



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2008-2009

(Reference: Appropriation Bill 2008-2009)

Members:

**MS M PORTER (The Chair)
MRS V DUNNE (The Deputy Chair)
MR M GENTLEMAN
MS K MACDONALD
MR B SMYTH**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

MONDAY, 26 MAY 2008

**Secretary to the committee:
Dr 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

artsACT	656
Chief Minister's Department	656
Cultural Facilities Corporation	656
Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services	656

The committee met at 9.34 am.

Appearances:

Stanhope, Mr Jon, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Business and Economic Development, Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Minister for the Environment, Water and Climate Change, Minister for the Arts

Chief Minister's Department

Cappie-Wood, Mr Andrew, Chief Executive

Davoren, Ms Pam, Deputy Chief Executive, Policy Division

Farnsworth, Ms Penny, Director, Social Policy and Implementation

Dawes, Mr David, Deputy Chief Executive, Business and Projects Division

Tomlins, Mr George, Executive Director, Strategic Priorities

McKay, Mr Ross, Acting Director, Project Facilitation

Hudson, Ms Cathy, Deputy Chief Executive, Governance

Lasek, Mr Jeremy, Executive Director, Arts, Communications, Events and Protocol

Stewart-Moore, Ms Karen, Senior Manager, Arts, Communications, Events and Protocol

artsACT

Whitney, Mr David, Executive Director

Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services

Lambert, Ms Sandra, Chief Executive

Cultural Facilities Corporation

Elvin, Ms Harriet, Chief Executive Officer

Tidy, Mr Ian, Financial Controller

THE CHAIR: Good morning, Chief Minister.

Mr Stanhope: Good morning.

THE CHAIR: I presume everybody is very familiar with the yellow card and you understand the privileges implications that are contained within it?

Mr Stanhope: Yes.

THE CHAIR: For the record, I move:

That the statement be incorporated into *Hansard*.

The statement read as follows—

Privilege statement

To be read at the commencement of a hearing and reiterated as necessary for new witnesses

The committee has authorised the recording, broadcasting and rebroadcasting of these proceedings in accordance with the rules contained in the Resolution agreed by the Assembly on 7 March 2002 concerning the broadcasting of Assembly and committee proceedings. Before the committee commences taking evidence, let me place on record that all witnesses are protected by parliamentary privilege with respect to submissions made to the committee in evidence given before it.

Parliamentary privilege means special rights and immunities attach to parliament, its members and others, necessary to the discharge of functions of the Assembly without obstruction and without fear of prosecution.

While the committee prefers to hear all evidence in public, if the committee accedes to such a request, the committee will take evidence in camera and record that evidence. Should the committee take evidence in this manner, I remind the committee and those present that it is within the power of the committee at a later date to publish or present all or part of that evidence to the Assembly. I should add that any decision regarding publication of in camera evidence or confidential submissions will not be taken by the committee without prior reference to the person whose evidence the committee may consider publishing.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Chief Minister, for appearing before us for the 2008-09 estimate hearings. Would you like to make some opening remarks?

Mr Stanhope: No, I have no opening statements, thank you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: I believe we are going to go straight into ageing and then go on to arts after that. Is that your understanding, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Do you have a question, Mr Gentleman?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do, thank you. Chief Minister, this is a bit of a general question, but it is now well recognised that the ACT is moving into an older demographic and that our population is ageing. Can you tell us what you are doing as the population ages to help people age in place?

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mr Gentleman. It is a fact which affects and influences much of our thinking—I think we are all aware of it—that the ACT has the second youngest population in Australia, I think after the Northern Territory. As a result of

that, it is the case that our population is ageing as fast as or faster than any other place in Australia. We are moving to a spike in ageing that other jurisdictions have reached earlier than us as a result of our demographic. Much of the work that we are now doing and which is a major priority is an issue that other jurisdictions have faced a little earlier than us. We are now going through a period where ageing is becoming in a strategic and policy sense far more of a priority than it has previously been.

As to the specifics of your question, which is about ageing in place and the capacity to ensure that older people within our community have accommodation which is appropriate to their circumstances, that is a major focus of the government's attention. It was in that context that we established a strategy, building for our ageing community, which seeks to ensure that older people or people within this community do have open to them as they age the range of choices that you would expect in order to ensure that, as we age, we have the capacity to continue to participate in the way that we would wish in the life of our community.

In just the physical sense about providing infrastructure or housing for our ageing community, the strategy was designed to ensure that our planning regime was seamless, that we did have the capacity to ensure that, when aged care beds most particularly were provided or funded by the commonwealth, we had in place for those aged care providers a system that ensured that the beds could be utilised as quickly as possible.

Since the strategy was launched at the end of 2003, an additional 231 aged care beds have been provided within the ACT as well as a significant number of independent living units. We have just had 130 supported living units completed in 2007, and a further 491 beds and 472 supported living units are currently under construction. Just under 500 beds and supported living units are currently under construction or have been approved.

Furthermore, an additional 430 beds and 461 supported living units are currently in the design phase, so there has been a very significant increase in beds. We have delivered 231 beds; they are complete and occupied. There are 491 beds currently under construction and 430 are currently being designed. In addition to those, of course, there have been more independent or supported living units that have been built, are under construction or are in the design phase.

I think another aspect of the building for our ageing community strategy is, of course, to ensure that we identify land for future release. We have development-ready aged care sites identified throughout Canberra, and we continue to seek to identify aged care beds or retirement living in field sites that can be utilised, accepting how important it is that we identify within suburbs or general geographic areas where people currently live opportunities for them to change their housing to meet their changing needs.

It was in that sense that we announced the initiative in this particular budget that is very relevant to the question you ask—that is, the abolition of stamp duty for pensioners seeking to downsize to accommodation that is more appropriate to their needs. A pensioner downsizing to a house at the median price from now will not be required to pay stamp duty on the purchase of that new house.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy has a supplementary question.

MR MULCAHY: Chief Minister, in the last few weeks there has been some debate in the media between the operator of one group of nursing homes and others about what the current demand would be for places and what is an appropriate number of new units to be constructed. Have you any forward estimates over the next five years as to how many new dwellings or accommodation units for retired persons would be needed to meet the current demand? Do you at least know as we sit here today what this year's current demand would be in excess of supply?

Mr Stanhope: I do not have those numbers, Mr Mulcahy, but I know they are available. Indeed, I had discussions or conversations with Mr Bruce McKenzie, the Chief Executive of Goodwin, as recently as within the last week or two. It was interesting that, for the first time since I have been in the Assembly, I had a conversation with a major provider in the territory who believes aged care providers are now looking at a circumstance where demand and supply are coming into equilibrium. For the first time, the possibility of demand being satisfied is being factored into some of the forward planning by some of the major providers.

The debate is certainly moving in relation to the issue of supply. Mr McKay from the Chief Minister's Department, who has fundamental responsibility for implementation of the building for our ageing community strategy, may be able to provide the precise numbers that you have asked about, Mr Mulcahy.

Mr McKay: The commonwealth releases outyear estimates for bed allocations. The incoming government has not released any estimates for the outyears at the moment. We would expect that to happen in August this year. The last estimates we got were for this year, and they were for about 160 beds and 95 beds for the following year. We have only got the two years.

MR MULCAHY: That is part of it, but the issue I was anxious to hear about is whether this is going to meet demand. I know the commonwealth gives an allocation, but we have not always met that allocation. I am just wondering what the demand is in the community as we sit here in terms of spaces needed.

Mr McKay: The proxy for demand that we use is the commonwealth allocation of bed licences. They have their own demographic unit which works on a formula of 88 beds per 1,000 people over the age of 70.

MR MULCAHY: Has that been changed at all? How long has that been the case?

Mr McKay: That was changed about three years ago; it went up from 80 beds to 88 beds. It seems that the focus is going to be more on more on ageing in the community, ageing in place. However, while they are releasing the bed allocations and the service providers are bidding for those allocations and requesting blocks of land, we are continuing down that route.

MR MULCAHY: This is probably a little bit more into the health portfolio, Chief Minister, but do you have any data on the number of people who are currently

occupying hospital beds who are probably more appropriately placed in nursing homes but cannot be because of lack of space?

Mr McKay: I do not have those figures of the transition of people in acute care.

THE CHAIR: Dr Foskey has a supplementary.

DR FOSKEY: Good morning, everyone. One of the concerns that has been raised by COTA and other organisations that have a fair bit to do with the ageing is that there is actually a degree of homelessness amongst our senior citizens. That is obviously not always evident, because people often find accommodation in relatives' homes and so on, but it is a mature version of couch surfing. Given that it is a rather hidden problem, I would be very interested in hearing how the government is tackling that and how the impact of not increasing public housing might be playing in that equation.

I have another question, too. There was talk just now of supporting people to stay in their communities. Obviously, 88 beds for 1,000 people is not a real lot. That is quite a lot of people staying in the community. What additional supports is the government providing to encourage and assist people to stay in the community? It is two questions.

Ms Lambert: We are well aware of issues in relation to ageing and homelessness. Indeed, there was a representative from COTA on the homelessness advisory committee. They have always been a target for us as part of that process. As part of the work I do, I meet regularly with what I call a roundtable of set providers to pick up on issues. The issue with older people and ageing and homelessness is sometimes, of course, the income requirement for public housing. There is a very rapid movement into public housing for those who are eligible.

In relation to other issues around older people and their social isolation, we are in the process of a research project that is looking at what the gaps might be in terms of services for older people. One of those gaps would be to pick up on people who are feeling vulnerable in terms of their housing. The Ministerial Advisory Council on the Ageing is actually conducting a seminar early in July, I think, to have a look at this as well. We are alert to those; we are aware that it is an emerging issue, and we are working with the community to see if we can do more proactive things about it.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, looking at the strategic and the accountability indicators for this office, there does not seem to be any specific indicators as to how we measure the progress of service provision to our ageing population. Is there a reason for that?

Mr Stanhope: Many of the services in relation to older people within the community are very much part of our mainstream service provision. The point, for instance, that Ms Lambert just makes in relation to homelessness and public housing goes to the issue of the extent to which we are accountable for the services that we provide in relation to housing or in relation to homelessness.

I do not believe it is the case—Ms Lambert might be able to confirm this—that, in relation to issues such as homelessness or public housing, we have not cut down the accountability measures into age cohorts. The government stands accountable through the provision of housing across the board. Ms Lambert might be able to give more detail, but just because there is not a specific heading “homeless and the ageing” or “public housing and people over the age of 75” does not mean that the accountability measures are not invested in ageing.

MR SMYTH: I do not refer just to housing across the board.

Mr Stanhope: No; I use that as an example.

MR SMYTH: There are two references to a grants program and the ministerial council.

Ms Lambert: That is right.

MR SMYTH: When you go through the strategic indicators, there are plenty on youth—as there should be—there are plenty on recidivist rates, there are other measures for multicultural council and community groups, but there does not seem to be anything specifically for ageing.

Ms Lambert: Ageing is included in the council references as well. Part of the work that we do is to support the council for ageing which gives us advice on policy, so that is there in that measure. We have a broad whole-of-government role, and that is one of the reasons we have not got a specific thing in there around services to ageing.

As you have heard, the Chief Minister’s Department has a significant role in terms of aged care accommodation. Our role is much more of a broader policy role and, therefore, we do not have at this point in time a specific indicator on actual services. But we do look at the needs of ageing within all of our services in the department that I am responsible for.

Another area we look at, of course, is the issue of grandparents taking over responsibility for their children. We do not have specific indicators on that. Quite often that is very difficult to measure. These, of course, must be indicators that we can measure accurately. We are starting to get more emphasis on national collections now on aged people and the issues that face them. We are starting to work on data collections around that. But, you are right; we do not have a specific indicator on services, but the Ministerial Council for Ageing is definitely there.

MR SMYTH: Is there a disconnection in that you have one minister—you, Chief Minister—delivering what appears to be policy level information and another minister delivering services? Does that make it awkward to coordinate and report on what is happening in the aged care sector?

Mr Stanhope: I do not believe that it does. Of course, this is an issue across the board in relation to all service provision. It applies to the ageing, it applies to younger people, it applies to Indigenous people, and it applies to people of diverse ethnic

backgrounds. In relation to all of those areas we have a minister with designated responsibility for each of those particular areas within our community. But then services in relation to all of those areas are spread across a range of portfolios.

I do not believe it is a disconnect, but I understand the point that you make, and it is an issue for all governments. I have a specific interest as minister for ageing and similarly for Indigenous affairs, whereas the vast majority of services for older people or for Indigenous people—these are good examples—are delivered through mainstream agencies. The big issues for ageing are in health and housing. \

The Minister for Health has responsibility for delivering health service to older people; the Minister for Housing is responsible for housing. You are quite right; I do not have those service-delivery responsibilities, but, as minister for ageing, I am appointed to focus and oversight the government's response to the delivery of services specifically targeted at meeting the needs of older Canberrans.

I do not believe that there would be any construction or governance arrangement that invested in a minister for ageing responsibility for service delivery in the major areas of service that governments provide to older people.

MS MacDONALD: Minister on that, when COTA appeared before us the other day, they made the suggestion that there should be a seniors budget impact statement similar to the women's budget impact statement. What do you think of that, given that it is difficult to have accountability indicators for a number of the areas that affect seniors? It could actually highlight a number of the things that are being done within individual budgets which deal with seniors-related issues.

Mr Stanhope: I have an instinctive concern about overburdening processes with impact statements in relation to every identifiable group. I might say that I think the point that Mr Smyth raises in relation to identifiable strategic indicators in relation to ageing is something that might be looked at a little more thoroughly. But in the context of, say, a seniors impact statement in relation to all government initiatives, I would have a concern that one gets to a point of detail or bureaucratising of the system that produces diminishing returns.

Certainly it is appropriate that the mechanisms that exist are transparent and detailed enough to allow for an assessment of government effectiveness. I think you could pick a dozen other groups within our community that one might give the same consideration to, and I would have concerns about overbureaucratising the process.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: On the same point, Chief Minister, if we are in a situation where everyone recognises that we are facing an increased demand on services—much of the health revamp and the capital investment health is predicated upon hitting a phase where the costs on the system of the increasingly the ageing population will be quite drastic—in those circumstances, would there not be some merit in highlighting in some way in the budget the government's programs and their progress towards that?

I take the point Ms Lambert makes about the robustness of some of the indicators that people might envisage, but there does not even seem to be an attempt to do that. We have no recognisable output class, and that is not the case with other areas. We have output classes for women; we have output classes that relate specifically to Indigenous people; we report on matters in relation to Indigenous people—

MR MULCAHY: Madam Chair, could we get to the question? This is a monologue.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that would be good.

MRS DUNNE: But at the same time, there is nothing in this budget that would point elderly people to what is happening in an area of their concern. For the rest of the community who are looking to look after their elderly, there is nowhere that they can say that this is what is happening. Why are you not trying to be accountable and to provide information to a growing sector in the community about what is being done?

Mr Stanhope: I reject that absolutely. That is nonsense. There is a whole range of specific measures within the budget and within the government's reporting mechanisms in relation to the ageing—detailed accountability measures and detailed explanative—

MRS DUNNE: Perhaps, Chief Minister, you could list them for the committee—

Mr Stanhope: There are detailed explanations of what we are achieving. Mr Gentlemen's opening question was a question about building for our ageing community and ageing in place. I can go in quite specific detail to the steps that are publicly available and are published in relation to the building for our ageing community and the strategies that underpin it.

Similarly, in relation to health, the health outcomes and the health status of older people in this community are excellent. In fact, over the last three years all of the indicators in relation to health, particularly the health of older people in this community are there for specific—

MRS DUNNE: But you will not use the budget—

THE CHAIR: Just a moment, Mrs Dunne.

Mr Stanhope: So, I can point, Mrs Dunne, to indicators across the budget and, most particularly, through all of our annual reports in relation to a whole range of aspects of specific importance to our ageing community or older Canberrans, whether it be in health, whether it be in education, whether it be in housing, whether it be living in place or whether it be community support and community supports available to older people in this community. There is a specific, detailed explanation of the remarkable support services provided by my government to people ageing in this community. We lead the nation in almost every single indicator of support for older people and the government recording mechanisms to deal with that.

MRS DUNNE: But you will not put them in one place so that the community can see them and judge for themselves?

Mr Stanhope: I quite specifically referred to the annual reports, Mrs Dunne, because that is where they are. What I have acknowledged today is in relation to the budget. The budget, of course, is the budget; it is not the annual report; it is not the mechanism which we bring together in a single place all of the services that are available within this community and the broad range of services that are provided to ensure that older people in this community maintain a capacity throughout their lives to continue to participate in the life of the community. We have exemplary services for women. We report for older people, and we report on those services through our annual reports. But this is the budget; this is not the annual report.

THE CHAIR: Mr Mulcahy.

MR MULCAHY: Just in relation to that issue of services for the elderly, Chief Minister, could you acquaint us with where things are up to with the reciprocal transport concessions that you have started to negotiate?

Mr Stanhope: There has been quite significant process, I must say, as a result of some frustration which I and the smaller jurisdictions coincidentally felt in relation to the lack of a national approach. As you know, Mr Mulcahy—I reported on this previously—I contacted each of my colleagues in the states and territories and asked them whether they would join in the negotiating of bilateral transport concession regimes. We have now negotiated regimes with both Tasmania and the Northern Territory but—

MR MULCAHY: He probably knew he was going to be a beneficiary.

Mr Stanhope: To be fair, in the negotiations that have been ongoing now for years, it is the larger states with an eye to the potential implications for them that have been less inclined to negotiate an outcome, particularly without commonwealth support, for a national seniors transport concession regime. But, along with myriad other issues that advance the nation, the election of a Rudd Labor government last November has seen a significant impetus to this particular issue.

The new federal government has provided \$50 million and has put the issue back on the agenda of the ministerial council. Whilst the ACT, Tasmania and the Northern Territory have acted unilaterally and are at the point of signing memoranda of understanding in relation to reciprocal rights, to some extent, as is often the case, the rest of Australia is now looking to the ACT for the leadership that we provide on this and many other issues. The commonwealth government is now coming on board and has put \$50 million on the table—

MR MULCAHY: The last government did the same, and it did not work, did it?

Mr Stanhope: The last government did not \$50 million on the table, that was—

MR MULCAHY: I think they put in something in the order of \$38 million, did they not?

Mr Stanhope: Well, it was a miserly amount that was actually designed to show some apparent interest, but it showed no interest at all in older Australians. But with a new, refreshed federal government, a new willingness to engage with the states and territories with the new federalism, the issue is advancing and will advance—

MR STEFANIAK: What are they going to do about petrol?

THE CHAIR: Mr Stefaniak.

Mr MULCAHY: The bottom line is that no other states have come on board yet?

Mr Stanhope: Not in terms of bilateral arrangements with the ACT, but it is a great advance the—

Mr MULCAHY: Are you still pushing it with the other states?

Mr Stanhope: Yes, and quite seriously, Mr Mulcahy. It is now back firmly on the national agenda. I am hopeful that sooner rather than later there will be a national system, the best possible.

MR MULCAHY: Is that ageing ministers or transport or heads of government?

Mr Stanhope: I am not sure; I will have to check that, Mr Mulcahy. I will get back to you on which ministerial council will advance that. It is actually COAG. It is actually set as a commonwealth initiative. It is their issue to discuss.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, what is being planned to retain and retrain older members of the public service or staff in the public service who are getting older? Because of our skills shortage, we do need to retrain and retain as many of our skilled workers as possible.

Mr Stanhope: There is a significant list within the budget in relation to attraction and retention, and it actually reinforces specific decisions that have been pursued by the government. I think it is fair to say that a very expansive answer could be given in relation to skills and the report of the Skills Commission, but, most specifically, Ms Hudson, the Commissioner for Public Administration, has been working on a number of initiatives directly aimed at addressing the skills or workforce issues we know that we face, not just through the general national shortage of workers but also as a result of the ageing of the ACT government public service.

Ms Hudson: One of the things that were implemented in the last collective agreement that was specifically responding to the needs and desires of older workers was to increase the amount of purchased leave that can be taken. That is a measure that other people who are trying to balance work-life issues are also benefiting from. But for older workers or more mature workers it is particularly meeting the desire that people can perhaps take a few months off in the middle of the year and transition to

retirement. I think we doubled that purchased leave requirement.

With the joint council, which is the peak consultative body between ACT executives and union executives, we are looking at a whole range of mature age strategies. One of those that the Chief Minister was particularly keen on and has asked for work to be done on is around grandparental leave. We have just finished that consultation with unions and ACT government agencies, and that advice will be going to the Chief Minister shortly as part of looking at strategies for the future. The next agreement is very much in the forefront of our minds of what we need to do to be an employer of choice for older workers.

One of the things that we are keen to look at is people who want to work part time or who may be currently in the executive, the SES, and wish to actually take a step back and perhaps work as a SOG A or a SOG B. Because we have different mechanisms currently—we have a collective agreement for everyone up to SOG A level and we have SES contracts—we need to look at how we can make that transition easier. But we know that there are people who want to do that or are looking for it.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. I think we will go on to the next—

MRS DUNNE: Could I just follow up on that?

THE CHAIR: Yes. We will do one follow-up and then we will go on to the Cultural Facilities Corporation.

MRS DUNNE: One of the issues that are confronting people in the public service is what we might do to facilitate the re-entry of people into the public service after they hit the magic 54-11.

Ms Hudson: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: It is a growing risk for everyone, the commonwealth and the ACT in particular, that as people hit that age they are forced to leave for financial reasons. It is sometimes difficult for them to come back, and sometimes they probably want to come back under different means; for example, not working full time or looking for adjustments in their careers.

What thinking have you undertaken in that area where you might encourage people, say from the commonwealth service, who might be looking for a slight career change and a slowing down but who still have a good number of productive years ahead of them to return to the service? These days 55 is pretty young to be retiring.

Ms Hudson: We have actually benefited in the ACT public service from that for a number of years. People have retired from the commonwealth service and come to work for us. One of the things we are promoting which sometimes suits that—someone who wants to have a look and see—is temporary employment opportunities. Part of the recent revamp around the great careers, come to the territory campaign is actually putting the temporary jobs in one location on the website so that people can see what might be available to them.

We are aware that there are some arrangements for people under the CSS where you can organise superannuation arrangements to suit you. I should check on that, actually, because there is one of the transitional arrangements between the CSS and the PSS that we do not have. One of those is not easy for people—anyone, actually—to work after they have taken their super.

Basically, though, the HR council, which advises the management council, is looking at all of the things that we should do to make arrangements more flexible for all employees, including older ones. Basically, with skill shortages, we need to be doing what people want to suit them and promoting the fact that we are a flexible employer. However they want to work, we want to be the employer who can adjust to their wants and desires so that we get those workers.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, thank you.

THE CHAIR: We will now go on to the Cultural Facilities Corporation. Chief Minister, could we do output 1.5, which is the arts policy advice programs, at the same time?

Mr Stanhope: Yes, that is fine.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman, you have a question?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do, yes. My question relates to the Dawn Waterhouse collection. I understand that has now been purchased, and I just wanted to know where it will be displayed.

Ms Elvin: Yes, you are correct in that the purchase has gone through. We are currently in the fairly lengthy process of assessing this very large collection. It is over 1,000 separate items. We are assessing the condition of them and putting all of that information onto a database. That will then allow us to use the collection in a number of ways.

The first thing that we will be doing is a little snapshot exhibition from the collection later this year so that we can show people just what is in the collection and give them an idea of the breadth and the scope of that collection. In the future, what we aim to do is to have a permanent display of items from the collection within our permanent collection gallery of the Canberra Museum and Gallery. It is an immensely valuable resource for us, particularly as we move towards the centenary of Canberra. It gives us all sorts of opportunities.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: Yes, thank you. I noticed on the last page of your statement of intent reference to the Nolan collection gallery at the Canberra Museum and Gallery. Can you update the committee as to what is happening with the Nolan collection? Has a decision been made about what might happen or not happen at Lanyon, and when will that decision be known?

Ms Elvin: Of course, the collection is owned by the commonwealth; we are the custodians of the collection on behalf of the commonwealth. The commonwealth has not yet made any final decisions as to future arrangements for the collection. I understand that the new commonwealth minister, Mr Debus, the Minister for Home Affairs, is in the process of assessing the various options, consulting the various stakeholders, including ourselves, of course, but also Lady Mary Nolan, the widow of the late artist. He will then reach a decision as to the future arrangements for the collection.

MR SMYTH: Lady Mary's wishes were that it stay at Lanyon?

Ms Elvin: Lady Mary Nolan has previously indicated that her preference is for the collection to remain at Lanyon. However, in communications with her, including a meeting that the Chief Minister had with her late last year, it has been pointed out to her that the physical conditions of the Nolan Gallery at Lanyon mean that it is no longer appropriate to store the works there. There is also the issue, of course, not just of the physical conditions but also of the very low visitation to the Nolan Gallery, which has been a concern for a number of years with only about 6,500 people a year visiting this internationally important collection. That in itself is of concern.

MR SMYTH: How many pieces are in the collection?

Ms Elvin: There are 24 items in the foundation collection. There are 117 items that were gifted subsequent to that in a number of series, like the bird series, the "For the term of his natural life" series and so forth. The main collection, the one that people really want to see, is the foundation collection of 24 works.

THE CHAIR: You have a supplementary, Ms MacDonald?

MS MacDONALD: Yes. I know that the visitation numbers have been an issue for a long period of time, but there has been an ongoing debate because Nolan actually wanted them housed in a rural setting. I understand that Lady Nolan has been pushing for that as well. I suppose the question is: how do we reconcile trying to get it into a central setting where people can actually get access to it reasonably easily, which they cannot do at Lanyon, and the original desires?

Ms Elvin: When you talk about the original desires of the artist, it is interesting that none of that actually was embedded in the formal transfer documents. The legal advice that we have received, and I believe the commonwealth has received it also, is that the deeds of gift have no requirement for the works to stay at Lanyon. There is anecdotal evidence both that the artist wished the works to stay at Lanyon but also that he was quite comfortable with the idea, once the regional museum was established, for the works to go there. I think beyond the legal documents we start getting into hearsay.

Certainly if a decision is made by the commonwealth that the works should be permanently located elsewhere, then we would ensure that, whatever happens to the Nolan Gallery building in the future, there would be appropriate reference to the Nolan collection being housed there. You can do that through interpretive signage and

so forth.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne, you have a supplementary?

MRS DUNNE: Yes.

Mr Stanhope: I might just say that I understand the point that Ms MacDonald makes in respecting an apparent wish of the artist and the artist's widow. As Ms Elvin said, I met with Lady Mary and we talked through all of these issues. You are quite right that Lady Mary has expressed a preference for the works to remain. We talked through the issues about the state of the gallery, the need for security and the very low level of visitation.

Certainly in our representations and correspondence with the commonwealth in relation to a decision—at the end of the day, the decision about the location of the Nolan Gallery will be made by the commonwealth—my government has expressed, most particularly through this budget, a view that the museum and gallery in Civic Square is a more appropriate venue for a whole range of reasons.

We are very respectful of the views most particularly of Lady Mary. We certainly have been very forthright in ensuring that the commonwealth is fully aware of the views of Lady Mary as it gives its consideration to what it believes to be an appropriate resolution to the issue of the housing of the collection.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne.

MRS DUNNE: There is money in the budget for rehousing. What would be necessary to appropriately accommodate the Nolan collection in CMAG, and what would have to go to accommodate them?

Ms Elvin: The intention is that gallery one, which is the large gallery space that is nearest to London Circuit which houses our permanent collection, would have part of that space reconfigured to accommodate the foundation collection, those 24 key works. That would involve the construction of some internal walls and some display areas, installation of additional track lighting and an upgrading of the security system. So it would be the creation of a dedicated space within that larger gallery space.

MRS DUNNE: But something would have to go out of the permanent collection to do that?

Ms Elvin: It would certainly involve a reconfiguring of what we show in that permanent collection space, but we think it would be such a star attraction, if you like, of the permanent collection and would relate very well to other aspects of the collection that it would be quite a feature of that space.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman, you have a question?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes, a new question. Firstly, I congratulate you on the first anniversary of the Glassworks. I went there yesterday and it was absolutely packed. There is some extra work to be done, I understand, in that the chimneys have to be

constructed. Can you tell us when that is due to be done and also what else you have planned for that precinct?

Mr Stanhope: Thanks, Mr Gentleman. Mr Whitney would be able to respond to those questions.

Mr Whitney: Thank you. The first question is about the chimneystack. There was always an intention when the powerhouse was being converted to become the Glassworks that the smokestack would be replaced as a public artwork. The anniversary was a good time to release an expression of interest inviting artists and teams of artists and engineers who have background and experience in such large work to respond to what they might do on that site. That expression of interest was called on the weekend, and we are now waiting for a process whereby those expressions of interest will come in. They will be assessed by a combination of the public art panel and also representatives from ActewAGL, the LDA and from artsACT, and we will then move towards commissioning a piece to be constructed hopefully by Christmas 2009.

MR GENTLEMAN: And for the rest of the precinct?

Mr Whitney: At the moment there is work being undertaken on a building known as the chapel, which was the switch room. It has been converted to short-term residences for artists visiting the Glassworks. Both national and international artists will be invited to come and work as part of the Glassworks program. That work has commenced.

There is also a very interesting development with the fitters workshop, which is a building also designed by J S Murdoch, who designed the powerhouse building and, of course, Old Parliament House and the Canberra Hotel. We have a feasibility study being undertaken this year to look at potential uses for that site to expand the cultural precinct area around Kingston.

At this stage we are not sure exactly what we would like to see in there. So this feasibility study will work out finding arts-related activity that is alive and active. We are not particularly looking for an extension of a gallery; we are looking at something that complements very strongly the work both of the Glassworks and also the visitor interest at the Old Bus Depot Markets.

Mr Whitney: There is another element to the new works, and that is to improve the public amenity around the Glassworks. This will be a glass atrium constructed to the north side of the building immediately adjacent to the existing cafe, which has very small capacity. This will provide a greater amenity for people to take advantage of the cultural precinct when they visit the Glassworks. Built within that is also an access component to enable much greater access, in particular disability access, into the Glassworks.

The Glassworks conforms to regulation, but the nature of the doors that are there are currently difficult, as we have discovered with the number of people going through them. We will be replacing those doors with automatically controlled sliding doors to enable greater access into the building. They are the three elements that are part of the

construction program.

THE CHAIR: Ms MacDonald, you have a supplementary?

MS MacDONALD: Yes. I am glad you mentioned the issue of the glass atrium within the cafe, because I have been there on a number of occasions and it is always very tight. Especially on Sundays when the Old Bus Depot Markets are going on, the cafe is a way of getting people into the Glassworks in the first place and, once in there, after they have had a coffee, hopefully they will then go and have a look around as well and appreciate what a fantastic facility it is. When do you anticipate the glass atrium will be completed?

Mr Whitney: I cannot give an exact date on the completion.

MS MacDONALD: I do not want an exact date.

Mr Whitney: The drawings for the atrium were done as part of the original work for conversion to the Glassworks, but that was one element that was not able to proceed because of cost. The drawings are already there; it is a question of revisiting those and then engaging through procurements to undertake that work. But the intention is to do that as soon as we can.

THE CHAIR: Did you have a supplementary, Dr Foskey?

DR FOSKEY: Yes, I do. It is about arts facilities in general—

MR STEFANIAK: That is not a supplementary.

THE CHAIR: That is not a supplementary.

DR FOSKEY: Well, is not the Glasshouse an art facility for practitioners?

THE CHAIR: Yes, it is.

DR FOSKEY: I am interested in how we are rolling out to other artisans, chair.

MRS DUNNE: Well, that is not a supplementary.

DR FOSKEY: I am interested, for instance, in—

MR STEFANIAK: When are you going to stop her?

DR FOSKEY: I have heard that the Griffith primary school is going to become an artist hub.

MR STEFANIAK: Tell her.

DR FOSKEY: I am interested in whether that is going to open up the number of arts disciplines that actually have a place to practise and showcase exhibitions.

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Dr Foskey. I will actually ask Mr Whitney to respond to other plans in place in relation to other arts facilities and hubs. For instance, in recent budgets the government has provided some funding for an expansion of a space at Strathnairn at Watson. Indeed, in relation to excess government property, it has been advised that Cook primary school will be redeveloped as an arts hub but the—

DR FOSKEY: What does that mean?

Mr Stanhope: I will actually defer to Mr Whitney. The government is also working, in terms of arts facilities with M16 in relation to its future needs. Mr Whitney may actually be able to give some further advice around a range of other facilities, such as the Belconnen arts centre and other arts facilities.

Mr Whitney: Yes, there are a lot of them. Currently 12 arts facilities need to be maintained, and there is also opportunity for expanding that number of facilities. There is money involved for landscaping and pedestrian amenity and pedestrian safety at the arts centre at Manuka.

DR FOSKEY: Is that the anchor?

Mr Whitney: No, Manuka is PhotoAccess.

DR FOSKEY: PhotoAccess, yes.

Mr Whitney: In particular, it is the public access to the gallery space there. Strathnairn homestead, there is work underway at the moment to build two new studios there. In the new budget there will be an opportunity to stabilise the woolshed. The roof is leaning in a bit, but it can be repaired quite safely and the woolshed maintained. Also, some decking around the woolshed will be replaced to provide another facility for Strathnairn to continue to provide the arts activity it does.

At Theatre 3 there is an opportunity to build at long last some disability access so that people in wheelchairs can access the theatre without having to go around the outside of the building, which is not appropriate. At Tuggeranong Arts Centre the dance floor has been worn out, and so there is a chance to replace that dance floor.

THE CHAIR: Too much dancing.

MS MacDONALD: Yes, too much Fresh Funk.

Mr Whitney: We think it is a very important key performance indicator that Fresh Funk, the main user, have worn the floor out.

Mr Whitney: There is money to install airconditioning, at Gorman House, in particular into the Canberra Youth Theatre and also into the Hatchery, where the young people are involved in their own arts development and creating activity. Also there is going to be some work on upgrading the toilets.

At the Watson Arts Centre the ceiling in the main gallery needs to be replaced because, just as age comes on, it is also sagging. There is also going to be money to

look at the creation of five new studio facilities as part of that. The Watson Arts Group is managed by the Canberra Potters Society, and they have expressed an interest in having greater workshop facilities. One of those workshops will probably have the potential also to welcome visiting artists who might be coming in from across the nation or internationally and provide short-term accommodation whilst they are conducting workshops.

The Street Theatre in City West, \$250,000 is set aside to upgrade critical lighting and sound equipment as part of its program. Ten years on, through the amount of use it is getting, those facilities need to be replaced. With regard to M16, a collective of visual artists currently in Fyshwick, we are going to look at working with TAMS to rehouse them into the Blaxland centre, part of the Griffith school. Also, I believe the Cook school has been identified as an arts hub in response to the current community use, which is mainly through, I believe, a local dance school and also some cultural groups who use the facilities in the area. That detail has yet to be fully unfolded.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne, a substantive question, then we are going to Mr Stefaniak.

MRS DUNNE: Mr Whitney, could you give the committee a brief rundown on the staging of the Belconnen arts centre, when we are likely to see something coming out of the ground, what is involved in the second stage and when might that occur?

Mr Whitney: Certainly. There is a physical component and also a structural component or an administrative component. The structural component tenders close this week, and the sense is that there are three interested parties. It will be interesting to see what response they have. We anticipate that work will begin on site in June this year with a completion date of July next year. So that will be stage 1 of the Belconnen arts centre, which principally incorporates from the assessment of the community's needs, a dance studio, an art gallery, a series of workshop spaces principally for visual arts people but also for other organisations, and then a central foyer and administration area. That complements the calls from the community for an arts centre.

That is stage 1, and then we anticipate after that the opportunity of getting funding to continue the building with stage 2, which sees an expansion of the workshop facilities, greater community access and workshop spaces for arts-related companies to set themselves up and also the building of a large theatre, which will be a replacement for the existing facility at the Belconnen community services.

MRS DUNNE: Loosely called a facility, yes.

MR STEFANIAK: Yes. What do you mean by "anticipate getting funding"? Is that funding not definite? There is \$9 million in the budget that—

Mr Whitney: Stage 1 is funded, but stage 2 is not funded. Stage 2 is the building of the theatre and expanded workshops.

MR STEFANIAK: When you say you only anticipate that, I see \$9 million allocated in the budget. Does that include stage 2?

Mr Whitney: No, that is for stage 1 only.

MR STEFANIAK: Only?

Mr Whitney: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: What is the funding on stage 2? What is the projected cost of stage 2?

Mr Whitney: I will have to get back to you. I prefer not to—

MRS DUNNE: Take it on notice, thank you, Mr Whitney.

Mr Whitney: I prefer not to remember that figure.

THE CHAIR: Take it on notice. Mr Stefaniak, your question?

MR STEFANIAK: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. The per cent for art scheme, I note at budget paper 4, page 42, in 2008-09 it receives \$1.028 million going up to \$1.656 million in the outyear. What exactly is planned in terms of that scheme in the budget period? What additional projects do we actually see in relation to this money? There is some additional money there; what are we going to see with it?

Mr Whitney: The first thing, I think, is that there is a forward plan for public art, which is due to be released in the next few weeks. That outlines the vision of embracing public art across Canberra. At the moment there has been quite a focus on works within Civic, so there has been the installation of the first round of works. The second round has been purchased and will be installed later this calendar year.

The next step is to broaden out into Woden, which was an area that was identified as needing some new public art, and also some works identified to go into Tuggeranong. But the forward plan looks at the opportunities for public art to be located in each of the town centres and also to provide gateway pieces to welcome people arriving into Canberra as gateways into the city and to incorporate that artwork.

MR STEFANIAK: What sort of gateways? There are two projects which I think are somewhat controversial on Gungahlin Drive—the multicoloured stones and the bogong moth thing and also that structure near the highway which actually some people say is quite dangerous but is obviously meant to be some sort of form of art. So, in terms of gateways, are you envisaging any other projects along those lines which have led to some controversy in the community?

Mr Whitney: By “gateway pieces” we mean works that are statements so that when you are arriving into an area there is a gateway. I think a great example might be to look at driving into Melbourne, either coming in on the Tullamarine Freeway, the large works on that freeway going to the Bolte Bridge, or, alternatively, as you are driving in on the main highway from here, a series of integrated works along the side of the highway.

MS MacDONALD: Stop laughing, Vicki.

DR FOSKEY: I thought they were structures to reduce the sound in neighbouring

suburbs.

MR STEFANIAK: I see.

Mr Whitney: But I mean—

THE CHAIR: Sorry, Mr Whitney, there is a bit of interference running over here. I apologise for that. Would you continue?

MRS DUNNE: Everyone is expressing their view on the art on the Tullamarine Freeway, I think.

Mr Whitney: That is right, and that is a good thing. That is also why there is a panel established as the public art panel. There are people in artsACT who have experience not only in art but also in landscape design. We can look at those elements. I would prefer not to get into a discussion about the works on the Gungahlin Drive Extension. I think they are safe. You were expressing concern about them falling over.

MR STEFANIAK: People have mentioned that.

Mr Whitney: I do not think there is any chance of that. The work has been designed and approved by engineers to be installed there, so they would accept that responsibility. But the gateways can take a variety of forms. They do not necessarily have to be like the Victorian experience. There is quite a lot of public art on the main freeways going into Brisbane and also into Sydney. There is an art statement as you come along the road there. We have not determined what they are going to be just yet. It would probably be through a process of either calling for expressions of interest from artists or commissioning artists to undertake the work.

MR STEFANIAK: I see. So we could get anything from what we see on the Tullamarine Freeway through to the dolphins as you come into the Sutherland shire from Wollongong?

Mr Whitney: Yes, we could, but I think we need to have faith in the process of public art and in the Public Art Panel to make their determination on the work that is recommended.

MR STEFANIAK: I look forward with fascination to see what you are going to do.

Mr Whitney: We look forward to that as well.

MRS DUNNE: On a completely different line of questioning, Chief Minister, what consultation has there been between the ANU and the ACT government about the announcement that the ANU made about a foundation?

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mrs Dunne. Mr Whitney can give details on that.

Mr Whitney: There have been quite a few discussions that I have had with the pro vice-chancellor of the university, Professor Mandy Thomas, and we also met last week, another meeting to look at their first draft proposal of what the outcome of that

foundation may in fact provide as a benefit for the ACT. We are still working through. It was an ambitious call by the vice-chancellor to put his \$1 million on the table and to call for a further \$1 million from the territory and then propose \$2 million from public subscription.

Interestingly, the \$2 million from public subscription has been seen as an ambition that probably will not be realised by the university, and when we asked for some detail, some form of business case about what that foundation might be able to return, it appears to be early days yet and the university are still working their way through what that could be. Many of the things that they are suggesting I think will be of great benefit to the university and to the School of Music but, in terms of them having a broader reach to the Canberra community, we need to work through how we can get that better response.

DR FOSKEY: Can I seek some clarification on that? Is that the ANU co-investment program, \$2.5 million, or is that something else?

Mr Whitney: It does not appear in the budget at all; it is a statement from the vice-chancellor where he—

DR FOSKEY: He has made an approach to the ACT government?

Mr Stanhope: Well sort of, yes, through the *Canberra Times*—

MRS DUNNE: I think he made what could be called an opening gambit in public.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, precisely, Mrs Dunne. But the government is responding—

Mr Whitney: Yes. Just for clarification, the territory does support the School of Art and the School of Music to the tune of \$1.6 million a year through the community outreach program, and that outreach program provides programs of activity, mainly through the School of Music. The ones through the School of Music are involved in support for education or work in music in schools, in primary schools in particular; also in providing teachers from the university to go and work in secondary schools and colleges. It also provides support for the CSO and access to Llewellyn Hall and also for community groups to have access to Llewellyn Hall. So that is an ongoing funding arrangement that currently exists. There is also support in there for the School of Art through a public art program and also to assist them in their open education programs.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, page 67 of budget paper 3 talks about an initiative to provide “an increase to the ACT Arts Fund’s base”. It appears to be a new program. I was just wondering if you could address that for us, please.

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Ms Porter. It is some time since artsACT’s base funding has received a boost or a significant increase, and this is a quite significant increase in the arts fund to enhance arts capacity of \$1.87 million over four years. I will ask Mr Whitney to go to the detail of that particular additional expenditure.

Mr Whitney: The arts fund is the principal source of support for arts activity within

Canberra and historically that has been through two particular areas of application. One is to support our key arts organisations, of which there are 22, and also through project funding or one-off funding. What has been created this year is an area called program funding, which provides arts activity that does not necessarily fit into each category. So it may be an activity that could stretch from one year to the next and so the opportunity of having funding over two years gives them a greater chance to work their program and to get a better business plan or relationships with potential sponsors or other activities.

We think the introduction of that program category is a very positive new direction and the increased money coming into the arts fund will enable that to happen without being negative on the rest of the fund; also, the increased money will be able to go towards supporting both the key arts organisations and the project funding. The applications to that fund, as to most funds, often exceed by a factor of three the available money, so any increased money coming in will enable more arts activity to happen within Canberra.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth.

DR FOSKEY: Can I ask a supp to that?

THE CHAIR: No.

DR FOSKEY: Please?

MS MacDONALD: The last time you said you were going to ask a supp, it was not a supp.

DR FOSKEY: Yes, it was.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth had a supp to something that was way back because we went off in a different direction.

MR SMYTH: Yes, it got lost. I just want to go back to the Glassworks. When the issue of replacing the chimney was first mooted in the late nineties—I think Rick Scott-Murphy was the executive officer of the Kingston Foreshore Development Authority—the discussions revolved around it being an enormous landmark that might be the largest freestanding glass building in the world. Is that the sort of scope we are still talking about?

Mr Whitney: Yes, the ambition is to do that. I think the original tower was measured in feet, and at 131 feet high, so that is quite some height. The intention is to have a public artwork that is a mixture of light and the glass. I think there was some very early ambition that the glass would all be made at the Glassworks and that it would be the glass artists that would construct it.

I think a reality check has indicated to them that perhaps it is a project they are not quite familiar with, so that is why we are now calling for people who have experience in that area. But certainly we are talking about a project that may be 20 or 30 metres high that will be of significance not only as a landmark for the Canberra Glassworks

but also as a feature for Canberra.

MR SMYTH: You might like to talk to Rick Scott-Murphy because there was a lot of discussion about it in the late nineties. Indeed, when the first funding for the Glassworks appeared in our last budget, the intention was always to go on with some sort of landmark. Mr Tidy has sat there silently throughout the meeting. What is Mr Tidy's role, Ms Elvin?

Ms Elvin: Mr Tidy is the finance controller and he has very kindly accompanied me this morning because my chief financial officer is unfortunately ill.

MR SMYTH: All right.

MS MacDONALD: It does not mean you have to ask him financial questions, Brendan.

Ms Elvin: He will be very grateful if you do not ask any questions.

MR SMYTH: The statement of intent is not numbered, but I think it is the seventh last page.

THE CHAIR: Seventh last page?

MR SMYTH: Seventh last—so go back seven pages from the last page—is the operating statement. I notice that we have a negative operating result this year, for the coming year and for the three outyears. Can you explain why that is so? Also, in the three outyears the operating result is an amazing minus \$1.831 million three years in a row. Are we lucky there, are we very calculating, or why is it exactly the same, even though some of the other numbers, like employee expenses, do change?

Ms Elvin: I might embark on that answer and Mr Tidy can help me if I get into difficulties. The corporation throughout its history has always budgeted for large operating deficits. The reason for that is that we manage a large asset portfolio which attracts large depreciation expenses. In fact, if you look further up at that operating statement, you will see that the projections for depreciation and amortisation are over \$2 million for each of those years, including the outyears.

The premise on which we operate—and I think we say this elsewhere in the statement of intent—is that we always seek to achieve an operating result that is better than the depreciation cost. In other words, I suppose in a cash sense we are ahead.

MR SMYTH: Okay. On the depreciation—it is an interesting line—I note that in the budget \$1.694 million was the estimate; the outcome is \$2,001,000, so it is \$307,000 worse. But in the coming year you are only budgeting for the depreciation to be \$13,000. What caused the big jump in depreciation this year? Was there a revaluation? And what causes you to think that it will be so small in the coming year?

Ms Elvin: Mr Smyth, there is a note to that under the notes to the budget statements.

MR SMYTH: Yes, that is not referenced, which makes it very hard to follow. The

notes would be in there?

Ms Elvin: I think it is easier to refer to this in budget paper No 4—page 491, budget paper No 4.

MR SMYTH: Is this the same notes in the back of the statement of intent?

Ms Elvin: It is; they are identical notes, yes. If you look at the last note on page 491 of budget paper No 4, it explains that increase in the depreciation figure from the budget to the estimated outcome, and it relates to recalculation of the depreciation rate on the Civic library and link building, which came onto our books as an asset during that time. We are not anticipating any further major changes, I suppose, in our asset base that would cause a similar change in our expected depreciation.

MR SMYTH: Which leads to the question: what caused the recalculation?

MRS DUNNE: It coming onto the books.

MR SMYTH: No, there had been a figure in it, but once it came onto the books there was a recalculation, if I read this right.

Ms Elvin: I might ask Mr Tidy to explain that because I believe it is quite a complex accounting matter.

Mr Tidy: It was basically a combination of two things. The final cost for the project was slightly more than originally anticipated from previous years, from a few years ago when the project was first mooted, I suppose. The other major one would have been that the useful life was assessed when we brought it on the books at a different age from originally when the project was first brought up, and the useful life is basically the major cause of the depreciation difference.

MR SMYTH: Okay. Was the decline in the useful life as a consequence of the damage caused in the hailstorm?

Mr Tidy: No, not at all. Basically the useful life that was assessed at the time we brought the project on as opposed to the useful life that would have been assessed three or four years prior, when the project was first discussed.

MR SMYTH: Right. And what is the difference in the useful life now as to what was proposed?

Mr Tidy: I think it was originally 50 but it was assessed when we brought it on the books to 40 years.

MR SMYTH: And why is that? If we built and paid for 50, why have we got 40?

Mr Tidy: I suppose that is an accounting estimate made at the time that we brought it on the books, based on what other buildings were being depreciated over at the time.

THE CHAIR: Okay. I think we will break for morning tea now, Chief Minister. We

have 15 minutes for morning tea, so we will come back just after 10 o'clock and go on to 1.1—

DR FOSKEY: Are we not going to stay on the arts?

MS MacDONALD: No; there are other areas we need to cover.

THE CHAIR: No, we will be going on to 1.1, strategic policy and strategy. Thank you very much, Ms Elvin, Mr Whitney and Mr Tidy.

Meeting adjourned from 10.46 to 11.05 am.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, we are on output class 1, output 1.1. Mr Gentleman?

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks, chair. Chief Minister, if I can bring you to page 37 of budget paper 4, there is a new line there, for COAG and CAF meetings and a new—

Mr Stanhope: Sorry, Mr Gentleman, which page is that?

MR GENTLEMAN: Page 37 of budget paper 4. Item i is support for COAG and CAF meetings. There is a new target there of eight. Can you provide some detail of what that target measures and some of the support processes you need for COAG?

Mr Stanhope: Thanks, Mr Gentleman. I will just respond briefly and ask Mr Cappie-Wood to expand. Post the election of the current commonwealth government, the Prime Minister at the first COAG meeting which he convened changed quite significantly the nature of COAG and the way in which COAG operates.

For instance, at the first meeting last December, the Prime Minister initiated, and COAG supported, the appointment of eight individual COAG working groups, each of which is chaired by the relevant commonwealth portfolio minister but which has senior representatives of each state and territory as members of the working group across eight identified priority areas. They have required significant organisation and coordination and resources. Indeed, the workload has been extremely heavy and it has impacted significantly on some portfolios. For instance, Ms Lambert, who was here earlier today, is the deputy chair of the COAG Indigenous working group.

In addition to that, the states and territories some 18 months ago decided to form the Council for the Australian Federation, a meeting of the states and territories which does not involve the commonwealth, in order that states and territories might have a separate or identified forum for discussing and progressing issues of direct concern to the states and territories. That is a very significant initiative; it is important that states and territories do have the capacity to meet together to discuss the issues that are of specific interest and importance to the states and territories.

That is the configuration of the two new structures, and they have involved significant effort on behalf of states and territories. Mr Cappie-Wood could go to some of the detail of how we sought to meet those priorities.

Mr Cappie-Wood: The output indicator of eight represents the anticipated four COAG meetings during the course of the period as well as four CAF meetings. However, there are significant additional phone hook-ups with first ministers on top of that in preparation for those particular ones.

Just to add to the Chief Minister's details associated with the various working groups, we see at least 22 subgroups of the initial eight that are available there. Of those 22, it breaks down into further working parties et cetera. So there is a significant effort associated with this. All jurisdictions are having to resource up to be able to deal with this. The Prime Minister described COAG as the workhorse of the nation, and certainly it is being well flogged at the moment.

MRS DUNNE: Can I just follow up on that? I do not want this to sound in any way critical, but is there a risk that COAG and CAF will be at cross-purposes or may be duplicating each other in time? I know the genesis of CAF and I appreciate that, and we may not agree, but I am just concerned about that duplication.

Mr Stanhope: No, Mrs Dunne. I do not believe there is any possibility of COAG and CAF operating in a way that would put them at cross-purposes. Indeed, the Council for the Australian Federation very much complements COAG. It is important that the states and territories, irrespective of the political flavour of the commonwealth government of the day, do have an opportunity. This is not about states and territories seeking to gang up; this is about states and territories pursuing strategic issues that are essentially important to the states and territories independent of the priority which a commonwealth government would give to a particular issue.

Secondly, it is important that states and territories from time to time, particularly in their negotiations with the commonwealth through COAG, have an opportunity to flesh out appropriate responses. As I say, it is not about ganging up; it is not about being at cross-purposes; it is not about competition. At one level it is about the states and territories in relation to issues of specific concern to states and territories constitutionally and in relation to service delivery leading together at head-of-government level to talk through issues. Our ministerial councils, of course, work independently of both COAG and CAF and bring together relevant portfolio ministers. But I think it is important that heads of government at both state and national level work together, and that is what we do.

The CAF is quite new; it has met at this stage, I think, three or four times. The meetings have been useful. They have allowed states and territories to develop common positions and to progress significantly. For instance, Australia is as advanced as it is in relation to the development of a national emissions trading scheme because of decisions which were taken at CAF by premiers and chief ministers. It was the Council for the Australian Federation that decided to appoint Professor Garner to undertake the review that is currently being pursued in relation to climate change.

MRS DUNNE: But will you be watching, Chief Minister, to ensure that they do not work against each other or there are not unnecessary overlaps?

Mr Stanhope: Certainly it is in nobody's interest that they do not work appropriately together.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth, any questions?

MR SMYTH: Sure. On page 37 of budget paper 4, Chief Minister, in output class 1.1, item j, pre-election period preparation, can you tell us what that actually is and what will occur in the pre-election period?

Mr Stanhope: I am aware that the Chief Minister's Department and agencies are currently, for instance, refreshing documentation in relation to the caretaker period and the caretaker convention and ensuring that there is an understanding across the ACT public service of issues around the convention and the issues that any bureaucracy would need to address in relation to a transition if there were to be a new government elected.

These are, as I understand it—Mr Cappie-Wood can expand on it—the normal preparations that any incumbent government takes in anticipation of a potential change of government and, indeed, of the significant issues that a public service faces in relation to the administration of government in a caretaker period and in a transition between governments. Mr Cappie-Wood can perhaps expand on it.

MR MULCAHY: I have a supplementary on that, if I could.

THE CHAIR: Yes, Mr Mulcahy, although wait until Mr Cappie-Wood enlarges on it, and then we will go to you.

Mr Cappie-Wood: Just expanding on that, we are conducting a range of seminars across the public service to ensure that the public service understands those conventions in terms of caretaker mode. We will also be placing updated information on the website, again to make sure that everyone understands exactly what is expected of them in the caretaker period. This is in addition to the normal convention of the Chief Minister writing to all MLAs informing them of the conventions. But, certainly in terms of the public service, we will be taking all actions to make sure that that is clearly understood. So between now—

MR MULCAHY: Sorry, a supplementary on that issue.

MR SMYTH: Sorry, I have not finished the question that I have.

MR MULCAHY: I think we normally take supplementaries. Chief Minister, are you planning —

MRS DUNNE: Madam Chair, Mr Smyth was in mid-flight.

MR MULCAHY: Sorry, I had the call.

MRS DUNNE: No, you did not have the call.

THE CHAIR: He did.

MR MULCAHY: Chief Minister, are you planning to embark on a marketing

campaign on the budget as happened last year? If so, do you have an indication of the budget and also the allocation of that budget in relation to marketing aspects of the budget to the taxpayer?

Mr Stanhope: The government does intend, Mr Mulcahy, to provide some information to the community in relation to the budget. It will not be as expansive as last year; we do not propose any electronic explanation of the budget this year as was pursued last year. But the government is planning to provide some detail of the budget to Canberrans.

MR MULCAHY: Do we have a quantum on the campaign?

Mr Stanhope: What is the cost?

Mr Lasek: It is in the vicinity of \$35,000 for a letterbox drop around the city.

MR SESELJA: Is this just for the Chief Minister's Department, or is this for whole of government?

Mr Lasek: It is a whole-of-government document.

MR SESELJA: So those ads that started airing last night—I did not see them myself—I am told they are about what the government has done in relation to education.

MR GENTLEMAN: Not your ads?

MR SESELJA: They would be separate. What would be the quantum for those kinds of advertising programs that you have planned?

Mr Stanhope: That is a matter for the department of education.

MR SESELJA: So there is no coordination in the Chief Minister's Department on those issues?

Mr Stanhope: That is an advertising campaign relevant to public education week, which starts today. The ACT government is very mindful of the need for public education to be supported visibly and strongly. It is very much a part of our determination to address issues in relation to ACT public education being the education system of first choice for Canberrans. In public education week it is quite usual for governments to publicly support and laud the big achievements of public education. This government quite proudly are doing that through our support for public education week.

In terms of the support for public education week, I am personally not aware of the details of the public education program. There would be some coordination through Mr Lasek, but that is being run by education. It is a public education week program that has been developed by the Minister for Education and Training and his department to support public education.

MR SESELJA: So Mr Lasek will be coordinating other government information campaigns? You have a role in coordinating what happens in other agencies in terms of government information campaigns?

Mr Lasek: Traditionally, the Chief Minister's Department coordinates whole-of-government communication or public information campaigns, yes.

MR SESELJA: What is then the quantum that is being planned, quite aside from selling the budget, to provide government information prior to the election?

MR LASEK: I believe there might be an update on the progress so far about housing affordability one year on from the launch of that campaign. The budget information will be going into letterboxes in the next fortnight, I understand. I am not aware of any—

MR MULCAHY: Before it is passed by the Assembly, Mr Lasek, is it? Mr Lasek, before it is passed by the Assembly it will be published as a finished document?

Mr Lasek: No, I think the document is on hold pending Assembly approval.

MR MULCAHY: It will not be approved in two weeks.

THE CHAIR: Okay—

MR SESELJA: Sorry, I think Mr Lasek was still answering a question in terms of whole-of-government coordination—

Mr Lasek: Yes, thank you.

MR SESELJA: How much is planned prior to the election?

Mr Lasek: The department is in the process of completing a refresh of the Canberra plan, and there will be some public information about that in the document, once finalised.

MR MULCAHY: So what is the total value that Mr Seselja has asked about for all these marketing programs?

Mr Lasek: We will take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: Take that on notice. Mr Smyth and then Mrs Dunne.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, I have got a copy of what appears to be a Labor Party strategy document, which says it should certainly have budgeted capacity to run government information programs like the 2020 ads more often. It goes on to say it needs signage and government information programs and government announcements which look like government announcements. It says the CMD information unit will need to have a more influential coordinating role. Chief Minister, why are you politicising the public service for the aims of the Labor Party?

Mr Stanhope: We are not, Madam Chair.

MR SMYTH: So how much additional money will be spent between now and the election on promoting you and your government rather than reporting to the people of the ACT?

Mr Stanhope: Mr Lasek just answered that question, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MR SMYTH: So why do you feel it necessary that the CMD unit should need to have a more influential coordinating role?

Mr Stanhope: It is important, but I am not aware of this document. I am not aware of its status. The Chief Minister's communication unit has an important coordinating role, which I support. I think it is very important that we as a government consult with the Canberra community, that our consultation be professional and well organised and that it be efficient. That is best done through a central coordinating agency with a unit tasked specifically, as the Chief Minister's Department is, to provide that service.

MR SMYTH: So why would you be planning to run more ads between now and the election?

Mr Stanhope: We are not.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne?

MRS DUNNE: Chief Minister, we might be in a position where we might have to come back to this on the basis of the questions Mr Lasek and Mr Cappie-Wood have taken on notice. The strategy document, your development of a third-term agenda, which you did manifest some knowledge of a couple of weeks ago, clearly says that the Labor Party needs the coordination of the CMD information unit to be more influential. It talks about how it is important to make sure that the party's announcements are out there and publicised.

Why is the advertising that is currently on the television, the advertising that is currently proposed to go into letterboxes, the advertising on housing affordability and the advertising of the Canberra plan, which has been as dead as a dodo for two years, suddenly coming to light? It seems to some members here that the proximity to the election is the fundamental driver for that. How can you justify that to the taxpayers?

Mr Stanhope: I will take this on notice as well, but I think it is almost certainly the case that the government are doing less advertising this year than it did last year. We are certainly doing far less advertising in relation to the budget this year than we did last year. I think it would probably be fair to suggest that there will be less advertising undertaken by the government this year than was undertaken last year.

Madam Chair, to the extent that questions are being asked in relation to a document which has absolutely no status, which is not a government document and which has not been endorsed by me or the government, the questions are hypothetical and

spurious. It is not a government document; it does not reflect government policy. The document has absolutely no status.

MR SESELJA: Who was it?

Mr Stanhope: I cannot respond to questions about documents that are not government documents and that are without status. The questions are quite spurious.

MR SESELJA: If it is not a government document, who prepared it?

Mr Stanhope: It is not a government document.

MR SESELJA: Who prepared it, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: It is not a government document.

THE CHAIR: We will go on to questions.

MR SESELJA: Madam Chair, he said it is not a government document, so maybe he could tell us where it has come from to clarify its status.

MS MacDONALD: Mr Smyth brought it up; it has not been brought up by anybody else.

Mr Stanhope: I just clarified the status.

MR SESELJA: You have not. You just said it is not a government document. Who prepared it?

Mr Stanhope: It is not a government document.

THE CHAIR: So we will go on to other—

MR SMYTH: No, I have got core questions on this area, Madam Chair. Chief Minister, the document also says the cabinet should consider having some contingency built into the budget. What contingency did you build into the budget to run your advertising programs? I note you said there is no extra advertising this year, but there is for the next financial year, the 2008-09 year. What extra contingency has been built into the budget?

Mr Stanhope: I am not aware of any.

THE CHAIR: Okay, so we—

MR SMYTH: Well, no, hang on.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth, no. We are going onto another area. The Chief Minister has already said—

MR SMYTH: Are you just shutting it down?

MRS DUNNE: You are shutting it down, are you, Mary?

THE CHAIR: No, the Chief Minister has already said that he cannot answer questions upon this particular output.

MRS DUNNE: He can; he chooses not to.

THE CHAIR: Because it is not a government document.

MS MacDONALD: He does not have to answer questions on a hypothetical document which Mr Smyth has brought up.

MRS DUNNE: It is not a hypothetical document; it was written in his office.

MR SMYTH: It is not hypothetical.

MR SESELJA: He has acknowledged its existence.

MS MacDONALD: Which the rest of us do not have access to.

THE CHAIR: No, exactly. I think we will move on. Do you have a question in another area?

DR FOSKEY: I have some questions.

THE CHAIR: Yes, Dr Foskey.

DR FOSKEY: I have a question about the Canberra plan. In renewing—

MRS DUNNE: They are going to advertise about it next financial year.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne.

DR FOSKEY: We have an item in priorities referring to “leading the development in implementation of the Canberra plan—a renewed vision.” I am interested in this renewed vision and the process that is going to be taken to get us there.

You will be aware that the social plan has been part of the Canberra plan, and I am wondering if there will be work done on the social plan and whether the government will be engaging with social housing advocacy groups and service providers and a number of other organisations who feel that the Canberra social plan effectively was gutted by the 2006 budget. Could you let me know what the renewed vision for the Canberra plan will involve and how the social plan will be brought up to date and included?

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Dr Foskey. Some months ago, indeed in November last year, I asked the Chief Minister’s Department to review and update the Canberra plan. Having been in existence for four years, it was in need of a close review and of reconsideration. That work has not yet been concluded; it is at a stage where it is well

advanced, but it has not yet been completed.

The aim of the project is quite simply to review and refresh the Canberra plan to ensure that the themes and content that are contained remain relevant and that the overall vision is appropriate, and to undertake assessment of the achievements of the Canberra plan.

As part of development that has occurred to date, there has been broad consultation within and across the government and within the business and community sectors. It is a document that we anticipate releasing some time in the next couple of months. Having regard to the importance of the Canberra plan to the vision of the future of government service provision and the setting of government priorities, the government believes it is very important that we engage with the community in relation to the Canberra plan.

In relation to your specific questions about the social agenda, the review is a review of all aspects of the social plan as incorporated within the Canberra plan and, indeed, all other aspects of the Canberra plan in both an economic and a spatial sense. It is a review of the plan, its continued relevance and the need to ensure that it continues to meet our future needs.

DR FOSKEY: Have you then consulted with the community sector organisations, given that you have consulted with business and the plans can be released in a couple of months?

Mr Stanhope: Actually, in relation to the consultation that has occurred to date and plans for the future, I will defer to Mr Cappie-Wood or Ms Farnsworth.

Ms Farnsworth: In relation to the social aspects of the Canberra plan renewal, the community inclusion board was pleased to be able to host a forum which involved a range of members from the community sector. That was held in February. Also, I can say that we issued a progress report on the social plan last year, which also focused on future directions as well as achievements. So there has been consultation specifically with the community sector.

DR FOSKEY: Consultation and engagement? When you talked about reviewing the existing social plan you talked about achievements. What about the things where we have failed to reach the standards that were set? Are they also going to be made public?

Ms Farnsworth: Some of those areas which we described as challenges and that are still ongoing are articulated in the report on the progress of the social plan. Some of those areas will continue to be emphasised in the renewed Canberra plan. It will be a balance of achievements and areas where further work will be needed.

THE CHAIR: Do you want to add anything, Mr Cappie-Wood?

Mr Cappie-Wood: Just to say that the Canberra plan is a refresh; it is not going back to zero base; it is looking at the changes in the social economic demographic as well as some of the sustainability issues that have come up since the original plan was

made. It is looking at those trends; it is projecting into those futures; it is looking at how to tackle some of the continued issues and opportunities that face Canberra. As such, it is a refresh rather than a complete remake.

DR FOSKEY: Is the community engagement process being looked at again, given that the work done prior to the last election appears to have been abandoned by the government in terms of the rather extensive processes that were enumerated and which do not appear to have been followed up?

Mr Cappie-Wood: I think you are referring to a broader issue of community engagement per se. That is something that is not just a question for the Canberra plan refresh but a broader one about how communities are engaged through the process of anything from fireworks and the rest of it onwards. I would have to say, as a comparator, the ACT does pretty well in terms of community consultation, but it is nothing that you can take lightly or for granted.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth, do you have another question on this output class, or shall we go on to the next?

MR SMYTH: Is this 1.1 or 1.2?

THE CHAIR: We can go on to 1.2 now.

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, I notice that on page 575 of budget paper 4, under the whole-of-government staffing, it says, “The following table lists the number of full-time employees (FTE).” The standard understanding of the term “FTE” is “full-time equivalent.” Has that changed?

Mr Stanhope: Ms Hudson will explain the basis on which the table has been developed.

Ms Hudson: I do not believe there is any change in the way FTE is calculated. In terms of the numbers for this table, they were calculated by Treasury as part of the budget process with liaison with each chief executive and, I assume, the CFO.

MR SMYTH: A full-time employee is quite different from a full-time equivalent, so which is it? Is it a mistake in that it should be “equivalent”?

Ms Hudson: Yes, I think you are correct.

MR SMYTH: That is okay, because otherwise you have excluded all of the casuals and part-timers and the contractors.

Ms Hudson: No, it is full-time equivalent.

MR SMYTH: It should be full-time equivalent; okay, thank you. That does lead to a question. The CIT folk the other day were talking about Treasury recalculating, for instance, the number of hours that casual teachers work et cetera. Is the FTE here still the standard—whatever it is that the public service now work—36 hours a week?

Ms Hudson: My understanding is that shared services have done some work around the full-time equivalent methodology and there are a couple of areas where there are ongoing revisions to look at it to make it consistent across the service. I would imagine the issue that you are raising is related to those ongoing conversations.

MR SMYTH: All right.

MR SESELJA: So do FTEs include contractors or not, and do they continue to include casuals?

Ms Hudson: We have two methods for counting. One is a paid head count, which includes permanent, temporary and casual. That is more the people management tool, knowing how many people you have actually got, and we take that off the payroll each fortnight. In terms of full-time equivalent, it is more a budget measure for saying, “This is what you are allocated and this is how many people you have got.” So they are used for different purposes.

MR SESELJA: So it would include contractors in that case then? If there is a contractor working essentially within a department, are they counted as one full-time equivalent if they are full time?

Mr Cappie-Wood: Only if they are in the public service.

Ms Hudson: Yes, only if they are in the public service, come under the public service. In terms of paid head count, there would be, I believe, some temporary people who would be contractors, so under the paid head count definition. In terms of the FTE—

Mr Cappie-Wood: To be included in FTE, they effectively have to be employed under the Public Service Act, so they are public servants for that.

MR MULCAHY: So would the InTACT people, who are usually contractors, be in those head counts or not?

Mr Cappie-Wood: If they are contracted external consultants, effectively from a consulting firm or provided by a labour hire firm, they are not considered as public servants; they are contractors. But the cost of their employment is reflected in—

MR SESELJA: Supplies and services or something?

Mr Cappie-Wood: obviously the financials.

MR MULCAHY: What if they are a self-employed contractor, exclusively working for—

Mr Cappie-Wood: Self-employed contractors are not defined as public servants per se. There is clearly a desire, and it has been a desire, to try and get as many of the contractors converted to public servants, but it depends upon the market forces at the time. Sometimes that has worked, and we have seen that in the IT area swing between areas where there has been a fairly high contractor count because of the market demands, to where we have been quite successful at being able to make sure that they

have become public servants.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman?

MR SESELJA: Sorry, just to finish that, chair, if then they are not included in that whole of government staffing, the full-time employees or full-time equivalent, is there somewhere where we can get a gauge of how many of these type of contractors there are and how many full-time equivalent positions there are for contractors in the public service?

Mr Cappie-Wood: I am sure that would be a question we can take on notice.

THE CHAIR: Okay. Mr Gentleman?

MR GENTLEMAN: Mine relates to staffing as well. On page 37 of budget paper 4 there is a new line i, which is the collective agreement negotiations for 2010-13. I note that the two other agreement lines do not continue. Can you give us a time line for when you will be engaging with the employee groups regarding the new agreement for 2010-13?

Mr Stanhope: Thanks, Mr Gentleman. Yes, Ms Hudson can answer.

Ms Hudson: That will start in 2009. What we are doing as part of this measure is looking at all of the factors that impact on wages and conditions and looking at what other jurisdictions are doing. But in terms of the template agreement and the cycle for those negotiations, they will start in 2009.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, the government used to publish a state of the service report. I understand the last one published was 2004-05. Is there a reason for stopping that document?

Ms Hudson: We have now what used to be as part of annual reports for the commissioner. Last year it was separated and it was partly to do with workload management. So we report as the commissioner's annual report on the requirements that we need to under the annual report directions. There was a workforce profile released last year, and the next workforce profile is actually at the printers at the moment. What happens with that workforce profile is that I seek chief executive's clearance on all the data that is in there. This time we needed to do a couple of iterations of those and I got clearance from chief executive's about three weeks ago, so that document will be out shortly.

MR SMYTH: So all of the information that used to be in the state of the service will either be in the commission's annual report—

Ms Hudson: Essentially, yes.

MR SMYTH: or in the profile? You say “essentially”; what will not be reported on?

Ms Hudson: What is an agency survey has been done in the past and included in that. We are still doing that agency survey and that is also nearing completion and should be completed by the end of June. It is whether we then actually release that at that time or wait for the annual report. So we are leaning towards releasing that in June. What we did with the agency survey was redesign it to add a few more questions around attraction/retention, because that had not been looked at, the design of it, since 2004. So the same data comes out, the same information, but sometimes at different times, and part of that is managing the workload across the division.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne?

MRS DUNNE: I have got a couple of questions which go in completely different directions. First of all, I am just looking for direction. The ANU co-investment program and the additional resourcing for the University of Canberra: where do I ask questions about those?

MR SMYTH: Wherever you want.

MRS DUNNE: Okay. Could somebody give me a breakdown of what the \$2.5 million for the co-investment in climate change adaptation research centre is for, what we hope to get from it and over what time period?

Mr Cappie-Wood: The co-investment fund \$2.5 million there represents the ACT’s contribution towards the adaptive climate change centre that the ANU had proposed for some period of time. The ANU are putting in some additional moneys, or substantial moneys, into that, and I will see if I can find in the papers the total amount. This has been in discussion with ANU for some considerable period of time and it was proposed to originally have been funded as a proposal put up to the previous federal government. Unfortunately, that did not come about and at that particular point in time ANU approached the ACT government for an investment of \$2.5 million.

It will bring together the nation’s best scientists to work on climate change in this particular centre and will lead research and a generation of high-quality knowledge around this very important aspect. ANU has engaged an array of partners to work through this proposed centre, including leading climate change researchers across Australia. I understand that the centre will lead the world in terms of climate change adaptation, and Professor Will Steffen from the ANU will be in charge of this.

This new initiative builds on some of the other additional infrastructure that the ACT has in the past helped ANU develop. The ANU is proposing that this particular centre would be under construction well before the end of this coming financial year.

MRS DUNNE: Presumably in an environmentally friendly building.

Mr Cappie-Wood: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: I suppose the key question is: what does adaptation mean?

Mr Cappie-Wood: Adaptation in this context is: how do you take existing resources, how do you take existing processes, and adapt and adopt them to changing climate conditions? So they can be anything from agriculture to other forms of economic activity that would enable a rapidly changing climatic pattern to be adapted to. So we see this as not being only pure research about the rate of global warming but how does mankind adapt to that—

DR FOSKEY: And the other species.

Mr Cappie-Wood: and other species, indeed. But how do we make sure that we can continue to survive in a rapidly changing environment? You asked a question about Canberra university as well?

MRS DUNNE: Yes, but before we go on to that can I ask a related question of Ms Davoren? Ms Davoren, what has happened to the feed-in tariff discussion paper?

Ms Davoren: That has been concluded. We had a period of consultation on the paper in February and we are just in the process of providing feedback back to the community about what the community comments were. It has also moved into supporting the government in debate in the Assembly on Mr Gentleman's private member's bill.

MRS DUNNE: When is something going to be published?

Ms Davoren: In terms of feedback on the—

MRS DUNNE: Yes, or whatever.

Ms Davoren: Shortly.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, thanks. Sorry, it was just one of the other related questions. Also, the University of Canberra—

DR FOSKEY: Can I have a supplementary on your \$2.5 million just before we leave it? You mentioned construction—

THE CHAIR: Wait a minute. Mr Cappie-Wood is about to finish his answers to Mrs Dunne, and then you may ask me if you want a supplementary.

DR FOSKEY: Sorry, I heard Mrs Dunne going on, chair.

Mr Cappie-Wood: There is money in this particular budget to support the University of Canberra in developing four initiatives. One of those is to improve water use and management on site at Canberra university, and this will certainly help the water management more generally in quite a large precinct of the city. More importantly, in relation to its academic endeavours, the money will establish and fund an urban planning course.

MRS DUNNE: How much?

Mr Cappie-Wood: That is approximately \$200,000. I will check that, though, if—

THE CHAIR: Yes, get back to us on that.

Mr Cappie-Wood: Yes. Also it is there to establish a chair for ANSOG, which is the Australian and New Zealand School of Government, particularly focusing on practical public service management, and also to establish a cultural heritage management course.

MRS DUNNE: Perhaps just on notice, Mr Cappie-Wood, if you could give us a breakdown of how much money is budgeted in the outyears for each of those projects that would be helpful.

Mr Cappie-Wood: Yes, absolutely.

MRS DUNNE: Thank you.

DR FOSKEY: This is absolutely a quick one, chair. It was raised by Mr Cappie-Wood saying that there was construction of the climate change centre. It is my understanding that we are not talking about new capital works; this is not an injection into capital works at the ANU and that it is more about setting up the centre. I just want clarification on that. Are we having a new building at ANU and is the ACT helping to fund it?

Mr Cappie-Wood: Certainly the ANU are proposing to utilise partly a new facility, and they will also be injecting some of their own funds into modifying an existing facility and adding onto an existing facility to meet these purposes. We saw that the money from ACT would go towards assisting with the research and assisting with some of the public education elements associated with what would come out of that adaptive climate change research.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will go on to output class 1.4, coordination, communication and events. Mr Gentleman, you have a question?

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks, chair, I do. Chief Minister, in budget paper 4 at page 38, under output 1.4, item d is the delivery of the live in Canberra campaign. Can you tell us where we are up to with this program, what cities have been visited recently and what is the response?

Mr Stanhope: Thank you, Mr Gentleman. This live in Canberra campaign goes from strength to strength. It was in that context of recognising its success that the government proposes through this budget to enhance funding for the live in Canberra campaign. Mr Lasek would be able to give you detail of the specific questions that you ask.

Mr Lasek: The live in Canberra campaign started in April 2006, so it is just past its second anniversary. It has been a profiling exercise. Many people around the world and even around Australia were not aware of the benefits of the lifestyle and certainly the job opportunities in Canberra. It has been largely a promotional marketing exercise. Very little of the money that is there can actually support people moving

here; in fact, almost nil. So it has been an exercise in pushing Canberra out as a great place to live and to work.

You asked about the places we have been. We have been a number of times into Sydney, specifically the south and western suburbs of Sydney. We have been to the Illawarra and South Coast area. We have had two visits to South Africa, the most recent one in the last month. We have had several visits to the United Kingdom and Ireland and, earlier this year, a first venture into the Netherlands and Germany. Without exception, there has been a tremendous response. From the South African experience we have had several hundred people coming, most of whom wanted to come to Australia but had never had Canberra on their radar. We are excited about the prospect of some of those converting.

It is spreading by word of mouth that Canberra is a very livable city. Certainly for South Africans it is a very safe city. We are getting daily emails and correspondence now, certainly from South Africa but also from around the world. Website hits are up; they have been spiking whenever we have travelled. We have sent out over 3,000 information packs around the world. We have given out 3,000 welcome packs to people who have moved to Canberra. We are not taking credit for every person that comes to Canberra, but we think we are doing our bit and we are looking forward to the campaign continuing to roll out.

MR GENTLEMAN: And what sort of jobs are you able to advise these people about? Particularly in the public service or other jobs as well?

Mr Lasek: Right across the field, in the trades and in the professional sectors. When we travel overseas we focus largely on the jobs that are specifically seen as skills that Canberra needs, and there is a list of those. Some of those are public service jobs but others include things like hairdressing. Clearly there is a need for hairdressers in Canberra. There is a need for chefs, there is a need for people in the trades to build the new homes that the government is rolling out in terms of the increased housing for the city.

So overseas we are focusing on the skills that we most need and there is a list of those that is compiled by the department of immigration. But across Australia the message is basically that our employment is basically full at the moment and certainly our private sector is struggling to continue to grow without the additional skills that we need in the city at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Dunne, you have a supplementary?

MRS DUNNE: Yes, thank you. Mr Lasek, is there any way of tracking the number of people? You said you sent out 3,000 welcome packs, but how many of those people have responded directly to the live in Canberra promotion?

Mr Lasek: It is actually impossible to quantify. I think we said even before the Chief Minister launched this campaign that it will be very difficult to track people who hear about live in Canberra. As happened in South Africa, a friend or a family or a neighbour went to one of our sessions and they then jump onto our website, seek some further information. As has happened a number of times, we have stumbled on

people in Canberra who have said, “I discovered Canberra through your live in Canberra website”, or “A neighbour passed me a pack that you sent them and I’m here and they’re not.” We would love to be able to measure it more accurately, but it is hard.

Mr Stanhope: It is relevant, though, in terms of before and after, that international migration to Canberra has just about doubled in the last three years. In 2003-04, international migration was 450. In 2006-07, according to the ABS, it was 800. As Mr Lasek says, it is impossible, at the end of the day, to identify with each person that comes to the ACT the motivation. But live in Canberra is significant and, to the extent that our live in Canberra campaign works hand in glove with the skilled and business migration program, which works closely with business, there are linkages between all of the programs or support for attracting people to the territory.

But just on some of those numbers, international migration has gone from 450 to 800 in the space of three years, and live in Canberra and the skilled and business migration program, as well as individual business responses to their own skills needs, have all worked together to achieve some of those. That is almost a doubling of international migration to the ACT. They are before and after numbers, the 2003-04, the year before, and since then. So it is certainly having an impact, but it is, and probably always will be, impossible to quantify.

MRS DUNNE: I gather, Mr Lasek, that last year you went to a national planning conference in Perth with the live in Canberra campaign. What was the purpose of that?

Mr Lasek: Dual purpose; I actually took some leave to attend that conference. I was asked to be master of ceremonies and got approval to do it, but part of my arrangement was that I would have a stand there where we were promoting jobs in Canberra—specifically planning jobs, as you would at a planning conference—and, yes, we distributed, at a conference of 600, I think 150 brochures about living in Canberra and some information was distributed about jobs at ACTPLA.

Again, it is hard to measure if planners have moved here from Perth or, it being a national conference, whether people have come here to Canberra from other places, as a direct result of that. But the aim of live in Canberra is always to seize every opportunity you can to get the message out about this city and the job opportunities. I saw that and we saw that as another good opportunity for a skill that we desperately need, and that is in the planning profession.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth, you had a question in this output class?

MR SMYTH: I certainly do. Chief Minister, can you table for the community the final budget for the balloon spectacular that occurred last month?

Mr Stanhope: It is a cross-agency responsibility and we will liaise with tourism to provide the cost to the territory, but what I can say is that the 2008 balloon event was an absolutely spectacular success. It is estimated that over 25,000 people attended the spectacular and we understand that almost half of those 25,000 were visitors for the first time. It was tremendous to see 25,000 people attending. It was tremendous to see

half of those attending for the first time. We believe somewhere in the order of 25 per cent of those 25,000 people were tourists to the ACT, who had come specifically to see the balloons. The feedback from the balloonists and from the public has been overwhelmingly positive, many saying that they intend to return next year.

There had been some issues with the weather, issues outside of our control, and, having regard to the weather and the fact that I think on a couple of days the balloons could not launch, the event was, all in all, a tremendous success, a spectacular success, and we will be repeating it again next year, bigger and better.

MR SMYTH: So, by that, the government intends to run the balloon spectacular again next year?

Mr Stanhope: I am not sure what arrangements are in place. But, having regard to the absolutely overwhelming feedback that we have received from all the participants, all balloonists and from the Canberra public—the tremendous numbers that attended, the enhancement to ACT tourism and the enormous support we received from the tourism sector of the business community of the ACT—I think that it is a model that we will certainly build on. It was just a stunning success. I am really pleased to have been associated with it.

MR SMYTH: So who undertook that evaluation that you have just revealed to the committee?

Mr Stanhope: Mr Lasek?

Mr Lasek: That evaluation was undertaken with the balloonists who participated. The Lions Club, who I understand were in a position where they were going to walk away from the event potentially because they had not done very well in the past, raised in the vicinity of \$22,000 this year and that money is going to a number of local charities, including the Pegasus riding school and the Down Syndrome Association.

The SES gave us their best guess, because it is not a ticketed event, on crowd figures. These are SES people who attended the event and have attended the event regularly. So a mix of responses. And there was a survey undertaken by tourism, which gave us some of that feedback on where people came from and so on.

MR SMYTH: So that is ACT tourism?

Mr Lasek: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Is it possible for that to be tabled?

Mr Lasek: It is not our survey.

MR SMYTH: It is a government survey.

Mr Stanhope: As the minister for tourism—

MS MacDONALD: He is appearing tomorrow.

Mr Stanhope: Yes; ask the minister tomorrow.

THE CHAIR: He is appearing tomorrow. You can ask that question then. Ms MacDonald, did you have a supplementary?

MS MacDONALD: Yes.

Mr Stanhope: I think it is a great sign, though, that, if you support local events—if you support Canberra people doing things for the Canberra community—you are guaranteed stunning outcomes and stunning success. This really is about supporting Canberra, supporting Canberra organisations and supporting Canberrans who want to support Canberra. We will continue to do that, unlike some others.

THE CHAIR: Ms MacDonald?

MS MacDONALD: Mr Lasek, you said that the Lions Club had raised \$22,000 this year. Are you aware of how much they raised in previous years?

Mr Lasek: I am not, but anecdotally they said that that was way up on recent years so they are over the moon about it. They put a lot of effort in over the nine days and they were there even when the balloons were weathered out. One of the other factors this year was that we had entertainment every day; even when people came along and the balloons were not flying, we had tethered balloons, live entertainment and the Lions Club selling breakfast, so people still had an experience.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: Chief Minister, what decisions did you make in relation to this event in changing it from the former community base that Canberra provided to the new provider?

THE CHAIR: That is a question for Mr Barr, is it?

Mr Stanhope: I am not quite sure what decisions I made—what specifically. Decisions in relation to what?

MR SMYTH: Anything in regard to the event. I put in an FOI of which Mr Barr's ministerial briefs were released to me and the FOI to your office. Those briefs were not released. I am not aware what decisions you made or what decisions you did not make. What was your part in the process to shift providers?

Mr Stanhope: I must say that I am not sure whether I had any part in any decision to shift providers. I would have to take the question on notice.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR SMYTH: Perhaps Mr Lasek could detail the process by which we shifted from the not-for-profit community-based Canberra organisation to the new provider.

THE CHAIR: No, it is a tourism question.

MR SMYTH: No. Tourism has said previously that these decisions were taken by the Chief Minister's Department. This is an event. Some money was spent from the events unit on it. I would like Mr Lasek to detail the events that led to the change of provider from October last year.

Mr Lasek: It is hard to give chapter and verse, and we will provide you with that breakdown. I am aware that we were in danger of this event not happening this year because we could not get a commitment from the previous organisers, the Canberra Balloon Fiesta. I believe there were a number of requests for them to confirm that they could run what was the government's preference for a nine-day event, and at a date in February. I understand that there was a decision made at that stage to change providers because time was running out. It became helter-skelter in two months or so—to get what is a significant and complex event together and delivered.

The Chief Minister referred to “a spectacular success”. That was made more difficult because we could not get a commitment from the previous organisers to deliver what they had said they would deliver for the government as part of their funding agreement.

MR SMYTH: So who made the decision to change from the community-based Canberra organisation to the new provider?

Mr Stanhope: Which is the community-based organisation you are taking about?

MR SMYTH: Canberra Balloon Fiesta Inc. It is a community organisation incorporated here in the ACT, Chief Minister.

Mr Stanhope: The one that wanted \$250,000 to run it.

MR SMYTH: Mr Lasek, who made the decision to change from the previous provider to the existing provider?

Mr Stanhope: As I say, I have taken the question on notice.

THE CHAIR: You have.

Mr Stanhope: I do not remember the sequence of decisions I made or that I was involved in. I certainly do remember—as I say I will have to take the question on notice, as I already have—the gamesmanship that was being played by the previous providers in relation to the event, leaving decisions to the death, essentially suggesting that no commitment could be given as late as February as to whether or not the event would proceed in April.

MR SMYTH: Letters were sent in February seeking confirmation of payment.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth!

Mr Stanhope: No, no.

MR SMYTH: Yes, there were, Chief Minister.

Mr Stanhope: There was a degree of gamesmanship and one-upmanship that left the territory with no option in order to ensure that this incredibly popular community event proceeded—and proceeded in a way that met the needs and the decisions that the government had taken in relation to the length and the nature of the festival to the last minute. I remember that; I certainly remember the—

MR SMYTH: But you do not recall decisions you made?

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth!

Mr Stanhope: I cannot remember; that is what I mean. For me to take off the top of my head in response to a question “what decisions did you make?”—I made the decisions that are reflected in the files but I do not carry the files around in my head.

MR SMYTH: I am happy to have Mr Lasek answer.

Mr Stanhope: I am aware—I am very aware of—

THE CHAIR: The question is on notice, Mr Smyth.

Mr Stanhope: I have taken the question on notice. But I am certainly aware of the lack of—

MRS DUNNE: Okay, we can move on then.

THE CHAIR: We can move on. I would like to move on any minute now.

Mr Stanhope: regard that the previous provider had to ensuring the timely provision of an incredibly popular event, an event that is very important to the people of Canberra, to local balloonists and to Balloon Aloft and that was put at grave risk by what I interpret as a determined bid, strategy or campaign by the previous providers to leverage as much money out of the ACT government and the community as they could—to the point where, as late as February, they were still advising the government that they were not in a position to commit to the event and were not in a position to commit to the event proceeding at all. The government then, quite rightly, looked for—

MR SMYTH: It is a long answer for a question on notice.

Mr Stanhope: alternative providers and looked expansively at how we might ensure that the risk of not proceeding that the event faced was avoided. And we did it. We did it successfully, spectacularly, in a way that benefited the community. The balloon festival continued; it was a remarkable success. The government and the community got value for money, something which the previous provider was not offering. In fact, the previous provider was offering the complete reverse.

MR SMYTH: How do you define value for money, Chief Minister?

THE CHAIR: We are moving on, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: I have one last question for Mr Lasek. Did we manage to get a gas sponsor?

Mr Lasek: No.

MR SMYTH: All balloons—

THE CHAIR: That is the last question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: All balloons were refilled. Were commercial operators making a profit out of the day? Were they charged for the gas provided?

Mr Lasek: I will take that on notice. We got, for the first time, three media sponsors; we got an accommodation sponsor; we got a cash sponsor, someone who had been associated with the event for a long time. There was tremendous support from all of those groups, who have all indicated a keenness to get back on next year.

THE CHAIR: We are moving on now.

MR SMYTH: Could we have a list of all the sponsors as well?

Mr Lasek: Of course.

MR SMYTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, how are the plans for the centenary progressing?

Mr Stanhope: Certainly the plans are progressing. This budget proposes a significant addition to the funding to allow detailed planning for the centenary to proceed. In fact, one of the first of the initiatives we are now proceeding with is to scope possible outcomes. There has been considerable work over the last couple of years. There are very high levels of engagement by organisations around Canberra in the prospect of being involved in centenary celebrations in 2013.

It might be appropriate if I ask Mr Lasek and other officers to go through all of the initiatives that are currently being pursued and the governance and administrative structures and arrangements that are in place. It is very important for the territory. We are looking to work closely with all of the community—and, indeed, the commonwealth government. At this stage, the role and involvement of the commonwealth is very important to achieving the optimal outcomes that we all hope for with a celebration of our centenary. Mr Lasek can provide some of that detail, and I am sure that there are other members of his office who have a more direct day-to-day role who might be able to assist Mr Lasek in that.

Mr Lasek: Our first full-time officer on the centenary was engaged and appointed less than 12 months ago. In that time, a lot of work has been done. But the Chief Minister is right: after a fairly thorough procurement process, we have just launched

into a major scoping exercise. Ms Stewart-Moore can perhaps give more detail about that.

We formed within government an interdepartmental committee that is looking at all the ways that the government can join together to deliver what will be a great centenary. Earlier this year, we had the return to Canberra of the former executive director of the Alberta centenary, Terry Keyko, who has been a great mentor. His program has provided a great model for Canberra in its planning.

A few months ago we launched the Y series motor vehicle registration plate, which I have now seen. We are seeing it on cars around town. Motor vehicles that now register within Canberra—and there are tens of thousands of those each year, I am told—will have a centenary numberplate, which is great promotion. And, with the Canberra and district wine industry, we have embarked on a red and a white centenary wine, which are being made this year for release in 2013. There are also plans for a centenary rose and a commemorative native plant for the centenary. We have started fairly detailed negotiations with a range of sporting organisations and others on some significant events that we hope to roll out in the centenary year.

I think it is great progress. We are looking forward to the commonwealth coming on board so that we can form a true partnership in delivering an event not just for the city but for the nation. I do not know if Ms Stewart-Moore would like to give more detail on the scoping.

Ms Stewart-Moore: We have recently embarked on a scoping study, after a procurement process. I will give some background to the committee on what has happened to date. Two years ago, a raft of community consultation that was undertaken came up with a number of suggestions for the centenary of Canberra celebrations. We are now undertaking to look at those suggestions and ideas, put a little bit more meat on the bones and look at priority projects for those celebrations. The scoping study is about looking at all of those projects and at what might be the priorities that we take forward. There are 160-odd projects, which is quite a number, and we are now looking at taking some of those forward.

DR FOSKEY: I would like some more information on the cost of saving the Narrabundah long-stay park, but first of all I would like to correct the record by pointing out that I have always appreciated and supported the government's major efforts to safeguard the living—

THE CHAIR: I do not understand how this comes under this output class.

DR FOSKEY: This is an ACT government project—Chief Minister's Department.

THE CHAIR: This is under output 1.6. So we will go on to 1.6. I thought you meant you had a question on 1.4.

MRS DUNNE: Can I ask, by way of general introduction, what the basis of this new output class is—output 1.6. What is the rationale behind it and to what extent, if any, does it cut across the work of the LDA?

Mr Cappie-Wood: The purpose of establishing an output class is to recognise that, as part of the Chief Minister's Department, which looks at whole-of-government—not only for the public service—policy coordination, like all jurisdictions, there is a capacity in the central agency to facilitate not only investment but also major projects within that. It was thought, for the sake of transparency and accountability, that a separate output class should be established so that we have that in the budgetary process and also in the annual report process. I thought it was prudent and accountable to do so.

MRS DUNNE: The second part of my question was: to what extent does this cut across the work of the LDA?

Mr Cappie-Wood: It does not cut across the work of the LDA. Because it is a coordinating issue, many of these aspects relate to activities which might involve the LDA or many other government agencies and outside parties. So we are very careful to make sure that we do not transgress the legislative responsibilities associated with other government agencies in this activity.

MR SMYTH: In regard to some of the tasks that this group is responsible for, in collaboration with government agencies, the private sector and the community, what role has the group had in the Macarthur power station proposal—the selection of the site and the facilitation of the project?

Mr Tomlins: The role that we have had has been in assisting and facilitating. The site selection, as I understand it, was not a matter that we were primarily involved in.

MR SMYTH: What sites were you looking for, how many initial sites were found and why were they discarded so that we came to the short list of three that were provided to the proponent?

Mr Tomlins: I cannot answer that. I do not know whether Ross McKay can.

Mr McKay: The site selection process was undertaken with the LDA and Actew. We did not have a role in selecting the site that they eventually went with, or any of the sites. Our role was a facilitation role. Project facilitation was involved; once the site was selected, we worked with the LDA and Actew to advance the project.

MRS DUNNE: So what does facilitation mean, Mr McKay, in this context? What did you do?

Mr McKay: We liaise between the agencies. We attend all the meetings; we work with the proponent to ensure that they understand the agency's requirements. We make notes at the meetings to ensure there is a continuity of understanding throughout the process. We liaise between agencies to ensure that the correct agencies attend meetings. If the proponent is seeking some input then we identify the person who can best give them the accurate input.

MR SESELJA: What input was sought on the sites that were being considered and what input was given? Was input sought from ActewAGL or the LDA on the suitability policy-wise from the point of view of the ACT government of some of

these sites being considered for a power station?

Mr McKay: Once the site had been identified by ActewAGL, we went ahead with facilitating the option agreement so that they could proceed.

MR SESELJA: This is the site that is currently on the table?

Mr McKay: The current site, correct.

MR SESELJA: What about prior to that, when there was a shortlist of three and prior to getting to the shortlist of three? Was there input at that stage?

Mr McKay: There was not.

MRS DUNNE: So you only became involved after the site was selected?

Mr McKay: That is correct.

MRS DUNNE: In your facilitating role, Mr McKay, has there been any facilitation of communication between the proponents and the environment protection authority?

Mr McKay: I cannot recall whether that was the case. I can take that on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Could you take that on notice?

Mr McKay: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: On the subject of the environment protection authority, the EPA legislation requires an environment impact statement for any class 1 activity, and the building of a power station is a class 1 activity. Are you aware of that, as a legislative requirement?

Mr McKay: Yes.

MRS DUNNE: Is ActewAGL aware of that as a legislative requirement?

Mr McKay: They are aware; they have planners who have certainly made them aware of all the requirements.

MRS DUNNE: When did the environment protection agency become involved in your facilitating process—or are you not sure that they have ever been involved?

Mr McKay: I am not sure. I will take that on notice.

MRS DUNNE: Thanks.

MR SMYTH: Mr Dawes, was there any discussion inside Chief Minister's as to the suitability of this block? Were there any discussions or dissent on putting this block forward?

Mr Dawes: As Mr McKay has already indicated, we were not involved in the site selection at all. That was a matter for ActewAGL and the LDA in determining what site was the appropriate site. We became involved after the site was selected. Obviously there was some attraction to this site that Actew selected because the location was close to some water and other power that was coming into the adjacent site.

MR SMYTH: Given that the role of the unit is to facilitate these projects, was there a black-hat exercise done saying, “Okay, what are the things that make it go forward and what are the things that will stop it”?

Mr Dawes: I think it is fair to say that one of the important things that you have got to understand is that our particular unit is there to coordinate and case-manage these projects. I think Mr Cappie-Wood indicated in his opening address that we do not get involved in the approval processes. We actually coordinate and ensure that the bulk of the people that need to be around the table are there to ensure that the project can proceed or may not proceed; it just depends on the nature of the particular project.

MR SMYTH: What costs have the unit incurred to date and are they part of the advertising that has been going on over the weekend?

Mr Tomlins: No, the costs have only been officer costs.

MR SMYTH: And you are not involved in the advertising that we have seen over the weekend?

Mr Tomlins: No.

Mr Stanhope: I think what goes to the heart of the misunderstanding behind those questions is that we are facilitating a private sector proposal, as you would. Any proponent is entitled to pursue a project such as this. Whether or not they receive the necessary statutory approval is a matter for them and a matter for the process. It is not for the Chief Minister’s Department or for this particular unit to second-guess whether or not appropriate statutory approvals will be forthcoming. Those are matters for the proponent.

MR SMYTH: We have not even asked that question yet.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, you have. You have actually run an outrageous scare campaign against the proposal; you have talked business down; you have talked Canberra down. You have sent a very clear message to the whole of the world that, under a Liberal government, this is not a place that you should seek to pursue business. This is a consortium—

MRS DUNNE: Madam Chair, this is a rhetorical riff; we will not be asking any questions.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister!

MRS DUNNE: Madam Chair, there are questions to be asked.

Mr Stanhope: We have here a consortium of major local, national and international businesses seeking to invest, as a minimum, \$2 billion into this community. It is for them to determine.

MRS DUNNE: Madam Chair, he is out of order.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, I need to move on—

Mr Stanhope: No, this is directly relevant and necessary to actually clear up the misunderstandings that are inherent in the questions that have been asked about has the Chief—

MR SESELJA: He is really trying to distance himself from it now, is he not?

Mr Stanhope: I am not distancing; I stand proudly with these proponents and I will do everything within my power to ensure that the message and the scare campaign that you have led does not deter them from establishing this most significant proposal here in the ACT. I stand with them, not against them. I will work and work as hard as I can—and that is why we have project facilitation within the Chief Minister's Department—to ensure that we provide the necessary facilitation to ensure that proposals like this are given due consideration.

The consultation aspect has not been finished yet. That is what is so remarkable. We are still in the consultation phase of the approval process and it is through that process that questions need to be asked on the appropriateness of the site, whether or not there are environmental issues that need to be pursued, whether or not emissions or noise standards can or will be met.

These are issues that are to be dealt with through the process. These are not issues to be pre-empted. This is a process that should not be pre-empted in the way that the Liberal Party is seeing to pre-empt it. We are still in the consultation phase of this particular proposal. It is not for the government to seek to pre-empt or to second-guess the necessary planning approvals, the necessary environmental approvals or any of the range of approvals that will need to be achieved before this particular project can proceed, consistent with the development application that has been lodged.

MR SMYTH: Would you like a briefing on my bill to help the project go ahead?

Mr Stanhope: I do not need a briefing to understand, Mr Smyth, that you and your colleagues and your leader have outrageously orchestrated a scare campaign designed to circumvent our statutory planning processes and that you have sent the clearest message that I have seen sent in my 10 years in the Assembly to business in the ACT that you do not care about business, that your shallow, short-term political purposes are more important than supporting and enhancing business and broadening the economic base of the territory.

MR SMYTH: Would you like a briefing on the bill?

Mr Stanhope: That is what I have seen.

MR GENTLEMAN: My question relates to the million trees issue. I understand it comes under this output class. I am interested to see what ACT groups you are involving in the initiative in regard to planting and providing the trees. Will Greening Australia be involved?

Mr Stanhope: It is involved and will remain involved. In fact, it is a most important partner. I think we have seen—most particularly in relation to the Cotter and the Cotter catchment and its rehabilitation and the significant work that has already been done in areas throughout the lower Cotter and indeed in other areas, including Mount Stromlo and Weston Creek—that Greening Australia has been fundamental and instrumental in ensuring that some of the rehabilitation of those areas has been completed and completed reasonably successfully. In some areas, of course, the drought has impacted quite significantly. But Greening Australia and the community more broadly will remain very important partners in the continued greening of the ACT.

The million trees proposal actually interlinks with a range of other proposals that the ACT government is pursuing. One of those is, of course, the plans that are in place—and this is not a responsibility of the Chief Minister’s Department but it is relevant to the initiatives that are—and the need for us to prepare a strategic plan for the replacement of the urban forest.

The government is in receipt of advice that we are reaching a stage now in relation to the urban forest where we can expect over the coming years for there to be a progressively increased level of stress and tree loss within the urban areas, including, sadly in one way, the original plantings at Weston and of Burley Griffin. The government has started a process—we funded last year a development of the strategic plan—to plan the progressive replacement of all street trees, most urgently within the older, more established areas of Canberra but progressively into newer areas as well.

There is a rough rule of thumb that the exotics, the street trees that are so much a feature of Canberra, have a life of the order of a century, and of course many of the trees in the inner north and south are now approaching that age; many of them are now approaching their centenary. The eucalypts that are much a feature of Canberra as well have—many of the species planted, we are advised—an anticipated life span of 70 years. So you can see that we face progressively a very serious issue.

We have provided, going forward in this budget, up to \$5 million a year for replacing them. That is over and above the specific one million trees initiative and of course is in addition to funding for the arboretum.

MRS DUNNE: This is probably a question for Mr McKay or Mr Dawes. In the facilitating role that this unit has, when you were presented with the proposal for the data centre and power station on the block in Macarthur, did any alarm bells ring, given your experience, that you might confront problems in implementing this important project on this site? At any stage did you say to the proponents or to LDA in relation to land allocation, “Perhaps we got it wrong”?

Mr Stanhope: Perhaps Mrs Dunne could be specific and say which parts of the

proposal are flawed, which parts of the proposal does the Liberal Party not believe will achieve statutory support. It is such a hypothetical question.

MRS DUNNE: It is quite obvious that we could not possibly give statutory support to this proposal because at the moment it is a class A activity under the Environment Protection Act and there is no environmental impact statement being done.

Mr Stanhope: But that is a decision—

MRS DUNNE: And one presumes that no planning authority can sign off on it.

Mr Stanhope: They will not but that is not the role—

MR SESELJA: I assume he is choosing not to answer the question.

Mr Stanhope: Mrs Dunne misunderstands the role that ACTPLA and the Minister for Planning have in relation to these particular issues.

MRS DUNNE: Did alarm bells at any stage ring that you may have a problem facilitating the implementation of this project?

Mr Dawes: I think it is fair to say that, once that site was selected, obviously the proponent then needed to put all their necessary applications in and take it forward. That would be a matter for ACTPLA in dealing with some of the planning initiatives. So, as far as that was concerned, no.

MRS DUNNE: In your facilitating role, have you or your unit advised the proponents that they will need to prepare an environmental impact statement?

Mr Stanhope: That is not a decision for the Chief Minister's Department; that is a decision for the Minister of Planning.

MRS DUNNE: It is actually a mandatory rule in the environment protection legislation that says that a class 1 activity prompts an EIS. Have you advised the proponents of this?

Mr Stanhope: That is if it proceeds. You misunderstand, Mrs Dunne. It may be that there are other aspects of the development application that actually rule the proposal out in any event. That is the decision that will be made subject to the—

MRS DUNNE: You were cosyng up a minute ago, Chief Minister, and suddenly you are walking away. Mr Dawes, in answer to my—

Mr Stanhope: No.

MRS DUNNE: Can you answer my question, Mr Dawes?

Mr Stanhope: No, no. I support the right of any proponent to fairness and to procedural fairness that any proponent—and this is what Mr Dawes has said. If a proponent submits—

MRS DUNNE: Mr Dawes has not had a chance to say anything yet.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, he has; he just said it. He rejected your earlier assertion that alarm bells rang within the Chief Minister's Department.

MR SESELJA: I do not think he did.

Mr Stanhope: These are the issues—

MRS DUNNE: No, I do not think he did.

MR SMYTH: I do not think he has said a word since.

MRS DUNNE: I think you have just verballed him. I think you just—

Mr Dawes: He certainly did not.

Mr Stanhope: I did not.

MR SMYTH: Okay.

MRS DUNNE: Okay, he has now.

Mr Stanhope: No; he did before.

MR GENTLEMAN: He did before.

Mr Stanhope: And the record will show it; he said no in answer to your question.

MR GENTLEMAN: You were just not listening.

Mr Stanhope: So do not—

MRS DUNNE: So did you advise, Mr Dawes—

Mr Stanhope: Madam Chair—

MRS DUNNE: about the EIS?

Mr Stanhope: Madam Chair?

THE CHAIR: Yes, Chief Minister.

Mr Stanhope: It is not appropriate for members of the committee to suggest that an official, a public official, did not answer a question in the way they answered it. It is simply not fair to the official to be contradicted in that way.

THE CHAIR: That is right. And we now—

MR SESELJA: You were the one verballing him.

THE CHAIR: So we now—

MRS DUNNE: Mr Dawes did say something. I do withdraw. If I did not hear, I apologise, Mr Dawes, but the Chief Minister has been a little raucous here. Mr Dawes, in answer to my question about the EIS, have you advised—or did anyone in your office advise—the proponents that they would need EIS for this to proceed?

Mr Dawes: That is not the role. You have got to understand that what we are actually doing here in this project facilitation group is coordinating, case managing and ensuring that the appropriate agencies are there to meet those particular proponents. Those particular proponents have a professional team that advise them and work with them to take those applications forward. They would be dealing directly with ACTPLA on that particular issue.

MR SESELJA: Chair—

THE CHAIR: It is 12.30. Dr Foskey put a question in this output class on the list. Are you happy just to take Dr Foskey's question and then we will finish?

Mr Stanhope: Most certainly.

DR FOSKEY: Thank you very much, Madam Chair, and I thank Mr Stanhope and his staff. I want to say up front, as I did say, that the Greens have been extremely supportive of the actions that you have taken in relation to the Narrabundah long-stay park, particularly the efforts of Mr Tomlins, and I do not imagine that any of that was easy. Nonetheless, there are questions for the taxpayer about the total cost to the territory of saving the Narrabundah long-stay park, a situation that became essential because of actions by earlier governments.

You might have to take it on notice, but the things I can identify where money would have been allotted or will be allotted are the cost of capital works on the new block of land; the cost of the territory plan variations so that the new owners can run a caravan park on the site, if that is indeed what they intend to do; the cost to the NCA of the variation to the national capital plan that had to be done; the estimated cost in staff time of the complex and extensive negotiating period; the total net running costs or net profit for Housing ACT; the value of the block of land that was eventually handed over; and total reimbursement from Koomarri.

Mr Stanhope: I will ask Mr Tomlins whether he has all of those costs. If he does not, we are more than happy to take the question on notice; I know the information is available. But suffice it to say that this was a very expensive stuff-up by the Liberal Party. It has been a matter of enormous regret to me—

MR SMYTH: Which had your enormous support in the Assembly at the time.

Mr Stanhope: It has been a matter of enormous regret to me that a decision—

MR SMYTH: And you agreed to the sale.

Mr Stanhope: That a decision taken by the then minister—

MR SMYTH: You told Koomarri it could be sold and then you whimpered.

MR SESELJA: Wasn't it Koomarri?

Mr Stanhope: Brendan Smyth to sell—

MR SMYTH: Yes, that is correct.

Mr Stanhope: the Narrabundah caravan park—

MR SMYTH: No, no, we gave—

Mr Stanhope: without safeguarding the future—

MR SESELJA: Are you saying Koomarri should not have been trusted?

Mr Stanhope: of the residents of—

THE CHAIR: Excuse me, would you just—

Mr Stanhope: Without—

MR SESELJA: Is that it Koomarri should not have been trusted, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: Without—

THE CHAIR: Mr Seselja!

Mr Stanhope: You are quite right, Dr Foskey. What we have here is—

MR SESELJA: He seems to be suggesting that they trusted Koomarri and they should not have.

THE CHAIR: Mr Seselja!

Mr Stanhope: What we have here is that—

THE CHAIR: Mr Seselja!—

MR SESELJA: If he just wants to put that on the record perhaps.

THE CHAIR: Mr Seselja, be quiet.

Mr Stanhope: the previous minister, the then minister, Brendan Smyth, sold the Narrabundah caravan long-stay park.

MR SMYTH: No, we gave it away.

Mr Stanhope: And when Mr Smyth sold it he did not think about the future; he did not do due diligence.

MR SMYTH: You said they could sell it.

Mr Stanhope: He did not secure—

MR SMYTH: You did not think about it.

Mr Stanhope: the future of the residents.

MR SMYTH: You gave them permission to sell.

Mr Stanhope: Yes, I accept—

MR SESELJA: Who was it in Koomarri that should not have been trusted, Chief Minister?

Mr Stanhope: Dr Foskey, that correcting the mistakes that Brendan Smyth made in disposing of the Narrabundah caravan park—

MR SESELJA: Is it John Mackay that should not have been trusted?

Mr Stanhope: have cost the community dearly. There is no getting away from that fact. But this a very expensive mistake that Brendan Smyth—

MR SMYTH: You agreed to the sale and you know it.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth!

Mr Stanhope: and the Liberal Party made in the decisions they took to dispose of the Narrabundah caravan park without any regard to the future, without doing due diligence and without ensuring the future security of the residents of the Narrabundah caravan park.

MR SMYTH: You agreed. You gave permission for the sale.

Mr Stanhope: So yes—

MR SMYTH: Koomarri rang your office and you agreed.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth!

Mr Stanhope: it is a very expensive mess of Mr Smyth's that the government has been required to clear up. We have done our best. We will give you the cost of Brendan Smyth's mistakes as soon as we can.

MR SMYTH: We will give you a bill for all your mistakes.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, we are going to try and fit the ACT executive in on Thursday afternoon when you appear before us again.

Mr Stanhope: Certainly.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for that.

Mr Stanhope: It is pleasure. Thank you, Madam Chair.

The committee adjourned at 12.33 pm.