Where green lanes cross over car lane exits, what education or training is being given to motorists in this critical phase as they try to adapt to this new system where they have to share major arterial roads with cycles? What steps have been taken so far to educate drivers who, to me, do not seem to have much of an idea about how to cope with this new challenge?

Mr Hargreaves: I dispute the fact that motorists do not know how to cope with this new challenge. The member and I might have to disagree on this issue. I do not hold the same view. I believe that motorists in the ACT are probably the most responsible in the country. They do not have any difficulty at all in coping with this issue. Some people do because they do not like sharing the roads. But I can tell members that we have changed the way in which roads look on the ground so new drivers need to be taught how to do it. When people go for their licences they are provided with booklets showing the road configuration and their responsibilities in relation to intersections and other road users. I will get Mr McNulty to give members a more fulsome reply.

Mr McNulty: When we first introduced those green markings on the road you might recall that we ran a media campaign to educate people as to why they were there and how they were to be used.

MR PRATT: Was that campaign broad enough, given the concerns that are still being expressed to us?

Mr Hargreaves: In the context of giving the community information, I thought we put out heaps.

MR SESELJA: I have a few questions relating to page 239 of budget paper 4, relating to Fairbairn Avenue. The cost of the upgrade has gone from \$8 million in the 2004-05 budget to \$9.7 million in the 2005-06 budget.

Mr McNulty: When we took that project to the market, with the state of the construction market at the time, the tenders came back higher than the pre-tender estimate and we sought and obtained additional funding to construct the project.

Mr Hargreaves: We have experienced the same thing with the GDE. It is essentially the

price inflator that applies to the marketplace.

MR SESELJA: Yes, just not for dragways.

Mr Hargreaves: No. There is an amount of \$8 million in the base for that, which is \$8 million more than you guys put in.

MR SESELJA: Minister, has any concern been expressed to you by Campbell residents about the placement of roundabouts along Fairbairn Avenue and the access to Truscott and Creswell streets?

Mr Hargreaves: I have not received one letter in my office from anybody complaining about the works on Fairbairn Avenue.

MR MULCAHY: Do footpaths come within this budget output class?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Hargreaves: If you want them to be, Mr Mulcahy, they are.

MR MULCAHY: Terrific. Minister, I recall in January you issued a statement to the effect that \$4 million would be spent on improving footpaths in the suburban areas of Canberra. I can see in the budget papers the provision of about \$600,000 or more a year.

Mr Hargreaves: It is \$665,000 over one year.

MR MULCAHY: The forward projections for 2007-08 show the same amounts. What is the amount spent on footpath maintenance?

Mr Hargreaves: We spend about \$3 million a year on it, and the \$665,000 is in addition to that amount. I think that is the third time I have answered that question today.

MR MULCAHY: No, that question was not asked.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it was.

THE CHAIR: I refer to footpaths and to what you said this morning about ringing up anonymously. When I go for a walk, I am sometimes annoyed about the overhang from people's gardens. If I were to ring, would somebody be sent out?

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: Would they be asked to cut back that overhang?

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely. First we would determine whether the overhang is on our land. It may be from a tree that is in our nature reserve, in which case our rangers would arrange for it to be pruned. If we are talking about overhanging roses or fruit trees, we go to the occupants of that home, if it is a private residence, and require them to trim them back. If it is a public housing property, housing is requested to address the issue in the context of its maintenance program.

MR MULCAHY: You announced program work for the inner suburbs of Braddon, Turner and, I think, Lyneham and Deakin. Do you have programming this year to do work in Griffith, Forrest and Yarralumla, for instance, where there are a number of issues?

Mr Hargreaves: It is a rolling program. I have announced those areas that will receive specific treatment. Where a footpath is dangerous because of tree roots pushing it up or where previous bitumen patching has lifted and a hole remains or it is a result of weathering and the cement has cracked and sunk because of the traffic across it, we have implemented a range of initiatives to deal with those problems. The most brilliant initiative is our ability to grind down and even out those footpaths, as that repairs them instantly.

If someone in the suburb of Isaacs identifies a particular stretch of footpath that is cracked and that they consider to be dangerous for an elderly person to walk on, we will send inspectors out there pretty quickly to have a look at it. If it is a mere case of grinding, it will happen as a priority issue. I emphasise that if people believe a particular part of a footpath is dangerous, we will have it inspected quickly. If it is not as dangerous as people perceive, we can tell them that. If it is as dangerous as they perceive, we will fix it. Obviously, we contract a certain number of people to do that and we cannot fix everything in 15 minutes, but we will tell people when we can fix it.

MR MULCAHY: I understand that with some of these one-offs. In some of these suburbs where there are a number of problems such as those that I have mentioned, is it likely they will be looked at this fiscal year or in the coming fiscal year?

Mr Hargreaves: In the fullness of time.

MR MULCAHY: What is that period of time, minister?

Mr Hargreaves: When time is very full!

MR MULCAHY: That is not really an answer.

Mr Hargreaves: No, it is not.

MR MULCAHY: I am trying to find out what program the government has in place.

Mr Hargreaves: I cannot give you a list of every suburb in Canberra to show where everybody will appear on that list. The reason is that we identify them in a priority order. Those priorities change year by year. We have noticed that there have been changes, particularly in the context of the drought. That is as a result of two things. One is that there are dead trees around the place that we need to pay attention to and the second is the compacting of the ground because of the evaporation of moisture, which has led to an increase in the number of cracks reported to us. We look at the number of reports we have in the suburbs and we look at the nature of them and we structure that. In the next financial year, it is quite possible that we will have different priorities than we did at the start of this one.

MR MULCAHY: In relation to the tree issue, do you have any figures indicating costs that have been incurred in replacing dead trees in urban areas as a consequence of the drought?

Mr Hargreaves: We received supplementary funding this year of \$500,000 to remove dead trees and we have implemented a tree replanting program. I could probably get you a cost on that. One of the things we are looking at is whether to replace those trees with the type of tree that was there before. One of the things we consider is whether the species of trees we want to replace them with are more drought resistant than the ones that fell over. We also have to have regard to the heritage ambience of a suburb. For example, we would not tear-arse around in the lower levels of the suburbs of Forrest and Red Hill, where the whole ambience of the suburb is due to its exotic European trees, and start slapping in trees that are drought resistant and out of context. We need to see where we can get trees that are sympathetic to that environment, and our arborists are looking at this, and put those back when we remove the dead trees.

We do have a significant tree planting program. I will just give you some details that may be of some assistance. Five contracts have been let for the removal of 2,826 trees involving 14 separate job lots. The prices for the variations to the existing five contracts involving an additional 996 trees have been sought. That process closed on 13 May, which was just under a week ago. All 3,822 trees will be removed by 30 June of this year. We have deployed additional resources in CityScape Services to deal with the outstanding tree-related public inquiries, because we are getting heaps of people ringing in to say that a tree is dead. That is not always the case but it is often the case, so we need to get a handle on that.

Our tree management staff have started to compile a list of additional trees that need to be removed in the coming financial year and we have allocated in this budget another half a million dollars for this work. On 27 April we deployed additional resources, at a cost of \$6,000 a day, of six extra staff, an extra truck and a woodchipper, another travel tower and driver for four days and three travel towers with drivers for two days, so you can see that the drought has had an incredible effect.

But I need to put on the record something that is not known by the community out there about these trees. Remember that once there were no trees here, just sheep grazing. What was it that somebody once said? That this was a long sheep station gone to waste, or something along those lines. In the early days European trees were planted in the suburbs of Red Hill, Manuka and Forrest and then later in the suburbs of Tuggeranong and Belconnen we put in eucalypts. Eucalypts have an age of about 70 and then they start to die through old age. European and exotic trees have a life of about 50 years. What is happening in Canberra at the moment, because of its age, is that we are getting to the stage where the trees are dying naturally anyway, but that process has been sped up because of the drought for both of those species.

When we start trimming them, it is something like \$700 a hit, up to a certain level. As trees age they naturally enough get taller. When a eucalypt is around 50 years old, tree surgeons cannot just shimmy up the tree and have a go; they need a cherry picker or a tower to get up there. That increases the cost of those trimmings to \$1,400 a hit. So with the trees dying off and requiring considerably more maintenance now due to their age and the drought, the cost per tree has almost doubled. The people in the ACT do not

understand because, when they see trees dying, they think it is just the drought. It is not just the drought. Even if the drought broke tomorrow, we would still find significant numbers of exotics and natives dying.

MR MULCAHY: Okay, last question on roads. I have had raised with me the issue of the roadwork signage that applies in different areas. The complaint is that it is fairly loosely applied in that hessian bags are thrown over roadwork signs when areas are not under construction. It seems hit and miss. I was amazed to learn that there are instructive courses conducted in Canberra on how to use a stop and go sign, a two-day course.

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely necessary, too.

MR MULCAHY: Yes, apparently. Is any regard given to the manner in which these zones are announced or policed, because I think people are frustrated by the fact that there are often signs there with low limits and nothing actually going on.

Mr Hargreaves: My experience with roadworks interstate suggests that our blokes are doing quite a good job, a great job. I will get Mr McNulty to explain why it is necessary to have a two-day course, but really you have to talk about liability, road safety and all those sorts of things. It is not a case of turning a lollipop around. With respect to whether it does or does not look sloppy, I do not think we are any better or any worse than anywhere else in the country. I do not propose to tell the guys to iron their overalls or make sure they put hospital corners on the hessian bags chucked over the signs. Mr McNulty can give you some more detail.

Mr McNulty: There are considerable occupational health and safety issues around heavy traffic management around roadworks. Over the last couple of years we have had significant interaction with WorkCover about the nature of those arrangements. Our arrangements have to comply with the Australian standards, again, the same as everything else we do. On the question about some jobs where the speed signs are covered up at night and on others they are not, that often relates to the nature of the work, what is happening on the site and the safety conditions even though work is not going on. That can explain why at some sites signs are covered up and at others they are not.

MR SESELJA: I have a follow-up on the footpath question. I have not had a briefing on this. Some constituents have raised it with me but it just occurred to me to raise it with you now. I am happy for you to take it on notice. I guess it goes to the goals of the sustainable transport plan. You would be aware that 20,000 or 30,000 people work around the Woden town centre.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, a hell of a lot more than in the Tuggeranong town centre, and we will talk about that later.

MR SESELJA: The sustainable transport plan is obviously about encouraging people to take alternative transport and one of those is walking. I forget the name of the road, but the link between Weston and Lyons that goes underneath the parkway is not well serviced by footpaths. Are there any plans to extend footpaths to that area?

Mr Hargreaves: Not at this point, there isn't, but I'm grateful for the information and

I'll get the department to look into it.

MR SESELJA: I would appreciate that.

Mr Hargreaves: I would appreciate it if you would drop us an email about that and I will have them brief you on it.

MR SESELJA: I'll certainly do that, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Pratt, you had a question on 1.2, road safety?

MR PRATT: Yes. Minister, I understand that there are some restricted licence holders under the age of 16.

Mr Hargreaves: Indeed there are; 25 of them.

MR PRATT: For what purposes or in what circumstances do they have those?

Mr Hargreaves: A range of purposes. Mr Zissler can give you some more detail on this. Because of that incident we saw the other day, which I was oblivious to, as you were, I sought a briefing and Mr Zissler was able to allay any fears I had. I will get him to allay yours.

Mr Zissler: We currently have 25 under-age licence holders. They are for a variety of reasons and I cannot discuss each individual case. The application process is fairly simple: it has to be sponsored in writing by a parent or guardian to say that there is a need. That need has to be supported by a place of employment. That would be about working hours and about it being the only mode of travel. It can be about medical conditions. I know of one person who needs to go for regular dialysis at certain times of the day, or it could be an elite athlete who needs to go for special training. It needs two letters and we review those very closely. We make sure that they cannot use public transport and that all reasons cited are correct and reasonable. They have to undertake all the normal driving licence requirements, sit the test and pass the test. It is really just about being on a P-plate earlier and, of course, once they're 17 they revert to normal driving standards.

MR PRATT: Pretty unusual.

Mr Zissler: I should point out that this is not unusual across the rest of Australia.

MR PRATT: Okay. That answered my second question there. How young?

Mr Zissler: They need to be 16.

MR PRATT: Is 16 the absolute minimum?

Mr Zissler: Yes, and they are very rare. You've got to remember that we have 245,000 licence holders in the ACT, so 25 is a very small number.

MR PRATT: Minister, I have been told that a footpath in Tasmania Circuit, Forrest was

reported by a constituent as broken back in September 2004 and nothing was done about it, but suddenly the wrong part of that street was repaired in March 2005 and they are still waiting. That's just one example, and I have four more like it, of where you're looking at a 12-month turnaround at least for some significantly dangerous footpath work. What is the turnaround? What is the standard?

Mr Hargreaves: As I indicated to Mr Mulcahy just a moment ago, in the normal course of events we send somebody out within a couple of days to have a look and see whether the path that has been reported to be dangerous is so. If it is so, we schedule the work to get it fixed. No doubt, with the thousands of kilometres that we have in this town of cyclepaths, we can all look around and find an instance where something hasn't been successfully attended to. We need to encourage the members of the community to contact Roads ACT, particularly through Canberra Connect, and tell us about those things. If they are not satisfied in a specific instance, we will deal with those as specific instances and use them to raise the game.

I cannot give you the details on a specific part of a specific street in a specific suburb in the context of these estimates and I would not even try. I can assure you and the committee that we don't regard these things lightly. When you say it can wait 12 months, it is not September 2005, Mr Pratt, it's actually May. I do accept that in some instances the wait is too long but in those specific instances people can contact my office, your office or the department directly. If they are not receiving the service, and we believe it is dangerous, there will be instant action.

MR PRATT: In these cases for Forrest and Lyons, the time ranges from eight to 15 months. Is that unusual?

Mr Hargreaves: Without having a photograph of those instances in front of us, I cannot determine whether our people have gone out there and determined that it was in fact as dangerous as portrayed. I do not doubt for a moment that the perception of those people using those paths is that it is dangerous. The question is whether it is dangerous according to standards and requiring instant attention. Without the specific detail, I cannot respond to you. But I am quite happy, if Mr Pratt wants to advise us of those particular localities, to have the department look at it and fix it.

MR PRATT: I have already in some cases, but I will certainly take it up.

Mr Hargreaves: In that case it's a moot point, isn't it?

THE CHAIR: Let us move to 1.3, waste and recycling.

DR FOSKEY: Minister, could you give us some advice on how we are going towards meeting the commitment of no waste by 2010?

Mr Hargreaves: The short answer is: gang busters. We are actually flogging down the path of no waste achievement in our Canberra community at a rate of knots. I will get Mr McNulty to give you some numbers in a minute because you will see by these numbers that it is remarkable. We need, though, to consider that there are a number of elements to this. There is the domestic approach to waste recycling and not sending waste to landfill and there is the business approach. The business approach can be the

construction industry, the hospitality industry or any number of ways that business generates waste. We are having significant success within the domestic market but not as much success within the business market, but there are strategies that are being kicked off. I am doing something next Monday in terms of promoting that. Some of the facilities that we have are rather incredible and I am happy to arrange for people to go and have a look at them.

The recycling plant at Hume, for example, is actually going gang busters. It is a fantastic recycling facility. But I need to put to you the hypothesis that I recently put to an international workshop or conference—I am not sure what it was called—in Narrabundah about the approach to recycling and zero waste. We need to understand that there will never be a time in our lives when there will be no—zero, zip, diddly-squat—waste generated. There will always be some in transit and there will always be some residue. So any talk about no waste by 2010 does not equate to the figure zero.

We are facing an international challenge, and this was picked up at the meeting in Narrabundah, as to what figure will constitute no waste—in other words, what is always going to be in transit. For example, if we talk about metal recycling—say, crushing cars and turning them into something else—there will always be some on the back of a truck or in a yard somewhere waiting to be picked up. So we need to understand what that level is going to be. My instinct tells me that it will be between three and five per cent. If, by the end of 2010, we have achieved a five per cent waste, I think we will have achieved that target. In fact, the conversations that occurred at that particular venue accepted the fact that no waste did not mean zero, it meant another number, but it is between three and five per cent.

What we have done is we have put down the challenge to the international community. Some people in England and America, particularly the St Vincent's people in America, are doing some brilliant things, and we hope to be jumping on that bandwagon. They have all accepted that the figure will be between three and five. We need to have an internationally recognised number so that when we talk we are all singing off the same hymn sheet, because to be able to say at any point in time that it is zero is just not on. I will get Mr McNulty to give you the numbers because the numbers are startling.

Mr McNulty: In the 2003-04 annual report, we reported a 70 per cent diversion of waste to local landfill, and the estimated target for this year is 73 per cent.

DR FOSKEY: Okay. The Commissioner for the Environment nonetheless was not satisfied in his/her 2003-04 annual report that the recommendations from progress towards no waste by 2010 had been satisfactorily implemented. Could you provide, on notice, an outline of your response to the Commissioner for the Environment's recommendations?

Mr Hargreaves: Was that in the Commissioner for the Environment's report to the Assembly?

DR FOSKEY: In the 2003-04 annual report.

Mr Hargreaves: We will have to take it on notice and have a bit of a look at it. Do you want our response to the totality of that report or to specific areas?

DR FOSKEY: No, just simply to what his/her recommendations were in respect of progress towards no waste.

Mr Hargreaves: I would like to do that, but I would also like to remind members of the committee that that was the 2003-04 financial year and, in fact, we are only six weeks away from the end of the 2004-05 financial year. So, within the context of achievement, we are talking about giving you a response to something that is 12 months old which refers to something 12 months older than that and we are, in fact, 12 months further down the track of bringing the community with us. What I would like to do, with your leave, is to answer the question you have asked—I am quite happy to do that—but also indicate to you the developments that have occurred within the last 11½ months so that you can see a movement.

DR FOSKEY: Thanks. I have visited the Hume centre and I am obviously a very strong supporter of it, but I would like it to be better. Have you had any approaches from ANU Green to work on some green waste projects together, particularly in relation to restaurants and food production places in the Civic city centre?

Mr Hargreaves: I have not. However, when I talk about business waste recycling, the green waste, the consumables, is one of the areas that we are particularly concerned about, not only the cardboard boxes and things like that that restaurants and the hospitality industry generate but also the foodstuffs and how we separate those foodstuffs. That is one of the challenges that ACT NOWaste is addressing at the moment. You might recall we had a trial of a third bin in Chifley a couple of years back—partially successful, partially a failure. We are having a look at technologies to do that. One of the difficulties we experience, as you will appreciate, is with separating the waste. Getting the people to separate it at source is a difficulty that we experience, and that is the conversation I will be having with business in the next few weeks.

DR FOSKEY: I think the ANU Green proposal had that pretty well sorted out and it did relate strictly to restaurant refuse after food preparation, which is totally food related. I would like to know that that sort of proposal would be considered positively, because it is a cost effective way of working.

Mr Hargreaves: I can give you the assurance that I am not going to give you any assurance that any proposal will be regarded positively until I have seen it, but I will give you this undertaking: any idea by anybody in this community to reduce waste and to encourage recycling and reuse will be considered very seriously by NOWaste.

MR SESELJA: Just a quick follow on in relation to NOWaste. I think the projected figures on page 228 of budget paper 4 show a steady increase in the percentage of recovered waste up to about 77 per cent in 2006-07, which is a good increase. I applaud the no waste strategy but, based on those kinds of projections, it is very unlikely we will get to the figures you were referring to of three to five per cent before 2010, if that's the accepted standard of NOWaste. Will something be done to accelerate that over the last few years or are we just likely not to make that?

Mr Hargreaves: No, we're not. I take your point, Mr Seselja. What we're seeing, as I mentioned a bit earlier, is a dramatic uptake on the part of domestic waste recycling and

reuse. It's been great. We have some challenges with multiunit complexes that we're trying to resolve. I believe that that achievement of 77 per cent—73 per cent at the moment—would be an incredibly good performance. You'll notice if you have a look at that graph on page 228 that it takes a rather steep upward movement. In our view the reason it is not even steeper is the reluctance of business to employ recycle and reuse techniques. One of the reasons they will be reluctant, and it's a legitimate reason for business, is that if reuse and recycling are costing them money they're not going to do it, and I understand that.

Our task is to get them to understand that, in the global economy of the ACT, the reuse and recycling of materials out of business—whether it be the hospitality industry through packaging or consumables or whether it be building products like steel reinforcing, cement, or whatever you like—can earn money. We can create jobs in that. Where once we used to dump concrete and broken up roads, we now recycle the material, and that has created an industry of its own. We need to get the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, business leaders in that area, to understand that there is no cost, which it can almost be. If done properly, it is at nil cost to the business. When they come on board, you'll find this will go to a steep upward swing.

Our challenge is to maintain the momentum in the domestic market through educating the kids. You might remember the effect the kids had on the no smoking campaign. They were the ones that got it down by refusing to allow people to smoke in cars and all that sort of stuff. We're employing exactly the same thing in the schools. If we can get the same commitment out of the commercial sector to this program as we've got out of the domestic sector, we will be away. The other thing is that it's a double-sided thing: we have to have the businesses here in the ACT to take that stuff and process it. We are exploring ways to attract businesses to the ACT to do that processing or arrange for contracts interstate to pick the stuff up. Does that answer your question? We are heading along down here.

MR SESELJA: It does answer my question. You talked about education. The targeting of the recent no waste ads seems fairly general, saying to people that recycling is a good thing. Most people in the community would accept that. How is that being targeted?

Mr Hargreaves: It has only just been hit. When we did the piloting of it, it was received very well. We don't need to worry about the people who are committed to recycling and reuse. What we want to do is have it made into habit. We want to take away people's complacency and the "who cares" attitude. We want people to do it deliberately when they actually create the waste themselves. We do buy a lot of stuff we don't really need in this town, and the packaging is pretty ordinary. If we can do the sorting at source, at the household, we can recycle the stuff a hell of a lot better.

I must put on the record that when I went out to what's called the "Murph" at the Hume facility the people out there were so committed to recycling and sorting the stuff into recycling things that I was rather amazed. Maybe it was my own prejudice but I would have thought that the thinking public would just do that, and then I made the mistake of thinking that the thinking public was restricted to white-collar workers and it isn't. When I went out there and saw these guys doing their sorting, and they were sorting materials coming through the conveyor belt faster than most people can think, I spoke to them and it wasn't just a job for these guys where they could get filthy and get paid a lot of money.

They were committed to the process that they were involved in and they spoke to me in particularly eloquent language about how the average household can do this stuff. These ads are trying to target the complacency of people. We will see a measure of it when and if this graph takes another upward swing a little later, and we sincerely hope it will.

MR SESELJA: Are you able to give us the figures on the costs of that advertising campaign, the breakdown?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, but I'll have to take the question on notice, because it's a contract thing. But we will quite happily give them to you.

MR SESELJA: Thanks very much.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, I'm advised that the contract for that one that Mr Seselja was looking for was for \$110,000 to produce and place it, and \$50,000, I think, for air time. So, in round figures, \$160,000.

MS PORTER: Does that include the information booklet that came in the mail?

Mr Hargreaves: The booklet was \$60,000, which included production and distribution costs.

MS PORTER: I was going to make a suggestion for the future around that booklet. You mentioned trying to educate the children and then the children educating the parents and you were talking—

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it's in the schools.

MS PORTER: No, I was just thinking about the booklet that maybe you'd like next time round to make it a comic.

Mr Hargreaves: That's worthy. We'll think about that; thank you very much for that.

MS PORTER: Then the young people will read it and talk to their parents about the fact that they think that their mums should do this.

Mr Hargreaves: We'll take that suggestion on board. Thanks for that.

MS PORTER: It would be just as cheap, I would think, as the booklet that came out?

Mr Hargreaves: We have a range of strategies around the schools and that sort of stuff, and one of the things we do in the schools is to talk about the subject in the language, the vernacular, that the kids use; so that's an extension of that approach.

THE CHAIR: I have an ongoing interest in this area. I've heard briefings from ACT NOWaste on a few occasions and I know that we're looking towards being able to have a one bin system. I know there have been discussions about taking the divider out of the recycling bin because people like to separate things and the issues around that, people feel like they're making a contribution. How far have we got with that issue of having one bin and being able to extract the recyclables from the general waste stream

and also dealing with the putrescible waste?

Mr Hargreaves: At this stage of the game, we don't have the technology to separate putrescible waste from the other stuff, so we will be a two-bin society for some time yet. It is our desire that with emerging technology we will be able to move to the one bin. You would recall that the yellow-lidded bin was divided into two lots—paper and others. You don't need that now because, when it is dumped at the facility at Hume, the waste is put on a conveyor belt and, through a combination of technology and human speed, eye/hand coordination, the different things are separated. One of the things that absolutely stunned me was the reverse magnet for aluminium cans. It goes flogging along the conveyor belt with everything else and everything else drops off the belt and the aluminium cans come off at about four kilometres an hour and go into a separate bin—bam, done, thanks for coming.

We are keeping abreast of this technology as best we can but we are looking at those sorts of partnerships to embrace the technology. The “Murph” is a partnership between Thiess and us. I have to pay credit to NOWaste because, when they first put out no waste by 2010, I thought they had a snowflake's hope of getting there. I am convinced now that we can get there as long as we can agree on the definition.

THE CHAIR: What percentage of the waste stream going to landfill is putrescible waste?

Mr Hargreaves: We do not separate that out.

Mr Zissler: We cannot separate it out.

Mr Hargreaves: Almost 100 per cent of the putrescible waste, but not all of it because some of it sticks to the can!

THE CHAIR: I will rephrase that question. Of the waste stream, if you were to combine the recyclables and the general waste to landfill stream, what percentage would be going to landfill?

Mr Hargreaves: I will ask Mr Horsey, the guru behind ACT NOWaste, to join us at the table and will explain to you our attack on putrescible waste. I acknowledge the absence of Mrs Dunne, who usually raises these questions.

THE CHAIR: Yes, and I do as well, but I welcome Mr Horsey to the table.

Mr Horsey: I think it is important to distinguish that the intention of your question is to look at organic reprocessing. Putrescible waste really is a mixed waste component. We, apart from a waste inventory in 1997, do not have any firm data on what that organic composition is. We do know we process 180,000 tonnes of green waste per year at below \$5 a tonne, which is probably a national benchmark for that green waste processing. As to the remaining organics, which are essentially the food waste and a residual green waste that comes in in the mix, we are unsure of the exact percentage of that composition in the mixed waste stream of the 208,000 tonnes going to landfill.

What we do know is that we can drive some more green waste out of that waste stream

over to the current garden waste processing operations and that at some point in time, when the technologies become feasible and viable and a bit more certain, we can look at a processing plant for the organics. I will say that we are not investigating or trying to pursue a single bin system per se. The rationale behind that is that to obtain the resource value in the paper, cardboard, steel and aluminium, those types of products, it is best to separate those products and get them out.

We use a range of tools from pricing mechanisms, education strategies and working cooperatively with business and government sectors to try to achieve that. We have a lot of work to do there to further progress that work. On the organics bin that we trialled, we found that, whilst we get a good separation there and there are low contamination rates, there is still about 30 per cent contamination in the waste stream of the organics, which would essentially mean you would still need a processing plant for it. Effectively, the collection system you would have for the third bin becomes somewhat superfluous in terms of expenditure when you should have a plant to do that.

Effectively, we will still have the yellow-top recycling bin with a garbage bin for the households. The business and government waste that comes out of the ACT would then go to some sort of processing plant. For those people that have not done the right thing by taking up recycling, we would put that residual recyclable out of that mixed waste stream, process the organic, stabilise that and use that organic product. As the minister has outlined, we believe there would be about a five per cent residual that would still require to go to landfill, but that would be a stabilised product.

THE CHAIR: I appreciate that. I think it is well and truly on the record that I am a resident of Chifley and was a big supporter of the bio bins. Not so my husband. I appreciate that there was a contamination rate that actually increased towards the end of the trial as people became slacker about it and started forgetting what it was they had been told at the beginning. But I know also that, at places like the Canberra show and through schools, you will do stuff on composting and worm farming. I would be interested, and I am happy for you to take this on notice and give me back the figures, in the numbers of workshops that you have done in the last year on composting and worm farming.

Mr Hargreaves: We will take that on notice, Madam Chair. We will go back and check the records.

THE CHAIR: That is great. Mr Mulcahy, do you wish to go to the area that you wanted to raise before?

MR MULCAHY: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I do not want to stop you. I am just keeping in mind how long it will take. Will we do it now or after?

MR MULCAHY: I have only four or five questions. It should not take too long.

THE CHAIR: Four or five questions will take longer than four minutes, but I am happy to have a later afternoon tea if everybody else is happy to do that.

MR MULCAHY: There may be short answers from the minister.

Mr Hargreaves: Not necessarily.

MR SESELJA: I am happy to have a later afternoon tea.

THE CHAIR: All right. Let us get it done, then.

MR MULCAHY: Thank you. Minister, I did signal to you that I had some questions in relation to the Parkwood estate, which is, as you well know, managed by NOWaste under your department. Minister, could you confirm for me that NOWaste has no intention to remove any tenants or any particular group of tenants from the Parkwood estate? Related to that, did you or any officials from your department at a meeting of all the tenants of Parkwood estate tell them that there was no agenda to remove non-recycling tenants from the estate?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, those conversations are ongoing and I do not intend to pursue them in this forum.

MR MULCAHY: You are not pursuing them. I am the one pursuing them, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: You can pursue them, but I am not following you.

MR MULCAHY: All right. I will ask a related question, which I suspect you will not answer. Why did the contracts manager for NOWaste write to the Government Solicitor's Office on 10 June 2004 stating that NOWaste was looking to develop mechanisms and assessment strategies—and I use that officer's own words—to “weed out industries that are not aligned with the no waste strategy”? Further, why does a departmental document titled “Parkwood Road recycling estate review of management arrangements” dated 18 December 2003 specify that the department will, and again I quote directly, “establish mechanisms/frameworks to weed out non-contributors”? I am just wondering which of these business people—and some of them were here this morning—many of which have been operating for more than 25 years, are the weeds that are going to be weeded out under this arrangement.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, firstly I take exception to your implication that when we are talking about a weeding out process we are talking about people being that way. That is insulting. That is totally incorrect and I reject it outright. Furthermore, it is not unusual practice for a department to explore a range of options with a range of its advisory agencies, such as the Government Solicitor's Office, on any idea it may have at all. I do not see anything difficult about that at all.

I have already indicated to you that I do not propose, in the course of this particular estimates hearing, to continue a discussion that is, in my view, an ongoing dialogue between people at Belconnen. It is not budget related. It is not, in my view, appropriate that the estimates committee be seen as a vehicle to interfere with a negotiation process.

MR MULCAHY: Minister, let me just say two things. I think you know as well as I, if not better, that estimates are customarily a far-reaching process looking at the administration of government.

Mr Hargreaves: I am sorry. You will have to start again, Mr Mulcahy. I was a bit distracted.

MR MULCAHY: The estimates process, minister, as you know, is a reasonably far reaching and free examination of the efficient management of the territory's resources by government agencies in the budgetary process. So I think it is quite appropriate to pursue these questions. The second matter I would raise is that the term that you took great exception to, about weeding out industries, was in fact extracted from an email sent from Mr O'Connell to Jock Campbell and copied to Mr Horsey on 10 June. These documents were produced under freedom of information, as you know.

Mr Hargreaves: I did not take exception to the phrase "to weed out", Mr Mulcahy. I took exception to you saying that we were describing these people as weeds. That was your interpretation of it. If you examine the *Hansard*, I think you will find you will be a little bit embarrassed, and I suggest you reconsider your position on that. An examination of the *Hansard* will reveal what I am telling you is correct. Now, I do not propose—I have never done this; in fact, when on your side of the chamber I never sought to do this—to interfere in or to examine the complexities of a negotiating process midstream. I am not going to do that. I am just not going to do that.

MR MULCAHY: I am not asking you to discuss an individual commercial arrangement that may be subject to negotiation. It is the collective situation that troubles me. That leads me to the next issue, as to whether the tenants at Parkwood have expressed concerns about the terms of their licensing agreements and whether or not it is correct that they were informed that the license agreement offered was a standard territory agreement for this type of arrangement, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, I repeat the answer I have given to you before. There are ongoing discussions with people at that particular estate and I do not propose to engage in discussion on those negotiations in the course of this committee.

MR MULCAHY: Again, minister, for the record—

Mr Hargreaves: We can do this for another half an hour, if you like.

MR MULCAHY: If you maintain that the contract is only a standard form of government agreement, which I believe is being put forward, I am wondering why your contracts manager wrote to the Government Solicitor's Office on 10 June in fact requesting that they prepare an agreement that would give the territory far greater rights, including, and again I quote, "an eviction clause that gives the territory more rights in the event of default, especially non-payment of fees, not arranging insurances required and not maintaining the property in a proper manner". Minister, this does not suggest that your people are operating with standard agreement. Rather, they are looking to a way of tightening the noose on some of these businesses.

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, using emotive language like "tightening the noose" on people, suggesting certain motivation by officers through your interpretation of documents, is a contest that I am not going to indulge in. I will just treat all of those implications, all of those suggestions, with the contempt that they are due.

MR MULCAHY: Can I ask you a final question, minister? Will you give these small businesses leases that would give them some degree of certainty in which to operate their businesses? Is that at least something that you can tell the committee you will do through your ministerial role?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, I do not know how many ways I can describe the colour black to you or the colour white. I am not going to discuss this particular issue in the middle of a negotiation or a conversation with those people that my department quite rightly is engaged in. Once those conclusions have been reached, that is a time when we can have those conversations, not in the middle of it.

I am not going to have interference by the shadow treasurer into an issue that is currently being engaged in between my officers and a group of people. I am not going to have that seen as undue influence, which is what you are doing. I reject your actions in this regard. I am not going to engage in discussion in the middle of these negotiations. We can have a chat when it is concluded, if you like. I am sorry about this. The conversation is between the government and these people. You are not included in the loop.

MR MULCAHY: Chair, I think the record will show my concerns. To say that the estimates committee is not included in the loop—

Mr Hargreaves: No, I did not, Mr Mulcahy. I said you are not.

THE CHAIR: Order! Order!

MR MULCAHY: Excuse me. I am finishing. It is a matter of fairly grave concern and will be, I think, to most members of the committee and the Assembly.

Mr Hargreaves: Bring it on.

THE CHAIR: I think there have been unnecessary comments from both parties. Can I say that I have listened to this issue? Mr Mulcahy, while you are correct that the estimates committee does look at just more than the budget numbers and the budget papers per se, that does not mean that we go into discussion about contract negotiations. I believe that the minister is quite correct in the answer he has given you on that.

MR PRATT: Chair, can I ask a supplementary of the minister on this issue?

THE CHAIR: No, you may not, Mr Pratt.

MR SESELJA: Why not? Why can't he ask a supplementary?

MR PRATT: Why can't I do that? Because of time? If that is the case, can I ask it when we return from afternoon tea? Please. Pretty please.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, I have no objection to finalising this matter before we have afternoon tea at your pleasure.

THE CHAIR: All right, Mr Pratt. Make it quick.

MR PRATT: Minister, in the spirit of what this committee is all about, going back to the document quoted by Mr Mulcahy, which was received through the FOI process, do you support the sentiment of the statement made in that “to weed out the industries that are not aligned with the no waste strategy”? Do you support the sentiment of that statement? Do you think that people involved in this have a balanced and professional approach to how they assess their capabilities?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Pratt, I have been in this Assembly for—

THE CHAIR: Minister! Mr Pratt, that is really taking it beyond the pale. It is not helpful.

MR PRATT: Why, chair?

MR SESELJA: He is asking a fairly general question, whether he supports those sentiments.

MR PRATT: Chair, can you please explain why that is taking it beyond the pale?

MR SESELJA: Because the minister does not like it and she does not like it.

MR PRATT: We are talking here about governance.

THE CHAIR: All right. Before you do, minister, I point this out: I made the comment that, while the estimates committee was wide ranging in its questioning, it did not go to negotiations that are taking place at the time. I think you have gone straight back to the issue. You have not actually developed the issue any further, Mr Pratt.

MR PRATT: I refute that, chair.

THE CHAIR: Order, Mr Pratt!

Mr Hargreaves: Thanks very much, Madam Chair. Two quick points on it. Firstly, Mr Pratt has been in this place now for 3½ years. I have been here for seven. We have not agreed on his interpretation of sentiment, and I do not think we ever will. I do not propose to interpret letters written by my department or me for the benefit of a fishing trip by Mr Pratt.

MR PRATT: They work for you, minister.

THE CHAIR: Order, Mr Pratt!

Mr Hargreaves: The second thing is that the government is 110 per cent behind the no waste strategy.

MR PRATT: That does not answer the—

THE CHAIR: Order, Mr Pratt!

MR PRATT: It does not answer the question, chair.

Mr Hargreaves: Get used to it.

THE CHAIR: Maybe not in the way you would like.

MR PRATT: I am used to it, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: I do not know why you keep trying, then.

THE CHAIR: I think it might be a good time to break for afternoon tea.

DR FOSKEY: Can I propose that we move on to the next output after afternoon tea?

THE CHAIR: I am happy if nobody else has any further questions on 1.3?

DR FOSKEY: I would like to move on whether they do or not, because we have got an awful lot more to do.

THE CHAIR: Yes, we do.

MR SESELJA: We have only two more output classes.

THE CHAIR: No, we have four output classes because we have forestry in there as well.

Meeting adjourned from 3.39 to 3.56 pm.

THE CHAIR: Welcome back. We are now on output class 1.4, which relates to Canberra Urban Parks and Places. Mr Stefaniak tells me that he has five questions. I do not know whether I am going to allow him to ask that many questions. It depends on whether we can get through them in time. I might allow him to ask one or two of them to start off with and see if we can dispose of the issue.

MR STEFANIAK: Thank you, chair. Minister, in relation to sportsgrounds, there is a reference on page 233 of BP4 to customer satisfaction with sportsgrounds and ovals being at 92 per cent. How did you arrive at that figure? At present I am getting lots of complaints about the number of sportsgrounds that are closed because of the drought and the fact that 40 hectares of category 4 ovals went as of some time last year, I think, and that 57 hectares of category 3 ovals are not being looked after. We are seeing the impact that that is having in terms of some clubs having difficulty with training on sportsgrounds, having to double up with others, and there seems to be a real problem in terms of the availability of sportsgrounds because of the drought. How did you arrive at that 92 per cent?

Mr Hargreaves: I will get the officers to explain the process. You probably know the process anyway, but we will do it for the record. Firstly, how many complaints do you reckon you have received? Fifty?

MR STEFANIAK: Probably more than that.

Mr Hargreaves: Let's double it; let's say 100. I have not had that many sent to my office. I would have had 10 to 20 perhaps. Out of a population of 330,000, it is pretty indicative of the fact that the people who are upset about it enough to make a complaint are a bit in the minority. People understand in Canberra that the drought is the villain here. It isn't that the government or the mysterious, mythical and fickle "they" have to fix it. They know that we have had to have these water restrictions and they know that the government will not ask them to undergo level 3 or level 2 water restrictions and then not apply them to itself. You talk about sportsgrounds. The fountains are the same. We have a fountain out the front of this place. Somebody said to me today, "Why don't you turn it on as it will not evaporate much? They are on in Sydney and they are on level 2." The answer is that we will not ask the community to shoulder more pain than we will ourselves.

MR STEFANIAK: I have had no-one from the community tell me that they would not be prepared to use a little less water if it meant watering sportsgrounds.

Mr Hargreaves: Sorry, could you just say that bit again.

MR STEFANIAK: I have had people say that they would be more than happy to use a little less water if it meant that these category 3 grounds—let's leave out the category 4 grounds because they are low maintenance ovals; that is fair enough—which are used for seniors' training and a lot of junior sport could be watered. People have got no problem with maybe you tweaking the restrictions so that they would use a little bit less because it would mean thousands of kids could use those ovals.

Also, you are well aware of the views of experts like Keith McIntyre, who designed the in-ground watering system and who reckons that for an extra five per cent of outdoor watering with stage 3 restrictions you could water all those category 3 ovals. I have since seen some evidence, which you are probably aware of because I think I have indicated it to you, that he is probably being pessimistic and you could probably get away with watering those category 3 grounds even less than Keith McIntyre suggests and still keep them bubbling along, together with utilising better grasses, such as couch grass, which use less water.

I appreciate that we are in a drought and, obviously, I would have no dramas if we were under, say, category 5. But, given that we fluctuate between categories 2 and 3 and we have a fair bit of expert opinion saying that for about five per cent of extra outdoor watering at level 3, and we are only at level 2, you could do all these grounds, why aren't you? I have had no-one come to me saying that they would not forgo a little bit more of a restriction in terms of their own water use if it meant kids could play on these ovals.

Mr Hargreaves: I have not had that statement given to me by a constituent directly, nor have I had it given to me by an organisation. My staff, my officials and I have been talking to a range of sporting groups—cricket, junior AFL, soccer—and concerned residents, like people in Chisholm recently, about the effect of it and I sympathise with the effect. We have also to understand that I am not the minister responsible for water restrictions. I just respond to the water restrictions that are imposed by the minister who has responsibility for the water restrictions and I will not ask for an exemption where I am asking the community at large to suffer a regime I am not prepared to suffer myself.

If you want to criticise me for that stance, feel free.

MR STEFANIAK: Even if it is only five per cent, at most, more.

Mr Hargreaves: I will just continue the stance that I have. But I have to say that that is against the background of the replenishment program that we have. As to the replenishment program that we have, and I can get specific details for you—

MR STEFANIAK: If you would, it would be helpful.

Mr Hargreaves: I am happy to do that. In fact, I will do that on notice, Madam Chair, so that we can actually nominate the ovals themselves. As to the point that you made earlier about the types of grasses, making sure that they are a bit more drought resistant, the watering regimes and that sort of thing, I must reiterate something that I said in the annual reports meetings. There are some ovals in town—I have no idea of the number—that are not being used as ovals for kids and ovals per se. They are used as large pockets of urban open space. In fact, when my bride and I go walkies we often come across this sort of open space and I think to myself, “I wouldn’t mind a tree in the middle of that and a bit of shade.”

It seems to me that, whilst we have the replenishment of sporting ovals in the front of our head, we have new sporting facilities at Gungahlin to provide in the future and we have new technology about our person to start looking at, now is not a bad time to say to the people in a given suburban area, “Do you want an oval?” If they say yes, with the replenishment program they get an oval. If they say that they would really like a nice park, no reduction in size, no building, no nothing, with some trees planted on it, we would be mad not to look at what is going to be cheaper to maintain. You would increase amenity to the people in the suburb. I just underline the point, in case I am misquoted somewhere, that it is the residents’ choice. It is not something that we will be doing.

MR STEFANIAK: Is that for new areas?

Mr Hargreaves: No. We have satellite pictures of the ovals around the town. Let’s look at Torrens oval, for example, to take one off the top of my head.

MR STEFANIAK: They are all brown.

Mr Hargreaves: They are all brown. Supposing I went to the good burghers of Torrens and asked them whether they would prefer to have a park that the kids can play in after school and asked some of the older people who are now moving into older persons’ accommodation whether they would prefer to have a park with benches and trees in it that are low maintenance and drought resistant or they would like to have the area maintained as an oval and they came back and said to me as a community that they would really like some trees, I think it would be incumbent upon me to respond to that, in which case it would be a community choice, but I would actually be saying that now is the chance for us to go back and say to people, “Do you want us to replenish it or do you want us to turn it into a park, given that you have a guarantee of urban open space? It is your choice.”

MR STEFANIAK: That seems to be very different from what Minister Corbell said

when he was in opposition about guaranteeing all those ovals. Are you going to talk to the sporting groups, too?

THE CHAIR: Mr Stefaniak, with the Torrens oval, it would depend on whether the people concerned were the ones who practised their golf chipping there.

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely, and anybody who has ever played golf would know that you play more golf in the trees than you ever do on the fairway. In answer to your last question, Mr Stefaniak, about talking to the sporting clubs: yes, of course, absolutely. We would be talking to the users of a given oval. There are some patches of ground with brown grass on them at the moment that are not dedicated to a specific sport, for example. An oval dedicated to a specific sport would not come into the equation because we have actually dedicated it as a sportsground, for example, Gowrie oval. The Dragons rugby league team actually do their training on that oval. It would not be one that we would ask the community to say how it feels about it because it has already got that guarantee of being used for sport.

MR STEFANIAK: Fair enough.

THE CHAIR: Mr Seselja has a supplementary question. I will go to him and see how we go from there.

MR SESELJA: Minister, you mentioned ovals in Gungahlin. How many ovals or public sportsgrounds are there in Gungahlin at the moments that are in a condition for use by various sporting associations?

Mr Hargreaves: I'll take that one on notice, Mr Seselja, because, as you know, there are gradations of that and I think it would be more helpful if we categorised them for you.

MR SESELJA: It would be good to get a detailed breakdown and also a comparison with how many there are in the rest of Canberra.

Mr Hargreaves: Hang on a second, Mr Seselja: when you speak of a comparison, would you like to know how many there are out of the total number that we have on stream or would you like to know how many there were compared to, for example, Weston Creek?

MR SESELJA: Compared to the total.

Mr Hargreaves: It will just be a number over the total.

MR STEFANIAK: Dovetail that into what you are giving me, anyway.

MR SESELJA: That would be fine. If you want to give us one comparable with Weston Creek and Weston Creek is an area of similar size, that would be quite helpful too.

Mr Hargreaves: We will just give you what you indicated the first time, one number over the total.

MR SESELJA: Could I get one for Weston Creek as well?

Mr Hargreaves: Would you like one for Tuggeranong as well?

MR SESELJA: No, Weston Creek will be fine.

Mr Hargreaves: It doesn't rain as much in Tuggeranong as in Weston Creek.

MR SESELJA: Is that right? Did urban services make a submission for more ovals to be built in Gungahlin in the budget process?

Mr Hargreaves: I don't propose to discuss budget cabinet processes, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: I heard you quoted as saying on 2CC—

Mr Hargreaves: It's got to be true, then.

MR SESELJA: That's what I want you to confirm.

Mr Hargreaves: Was that the Mike Jeffreys yelling, screaming half-hour, the poor man's Stan Zemanek?

MR SESELJA: I want you to confirm for me whether it is true that you said something along the lines, in relation to building more ovals in the new suburbs of Gungahlin; of, "Why would we build more ovals; we would just have to water them?" Is that an accurate reflection?

Mr Hargreaves: I said what? You're taking one sentence of what I might have said to screaming Mike Jeffreys out of context.

MR PRATT: Chair, I thought personal attacks were out—"screaming Mike Jeffries".

Mr Hargreaves: It's an affectionate appellation, Mr Pratt.

MR PRATT: I bet it is.

MR SESELJA: Was that a misquote?

Mr Hargreaves: I'm not going to comment on something I said without seeing the entire passage that you are quoting from.

MR SESELJA: Is it the policy of the government that, whilst we are in drought, no more ovals will be built in places like Gungahlin, where there is a significant demand for them?

Mr Hargreaves: No, it's not.

MR SESELJA: It's not. So we can expect more ovals to come on line—

Mr Hargreaves: You need to address that issue through the planning minister, Mr Seselja.

MR STEFANIAK: Just one more thing on ovals. On page 234 you have a reference to annual sportsground maintenance costs per hectare. I've heard recently a whole range of figures on how much it costs to bring back a sportsground, from \$10,000 per hectare—you have \$15,000 or so there—up to \$30,000. I note you have recently said that, of the 30 category 3 ovals that are not being watered, 28 will need to be brought back to full maintenance. That will cost money. What is the cost per hectare at present of bringing an oval back to full maintenance?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr McNulty will address that one for you.

MR STEFANIAK: If there are some variables, please tell me.

Mr McNulty: We have been talking for the past couple of years of an average cost of \$10,000 per hectare to restore an oval that has been damaged by the drought. We are still happy with that number.

MR STEFANIAK: What is this one?

Mr McNulty: That is the sportsground maintenance number, not restoration. That's for mowing, irrigation, the whole lot.

MR STEFANIAK: Are you still happy with \$10,000 as a figure to bring them back?

Mr McNulty: At the moment, yes. That will obviously vary from oval to oval. That's an average.

MR STEFANIAK: Minister, it is still your intention, I take it—it seemed to be a few weeks ago—if this drought ever breaks, to bring those 30 grounds which are in category 3 back to full maintenance.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, if the drought breaks, Mr Stefaniak, we'll do everything in our power to restore every one of them. You've got to understand that it won't happen overnight because of the actual condition of the ovals themselves. It is not only the grass, as you would know. If you go to the Kambah No 3 oval, you'll notice holes big enough to lose a truck in. That's because the soil has lost water through evaporation and has gone brick hard. So we've got to talk about resurfacing; we've got to reseed it; we've got to do all of that sort of stuff again. We've basically got to start from scratch all over again. There will have to be a program developed to cover that.

If the drought breaks properly, some of the ovals will recover of their own volition and they'll only require top dressing and a little bit of reseeding, but some of them will need the kiss of life. We will need to work out over time which of those we will do and then, of course, we would overlay the imperatives for the ovals. For example, if some of them require a lot of work to bring them to such a state and they are the ones being used by junior soccer, then that's where we'll go. If they're being used as a community recreational space versus being used for junior sport, you would have to weight it towards the junior sport, wouldn't you?

MR STEFANIAK: You would. You have a 40 per cent reduction, don't you? You are currently working at level 3 water restrictions on a 40 per cent reduction in watering for

open spaces.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes.

MR STEFANIAK: I hark back to my earlier question in relation to just how you are going about it and the various suggestions experts make. It was drawn to my attention when I looked at Chisholm oval that the Mary MacKillop high school also had the 40 per cent water reduction which the government sportsground had and managed to maintain their oval, which wasn't the case with the government one. Have you got any explanation as to how those people are actually managing it?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, they're pretty clever. Those Catholics are clever, aren't they?

MR STEFANIAK: I noticed a comment, by the way, from a bloke at the Lodge who said they were on the same sorts of restrictions, yet they managed to have pretty significant green areas. Is there any magic there as to dealing with these restrictions that you guys can learn from?

Mr Hargreaves: No. I agree with you; the answer is no. We are looking into that sort of thing. We've had conversations with the community at Chisholm and are looking into it significantly. One of the things I noticed when I was looking at aerial photographs was the Marist Brothers one, for example, right next door to Melrose. My instant thought was that they had their own bore, but they don't; they were using watering techniques. The thing is that some people use greenkeeping approaches to what they do. They have people on their staff whose job is more to look after that than we do. But there is a whole range of things. Some of the schools actually do have their own bores. No, there isn't a straight answer on any particular oval; each one has a different reason for it.

MR STEFANIAK: Could you look into that because it just seems—

Mr Hargreaves: The Chisholm one?

MR STEFANIAK: Generally, because it seems that if the drought doesn't go away—

Mr Hargreaves: Again, there is a different approach. Are we looking into it? Yes, I will and, yes, we are to see whether or not those techniques that they employ are ones that we can employ too. Would you like us to talk about the sustainable water issue as far as our department is concerned? I'll get Mr Zissler to do it.

DR FOSKEY: I don't think so.

THE CHAIR: Mr Pratt has a supplementary question on the issue of ovals, but I don't think it relates to the sustainable water issue. I will get Mr Pratt to ask his question about that and then we might move on to other areas.

MR PRATT: Minister, at page 233 of BP4, under the accountability indicators, there is a 2005-06 target of 92 per cent for customer satisfaction with ovals. Do you realistically expect to meet that customer satisfaction level when so many ovals clearly have been put on the backburner for God knows how long, particularly community ovals such as the one at Chisholm, where you have an oval that has been used by schools and by the

community in general?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes.

MR PRATT: Can you explain how you can get to 92 per cent?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, 100 people over 330,000 gives me 92.

MR PRATT: I love your maths, minister.

THE CHAIR: Are we ready to move on to something other than ovals?

MR PRATT: I don't know whether it was answered in detail before, but I notice that the cost of reinstating an oval is shown as \$10,000 per hectare and the maintenance rate is \$15,000 per hectare.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes.

MR PRATT: What is the reason for the differential there?

Mr Hargreaves: It's a bit like what's an in and what's an out. It's a bit like the difference between a block and a lease. One of them mows an oval, top dresses an oval and does reseeding of patches. It also requires a certain frequency of mowing and we have to pay for the water on an ongoing and continual basis, so it's actually a maintenance regime forever. To restore an oval, that would be the one-off cost to us per hectare of restoring it.

MR PRATT: So you are saving your \$15,000—

Mr Hargreaves: No, we're not mowing a brand new lawn, are we?

MR PRATT: Of course.

Mr Hargreaves: There are payments that we make in the normal maintenance regime that we don't make in the restoration process.

THE CHAIR: Dr Foskey has a question on 1.4.

DR FOSKEY: I had concerns raised with me, minister, about the planting program along some of the major routes. In this instance, this constituent is concerned about recent plantings just begun from the corner of Antill and Mouat streets and Northbourne Avenue, up to the Federal Highway and Stirling Avenue intersection. This person has already watched trees die on the Phillip Avenue to Federal Highway area. Apparently, only two or three of quite a lot of trees planted have survived. Planting and nurturing them is one thing. The timing of planting of course is important, but weekly, reasonable water is probably essential. It is a bit of a waste of money to plant seedlings that are then not followed up. I am wondering about those particular trees that this constituent is writing about and other measures.

Mr Hargreaves: It is a challenge. Arboriculture is, in fact, a non-exact science. We take

advice from horticulturalists about the species of trees that we are planting in and around those sorts of thoroughfares. I can recall the other way around. In fact, if you wander around the suburb of Kambah, around, let's say, any cul-de-sac off Bateman Street perhaps, or any of the streets in Wannassa, you will find four or five trees growing happily on the nature strip. That is because there was a guess that we could whack five in and three of them would die. They didn't; they grew. What we have got now is, as I say, an inexact science. People are trying the best they can.

We have got some work going on in our organisation about the drought resistance of trees. As we progress further down that track, that is what we are doing with it. Certain thoroughfares are different, as you would know. You know the difference between the Monaro Highway, the sides of which are quite lush—the long paddock along there is really good—and the bit that you are talking about, Northbourne Avenue to the Federal Highway, which is quite choked with fumes; the soil is quite compacted. You plant the species as best you can. But I am advised that in the second appropriation we have got an additional \$150,000 to go around and water these young trees. I am getting notes from everywhere.

DR FOSKEY: So money is appearing.

Mr Hargreaves: I will tell you what: has anybody ever watched Rin Tin Tin on the TV and seen the cavalry come? It is brilliant.

THE CHAIR: Let us not digress, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: But we do have a regular watering program. We are struggling against the odds. We are criticised for pulling the trees out; we are criticised for putting the trees in; we are criticised because the trees die; and we are criticised because we are stopping the trees dying.

MR STEFANIAK: Welcome to government.

Mr Hargreaves: At least we are in government, yes. All I can say is, "Bring back Bob Hawke." He broke the drought in 1983. He can do it again.

DR FOSKEY: Did you say \$150,000 minister?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, \$150,000. But he won't ever take Hawthorn to a flag. Sorry, Andrew.

THE CHAIR: I don't think there is any chance of the Hawks going anywhere, minister.

DR FOSKEY: So we are moving on to 2.1?

THE CHAIR: No.

Mr Hargreaves: We can, Dr Foskey, if you like. Shall we take a vote?

THE CHAIR: I know Mr Stefaniak has a question on 1.4. Does anybody else have any questions on 1.4?

MR SESELJA: Yes, I have another question on 1.4. I believe Mr Pratt had one, but he has stepped out.

Mr Hargreaves: Are we waiting for Mr Pratt? I will answer Mr Pratt's question in that case, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: We have all descended into silliness. I would like to bring us back to being sensible. I am sure Mr Seselja will take us there.

MR SESELJA: Thank you, I will. The arboretum, minister, is allocated, I think, \$12 million—

Mr Hargreaves: Page number, please, Mr Seselja.

MR SESELJA: It is page 240, BP4. \$12 million is the estimated total cost at the moment. I note that has gone up. I am sure I know the answer that you will give me for that.

Mr Hargreaves: Bet you don't.

MR SESELJA: That is why I'm not going to ask you. I would like you to tell us, though, what we are likely to get for that \$12 million. There has been much discussion with the Chief Minister about whether it would eventually cost \$50 million or \$100 million and the like. Given that \$8 million got you a very basic drag strip a few years ago, what does \$12 million get you in terms of an arboretum?

Mr Hargreaves: The arboretum is a project the Chief Minister is running; we are merely the instruments of his will.

MR SESELJA: But it is in your part of the budget papers, isn't it?

Mr Hargreaves: As I said, we are the instruments of the Chief Minister's will with respect to the arboretum. He will be setting the criteria of what we get.

MR SESELJA: It is in your portfolio.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it is and indeed—

MR SESELJA: But you have got no idea what it will be.

Mr Hargreaves: Absolutely, in the same way that roads are in my portfolio but I don't do them; the planning people tell me.

MR SESELJA: But you are responsible for the spending.

Mr Hargreaves: I will provide what the arboretum specifications ask us to provide.

MR SESELJA: You have no idea at all; you just do as you are told.

Mr Hargreaves: Why would I want to do that? I'm not an instrument of the Chief Minister's will. Check it out next Wednesday when the Chief Minister talks about it.

MR SESELJA: I look forward to it.

Mr Hargreaves: I bet you do.

THE CHAIR: It is on Thursday.

Mr Hargreaves: You have an exciting life, Mr Seselja.

THE CHAIR: He does.

MR SESELJA: It will, with State of Origin this evening, be very exciting.

THE CHAIR: Mr Pratt, do you have a question on output class 1.4?

MR PRATT: I have quite a few, but how much time do we have?

THE CHAIR: I have got three output classes after this one to deal with. Mr Stefaniak has indicated he wants to ask something about the pool; then he will be done. If you can limit it to one, maximum two, then Mr Stefaniak can ask his question. I would ask you to place the others on notice; otherwise we won't get through the rest of the program.

MR PRATT: Thanks, chair. Minister, I want to go back to graffiti, please.

Mr Hargreaves: Hang on a tick; which output class are we on?

MR PRATT: Output 1.4.

THE CHAIR: Urban Parks and Places.

Mr Hargreaves: I am fine with that. Your page of reference is?

MR PRATT: We were looking at BP4, 233, I think. I go back to—

Mr Hargreaves: I can't see it.

MR PRATT: I am following up a question that you answered this morning about the turnaround times.

Mr Hargreaves: I still can't see it.

THE CHAIR: What page are you on, Mr Pratt?

MR PRATT: We are on page 233. We are talking about—

Mr Hargreaves: We are not talking about recycling here, are we? I am still trying to find it.

THE CHAIR: Page, 233, of budget paper 4, yes? A question from the chair.

MR PRATT: What the question is—

THE CHAIR: No, that is a question from me to you, Mr Pratt. We are on page 233, under output class 1.4. Where are you referring to?

MR PRATT: I am sorry; this looks like it is not a 1.4 output. I thought it was.

Mr Hargreaves: Maybe somebody whited it out.

THE CHAIR: Can I suggest, Mr Pratt, that you might like to place that question on notice.

Mr Hargreaves: Somebody graffitied over that bit

MR PRATT: I can't tie it down on 1.4. I must have had my wires crossed on 1.4 outputs. I will come back to it later, thanks, chair.

THE CHAIR: Did you have other questions on 1.4 or are you unsure as to where they are located in the budget papers as well?

MR PRATT: I can go back to output 1.4.

THE CHAIR: We haven't left it.

MR PRATT: Rubbish bins.

Mr Hargreaves: And the reference for the output, for the indicators? Are you talking about the number of bins, how much, it costs or—

MR PRATT: Yes, I am.

Mr Hargreaves: Was it perhaps 233 that you were on in the first place? Maybe you transposed the numbers?

MR PRATT: It may well be. Yes.

Mr Hargreaves: The costs of kerbside collection per household at \$57, is that a good place to start?

MS PORTER: That's 1.3

THE CHAIR: Yes. We have already released the officers from that as well.

Mr Hargreaves: Heavens.

MR PRATT: I will leave it at that.

THE CHAIR: Mr Stefaniak, you get to ask your pool question.

MR STEFANIAK: Thank you, Madam Chair. I note the percentage of customers satisfied with the management of pool facilities. There has been a significant push by residents of Gungahlin—

Mr Hargreaves: Pool facilities?

MR STEFANIAK: Sorry, bottom of page 233.

Mr Hargreaves: Got it, yes.

MR STEFANIAK: It says that 93 per cent of customers are happy with the management of pool facilities. I note, however, that the residents of Gungahlin seem very keen to have a pool developed there.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, they are, too.

MR STEFANIAK: What is the current state of play in relation to the pool for Gungahlin?

Mr Hargreaves: You will have to ask Mr Corbell.

MR STEFANIAK: You have got nothing to do with that?

Mr Hargreaves: I don't have anything to do with that, no.

THE CHAIR: You can't manage it until it's built. Is that what you are trying to tell us, minister?

Mr Hargreaves: Something like that. There has got to be a block of land allocated and then—

Mr Zissler: It has got to be planned first.

MR STEFANIAK: What was that, Mr Zissler?

Mr Zissler: It has got to be planned first.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, you have got to have the block of land arranged; then it has got to be tendered and all that stuff. But we are not involved in the process at this point. They can always go to Belconnen pool, anyway, in the meantime, can't they? Then you get the economic benefit of that, don't you?

THE CHAIR: If there are no other questions on 1.4, we will move to output class 2. Mary, did you have a question on 1.4

MS PORTER: I did, but it was answered.

MR MULCAHY: Was that on Parkwood?

MS PORTER: No, it wasn't. Seeing as you asked, it was on tree maintenance, the removal of dead trees.

THE CHAIR: Output class 2, transport; 2.1, transport regulation and services. Mr Mulcahy, you have a question in this area?

MR MULCAHY: Yes. Minister, an issue that has been raised with me relates to drivers licence renewal. The concern has been expressed periodically. I can't remember whether it is three or five years that you can buy an extended licence for, but you have to come in and be photographed again.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, five.

MR MULCAHY: The issue is the availability of those services beyond the Monday to Friday core because of the difficulty for people that are working. Have you given regard to making some sort of service available at least on a Saturday where people could use that facility?

Mr Hargreaves: We are not going to do that.

MR MULCAHY: Is there a reason why you won't provide that?

Mr Hargreaves: We are working nine to five, like most other businesses. We don't believe at this point in time that opening the shopfronts on that particular frequency is efficacious.

MR MULCAHY: But you recognise that, with most people working nine to five, it is a major inconvenience when many other institutions that people want to access now, even banks, are moving to a Saturday opening. I would have thought that would have been a sensible service for the community.

Mr Hargreaves: The St George Bank closed its branch on a Saturday morning at a major group centre in my region because the people just were not doing it. I do not think the service that we provide people to obtain licences is inadequate enough.

MR MULCAHY: Is what, sorry?

Mr Hargreaves: Is inadequate enough to do that. I think it is adequate enough.

MR MULCAHY: You have no interest in looking at it for the community?

Mr Hargreaves: No, not at all.

MR MULCAHY: About the random vehicle inspections, the—

Mr Hargreaves: What page are we on?

MR MULCAHY: Page 234 of BP4, the random vehicle inspections of 2,239 per 10,000 vehicles. How many in fact, in total, do you actually examine each year?

Mr Hargreaves: Three point three times that figure.

MR MULCAHY: What is the percentage of defective vehicles that are picked up under this system?

Mr Hargreaves: Have you got that or will you take it on notice?

Ms Greenland: I would have to take that one on notice, I think.

THE CHAIR: Welcome, Ms Greenland. Dr Foskey has some questions on this output class.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, especially while we are on buses. Are we on buses?

THE CHAIR: No.

Mr Hargreaves: No, we are not on the buses.

DR FOSKEY: We are on Ms Greenland's topic, though. I gather that most of the other states have—

MR MULCAHY: I have a third question to ask. I suddenly lost the position.

THE CHAIR: I am terribly sorry. I had not realised that was so.

MR MULCAHY: My second question was on notice.

THE CHAIR: With Dr Foskey's indulgence, we will go back to you and then I will come back to Dr Foskey.

MR MULCAHY: Thank you. Minister, another item on the same page of budget paper 4, page 234, relates to the annual operating costs per parking space of \$90.78. Can you explain what that relates to? What do these parking spaces cover? What is the total cost for the year? Is this for a government-owned parking space?

Mr Hargreaves: Karen Greenland will give you this one, but we do not just let them sit there on their own. We have to go and collect the money sometimes. We have to send parking inspectors around sometimes.

MR MULCAHY: So this is collection cost?

Mr Hargreaves: No, this is a total cost of operation of a parking space. Give him the details.

Ms Greenland: It relates to the number of parking spaces where enforcement activities are carried out; so it is essentially all of the government car parks, the on street parking which is regulated by meters, those sorts of thing. It is essentially the cost of regulating parking spaces—

MR MULCAHY: All versions, basically, that are government enforced. It seems a high

cost.

Mr Hargreaves: We do not report on the cost of the private ones because—

MR MULCAHY: The ones that you do under authority.

Mr Hargreaves: they are not responsible to the Assembly; they are responsible to their shareholders.

MR MULCAHY: They are the ones that you pay a fee for and you could have them enforced?

Mr Hargreaves: These are for public car park spaces for which you have to pay some type of fee, whether it be a ticket machine type or a parking meter.

MR MULCAHY: What is your revenue from those that you enforce for private clients? Are we talking about buildings or the airport or other places?

Mr Hargreaves: No. Is it enforcement revenue you are talking about?

MR MULCAHY: Yes.

Mr Hargreaves: Parking fines that we get out of that?

MR MULCAHY: I think there are fees involved, too.

Ms Greenland: No, we do not have the figures for those. The revenue is collected. What happens is that parking inspectors go out on essentially a route that will include some government car parking spaces and may include some non-government car parking spaces, the parking authority spaces. There is no breakdown of the figures between those two in terms of the infringements that are issued across that patrol, if you like.

MR MULCAHY: But there is a fee, is there not, for private firms that want you to enforce laws?

Ms Greenland: There is no fee charged. What happens is the territory retains the revenue from any infringements that are issued in those car parks.

MR MULCAHY: They pay for the signs or something, do they?

Ms Greenland: They pay for all of their own costs. They pay to put signs in the car park; they pay for all of the signs. The signs have to comply with territory parking signage requirements.

Mr Hargreaves: They also pay for things like boom gates, for example, underneath Westfield. The private sector is picking up the total cost. All we really do is send the parking inspectors around to pick up infringements and pocket the money. Very simple.

DR FOSKEY: I understand that my question about smart ticketing is not actually related to 2.1; it is 2.2.

Mr Hargreaves: It is not.

THE CHAIR: No. That was covered yesterday. Two point two is—

Mr Hargreaves: That is a bus question, isn't it?

DR FOSKEY: Yes, it is about ticketing. I have got other questions, thanks. ACTCOSS continues to be concerned that transport cost is a major issue for people on low and fixed incomes. This is especially the case for people with a disability, despite the government's adoption of the lift fee for wheelchair accessible taxis and the uptake of accessible buses. Are there any measures in the budget to address these concerns?

Mr Hargreaves: We have not put specific funds in the budget to increase the already significant moneys that we have in there. I think it is somewhere about the \$8.5 mark now, somewhere around that.

Ms Greenland: It is just over \$8.25.

Mr Hargreaves: The \$8.25 is the lift fee that we pay for wheelchair accessible taxis, to compensate them for the longer waiting times to have passengers embark. We, as you would know, are trying to normalise things for people with a disability as much as we can. That is why the minister for buses has got those particular low-slung buses, those sleek, long, low-slung buses.

But also in terms of the cost: we have got the taxi subsidy scheme which is available to people who suffer either a permanent or a temporary disability, subject to certain criteria. You would know about that. You would also know about the initiative that another one of my departments is implementing regarding wheelchair taxi provision in conjunction with the Department of Urban Services. The CEO of DUS, Mr Zissler, Sandra Lambert, who is the CEO of Disability, Housing and Community Services, and Mr Craig Wallace, who is the chair of the disability advisory committee, have come together and are orchestrating a proper and speedy review into the transport of disabled people across the town.

I am expecting to receive some advice in about two months, but I cannot guarantee that. There will be an advertisement in the paper about that this Saturday. I urge you to have a look at it and pass it on to your friends at ACTCOSS who probably will not be reading the paper.

DR FOSKEY: My friends at ACTCOSS, in their budget analysis, also felt that it looked—from budget paper 3, page 133, community service obligations analysis—like there will be an actual reduction in the level of support for taxi transport for people with a disability. I just wonder whether you could clarify that.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, sure. The access to the taxi subsidy scheme is demand driven. That is administered, I believe, by the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services. That department fronted here last Friday and I do not propose to revisit it.

THE CHAIR: I know Ms Porter has a question. I am also told that Mr Gentleman would like to ask a question.

DR FOSKEY: I have one more question, I am sorry. Let me just finish this off.

THE CHAIR: That is okay.

DR FOSKEY: Hopefully, this one will fit in. There was apparently an article in the *Canberra Times* on Monday, 23 May, about Canberra Cabs' initiative. You are probably well aware of this.

Mr Hargreaves: I read the thing, but I have not seen the reports.

DR FOSKEY: Do you have a response to their idea of creating a more fluid taxi system?

Mr Hargreaves: I look forward to reading it.

DR FOSKEY: The actual detail?

Mr Hargreaves: The detail that Canberra Cabs have shared with the journalist from the *Canberra Times* contained a number of initiatives being promoted by that network, that monopolistic cooperative. They have developed some ways to address things like a silver service, a second taxi network within their own network. How that was separated out is absolutely beyond my measure of comprehension at the moment. They have felt comfortable in sharing the thoughts with the media but I have not seen it. Until such time as I see it, I will remain as much in the dark as you. Am I going to chase them? No, I am not.

DR FOSKEY: Do you think it is interesting?

Mr Hargreaves: I would not know until I read it. I am afraid I do not have the capacity to read tea-leaves, ever since tea bags were introduced.

THE CHAIR: We might move on. Ms Porter has a question.

MS PORTER: Minister, I notice on page 234, budget paper 4, under the accountability indicators, there are two indicators. One is that taxicab waiting times are within standard. The other one is that waiting times for wheelchair-accessible taxis are within standard. I wonder what this standard is, whether it is an Australian standard, for instance, and what it is. Is there a specific time?

Mr Hargreaves: I am advised that there is not an Australian standard. Our standard has been developed with the ACT context in mind, but it is pretty consistent with a number of other jurisdictions. I will ask Ms Greenland to give you some indication of what that means in time and some comparatives, if you would be kind enough.

Ms Greenland: Canberra Cabs are required to report to urban services every month on how their services are meeting the standards that we set. What is required is that, for standard cabs, in peak periods, 85 per cent of bookings are met within 18 minutes, and

95 per cent of bookings are met within 30 minutes. That is for peak periods. For off-peak periods, 85 per cent of the bookings have to be met within 10 minutes, and 95 per cent within 20 minutes. Those standards are broadly consistent with the standards that apply in other jurisdictions, where they in fact have standards. Some jurisdictions do not have standards at all.

Mr Hargreaves: I have to say, just as a follow on, with regard to the wheelchair-accessible taxis issue, we need to understand that in that context there are some people out there for whom the waiting time is measured in hours and not measured in a number of minutes, as it might be for you and me. Notwithstanding that the industry is achieving what is, in a sense, a standard, I am still not satisfied that they are providing a service. I do not want anybody to read into this figure here that I am saying that the service is satisfactory, because it is not. This is just an achievement against the standard. It actually points to the danger of using a standard to adopt an opinion. It is only one of the measures.

As I say, there will be an advertisement in the paper on the weekend. I invite you to advise any people you know that have an interest in this particular subject to engage with us, because talking is almost over.

MS PORTER: So next year we might have some different accountability measures on that?

Mr Hargreaves: We will have to have a look at that and see. We will have to have a look and see what this steering committee discovers in its deliberations. I think you might find that there will be, quite probably, a different regime anyway with respect to this. Without wishing to pre-empt what that committee may discover or even look into, there are any number of ways.

We have had complaints that part of the problem is that the industry is obliged to have a vehicle that carries two wheelchairs and they only ever carry one. So we will have a look at that if this task force wants us to have a look at it. There is the issue of whether or not, if we really mean business about disability, every cab in town ought to be able to take someone in a wheelchair. If that is what the task force wants us to look into, we will do that. But we will not be doing that at our leisure; we will be doing that promptly.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, if I could just bring you back to page 225 of BP4: the output description of 2.1 talks about road user safety. You may have touched on this before. The government has announced \$1.4 million to be spent on improving safety on our roads. Can you inform us of the type of improvements that this will include?

Mr Hargreaves: Welcome, Mr Gentleman. We have a number of approaches in terms of output class 1.2 specifically. We have allocated \$2.55 million for roads and bridges. This covers improvements to a range of different asset classes. It goes into pavement rehabilitation, traffic light equipment upgrades, road safety improvements, arterial road barriers, arterial road cycling, armour cable replacements and bridge strengthening. I mentioned some of those before.

We also have sustainable transport initiatives. We are putting \$700,000 into new community paths, cycle facilities consistent with a 10-year master plan for main routes.

In our neighbourhood improvements, there is \$1½ million for street lighting in residential areas, traffic safety measures in schools, residential street improvements, neighbourhood plans and stormwater improvements.

Mr Mulcahy was talking about, incidentally, street lighting in residential areas not long ago. We have, as part of the community safety initiative, that very point that you were talking about as part of a total attack on the perceptions of feeling unsafe. Sometimes there is not a bogymen in the dark, but it would be nice to shine a light to make sure of it. So we propose to go down that track. There you go, Mr Gentleman. It is \$2.55 million for roads and bridges, \$700,000 in sustainable transport and another \$1½ million in neighbourhood improvements.

MR PRATT: Minister, on BP4 again, page 234: vehicle inspections is the subject area. If the number of random vehicle inspections per 10,000 vehicles is 2,239 per annum, 22 per cent roughly, how many vehicles in total are inspected each year? Do you have the figure handy, or would you prefer to take the question on notice?

Mr Hargreaves: That is the second time we have had that question.

MR SESELJA: I think Mr Pratt was out of the room. I was not sure about the answer. You said around three times.

Mr Hargreaves: The answer is this: it is an arithmetic answer. With the vast array of tertiary qualifications I am being confronted with—it says here 2,239 vehicles per 10,000—don't you reckon that someone with a tertiary qualification could work that out.

MR SESELJA: But you said times by about three.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. We have got 320,000 people in this town. Right.

MR SESELJA: Yes, I understand that.

Mr Hargreaves: You go and work your arithmetic out. I am not going to do it for you.

MR SESELJA: You said per 10,000 times three. It is only about 30,000 cars.

Mr Hargreaves: You are the lawyer. You know how to manipulate words; you know how to manipulate numbers. Go knock yourself out, mate.

MR SESELJA: I know. I think your maths are really dodgy.

THE CHAIR: Minister and Mr Seselja, come to order.

MR PRATT: Perhaps I will beat this to death. The minister is not able to give us a precise answer and we need to go back and do a demographic research. I will leave it at that. On the basis of this policy, are you looking at perhaps continuing with the system as it now is or with the view to bringing back compulsory inspections?

Mr Hargreaves: We are going to continue with the system as it is now.

MR PRATT: Can I go on to parking, please, chair? Minister, the annual operating cost per parking space is \$90.78—

Mr Hargreaves: We answered that question again a minute ago.

MR PRATT: Was I out of the room?

Mr Hargreaves: If you want to pop out again, I will answer another one while you are out.

MR PRATT: This \$140,000 funding in 2005-06 you are talking about—

Mr Hargreaves: Whereabouts is that?

MR PRATT: BP4, 237. The issue now is: relative to what you are proposing, how much additional revenue is this \$140,000 outlay supposed to generate for the ACT government each year?

Mr Hargreaves: \$140,000. What this additional parking is—because it is a pretty vague title—for the record, when you come into park, you have got all-day parking. What happens is that that does not go up every year by CPI because of the change you need to put into the machine. We leave it until it rounds up, until it goes up to the nearest 50c or the nearest dollar, that sort of thing. Also, the stand meters, the ordinary coin-operated meters, do not have the technology to take that sort of increase anyway. They are old technology and we are leaving them alone. So there will be no increase in charges for the ordinary parking meters, as you know them, on the side of the road. All we are talking about is bringing up to speed, to the round figures, those ones in the all-day parking in the medium figures. That is all that is. It is only being brought up to speed because of that CPI change as we have gone.

MR PRATT: It is a CPI-factor increase?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes. If you take the last time the charge was determined, you will notice that there was not an increase last year or the year before, that sort of thing. Then, as it hits a certain figure, we bump the charge up.

MR PRATT: Does this include the additional costs associated with proposing limitations of pay parking at Canberra Hospital?

Mr Hargreaves: No.

THE CHAIR: That area was covered last Thursday.

MR PRATT: We can ask him again.

Mr Hargreaves: No, it is not within my portfolio.

THE CHAIR: No, you cannot because it does not actually relate to this minister's portfolio. Mr Seselja has a supplementary.

MR SESELJA: Minister, could you provide us with the total number of vehicles registered in the ACT? Do you want to take that on notice?

Mr Hargreaves: It is about 250,000.

MR SESELJA: So it is more than 33,000 tested then?

Mr Hargreaves: If you say so. You are the lawyer.

MR SESELJA: I am just going on your figures of 33,000 vehicles in the ACT. I just wanted to check the numbers.

Mr Hargreaves: You are the lawyer.

THE CHAIR: Stop antagonising each other.

Mr Hargreaves: I am not antagonised at all. I am having a great time. This is a great swordfight.

THE CHAIR: That brings us to the end of 2.1, I believe, which brings us to output class 3, government services, on which I have a question. Minister, in budget paper 4 at page 239—and it is also referred to in budget paper 3, page 219—there is mention of \$1.5 million being allocated to the Callam Offices. Could you indicate to the committee how the \$1.5 million will be spent on Callam Offices.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, sure. It is part of a regular program of building audits undertaken by Property ACT. A Building Code of Australia compliance audit of the Callam Offices was undertaken in March 2004. The audit identified a range of works that needed to be addressed to enable the building to continue to meet the building code.

These works included the relocation of hydrants, hose reels, sprinkler valves and extinguishers; the placement of non-compliance pipework; modifications and upgrades to the fire control panel, fire separation doors, exit and emergency lighting, fire smoke control system; and cooling plant upgrade. To enable some of these works to occur, a program of asbestos removal will also be undertaken.

The asbestos does not pose a threat to staff working in the building but will have to be removed to enable access to some of the areas that require modification to meet building code requirements. The funding provided will enable these works to be completed over the next two years, with a majority of the work, which is about \$1.2 million, to be completed in 2005-06.

The Building Code of Australia compliance audit, as I said, was undertaken in March last year. That identified a number of urgent and essential works to fire safety of the building. If these works are not undertaken, the building will not comply with the Building Code of Australia. The works must be undertaken to enable the continued occupation of the building by ACT government staff.

An extensive analysis concerning the long-term future of the Callam Offices has been undertaken by GHD on behalf of the government. Options considered included

refurbishment—

THE CHAIR: Minister, for the benefit of *Hansard* and myself and Ms Porter, what does GHD stand for again?

Mr Hargreaves: Gutteridge Haskins Davey, GHD. It is a contracting company. It is easier to say GHD than Gutteridge Haskins Davey.

THE CHAIR: It would be good to know what it stands for at the beginning.

Mr Hargreaves: Even they do not recognise it; they have been called GHD for about 30 years. Having said that, they have been really good and have undertaken this work on behalf of the government.

The options considered included, as I say, refurbishment, demolition and replacement, mothballing and disposal of the property. The cost-benefit analysis undertaken recommends a refurbishment of the property at a cost of over \$20 million. The alternatives were all significantly more expensive. I have not received it yet but there will be a submission on the long-term future of it. We need to look at the long-term future of those particular offices. When we talk long term, we are talking about 40 years, 50 years, that kind of thing. I have not done that yet.

THE CHAIR: Can I ask a couple of questions about that. Do the Callam Offices have a heritage order listed on them for their unique architecture?

Mr Hargreaves: No. I thought they did. I think they have some sort of a smallish one but it is not a significant one. It is just a nomination. It is not actually a listing. In any case, it would probably only be one of the pods.

THE CHAIR: When you were talking about refurbishment and, in particular, lighting, it did come to mind how confusing it is getting around the Callam Offices. I have not been there for a while, but I do not imagine it has changed very much.

Mr Hargreaves: I can see why. It was designed for students and it was because the teachers at the CIT did not like the students very much.

THE CHAIR: I think that is a bit harsh on the teachers at the CIT, as they did not design the buildings.

Mr Hargreaves: It was a lot harsher on the students, let me tell you. Some of them have never been seen since.

THE CHAIR: What I was going to ask was: was there any consideration given to any lighting that would light up and indicate where people were going?

Mr Hargreaves: Not at this point, no. We thought of miners helmets and torches but we gave that away. The Building Code of Australia actually determines those things.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Hargreaves: Have we got a team effort over here!

MR MULCAHY: Minister, enlighten me, possibly. Capital Linen Service was formerly part of TotalCare, as I understand.

Mr Hargreaves: And before that it was part of the Health Services Supply Centre and before that it was the linen service. Now, guess what? It is the linen service.

MR MULCAHY: In relation to that enterprise, do you have discrete costs of what that operation is in terms of the cost of running that service?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, we do. I will get you that on notice. We have a particularly high regard for this service. It produces quality work and a quality product and I believe it functions in a competitive way comparable to any similar sized business. We have got to understand that it has a number of roles to play, not the least of which is its community service obligation. We have to guarantee that the linen is provided to our hospitals as a community service obligation.

I am not convinced that we could contract that out to any company in this town and I could not be guaranteed that, for example, in the case of a petrol strike, we could import the stuff from interstate anyway. But I am confident that the product that comes out of the linen service to our hospitals in the community service obligation is brilliant.

MR MULCAHY: As an entity, it is not being subsidised; it is returning a positive financial income?

Mr Hargreaves: You have got to understand that it has commercial clients and operates in the commercial arena, but it provides a service from one arm of government to another.

MR MULCAHY: But do you not cost those out on a reasonable basis so that you are not providing a service gratis?

Mr Hargreaves: No, we are not providing a service gratis. What happened, of course, as you would know, is that when it was part of TotalCare it came across to the Department of Urban Services. It has been the subject of a business case investigation since. We have only just got that report. That report in fact has to go to cabinet and I am not at liberty to talk about it at this point. Otherwise I would be happy to, but I can, in an overview perspective, tell you that I am very happy with the way they do business. When we look at the ongoing pricing structure, people will be even happier.

MR MULCAHY: I guess, from the tenor of your reply, my next question is: had you contemplated privatising that, selling that off?

Mr Hargreaves: I had contemplated privatising it. Again I have to tell you that it took longer for me to answer this question than to think about it.

MR GENTLEMAN: Chair, I have got a supp off the back of Mr Mulcahy's, if I could.

THE CHAIR: Yes, sure.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, can you tell us how the staff in Capital Linen Service have reacted after coming back under government employment?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, I can. They were thrilled as. We have been able to show the staff of the linen service that we consider them to be professionals. As Mr Zissler said, on the factory floor you've got 20-something different languages.

Mr Zissler: Twenty-six.

Mr Hargreaves: It is not an easy task to knit that conglomerate group together and give them a sense of corporate identity, a sense of belonging and a sense of ownership of the product. We have done that. The guy who has delivered that is my CEO, Mr Mike Zissler. We were able to manage the transition from TotalCare into DUS, with the union movement and with the staff, as part of a joint process. At the end of the day, these staff, in fact, enjoy now the same permanency guarantees the general public service do. I am pleased to be able to report that. Dr Foskey is busting there, I can tell.

DR FOSKEY: I note, on page 235, that we are set a target of 17 per cent use of green power in ACT buildings. I am interested in knowing how you determined that figure and how we are progressing towards it.

Mr Hargreaves: Can I take that one on notice? The reason why is that I have called for departmental advice on whether or not we can increase that percentage. I am not familiar at the moment with where that submission is. It may be between me and the cabinet; it may be between the department and my office on the way to that. I would rather do that if you don't mind. I will take your question on notice and respond to you. But, in general terms, we are at 17 per cent now. Under the agreements that we are striking with Actew at the minute, it is likely that it will increase the target. That is what I was talking about, about not being able to do that. But I will let that stand as an answer to your question.

DR FOSKEY: That is great. I have some other questions about Property ACT. I have got some questions relating to retrofitting of government buildings and public housing for energy efficiency and water conservation.

Mr Hargreaves: If it is public housing, you are wasting your breath.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, I know that. There was \$5 million for schools. I also understand that a \$135,000 audit contract was awarded to a local company, to be completed in six months. That is around November this year. However, there seems to be little or no money to follow up on the recommendations coming from these audits.

TotalCare, before it was wound up, was one of the groups that did some of this work. TotalCare has been wound up and its functions transferred to DUS. TotalCare had flagged in its last annual report that a key achievement was: "Progress on the condition audit program for ACT government property assets." TotalCare has an ongoing energy audit program to improve the energy efficiency of client-owned buildings. I guess this program has been transferred to DUS. I would appreciate an update on it and an idea of how much money is allocated to it. Is there money allocated to do the work recommended by the audit?

Mr Hargreaves: May I introduce Steven Ryan, who will give you the information Dr Foskey looks for.

DR FOSKEY: I am very pleased to give Mr Ryan a chance to answer my question.

Mr Ryan: Property ACT looks after the government's office portfolio and the buildings that are referred to in most places as surplus property. Those are the old schools, hospitals and all the rest of it, which are now used for a variety of community purposes and some government purposes. As I understand it, the energy audits program is being arranged through the office of sustainability in the Chief Minister's Department. They funded a series of energy audits for Property ACT and we've got 10 underway at the moment. On top of that we've been provided with energy funding to do projects across our buildings. Perhaps I will just give you a rundown on some of the energy projects we're doing this year.

We're doing some power factor correction at the old Hotel Kurrajong—I'm just zipping through this. We're putting in solar panels, which came up at the last hearing, at Macarthur House. Those are in the process of being installed at the present time. We're doing lighting upgrading for the North Building as part of the works for the multicultural centre across the footpath; at Callam Offices we're doing some lighting; at the Magistrates Court we're doing lighting control systems; and at Dame Pattie Menzies House we're upgrading the lighting control system. We're doing a number of energy projects as a result of previous energy audits that we conducted on our buildings.

DR FOSKEY: Are the solar panels for electricity, or do you mean solar hot water systems?

Mr Ryan: Solar hot water at Macarthur House. That will be used to supplement the heating of hot water systems in toilets, kitchens and the like.

DR FOSKEY: How many buildings do you audit every year?

Mr Ryan: As I say, this year we're doing energy audits for 10 buildings. That will basically do the majority of the major office and community facilities in our portfolio. You'd need to talk to education and health to find out what they're doing with theirs but once these 10 have been done it will leave us with only buildings of the nature of smaller ex-depots and the like.

DR FOSKEY: You don't know what percentage of government buildings have been covered by the program, just your own department?

Mr Ryan: Not necessarily our own department but our own portfolio.

Mr Hargreaves: By way of explanation, Mr Ryan just gave you the example of the work we're doing at the multicultural centre. The multicultural centre will be the responsibility of disability, housing and community services, but the property group are doing the work for them. Callam Offices is another one. It's owned by NASA.

DR FOSKEY: Do you go back to check whether the changes you've implemented result

in savings?

Mr Ryan: Yes. We have a regular series of audits. We do building condition audits, safety audits and energy audits. A number of the buildings that are having energy audits done this year will have been done in the last five years. We've got a program of trying to do these audits once every five years or so.

DR FOSKEY: Is water use also audited and are water conservation measures proposed?

Mr Ryan: Yes. We report on usage, as part of the energy reporting we do to the office of sustainability.

DR FOSKEY: Given that this is resulting in significant savings, I'm just wondering why more money isn't allocated to energy and water auditing and follow up.

Mr Hargreaves: Are you saying, given that we've made lots of savings, why aren't we spending more money?

DR FOSKEY: Given that it does result in savings, why not invest more in it?

Mr Hargreaves: Because there are only a certain number of hours you can do this in a day. I think the rate that we're doing it at is quite satisfactory, at the minute.

MR PRATT: I will follow up on that last group of questions, and certainly the questions about the environmental capacity of those buildings to sustain themselves. I did ask you, minister, I think in annual reports, whether you were looking at—and you said you were—whether government buildings might be now utilised in a water capturing role, particularly those in close proximity to parks and ovals, et cetera. Have you given that any thought? Has the government considered the potential to perhaps look at the catchment areas with those vast square metres of roofs and perhaps rainwater tanks, or drainage at least, to be taken from those rooftops into public areas?

Mr Hargreaves: I don't recall saying that in the annual report hearings.

MR PRATT: I don't want to misquote you; but I just thought we had.

Mr Hargreaves: I'm not suggesting that what you're saying is not true, I just don't recall it. I have to say it's not necessarily consistent with some of the views I have about rainwater catchment in urban areas. When we get to places like Amaroo school, for example, that might be a possibility. Mr Zissler will talk to you a bit about how that can work. You can use that for the benefit of the school. I'm not convinced. I know other people are, but I don't necessarily share the views of other people. I'm not a big fan of a proliferation of rainwater tanks, and I'm not a big fan of a proliferation of rainwater tanks in commercial areas either.

It seems to me that we're creating a series of small dams everywhere. The aggregate of that is that we'll end up with a rather large dam and, as a consequence, we will end up having plenty of water usage within the city, and that's a successful thing. We will have, in fact, fewer water restrictions in the city if we can reticulate rainwater caught off roofing. At the end of the day we have to understand that a lot of this rainwater goes

down into the river catchment and into the Murray Darling. We don't want to interrupt the flow. We're putting in a whole series of small farm dams everywhere. We need to consider it in the totality of the approach.

When I mentioned that possibility to Kerrie Tucker, who was talking about these things in the chamber at the time, she was quite alarmed at the possibility. I don't know if she still holds that view but she was quite alarmed. I would need to have some more advice on that, to be quite frank with you, from people who can talk to us about a global approach to this. It is attractive in the first instance, the first pass, but maybe not so attractive when you look at the total picture. I'd like to have some more thinking done about that and obtain some more advice. That's why I say I'm a bit surprised to hear you say I would be supportive of that because I'm not, instinctively.

MR PRATT: Okay. I may have misquoted you. Perhaps I was asking somebody else.

Mr Hargreaves: It's quite possible.

MR PRATT: I certainly did ask a question about schools. In fact, the Amaroo model inspired me to ask that question particularly in terms of self-sufficiency of school ovals. Given the dramatic amount of roof space you've got under your portfolio, your assets, I too wondered whether you might have thought about that. I would have thought water draining from rooftops—not necessarily being harnessed in tanks but being allowed, by proper irrigation, to run into ovals and spaces—would eventually end up in the Molonglo anyway.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes it does, but not necessarily so. It might be contaminated in the process, and it has to go into the Lower Molonglo in the process of getting there. We're straying into an area that is not my portfolio's responsibility; it's environment's responsibility. We don't have the roof area in public buildings other than schools, which I don't have. That's an education exercise. Within the property group that I have there is not the roof area that people may think there is where it is in proximity to use that water for such things as irrigation, unless you pipe it into another container somewhere else. Therefore, you're getting into big issues—water management issues. I have to say to you that I would be taking advice from ActewAGL on that particular perspective. I wouldn't be going down that path unilaterally at all.

MR PRATT: And here I was thinking you were the lord of rooftops!

Mr Hargreaves: No. I'm just up there more often than you are!

MR PRATT: I see. Up on the roof?

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, not fiddling, though.

MR PRATT: Will you be asking Actew, or is the government indeed asking Actew or somebody else, to analyse this potential?

Mr Hargreaves: I'm not; and I don't know.

MR PRATT: You wouldn't want to encourage your colleagues and Actew to perhaps

look at this as a means of harnessing a powerful and valuable asset or resource?

Mr Hargreaves: Given the breadth of portfolios that I have, I'd rather worry about the things within my portfolio than encroach on the patches of my colleagues.

MR PRATT: Even in these drought conditions?

Mr Hargreaves: If you want me to stick up a whole stack of rain catchment facilities in a place where it doesn't rain, good on you.

MR PRATT: When it does rain.

Mr Hargreaves: It's not my job; it's not my worry.

THE CHAIR: Let us move onto forestry services—page 259 onwards.

DR FOSKEY: Who is the representative from ACT Forests?

THE CHAIR: Mr Zissler is going to be taking forestry questions.

Mr Hargreaves: Ordinarily we would have Mr Tony Bartlett here to be available to the committee for technical information but he is not in the country; he is at the United Nations representing Australia on forestry matters, as we speak. With your leave, we will take technical questions on notice.

DR FOSKEY: Isn't it also true that he is no longer the director?

Mr Hargreaves: Incidentally, ACT taxpayers are not paying for that trip, in case someone wants to rip out a press release.

DR FOSKEY: Am I right that he is no longer the director of ACT Forests?

Mr Hargreaves: He is, until such time as he returns from representing the country at the UN. Notwithstanding that, if he were here he would be the director of forests and would be sitting here to my left.

DR FOSKEY: Thank you very much for that. I guess people are aware that I have been asking questions about the revegetation of the Cotter and the replanting of pines. I was interested that the other day the Minister for the Environment said that the government is, at the moment, reconsidering some of the management issues in relation particularly to the lower Cotter catchment and how best to ensure that the number one imperative for the restoration of the catchment—namely the maintenance of water quality—is met.

Mr Stanhope went on to say that there was a need to adjust some of the decisions that had been made and to identify places for the planting of natives, as opposed to pines, within the catchment. With that in mind, I would like to ask what has happened since March, which is when we last checked with Mr Stanhope's office on this matter, to change the thinking of the government.

Mr Zissler: I can talk about the high level principles. We have been working with the

environmental protection agency and ActewAGL examining the options for the reforestation or replanting of that area. It is under constant review. We will be continuing with our planting this year as per our program. We constantly review what we plant and where we plant it.

DR FOSKEY: The last budget created the position of forest ecologist to provide specialist input for vegetation management, forest recovery, catchment and riparian vegetation management. That is from 2004-05 budget paper 3, page 160. I assume this person has been in the job for a while. Whom does he or she report to? Were their views taken into account in the management strategy?

Mr Zissler: I will have to take that question on notice.

DR FOSKEY: Mr Gentleman reported something in the Assembly on 16 February that he will remember word for word. It reads:

...Forest Road Research Group, UNSW ADFA, the ANU Centre for Resource and Environmental Studies and Greening Australia are undertaking a coordinated research effort in the lower Cotter catchment. That work is designed to gather further scientific data to assist the development of models for future land management decisions.

I would be interested in details of that work, please.

Mr Zissler: Again I will take that question on notice. We have a large number of research projects occurring at any one time and all those reports are taken into account. They are dealt with through a chief executive steering committee which looks after all the CEOs from the water catchment areas.

DR FOSKEY: When you provide me with that information, could you also let me know the other research work that is outside this list I just presented to you?

Mr Zissler: Yes.

DR FOSKEY: On the same day in the Assembly—16 February 2005—the Chief Minister said:

The government is continuing to monitor and, where necessary, revise or finetune its strategies. This is happening now.

I would like some details on how this is occurring—i.e. the monitoring, revision and adjustment of strategies.

Mr Hargreaves: You will have to take that up with the Chief Minister. I don't think it is appropriate that I comment on comments made by the Chief Minister.

DR FOSKEY: Do you know—because, of course, this area crosses over—whether ACT Forests have been involved in decisions to give grants to research institutions, Greening Australia and National Heritage Trust?

Mr Hargreaves: The responsibility for awarding grants is done through processes within

the department. We receive advice from all affected agencies within the Department of Urban Services where we think it is appropriate to do so.

DR FOSKEY: Given your advice about the Chief Minister being the appropriate person in the case of some of my questions, I guess this one is definitely for ACT Forests.

Mr Hargreaves: We'll see.

DR FOSKEY: One of the things that have become evident is that roads and other of those sorts of activities are some of the major problems with the catchment run-off and disturbances. Given that it is the body responsible for roads, et cetera, I would like to be assured that the methods used by ACT Forests are best practice. I am wondering how ACT Forests is always certain that what it does is the best thing that can be done in relation to catchment management, as well as servicing its own operations.

Mr Hargreaves: Firstly, I give you the assurance that best practice is employed. Secondly, whenever we talk about roads throughout the forest and catchment areas, conversations are held between Environment ACT, Emergency Services Australia, the Department of Urban Services and the Roads ACT agency. They use their own expertise when they decide when and if to do something like that, or when and if to replenish, refurbish or indeed to close off roads. Of course, all of that is approved by the Environmental Protection Authority.

DR FOSKEY: Does that mean that ACT Forests goes for advice from Environment ACT on these kinds of matters?

Mr Hargreaves: We have a particularly close relationship with Environment ACT. You might almost say that we were the one family. In fact you might also say that their oneness of purpose is somewhat remarkable.

DR FOSKEY: You might say that!

MR SESELJA: Is that one family sort of like the Labor Party, right and left, holding hands?

Mr Hargreaves: It is not unlike the wets and the dries of the Liberal Party. The only difference between the Labor Party and the Liberal Party is that the Labor Party does not own magazines such as the *Rural Press* to hide their factional infighting.

MR SESELJA: I have no idea what you're talking about!

Mr Hargreaves: I bet you don't! Good on you, Zed. You've spent too much time in Victoria.

THE CHAIR: Order! I believe that brings us to the end of the hearings.

MR SESELJA: I think we agreed that, if we had time, we would go back to general issues.

MR PRATT: I would like to go back to graffiti.

THE CHAIR: Is that a place?

MR PRATT: It could be, with a certain Latin flavour, perhaps. Perhaps it is in Canberra. The question probably did come under 1.4 CUPP, but it is just hard to tie down. It certainly is an area there, and if you look at page 225, where we look at expenditures of CUPP operations, I guess the first question is: is that where we would find details about the allocation of budget expenditure for cleaning up graffiti and other graffiti prevention operations?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Pratt, you have got to understand that the budgets are incremental. What you see most of the time in these budget papers is, in fact, the additional funds that go on top of it. It is actually in the base of the department. The amounts of money that we actually apply to these things are in the base.

MR PRATT: I have a fair idea of how much you are spending on cleaning up, but what sort of funding is set aside for preventative measures, other than graffiti art type programs, which may or may not come under your portfolio?

Mr Hargreaves: One of the things that we are trying to stitch together, in fact, is exactly this question. I was talking to those people. I went out to the CIT and talked to people in the program who actually do the cleanup and that sort of stuff. It is sort of double-barrelled. They have got the cleanup part of it, but they also talk about the whys, the psychological aspects of people who do it and all this sort of stuff, because some of these people actually did it themselves. The object of the exercise is to train them. They are low-income workers or they are on the dole, that sort of thing. We want the message to go to the source as well. Not only do we teach these people to do that, but we also teach them about that sort of stuff. To answer your question about the preventative stuff, we have a full-time coordinator on deck who actually coordinates that sort of stuff, and that cost is \$70,000.

MR PRATT: And that is coordinating the sort of program you have just described identifying—

Mr Hargreaves: And anything else, including any bright ideas about the way in which to go, for example, our relationship with the mural program. I would like to encourage the owner of the building in which the Chairman & Yip restaurant sits to adopt the same approach that the one across the alley did, which is the one that Blades is in. The guy who runs Blades did fantastic work. I think we actually might have even shared in that cost somewhere down the track. I am not quite sure. This guy has made a decision to have a mural on the wall. You have seen it. It has only got the tiniest little bit of extra spray on it. The other side of the wall is filthy as, but it is not offensive and it is not racist and all that sort of thing. It is just filthy as.

What this coordinator will do is go around and try to track the owner down and say, "Look, this is the benefit. If you are interested in doing this, we will put you together with that group of people who coordinate wall artists. Then we can talk about what you would like to have on it and the resources and all that sort of stuff." There is a piece of wall art at the Woden interchange. Once upon a time the Woden interchange was covered in the stuff. Now there is a great big mural on it. It was put there by young

people of different cultures, and you will see very different cultures expressed in that wall art. The coordinator of the anti-graffiti campaign was the guy who interfaced between the interchange, the artist and the people who provided the resources. We have actually got a full-time person whose mind is being applied to this sort of stuff.

MR PRATT: Is that the full scope of your preventative measures or do you have other operational activities to perhaps prevent graffiti being put on our buildings, our government buildings and our bridges? What else are you doing?

Mr Hargreaves: We have got legal graffiti sites, as you know. Some public buildings are actually available for that. We are considering increasing the number of those. We would do that in localities in the general area, whether it is business, restaurant strip, whatever, in conjunction with the nearest youth centre from which a lot of these folks come. That is some. It varies from year to year, depending on the conversations that we have with this particular coordinator. It varies.

MR PRATT: Are you doing anything at all to catch graffiti artists? I notice the 50,315 incidents that have occurred in total over the last—it looks like about four years.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes.

MR PRATT: This is the figure that I think you are aware of, with 77 arrests—

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, I know.

MR PRATT: as a result, which relates to a 0.2 per cent success rate in catching graffiti vandals as opposed to graffiti artists. That is pretty damned low.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, it is.

MR PRATT: What other initiatives do you have in place to try to cut this off at the pass?

Mr Hargreaves: A couple of them, actually. I share your concern about this. I do not mind the clever stuff, and businesses have actually said to us; “Don’t rub it off,” because they think it is funny or they think it is good. But in some places it is just dirty, and the stuff at that locality I just described, it is just plain dirty.

We have done a couple of things. One is a graffiti hotline. We are having conversations with business to try to come up with some joint initiatives on that and apply both our minds to this. As I say, the graffiti hotline is dobbing in people who are doing it. What happens is when we go and actually clean some stuff off public buildings, we take a photograph of the stuff. We record it because you would know of the culture of not dobbing in a fellow tagger. But what happens is that we have caught some of these people and then, when we have caught them, we have got the tag. So we can then do them for a number of the items that they have done and not just the one. They do not get charged with just that one. They get charged with a series of them. As we have greater success with that, we are hoping that the word will go around a bit. You know, I do not know if we are ever going to stamp it out, but I agree with you that we have got to try to stamp it out and be seen to be trying to stamp it out.

The penalties are pretty stiff, quite frankly. The opportunities for police officers to catch somebody in the act are pretty slim. You have to have either a dob-in in the process, which is pretty good, or the police car comes across these people accidentally at the time, and they go, “Yep, gotcha, seen you in the act,” or you have to have sufficient evidence to be able to put up in court, which is where the tags come in. So we have got all those sorts of initiatives as well.

We also talk to young folks in the youth centres, not so much saying: “This is a really terrible thing to do,” but, “What is it that is causing this?” You see, I believe, in fact, that a lot of this stuff is negative attention seeking. It is frustration and anger coming out in young people. We need to find out what is causing the frustration, the anger, the impotence or the lack of recognition that causes them to put their scrawl on a wall. It is not just the thrill of not getting caught, because their chances of getting caught are so slight.

MR PRATT: Surely, minister, given that the ACT is looking so damned grubby and it is impacting—

Mr Hargreaves: That’s bollocks.

MR PRATT: No, no, no. It is.

THE CHAIR: Order!

MR PRATT: It is impacting on our tourist potential and it is having an impact on small business capability. Shouldn’t you be doing a damn sight more than simply worrying about what makes these poor young things resort to carrying out graffiti vandalism? What about the impact on small businesses? Why are we not concerned about protecting them, rather than—

Mr Hargreaves: Well, how about the small business owner, the people who own the actual business, not only the lessee, shoulder responsibility themselves and clean it off within 24 hours, the same way we do? They do not. They do not have the same approach that we do. It is not our building, Mr Pratt.

MR PRATT: So what you are saying is you have no program in place, a totally ineffective approach to stopping graffiti in the territory and no sympathy with small businesses having to wear the load of graffiti they have to wear?

THE CHAIR: Order, Mr Pratt!

Mr Hargreaves: No, I did not say that at all.

THE CHAIR: Mr Pratt, can I remind you of my request not to be inflammatory?

Mr Hargreaves: No, Mr Pratt. In answer to your question, no, that is not right. You have exaggerated it again, and it is not right. What I am saying is that this is a community problem and there has to be a community solution to it. We have our own public buildings. We have a program of removing it. We have a program of education. We have

a program of removing offensive, racist and sexist images that invoke violence on private property. We have that program in place.

We have a program in place to remove any graffiti that is offensive that faces the public on private property. I explained that to you earlier on. What we do not have—and the taxpayer does not have to cop this, Mr Pratt—is the price of removing something on the back wall of a restaurant in an alleyway somewhere. The building owner can do that or the lessee can do that. They can do it in partnership or they can come to us and work out ways in which we can address it. It is not our problem. Are you saying that you are going to put money in your budget when you get in to do that?

MR PRATT: Well, minister, I think—

Mr Hargreaves: Because we will be waiting a long time.

MR PRATT: I will not answer. It is not my job to answer questions here, minister. It is yours.

THE CHAIR: Just ask the question, Mr Pratt.

MR PRATT: Can I ask this question? On the junction of Callam Street and Launceston Street in Phillip, that is, the northern end of Callam Street, not far from the Hellenic Club—

Mr Hargreaves: Near the bridge?

MR PRATT: you have got graffiti scattered all over that bridge there and the drainage system that runs under it, which is the same damn graffiti that has been there for months and months on public property. If you turn around—

Mr Hargreaves: Do you find it offensive?

MR PRATT: Well, I do.

Mr Hargreaves: Do you?

MR PRATT: I do. Here we have a bridge in which the community should have some pride—

Mr Hargreaves: A bridge too far away.

MR PRATT: and it is just covered in graffiti.

Mr Hargreaves: Let me tell you, Mr Pratt, that is one of our legal sites. That is one of our legal sites, Mr Pratt.

MR PRATT: You are proud of it? You are proud of that standard?

THE CHAIR: Order! Order, Mr Pratt!

Mr Hargreaves: It is a legal site.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy has a supplementary, and then Mr Seselja.

MR MULCAHY: Thanks, chair. Minister, I just want to be clear on the policy. You said that if it is on private property and it is offensive or various things in that category—

Mr Hargreaves: In public view.

MR MULCAHY: then you attend to it.

Mr Hargreaves: In public view.

MR MULCAHY: In public view. Take, for example, on Hindmarsh going out through Weston towards Duffy. It is almost uninterrupted graffiti on all the walls facing the highway there.

Mr Hargreaves: Used to be.

MR MULCAHY: They may not be obscene, but they are pretty unsightly. Is it simply that on one side of those fences is private land and it is public on the other side they are not of interest to your agency?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Mulcahy, firstly, it was some time ago when that was really bad. Hang on a second, Mr Pratt. Settle down, petal. What happened was—

THE CHAIR: I will keep the order here, minister.

Mr Hargreaves: Thanks very much. I am just trying to avoid the bait, though, Madam Chair, under your instruction. You know how difficult it is for me to resist that.

THE CHAIR: Just get on with the answers.

MR PRATT: Thank God it is good now!

Mr Hargreaves: What happened was that there was an enormous amount of graffiti down there. We sent the troops—

THE CHAIR: Hang on a sec, minister. Mr Pratt, just settle down. We are almost at the end of the day. I would like to get through without throwing anything at anybody, okay?

MR PRATT: I have run out of tea, chair.

THE CHAIR: That is not my problem. My problem is your interjecting. Let the minister answer Mr Mulcahy's question, please.

Mr Hargreaves: I will let that one go through to the keeper, Madam Chair, about the tea. The graffiti there was attacked by the squad. It is our responsibility to do those fences. In fact, when we had a concerted attack on that, there was a period for about three or four months where it was pristine; it was great. Then they are back.

We know that if we remove things three times really quickly, people go away and find another site because they know that we are going to do it. That works in most of the cases or a lot of the cases. You can talk about building graffiti. It does not necessarily work on fencing graffiti because you are not dealing with the same perpetrators.

So what we have is a two-fold attack on that particular stretch. The first one is to remove it on report, particularly where it is offensive. If it is offensive and we can see it, it goes off, end of story. But where it is not offensive, you have to have another strategy as well because we can take it off and a completely different graffiti idiot comes along and has a go. So what we are doing is actually putting tree screening down the length of that strip. The reason is not so much to hide it as to not give the graffiti artist an audience.

MR MULCAHY: There seems to be a lot out there. I get a lot of calls out in that area, around Weston. I do not know why.

Mr Hargreaves: I can assure you, Mr Mulcahy, it is not the same artist. They are different tags. What happens is we will go and wipe it out three times in a row. That character will nick off and do it somewhere else and then some other graffiti artist comes along and says, “You beauty, a free wall. Whack.” So what we need to do is to deny that person. As I said before, these are expressions of internal turmoil from some young people, and it is an expression now. If we take away the audience for that expression, they go somewhere else. Then, if they go somewhere else and they put their tag on and we spring them somewhere, we will take them out again. If you have got any better ideas, let us hear them. I seriously mean it.

MR SESELJA: Minister, you spoke before about education and prevention. You are going to think I am not asking a serious question here, but it is a serious question.

Mr Hargreaves: I believe you.

MR SESELJA: The impact of the Bruford publicity, what impact has that had?

Mr Hargreaves: Of the?

MR SESELJA: The publicity surrounding Aidan Bruford and the graffiti. Does that have an impact on young people the liaison officers in your department are dealing with in terms of an example of someone senior in the community doing it? An honest answer—

Mr Hargreaves: That is not a silly question at all. I actually applaud you for asking the question because it goes to whether or not the name and shame concept is efficacious or not. I have to say we have not seen evidence since then of a slowdown that we can attribute to that. But I am reminded of a conversation I had with a community group last night, one of a couple I went to with the police in regard to impounding motorcars.

What happened was that we knocked off some cars, something like 23 in the last couple of months since Operation Globin has been in, and we noticed that some of them, at least five, I think, were from the same group of young people. What is happening is that they are 10 feet tall and bullet proof, these people. This is five from the same group. You

would reckon, wouldn't you, after the third car had been knocked off from that group that the rest of them would have got the message. But, no. It has got to five so far. They are saying; "Ho, ho, ho. Look at this. You got your car nicked. That is a bit of a bugger." They are thinking, "It won't happen to me." When it does, they are downcast. They have lost their licence and do not know what to do.

The shame game, the peer shame game, which is what we are really talking about here, is not biting, according to the police officers I spoke to last night. So I have to say to you I do not know whether the naming and shaming thing is going to work. I have no difficulty. If you have a look at the drink-driving thing, the reason why people's names were in the paper because they got done for drink driving was the name and shame idea. Now you do not even look at the list, do you? I do not. I used to. I do not now.

MR SESELJA: I did not know they still published it. I thought they did not publish it anymore.

Mr Hargreaves: Yes, they do. See what I mean.

MR SESELJA: My wife used to like to look at it.

Mr Hargreaves: To find out if she is in it. Now the point is, of course, that when it was introduced, it was all about shame. But nobody looks at it any more, and it is commonplace now that the shame thing almost does not exist either. I do not know the answer to your question and whether or not it is going to work. I have not seen any evidence so far.

MR SESELJA: As the minister responsible, and your department is responsible for cleaning a lot of this up, did you think that the Chief Minister's response was adequate?

Mr Hargreaves: I supported without flinching the Chief Minister's decision not to take action against his staff. What people do in their own time is none of my business and none of his.

MR SESELJA: So when he eventually accepted it, did he do the right thing then?

Mr Hargreaves: Mr Seselja, you are asking me to give you a personal judgment as an individual and not as a minister of this Assembly.

MR SESELJA: But you gave me a personal judgment on the first one.

Mr Hargreaves: No. I would have done exactly what the Chief Minister did because, as usual, the Chief Minister was right.

MR SESELJA: You would have held off from accepting the resignation and then eventually accepted it?

Mr Hargreaves: The Chief Minister is more right than most people you know.

THE CHAIR: Order, minister! Mr Seselja, you have strayed in so many ways.

Mr Hargreaves: We will take care of him under the domestic animals laws—have him desexed.

MR SESELJA: I ask that the minister withdraw that assertion.

Mr Hargreaves: Which bit, the bit about being desexed? All right. We will just have you microchipped, Zed.

THE CHAIR: Order! I think we are done now. Thank you, minister and officials, for your attendance and your assistance today.

Mr Hargreaves: Thank you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: Minister, we will see you tomorrow afternoon.

Mr Hargreaves: Madam Chair, just for the record, before they switch everything off, may I express my appreciation to my departmental officers, who gave their time and expertise in the compilation of these estimates documents.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 5.47 pm.