



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2006-2007**

**(Reference: Appropriation Bill 2006-2007)**

**Members:**

**MS M PORTER (The Chair)**  
**DR D FOSKEY (The Deputy Chair)**  
**MR M GENTLEMAN**  
**MS K MacDONALD**  
**MR S PRATT**  
**MR B SMYTH**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

**THURSDAY, 29 JUNE 2006**

**Secretary to the committee:**  
**Ms S Lilburn (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 that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the committee office of the Legislative Assembly (Ph: 6205 0127).

## APPEARANCES

<b>Chief Minister's Department.....</b>	<b>866</b>
<b>Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services.....</b>	<b>866</b>

**The committee met at 9.35 am.**

Gallagher, Ms Katy, Minister for Health, Minister for Disability and Community Services and Minister for Women

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Lambert, Ms Sandra, Chief Executive

Adrian, Dr Colin, Deputy Chief Executive

Sheehan, Ms Maureen, A/g Executive Director, Housing and Community Services

Denley, Ms Louise, Executive Director, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Hubbard, Mr Ian, Director, Finance and Budget

Ford, Ms Lois, Executive Director, Disability ACT

Whitten, Ms Meredith, Director, Advocacy, Review and Quality

Brown, Ms Pauline, Senior Manager, Child and Family Centres

Overton-Clarke, Ms Bronwen, Executive Director, Policy and Organisational Services

Manikis, Mr Nic, Director, Multicultural Affairs and Community Development Branch

Duggan, Mr Frank, Director, Care and Protection Group

Wyles, Mr Paul, Director, Client and Adolescent Services

Kitchin, Ms Jenny, Director, Partnerships Group

Harwood, Mr Neil, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services

Stankevicius, Mr Adam, Senior Manager, Governance and Strategy

Kelly, Mr Shaun, Manager, Homelessness Implementation

Collett, Mr David, Director, Asset Management

Mannion, Ms Maree, Senior Manager, Organisational Services

Mannion, Ms Marie, Senior Manager, Consumer Advocacy and Quality Services

Hardy, Ms Rosalie, Senior Manager, Therapy ACT

Whale, Mr Andrew, Acting Director, Disability ACT

Chief Minister's Department

Davoren, Ms Pam, Deputy Chief Executive, Cabinet and Policy

Hall, Ms Sue, Director, Community Affairs

**THE CHAIR:** We might get started. You should understand 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 in 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 am sure you all understood that. Minister, would you like to make some opening remarks?

**Ms Gallagher:** Thank you, chair and committee, for the opportunity to appear before you today. I am appearing as the Minister for Disability and Community Services. The portfolio includes Disability ACT, SAAP services, the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support, Therapy ACT, and child and family centres. It has funding of over \$200

million.

I am very pleased to appear in this capacity today. I think the recent ministerial reshuffle has created a real opportunity across the department. Because of my background it is an area in which I have enormous interest and considerable work experience. I am delighted to have the opportunity to be the minister for the entire department, instead of just the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support, as previously. Pulling together all of these agencies under one administration and under one minister gives us the opportunity to deliver a really holistic approach to providing services to people in the community.

This year, I think it is fair to say, across this portfolio that there is an opportunity for consolidation. There have been very significant increases in resourcing to areas within this department in recent years, particularly Disability ACT and the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support. The year is about looking at how we are doing it, identifying areas where we can do it better and looking at innovative ways to deliver services. We can talk about some of that later as we go through the questions from the committee.

In Disability ACT a number of new services will be coming online this year, which will assist us with increased demand for services. There is also the budget initiative to assist younger people who are in nursing homes to live in more appropriate accommodation. This is an initiative that is matched equally by the commonwealth government and is a strategy across the country.

There is \$2 million to improve the environment that people work in at the Holder location of Therapy ACT. This continues the work that is being done for a single therapy service in terms of trying to make the southside hub a better place to work in. There has been significant work done there in the past, and this funding will assist to continue that.

In the Office of Children, Youth and Family Support the reports of allegations of abuse or neglect of children continue to rise. This year we will, I imagine, exceed 9,000 reports, of which 3,500 proceed to appraisal. A lot of work is being done there to manage that workload. As with Disability ACT, we are looking at the services we provide and new ways of providing services, including increasing some of the options around accommodation for young people with very high or complex needs and providing alternatives for some of the models that we have had in the past which may not have met the needs of these children and young people as best as they could.

The Office of Children, Youth and Family Support has a budget of around \$74 million across the different components within it, including care and protection, which takes a large chunk of that. On any given day the chief executive has around 470 children in her care. That changes day by day, but it is remaining fairly steady. Again, we have seen big increases in recent years of the numbers of children under various types of orders or under the care of the chief executive.

Child and family centres are continuing to break all records in the provision of services to families. Chair, you were at the opening of the purpose-built Gungahlin building, although services have been provided there for some time. Services are being provided in Tuggeranong already, but the new building should be finished by the end of this year, hopefully. We will have that building there, which will be fantastic in terms of delivering services to people in Tuggeranong.

In relation to SAAP, as many would know from recent coverage, we are looking at efficiencies across the SAAP sector. We are seeking \$1 million in savings, and I am very confident that these savings can be achieved without reduction in capacity. In fact, with some of the changes that we are looking at in putting in place, I believe that we can increase the capacity and better utilise the services that are there.

Whilst there is some criticism about those proposed savings, a number of services I have spoken to are certainly supportive of the direction that we are taking and are keen to work with us to ensure that the services they provide best meet the needs of the community that needs them. I am sure we will go to many questions around SAAP. As minister, I am confident that we can deliver on the \$1 million savings and increase the amount of provision for homeless people out in the community through new ways of doing things and better utilising the services that are currently funded to provide those services to the community.

I think it is good of the committee to leave the best portfolios until last; we have health tomorrow. We all sit here ready to take your questions and to assist the committee in any way we can.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you very much, minister. I will begin. Page 186 of budget paper No 4, under the general heading 2006-07 priorities on page 185, refers to young people with disabilities currently living in residential aged care facilities. Earlier you referred to your priority to reduce the number of these young people with disabilities living in these facilities. Could give us a little bit more background about that? How is that going to be achieved? Also, you mentioned a number of new services to be implemented in Disability ACT. Could you briefly give us that detail?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. I will ask Lois Ford to talk you through some of those services. The initiative around younger people in nursing homes is, as I said, a joint initiative between the ACT government and the commonwealth government. It actually follows a commitment from COAG, where it seems all decisions are made these days and then flow through, that we need to look at the issue of younger people in nursing homes.

It is not necessarily young people in nursing homes, but younger; it means younger than 65. Initially we will target people under the age of 50 as the primary focus. I think it is also fair to say that we will be looking not only at people who are in nursing homes, but also at people who might be in hospital because of a lack of more appropriate accommodation. They will come into that initial assessment, too.

This initiative will commence with some mapping exercises to find out exactly who fits this criterion, and then, once that information is in place, how we can best provide a service to them. But I imagine it will be a house of sorts. The model of that house I think is yet to be determined and really needs to be talked about in discussion with the people who are eligible for the service.

**Ms Ford:** The ACT has a very good record of actually diverting people from nursing homes. We already have a number of services that support a residential, more person-centred approach. As well, the use of our ISPs has enabled us to prevent young people from going into nursing homes. At this point in time in the ACT, we have

approximately three people under the age of 50 and this program would target them in the first instance. We would be looking at their needs, whether they need a residential approach. There is a component of this service that will be for a residential environment. We will be looking at whether they need a purpose-built residence or whether it would be within another home or in another configuration.

After that we have approximately 43 people who are under the age of 65. The majority of those people are between 60 and 64. We have approximately eight between 50 to 54 and 11 between 54 and 59. So we have a range of ages and a range of abilities within that, we would imagine, and some of those we already do now about. After we have assessed the first priority group, which is the under 50-year-olds, we would then move to the next group and look at what their needs are.

There would be three levels or three types of service provision. One would, as I say, be residential. We anticipate that and there is also, as I say, a component available for that. The other we would be looking at is those young people or younger people who chose to stay within their current accommodation. We would not be forcing them to leave that, but we would be looking at more appropriate supports going into residential aged care to support them.

Then, for those who are at risk, we will be looking at diversion. I guess this does need to be predicated by the fact that there are a large number of people to serve, and it would be a matter of prioritising to meet demand in the most efficient and effective way.

**Ms Lambert:** You also mentioned new services coming on stream, and there are a number of those. We have been in negotiation and consultation with the community around some of those. They are now coming online and will consolidate over the next year. Examples of those are community support services on the north side of Canberra, which is about providing post-school options, in particular, for young people.

There is also the local area coordination service. This will be run by two of the community services. They won the tender for that. That will be Belconnen Community Services and Woden Community Services. That service is modelled on the very successful WA model, which is about having people who broker or who work with people in the community to enable people with disabilities in the community and work with them to access services and support. But it has a strong inclusion model, if you like. So there are a number of those things that we will be consolidating in this year and are coming on online that were funded previously.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. Minister, you would be aware that I am very familiar with the stress that organisations experience when they are putting in grants applications over the years.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** I have had many an opportunity to do that myself in my past life. So I am really interested in this initiative that is listed on page 185, and committee members have asked other ministers questions about this. Could give us your perspective about this initiative with regard to having a centralised unit for the grants and what benefits you think it might bring to the particular community groups that work under this particular

portfolio area. Also, there has been some disquiet that the grants applications might not get proper peer review within this centralised scheme. Could you make some comments about that?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. I imagine you have spoken to Minister Hargreaves about this because it covers his portfolio, too. Anyone who has worked in the community sector, as you and I have, would understand some of the frustration that exists out there. It is not just the number of grants; it is the number of organisations that are unaware of the number of grants or where to go. Some organisations know where every grant is and are very good at applying for them.

Across the sector there are some inconsistencies in terms of a fair go about how you have access to government money. If you are very good and you have got a large organisation, you can probably have somebody who can write grant applications as their full-time job. For some smaller organisations, people probably write them at night after they have gone home from work.

The decision that the government has taken is about trying to provide more consistency and a simpler way of accessing grants programs. In terms of the peer review, because disability, housing and community services will be looking after the health and community wellbeing grants, there is a lot of expertise in that area. I could understand your criticism if we were to look at who gets some money to fix up a footpath or something. I am not a city and territory person and I do not know what their grants are.

There is the expertise within the department to assess those grants. The grant portal, which is part of this, will be a very important part of it. That is the one place where you can go to access information about all of the grants that you would be interested in. I was talking to Winnunga Nimmityjah yesterday, and they have 52 different grants that they need to equip every year. That is between commonwealth and state. Even though they have an overarching agreement with the ACT government, there are a number of agreements that sit under that which they have to report against.

There are obviously better ways we can do this. It is about simplifying it, standardising it. There is a difference between service agreements and grants and we need to clarify that. Part of the work that needs to be done is to have a look at all the different grants and how they work in together. Certainly we will not be removing money from grants programs. I think it is about better using the money that is already there, streamlining it and making it easier for the community sector to apply for those programs.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**Ms Lambert:** It is also about people accessing the system and actually being able to see what is available. We had an example of that the other night at the disability advisory council. One of the members was asking about council funding for a particular item. It was not within the council's remit. But if we had a place where all the grants were listed, we would go and do the work and find out where there might be a grant that suits that application. If everything is on the one portal, that makes it a lot easier for individuals as well to see where the grants are and what the criteria are for them, rather than people endeavouring to look at a range of places and trying to get the information themselves. So it works from the individual perspective. That is the aim,

anyway.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you.

**DR FOSKEY:** We were told the other day that there are two streams. The health and community wellbeing grants I guess are the ones we are talking about today. Will the same categories of grants exist and will there be an allotted amount for each category, as previously, or will there just be a pool of money that moves around the system a bit? Will there still be a peer assessment of some kind in terms of deciding who is allocated the grants? Will the community be advised when the funds are available, and how much?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** The government has asked us to go back to them on exactly how the grants process will work. What we are looking at doing is obviously being very clear about objectives and priorities across the whole of the health and community wellbeing grants program. As part of that, we will obviously need to look at the amounts of categories that there are at the moment, multicultural organisations, for example, being one of them, and what exactly that means in terms of how those organisations or those sectors of populations are able to ensure that they are properly in the pool and may have access to a larger amount of funding than they have already. So that part of it is coming into one grants program.

As the chief executive said, it means that they will have access to a greater amount of money and the criteria will be very clear. The objectives and the priorities will be clear. There will be one place to apply for them. They will be able to see the register of everything that has been funded, and for what. So within government but, more importantly, for the community organisations it gives them a very clear perspective of what is available, what the timing of applications is and whether there are two rounds a year. That is the work we are doing now. It will be available within the next six to eight weeks.

With respect to the peer review, we are looking at what exactly the arrangements are in different areas. I know the arts program does have a peer review process. That is not necessarily the case in other programs. But we will be looking at exactly what they have, and while the administration of the grants process will be in a centralised area, of course its whole make or break will be on how it connects with the business areas in the department and the other departments and how exactly that information and that expertise is used to be able to assess. So, just like at the moment, different parts of different departments are involved in the assessment processes and may or may not bring in people from outside to do that. We will continue to do that.

**DR FOSKEY:** So watch this space?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** Yes.

**DR FOSKEY:** Watch this web space?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** I am already talking to community organisations about the new process and telling them that as soon as we get that information we will get it out to them. It is not that people are concerned. They are just wanting, like you, to know exactly how it will be, and that is the work we are doing now.



**DR FOSKEY:** Will you keep us, as MLAs, in that loop, too?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** I am happy to do that.

**MR SMYTH:** Minister, on page 187 of budget paper No 4, the staff number goes from 972 down to 931. Can you tell us where the 41 staff that are leaving will go?

**Ms Gallagher:** Like other agencies, there will be a loss of staff across this department. We believe that, because of the turnover of staff within the agency, this will be able to be managed through people leaving jobs and some voluntary redundancies over the course of the next year.

**MR SMYTH:** So it will be done in an ad hoc way? There is no plan to reduce specific areas? You are just hoping that people will go and therefore 41 jobs are reduced?

**Ms Lambert:** No, it will not be done in an ad hoc way. We will certainly, as always, be working, as much as possible, to minimise the impact on service delivery areas. But, having said that, there is always churn in the service delivery areas too. We will be having a planned approach, but particularly looking at, if you like, our support functions and focusing in on them as part of this process.

**MR SMYTH:** Can we have a breakdown of where they are coming from?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** It actually includes a transfer of function, and so 28 out of the 41 staff is actually showing a shift between the department and Housing ACT. The reason for that is that we have corporate functions in the department who entirely service Housing ACT and we need to better reflect that that is actually what they do. The loss only differs between 28 and 41.

**MR SMYTH:** Which would be 13?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** That is right.

**MR SMYTH:** Where are the 13 coming from?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** Those are in the back-of-house functions in the department, so primarily in the corporate support area.

**MR SMYTH:** Are they transfers to shared services or are they actual job losses?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** There is some transfer to shared services.

**MR SMYTH:** Of the 13, how many are going to shared services?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** 11.3.

**MR SMYTH:** So you are only losing 1.7 jobs?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** We have some ins from Chief Minister's Department. Thirteen

from community affairs are joining the department; also 3.2 from the Women's Information and Referral Centre are coming from urban services.

**MR SMYTH:** So you are losing 1.7 and picking up 13. So 17.9 would seem to be the loss, then. Are they all coming from back-of-house services?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** Yes, they are. So ICT, procurement and—

**MR SMYTH:** Aren't IT and procurement covered in the 11.3 going to shared services?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** No, they are not.

**MR SMYTH:** There are further reductions there as well?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** Yes, that is right. Then general corporate support is over and above the shared services. As you are aware, the shared services, certainly in the first tranche, are about HR and finance functions. Corporate services incorporate data and media. Anything that is not service delivery is within our general policy and organisational services area. So the cuts are coming from those sorts of areas.

**MR SMYTH:** Page 206 of budget paper No 4 deals with employee expenses and superannuation expenses. They are growing significantly, and I understand the budget itself goes from 101 to 179 as a result of transfers in. To what extent will your wages and super bill grow in the coming year?

**Mr Hubbard:** Could you ask the question again, Mr Smyth?

**MR SMYTH:** Okay. I note that, because of transfers in, the total expenses goes from \$101 million outcome this year to \$179 million next year. How much of the \$179 million is growth in wages?

**Mr Hubbard:** Thank you for that question, Mr Smyth. What you see there are the employees—

**MR SMYTH:** You said that with a straight face.

**Mr Hubbard:** No. I am happy with that. I love that sort of question. If you look at the expenses, you will see the employee expenses line. Our estimated outcome of \$34 million goes to \$58 million. What that does represent, on the whole, is the bringing in of the office.

**MR SMYTH:** Okay.

**Mr Hubbard:** Probably the biggest movement in these accounts, you know, is the shift in the ingredients from just being part of the department to actually bringing in the office—from being a separate entity to bringing it in as part of the DHCS entity itself. We expect our salaries to grow from 34 to 58 essentially as a result of the integration of the office and of community affairs from CMD.

**MR SMYTH:** Can I just make a comment on the presentation?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** If you go back to the staffing head count, it looks like you lose 40-odd jobs. When you go to the actual expenses, it jumps from \$34 million to \$58 million. I understand the reason why.

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** But it is hard to determine the real growth because if you then go to the 2007-08 estimate, you actually lose about another \$480,000. Are further job losses in the 2007-08 year expected?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes. There are two stages in the way that we are driving efficiency savings. In the first year, for 2006-07, there is a proportion of the savings that can be delivered after, in a sense, really assessing how the business is operating, and then most of the impact for this agency will actually occur in the second year.

**MR SMYTH:** So what is the impact for the big loss? How many losses will there be in the second year?

**Mr Hubbard:** We have not done that calculation at the moment. That does really depend on, you know, how the agency moves through next year and into the following. We are looking two years out. As, I think, both the minister and the chief executive said, we expect that due to churn and natural attrition we will quite easily be able to accommodate any changes within the department that are brought on by efficiencies that we need to make.

**MR SMYTH:** But more jobs will go in 2007-08?

**Mr Hubbard:** I cannot say that at the moment because it is—

**MR SMYTH:** You have got less money.

**Mr Hubbard:** We have got less money. There is no doubt about that. So we will actually—

**MR SMYTH:** And you have to factor in, no doubt, a pay increase and CPI?

**Mr Hubbard:** The pay increases and CPI are already factored into those numbers.

**MR SMYTH:** Okay.

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes, without a doubt.

**MR SMYTH:** Just a final question—

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** To add to that, the full year effect of shared services kicks in in 2007-08, so next year it is only five-twelfths, and then in 2007-08 it is the full effect.

**MR SMYTH:** The full effect.

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** The other thing that we are doing is, of course, looking at casual staff and vacancies first. It is really hard to say specifically how many jobs will go because we have a number of positions that are funded but that we have held vacant for different reasons. Those positions will go before jobs.

**MR SMYTH:** I have just a final question on the staffing. The minister constantly tells us how much extra we are spending as a result of the Vardon review and how many extra staff we have employed as an excuse for the 2,500 growth in the public service. As a result of the Vardon review and its implementation, how many extra staff has the department increased by?

**Ms Lambert:** As a department we have increased by all the staff in the office. In terms of the office, the care and protection numbers, what are they, Ian?

**Mr Hubbard:** I am not sure of the exact number. One thing I can tell you is that the budget for the office has increased by about 100 per cent during that period.

**MR SMYTH:** That is okay. I am interested in the staff numbers.

**Ms Lambert:** 130.

**MR SMYTH:** 130; and that is all attributable as an outcome of Vardon?

**Ms Lambert:** That is the increase in care and protection workers as a result of the implementation of Vardon.

**MR SMYTH:** Have any other areas increased?

**Ms Lambert:** And that went from 40.

**MR SMYTH:** All right.

**MR SMYTH:** Have any other areas increased as a result?

**Ms Gallagher:** Of Vardon?

**MR SMYTH:** Yes.

**Ms Gallagher:** Primarily it is care and protection staff, yes.

**Ms Lambert:** But there is also a different executive structure and so on as a result of that.

**MR SMYTH:** I am sure, but were jobs involved in that?

**Ms Lambert:** Yes. Also in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit.

**MR SMYTH:** Can we have those numbers?

**Ms Lambert:** We can provide those for you in a few minutes.

**DR FOSKEY:** It is very hard to tell from the budget with the combining of departments and so on where there might be any savings in disability itself, not that one wants there to be a loss of jobs or anything like that. I was just wondering whether disability has to deliver efficiency gains? Who are you benchmarking your operations against? Where might I find that?

**Ms Lambert:** I am sorry, I missed a bit of the question because I was being spoken to.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am interested in where the cost savings are to be made in disability in particular, whether disability is required to deliver efficiency gains and what it is benchmarking against?

**Ms Lambert:** All the areas of the department have corporate support functions in them and, as Ms Overton-Clarke has already said, if we are going to take savings in terms of jobs, we take them from the back end. In terms of the frontline service delivery in the department, we will be endeavouring as much as possible to quarantine that, at the same time, as always, looking at ways we can more effectively do our business.

**MRS BURKE:** I note from page 185 of BP4 that, as from 1 July 2006, your department has additional policy responsibilities for women, ageing and Aboriginal and Torres Islander affairs. Let me get this straight. You have responsibility for policy development, yet the Chief Minister still remains the Minister for Indigenous Affairs. If that is the case, isn't there a conflict there and who is going to be the spokesperson?

**Ms Gallagher:** No, the Chief Minister is keeping Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs completely and I am taking over women and ageing.

**MRS BURKE:** If you are not doing policy for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, that is not correct, then.

**Ms Lambert:** The department is.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, but they will be answerable to the Chief Minister for that area of responsibility.

**MRS BURKE:** Is that not somewhat confusing?

**Ms Gallagher:** No, I do not think so. It is whether you send a note to Mr Stanhope or you send a note to me.

**MRS BURKE:** That is what I mean. You are going to be doing all the hard work here, minister, and the Chief Minister is going to take the glory.

**Ms Gallagher:** I am used to it.

**MRS BURKE:** I know. You are a woman. Well done. It is a little confusing, I have to say. Does that have funding implications and isn't it a doubling of effort?

**Ms Gallagher:** No, the whole unit is coming across from CMD, as it sits now, to disability and housing.

**MRS BURKE:** So it is just cost shifting; there are no additional costs.

**Ms Gallagher:** No. The costs will go with it. Everything will transfer out of CMD to disability.

**MRS BURKE:** Is it not costing additional to do all that?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** I will give you a really quick breakdown that will help you, I think. The department works to three ministers. For most of its functions it works to Minister Gallagher. It works to Mr Hargreaves for housing and multicultural affairs and it works to the Chief Minister for indigenous affairs.

**MRS BURKE:** As I said, it is very confusing.

**Ms Lambert:** Not for us.

**MR SMYTH:** Is there logic in leaving the Chief Minister as Minister for Indigenous Affairs and transferring the actual functions to a different department if, logically, they could have remained in Chief Minister's?

**Ms Gallagher:** The Chief Minister, as you all know, has a very strong interest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs.

**MRS BURKE:** Why move it?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is all part of the community affairs group within CMD. So, in terms of the move, it is all going across. It really makes no difference and the reason that I have only two-thirds of that work is simply Mr Stanhope's very strong interest in this area.

**MRS BURKE:** As I said, why move it, why go to all the trouble of shifting that section?

**Ms Gallagher:** Because they all work together in the unit. I do not know how many staff work on indigenous affairs, but the Office of Women has about 3.4 staff.

**MRS BURKE:** Has that unit been decimated? That is the issue.

**Ms Gallagher:** No, the unit as it sits is going across, but staff can work across those areas if they need to. I do not know whether Ms Overton-Clarke knows, but the women's area has 3.4 staff, for example. I imagine the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit part of that, whatever staff it has—

**Ms Lambert:** It has four staff, I think.

**Ms Gallagher:** I guess there are more people to support each other in the community affairs area than just leaving a couple of staff at CMD to do that work by themselves. It really makes no difference at all.

**MRS BURKE:** Except you are doing the work and Mr Stanhope is getting the glory, but never mind.

**MR SMYTH:** No, he has still got to do the job.

**Ms Gallagher:** No, there are very clear lines in the sand.

**Ms Lambert:** From my perspective as the chief executive—it is a government decision clearly about ministerial responsibilities, not mine—it brings with it some nice synergies for us. One of them is the link with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit we have set up for the care and protection and the family support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. It also means that a lot of the work to do with people now is in my portfolio and it enables us to have better integration than we had before. For instance, we have mentioned that the Women's Information Referral Centre is coming from the Department of Urban Services, so that we have now got things that are to do with women there. We already do an enormous amount of work with the Domestic Violence Crisis Service and all of that fits there.

**MRS BURKE:** I am not disagreeing with anything you have said. I totally agree. It just seems as though everybody is everywhere.

**Ms Lambert:** I have just got some responses to your question, Mr Smyth, around staffing. We have 130 operational care and protection staff of whom 90 were funded through Vardon; that is the extra number. In the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander unit we have 22 staff. They are additional to those.

**MR SMYTH:** You have an additional 22 as a consequence of Vardon.

**Ms Lambert:** Yes.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Minister, I want to reflect on a couple of points in your opening comments. Of particular interest to me is the Tuggeranong child and family centre. You mentioned that it would be completed by the end of the year. Funding is allocated in budget paper 4, page 204, for child and family centres. Is that specifically for the Tuggeranong centre?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, in the capital program for 2006-07, that is for Tuggeranong.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** In your opening remarks you said that you would expect some questions on SAAP and I will kick off with that. What do you hope to achieve in this reallocation of resources in the SAAP sector?

**Ms Gallagher:** I will start at the beginning. We are hoping to achieve a better utilisation of the existing services. It is fair to say that there are differences across the sector. I think that around 35 different organisations are funded through the SAAP program and there is significant variance in terms of those services operating at capacity and those not. If you look at it across all of the services, the SAAP sector is operating at 79 per cent capacity, with some organisations operating below 50 per cent capacity; that is, there are a number of staff and services funded where occupancy is not being fully utilised and, for government, that is a problem.

We currently overmatch our responsibilities under the SAAP agreement we have with the commonwealth by about \$3.5 million. This year, through this budget, we have sought to take back \$1 million, leaving us still overmatching by \$2.5 million but looking at those services, how they are configured, how we can better support them, and whether there is some organisational change that can be implemented to better utilise the occupancy of those services. We will also be looking at injecting significant additional housing into the SAAP sector this year—I think 20 additional properties—in order to create space and more places for the homeless sector. That is equivalent to about a \$4.5 million capital injection into the sector.

At the same time, we are seeking savings. We are, as I said in my opening statement, looking at the way we do things, ways we can do things better, ways in which we can support additional capacity within the sector, but we are asking the sector to work better, work more effectively and efficiently within the delivery of their services. I know there has been some criticism of this decision, not unexpected, but I have had, as I said, talks with a number of services, as has the department, of course, which is dealing very closely with this, and there are lots of mixed views, I would say, but there is certainly a lot of support for the way in which we are proceeding forward, and that is to make sure that the services that are being funded are delivering what we are asking them to deliver and meeting the needs of the community in which they serve. That is it in a general overview. I am happy to go further into detail. Do you want to add anything?

**Ms Lambert:** Yes, I wish to add something to that, if that is all right. The minister mentioned the transitional housing program. In fact, that will add significant extra beds to the system as well. This year, 2005-06, the total number of supported accommodation beds is 270. With this addition it will go up to something like 316. What we did last year was we were becoming well aware that we needed to inject more crisis response into the system and also to provide more throughput in the system, so I personally met with all the women's services and then we got together.

We were particularly concerned about the response to domestic violence, so we worked together on a new model that we piloted over the Christmas period, which was to free up some housing properties, either our hard to let properties or properties which were awaiting renovation. We always have a churn of those. Over the Christmas period, working closely with domestic violence and the rest of the women's sector, we were able to inject 900 extra bed nights into the system. We did that in a way which did not presume that the only exit point would be public housing or, indeed, the SAAP system. While some people did stay within the SAAP system, there was significant throughput into other forms of accommodation.

So what we are doing this year in relation to domestic violence and with this initiative of transitional accommodation is making sure we can build on that model and have throughput so that SAAP is much more as it is intended to be, the crisis response, and housing is the post-crisis response and we have more throughput. We are using the project that we used over the Christmas period which was very successful. I am not taking all the credit for it. It was also the sector that worked on it with us very closely and we will be modelling that through the work we do in the next year.

Similarly with men's services. The homelessness strategy started with an analysis of the



needs in regard to homelessness in Canberra. One of the areas that was not being looked at was both single men and single men with families. We have actually created new services in that area. We have trialled outreach workers working with those services as well. So we are trying to have a model of accommodation plus support for people, making sure that when they are on the brink of homelessness we have people working with them to make sure that they can stay and sustain their tenancies. So it is quite complex, but there are some models that we have been working on that we wish to bed down more in the next year and the next few years of the SAAP agreement. Ms Sheehan, do you want to add to that?

**Ms Sheehan:** I do not think I could.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** You said that there would be an increase in some of the properties. What is the total number of properties that the department holds? You have disability service properties as well as rented accommodation.

**Ms Lambert:** They are all housing properties. They are all part of the housing portfolio. I am not sure of the total number. Yes, there are 11,500 housing properties. We have 68 disability properties and over 60 SAAP properties. We will be adding 20 with the transitional housing program to that.

**DR FOSKEY:** You talked about some services being underused or underoccupied. Did you consider issues such as services not wanting—for instance, for the safety of some of their clients—to house certain people together so that, in a sense, they were underoccupied? You could not have girls with boys and so on. I do know there are issues around that and good management sometimes requires underoccupation. Secondly, while it is commendable that there is a reasonable array of SAAP services, exit options do seem to be the problem and I was just interested in what you said, Ms Lambert, about being able to exit people from other than public housing because it is my experience that there is a real shortage of accommodation that people might be able to afford.

**Ms Lambert:** But not everybody who is escaping domestic violence does not have the resources to rent in the private sector, either.

**DR FOSKEY:** That is a good comment.

**Ms Lambert:** But there is, of course, a range of people whom we look after. We are targeting our housing to those most in need and we are endeavouring to make sure that there are multiple exit points. We will work more with the sector on this. I would not say that we have got the answer to it completely. But we did start off by saying there will be other places where people will be able to exit and we have got some community housing programs that they work through, for instance, the one with Communities@Work.

**DR FOSKEY:** I think Ms Sheehan wishes to answer my first question.

**Ms Sheehan:** Dr Foskey, thank you for the question concerning the complexity of need of SAAP clients. It is certainly the case that the department works very closely with SAAP services when there are particular issues with a service. We would agree for a short period of time to reduce capacity because of the very intense needs that individual clients might have. We do that on probably a weekly basis. One thing that we do know

about homelessness is that its hallmark is the complexity of need of the people in homelessness services and the SAAP service system needs to be in a position where it understands that complexity is the norm. So, in the way that we fund services and that we describe the services that we expect to be delivered, we do build in funding levels to respect the fact that complexity is the norm.

We simply cannot operate a service system to the benefit of people who really need it if services say to us that although they are funded for 10 beds they can only provide two beds because the clients are complex. In fact, we would say that services are funded to provide services to very complex people at the level at which they are funded. So, while we would not expect people to be operating at 100 per cent every day of the year, across the year they need to do much better than they have been. They absolutely accept this and that is why they are working so closely with us on ways in which they can improve performance and improve occupancy in SAAP generally.

**MR SMYTH:** On the same issue of people moving in and out of the system, the third dot point on page 186 refers to continuing to implement the whole-of-government ACT homelessness strategy. The article on the front page of this morning's *Canberra Times* seems to suggest we have got the worst homelessness in the country of children. Do you agree with that assessment? What are we doing to address it?

**Ms Gallagher:** I have had a quick read of that article. My understanding is that the figures are from an old report. We have actually commissioned some work through the Institute of Child Protection to research this in the territory and provide us with some very good data but also a very good understanding about why this might be the case in order to respond to that. I have not had the time to sit down and be briefed by the department about that very alarming article but there are some doubts, I think, about some of the content of it.

**Ms Lambert:** It is the timing of the data, essentially. My understanding is that it is 2004-05 data. The homelessness strategy kicked off in April 2004. The services then came on line at the end of 2004 and as part of those services for instance, as I mentioned before, we funded new services for families which all have children's workers and outreach. So we actually commissioned that study that is referred to in the paper. That was an initiative of the department, working with the other members of the homelessness committee, to see if what we were doing was having an impact on numbers such as that. But the numbers also need to be taken in the context of how they are actually presented. As we have talked about in these committees before over a number of years, they are not necessarily broken down in terms of actual numbers of people. They represent the number of people who turn up at services and there could be the same people going to a number of services. But Ms Sheehan can provide more detail.

**MR SMYTH:** Do you have different data to debunk what is in the paper this morning and can you prove that the services that you have put in place have actually reduced the incidence of homelessness in young children?

**Ms Lambert:** That is why we commissioned the study with the Institute of Child Protection, to do some objective work around that.

**MR SMYTH:** But you must have a feeling already as to whether the strategy is working

and the things you have put in place are actually having an effect.

**Ms Lambert:** Informal feedback from the sector certainly tells us that there has been a significant difference in terms of the way homelessness is being approached. We are also, as I have said, doing work with the Institute of Child Protection and earlier this year, I think, we provided a report on the homelessness strategy which indicated some of the changes that were occurring. So my judgment is, given the feedback that I get from the sector and given the interventions we have been able to make, that change is occurring.

**MR SMYTH:** Was all the implementation from the end of 2005?

**Ms Lambert:** No. The first new services under the strategy—remember, we already had services—came on line at the end of 2004, most of them, and they were quite new models of services.

**Ms Sheehan:** The first point to make about the data that we are referring to is that it is actually a record of services that were provided to homeless children. It is not a record of homeless children that were without any service provision at all. It is a combination of children that came with their mothers or their fathers into the service system and we provided a service to them. I think that we need to be glad that we were in a position where we were able to provide services to those children. Ms Lambert has now described that since that time new services have come on line. They are targeted to the specific needs of children, particularly around models where families can be in properties that can eventually become their long-term home and they are supported by services with specific children's workers to enable those children to address the needs that they have around homelessness. Not just the needs of the parents who have brought the children with them, where the parents' needs are addressed, but the children's needs are addressed as well. So we are building on the services that we have provided and we are doing it in a way which is very focused on the needs of children.

**MR SMYTH:** Initially, comparing like with like, how many occasions of service have the existing programs and the new programs provided?

**Ms Sheehan:** We have a national data collection for SAAP services which all services that are funded under SAAP are required to contribute to and that data collection will be made available in the next few months. That is nationally available and we are certainly able to provide that to you.

**MR SMYTH:** Okay, but can you give us a progress report year-to-date on how many occasions of service you have provided?

**Ms Sheehan:** I can't give you a progress report because it is national data collection funded under SAAP with the National Data Collection Agency, but when we do have those figures available we will certainly be able to provide them to you.

**MR SMYTH:** But you provide the figures. Don't you have some indication?

**Ms Sheehan:** No, the individual services provide the figures directly to the National Data Collection Agency and I think it would be quite wrong to try to second-guess a

national data collection which is extremely accurate and mostly done electronically. We will be very happy to provide those figures once they are available.

**Ms Lambert:** Having said all of that, I do not underestimate the complexity of homelessness for children and the rights of children in that circumstance, and it is a very difficult issue for us and for services as well. It is a clear issue for us in eviction and one of the things that we have looked at closely in housing when we are moving to eviction is, if there are children involved, how we deal with the rights of those children. Quite often that is a circuit-breaker for us in terms of working hard with those families to sustain their tenancies and in that circumstance we do often call on the service system to assist us. But it is very complex, which is why we commissioned the study, and it is about the rights of children in a very difficult circumstance and how we can continue to support the children as opposed to, although it is not in direct opposition, their parents. That is why we asked the Institute of Child Protection Studies to do some work on this to give us better guidance.

**DR FOSKEY:** When will it report?

**Ms Lambert:** I am not sure of the time frame for it. We have just started the work. I am assuming that it will be done in the next tranche of this year.

**DR FOSKEY:** In this financial year.

**Ms Lambert:** No, the beginning of the next financial year, so I am talking about the calendar year.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am looking forward to seeing it.

**Ms Lambert:** I have just been told that it is due in December.

**Meeting adjourned from 10.32 to 10.51 am.**

**THE CHAIR:** We are going on to output 1.1.

**MRS BURKE:** I turn your attention to page 188 of BP4, looking at disability and therapy services. With 188 we will kick off, and you will also need to look at pages 206 and 221. This is all in relation to total cost. Firstly, could you explain why there is a decline in the total cost of this output class of \$22.854 million and a subsequent fall in the government payment for outputs by \$16.510 million? This is Ian's favourite topic.

**Mr Hubbard:** There is a big difference here. I apologise in advance. Giving you a good presentation on the output classes with the integration of the office made it quite hard. As you see there, what has happened basically is that—say we just go for GPO, government payments for outputs, which has gone down by the amount you have said—there are different ingredients in this output class now.

If you look at the bottom of page 188, you will see that we have taken out the previous output class, which was organisational services, and put therapy services into the output class. There are a few ins and outs on this one, just on output class one. We have shifted therapy services from the output we originally had it in, which was early intervention,

and moved it into this output class, which we now call disability and therapy services.

Generally there have been some movements across the output classes as a result of the restructuring of the delivery of these services in the department. We have put them under headings which we believe are more representative of the service delivered. I apologise for that because some of the numbers move quite dramatically.

That really is the result of putting therapy services in and taking organisational services out. I believe there was previously a more expensive output in there, which I think was community and homelessness services, which was a bigger number than therapy. When you do all the additions, that is how it works.

**MRS BURKE:** Looking, therefore, at page 221, that section is the operating statement from disability and therapy services. If we look back to page 206, you have the same figure quoted for estimated outcome 2005-06 for the whole department as you do just for disability and therapy services. It is the same figure of \$44,374,000. Can you explain that? You talked about big jumps.

**Mr Hubbard:** Hang on. I need to catch up with you.

**MRS BURKE:** Page 221.

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes. Where is the number you are talking about?

**MRS BURKE:** It is on the grants and purchased services for disability and therapy services. Keeping in mind that that is not a department operating statement, we then go back to page 206 which gives the operating statement for the whole of the department. That grants and purchased services figure is exactly the same. Can you explain that?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes. There is a pretty straightforward answer. Grants and purchased services was the total grants and purchased services in the community development output. As I said to you, the operating statement on page 221 is the operating statement of just that output.

**MRS BURKE:** But then on page 206, it is the whole of the department?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes. That just shows the majority of grants.

**MRS BURKE:** All of them, in fact; not the majority, I would say.

**Mr Hubbard:** I am just checking to see whether the numbers add up. Yes, they do. That is what it is representing. With the office coming in, we have restructured community development out of that area. It is a 2005-06 estimated outcome, so it is not including the office at this stage in this particular output. As you will see, the majority of grants and purchased services are in there.

**Ms Gallagher:** It rises considerably in 2006-07.

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes, with the addition of all the purchased services.

**Ms Gallagher:** And decreases.

**MRS BURKE:** In relation to my previous question, the operating statement of this output class in budget paper No 4 at page 221 shows a decline of \$22.008 million in grants and purchased services. What grants programs and services have been cut to achieve the cost saving?

**Mr Hubbard:** Not cut.

**MRS BURKE:** They are not?

**Mr Hubbard:** They are not cut; they are shifted into a different output class. You will actually see the additional output class.

**MRS BURKE:** It is good playing with these figures, isn't it?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**Mr Hubbard:** Let me just show you where they are.

**MRS BURKE:** One could almost get lost, couldn't one, wondering what money is going where, to whom and why.

**Mr Hubbard:** As I said to you, I apologise for the presentation because it is quite complex. One thing we can tell you is that the funds have not reduced overall. You can see that from the operating statement.

**MRS BURKE:** You are saying it is offset somewhere else.

**Mr Hubbard:** We just shifted that section into a different output class.

**MRS BURKE:** They are interesting figures, you would have to agree, when you have the same figure for one section as shown for the whole department. Maybe you could express it a little differently. If there is more information you want to give to the committee, I am sure they would appreciate that.

**Ms Gallagher:** As Mr Hubbard has said, it is difficult because of the office coming in this year. You see these big variations.

**MRS BURKE:** You would have to agree it does not reflect that in the notes, though.

**Mr Hubbard:** No. It does reflect that in the notes. Below each output class, you can see that it shows it is either a new output or a new—

**MRS BURKE:** No, but not in the way we are looking at it.

**Ms Gallagher:** You have to get it at the beginning to follow it through.

**MRS BURKE:** That is right.

**Mr Hubbard:** Can I give a bit of an explanation of where the funds have been shifted over to?

**MRS BURKE:** Yes, please.

**Mr Hubbard:** If you look at page 190, you will see that the community development budget has shifted into output class 3, and that is where your ins and outs are. That is a larger number than you have for therapy. That explains the difference between the two.

**MRS BURKE:** Does it?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**MRS BURKE:** I guess we will leave that one there.

**Ms Lambert:** Mr Hubbard is the expert on the numbers, but the changes are shown in the next financial year, not this financial year. If you have a look at the one you were looking at on page 206, you can see in the 2006-07 year that, for the whole department, the grants and purchased services go up to \$74 million.

**MRS BURKE:** That is right. It is a huge shifting of money. I think there needs to be a better explanation for the committee.

**Ms Gallagher:** It will be better next year. It is difficult because of consolidating CMD and the office.

**MRS BURKE:** Yes, I understand that. We had this last year. If there is any better explanation that would help the committee, that might be helpful. Rather than hang on this for too much longer, I think it deserves a bit more explanation than we have here.

**Ms Gallagher:** I think we have explained it as much as we can, though. I am not sure what more we can add.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** It seems pretty straightforward to me.

**Ms Lambert:** There is quite a long explanation on page 214.

**MRS BURKE:** So you would like to explain it, Mr Gentleman?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** No. I said it seems pretty straightforward to me.

**Ms Gallagher:** We can tell you there is no money going missing. Mr Hubbard is not sneaking off with 22 million bucks—are you?

**Mr Hubbard:** No.

**MRS BURKE:** No. We were just wondering if there was a net reduction or if it was being offset somewhere else.

**Ms Lambert:** No. There is no reduction.

**Mr Hubbard:** I think it is worth looking at the note on page 214 which splits up the grants and purchased services. It is about halfway down. There is a dash point there that explains the increase of \$29.737 million. You can see how many ins and outs there are. There is a lot of detail there.

**Ms Lambert:** It should be much simpler next year because the office will remain as part of the financial entity. The reason is we have integrated them now. There was a separate operating statement.

**MRS BURKE:** We had this in disability and housing.

**Ms Lambert:** Yes, we did.

**Mr Hubbard:** I apologise because the presentation is very complex this year.

**MRS BURKE:** That is all right, I think.

**Mr Hubbard:** It is very hard to make it simpler in the document without having screeds of stuff at the end.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I take you to page 195 of budget paper No 4. The officers earlier on touched on supported accommodation places. The target for 2005-06 was 327 and the actual outcome was 334. The target for this year is 327. If you need to find those seven places again, where will you get them from?

**Ms Lambert:** Accommodation support you are referring to?

**Ms Ford:** Sorry, can you just—

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, sure. It says there that the target for 2005-06 was 327 and the outcome was 334. The target for this budget is 327. If you need to find another seven places, where do you actually get them from?

**Ms Ford:** The estimated outcome for 2005-06 was an overcounting by one of our non-government organisations when we ordered their acquittal. They actually overcounted, so the actual estimated outcome for that period was 322.

**DR FOSKEY:** I refer to enhanced integration of disability, housing, therapy, et cetera, which I guess is a whole-of-department thing. One of the issues raised with us is the need to ensure that our tenancy and support services, although provided by different parts of the department, work well together.

I refer to people who at the moment might be housed inappropriately, perhaps with their parents, who do not fall into the high needs category of the housing list but still need to move before their parents are unable to support that move. This is a dilemma for parents with young people, or even ageing children, with a disability.



There are three things here: how the links between disability services and housing are going, will the cut in SAAP not make a difference to the ability to house people with a disability and does the fact that there does not appear to be any growth at all in community housing make a difference. I heard you refer to Communities at Work and their community housing role earlier on. Those three things—links with housing, cuts in SAAP and lack of growth in community housing.

**Ms Lambert:** I will start answering that. Ms Ford and Mr Whale may have some other things to add. In terms of the links with disability and housing, we have tabled in the Assembly changes to the public rental housing program. That enables us to include in our priority one category, as we are now framing it, those people who are at risk of their natural supports breaking down when they have a disability. We have expanded our criteria in terms of that particular category.

In the \$10 million that we have had provided over the next three years, we will be looking at quarantining some of those dollars—probably about \$1.5 million of that. This is straying into Minister Hargreaves's territory, of course, but we are looking at that in terms of keeping that for models for disability housing.

In terms of the community housing, we have already, through the community housing program, provided significant funding for disability models. One of those you would be well aware of is the Abbeyfield model, which is now being built.

Another is the Link model, a partnership with Centacare, which is modelled on the network models in the UK. That is about people with intellectual disability living within a particular geographical area and having a worker to support them in terms of their living arrangements—a very successful model.

In relation to SAAP in terms of disability, my information from the numbers I have seen—and these are, again, 2004-05 numbers—is that we do not have a significant demand in our SAAP services for people with a disability, but we do provide those services. I do not see that they will be affected because the bed nights are not being affected by the change to the funding arrangement with SAAP. I assume they will still be able to be accommodated.

As you would also be aware, Minister Hargreaves, in the lead-up to his housing summit, held a forum specifically on people with a disability and housing. We will be working with CCHOACT. We will be funding somebody to work with CCHOACT to continue the work that was begun in the housing summit. That is a sort of broad overview of that. I do not know if, Ms Ford, you would like to add anything.

**Ms Ford:** I would just like to add that the housing and tenancy working group, the previous one from the disability reform working groups—developed a set of guiding principles for housing for people with disability and just that issue of how housing and support come together. Those principles were extensively consulted on and have been adopted as the guiding principles for how we would move forward.

In addition to that, when Minister Hargreaves had his housing summit, we had done a round of research around different support and tenancy models for people with disability. We looked at arrangements such as a shared tenancy, where a person who does not have

a disability may live with a person with a disability and, through that relationship, provide some support, which is very normalising in the community. That is one of the models parents would like to explore. In fact, one of our non-government organisations uses that model extensively in its service delivery.

The other thing we have been exploring is the notion of a friendly landlord for those people with a disability who may be in the community housing sector who need additional support to assist them to live independently within their own home. A provider will provide services over and above those that would commonly be provided through public housing or community housing.

That might be additional support around maintenance, assisting a person to set up their home environment, keeping an eye on the tenancy arrangements if it is a shared arrangement, sometimes negotiating between tenants to ameliorate any problems that might be arising, and also alerting the support providers if there are issues related to that.

Another model we looked at was the notion of home ownership for people with disability. We did some work around the trust funds and how home ownership may well be achieved. As you would be aware, normally people would suggest that people with disability cannot own a home, for a variety of reasons. What would need to happen is to enable families to either give through a trust fund or buy a home for their child so that when they pass on—or die—they are secure in the tenancy.

The other area we looked at was whether within housing there needed to be a nominal amount of housing that would be available for people with disability throughout the year so that, when people got support funding, the match was more easily made.

Those are some of the projects that have been looked at by the reference group. That is under reference group three of future directions. We will be starting to do some project work. We have indeed done work on it already; it is just moving that forward.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thanks. That was a very comprehensive answer. I will explore future directions later.

**MS MacDONALD:** There has been quite a lot of publicity around the staffing shortages for disability support workers. Can you outline how you are responding to this, and what success you had with it.

**Ms Lambert:** We have worked very hard on this. We have talked to the committee over a number of years about the issues we have had with staffing. When I took over responsibility for this area we had an extremely casualised work force. We had quite significant difficulty recruiting and we also had quite a significant turnover. We have been able to work on all of those. We have diversified our recruiting and we have actually improved our retention rate dramatically. Mr Whale, do you want to add to that?

**Mr Whale:** We have undertaken a number of new strategies in our recruitment processes, targeting the areas of, initially, recruitment, induction and training, and then working with the community sector to ensure we are leading the way across the whole sector in relation to improving staffing levels for people with disability. With regard to the recruiting, we now advertise a lot more widely. We tend to target our recruitment

campaigns to particular demographic groups, so we maintain a balanced mix of staff across the service.

We also provide information sessions when we do our recruiting, about the service and about the job, so people have an understanding of what they are applying for when they seek a job with us. We also provide training assistance in writing the applications. That has had a huge effect on the quality of the applicants we are getting across our services.

Once people start working with us we put them on a six-week induction process of both classroom and on-the-job training. That covers a whole range of areas from basic orientation around disability through to particular health matters and care matters, including things such as epilepsy, autism and areas such as that.

These processes have had a big effect directly on our retention and recruitment rate. They have also increased the quality of service and care we provide. They have also enabled us to reduce the level of dependency we have had in recent times on agency staff, and we have a more stable work force. One of the biggest issues families raise is that continuation and quality of care of the staff.

We are also working with the community sector with shared training, exploring development opportunities, looking at things such as the disability certification for training that CIT run, and ensuring that is more directed towards disability services. We also conduct annual networking and workshops for the sector, both government and non-government, about specific issues in relation to support workers for disability.

**Ms Lambert:** Our turnover rate has actually dropped quite significantly. Just prior to my taking over, it was something like 28 per cent. It is now around 12 per cent, which is generally quoted as the public sector average for turnovers.

In a very tough area of service delivery, that is a significant achievement for the disability leadership, really. It is an area, though, that we need to continue to work on because, in times of full employment, that is an area where we have challenges in recruiting staff.

The profile is changing a bit too. I think in one of our rounds last year we had a lot more interest from students in this sort of work because it is part-time work that manages to enable people to do their study and so on as well.

**MS MacDONALD:** You said that, when you took up the job, it was at 28 per cent and it has dropped to around 12 per cent, which is excellent. How does that compare to other jurisdictions? We obviously compete with other jurisdictions for disability workers. Having worked in that area myself, it is a hard area to work in.

**Ms Lambert:** I am not aware that we have done comparisons with other jurisdictions, but we focus very much on trying to have fewer casual staff, changing the profile of the workplace and working, as Mr Whale has said, on training and doing the training with the community sector because of the sharing of the work force between the two areas.

From conversations with my counterparts in other jurisdictions, I am well aware of how difficult it is everywhere to recruit staff for this area. While we have done well, I think

there are some peaks and troughs in this as well. As I said, when you are staring at pretty well full employment, that means it is an issue in recruiting into all the areas of human services. We actually have to focus a lot on our recruitment campaigns and the conditions we provide people with when they are here.

**MRS BURKE:** Looking at page 195, it follows on quite nicely and dovetails into what we have just been talking about. If we look at item f, client satisfaction, I note that the targets for 2005-06 were 75 per cent, the estimated outcome was 75 per cent and the targets in the future, for 2006-07, were 75 per cent. Why is 75 per cent the best you are hoping to achieve in terms of client satisfaction?

**Ms Gallagher:** I guess there is always a difference of opinion about how you set targets and what measure you mark yourself by. In other portfolios I have been asked a similar question. It is about setting a realistic measure. The fact is that, in this area of service delivery, achieving perhaps higher than 75 per cent is unlikely. That does not stop you from achieving higher.

This is an estimated outcome, of course. If we get 80 or 85 per cent, then we report against that. My understanding is that it is about setting a realistic expectation. I think 75 per cent is a pretty high measure. If you achieve that, I would think any service would be doing quite a good job.

**MRS BURKE:** Yes. You may be getting the same feedback as I am. It is fairly disappointing, in view of the excellent moves that are in place to train and retrain staff. Many parents are not satisfied, simply because of the way they are being treated. I am not talking about front line people or junior departmental officials. That is disappointing. I think Ms Lambert may take note of that and may not need to make a comment on it.

Perhaps you are hedging your bets and saying, "Well, we had better not say more than 75 per cent because we know there are some inherent problems, but we are training staff." With the increased emphasis on training, as Ms MacDonald has said, and as has been so articulately explained by the department, one would have hoped for perhaps a little increase in the past record.

**Ms Gallagher:** I think we have to be mindful of the fact that this is a very difficult area to please everybody, particularly the provision of services to families who have a child or a young adult with a disability. The reality is you are not going to be able to please everyone. Parents and families are going to want either more or different types of care than we are able to provide. It is a delicate balance.

I know, from my experience with the department and from discussions I have had with parents as well, that this department tries to be extremely responsive to what parents are requesting and to what people receiving the service actually need. But, at the end of the day, we cannot be everything to everybody. I think setting measures such as this is realistic.

As I said, if we get more than that, that is great, but this is an estimate of where we think we are heading. These targets are usually set after looking back over previous years at what is achievable. As I said, I think 75 per cent is a pretty high measure. We are achieving 75 per cent. Of course that means it can go above that. But it shows a very

high level of satisfaction overall with the quality of the provision of service in this area. But that is not to say things cannot improve or that everybody is happy.

**MRS BURKE:** No. I am glad to hear that, because I think people feel that they are treated like second class citizens and have somehow been pushed into a corner. They are not being represented on various bodies where they could give you the information. They feel as though you do not want to hear their advice. Ms Lambert might want to say something here.

**Ms Lambert:** I am very happy to comment on that. I make myself as available as I can. You would be interested to know that I meet very regularly with the client guardian forum and indeed receive emails and talk with them as I need to. I have asked them to ask parents who are dissatisfied to contact me directly if they want to. I always make that offer when parents come to me.

Sometimes parents do not take me up on that offer, though. But certainly I have direct contact. We work very hard to engage people in our services, and I know we have to always go that extra yard. I am very comfortable, if people talk to you, to have them talk to me. I am very comfortable for that to occur. It happens now.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you. Just as a bit of further feedback for you, the parents feel that meet the director meetings are simply a waste of time because they are just information sessions from the department. There does not appear to be a two-way flow. Maybe you want to take that on board.

**Mr Whale:** We have made a number of changes to the meet the director processes and we now have information sessions. One of the issues that we know is a concern with parents and guardians is the role of key workers and some of the functioning around key workers.

In the February or March meet the director meeting this year we had a three-quarters of an hour session getting feedback and incorporating those proposals from parents and guardians into a formal structure that we have now implemented around improving the quality of key workers.

In the meet the director session we had just a few weeks ago, we further took up that issue. We also talked about the role of IPs—individual performances—packages and improvements we can make with that. We are having a very clear dialogue. We would like to see a lot more people attend the meet the director meetings. We are looking at ways of increasing the participation rate and getting more information out to parents.

**MRS BURKE:** I think that participation is the key. If you are making sure that you are involving people, not just talking to them, that would be good. I think given all the information just provided to me, I still don't see why we cannot raise the bar a little. Hopefully, as the minister says, we will move from 75 per cent to something a little higher.

**Ms Lambert:** I can assure you that as someone who has had, as you know, significant experience in human service organisations I am very much aware that there needs to be a focus on continuous improvement. The other thing I would say is that when I do meet

with parents they all acknowledge that things have changed quite dramatically for them, but that we still have a way to go. I would expect that in any reform process. We have made a difference; we continue to make a difference. We need to listen continually to the people that are our clients to continue making that improvement. So I certainly hope that we can improve on that satisfaction rating too, because that is what it is about when you are running a human service area.

**MRS BURKE:** And I would link that to group homes as well; so hopefully they are being listened to. Thank you.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Minister, I have a supplementary question on this one. With these meet-the-director community forums, will parents and guardians at some point in the future be able to look at a change and see where their ideas or input have been able to affect something that is tangible?

**Mr Whale:** Yes, thank you, Mr Gentleman. We do provide feedback, like I said. At that earlier director meeting we had, literally, a whiteboard type session. We got a lot of feedback from participants at the meeting. At the follow up meeting we did give them a lot of feedback as to the information we received, what we had done with it and how we had actually moved it into a formal structure within the department. We will also be looking at things like newsletters and use of the internet to make sure some of those feedback sessions are further transferred to the wider users of the service that don't attend those meetings or who are not able to attend the meetings.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** So from that second feedback meeting, were these parents and guardians able to have a bit of ownership? Did they see that they had actually made a difference?

**Mr Whale:** There was a very positive feedback from the fact that we actually had listened and that we actually had implemented changes around some of the stuff they had raised. So it was very positive.

**Ms Ford:** Can I just say in addition to that, that meet-the-director meetings are conducted largely around our individual support services. It is important to recognise that people who place their children in care or whose children go into care and support, particularly within the government services, often have other emotion around that. It is not as simple as saying, "Well, we hand it over to you and it's for you to care." We work with 169 clients, over 400 families and 256 staff. And that is what we manage, just within that ambit of the meet-the-director group.

**MRS BURKE:** Particularly with meeting the parents, you make a good point.

**Ms Ford:** Absolutely. With ageing parents in particular, they have high anxiety as to, "What will happen to my child when I die, who will ever care for them, who will be the guardian for them, who will make sure that they are all right?" There is always a healthy tension between the service provider and the families that use the service. So in defence of our 75 per cent, whilst we would want to see the satisfaction rate rise, we would anticipate a very healthy tension between families and the service provider to ensure that the quality continues to improve. We rely on that feedback to improve areas of practice.

**Ms Lambert:** As I mentioned before, if you are looking at continuous improvement, as you always must in the human services, one of the conversations Ms Ford and I have been having recently is that we really must have a more intense focus over the next six months around parents who are ageing and who have children with a disability, who want to get more certainty and so on. And that's what we need to do. We actually get the feedback and then we endeavour to work on that. That will be a strong focus, and it fits in, as I have said, with the changes to the public housing rental program, which is making some housing available for that purpose as well. We have to work on continuous improvement. As I said, as someone who has run human service agencies for a while, nothing is absolute and you have actually got to keep working on what you are doing because the dynamics shift as well.

**THE CHAIR:** Dr Foskey?

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes, I would like to go back to some of the figures in the budget. I note on page 188, output class 1, that disability and therapy services appear to have reduced from \$82.4 million to \$65.9 million. Even adding new output 1.2, therapy services with output 2.2, the overall figure is \$16 million less for 2006-07. Is this correct and, if not, what other areas have received funding that was previously reported under disability and therapy services?

**Ms Gallagher:** I am not sure whether you were in the room but this relates a bit to the question that we got asked at the beginning of this session from Mrs Burke.

**DR FOSKEY:** I don't want to take up precious time in repetition.

**Ms Gallagher:** Well, I think you have asked a slightly different question. Essentially it relates to different ingredients in output class 1.

**Mr Hubbard:** Thanks very much, Dr Foskey. The minister was right about the change of ingredients in the various output classes. With output class 1, in 2005-06 we did have disability community development and organisational services. Community development, which was a larger number than therapy, as far as the budget that goes towards it, was shifted into output class 3; so if you have a look at output class 3.1, that related to community development in your output statements.

**DR FOSKEY:** Okay.

**Mr Hubbard:** Therefore, there was a much larger budget for that output class itself. One thing does happen: if you add up the operating statements of all the output classes, they will add up to the numbers in the budget papers for the 2005-06 year. It is reasonably easy to track it through. I can show you the maths behind the shifting of the—

**DR FOSKEY:** I would rather not go into that detail now because there are a lot more other issues that I would like to explore.

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes, but that's the simple rationale to it.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thank you.

**Mr Hubbard:** We have simply shifted the budget from one output class to another without diminishing it at all. That is an important point.

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes, and we can follow that through later on, if that is okay, with the transcript from the earlier question, which I missed, that elucidates the point.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, it was a similar question.

**Mr Hubbard:** I might just quickly make the question a bit clearer. I wish Mrs Burke was here because I could really give the simple explanation to that number now.

**Ms Gallagher:** You might want to do it on paper.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thank you. We non-accountants do appreciate it.

**Ms Gallagher:** I know. They love it.

**DR FOSKEY:** I was just wondering, given our concern and, I know, the ACT government's concern about the impact of the welfare-to-work policies of the federal government, has the department given any thought to preparing a strategy to deal with, potentially, an increase in demand for support and services? It is quite likely that people, as they are required to go to work, but for various reasons cannot find a job or cannot do a job, will start to lose income. Have you given any thought to how disability might deal with that?

**Ms Lambert:** Before Ms Ford responds, we have actually given thought to that across the agency. Ms Sheehan talked the other day when she was here with Minister Hargreaves about what we have done in housing, and Ms Denley can talk about the work we have done in relation to foster carers as part of this exercise as well. But if we stay with disability, Lois, you might mention what we've done in relation to your area.

**Ms Ford:** Yes, certainly. It is necessary to accept that a lot of the 3.5 per cent of the population with a core profound disability will either be on supported employment or in employment that is less than 15 hours a week. A number of them will be in that category. We, however, know that there is also a proportion of those people that would move into or are already in full-time employment.

Most of our strategy one under future directions, which is influencing policy and culture, is working with the community and with the business organisations to create access points for people with disability both as employees, employers and as customers of those services. Last year we started a program called BLITS, business leaders innovation thoughts and solutions, which was targeting business leaders in the ACT. We held a very successful round table event in September of 2005 in which we invited 21 business leaders to the table to discuss amongst themselves, but under the guidance of a facilitator, the ways in which people with disability could increase their social, economic, recreational and cultural participation in the ACT community life.

They came back to us with a range of ideas, ranging from working with single large organisations that might provide a range of opportunities for people with disability, both in employment and also as customers. For example, this could include the clubs or



tourism, and raising the profile for people with disability in those organisations. They looked at ways in which we could better support organisations to create jobs for people, particularly where there are jobs that have been taken by highly skilled workers and those jobs are more office-type jobs or rote-type jobs that could well be covered by a person with disability.

They also looked at ways in which we could look at supporting people with disability to enter into the work force with the types of support they need in doing environmental scans of businesses to see what that may be and giving the organisations some ideas on how they can change their work environment to accommodate that. There was a whole range of ideas that came out of that.

We have followed those ideas up with a selected group of those business people to further advance them. Then we are now just undertaking a survey of businesses across the ACT to get a better understanding of what business would see as being good business principles for working with people with disability. We are looking at a three-year program to continue to roll this out through the community. The central thrust behind it is, as I say, to open up access points for people with disability so that specialist services are not continuing to provide employment—social and recreational—in a vacuum outside of the normal environment.

The other area that we have been very proactive around is the access-to-government strategy. It is opening up access for people with disability to government and also the government's own employment strategy. So there are areas we are looking at to ensure that people can move into disability. Alongside of that is looking at the key principles that we would have around community access to ensure that people with disability don't simply enter into a day activity or social-type program, that those programs are targeted to supporting people to develop their skills so that they can engage better with the community and be more included in the normal community and normal community settings when they are looking at social and recreational activities.

**DR FOSKEY:** Have you had a look at the idea of social tendering, which is where groups can involve some people with a disability themselves actually in contract to deliver services to their own community. It is something that is quite well advanced in some precincts such as Queensland.

**Ms Ford:** Yes.

**DR FOSKEY:** And also have you given any thought to the encouragement of the formation of cooperatives, workers' cooperatives, again to facilitate the same kind of empowering process.

**Ms Ford:** Yes, we have given thought to those areas. For those to be successful we need to work quite strongly with the families and people with disability as a base to start developing. Families have traditionally looked to services to provide. Many families have fed this back to us; so it is anecdotal. They haven't felt that they have been able to actually be the ones to make the decisions around how their services will be delivered.

We have funded three family governance models in the ACT as small pilots to start to see how families do work in family governance and we have also funded another model

called consumers in control. It is a consumer-governed model. That is to start the development of families themselves taking more responsibility or having more responsibility for how the resources that they have are expended on behalf of their family member. So we have done some of that work.

**Ms Gallagher:** Can I just add, Dr Foskey, that we will watch how welfare to work impacts on our community. As you would expect, people at the front line will be the first to notice whether demand for service increases, because I think that is the other side. It is not just creating opportunity for people with disability; it is also the impact on people currently caring for someone with a disability.

It is the same thing we have seen with foster carers, although foster carers are exempt now. The Foster Carers Association and I wrote to the minister last year seeking exemptions for foster carers because they weren't originally exempt. They have now been made exempt as long as they are registered and all the rest of it, which we have to do of course.

In relation to co-ops and social contracts, I think we do need to remember that employment for people with a disability is a commonwealth responsibility under the commonwealth-state disability agreement. There are very clear responsibility lines. I just want to say here that to think that we could start moving into that area and start establishing co-ops or other employment arrangements would be the thin edge of the wedge for us. I don't think we would be in any position to do it. Whilst the commonwealth might through welfare to work be pushing work our way and we have a need to respond to that, to move into an area which is very clearly theirs is not something the government would be doing.

**DR FOSKEY:** I just want to explain that that was a bit of a sideways question. Like you, in no way do I believe the ACT should take over the federal government's job. But I do think it is an issue—something worth exploring anyway as a service delivery model rather than an as employment creation model. We will talk about that some other time down the track.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, sure.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms MacDonald?

**MS MacDONALD:** Thank you, chair. My question is more of a general nature. It relates to the issue of distribution of resources within the different disability areas. It is an area that got raised with me when I was out doing a shopping centre stall months ago by people who were the parents of a child with a disability. It was a fairly severe intellectual and physical disability. They were talking about the whole squeaky wheel concept. They specifically named another area, which I won't name. But there is an issue that I am concerned about and they were concerned about. If you shout louder then you will actually get more resources. That is not to say that people who are shouting loud don't actually have a right to those resources, but I was wondering if you could comment on the ways that you actually deal with that.

**Ms Gallagher:** I will begin. I think you are right. This is a difficult area in terms of responding to the needs that exist in the community and the range of support that is

required for people. In a sense, having spoken to some parents myself, I think the term they use was “competitive misery”—whose situation was worse in terms of being able to get more allocation. I think from where I sit the department responds again very well, as flexibly as it can to meet the needs of individuals. That is what this is all about at the end of the day—to support all of those individuals across the service system. It is true that there are crisis situations where resources have to be allocated very quickly.

I think as much as can be done, there is a very equitable and fair process. Having said that, from time to time there will be situations that arise in which resources are allocated that a whole range of other people would feel are unfair because they haven’t been able to be responded to in that way. I want to do some more work on this too, having the portfolio only since April. We are doing a range of work in the future around the provision of support to people with a disability and who is the provider of that support. We are about to finalise some of the details of that work.

That will, I think, assist us in terms of looking at how resources are allocated, under what models it is done, and the process for review. I think that since the emergence of the individual support packages particularly, there is a view out there in the community among people who talk to me from time to time. They are unclear about how those decisions are made and who gets what money, and if they run out of money how that money is allocated.

This is one of those areas that needs to be continually looked at to make sure we are responding in the best way we can. But there will be times, as I said, where situations occur, where resources are allocated. Whilst they are really needed for that person, there might be some other people that feel that they have waited long enough.

**Ms Lambert:** I’m happy to add to that. We have worked very hard over the last few years on having criteria as transparent as we possibly can. We have also worked in involving members of the community in our processes as well to deal with this. Again, there is always a perception in the human service area. As the minister said, what is often a crisis response is perceived as a squeaky wheel response.

I have talked at length with parents about this myself, and about ways to improve our processes even more so that we deal with people as transparently as we can. So we always take the feedback on board when we get it. As I said, I meet pretty regularly with parents myself, particularly with the client guardian forum. We have canvassed this issue as well. But it is often the crisis response that gets seen in that way. We have a great opportunity now which we are just working on in having the office as part of our department as well. It has been now for some time but we have been focusing really on some of the care and protection work and on getting services established. We will work a lot, particularly around children with disabilities, and integrate our services much better around that. Ms Ford and Ms Denley in particular will be working on that over the next year as well. That is a key area of focus for us.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Pratt, do you have any questions on output 1.1? If you don’t, does Ms MacDonald have any questions?

**MS MacDONALD:** Dr Foskey has some more questions on this area.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 195, output class 1.1, sub-class b, it looks as though support funding for 84 people was transferred to sub-class c, which provided an extra 21,000 hours of service. What I would like to know is what was achieved with this extra funding.

**Ms Ford:** You are looking at the community access?

**DR FOSKEY:** The community support to community access.

**Ms Ford:** Yes. The additional services that were delivered through that?

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes.

**Ms Ford:** Yes, community access delivers a range of services—social, recreational, and daytime activity-type services. People who were awarded or people who were successful in getting an individual support package would purchase services from places like sharing places, community access programs, Koomarri, and also linking into a range of other activities within the community. So those services provide social, recreational, life skills development, prevocational-type development, supporting people to transition between school and to maybe to supported employment.

**DR FOSKEY:** The community access hours of service in c decreases from 128 to 105. I am wondering whether those were picked up anywhere else or if this is a response to less demand.

**Ms Ford:** No, I can explain that. Those 21 hours are made up of non-recurrent funding into the likes of the post-schools option or additional to an individual support package, which people may not need on an ongoing basis. The post-schools option program is a three-year program. People transition in and out of that program. Those targets for 2006-07 may be readjusted again based on next year. I am referring to the non-recurrent funding that goes into that community access for 2006-2007.

**THE CHAIR:** Mrs Burke, you can ask one question then we are going on to 1.2.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you, madam chair. I feel honoured. I think Mr Hubbard has been far too quiet; so this one is for him. I refer to pages 202 and 203. I would just like you to explain to me the position in relation to the outyears 2009-10, revised indexation parameters. I am referring to the \$2.465 million, if you look across both pages. I am referring to the top of the page where reference is made to “Payment for expense on behalf of the Territory” on 203 and then a third up from the bottom on 202. \$1,781 million on page 202 and \$684,000 on 203.

**Mr Hubbard:** Let me go to 203, just to start off with. What happens is each year we get indexed essentially for our administration budget. That is the next outyear. So what we do there is we make a calculation of what the resources are required to cover that indexation amount in the last outyear.

**MRS BURKE:** What does it cover?

**Mr Hubbard:** It just covers a general increase in costs.

**MRS BURKE:** Across the whole spectrum?

**Mr Hubbard:** Across all of our admin vote—telephones, IT, electricity; you name it. The notion is that we get an indexation amount, which is mentioned in the budget papers, which I think is about 2.5 this year, and then we just index up our admin component of our budget by that amount. The reason why there is no indexation in the previous years is because each outyear gets incorporated in the base.

**MRS BURKE:** Okay, that won't be there but for the following outyears it will?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay, Dr Foskey has talked me into letting her have one last question in output 1.

**MRS BURKE:** And I thought I was the last.

**THE CHAIR:** There has to be some advantage to being on the estimates committee.

**MS MacDONALD:** And it's so exciting!

**MR PRATT:** That was very inspirational.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am wondering how the education department's special education section links to disability, especially in relation to whether disability was consulted in the development of the 2020 schools plan, given that a number of schools which have special services related to children with a disability are affected?

**Ms Gallagher:** We are currently in the consultation phase of the 2020 document. Of course, government departments are talking with each other as the departments are talking with the community around that. Having been the education minister, I can say that special education services are provided where they are needed on demand. My understanding of discussions with Minister Barr is that all of the decisions around the provision of special education, depending on the outcome of the decisions that will be taken in December this year, will be made on the individual needs of the students, as they are every year.

Decisions about location of LSUs and learning autism units and all the rest as they exist in the mainstream schools are taken every single year. They do change every year and that will be no different this year. But as I said, we are in the middle of a consultation period now. The department will be of course talking to the education department.

**DR FOSKEY:** I thought you would have been consulted in the preparation, in the actual proposal of choice of schools, et cetera, because autism units, for instance, aren't easily relocated. They are very expensive and they take quite a while to build. They have to be specially designed for each school.

**MRS BURKE:** I asked that yesterday but didn't get the answer.

**Ms Gallagher:** Where autism units are located in the schools is not a matter that disability would normally be consulted on. This is a matter for the education department. They manage not only five years on, but they also do the early intervention preschools. So looking after children I think from about 2½ on can go into early intervention preschools. It is a matter for the education department. It is not one which disability would be consulted on normally about where these should be operated and established.

Autism units are established year by year. Yes, they are expensive and it is a big challenge for the department of education to continue to meet the needs of all the children that require extra support, but they do a very good job and they open autism units every single year in different schools. I know that in Amaroo school this year they opened another unit. They open units as they are demanded. It's a very big balancing act for the education department to be able to respond, because they need to respond come day 1, term 1 when they don't often have all the data until towards the end of the year. So it is a very big management issue to actually make those decisions, and get those units established where they need them. It does change year by year.

**DR FOSKEY:** Minister, it would seem that your experience as education minister and now in your present portfolio would be an extreme advantage.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. And, of course, I am a member of cabinet. We have these very long discussions. As the minister for disability and as a previous education minister, it can be guaranteed I don't keep my nose out of things.

**MR PRATT:** Minister, do you have a role in guaranteeing the level of service or is that the education minister's call? I am referring to things like the retention of autism LSUs.

**Ms Gallagher:** The level of service is demand driven. It is not a ministerial decision. This is me going back to wearing my education hat, but if children enrol this year and there are 10 more students who have autism, there are at least two new autism units that need to be established for next year. There is no waiting list. It is completely demand driven.

I think the education department does an excellent job because I think the breakdown of students with a disability in the system is over 2,000—2,500 perhaps. And 1,800 of them are in mainstream government schooling. Many of those units have four children in them; so you can imagine the prevalence of them across the system. It is completely demand driven and it is very well managed from year to year.

**THE CHAIR:** We are going on to output 1.2. Mr Gentleman has a question.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Minister, you announced in the budget process that there is a specific \$2 million to support the program of refurbishment of the Therapy ACT site at Holder. Will the refurbishment include the purchase of new equipment and, if so, what type of equipment are you putting in there?

**Ms Gallagher:** There are probably greater minds than mine available to answer this question. I haven't actually been out to the Holder site. I intend to get out there soon, but my understanding is that although some work has been done, we need to improve the amenity of that building both for staff and clients. This \$2 million will go a long way to

improving that. I think the focus last year was on the Swanson Plaza, the north side hub, and this money will go into supporting the south side hub.

**Ms Hardy:** The \$2 million is envisaged to progress the accommodation strategy that is in the therapy service. It will be used to improve the amenities and infrastructure in the Holder site, which is an old public primary school.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The tail end of my question is: would there be new equipment in there; if so, what type?

**Ms Hardy:** No. It will be purely for the—

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Just for refurbishment?

**Ms Hardy:** Yes.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** On the same subject, on page 196, note 2 forecasts a reduction in therapy because of this refurbishment. What support will you be able to provide to those clients directly affected while the refurbishment is going on?

**Ms Hardy:** Currently we have half of the building offline but we are using the other half to provide services. We also have our other base at Homeworld where we provide eligibility services at the moment. It is envisaged that, when we fully develop the southern half, the Homeworld and the Holder site will join. We will use the child and family service at Tuggeranong to provide outreach to the Tuggeranong Valley area.

**Ms Lambert:** We expect, Mr Gentleman, while the churn occurs, as inevitably happens when you are moving people around with accommodation, that the child and family centres can assist in this process. We do provide staffing for that as well. That will be the way that we try to continue the service in those down times when you are moving people around and work is going on.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms MacDonald has a supplementary.

**MS MacDONALD:** Yes, I was just trying to ascertain whether or not Ms Lambert was answering my question. With the \$2 million that is being allocated to you consolidating the southside hub, how will that benefit both clients and staff? How will the money be expended in order to do it?

**Ms Lambert:** I will answer first in terms of staff. One of the reasons that was given to us when we did our exit interviews for staff leaving Therapy—we had quite a high churn in Therapy again several years ago—was the conditions in which they were working. So it will certainly enable staff to be in much better working conditions, which is very important, particularly for the work that they are doing with young children. I have forgotten the second part of your question.

**Ms Gallagher:** The clients.

**Ms Lambert:** Again, it is about going into a building which is more purpose-built rather than for a school and, again, which is safer. Rosalie can answer in more detail.

**MS MacDONALD:** It would have been answered, in part, by Mr Gentleman's question, as to how the \$2 million will be expended.

**Ms Lambert:** It is essentially on infrastructure. We have already spent other money on infrastructure over the years through our repairs and maintenance. Mr Hubbard can probably give you a total for that, I am sure.

**MS MacDONALD:** How is the roof?

**Ms Lambert:** The roof is good now. Is that right, Rosalie?

**Ms Hardy:** It is fine. It does not leak anymore.

**Ms Lambert:** We have done work on that.

**Ms Gallagher:** Every workplace needs it.

**Ms Lambert:** It is the end of an ongoing exercise to make this building safer for staff and a better place for our clients to come to.

**MS MacDONALD:** I do not know if Ms Hardy wanted to add anything to that.

**Ms Hardy:** I just think that the current work and the work that we envisage being done with the \$2 million is certainly going to improve the security of the building as well as the look and the configuration.

**MS MacDONALD:** Having visited the building it is good to see the money being expended on it. It is a good service but it could be described as a little drab.

**Ms Lambert:** You will have to visit our northside hub in Swanson Plaza.

**MS MacDONALD:** Oh no. You will just make me jealous.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Pratt, do you have any questions on 1.2?

**MR PRATT:** Yes. BP4, on page 189, I am looking at—

**DR FOSKEY:** We are not on that.

**THE CHAIR:** We are on 1.2.

**MRS BURKE:** Output class 2: early intervention—

**MR PRATT:** Sorry. Let us go to page 222, which is part of output class 2.

**MS MacDONALD:** We are not on that yet.

**THE CHAIR:** Sorry, Mr Pratt. We are on 1.2.



**MR PRATT:** Sorry. I have jumped the gun. I will back off.

**MRS BURKE:** We are not doing early intervention then?

**MS MacDONALD:** Not yet, no.

**THE CHAIR:** We are not there yet, Mrs Burke.

**MS MacDONALD:** We are still on Therapy.

**MRS BURKE:** We all need therapy.

**MR PRATT:** I will leave it to you.

**THE CHAIR:** There do not appear to be any more questions in that output area so we will go straight on to output class 2: early intervention—or is it 2.1?

**MRS BURKE:** If you look on your sheet, Chair, you have got output class 2 involved in 1.1 and 1.2. It goes output class 2 and intervention.

**MS MacDONALD:** On this particular overview, Mrs Burke, it goes 1.1 and 1.2 under output class 1, and that is supposed to go through until 2.30. We are dealing with early intervention after lunch. That is what it says on the piece of paper—

**MRS BURKE:** It is not the one that is on my desk here.

**THE CHAIR:** We have been too quick.

**Ms Gallagher:** Are we ahead of schedule?

**Ms Lambert:** We have everybody here. We are ready to roll.

**THE CHAIR:** You are ready to rock and roll.

**Ms Gallagher:** We can just keep going as is.

**THE CHAIR:** Fantastic. Having clarified all of that, we are now doing output class 2: early intervention and output class 2.1: child and family centre program.

**MR PRATT:** Therefore I can ask this question. Page 222, looking at the operating statement for the output class, it seems to me that, for the first time, there is an allocation of funding of \$8.4 million for grants and purchased services. Is that new money?

**MRS BURKE:** Mr Hubbard again.

**Mr Hubbard:** Thanks, Mr Pratt.

**Ms Gallagher:** This is some of the missing—

**MRS BURKE:** This is the missing money.

**Ms Gallagher:** This is some of the reallocation of what you asked about.

**MRS BURKE:** I did not call it missing money, minister.

**Ms Gallagher:** No. It is not missing; here it is.

**MR PRATT:** I am calling it perhaps new money. Is that true?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is not new.

**Mr Hubbard:** No. It is not actually new money.

**MR PRATT:** Is it reallocated from somewhere else?

**Mr Hubbard:** It is definitely reallocated.

**MRS BURKE:** Where does it come from?

**Mr Hubbard:** It goes to the question—

**MRS BURKE:** It is all part of page 214.

**THE CHAIR:** Excuse me. Remember that yesterday I asked you not to talk over each other. I am not trying to sound like a grandmother but the fact is that Hansard cannot hear if you all talk over one another, so one person at a time. Who is answering the question?

**MR PRATT:** I think Mr Hubbard is.

**Mr Hubbard:** I am answering that question. It is a very similar question to the one that Mrs Burke asked previously. Just to give you a bit of an idea, some of the ingredients of the output classes have changed and that is why there are some changes in the numbers. If you go back to page 189, output class 2, and read the notes there, what has happened in the early intervention area—the change from 2005-06 to 2006-07; the notes actually show this—is that therapy services have been moved out of that output class and child, youth and family support has moved in. If you then go to page 222, that is one of the operating statements represented by the output classes. I thought I would use this to give you a simpler answer to the question that you asked before about the numbers in relation to the overall departmental operating statement and the operating statements that are indicated by the individual output classes themselves.

Those three operating statements do have to add up to the whole of department one. You asked the question before: why was there such synergy with the 2005-06 figure of \$44,374 million? As I suspected, the grants and purchased services were all in output class 1 at that stage. If you go to page 221, grants and purchased services are \$44 million but over the page under “early intervention” grants and purchased services are zero. On the next page under “community development and policy” grants and purchased services are also zero.

**MR PRATT:** This has got more twists and turns than the Da Vinci code.

**MRS BURKE:** That is right. It looks odd because you put it all under “disability and therapy services”.

**Mr Hubbard:** That is where it was.

**MRS BURKE:** So the whole department is the same figure as one small—

**Mr Hubbard:** For next year it changes.

**MRS BURKE:** That reflects the mood this year.

**Mr Hubbard:** That is right. That is it in a nutshell. When you look at the operating statement, Mr Pratt—

**MR PRATT:** Sorry. I was just taking counselling from Ms MacDonald on the complicated pathway.

**Ms MacDONALD:** Don't blame me!

**Mr Hubbard:** I am just trying to answer your question, if you are listening.

**MR PRATT:** No. This was a professional piece of consultation.

**Mr Hubbard:** This is the answer to your part of the question: when you go to 2006-07 in the new year and what has been incorporated and add up all the grants and purchased services in each of the output statements, they total \$74,111 million.

**MRS BURKE:** How do you sleep at night?

**Mr Hubbard:** There has been a shifting of the grants and purchased services. While maintaining the total resources in the budget, they have been shifted through. These operating statements clearly show where those grants and purchased services have been distributed.

**MR PRATT:** Thank you for placing me back on the straight and narrow, Mr Hubbard.

**Mr Hubbard:** Thanks, Mr Pratt.

**THE CHAIR:** The next time this question gets asked, I am just going to say, “See above.”

**MS MacDONALD:** My question, you will be relieved to know, does not relate to the shifting of moneys; it relates to the child and family centres and the excellent work that I believe they do. Minister, Ms Lambert and Ms Brown—this is about the third incarnation that I have actually seen you in in this particular area—how will the Child and Family Centre Program continue to offer a range of client and community programs to strengthen the Gungahlin and Tuggeranong communities?

**Ms Gallagher:** I will begin. The Child and Family Centre has been a real success story. As you know, it grew out of the model, established after the bushfires, at the Lyons Recovery Centre, where a whole range of services came under the one umbrella in order to provide the range of services needed by a particular community. Certainly when we were looking at this—I think it was probably two budgets ago—the idea about co-locating a range of children and family services, particularly in Gungahlin where the largest proportion of our young families are these days, was a really exciting opportunity.

I have to congratulate the team and the department driving this. It was a new model, so there was the chance that things could go wrong or that it would not meet the needs of the community. The flexibility that has been shown in adapting the services to what the community is asking for has probably been its biggest success. Getting Gungahlin up and running and then getting the purpose-built building have given us an opportunity to understand a little more about how to provide the services in Tuggeranong and what is needed out there—although that is also responsive to the local community.

This is an initiative which hopefully will be around for a long time—the numbers that are going in through the door, the families that are being helped, the relationships with schools and businesses in the Gungahlin area. The place is buzzing, if anyone wants to have a look out there. I know Dr Foskey, Ms Porter, Mrs Dunne and Mr Mulcahy attended the opening of the new centre and had a look through. Playgroups are being run and there is a range of different rooms out there that are appropriate for a whole range of different functions. I know because I use the change table in the parents' room.

**MRS BURKE:** Not personally, I hope. You do mean the baby?

**Ms Gallagher:** The baby uses it. It is a really fantastic opportunity; this is a really good news story. If Pauline wants to add some more about the numbers using the service that would be useful.

**Ms Brown:** I really cannot add a lot to what you have said. We do want to keep responding to the local community and the families with young children in those communities. To assist us with that we have recently completed an evaluation of the first 18 months of the program. That evaluation report is with Sandra right now and the minister will have it shortly. So that will help us look at where our strengths and weaknesses are.

We have also been involved with the national early childhood development index study in the Gungahlin region, which has given us a population based set of information around the vulnerabilities for children from birth to five in that area, which will help us target our programs more. We have done a lot of work with communities that work with other non-government organisations and other departments in Tuggeranong as well, looking at where we need to fill gaps and what we need to do. So we will continue to evolve and we will always be evolving and changing in how we continue to meet the needs of the populations that we are serving.

**MS MacDONALD:** Just on the Tuggeranong issue, you have started implementing the model in Tuggeranong already but you have not followed the same model that you used in Gungahlin where you rented premises while you were building the Child and Family Centre. Did you want to address how you are dealing with that?

**Ms Brown:** Yes. We are sharing some administrative office space with Therapy ACT and Homeworld at the moment—a small amount of office space where we have our resources and our staff based. We run programs in conjunction with other organisations such as maternal and child health nurses in Lanyon. We have been running some groups and doing some drop-ins for families in their location down there. We have been running and co-facilitating a parent group with the YWCA at the Youth Centre in Lanyon. We are now working very closely with one of the programs in Richardson and looking at how we link in with families in the Richardson and Isabella Plains area.

**MS MacDONALD:** Is that the Paint and Play?

**Ms Brown:** No. That is a different one altogether. We do Paint and Play in Richardson as well. It is an outdoor playgroup that anybody can come to and there is a range of different professionals in there. At Tuggeranong there is a terrific partnership group comprising us, Communities@Work, the YWCA and maternal and child health services. We have a range of different professionals that work in the playgroup and families can come and bring their children. It is very popular with families. We get a lot of dads coming along—single dads and dads who are at home with their children—which is very unusual because most men do not like to go to playgroups where lots of women talk about cooking, babies and stuff all the time. It has been really good for that. It is a terrific way for us to involve and start to engage some of the more disadvantaged families in the areas. You work with them in the group, watch them and start to initiate their mentoring in the services and getting more support in other ways. That particular style of universal access to move our more disadvantaged clients into more targeted services has really been a great success at both sites.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. I have a supplementary. Congratulations on the centre at Gungahlin. It is fantastic. Minister, you would be aware that there is a lot of interest in this model at West Belconnen. I was wondering whether or not we may be fortunate enough to have something out there in the future. There is already a men's playgroup out there.

**Ms Gallagher:** With Uniting Care Kippax.

**THE CHAIR:** With Uniting Care Kippax. There is a lot of interest in other areas in those community groups that exists out there and I know that they would welcome as many as possible.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. Certainly the government is committed to investigating a third location for a Child and Family Centre. We have indicated that we will look at places in the West Belconnen area. I think there is some opportunity for us to engage with the department of education in the design of the new West Belconnen school. The model I think we will be investigating or wanting to look at is the capacity within the school to be able to accommodate services as they are needed from time to time. Now that we have two established purpose-built centres—in Gungahlin and Tuggeranong—we will look at how we can provide some outreach to communities as they need it. We need to do a bit of work. I have met just recently with Uniting Care Kippax, about ensuring that we are targeting our support services into particular regions. So we need to have a look at that.

One of the issues around funding family support programs—this has been a long bugbear of mine; I cannot wait to get on top of it—is that we fund a range of programs historically; tiny bits of money that do a bit here and a bit there. Some of them may not provide family support programs now, but they were maybe a few years ago. We need to have a really good look at that and make sure that the money that we have going into these areas is not piecemeal. But, like the streamlining of the grant application and the arrangements with services, we need to have a good look at how the different grants and the allocations are delivering family support programs.

I see a model—this is what I hope for—perhaps co-located in the new school with some capacity for not only the Child and Family Centre but some other organisation, such as Uniting Care Kippax, just off the top of my head, to come in and be partners in the provision of some social programs, through community building, which will be at the school at that time. I think there is a bit more work to be done there. I am very keen on seeing some of those arrangements in place.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Ms Brown touched earlier on parenting support at Tuggeranong. If you have a look at page 196, there are parenting sessions listed at the top. I just want to try to understand: is it a supply or demand issue for the maintenance of the number of parenting classes at 80? I cannot remember any parenting classes when I started a family. I think it is a great program. I want to know if there is any forecast for expansion after this?

**MS MacDONALD:** Are you planning on having more kids?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Not for myself as yet. There are lots of constituents out there, though.

**MR PRATT:** He has got his WRX.

**Ms Brown:** I can respond to that. We are continually looking at the parenting classes and the types of parenting classes that are needed. Currently we run a range of parenting classes at both sites—sometimes staffed by our own staff, sometimes staffed in conjunction with other organisations both government and non-government. But we are looking particularly at classes for new parents who might feel, especially with a first child, uncomfortable bringing up a new baby. We do that with the maternal and child health nurses. We have behaviour management classes for parents with children exhibiting different behaviours. Hopefully we can work with them and their children, and we do it in a class-type situation. We do some work in the high schools in Gungahlin. We call it a babysitting class, but it is really a parenting class for teenage mums. They get a certificate out of it that says that they can babysit, but it is geared at people who are pregnant or at school with babies.

We have just finished PPP training in the ACT. We are expected to roll out some behaviour management programs under the PPP format for parents in both Tuggeranong and Gungahlin—we do a range of different ones. Does that answer the question?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Yes, except I just want to try to understand how the number is driven. Is it supply and demand or is it from an allocation of resources?

**Ms Brown:** Basically, yes, it is. The type of parenting program we run comes through our discussions with our clients and partners around what types of issues they are having. Is it best delivered in a group framework or is it best delivered on an individual family basis, or is it a combination of both?

**THE CHAIR:** Sorry, Mrs Burke, I will go back to your supplementary.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you, Madam Chair. It is following on with the Child and Family Centre, for which I congratulate you. I am sorry that I could not get there for the opening, minister. Well done to you and your department. I refer to page 189—and, yes, it is a Mr Hubbard question again. I presume there is a typographical error here: under the Child and Family Centre Program it says note 3 but it should be note 2. We see that the total cost increases. Obviously that also includes depreciation or whatever throughout it. What I am looking at here mainly is the government payment for outputs. We go from an estimated outcome of \$2,033,000 down to \$2,000,008. Can you tell me what the difference is, please?

**Mr Hubbard:** I would need to get you the details on why there is a drop of, what is it, \$15,000?

**Ms Brown:** I believe it may be an adjustment for changing from rented accommodation to permanent accommodation.

**Mr Hubbard:** I will find out what that \$25,000 is.

**MRS BURKE:** That will be good. Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** You will take that on notice?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** We will move on to 2.2: Child, Youth and Family Support.

**DR FOSKEY:** The 2004-05 annual report of the ACT Office for Children, Youth and Family Support commits to implementing the recommendations of the Review of Family Support Services, but I have not been able to find any 2005-06 or 2006-07 budget initiatives associated with this. I would appreciate some information on it and when it will occur. I am aware this might not be the right place to ask this, but it is family support services.

**Ms Denley:** The review of the family support project actually led to an initiative that has been occurring over a period of time whereby we have been looking at one of the most significant recommendations in that review, which was to trial a much more integrated approach. We have had a number of workshops with the government and non-government sector and we are looking at how we can work particularly with the more high-risk families in an integrated way across government and non-government.

A number of services have elected to work with us and in that initiative we are actually looking at families who may have come in contact with the child protection system, families that are often hesitant to engage with family support services, and we are

looking at identifying a service delivery model using the existing resources but in a much more targeted and coordinated way. At the moment, there are a number of structures where the government and non-government services are actually developing the model, and this is a direct outcome of one of the recommendations in the family support review.

The other thing that has happened is that there has been cooperation particularly with the regional family support services, which have worked with us to identify and answer the critical question that could not be answered in that review, which was: who are receiving the services? You may remember that in that review comment was made that some of the family support service money was, in fact, servicing individual clients. Over this last period, and the minister hasn't seen this report, they have been working with us to look at getting much more detail about who are the critical types of recipients of those services and the nature of those services. We are really furthering that work. We are getting a much more comprehensive picture. But we are also looking at how we can get more outcomes out of the use of those funds through the integrated model.

**DR FOSKEY:** Has any money been spent on implementing recommendations and how can interested parties, members, keep in touch with what you are learning as you go along?

**Ms Denley:** It has no actual budget impact, Dr Foskey. We are actually looking at the use of that existing money and we are working with the sector. It is more about a process as to how people are working together, so you won't see it in the budget papers. The way in which we are communicating about this is that one of the Vardon subcommittees, the early intervention subcommittee, has provided a reference group for our work. You may be aware that the family support services network has recently been incorporated and established. Dawson Ruhl from Marymead is chairing that. He also shares the chairing of the Vardon subcommittee and we also have a report on the progress of the work to it as a reference group for this work and also to the participants, and I think about 17 agencies are participating in the pilot process.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Minister, the output description on page 189 talks about schools as communities program. Do you envisage the education department's *Towards 2020* policy having an impact on the schools as communities program?

**Ms Gallagher:** There shouldn't be. It is a bit hard to say because we are still in the consultation phase of the 2020 document. The decisions around which schools benefit from the schools as communities program are based on socioeconomic data from the ABS. It is the location of those schools within communities that ranks. I am advised that it relates to 11 schools. Ginninderra district high was the only high school that benefited from the schools as communities program and that program has assisted the transition of those students. My understanding is that it has been able to support some of their movements to other schools. It is a bit early to say. If some of the schools which are in the schools as communities program were to close, obviously we would look at reallocating the program to other schools, if that is the decision at the end of the day.

**DR FOSKEY:** It would seem that Dickson college would be most profoundly affected.

**Ms Gallagher:** Dickson college does not receive schools as communities assistance. As I said, it is based on socioeconomic data from the ABS.



**DR FOSKEY:** How about the adolescent day unit?

**Ms Gallagher:** I am talking about the schools as communities program, not the ADU, but the ADU fits within this output class and I am happy to answer a question about the ADU.

**DR FOSKEY:** The Youth Coalition has concerns about the difficulty of getting some young people to attend these programs and the transition would have to be handled very carefully if Dickson were to close.

**Ms Kitchin:** The adolescent day unit only services young people in high schools, so the proposed closure of colleges won't have any impact on it.

**DR FOSKEY:** I think I might have the wrong one.

**MRS BURKE:** They do have the DCAP program.

**Ms Gallagher:** Supportive programs are run at Dickson college but they are run through the education department, not by the ADU, which operates out of Erindale. It is located at the Erindale college campus but it is dealing with high school students. I should say, and perhaps Ms Kitchin or Ms Denley could expand, that the focus of the ADU has changed slightly to supporting students within their schools rather than withdrawing them and then reintegrating them, which had been the practice in the past. The program now is looking at keeping them within their high school setting with extra support and I think that it is showing some successes.

**MRS BURKE:** Minister, you have led very nicely into my question, which is about funding appropriated to the ADU through support services. The reintegration in high school seems to be an excellent move and I hope that it reaps dividends for you and, more particularly, for the students. I would like you to tell me more about the funding and staffing of the program and the future for it.

**Ms Gallagher:** The funding has stayed the same.

**MRS BURKE:** At what level?

**Ms Gallagher:** Are you looking for a breakdown of it outside of this output class?

**MRS BURKE:** If that is possible.

**Ms Gallagher:** I am sure it is. We will take that on notice. Mr Hubbard might be able to tell you.

**Mr Hubbard:** What I might do, if you have particular questions about those sorts of things, is, as I get the answers, if it is okay with you, put them on the record. I want to go back to your question about the child and family centre 25K drop. As to the difference between 2005-06 and 2006-07, we had some funds left over in 2005-06, \$50,000, and we rolled them over. As that 50K was expended, you would expect 2006-07 to be slightly less than \$2 million, but 25K of indexation actually took it up to 2008. So it was a

rollover of funds exhausted in that year because it was rolled over from the previous year for a program that was ongoing, so that 50K left. Indexation, et cetera, took it up to 2008. It actually masks an increase of 25K.

**MRS BURKE:** Going back to that 50K rollover, why wasn't it expended?

**Mr Hubbard:** It was a timing issue. As CFO, I would love everything to fall within 1 July to 30 June, but people in the room don't do that.

**MRS BURKE:** It was obviously earmarked for something. It hasn't been picked up again this time, has it?

**Mr Hubbard:** No, it has been spent. It was a program that started in a prior year and it was rolled over. When the invoices come in, we pay them and the invoice actually came in after 30 June. That occurs quite often because, as I said, people don't maintain the financial year as a benchmark.

**MRS BURKE:** Let's go back to the ADU and the staffing.

**Ms Lambert:** Ms Kitchin can explain the staffing.

**Ms Kitchin:** When we changed the model for the adolescent day unit we connected it much more closely with the youth connections programs, so now we have a staffing structure where we have a coordinator who oversees the two programs, we have two staff in the adolescent day unit and we have five youth connections workers. The synergy of the two works very well in that as the ADU workers support young people in schools and as the young persons become more integrated we can then pass them on to a youth connections worker who can follow up that support on a longer-term basis.

**THE CHAIR:** We will go to questions on childcare before we go to lunch so that we can finish the output classes.

**DR FOSKEY:** Minister, you would be aware that I have explored the issue of childcare in the Assembly. I am interested to know the government's ability to understand the basic supply and demand across Canberra and whether you are able to point to areas where there is oversupply or lack of ability to meet demand and if there is anything at all that the government can do to match supply and demand across the whole city.

**Ms Gallagher:** You are right: we have been through this in the Assembly. It is a difficult one for the ACT government because, whilst we accept that childcare is an essential part of many people's lives, the ability to access it and the affordability of it, it is very much outside the control of the ACT government. We have specific responsibilities for licensing and regulating the childcare centres, which we do, and we own some buildings and have built a childcare facility in Gungahlin for the community which has been tendered out. In the way of making sure when we are mapping new areas that there is land put aside for childcare services, we do that.

In terms of creating places, that is out of our control. That is something that is controlled by the commonwealth. Some of the industry, a fairly large bit compared to recent years, is private business now, with ABC now owning eight centres, I think, in the ACT. It had

taken them some time to show any interest in the ACT, maybe because they did not think they could make any money here, but they have now come here and got eight centres pretty quickly.

I have been having talks with the department about areas that we could get a better understanding of. We have certainly done some survey work of long day care centres. It seems that, like everybody says, for 0 to 2 it is very hard to get a place anywhere, but for those above that age group there are vacancies. I was at a childcare centre in Belconnen last week which is about 45 per cent full and it is right near the Belconnen Mall. My office has been contacted by a provider from Tuggeranong who operates another one in, I think, Gungahlin. Both of his centres are not full.

It is difficult, I think, for the ACT government, other than to confirm that we know that there is a bit of an issue for 0 to 2, to say where else we could get involved in childcare. We do, as I said, provide some community facilities. We do licence and regulate the centres and do all of that quality checking. We do have a capital works program for community-based centres to make sure that the ones which are owned by us are being upgraded and are suitable facilities to have children in.

I think there is more work to be done. I am pretty keen to have some policy development in this area, but I have to walk through that fairly carefully because it is not an area in which I have the capacity to solve a lot of the problems. So I need to be clear about what the ACT government can do and how we best provide that information to the community is the answer. It is work which is under way and which we haven't finished.

**DR FOSKEY:** It seems as though supply and demand isn't going to work with this one as there is an oversupply in some areas. If someone came to you asking for a licence for one of those areas where there was an oversupply, would you have to give a licence or would you alert the potential licensee to the fact that there was already a problem there with empty places? How would you deal with that?

**Ms Kitchin:** Any provider who wants to establish a service in an any area and complies with the licensing we would grant a licence to. We would certainly have discussions with them about supply and demand in the area. One of the things that we are working on with a number of centres at the moment is actually increasing their capacity to fill the 0 to 2 places, moving some of their places from the three and four-year-olds down to that younger age group and working with them, as we do with a lot of centres, on what that means for staffing, room space and those kinds of issues.

**MRS BURKE:** Minister, I want to get clarity on a point. Wasn't it that the commonwealth had actually given extra spaces and we were not taking those spaces? It may not have been to do with you; it may have been a planning problem or something to do with land release. Was that an issue that was raised?

**Ms Gallagher:** No, I don't think so. The commonwealth in the recent budget uncapped the limit on family day care, not on long day care, so it does not affect centre-based care. But there is no problem there.

**Meeting adjourned from 12.37 to 2.32 pm.**

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, do you want to make any further remarks?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. Ian, would like to give an answer to a question about the ADU and staffing.

**Mr Hubbard:** Ms Burke asked a question earlier on. You wanted the splits between salaries and wages and admin. We managed to get those during lunchtime. In 2005-06 salaries and wages was \$222,640. In 2006-07 salaries and wages was \$231,115. For both years admin was \$18,000.

**MRS BURKE:** Combined?

**Mr Hubbard:** No, \$18,000 in 2005-06.

**MRS BURKE:** That is 2005-06 and 2006-07?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, I have a general question about women's grants. Are they being maintained in this budget? This is under budget paper No 4? Am I in the right place?

**Ms Gallagher:** No. That is under budget paper No 3.

**THE CHAIR:** I am in the wrong place. I beg your pardon. Do you have a question, Mr Gentleman?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I do, chair. Minister, could I bring you to page 199 of budget paper No 4. Output 4.1 indicates a 300-day increase in the outcome for 2005-06 compared with the target. Can you tell us why there is a 5.5 per cent increase in the days in custody there?

**Ms Gallagher:** That is largely determined by the courts. That is what we expect. Our target is as much as we can guess, and then the estimated outcome is where we think it is going to be at the end of the year based on the court's decisions.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Okay. Can you tell us what proportion of young people held in custody are reoffenders?

**Ms Gallagher:** I am sure I can get an official to answer that.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** The question following that will be: what strategies do you have in place to stop recidivism?

**Mr Wyles:** That question really goes to the recidivism rate, which we have set at 45 per cent. That is the rate of young people who reoffend in a two-year period.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** What programs or strategies do you have in place to try and address recidivism?

**Mr Wyles:** You will appreciate that that group of young people are what we tend to see as the hardends. They are the young people who have been through the criminal justice system. Most likely they would have been on community-based orders and there would have been interventions to divert them out of the system and the community. They have then offended subsequently to the degree that they are incarcerated.

The programs we have include a case management team that works closely with young people in detention. They work with young people and their families and the natural supports for those young people, whether that is education or whether it is aligning those young people to recreational or sporting clubs. Some of those community organisations come into the centre. We develop very specific transitional plans for young people as they exit and we work with key stakeholders like health and housing and education.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** So they individualise those plans?

**Mr Wyles:** They are individualised plans.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Thanks for that.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am not sure if I will be allowed to ask this question, but I will try. I am not sure where else I would ask the question. It is about the creation of a children and young people's commissioner.

**Ms Gallagher:** That is under justice and community safety. That would go to Simon Corbell.

**DR FOSKEY:** So you do not want to answer that one?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is not under my portfolio responsibilities.

**DR FOSKEY:** I will go to page 204 of budget paper No 4 regarding the upgrade. Can you tell me where the government is up to in reviewing the standing orders? We expected them, I think, at the end of last year.

**Ms Gallagher:** I will let Paul go into detail on that question because he has been doing all the work. Needless to say, once we embarked on the work of the standing orders, it has become a lot more complex than we had originally thought and the work involved in putting together standing orders in line with some of the work we have been doing with the human rights office has taken a lot longer than expected. But they are drawing to a conclusion now and Paul can talk you through that.

**Mr Wyles:** We are currently operating under the 26 standing orders that have been notified on the legislation register. We presented a report of some initial draft standing orders to the minister in August. From that time we have been consulting with a range of key stakeholders. We have consulted with nine indigenous stakeholder bodies; a child psychiatrist; a justice and corrections expert; the public advocate's office, the human rights office, the human rights unit, the official visitors and the Australian Federal Police. There has been a very extensive consultation process.

You will appreciate that as we get feedback from all of those consultations there is a process of incorporating those comments. Some of those comments subsequently have some significant policy ramifications and we need to develop that policy alongside the standing orders.

The other work we are doing is developing a set of procedures, which will sit in handbooks, on the young people at Quamby and for carers and parents who visit Quamby. That work, as the minister has suggested, is drawing to a close. We had comments from the executive director last week. We are incorporating those comments. I would expect it to be finalised very shortly.

**DR FOSKEY:** When do we expect the first report against the human rights audit recommendations?

**Mr Wyles:** Ms Denley and I have a time to meet with the human rights commissioner when she returns to work from leave in the next couple of weeks. We will be talking through with her where we have fully met or partially met those recommendations.

**Ms Lambert:** Dr Foskey, one of the things I could add about the standing orders is that in the past we have had a separate standing order for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. One of the complexities that we have looked at and made a decision about this time is that we should embed the treatment of those young people in all of the standing orders, rather than keep that as a separate order, so that our practices everywhere are inclusive. That is been one of the complexities that we have worked through. We are actually looking at all our practices and not just saying there is a separate group of people over here that we treat differently. With all of our standing orders, this is the way that we need to approach young people who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders.

In terms of the human rights audit, as Paul says, we are working through it and we converse as much as we can with the human rights commissioner to try to work through some of the areas where we are still working through the issues involved.

**Mr Wyles:** A number of those HRO recommendations will, of course, be picked up in the build of the new youth detention centre.

**DR FOSKEY:** It is quite difficult to pick them up before then, I take it?

**Ms Lambert:** Some of them.

**Mr Wyles:** Some of those are the ones that we have partly met, so we have done what we can. An example of that might be recommendation 7.2, where the human rights commissioner recommended the establishment of an indoor multipurpose recreation space. We have spent substantial money on the additional provision of gym equipment, but clearly we are not going to build something on the current site at this stage. That will happen in the new facility.

**DR FOSKEY:** Finally, do you have any idea what will happen to existing Quamby site? What will be the status of that once we have got the youth detention centre?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is hard to imagine it being used as anything else. I think it would just go through the normal process and be handed to territory and municipal services.

**DR FOSKEY:** It is next to the pound, is it not?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is close to there, yes, and the periodic detention centre.

**DR FOSKEY:** It is not such a bad spot.

**Ms Gallagher:** It is a difficult spot and it is difficult to imagine the building being used for anything other than a detention centre of some sort.

**DR FOSKEY:** The building probably needs to go.

**Ms Gallagher:** It is an inadequate one at that. I will leave that up to Minister Hargreaves to resolve.

**MR SMYTH:** Just on some of the matters raised by Dr Foskey, I notice on page 124 of budget paper No 3 that the pre-construction planning and consultation for the new youth detention centre has taken longer than anticipated. What specifically has taken longer than anticipated? They are actually building walls.

**Mr Collett:** I did not quite catch the question at the back of the room.

**MR SMYTH:** I note that the revised completion date is now June 2008.

**Mr Collett:** Where are we?

**MR SMYTH:** It is budget paper No 3, page 124. I thought you knew your capital stuff off by heart, Mr Collett. Why is the date pushed back to June 2008, and what particularly has caused the delay?

**Mr Collett:** The ACT Planning and Land Authority required a preliminary assessment of the new youth detention centre. We were also keen to ensure that we established a site for the new youth detention centre that was in an appropriate land use and did not require a territory plan variation. That restricted us to broadacre land or town centres, and so we had to go through the territory and look for suitable sites. It was that range of environmental and planning consultation and processes that we had to go through that established the timeframe.

**MR SMYTH:** So the all-up processes you have to go through for any major project in the ACT is lengthy and you have taken that length of time?

**Mr Collett:** Not lengthy compared to other jurisdictions, but—

**MR SMYTH:** Can you base that in fact?

**Mr Collett:** Given my recent experience in New South Wales, I can confirm that. It is the appropriate length of time. We are proceeding quite smoothly with those various steps. There was a preliminary investigation of a range of sites. A general location was

identified in Mitchell. Consultation was held both with the local community and more broadly with stakeholders. A site within that location was identified. Work was done with the ACT Planning and Land Authority. A preliminary assessment was prepared and commonwealth notification, given that almost all the ACT is a habitat for one endangered species or another, was prepared and lodged. So it was a quite significant process that we needed to go through, and that has been done in a timely way.

**Ms Gallagher:** The PA has been finalised now, hasn't it?

**Mr Collett:** The PA has been finalised and the determination from the ACT Planning and Land Authority was that whilst there were some specific requirements to be addressed in the DA no further investigation of environmental factors was required.

**MR SMYTH:** Just further on youth detention, I note that one of the indicators is that the cost per day of keeping a young person in the ACT in custody is \$1,001. Is there a reason it is such a large cost?

**Mr Hubbard:** What page is that on?

**MRS BURKE:** It is page 99 of budget paper No 4.

**MR SMYTH:** It is currently \$1,001. That is the estimated outcome for this year. It is actually going up to \$1,038. Why is it such a large amount? Even staying at the Hyatt is only about \$265 a day, and nobody has ever escaped from there!

**Mr Hubbard:** That number includes more than just the cost of accommodation at Quamby, of course. It includes other costs that are allocated across each of the outputs. The overhead costs from the department generally are put into that figure. It is from a whole-of-department perspective, rather than the true cost of just accommodation. This is our overall budget cost.

**MR SMYTH:** Can you split that for us into actual overheads and actual cost?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes, I will give that a go. We do not normally do that, but I will see if I can get that done for you, if you like.

**MR SMYTH:** It is interesting because if we go page 241 of budget paper No 4, the cost per day for a prisoner on remand at Belconnen is \$435; the cost per day for a prisoner in New South Wales is \$213 and just next door to the existing Quamby is the periodic detention centre and the cost per day is \$230. Why is it double and, in some cases, four times the other costs?

**Ms Lambert:** One of the reasons for that is that the approach in juvenile justice is quite different from the adult corrections system, as I am sure you will appreciate. It is about rehabilitation; it is about endeavouring to make sure that these young people do not reoffend and do not move into the adult system. So there is more of a suite of services, if you like, at this stage wrapped around those young people. That is factored into that cost.

**Ms Denley:** When you are dealing with comparisons with other jurisdictions, particularly in the adult jurisdictions, you are dealing with economies of scale. You are



dealing with a small number of young people—

**MR SMYTH:** But two of those numbers are inside the ACT.

**Ms Denley:** Yes, but you have still got more adults using that—

**Mr Wyles:** There are a couple of other factors. The first is a higher staff to young person ratio; the second is a high number of young people on remand who are there for very short periods; the third is our need to separate young people in the current facility, so there is staffing across five units.

**MR PRATT:** So there is a higher ratio of staff to—

**MR SMYTH:** What is the staff to remandee—

**Mr Wyles:** It varies depending upon the classification of the young person. So for someone with high needs, we might have one staff for one young person. But we might go back to 1:6.

**Ms Lambert:** We do have young people who come into the system who are in states of significant crisis, and that can require one-on-one attention over a significant period of time, particularly, as you will appreciate, if the behaviour is self-harming and so on. So there is the need at times to have very high levels of staffing

**MRS BURKE:** Operational costs, really.

**Ms Lambert:** Yes.

**MR SMYTH:** So how many staff in Quamby per shift?

**Mr Wyles:** It will vary per shift. There is 53 staff on the books permanently, and then we will also use casual staff periodically.

**MR SMYTH:** And the average number of young people there?

**Mr Wyles:** It is 21 today. It will fluctuate between about 10 and 25.

**Ms Lambert:** That does not include the other services, of course, that come in there as well. The education services are different from that.

**MRS BURKE:** So that is on top of that cost?

**Ms Lambert:** Yes. Health services are on top of that as well. We are dealing with young people who have significant needs.

**MR SMYTH:** What is the cost of the health services?

**Mr Wyles:** We could find that out. We have nursing services and mental health services on site.

**MR SMYTH:** And who pays for the health services?

**Mr Wyles:** ACT Health.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you, chair. I have a very quick supplementary question, if I may? Just to keep on this theme a little to get the figures really clear in our minds and what we are getting for what, the estimated outcome in 2003-04 was \$880. We have a jump now of \$120. We see in 2006-07 a jump to \$1,038. In your release today, minister, regarding the new facility at Mitchell, you say:

The new detention centre will be a national model of best practice, providing secure care to young offenders, while preparing for their planned reintegration into the community.

You have just clarified that this cost is operational and that there were additional costs above that. In a new facility why will it be more and not less? I know that you have had inordinate problems at Quamby in terms of security and so on, but I am wondering why the costs escalated and are continuing to? Maybe that will come with the figures that somebody is going to provide us. We will have a working out of those increases. In 2005-06 we go from an estimated outcome of 1,001 to a target of 1,038.

**Ms Gallagher:** It is \$37. That would be indexation. That is just rising costs. That is remaining pretty flat, and that does not take into account when the new facility will open. That takes us up to targets for 2006-07 and the new facility is not going to open until June 2008. So it will be in the 2008-09 financial year. Am I concerned about that \$120 increase?

**MRS BURKE:** Yes. Maybe there was something that happened there.

**Ms Gallagher:** I think I get the question. In Quamby there has been a lot of work done over the last year and a half or so to try and improve the service to young people there and also improve the environment for staff and young people. We pay what we need to pay to ensure that they are well looked after. If that means that we have had to put a couple of extra staff on, and I think we have had to upgrade some staff—

**Mr Wyles:** The demountables is the other explanation.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**MRS BURKE:** Sorry, the demountables?

**Mr Wyles:** The demountables that were—

**Ms Gallagher:** Provided.

**MRS BURKE:** It is in with this cost here?

**Ms Gallagher:** Because we staff now additional units, essentially—

**Mr Wyles:** We went from three units to five units.

**Ms Gallagher:** to deal with some of the separation requirements, because of concerns by members as well as by the human rights office. There has been some work done in reclassification of positions at Quamby as well over the past 18 months. Recognising the qualifications and the expertise of staff to deliver a good service has meant that we have been through that work as well. All of that will contribute to higher operational costs. It is a combination of things. I do not think we run a Rolls-Royce service out there at all. I think we run a service that tries to meet the needs of the young people there.

**MRS BURKE:** Given that these figures are for the current facility, with the you-beaut, new, wonderful facility that you have enhanced at Mitchell, do you foresee, minister, those costs coming down somewhat because the figures that we are dealing with here are operational costs?

**Ms Gallagher:** I would have to take some advice on that. It might, but then we are building a new facility for more young people.

**MRS BURKE:** Therefore the costs, as you have just explained for the adult facility, should be less.

**Ms Gallagher:** That is if all the young people turned up on any one day, which we hope they do not. This is reflected in the higher costs, too. I mean if you only have eight young people in Quamby, you still have to staff Quamby across the board. You still have to have a whole range of staff that you would have if you had 15 or 16 children and young people in there. I should not call them children, although some of them are pretty young. I think that also reflects in the higher costs.

We want to build a building that is good for the young people but is efficient to run as well and is a good operation to run, and that means it is easy to separate, easy to supervise, not easy to escape, all of those things. If that means that our costs are contained somewhat, then that would be a very good thing.

**MRS BURKE:** I am sorry, chair, to cut across you. Mr Hubbard, you thought you might have some rationale for the jump of \$120.

**Mr Hubbard:** If I may, I will answer Mr Smyth's previous questions about the direct cost. I am not sure if this is comparing apples with apples, because I have not had a look at the stuff that is in justice and community services, but we have a figure that we call direct cost with Quamby. At the moment that is \$4,452, taking out basically the overhead allocations that we then load into that for the output statements. If you divide the 452 by the number of custody days, which you will see a bit further up on that same output of \$5,800, that gives you a figure of \$767 for the direct per day costs. That is the figure that we have got at the moment. As I said, I am not sure whether that is identically comparable with the other figures that you have drawn out of the budget papers for other facilities.

**MR SMYTH:** Taking into account and appreciating the higher needs of young people, could you do some comparisons on that and get back to us?

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes, I will try and see what they do. I will give you a breakdown to see

how comparable they are.

**THE CHAIR:** So you will take that on notice.

**Mr Hubbard:** Yes.

**MR SESELJA:** Mr Gentleman asked before about recidivism. On page 193 it says that 45 per cent is the target. On page 301 of budget paper No 4 of last year the same chart talks about a 10 per cent target. Why the change? Was that a mistake last year? That was for the outyears. That was 10 per cent for 2005-06, 2007-08 through to 2009.

**Ms Lambert:** I will start the answer by saying that we have worked on all of our performance indicators for the office. We have been working particularly on two things. One is on standardising our definitions so we can do the work that Mr Smyth just referred to in terms of benchmarking ourselves against other jurisdictions, but also we are looking to try and have the same sort of definitions as other jurisdictions do.

There are changes in our output statements this year because we have worked hard on making them as clear as we possibly can. I will hand over to Ms Denley. Lou, do you want to deal with the detail of the definition?

**Ms Denley:** Yes. The original target measures the recidivism rate of young people who were sentenced to detention more than once during a 12-month period. That was problematic. A young person may have committed an offence but it may not actually get to conviction within that same 12-month period.

It was seen as being much more realistic and a much clearer measure to do it over a two-year period. Over a two-year period, even if they had reoffended within that 12 months, they may have got convictions and then been recommitted to Quamby—within that period. It is a more realistic figure and gives you a clearer idea of how many young people are coming back into the detention facility if you extend it to a two-year measure.

**MR SESELJA:** So the 10 per cent was not particularly realistic.

**Ms Denley:** That was a 12-month measure and it was not really picking up. We are wanting to focus on our success in rehabilitation. It is a more honest picture of where we really need to target.

**Mr Wyles:** We were measuring the second measure of the community-based orders over a two-year period, so it brings it into line with that. We were measuring both over a two-year period.

**MR SESELJA:** I note that the community-based orders are going down, but the targets stay the same in relation to young people in custody. I would have thought that, with the new centre coming on line in 2008, we would be looking to hopefully reduce recidivism. Is there a reason why the target stays the same in the outyears?

**Mr Wyles:** I think that was really us trying to set a realistic target. It is probably worthwhile saying up front that recidivism is very difficult to measure. It is difficult to get common agreement across jurisdictions on how you measure it.

We were informed by a report in Victoria which set recidivism rates over a two-year period at 48 and full community-based orders at 44. Clearly, going back to Mr Gentleman's earlier question, for those groups in custody you are talking about the hard—the top end—young people who have been through the system. We are going to have to work much harder to reduce that target over a period of time. I would hope we will be able to bring it down.

**MR SESELJA:** Yes, I think we all would. Do we have the estimated outcome for 2005-06 in relation to recidivism?

**Ms Lambert:** It will be in the annual report when it comes out.

**MR SMYTH:** Just as a supplementary to that line of questioning, is it possible to get, say, a five-year picture of what the recidivism really is? Only 10 per cent are coming back in the first year, but when we get to the second year I think you said it is 40 per cent. What is it in the third year? Is there a longitudinal tracking of this, and is it available?

**Mr Wyles:** No, there is no tracking. This is what we have set. We have defined it this way. As I said, other jurisdictions define it in different ways.

**MR SMYTH:** So you have only been keeping this—

**Mr Wyles:** We have not set a target over three years.

**MR SMYTH:** But you must have previous data.

**Mr Wyles:** It is quite an arduous count, I have to say.

**Ms Denley:** Yes, it is. We are trying to improve our data collection system to some extent. In doing the measures at the moment we have had to go back to pretty well almost a hard file audit to get the figures so we can set these as a realistic target. If you are asking us now to look back over the five years, I can tell you it would not be easy to do that using the existing data collection system.

**MR SMYTH:** Would it not be useful to have that? What if we are spending \$1,038 dollars per individual and we are doing it wrong? We know that they survived for 12 months, but half of them do not make two years, and three-quarters of them possibly do not make three years. Surely that would influence the way we are tackling the problem. It may lead to less grief for the young people involved, and potentially be a saving to the territory.

Minister, perhaps on your judgment discussion with staff, if it is possible to create a five-year picture, could you? If it is too difficult, could you report back that it would be beyond the bounds of what you can do?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, we will certainly have a look at it and see what we can provide the committee with. I should say also that, in changing the 10 per cent in the budget papers, we put a notifiable instrument in to the Assembly, advising that we were changing that

target to 45 per cent earlier this year, with an explanation of why we were doing it. So it should not come as a shock to any of you.

**MR SESELJA:** Of course we don't necessarily read every notifiable instrument.

**Ms Gallagher:** Don't you?

**MR SESELJA:** No, not always.

**Ms Gallagher:** That is where all the good stuff is.

**MR SESELJA:** Yes, I am sure it is. Last year you indicated that, whilst the new facility would be much more human rights compliant than the current facility, it may not necessarily meet all the requirements of the Human Rights Act. Has that assessment been revised at all since then? Is it still your expectation that a new facility would not meet all the provisions of the Human Rights Act?

**Ms Gallagher:** No, we have not revised that. I think the answers I gave last year explained it. They were largely around how we separate young people. That has not changed. I think this is an issue jurisdictions face when there are any relatively small detention centres. We have to balance up the client mix.

For example, it would go against many other reports to separate an indigenous young person by themselves. If there was a young woman there that we could place that person with and that would be a better outcome for that young person, then we would do that.

Decisions will be taken on a daily basis as to the best arrangements in place at the new detention centre, based on the young people's needs. At times that will bring into conflict some of the Human Rights Act requirements.

**MR SESELJA:** Given that you are not going to be able to meet it, if what you say is right—and I do not have any reason to disbelieve it—that at times it will be completely unreasonable for you to comply with those provisions, will the government be looking to amend those provisions to reflect the reality of what goes on in a youth detention centre and perhaps in other places, or will there continue to be a conflict in terms of practice versus what is in the Human Rights Act?

**Ms Gallagher:** I think we went through all this last year, and the answers are still the same. The Human Rights Act sets out a framework for the best way to protect individual human rights and, in Quamby's case, within the delivery of a particular service.

At times those rights have to be weighed up, and you cannot have all the rights at once, necessarily. That is what we are saying—there has to be a balance. If someone's right to having safety puts into conflict the right to be segregated from a range of other people, or isolated by themselves, then that is going to need to be resolved. At times the resolution for that will be not in accordance with the Human Rights Act.

I think this happens at the remand centre and it will happen at Quamby. We would not have the good stuff going on at Quamby, that the human rights audit, for example, did when they looked through the Human Rights Act and alerted us to improve the

operations at Quamby.

There is no doubt there has been an improvement. That has been down to the human rights commissioner coming in and having a look. That has improved operations there. Depending on the young people's mix and their requirements, at times there will be conflict. They are some of the issues we will be talking with the human rights commissioner about as we go into planning the new youth detention facility.

Hopefully we can get some agreement about when it is okay, or when it is the right time to balance up those decisions that need to be taken. Hopefully we will be able to do it in a way the human rights commissioner is supportive of, if we can get that at the end of the day. If you want me to sit here and say the Human Rights Act needs to be chucked out, is not worth it or is not delivering anything, I am not going to say that because I think it has improved things considerably.

**MR SESELJA:** I do not want you to say anything. I just want you to keep talking as you are.

**MR PRATT:** Can you tell us what the incidence of violence has been in Quamby in the year to date, and how that compares with previous years.

**Ms Gallagher:** I do not know what you want. There is a range of incidents that occur. Is there anything specific?

**MR PRATT:** Let us talk about reportable acts of assault.

**Mr Wyles:** I can give some figures. We do not separate out assaults or violence. I can tell you that in the year to date there have been 99 critical incidents. That is right. They include a range of things—assaults, property damage, contraband, systems failures and fire alarms. That is all.

**MR PRATT:** Self-harm?

**Mr Wyles:** Self-harm would be in there too, yes.

**MR PRATT:** I do not have annual reports to hand, but are these statistics normally in annual reports?

**Ms Lambert:** No.

**MR PRATT:** Are you able to give me an indication of the previous year; so we can measure some of these statistics against the previous year and establish whether these incidents are up or down?

**Ms Lambert:** These incidents depend on the nature of the young people in there, frankly. Sometimes you will have people who are, as I said, really reacting to being there. It will vary from year to year, depending on the nature of the clientele. I am not sure that there is value in comparing, in that respect, from year to year. Paul, you might have something more to add.

**Mr Wyles:** Through systems failures, we have had problems with demountables setting off alarms when the showers are on. That would add to that 99.

**MR PRATT:** I think we could probably exclude those, couldn't we?

**Ms Lambert:** All of those add disruption in the lives of people who are, as I said, in particular situations. We deal with all of those as part of our reporting process. That is what we do. We are pretty comprehensive in it.

**MR PRATT:** I would be happy to take those statistics. If you want to qualify the picture in terms of those variable factors, then that is fine too. I am sure the committee can have a look at that and see whether there is any meaningful picture or not. Is it three years? Let us go for 2004-05, 2005-06 and year to date.

**Ms Gallagher:** What, critical incidents?

**MR PRATT:** Yes, critical incidents.

**Ms Gallagher:** I am happy to give you that number.

**MR SMYTH:** Just following up on that, is there any tracking of self-harm, and is it decreasing or increasing?

**Mr Wyles:** It all comes to me as a critical incident report. We could go back and track how many self-harms. Anecdotally, my sense is it is probably decreasing.

**Ms Lambert:** People come to us in that state. It is something which is part of their coping, or not coping, when they actually come to us. Quite often that will refer to somebody who has just arrived in the centre. We then need to work with them to, if you like, reduce that behaviour and eliminate it. That is what happens.

**MS MacDONALD:** My question is not related to Quamby or the new youth detention centre. I am wanting to move to a different area. I hope everybody is fine with that. My question relates to budget paper No 4, page 199. There are two parts to the question that might or might not tie in. I note that there is an upward trend under 4.1.a—number of custody days used annually for people by the Children's Court. Can you explain that?

**Ms Gallagher:** I think you were out of the room when we were asked that question. It is determined by the courts.

**MS MacDONALD:** Apologies for that. The other question relates to the turnaround program. The turnaround program was a previous budget initiative. Could you provide information on the number of clients that have exited the program?

**Ms Gallagher:** This is a very worthwhile program. We have reached, I think, our full complement now of staff and team leaders. There have been some problems in the past in filling some of these positions. That has affected the numbers of young people that can come into the program. I have had a presentation from the turnaround team and I think it is having some very good outcomes for individual young people who have been too difficult for everyone to deal with in the past.



**Ms Lambert:** The program began in May 2004. Since that time we have had 25 young people enter the program. Five have been transitioned out of that original group. We are expecting, over the next one to four months, that another six young people will transition out as well. Mr Wyles can talk about this. We have had a particularly good educational outcome for a number of those children. We are very pleased about that because, of course, education is the key to moving them into other life outcomes, if you like. Paul can talk about that.

**Mr Wyles:** What I would say is that this program has been instrumental in changing the way some of the systems work—some of the service delivery agencies. Education have been engaged from the beginning. They identify a lead teacher for every young person that comes into this program. That lead teacher works with the young person.

Often these people have been alienated from school for some time. We have managed, as Ms Lambert said, some good outcomes. A number of those young people have either returned to mainstream school or have been placed in alternative education programs.

**Ms Denley:** I think the other thing to say about turnaround is that it was initially anticipated, when we were looking at the previous targets as throughputs, that we would be able to transition these young people through in a 12-month period. It has become clear over the operational period of this program that it is much more realistic to look at 18 months and, in some cases, even longer periods.

I think there are two clients currently in that program who are over 18 because we were waiting for an appropriate time in those young persons' case planning processes to transition them. It is very much an individualised program, but averaging out much more in an 18-month period of intensive engagement rather than the initially anticipated 12 months.

**MS MacDONALD:** It is good to know—and this is a statement, so I apologise—that they are not dropped when they reach the age of 18. Presumably they are not necessarily ready to no longer receive that support.

**Ms Gallagher:** It is something we need some more work done on across government as to what happens after. Children and youth cannot keep providing support forever, but many of these people are always going to need support. So it is an area where I think we need to do more work.

**Ms Lambert:** Of course our engagement with people in this program keeps them out of places like Quamby. By wrapping the services around them, we actually work with them individually. That prevents them moving into the harder end of the system as well.

**DR FOSKEY:** You talked about education and so on, but what about accommodation for these young people? Are they accommodated together or separately? How does all that work? When they exit the turnaround program, do they exit some accommodation as well?

**Ms Lambert:** A number of them are still with their families, so they do not necessarily have to be beyond those—or they are with a carer or something of that nature. They are

not necessarily on their own somewhere. They have a variety of living circumstances.

**Mr Wyles:** It is worth saying that we also work closely with housing to secure permanent accommodation for some of these young people. A number of them, because of their high and complex needs, will be moving between refuges.

We have put in place some strategies across the youth SAAP sector, where refuges have found it very difficult to cope with some of these young people, to institute some time out so that refuges can share the care of some of those young people. That is better for the staff in those refuges so they just do not use them permanently.

**DR FOSKEY:** Do they come together for the program, or is the turnaround program just you working individually with each person and necessarily keeping track in some cases, which would not always be easy?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. Paul, perhaps you could give an example of what it means for one person to be on turnaround.

**Mr Wyles:** Part of the difference with this program is that it is more than a program. It is about how government and non-government services come together to individualise and tailor a service response for young people. A young person is referred to the program through what is called a referral assessment panel, with representatives of government and non-government agencies. Youth services in the non-government sector are represented, as is their out-of-home care sector, health, education and others. They are all on that panel.

The young person is accepted into the turnaround program. The turnaround coordinator's main role is around initially convening the services that are required for that young person. We have found that, initially, some of those young people have 14 services involved.

One of the initial tasks of the case coordinator in the turnaround program is to identify very clearly with those services what is the case plan, who needs to be involved, and their roles and responsibilities. In that process some of those service systems and programs will drop off.

The case coordinator has a critical role in providing communication between those players and the young person. Young people often share their case conferences and case meetings, and they identify clear goals that everyone is working towards.

Because of the nature of these young people and their situations changing daily, a high level of communication is critical to keep those service providers up to date and informed about what has changed, in terms of accommodation or other sorts of crises in the young person's life.

**Ms Denley:** The other thing that needs to be said is that, whilst the services are signing on to that case plan, they also sign on not to reject.

**DR FOSKEY:** They see it through.

**Ms Denley:** They have to see it through.

**DR FOSKEY:** What is the basic sort of gender division among cases? Is there any noticeable gender division?

**Mr Wyles:** It is about even. I think initially we had more females in the program than males, but I think it is about even.

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes, I see.

**Ms Lambert:** Another interesting thing is that families are worked with as well. One of the very moving case studies I read was about a father who had also been engaging with the workers. He was saying that he had now learnt to manage his anger through this process and to actually intersect with his child more effectively as a result.

So while the focus is on the young person, it spreads out a bit beyond that as well. Other jurisdictions are having a look at this to see how it works. It is easier for us perhaps, in a smaller jurisdiction, but others are interested in looking at this model.

**DR FOSKEY:** Again, I suppose it is quite an expensive business.

**Ms Lambert:** Yes, it is.

**DR FOSKEY:** How does it compare to when they are in custody—“Quamby-isation”?

**Ms Denley:** Part of the evaluation process is to look at that. I cannot give you the figures from memory, but they certainly look favourable—and also because you need to cost out relatively. These young people have been multiple service users, with little outcome. There has been an expensive involvement over a period of time with no outcome, necessarily. So there would have to be cost benefits.

**DR FOSKEY:** It is a bit of a model across other areas too, isn't it?—not just for young people.

**Ms Denley:** That is right. It is a model.

**Ms Gallagher:** That is what I am saying—for those who are 18½.

**Mr Wyles:** It is probably worth saying that it is what is termed a principles-based model. So there are a number of things that underpin it, like being child centred, family focused and having capacity for flexible funding arrangements. Through that individualised approach we can buy services that are perhaps difficult to access. Additional support in Youth SAAP services is one thing and particular types of assessments that are difficult to assess or that there are waiting lists for is another.

**DR FOSKEY:** Be able to jump queues, including SAAP services.

**MRS BURKE:** Minister, following on the line of questioning here, could tell me the actual cost of delivering the turnaround program per annum? I realise that we have had it for over 18 months, but if you could give me the cost of the program for 12 months. Is it

included in the extra education programs that you are going to give us some figures for or is it another standalone?

**Ms Gallagher:** Sorry, I did not understand the last bit.

**MRS BURKE:** Is the turnaround program part of those figures that you are going to provide to the committee, how much does it cost to deliver the program to these young people and where is the funding for it shown in the budget papers?

**Ms Lambert:** It would be a component of the numbers there. You are talking about education services coming into Quamby and so on. It would more difficult to do that in a specific sense because they will be accessing universal services in education quite often. The intention is to get them mainstreamed in education, although some do go to a special setting. I am not sure that we could do more than give you the universal cost of that service for that one. It is a bit different from the Quamby one where services specifically come in to deliver health services and specifically come in to deliver education services. The costs that we would have would be the most accurate costs you would have.

**Ms Gallagher:** It would be staff costs. The staff employed by the department, or the office, are essentially the case coordinators or have a case coordinating role, if I am right, bringing together a range of other services from outside, usually non-government services, and they do the linking up, the communicating between, the dealing with. If a young person who rings in has been evicted or whatever, they will call someone else and arranging that link-up. The costs for turnaround are the staff costs. I am sure we can provide you with a figure on that.

**MRS BURKE:** Do you see what I am getting at? We have established that \$1,001 is for operational costs and so on.

**Ms Gallagher:** That is for Quamby. These aren't in Quamby.

**Ms Lambert:** This is a different program.

**MRS BURKE:** It is a different program. Sorry.

**Ms Gallagher:** Although from time to time we may have someone who is in turnaround in Quamby, hopefully not for too long.

**MRS BURKE:** Ms Lambert alluded to Quamby and I was just thinking of the linkages.

**Ms Lambert:** As an example.

**MRS BURKE:** Okay. I have got that sorted, thank you.

**Ms Gallagher:** Can I just clarify that we have undertaken to get back to the committee on the cost of turnaround.

**MRS BURKE:** Yes, and also, not wishing to confuse you, the cost of extra education programs for clients in Quamby above the operational costs that you have said.

**Ms Gallagher:** For running the Hindmarsh Education Centre?

**MRS BURKE:** Yes.

**Ms Gallagher:** Okay, but that is different to turnaround.

**MRS BURKE:** Yes, I realise that.

**MR PRATT:** Minister, can you give us a rundown on the status of the staff at Quamby? Let's focus on the operational staff.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. I think we have finalised all the staffing changes there. There has been a reclassification of positions and so a readvertising of those positions and a refilling of them. Mr Wyles is probably the best person to speak about that.

**Mr Wyles:** As the minister suggested earlier, we commissioned a consultant about 18 months ago to look at the levels of positions at Quamby and the consultant found that a number of those positions needed to be classified upwards, in line with other jurisdictions. So this is about how we retain staff at an appropriate level, given we are competing with other jurisdictions, such as New South Wales. That reclassification took some time because it involved some lengthy negotiations with the union. Following that, we advertised earlier this year. We have been through the rounds, recruiting to youth worker positions, team leader positions and unit manager positions.

**Ms Gallagher:** We have cooks there, too.

**Mr Wyles:** Yes, there are cooks on the staff.

**MR PRATT:** That is very important.

**Ms Gallagher:** The biggest complaint from young people in Quamby is about the food, not surprising. But now the complaints about food have decreased.

**Mr Wyles:** I think in total there were 31 positions we advertised at the end of January and the beginning of February. Through that recruitment round we have not filled all those positions and we will have to go out again and advertise, but the staffing is full in terms of the use of casuals, et cetera, so we are not down on staff. Retention rates generally, I have to say, have always been quite good at Quamby. There is not a high turnover of staff.

**MR PRATT:** Has the retention rate been about the same as it had been for the previous three years?

**Mr Wyles:** I would be guessing, but it is pretty stable.

**MR PRATT:** As to those that you have not retained, perhaps that was because of the reclassification as opposed to dissatisfaction.

**Mr Wyles:** As to the reclassification, some of the negotiation we had with the union was around the introduction of psychometric testing and job fit testing for that job. That

testing happens in ACT Corrective Services and happens in a number of youth detention centres across the country. So, as well as an interview, there is substantial testing that informs who we select for the positions. Clearly, through that process, which is more rigorous than we have had in the past, some staff have chosen not to apply for promotion, not to apply for a permanent position or to move on.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Are those staff on the whole-of-government enterprise agreement or do they have a separate agreement at Quamby?

**Mr Wyles:** They are on the office agreement.

**MR PRATT:** How many of those staff have actually moved on as part of this reclassification and retraining process?

**Mr Wyles:** I will have to check. It is not a substantial number, but I could check for you.

**MR PRATT:** Could you, please?

**Mr Wyles:** Yes. Perhaps how many staff have moved on since the beginning of this year.

**MR PRATT:** Since the beginning of the reclassification process coming out of the previous recommendations.

**Ms Gallagher:** Through the recruitment process would be the easiest one, rather than the reclassification.

**DR FOSKEY:** My question is about the working conditions and the reclassification. First of all, what is the length of a shift and what does a working week look like for someone who is permanent at the youth worker level? Secondly, was there a call for particular qualifications with the reclassification? Was that why some people did not reapply?

**Mr Wyles:** We work eight-hour shifts at Quamby, so there are three 8-hour shifts in a day. They rotate. That gives people the opportunity to have some mornings, some evenings, some nights and some weekends off. Certainly, the very strong message I have had from staff is that they like that roster and they do not want any changes to it.

**DR FOSKEY:** You are not suggesting that it be changed, are you?

**Mr Wyles:** In the move to the new facility we need to look at everything. We have been speaking to other jurisdictions. There is a range of ways you can arrange rostering. We need to be clear about when the busy times at the centre are and we need to ensure that our staffing requirements are meeting the needs of the young people and busy periods. For example, most of our admissions are after hours, after 5 o'clock.

**DR FOSKEY:** How about the qualifications in regard to reclassification and people applying for their jobs at different levels?

**Mr Wyles:** Youth worker qualifications were desirable. As part of the employment

engagement at Quamby we put people through a certificate 4 in youth work and we pay for that. That is an expectation when people are employed.

**DR FOSKEY:** So it wasn't an issue as to why people did not reapply.

**Mr Wyles:** No. I am pleased to report that we got some external applicants as well as internal applicants, so we got a reasonable mix.

**MR PRATT:** Mr Wyles, what is your overtime policy for operational staff?

**Mr Wyles:** I would have to check. My memory of it is that people can work a second shift, but I would have to check.

**MR PRATT:** If you just would not mind homing in on particularly the policy for those who are at the coalface and how far you can extend those officers with overtime in that type of environment. That is what I want to know.

**Mr Wyles:** My comment to that would be that overtime has not been an issue for permanent staff at Quamby because we have a reasonably large casual pool. Certainly through this recruitment process we are hoping to reduce the casual pool and increase the permanent staff pool.

**MR PRATT:** Also, on notice, could you let the committee know how much has been spent, year to date, on overtime for operational staff? I am not worried about the support staff.

**Ms Lambert:** Everyone is operational at Quamby.

**MR PRATT:** I thought you had two categories. I thought you had service support staff and operational staff.

**Mr Wyles:** We have health and education staff. We don't pay it to some of them.

**MR PRATT:** I am talking about the frontline staff.

**MR SMYTH:** The 2005-06 budget shows the rate of recidivism per sentence as 10 per cent flat for 2006, 2007, 2008 and 2009, but the rate for people on community-based orders is 45 per cent, 43 per cent, 42 per cent and 41 per cent. That trend continues in this year's paper for 2009-10. For people on community-based orders it goes down to 41 per cent, but the recidivism rate for sentenced young people is flat at 45 per cent. Given that the existing Quamby is being upgraded and we are building a facility that will open in 2008, why isn't there an expected drop in the recidivism rate?

**Ms Gallagher:** I think Mr Wyles did answer this, but the basic message, I think, is that the young people who are in custody or sentenced are a much harder group to work with to reduce that rate. We are setting a realistic target. We are hopeful that it will be able to drop over time, but it acknowledges that we are going to have to work harder with this group of young people. We think the new facilities will help, but it is going to take longer to deliver reductions with this particular group. It is a fairly small group as well.

**THE CHAIR:** We will adjourn now and come back at about 4 o'clock on output class 4.2.

**Meeting adjourned from to 3.37 to 4.02 pm.**

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Gentleman, do you have a question? We are on output 4.2.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Minister, I refer you to page 200. In output 4.2, item d., the chief executive has quite a bit of parental responsibility; he must be busy at Christmas time. That is increasing in this budget and the next one. Note 5 talks about why the increases happen and talks about court orders and voluntary care agreements. Can you tell me how many voluntary care agreements there are? Have they increased as well?

**Ms Ford:** I do not know the numbers for that. Ms Denley might have it.

**Ms Denley:** I am very sorry, I do not have them off the top of my head.

**THE CHAIR:** Will you take it on notice?

**Ms Lambert:** Yes. We are happy to do that.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Perhaps you could just indicate to me: has it—

**Mr Duggan:** I do not have the actual numbers but we often utilise a voluntary care agreement while we are trying to work very much in partnership with the family. It is a first step. We are engaged with families, in trying to keep the family together. One of the issues is that, if the child has to come into care for a range of reasons—sometimes it is people needing just respite care or a bit of help—we engage a voluntary care agreement rather than go before the Children's Court. I do not have the numbers but we do utilise it as a form of intervention.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Can you tell me then whether the trend has been increasing? I suppose with the extra reporting that speaks for itself.

**Mr Duggan:** As I say, we use it as a form of engagement—trying to keep the family together, not to initiate court action; to keep ourselves out of an adversarial situation. But there is quite often a range of occasions when parents really need help for a very short term. They will initiate the contact with us to basically allow us to admit the child into a joint caring arrangement.

**THE CHAIR:** While you are here, I will ask a question about the next one down, item e. It looks like there is some extra capacity there. Are children with high and complex needs covered in the out-of-home care in item e on page 200?

**Mr Duggan:** Yes, it does cover children who we determine are of high and complex needs. That figure is the cost.

**THE CHAIR:** Is it growing?

**Mr Duggan:** No. The department has been very successful. Our dependency level on



individual support packages has decreased for the number of different placement options we have been able to achieve. That has reduced the number of children who are in receipt of individual support packages at the moment.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you very much.

**DR FOSKEY:** Can I ask a supplementary question. Once these children have stopped receiving an ISP, do you still continue to monitor them?

**Mr Duggan:** Absolutely. Most of these children are on long-term orders and we continue to be involved. We have a number of children who are young adults; we are involved with post-18s.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms MacDonald, do you have a supplementary?

**MS MacDONALD:** Yes. Minister and Mr Duggan, on page 186 one of the dot points states:

enhancing service models for children and young people in out of home care;

Can you provide information on the provision of additional capacity in the range of out-of-home care services for children of high and complex needs? Sorry, Mr Duggan, it is not for you at all. I thought I was asking you something there.

**DR FOSKEY:** But don't go away.

**MS MacDONALD:** Dr Foskey just wants to have a conversation with you, Mr Duggan. She likes your accent.

**Ms Lambert:** I might just start in response to that question, if I may. What we have been endeavouring to do is shift young people from ISPs into arrangements which particularly enable them to stay in the ACT and which are residential care settings. We are shifting our service model, if you like, away from ISPs because often those place people interstate. My concern was that young people should be here in the ACT. The residential care programs that we have been setting up over this year are about enabling an arrangement that suits these young people that is ACT based. Jenny, over to you.

**Ms Kitchin:** Through the new residential care services we have expanded our capacity from 20 up to 41 new beds. The services are spread across a range of different models. We have one new crisis residential service, four generalist residential care homes, four stabilisation, assessment and transition houses and two houses for young people who have or display sexually inappropriate behaviours. Some of these services commenced from 1 April and gradually over the last three months have been coming on line. All will be operational as of next week.

**MRS BURKE:** I have a supplementary question before we go on too much further, madam chair, with your indulgence. Do we know the current level of unmet need with individual support packages? I know that that is a constant for all concerned.

**Ms Gallagher:** There isn't.

**MRS BURKE:** There is no unmet need.

**Ms Denley:** Mrs Burke, once a young person is taken under our care and protection, we must find accommodation. So that is not an option. Even if we have to establish an individual support package to meet their need, if there are no other existing beds, we are compelled to act.

**MRS BURKE:** I was just clearing that up.

**DR FOSKEY:** Can I just clarify something before I ask my question. Ms Lambert, are you currently the executive officer who has responsibility for these young people?

**Ms Lambert:** Yes.

**DR FOSKEY:** My question is about the revised child protection manual. On page 200 of last year's budget paper 3 it said that a further \$250,000 would be spent on the redevelopment of the procedures manual. Has that manual been completed? Will training on the new features be provided to all relevant staff?

**Ms Lambert:** There are a couple of steps. One is that we had to overlay, if you like, the care and protection manual with the principle of the best interests of the child or child centres, which was one of the responses to the Vardon report—one of the policy initiatives coming out of it. The second is that, as you would be aware being in the Assembly, we are revising the Children and Young People Act, so the manual clearly has to be revised to reflect that. So it is an ongoing and iterative process. Yes, there is training. With the changes that have already gone through, there is training of staff occurring at the moment.

**DR FOSKEY:** Do you think there will have to be many changes?

**Ms Lambert:** There are always changes with manuals of this nature because of practice. They must be iterative. You will never get to the stage where they are absolute; they must be iterative.

**Ms Denley:** The other part of that is also reflecting those changes in your data collection system and your recording system.

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes—pretty big.

**Ms Denley:** It is not just the manual; it is also making sure that your forms and your IT system reflect it.

**MRS BURKE:** Gosh, I was not quite ready for that. On page 200 still: looking at child protection reports and obviously taking on board the minister's comments earlier today, with the estimated outcome for 2005-06 we see, obviously, this exponential increase and it continues. I think the minister did talk about the reporting requirements. We go from 9,000 actual reports to 3,500 requiring appraisal—just 10 per cent of the top figure actually reported.

**Ms Gallagher:** Substantiated.

**MRS BURKE:** Substantiated reports, I beg your pardon. For the record, that is correct. So it is 10 per cent of the actual figure in the beginning.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**Mrs Burke:** No doubt you are continuing to monitor that process. If we do that, that is good. Given the significant increase of child protection reports and the anticipated additional 1,000 reports in 2006-07, how is the department adequately resourcing staff to cope with the influx of reported cases? How are you managing that workload?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is an area where we have seen significant growth in staff. Back in 2002 or 2003 there were about 36 staff in this area. We are funded for 130. There are still some vacancies there. We have about 110 now, so there are still some positions vacant. Once we move to the full complement of staff that will provide us with some capacity to meet some of those increases. We are hoping that at some point—and I think that is why we are only estimating an additional 1,000 in 2006-07—there will be some plateauing out eventually, but I have been saying that for the last three years at estimates hearings.

When I became minister for this area the target was 2,800. As you can see, that has grown over the years. We moved it up to 5,500 and it has gone to 7,000. I think we got 8,000 last year. We predicted 9,000, which I think we are going to reach now. We are hopeful that at some point there will be a plateauing out. With the numbers that we have seen, with a full complement of staff in the new executive management area and with the extra support in the courts—there is extra money in the JACS budget to deal with some of the court work that is flowing out of this—our staff are staying longer than they have been in the past. The attrition rate was around 39 per cent when there were only 36 people. You can understand why that was. It was a very bad situation. Retention is now under six per cent for this area, so we are keeping people. Our European contingent are staying and they have brought with them a whole range of skills to complement our local staff.

We are again looking at ways to employ and retain local people here, such as broadening out the category of qualifications to get employment here. Traditionally it was social work and psychology. We are looking at different skills and acknowledging that people can still work in this area with a broader range, such as education and experience with children.

With the work that is being done and the fact that, under the strong leadership we have in place now, staff are wanting to stay, we should be able to cope with the increases that we are predicting again. We are predicting again an increase in 2006-07—and of course that comes with an additional appraisal. I think the significant work comes in the appraisals of the allegations. The substantiation rate, as you say, is remaining the same but, because it is remaining at 10 per cent of a large total, we are dealing with more children.

**MRS BURKE:** Just very quickly then, there are 20 vacancies. What are those positions and categories and how are you addressing that?

**Ms Gallagher:** They are child protection workers. I imagine they are probably within the

stream of the lower levels up to the more senior areas. Frank's area has been doing a lot of work in broadening out the employment category. The qualifications category will help because there is a shortage of social workers and psychologists. A range of cadets and scholars are paying HECS, tying people to us for life. I think that is one of Frank's ideas.

**Mr Duggan:** We are about to launch a vocational employment strategy where we are going to target university students in the last year of their education in the relative fields. We are going to take them on board as trainees-cadets—we still have to work out the exact words. We will maintain them then during their student holidays, when they will come into the organisation. We will put them through our induction training during those periods. On graduation we will offer them a 12-month opportunity within the organisation at base level and then advertise the position at the next level up. Hopefully they will apply for them. On completion, we will sponsor a component of their HECS fees. So we will basically indenture them to the organisation for a period of time.

That same process worked very successfully with the overseas people. They are indentured to stay with the organisation for 18 months. A number of them have now passed the 18 months; one or two are into their second year. We are going to just follow that as a process into the education facilities around the town and see who we can sponsor to come and work for us.

**Ms Lambert:** It is a very intensely competitive market. All jurisdictions are marketing very aggressively. I think in the budgets of other jurisdictions this year all of them are calling for more and more child protection workers. Our retention rate is a real tribute to the work that Frank and his team have done. A real indicator of that to me was that I was absolutely delighted recently to have two staff approach me off their own initiative to have a practitioners' conference this year to share best practice from within the department. I am very happy to sponsor that, given my background. For me that is an indication of a staff that is engaged, really involved in their profession and want it to be a learning part of the organisation. I think that is terrific.

**MRS BURKE:** Finally, given my difficulty and all our agreed difficulties in reading figures and what money is where, I take it that 130 personnel are catered for in employment expenses in this budget.

**Mr Hubbard:** Definitely, yes. We are budgeted to the full complement.

**MRS BURKE:** You are, yes.

**Mr Hubbard:** The challenge is for Frank to get them through the door and then shut the door behind them.

**Ms Lambert:** He is very good at that.

**THE CHAIR:** Do we have any more questions on output class 4.2?

**MRS BURKE:** Yes, I do.

**Ms Gallagher:** Mr Hubbard has a couple of answers to questions that we took earlier.

**THE CHAIR:** We will take those and then we will go back to Mrs Burke.

**Mr Hubbard:** These were questions asked by Mrs Burke. Your first one was considering turnaround and the costs involved. You do not see them directly because they are built into expenses in each of the areas. What you have got is the total cost for turnaround at \$726,000. That is made up of a combination of \$405,000 for salaries and wages and \$320,000 for supplies and services. The supplies and services money includes a lot of the support costs for individual kids. We also get contributions from other agencies, including the AFP, DET and JACS at \$120,000. That deals with that question.

In another question you asked about the costs related to the Hindmarsh Education Centre. The centre is funded by the department of education. So the question on notice is probably best directed to education for that answer.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you for that. I asked the chair whether I could ask a question on SAAP funding, page 202.

**THE CHAIR:** Is that in here or annexed?

**DR FOSKEY:** We are not there yet.

**THE CHAIR:** SAAP is under output 3.

**Mrs Burke:** You want to do it at 3.3.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth do you have any questions under 4.2?

**MR SMYTH:** No. I am fine.

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, we will move on to output class 3.

**Ms Gallagher:** I am in your hands, madam chair.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Gentleman, do you have any questions in this area?

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I do. It is just an overview question. I am really interested to find out what the process is when you find someone that is homeless. What do you do when you initially find someone that is homeless? I have probably moved to 3.1; it is more of an overview question. I just want to get an idea in my own mind as to the process for accommodation when you find someone that is homeless.

**Ms Sheehan:** At the moment we have a service called Canberra emergency accommodation service, which is run by Anglicare and Lifeline. A service provider assisting a homeless person can ring the CEAS telephone number. CEAS will be able to advise immediately whether there are any vacant beds in the SAAP service system as advised by services to CEAS. If there are no available beds then CEAS is also funded to provide an amount of accommodation and support to homeless people. That is one very good route into a number of services. In addition to that, individual services can be directly contacted. My staff at Housing ACT would make the call on behalf of a person

that comes to us. We would contact an individual SAAP service that we might know would meet the specific needs of the homeless person. We might be able to make the direct contact that way. There are a number of routes into accommodation and support services for homeless people.

**Ms Lambert:** Another route would be through the domestic violence crisis service. That is a significant route for women.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** So is it the case that you can always find some kind of accommodation?

**Ms Sheehan:** Without a doubt it is true that there are homeless people in the ACT; there are homeless people nationally. It is not possible to say that we can always find a bed for a homeless person. We can try to attach them to other types of supports as well. The social plan does have the target of removing primary homelessness, which is people sleeping rough in the streets or in their cars, by 2013. We are working very hard to achieve that through our homelessness strategy.

**DR FOSKEY:** I just want to explore a little more the cuts to SAAP in the next four years of \$1 million which the government has said is due to an overmatching of ACT government funding to Australian government funding. Minister, did the ACT government not make the commitment to provide this extra funding to SAAP because it wanted to fund the ACT homelessness strategy?

**Ms Gallagher:** Thank you, Dr Foskey. We currently overfund under the agreement by \$3½ million. We are not seeking to go back to the requirement that we pay under that agreement; we are seeking \$1 million in efficiencies through the sector. We do not believe the sector has been working to capacity and that we can find these savings and increase the number of beds available to the sector whilst taking this money out. This budget has been a tough one for all agencies. We have looked across government at areas where savings can be made. The government has made the decision that \$1 million can be taken out but there must be no reduction in beds available through the homelessness services. That job has been given to me and the department to steer through. Based on some of the discussions I have had with the department and service providers, I am confident that we can meet those savings and increase the beds available through this process.

**DR FOSKEY:** Is there some way that we can track your progress on this? Obviously it is an issue where there is a lot of community concern.

**Ms Gallagher:** Sure. I am more than happy to work out a way to keep people informed of what we are doing.

**DR FOSKEY:** In relation to overcapacity—this is just a bit of a follow-up to my question this morning because we started touching on this area—you are probably aware of the specific instance at Castlereagh House.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**DR FOSKEY:** They have probably already made representations to you—

**Ms Gallagher:** They have not actually, no—not at all.

**DR FOSKEY:** They talked to us. I want to check that you are not basing your idea of their capacity on the fact that they used to have a five-bedroom house until it burned down and they have now got a three-bedroom house. I want to check that you are basing your idea of their capacity on the three, rather than the five-bedroom house.

**Ms Gallagher:** I am aware of the change in their accommodation from one house to another.

**DR FOSKEY:** When you are looking at refuges—and I will keep this general; I will not mention any names here—if a refuge or SAAP accommodation receives funding, is there an evaluation done at a certain specific stage, say, 12 to 18 months? Is that the normal process? With SAAP funding, how do you track that the services that are contracted are being delivered?

**Ms Sheehan:** We have a range of reporting mechanisms under the purchase agreements that we have with the non-government organisations. So organisations, depending upon their agreement, are required to report to us on the delivery of their services, both the quantitative measures and the qualitative measures, six-monthly and then 12-monthly as well. We do receive regular reports from services, and the old fashioned language would be according to their outputs.

In addition to that, as I believe I mentioned earlier on today, Dr Foskey, all services funded under the SAAP program, including the ACT homelessness additional dollars to the SAAP program, are required to participate in the national data collection for SAAP, which is administered through the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. That is very often electronic collections—some paper forms are submitted as well—directly from services to the SAAP National Data Collection Agency.

In addition to the reports that we receive on a six-monthly and 12-monthly basis, we can then look at the total data, as submitted to that agency, across the ACT on an annual basis. That is how we are able to compare overall performance of the sector in a very robust way.

**DR FOSKEY:** Is the government up to date with its review and reporting, receiving reporting back from SAAP funded services?

**Ms Sheehan:** Services are required to report according to the regime that I have just outlined. They are also required to submit to the national data, and we do receive those reports. We do use those reports to look at service performance and we are then in a position to be able to provide the minister with information about the occupancy of various services and then, when we consider there are issues that need to be addressed, to work very actively with services in order to address those issues.

**MRS BURKE:** Minister, I am having a bit difficulty understanding SAAP service funding, given the pressure of the sector. Dr Foskey and the department and I attend a regularly monthly forum meeting and we all know that there is continued pressure on the sector to provide, particularly, emergency accommodation. How will the department

seek to continue to provide relief at at least the same level when it is already struggling and you are removing \$1 million each year over the next four years? I just cannot see how that is going to work.

**Ms Gallagher:** We are looking at a range of strategies. One of them is looking at the organisations funded under SAAP and making sure they are providing direct delivery of services to homeless people. If it were a standalone service that maybe needs the support of a broader network, we would look at who could provide that service. We are injecting 20 transitional houses with a \$4.5 million capital injection into the sector to provide some more places. They are three that I can think of straight away.

We currently fund services for the beds they provide. If we are not utilising the beds in those services to their full capacity, we are still paying for those beds. We are really going to work hard to make sure the capacity that we already currently pay for is utilised in the best way possible so that it will not cost us any more. In fact, with some of the negotiations that are going on at the moment, extra capacity is being created through some of the work that is being done and, should I say, largely in cooperation with the services involved. I have not had one service that is actually providing accommodation come to me to raise a concern about the work that is being undertaken in reform of this area.

**MRS BURKE:** How is it, then, that each month we hear that there is a real demand and people are being turned away? I cannot quite get my head around that. You are talking about spaces in houses. Isn't this about client matching? Has this sector not been giving us the full facts, then?

**Ms Gallagher:** We know that across the board it is around 79 per cent occupancy.

**Ms Lambert:** We do not engage with the SAAP sector on shelter meetings. We engage regularly, monthly or six-weekly, with the SAAP forum as well. We get a lot of feedback from them. As I said earlier this morning, we have been working very hard on positioning SAAP as the crisis response and then housing, where it is needed. As I said earlier, not everybody who goes in SAAP services needs public housing.

We are looking at ways we can increase that throughput as we did over Christmas and using that as a model now to move with these new beds that we have in the 20 properties. So we are looking at a continuum of service and bedding that down.

**MRS BURKE:** You have not answered the question. Why are around 20 service providers telling us that they are having extreme difficulties; they have closed their books? How is removing \$1 million a year going to change that?

**DR FOSKEY:** I think I know. It is not for me to answer that.

**MRS BURKE:** I would love to hear your comments, Dr Foskey, but I would prefer to hear the minister and/or the department.

**Ms Gallagher:** There is room for efficiencies in the SAAP sector. They are not all operating at 100 per cent capacity. In fact, many of them are not. We are having a very close look at how they provide services and whether they need more assistance in



improving occupancy rates. If we take one service that I can think of where most of the residents are young people attending school, we are looking whether or not support workers are needed during the day at that location. These are some of the day-to-day realities that you look at in delivering services.

**MRS BURKE:** I understand that.

**Ms Gallagher:** They are some of the efficiencies that we want to find. As I said, in large part, when I have discussed this with the service providers, there is a genuine willingness to assist government with this work. I think there is acknowledgment that the system could work a lot better, and part of that, as Sandra explained, is around exit strategies and making sure that there is capacity to deal with different groups of people who might need emergency or supported accommodation for short periods of time and creating additional capacity outside of some of the services that we are seeing here.

**MRS BURKE:** So you are saying that removing \$4 million, \$1 million over each of the next four years, is going to improve the system and enhanced service level will eventuate?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**MRS BURKE:** Amazing!

**DR FOSKEY:** Can I ask a follow-up question?

**Ms Gallagher:** Well, you can measure me on it next year, Jacqui.

**DR FOSKEY:** One of the issues that keeps coming up at shelter forums and elsewhere is, of course, lack of exit points, which keeps our facilities full. We have been told by the YWCA Family Housing Outreach Service that they have got two families in their accommodation who have stabilised, got jobs and are ready to move out, but with the changes in eligibility they are no longer eligible for public housing. So they are sitting there clogging up the system, and that is not a very good way of putting it but that is the effect of stopping the throughput of SAAP places because there is nowhere to go. How do we tackle this, especially as the change in eligibility for public housing may end up in clogging up SAAP services even more?

**Ms Sheehan:** Dr Foskey, in the eligibility criteria under the public rental housing assistance program, the Commissioner for Housing has a discretion to weigh various of the individual qualification entitlements in cases of hardship. I must say that I, as the delegate of the commissioner and the director of Housing ACT, have a very constant stream of discussion with the individual SAAP providers about particular hardship cases and I am very surprised that there has not been any contact by that service with me about the issue because we do facilitate where we possibly can. Obviously you would not want to discuss individual cases, but we would be very pleased to look at the circumstances of those two families if the service were to make contact with us.

In general, the exit point issue has been an issue for us, and we are very actively addressing that by making those changes to the public rental housing assistance program. The problem that we have experienced and that SAAP services have raised with us and

at the shelter forum again and again is that in the old system where there was a chronological list kept of people to be housed there was no capacity under the legislation for us to look at the relative needs of different people on the waiting list and to use the relative need to very carefully match those families and individuals with the available housing stock.

The changes to the legislation now enable us to look very closely at the complex needs of people who are requiring housing and to allocate according to that need and at the same time to work very closely with the SAAP system, and not just SAAP, but other providers of supported accommodation, particularly mental health, drug and alcohol and children at risk and their carers, so that we can look at the relative need and then move people who are ready for independent living into our properties and allow the service system then to address the crisis.

As Ms Lambert said, we are reforming the system so that crisis is addressed where crisis is funded and where the expertise is. That is in the SAAP service system, in the mental health and drug and alcohol supported accommodation system. We are doing this so that after the crisis people come with a much lower level of support into public housing their tenancies can be sustained. This is a very exciting thing that we are doing to actually establish a service system where people can move through that system and have their needs addressed at the time that they have the need and in the way that is really appropriate to their circumstances. That is how we are going to very actively address the issue of exit block from SAAP accommodation services.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thank you for that. That was quite helpful and it will be very interesting to watch how that works. I think it is a casualty of the \$1 million a year cuts—and the minister can clarify this for me—that ACTCOSS has lost its two indigenous officers. Certainly ACTCOSS thought, and I am inclined to agree with them, that they provided a really invaluable service, far beyond what is delivered in relation to SAAP services. Was there consultation with the office of indigenous affairs before those cuts?

**Ms Lambert:** I was very clear when my officers dealt with the issues coming out of the budget decisions that those two positions were positions I would want to sustain. The program they were funded under was not funded only for training in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. They were funded more broadly than that, and there was an issue with take-up of those courses.

We believe that work is very valuable and Maureen, who was there doing the negotiation, can tell you that we said that we would want to keep those workers employed, whether it was with us or indeed continuing with ACTCOSS. ACTCOSS were asked to provide us with a proposal in terms of maintaining the employment of those two workers. So that is where we are with that. We have got a proposal from them. When did you talk with them, Maureen?

**Ms Sheehan:** It was in budget week.

**Ms Lambert:** That is right. So we made that offer in budget week and we received a proposal, as I understand it, last week?

**Ms Sheehan:** Yes.

**Ms Lambert:** We are considering that proposal. It is certainly my intention to continue in some form the employment of those two officers. I agree that the work is very important, but it was not the only work that was being funded under that part of the homelessness program. It was meant to be a broader development activity for the centre.

**DR FOSKEY:** So DHCS did find the work that they were doing valuable? If they are not doing it, that work is not being done?

**Ms Lambert:** We certainly recognise the value of that work in the community and the work that they did in terms of raising awareness of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues in SAAP services.

**MRS BURKE:** I just wanted to go back to Castlereagh House. It was something that I fought very hard for, along with the providers of that service at Castlereagh and a previous minister in a previous Assembly. Why are we removing the funding? It seems like we are trying to defrag the system somehow, like a computer, so that we can fill up all the spaces. But we cannot put certain people with certain people. You would all recognise that. Where will these clients go now? Isn't being moved on a total disruption to these young people's lives? I have no doubt the workers will get a job somewhere else, but what about the emotional, human and social impact on these young people?

**Ms Gallagher:** I will let Maureen take some of that question, but we are working very closely with the users of that service to make sure that they are supported through the transition arrangements over the next few months. There is a three-month transition period. As Ms Sheehan said, we are making sure that the services being provided are appropriate for the SAAP sector.

I do not really want to get into individual service discussions here. I am happy to have a discussion about Castlereagh House with you because I think there are some very good reasons for doing this, and we will look after those young people, of course. None of them will be homeless. I understand there are comments being made that they will be kicked out onto the street. That is absolutely not the case.

As to the details of that service, I am more than happy to discuss it with you, Mrs Burke. We are very confident that we can provide the service that Castlereagh House is providing and possibly increase it a little within the savings target that we are seeking. I should say that I have been further advised that, in terms of getting some of the savings back, there have been significant underspends across some services in the SAAP sector.

It has changed the way it is providing support services, resulting in an underspend of \$400,000 in the last year. We will obviously go into negotiations with that service around revising down their contract arrangement with the department, but there are other examples of that as well. It is not just about removing money; we are looking at money that has not been spent across the system. That is obviously the first place you would go.

**MRS BURKE:** That is what I am finding so amazing, given the huge number of people that say every month that they are pushed to the limits.

**Ms Gallagher:** I can advise you that there is a service that has not spent \$400,000 this

year.

**Ms Lambert:** In response to Dr Foskey's earlier question, I would like to talk about the service continuum. I have worked very closely with this sector over the last couple of years, and one of the models that we are now working on with them with is the early intervention model, which is about the outreach services to sustain tenancies for people, to actually prevent the act of homelessness, if you like. That is the other part of the continuum that needs a focus. It is not just the exit points that we have got to focus on. We have also got to look at sustaining tenancies in particular areas and in particular ways.

We do it as much as we can in public housing, but that is about women, for instance, being contacted when they are in a situation that is extreme for them and making the intervention at that point, to enable that person to stay where they are, rather than moving them out and moving them on and then trying to find somewhere else for them, if it is safe for them, for instance, in the case of domestic violence. So it is actually a continuum of service. It is not just looking at exit points as well. It is about intervening at that early end, too.

**MRS BURKE:** I have a question in regard to the community inclusion fund. Page 202 of budget paper No 4 refers to reallocated funds of \$4.075 million. What funds are there to continue the operation of the board and the allocation of funds to community groups?

**Ms Gallagher:** The board still reports to the Chief Minister.

**MRS BURKE:** That is what I was talking about earlier, isn't it?

**Ms Gallagher:** I know. He has kept the cash.

**MRS BURKE:** Therein lies the problem. So you cannot answer any more questions on this then?

**Ms Gallagher:** Sorry.

**DR FOSKEY:** Community engagements.

**Ms Lambert:** The fund will simply come into the new grants arrangements. It is like having all the dollars that are to do with grants coming into that grants portal and it is just the dollars that are coming across. The board will continue to report to the Chief Minister. We do not have the community inclusion board. It is just a matter of where the dollars are.

**DR FOSKEY:** I have a few questions about community engagement and the community reference advisory group, Ms Gallagher. Mr Hargreaves mentioned the other day that this advisory group will advise him in relation to a number of municipal issues, et cetera. Will the advisory group also be advising you? What mechanisms will you have to be advised by the community sector, as such? Mr Hargreaves felt that groups like shelter were not as important as he might have felt before and that the community reference advisory group would replace a number of advisory bodies. Is this group also going to advise you or are you looking at setting up some other measurements?

**Ms Gallagher:** Is that a group that territory and municipal services have set up?

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes, but I thought it might go across. It is a community reference advisory group.

**Ms Gallagher:** On territory and municipal services matters, probably.

**DR FOSKEY:** It includes multicultural affairs. It is going to be expanded now to take in quite a few other areas.

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** Probably the equivalent in the health and community wellbeing area is the joint community government reference group. But considering that we do have a number of boards and committees across government, each department was asked to look at the number of boards and committees that it currently has and really look at streamlining those arrangements. So as part of both the new grants proposals and also the work in taking the service agreements forward, we will be looking at all the boards and committees and working out what is the best mechanism to really take that work forward.

There will be a considerable amount of work, both in streamlining service agreements and working on the future arrangements, and we need to look at the existing boards and committees we have and decide what is the best way of working with the non-government sector to progress that work.

**DR FOSKEY:** The community engagement manual is a really useful document. I was looking at it this morning to see how it might be informing the government's processes at the moment, for instance, with schools restructuring. I am wondering to what extent government departments are actually seeking the advice of the community engagement unit. The community engagement unit has been moved from Chief Minister's Department to DFCS and has produced this document, and I assume the community grants portal had something to do with that. How now are they going to fit within the restructure?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** I might speak generally into the future and then Mr Manikis will talk about the current community engagement work. Going into the future, what we are doing within the department is bringing together the community engagement and community development area that sits within Mr Manikis's area, along with the community affairs functions that are coming from Chief Minister's Department and, as the chief executive outlined earlier, the work that is coming from DUS, the Women's Information Referral Centre.

In that new area we will be taking forward the work on both the grants and the service agreements. We will be bringing together all of those areas into one community area in the department. That is how we are going into the future. In terms of your specific question about the community engagement at the moment, I will ask Nic to respond.

**Mr Manikis:** You have pointed to that publication that was launched last year. That was one of several items in what we call community engagement initiative. The philosophical approach that we took at the time was that we would provide these sorts of mechanisms

and tools centrally and they would form a full and comprehensive guidance for the ACT administration, the agencies, and then we would devolve the implementation of community engagements to the agencies.

Our role with the community engagement unit will be to set standards centrally, and then the agencies will be encouraged in their day-to-day work to use those tools. We sent out 900 copies of that particular manual at the time. We mailed out to policy officers and communications managers information about the initiative, the service charter that we developed and the brochure. There were three whole-of-government emails in the six-month period after the launch. They outlined the community engagement policy, offered information sessions and provided access details for the community engagement web site and the use of the engagement calendar.

We also provided updates to the joint community government reference group about how we were progressing. To date we have conducted 18 information sessions on the community engagement initiative, 13 for government employees and five for community networks. The web site is up and running. We have got an online calendar for ACT government formal engagement activities. We have many links on that web site to national and international online engagement information, tools and training. So we have been quite active in the central way in providing agencies with the tools. As to how agencies use those tools, I think you would need to direct your questions on community engagement to each individual agency.

**DR FOSKEY:** Is someone keeping that web site up to date and so on?

**Mr Manikis:** Yes. There is a resource attached to the community engagement function and that will be transferring over.

**Ms Lambert:** Just within the department.

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** There is a calendar as part of the web site and it does, for example, have the school consultations on it.

**DR FOSKEY:** I think that one most important function it can perform is by keeping an up-to-date list of community meeting spaces. That is one of the biggest problems in this town. For instance, the reception room here has just become rather expensive, which is very sad, which mean that community organisations will have to look elsewhere. I don't know if everything is on there; for instance, every church hall in Reid and so on.

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** The other thing I should just add is that, as well as the transfer of the Women's Information and Referral Centre from DUS, one of the initiatives that TAMS had was Communities Online, a not terribly dissimilar service in terms of community organisations being able to publicise their events online, and we felt for quite a long time that that function should be more appropriately delivered by the non government sector. In fact, the Citizen's Advice Bureau of the ACT, as you know, has that very good service of giving information about all the different community services, both government and non-government, in the ACT. As part of the budget this year, what we have done, and this department was involved in that, is transfer that function from urban services to DHCS, and it was then immediately contracted out to the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Bringing it together in more appropriately located functions by

putting Communities Online with CABACT, both offering that online service, has been a part of the way of bringing all of these things into one more central spot.

**Ms Lambert:** Dr Foskey, we will certainly take on board your suggestion about community facilities.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thanks. When I find out about stuff I will be happy to feed it to you. On page 204 there is an item about extra community space in the new Griffin Centre. I am just checking on what that actually constitutes. I am very interested in some of the work that is yet undone, such as finishing off the acoustic work in the ground floor meeting room, the electronic key system so that people can access the building more easily out of hours, and the ongoing security.

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** The \$70,000 is for 2006-07. The column before that shows the pre-2006-07 expenditure. The \$70,000 is essentially for the finishing off of all of the money it has cost. I will get Mr Collett to expand on that, but the security system is exactly part of what that is for. We had active security guards, people identified, because the building configuration was such that we needed to be able to have a system put in place. I think that finished on 24 June and we released those security officers as the new system came into place. As I am so clumsily explaining this, I will hand over to Mr Collett.

**Mr Collett:** All I want to say is that that is correct.

**DR FOSKEY:** What is replacing these live security guards?

**Mr Collett:** We have a range of community users, as you would know. The front office is unattended after normal business hours, but access is still required to those spaces. Basically, we have put in a communication system, much the same as is happening at the Assembly here, so that visitors after hours when the doors are closed and the office is not attended can push buttons, call up one of the users and arrangements can be made to open the doors and let them in.

**MS MacDONALD:** No, we can't do that anymore. We have to walk downstairs now.

**Mr Collett:** Sorry, it is the same arrangement.

**DR FOSKEY:** They don't have the passes, though.

**Mr Collett:** No.

**DR FOSKEY:** Someone will have to come down and open the door, but people who are users obviously have passes. If you are actually a user, a tenant, you have got access after hours, et cetera; it is just your visitors that require this service.

**Mr Collett:** The requisite number of passes has been provided to all of the users, based on the space that they occupy and the nature of their tenancy.

**DR FOSKEY:** Has finishing off the ground floor meeting room been put on the backburner a bit?

**Mr Collett:** Yes, but the hearing loop, as I informed you, is going ahead and we are just tidying up the accounts. We provided funding to support all of the relocation of the tenants. That involved the reconnection of their telephony and IT facilities, help with going to the new space, furniture and relocation expenses. The last of the invoices are coming in still for that work and the final wash-up will determine how much we can spend on those extras. All the funds will be allocated according to the priorities that are set by the board.

**DR FOSKEY:** You will be aware that there has been some debate in the media recently about the ability of Karma to stay in the Griffin Centre. The ACT government provides money to the Griffin Centre but it is managed, I believe, by a board of tenants. Does that board decide who has tenancy in the building?

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** Yes.

**DR FOSKEY:** So ACT Health—in this case it is ACT Health, but I guess I can ask it because the Griffin Centre comes under this portfolio—can't actually direct a tenant to be removed.

**Ms Gallagher:** No, that is my understanding. We can certainly talk about this more tomorrow, if you like, but I understand that the lease was with the AIDS Action Council.

**DR FOSKEY:** We probably will talk about that tomorrow.

**MRS BURKE:** What is the current occupancy rate of the Griffin Centre at this stage?

**Ms Gallagher:** It is pretty full, from my understanding.

**DR FOSKEY:** The Conflict Resolution Service wrote to us recently about moving in and having to find money for a fitout.

**MRS BURKE:** I have written to the minister. Have you?

**DR FOSKEY:** I am now asking her direct about just how they would go about it. believe that earlier tenants got assistance with fitout. What about more recent tenants?

**Ms Gallagher:** I can't recall that letter, but I am happy to have a look at it.

**MRS BURKE:** I think that Dr Foskey is saying that they are having to relocate from the business centre in Narrabundah.

**DR FOSKEY:** Which has become very expensive since it got handed over.

**MRS BURKE:** Indeed. That poses a problem and they are having to relocate. I think that they are finding it quite hard. They do a great service for us. I will check if I have sent it to you.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, I recall it now that you have said they are having to relocate. That set the trigger off.



**MS MacDONALD:** I seek clarification. Dr Foskey said that the original tenants were assisted with fitout funding. Was that the case?

**Mr Collett:** Yes. The assistance that was provided came from both the department and the Queensland Investment Corporation, which was keen to assist them to relocate from the old Griffin Centre to the new one. It was a move that was required of them by government and a number of them were in the middle of their tenancies or their subtenancies, as it were, to the board. The assistance that was provided through QIC was partly in kind, the actual physical moving of their property, and partly in terms of getting them organised. We had Relocation Laws, a firm that is expert and provides services to the private sector in terms of organisation around relocating. We also provided access to some surplus government furniture.

We don't have budget provisions. The budget for that was established through the redevelopment of section 84 and it was really directed to people who were in the middle of their tenancies and who were required, as part of that redevelopment, to relocate. Budget funds had been identified for just that purpose. We don't have ongoing funding to provide for the relocation of community organisations generally across the ACT, but if a letter come forward through the minister we can certainly look at what the options are for the department in terms of furniture or other assistance we can provide.

**MRS BURKE:** Thank you, Mr Collett. I think it is an exceptional case for those organisations which are currently having to move out because of exponential increases in costs, not-for-profit organisations which provide a valuable service to the community.

**DR FOSKEY:** And the government in some cases.

**Ms Lambert:** We provide funding to that organisation and we use them in some of our processes, so we would certainly be keen to have a look at that and see what we can do.

**THE CHAIR:** Before we move on to the next one, 3.2, I just want to say that I am pleased that you have volunteering under your belt, as it were, and I am looking forward to seeing next year maybe some new work on the framework on volunteering, which I think is due for renewal in 2006-07. I asked a question earlier about women's grants and I have actually answered it for myself now, because they would be rolled into that portal, wouldn't they?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**THE CHAIR:** I won't ask that question again. Page 202 talks about the transfer of the Women's Information and Referral Service. Could you give us a bit more information about that, minister?

**Ms Gallagher:** Traditionally, the Women's Information and Referral Service has been under DUS. I think it was attached to libraries historically. I am really pleased as Minister for Women that it is being put with some of the women's policy area. Because the service it provides is very much targeted to women, I think it is better placed here with me than in DUS.

**THE CHAIR:** So it has synergies and things; is that correct?

**Ms Gallagher:** I think so, yes. I think the work that it does fits much better under the women's portfolio than it does under territory and municipal services and I think that historically it was there only because for some reason it was attached to the libraries, as I said. I do not know whether the Women's Information and Referral Service is represented here, but I think it is pretty pleased, too.

**Ms Overton-Clarke:** We have obviously already met with them and told them that they will be part of the Office for Women and they are very comfortable with that.

**DR FOSKEY:** I wish to ask a few questions about women's grants. Will there still be two women's grants streams, one for capacity building and the other for special research projects?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. We are not planning any changes to the women's grants program. It has only had two rounds and it seems to be working quite well with that break-up of the different grants. We seem to be able to meet those special one-off things that people want to do, the research, and then for other organisations fund particular projects. We are just having the acquittals from the first grants round coming through and it looks like they have had some really good programs with that money. I am not looking at changing the women's grants program at this stage.

**DR FOSKEY:** One of the things in the guidelines for the grants programs for last year said that successful applicants might be required to have public liability, professional indemnity and/or workers' compensation insurance. Do you know if that was a problem for any of the applicants?

**Ms Gallagher:** I have not heard from any of them that it was, but Ms Hall might have something to add to that.

**Ms Hall:** With that requirement, we need to put it in for cover. It is very much dependent on the individual activity, but where it looked like there would be problems we were able to meet with the group and with the ACT Insurance Authority and it has not restricted any grants being allocated.

**DR FOSKEY:** Will there be an update of the women's plan, which, I think, ran out this year?

**Ms Gallagher:** No, the women's plan has not run out.

**Ms Hall:** The women's plan was release in September 2004 under a five-year framework with annual updates. You have probably got the first action plan. There has been a second one.

**Ms Gallagher:** We do the action plan every year. I think we are due for another action plan soon.

**Ms Hall:** Yes, the third action plan should be out in August.

**DR FOSKEY:** There is a number of useful indicators in that plan, which I am sure everyone has had a look at. I was just wondering whether those had been taken up. I am particularly going to ask whether they were used or whether any gender analysis has been applied or will be applied to the 2020 plan proposals because it is my experience that women usually are the ones that are most involved in getting the kids to and from school and in child care—all those other things on those trips. But there are loads of other things as well. You are a gender expert and you know that.

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes. As I said in my answer previously to your question about 2020, now that 2020 is out as a consultation document we are engaging in that consultation with the Department of Education and Training. Before any final decision is taken through the cabinet process, one of the measures that needs to be reported against through the cabinet process is the impact on women. That work needs to be done as part of that cabinet process, I would imagine. As Minister for Women, I would like a very close look at that and some of the work that is being done over the next six months.

**MR SMYTH:** Just in regard to some of the indicators of success, I note on page 15 of the plan that only 8.4 per cent of ACT females undertake vocational education and training compared with the national average of 12.2 per cent. Has there been any increase in the last two years?

**Ms Hall:** I am not able to give the exact figures. When we did check the indicators recently, generally there had not been a huge shift with any, including that one. One of the reasons for that particular lower percentage in the ACT is that, while there are fewer women involved in VET education, there is a higher percentage involved in tertiary education through universities, et cetera. It reflects the demographic profile of the ACT.

**MR SMYTH:** How do you track the process? How will you report on it? Where you are not succeeding, how will you change it?

**Ms Hall:** With all of the indicators through the women's plan, the statistics will be gathered again centrally and that particular one will be fed to us through education and training; they track it for us.

**MR SMYTH:** What about reporting? How do you effect a change?

**Ms Hall:** There is a number of different mechanisms in the reporting process for the women's plan. One of them is using the statistical indicators, but we are looking at doing that more on a two to three-year basis, just because of the changing statistics. We are not going to get a sensible change in the short term. The other accountability indicator through the women's plan is the action plan that is produced every year, which provides an update on where there have been shifts. Also, individual agencies report through their annual reports on each of the objectives of the women's plan. Education and training and the VET section within that provide an annual report.

**MRS BURKE:** I refer to page 199, output 3.2, item a—"Percentage of participants that successfully complete the Work Experience and Support Program for Migrants". What funding allocation—

**Ms Gallagher:** That is for John Hargreaves; I am sorry.

**MRS BURKE:** Isn't this extraordinary? Okay, plan b.

**Ms Gallagher:** This is a new, simpler way forward.

**MRS BURKE:** This is a simpler way. I see, minister. I will take your word for that.

**Ms Gallagher:** It is not in this area.

**MRS BURKE:** That is typical. Okay, let us go for the women's plan. I think you can answer this. Seriously, page 10 of the women's plan refers to safe, inclusive communities. You may not have it in front of you.

**Ms Gallagher:** No, I don't, unfortunately.

**MRS BURKE:** That is okay. You have indicators of success here: crimes against women and crimes against the person have been reduced. How are we faring in that area? Ms Hall should probably answer that; maybe you cannot as you do not have the figures with you, I suspect.

**Ms Gallagher:** They will come out in the action plan.

**MRS BURKE:** I suppose we are going to have to wait for them.

**Ms Hall:** We have not done them against the indicators. Again, we will not be doing another measure of percentages for another six to 12 months. We are working to a time frame where we are going to get meaningful change in terms of the statistics. We do not do a six-monthly look at the indicators; it is a longer term look at the indicators. The Department of Justice and Community Safety through their reporting against the women's plan may or may not talk about those specific statistics, but they will talk about their programs and outcomes in relation to the programs they have that are addressing that area.

**MRS BURKE:** This is a supplementary—jumping forward. All areas for action—I take it that I am probably going get the same answer; I am particularly looking at “Economic Security and Opportunities”—indicate how we are measuring up, financial employment and business support and flexible workplace, et cetera. Can you give us any view on how we are doing, how we are travelling?

**Ms Hall:** The ACT is doing really well compared to most other jurisdictions across all of those areas—all six of the objectives for the women's plan. But in terms of individual programs in particular areas, most of the ones under “Economic Security” come through Education and Training. The best indicators will be when we get the new action plan out and also through the information contained in annual reports from agencies.

**MRS BURKE:** Finally—these questions are all over the place but I am sure you can answer this one—ministerial reports on allocation of grants: that is a new transfer from the Chief Minister's Department, I see. You probably will not be able to do that until 1 July.

**Ms Gallagher:** This is item b. under—

**MRS BURKE:** Item b. under 3.2.

**Ms Gallagher:** This is the women's grants and the seniors' grants. There are two grants programs.

**MRS BURKE:** Women's and seniors. What are the two programs?

**Ms Gallagher:** There are the seniors' grants and the women's grants.

**MR SMYTH:** It is getting late in the day.

**Ms Gallagher:** No, seriously, that is the answer. That is what they are called.

**MRS BURKE:** I know. What do both of those programs do?

**Ms Gallagher:** For the women's grants there is around \$100,000 available through application. We go out quite widely, as far as we can, to let people know. They are in two streams: capacity building, which is there to strengthen the capacity of women's organisations already; and special projects, which are just usually one-off things that align to the women's plan, roughly. The women's one is heavily oversubscribed, of course.

**MRS BURKE:** By much, minister?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes.

**MRS BURKE:** Is there a need to expand it then?

**Ms Gallagher:** Wouldn't we love to.

**MRS BURKE:** Talk to the Treasurer.

**Ms Gallagher:** This is one of the grant schemes where, one lucky year, I managed to get \$100,000 in a budget. Now when most applications come in it is always around \$400,000 or \$500,000, if you add them up. We have a panel—I have decided not to get involved in this as much as I can—which comprises someone from the ministerial council, someone from the Office for Women and usually a community member. They make recommendations to me, which I have agreed to both times it has occurred. We are just having some reports back from the first round. We did have a talk about whether the committee would like to hear from the ACT women's choir—they have made a DVD apparently—but we thought it might be too late in the day for that.

**THE CHAIR:** Were you going to wheel them all in or just play us the DVD, minister?

**Ms Gallagher:** We were going to go the DVD. They have funded some really good programs—little one-off things that these organisations were not able to find any support for. I understand that for the seniors' grants it is a smaller program of about \$80,000, is it?

**Ms Hall:** \$81,000.

**Ms Gallagher:** That gives very little bits of money—not that you can get a lot. That is a new program to me. Sue, you might want to add some more to that.

**Ms Hall:** The seniors' grants fall under the positive ageing initiative. It is \$81,000. It is run on a similar line to the women's grants in its annual funding. For small projects it is usually \$1,000 to \$3,000. It is for projects that support active and positive ageing activities. It is very heavily subscribed and usually able to fund about 20 to 30 programs; it is quite diverse.

**Ms Gallagher:** One of the things we want to make sure, though, is that we do not get into recurrent funding through this.

**MRS BURKE:** Yes, I know.

**Ms Gallagher:** There was a women's constitutional convention in the ACT a couple of years ago. They came to me and said, "We need to get some admin resources together to put together some work for this convention." There was just nowhere available at the time. It is to do the little one-off things that just assist with a bit of money, but not getting into recurrent programs; there is not enough money for that.

**MRS BURKE:** Are there many recurrent programs for women?

**Ms Gallagher:** Where you have larger amounts of money, if you fund a pilot program, for example, and it is very successful then there is an expectation that government can just find money to keep it going. I imagine people like Brendan, who has been a minister before, will realise that pilot programs usually are very good. That is why they are pilots; that is why they have got to the pilot stage. It is hard. When we did get this money it was very clear that we could not get into the business of recurrently funding a women's organisation for, say, \$10,000 a year. That would not be a fair way of doing it, because there would be only \$90,000 to share out. The challenge with this program is that we have to be very strict about the projects and make sure that they are one-offs. There is no expectation that this funding will be provided next year.

**MRS BURKE:** Is there any other avenue open to those women? Projects fall down because of lack of recurrent funding—and it would be a shame. Are there other avenues for women's successful projects to get recurrent funding?

**Ms Gallagher:** Yes, there are, across government. DHCS funds a number of women's organisations. It depends; it is more related to the portfolio area. In health there is the Women's Centre for Health Matters—all that sort of stuff. I did have a list of the programs we have funded. They are going to a number of funded organisations. Inanna has some money to do the women for better mental health peer support project. That is just a one-off. Lowanna has some money there. I do not know if the Muslim Women's Welfare Association get too much recurrent funding. They wanted to do a driving licence project, so they have some money. So that has a beginning and an end.

**MR SMYTH:** Was that program very successful?

**Ms Gallagher:** This one has just been funded this year. They will acquit at the end. They have just got that money.

**MR PRATT:** How many students through that?

**Ms Gallagher:** I do not know how many students they have. They received a \$7,000 grant. If we had a look at their grant application I am sure it would have it in there.

**Ms Hall:** From memory, that probably funds seven women to do the full driver training course. I think it is seven women.

**MR PRATT:** They reverse over my front garden and destroy my neighbours' relations!

**THE CHAIR:** If you have exhausted your questions—

**MRS BURKE:** I have, thank you.

**MR PRATT:** Keep it going.

**Ms Lambert:** A very important feature of inclusion in having a driver's licence.

**MR SMYTH:** What did you say, Ms Lambert?

**Ms Lambert:** I am just saying that having a driving licence is a very important feature of inclusion in the community. It is very important to enable groups to have that.

**MR PRATT:** Yes. It is good program.

**Ms Gallagher:** Havelock Housing Association got \$12,000 for sustaining female tenancy.

**MRS BURKE:** Can that be tabled?

**Ms Gallagher:** Sure. You can have that.

**MRS BURKE:** The committee might like that.

**Ms Gallagher:** I am happy to table it.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Smyth, do you have a question?

**MR SMYTH:** I am done.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Pratt, did you come down here specifically to ask a question or did you just grace us with your presence?

**MR PRATT:** I love being surrounded by women. I thought I would come down and test the ambience.

**Ms Gallagher:** We do outnumber you at the moment.

**THE CHAIR:** That concludes this hearing. Thank you very much, minister and Ms Lambert. Thank you very much everybody. We will see you tomorrow.

**The committee adjourned at 5.29 pm.**