



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON LEGAL AFFAIRS**

**(Reference: Annual and financial reports 2004-2005)**

**Members:**

**MR B STEFANIAK (The Chair)**  
**MS K MACDONALD (The Deputy Chair)**  
**DR D FOSKEY**

**TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE**

**CANBERRA**

**FRIDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2005**

**Secretary to the committee:**  
**Ms R Jaffray (Ph: 6205 0199)**

**By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory**

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

## **The committee met at 9.06 am.**

Appearances:

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

### ACT Policing

Ms Audrey Fagan, APM, Chief Police Officer

Mr Paul Williams, Director, Corporate Services

Ms Kylie Gumbleton, Acting Director, Finance, Exhibits and Logistics

### ACT Emergency Services Authority

Mr Peter Dunn, Commissioner

Mr Greg Williams, Chief Finance Officer

Mrs Monica Davidson, Management Accountant

Mr Geoff Britt, Acting Manager, Financial Services

**THE CHAIR:** I thank all witnesses for attending. You should understand that these hearings are legal proceedings of the Assembly protected by parliamentary privilege. That gives you certain protections but also certain responsibilities. It means that you are protected from certain legal action, such as being sued for defamation, for what you say at this public hearing. It also means that you have a responsibility to tell the committee the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated by the Assembly as a serious matter.

Do you wish to make a brief statement, minister?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, very brief, thank you. As you would know, chairman, I have always taken a keen interest in policing, having been shadow minister. In the past year, I have been further impressed by the professionalism and dedication shown by our police men and women. The 2004-05 annual report being discussed in this hearing today further demonstrates the excellent work being done by ACT Policing. During 2004-05 Canberrans benefited from a 13.2 per cent reduction in crime. That comes on top of a 7.9 per cent reduction in 2003-04. We have seen a reduction of 41.8 per cent in sexual assaults, 24.2 per cent in burglaries, 21.9 per cent in car thefts, 11.3 per cent in robberies and 25.8 per cent in fraud. It is important to note that they are all in double digits, and sexual assaults are nearly one in two.

While it is easy to rattle off these numbers, it is important to remember that these reductions make a real difference to people's lives and are a major reason Canberra is seen as one of the best cities to live and work, and certainly the safest. Since the Stanhope government's election in 2001, crime rates in the ACT have been consistently decreasing. From 2000-01 to 2004-05, overall offences against a person have decreased by 11.5 per cent, overall offences against property have decreased by 27.8 per cent and total offences have decreased by 20.9 per cent. Following specific targeted campaigns led by ACT Policing over this period, the territory has experienced a 36 per cent decrease in burglary offences since 2000-01 and a 32 per cent reduction in motor vehicle theft. The Stanhope government and the AFP are committed to providing quality

policing to the ACT.

The success in delivering any police service depends on fostering greater community goodwill. In the ACT our police are community police. These reductions in crimes have come about because of the police and the community working together. Figures contained in this annual report point to the excellent successes achieved through the use of the anonymous and confidential Crime Stoppers number that allows the community to assist the police by reporting crimes or suspicions of crime. This number allows the community to be the eyes and ears for the police everywhere in our community.

In 2004-05 the police received 1,277 calls to Crime Stoppers, leading to 22 arrests and 55 charges being laid, as well as over \$50,190 in cash being seized. In addition, \$28,000 worth of property was recovered and \$298,865 worth of drugs seized. This is not to mention the vast amount of crime that was prevented because of the intelligence received. ACT Policing and the ACT community should be applauded for their efforts and their successes.

In conclusion, I remind the committee that, while I have been the minister for a year, the period covered in the annual report includes time during which my predecessor, Mr Bill Wood, was minister and during which Mr John Davies was our chief police officer. A lot of the excellent results you see in the annual report can be laid at their door, and I think they should be applauded.

We are happy to answer any questions the committee might have.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. On page 15 of the report, under percentage of persons who are concerned about being the victim of housebreaking, I see some pleasing figures. Congratulations, for example, on No 20, very few substantiated complaints against the police—carrying on a splendid lengthy tradition there; well done, Chief Police Officer. But at point 8 why are 76.2 per cent of the population concerned about being the victim of a housebreaking when the claimed statistics show a drastic reduction in property offences? I think you mentioned, minister, a 13.2 per cent reduction in total offence levels. Are these statistics measured accurately?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, thanks for that question. I think it is a good question, too. We need to be a little careful that we do not take that figure in isolation. You will see with a lot of the other measures about perception—like people who are concerned about being the victim of physical assault, sexual assault or having their car knocked off—that the perception of people in the community is very much on the positive. You will see that ACT Policing have achieved their targets well and truly in those other ones.

The worry I have about perceptions is that if we the Assembly or the media or people talk negatively about what happens with these things, this will be the result. We need to tell people that they should not have this fear. It is obvious from the successes that the police have been having in terms of reducing the number of burglaries, solving them. You would know, chair, from your experience, that a lot of this comes down to the same small number of people popping up from time to time. Those people are known and fixed up. We need to get the message across more clearly to people in the community, and that is one of our targets.

**THE CHAIR:** Again in that vein, minister, on page 15 I see that the percentage of persons satisfied or very satisfied with the police service is 63.7 per cent, yet the national average is 68.9 per cent. Can you tell us why so few people are satisfied with the service when the majority of crime stats quoted show a reduction in the level of crime? Again, I ask: are all the statistics on crime reported or recorded accurately? And what quality assurance is undertaken to ensure that all reported crime becomes recorded crime?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will get the Chief Police Officer to answer that, but I would just ask the committee to consider—I say this yet again—that so far you have picked out two of non-achievement. We should be celebrating the amount of achievements against these targets as well. Let us not dwell on those ones that are under.

**Ms Fagan:** In relation to the first question and to burglary offences particularly, the ACT government property crime reduction strategy 2004-07 has set a target of five per cent reduction by December 2005. With the results that we have achieved in the last financial year, we have already seen a 25 per cent decrease in home burglary offences.

You asked about the perceptions. While the ACT was higher than the national average of 72 per cent of respondents concerned about being the victim of a housebreaking, at 76.2 per cent during 2004-05 this result was an improvement on the result of 78 per cent in 2003-04, so I think there is a dual issue here. Operation Halite has been part of the marketing and strategy of explaining what we are doing and can have a default response there to the people responding. But I am pleased to note that we have had a two per cent reduction on our results from the previous financial year, and we will maintain that focus.

In relation to the public confidence in policing, I am told by our statisticians that it is only just statistically significant. Of the people surveyed in the AC Nielsen survey who had had recent contact with police, 72.5 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they had received, while 74.1 per cent of people surveyed nationally were satisfied or very satisfied with the police. That difference is not statistically significant. We have had a separate survey here in the ACT Policing, conducted by our media people, which showed that more than 90 per cent of those surveyed were disposed towards being supportive or very supportive of ACT Policing. Whilst I recognise that is not the national survey, that is an encouraging result.

You also asked how we know that we are recording crime. The PROMIS system requires that calls are logged as they come in, and we have a data quality and audit process that runs across our systems to ensure that recorded crime is put in the system and recorded accurately and that there is no duplication.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you. On page 19 there is a graph and table 2.3. I see that the resolution rate has dropped from 15.6 per cent in 2003-04 to 13.6 per cent in 2004-05 and the apprehension rate has dropped from 13.8 per cent to 10.1 per cent. Those figures seem a bit worrying. Can you explain why there has been such a drop? Does it have anything to do with resourcing of police issues?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will answer part of that question and then hand over to the CPO. We have explanations in the annual report. The question that you asked about whether it has to do with resources is the bit I will respond to. The answer to that is that I do not believe

so. What we are seeing is the application of police officers in such things as Halite. As you would know, there has been a change in process over the last few years and we are seeing the benefits of this coming out with the drop in rates. I mentioned in my opening statement a whole stack of double-digit figures: 21 per cent reduction in car thefts, 24.2 per cent in burglary, 41 per cent in sexual assaults. Somebody is doing something right here. I would suggest to you that just having additional police around the place, chasing people around and not actually doing anything, is not going to achieve anything. What we need to do is make sure that our detection processes and our prevention processes are right and then the resources are brought on board to do that. Our concentration over the last couple of years has been on that intelligence-driven policing process. I am quite satisfied that that is delivering for the people of the ACT. But I take your point and I will get the Chief Police Officer to address your specific issue.

**Ms Fagan:** Thank you, minister. The total offences number is down. The resolution rate is also slightly down on previous years, as you noted. But it is an achievement exceeding our agreed target of 10 per cent. Overall, the percentage of offences against property cleared during 2004-05 was 13.5 per cent, which exceeded that target set. We believe that this is really down to Operation Halite as the chief mechanism for delivering under the property crime reduction strategy that I mentioned earlier. That strategy targets both stolen goods and the burglary rate, so it goes not just to the burglary itself but to receivers who have possibly received stolen goods and the passing on of that property. In relation to policing numbers, we did receive an additional 17 staff in the last financial year. With our resources, I am pleased with the results we are achieving. It is only a small reduction. It is clear that the targets are being met within the resources that we have.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Can I also draw your attention to pages 20 and 21 of the report. Even if you do not look at the numbers, you will see, from the colours on one map compared with the other, the movement from those areas that were considered to be particularly susceptible to property crime; the numbers have been significantly reduced. You will see the concentration on prevention. After all, prevention is more important than catching people after an event. This shows the down surge.

**THE CHAIR:** I must say, minister, that I was pleased to see that at least my suburb was consistent, but unfortunately my electorate seemed to have a few more dark colours this time around, but not to worry.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That says something about the people who live there, chairman.

**THE CHAIR:** Good quality people. Minister, you mentioned that you do not think resourcing is an issue. But, surely, given that it is accepted that we are below the national average, if you put in extra sworn police officers that would make the load of other serving police officers easier and that would enable you to basically devote more troops to the task, which surely must help in terms of further reducing crime in the territory.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You are right, absolutely right, with the idea that we can have a really good system and that the more operators we have going into the system the better it will be. I have no problem with that. You would have to be pretty stupid not to admit that one. But we need to understand a couple of things about that. Firstly, I ask the question: are we doing well at the minute? From those statistics that I gave you here at the

beginning, the answer is, yes, we are doing well. Then the question is: can we do better than that? And the answer is, yes, of course we can.

I want to pick up on what you said, though, about having more sworn people doing x, y and z. We need to understand that the police force is made up of various elements, and the unsworn people have an incredibly vital role to play. It is a mistake to consider that unsworn officers do not contribute to community safety. That is a very, very bad mistake. At some stage I am happy for the Chief Police Officer to run through the types of activities that the unsworn officers do. I am very, very satisfied—almost to the point of ecstasy—that the process that the police in the ACT are employing is having this kind of result. I am very keen on community visibility and prevention, so that we do not have to catch people; we have to stop them doing it in the first place.

When we consider whether we can do better, we also have to consider: is it dire? Contrary to some scaremongering that has appeared in newspapers and the media from time to time, I do not think it is dire. Yes, I certainly think that we can do better, but I do not think it is dire.

**DR FOSKEY:** I apologise for being late because of parental duties. Can the ACT-Commonwealth review of ACT policing services please be made publicly available?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Not at this point, Dr Foskey. I do not want to appear to be evasive, but for the joint study to be released it does not just require my okay; it requires the commissioner's permission as well, and I do not have it at this point, so I cannot give it to you.

**DR FOSKEY:** So that review is the one called “joint study into policing”?

**Mr Hargreaves:** The report is before government at the moment. If I just put a report down without a response to it, that is incomplete, and all that does is set the ferrets running. At the moment we are composing the response to it, so that when we do talk about it in public we have the response.

**DR FOSKEY:** Are you able to give us some idea of the major issues and findings of that review?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, not at the moment. It would be a much more fruitful exercise to do it in toto. I would be accused of letting out the good bits and not any of the other bits, and that would be totally inappropriate.

**DR FOSKEY:** Can you give us some sense of when it will be made publicly available?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I think Mr Quinlan said in the committee once “soon” and that meant Friday. I can say to you “soon” but, if it is not Friday, it will be in the fullness of time. This is not something that we are holding back for the sake of it. I just need to assure you—

**DR FOSKEY:** No. I do take your point.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You need to understand these sorts of things. There is a timing coincidence between when we had to sign off on the policing arrangement and the agreement and then we got the results of the study. The results of the study dictate the sorts of outcomes that we will expect to see reflected in the agreement, which is the annual agreement between us and the AFP. So we do not want to do those things in isolation. It would be silly to ask the police to sign off on a certain set of outcomes when the study reflects something different. There was that unfortunate timing coincidence that forced us to put the two together. You will see the study and the agreement as soon as we can stitch it together.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thanks. I will look forward to that. Why was \$75.6 million dedicated to crime management and only—

**Mr Hargreaves:** What page of the report are we talking about?

**DR FOSKEY:** I am still on the overview, on page 6. As \$75.6 million was dedicated to crime management and \$4.2 million was dedicated to crime prevention under the most recent purchase agreement—

**Mr Hargreaves:** I am having trouble finding those numbers on this page, Dr Foskey.

**DR FOSKEY:** Those numbers are in the most recent purchase agreement; perhaps they are not in the annual report.

**Mr Hargreaves:** So, with respect to crime and safety management, you asked: why was there \$75 million—

**DR FOSKEY:** To crime management, and \$4.2 million to crime prevention. You can probably answer the question in generic terms.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, sure. Those four dot points on page 6 are the four outputs that we require in the agreement between us and the AFP. Of course, the outcomes are agreed in each of those between the government and the AFP. I will get the Chief Police Officer to explain to you what they do and, hopefully, out of that will fall the answer to your question.

**Ms Fagan:** The purchase agreement articulates our four outputs and for the previous financial year that consisted of crime safety management, traffic law enforcement and road safety, prosecution and judicial support, and crime prevention. We articulate those in the purchase agreement as agreed with the government and formally signed by the Chief Police Officer at the time with, I would think, the previous police and emergency minister, Mr Bill Wood. I can advise that we have a similar situation in place this year with our current minister for the purchase agreement with our \$91,373,386 divided into those four outputs as we judge meets the government's priorities.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Dr Foskey, I am struggling a bit still to find what you were asking about. Were you suggesting that we have not got enough money in one and that we have too much in the other?

**DR FOSKEY:** I would never say too much money in any category, and I am sure that

any amount of money could be thrown at either of these things, but \$4.2 million for crime prevention is a lot smaller than \$75.6 million and I thought there might be some rationale for why those ratios apply.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Sure. One of the things you need to understand about crime prevention is that that is a partnership between us and the community and it is about fostering those sorts of partnerships. The other one is actually doing the work that policing have to do on the ground, so you cannot compare the two. There is no cause and effect necessarily between the two.

**Ms Fagan:** I think also our crime and safety management, as with our traffic law enforcement, as with our prosecution and judicial, all have elements of crime prevention in them. For example, the drug diversions: if you look at traffic law enforcement, as we go through, random breath testings have a prevention element in them; similarly, crime and safety management. While the majority is investigative and patrol staff, there is an element of, and the goal is, a safer and more secure ACT.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 7, under organisational change, it is mentioned that there was an internal review of the finance, exhibits and logistics portfolio. Why was it that, while the review recommended that more staff be allocated to this area, it appears that the role of people already working there was broadened and upgraded instead?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will get the Chief Police Officer to address that. One of the things that I have a lot of faith in is that the internal organisation of the police is reflective and I do not dabble in that sort of stuff.

**Ms Fagan:** They are not linked. It is an internal process of where we put our resources to the right places. In fact, we have a current review that we are looking at and we adjust as is required. We do constant reviews in those particular areas because they are areas of risk and it is part of an appropriate risk mitigation strategy to review and audit around property and exhibits.

**DR FOSKEY:** Also on page 7, under strategic planning, apparently the planning workshop in April decided that the primary focus of police resources should be on response activities. I am just wondering what impact this had on other areas of ACT Policing and whether there were negative impacts on any areas?

**Mr Hargreaves:** One of the things that this workshop did was to organise within the minds of planners the strategic priorities for attention for the next 12 months. It wasn't a case of saying, "Oh, well, something has got to suffer because this has got to increase." You need to understand there is a relationship between the various activities. Halite, for example, is a good feature of that. I went to that planning session and it was agreed amongst the senior management that our targeting needed to be in this particular direction for this particular 12 months. What we see here—and it happens every year—is a conversation about where we are going to put our priority resources. This is the result of that conversation.

We talk about response. Again, I remind you of the figures—you were here—when I said there was a 41.8 per cent reduction in sexual assaults, 24.2 in burglaries, 21.9 in car thefts, 11.3 in robberies and 25.8 per cent in fraud. I would suggest to you that the



priority of response has borne fruit, from those numbers. Has something else suffered? I don't think so. I think we have just done particularly better in those other areas.

**DR FOSKEY:** Can a copy of the key recommendations from that retreat be made available?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, Dr Foskey. It is an internal working document.

**DR FOSKEY:** Did those recommendations feed into the larger review that has taken place?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Those recommendations, that whole retreat, is part of the way in which senior management tackle their work load for the next 12 months and tackle their priorities. It was not an exercise in saying: do we have enough of this to do that? It was intended to be a management tool for the Chief Police Officer to provide services to people of the ACT.

**MS MacDONALD:** The first thing I want to ask will display my ignorance of ACT Policing, so I apologise in advance for that.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Go 10 kilometres over the speed limit and I'll fix that.

**MS MacDONALD:** No, I know about speed limits, minister. I am assuming that the exhibits are exhibits for courts et cetera in evidence. I am curious as to why finance, exhibits and logistics have been put together in a portfolio. It just seems a strange combination to me.

**Ms Fagan:** That decision was taken prior to my coming here, but it is reporting through to the executive, to the director, commercial services, and it has two elements. There are exhibits and property can be miscellaneous lost property as well, so it really is a reporting line. Having said that, within my first weeks, one of the first places I went out to visit was the exhibit area because I do put great store in ensuring that that has got appropriate oversight and is an area that we manage very closely. So it is a management decision where we put the reporting lines to.

**MS MacDONALD:** It just seemed like a strange combination to me, but that is my non-understanding of the way the police system works, I suppose.

**Ms Fagan:** It raises an interesting issue about the sworn officers in there reporting through to non-sworn, and this is really a bit about the philosophy of how we do our job. It is about getting the managerial lines and the direct reports in balance across ACT Policing as well so that our next layers up aren't overburdened in their responsibilities.

**MS MacDONALD:** That was more of a curiosity question than a question about the annual report as such. At the bottom of page 16, under overview of crime in the ACT, it is reported that there has been a 13.2 per cent reduction in total offence levels between 2003-04 and 2004-05. While this is a great achievement, the report also notes that, as in previous years, there was a strong resurgence of offences in the first half of the year. Are there any indications as to what is contributing to that trend, why it happens in the first half of the year, why it is continuing and how you can curb it?

**Ms Fagan:** I do not have particular trend analysis, but crime fluctuates throughout the year for a variety of reasons, including seasonal variations, the status of known recidivist offenders—that is, whether they are the subject of community-based supervision orders or in custody—and the effectiveness of operational policing strategies in place to address the emerging trends and issues. We work to maintain a consistent pressure on the crime rates throughout the year and I am confident that, when we look at the trend lines consistently, our continuing focus on intelligence-led response policing will continue to achieve those good results. So, through our monthly, fortnightly and then weekly meetings that superintendents have, we track those rates consistently. But it is a variety; there is no particular reason that we could hang our hat on.

**MS MacDONALD:** Are they just more active at the beginning of the year—taking the pills or something at the end of the year?

**Mr Hargreaves:** It is considerably warmer, the days are longer and it also depends on the type of crime we are talking about. Antisocial behaviour, for example, peaks around the Christmas/new year time.

**MS MacDONALD:** And then they go back on their medication.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You might be right.

**MS MacDONALD:** Sorry, I shouldn't say that; that is rather disrespectful.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You get locked up for saying that sort of thing, under the current laws.

**MS MacDONALD:** Yes, that's right; it's a bit seditious, isn't it? On page 19, figure 2.4 graphs the burglary offences in the ACT between 1 January 2002 and 30 June 2005. In particular, it charts the effects of Operation Halite, which managed to achieve a 24.2 per cent decrease in total reported burglary offences. What reasons could you explain for the percentage of persons concerned about being a victim of housebreaking being 5.6 per cent above the national average of 72 per cent, and, further, how will the property crime reduction strategy 2005-06, mentioned on page 27, tackle this problem?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I think we addressed part of that before. Perception is a difficult thing to counter, I have to say, with Halite coming on. When we start advertising really significantly and start pushing things like Crime Stoppers, people think there has to be a good reason why you would want to do that. So the success of it may have a negative spin-off. I will get the Chief Police Officer to give you a bit more detail on that.

**Ms Fagan:** It is difficult to achieve a statistical clear-up rate for burglaries, as there are often problems linking not just the burglary rate; there is also property that goes with it. Sometimes you cannot link them, so that affects the clear-up rate, which in turn may affect the perception if we are not recovering the property. I think the message for the community is to encourage them to keep records of personal items and mark and engrave their property, to enable us to link them.

I mentioned in the earlier answer about perceptions of crime. While it is higher than the national average, we are moving down. We have had a two per cent decrease, which I

find encouraging, and I think that those strategies, primarily through our Operation Halite, have seen the number of reported burglaries reducing, clearly, as we have seen in the data, and due to that the Canberra community are becoming more aware of protecting themselves against burglary. This is very encouraging in relation to the ACT government's property crime reduction strategy. We are well within our targets and I am confident that we will meet it again this year.

**MR PRATT:** Congratulations on the quite good signs throughout the report on a number of capability improvements and performances. There is, of course, a range of other questions and I will start with one on Operation Halite. This is a supplementary question, following on from Ms MacDonald's. Ms MacDonald asked a number of questions about Operation Halite and, of course, it continues. Can you tell me whether the Operation Halite team is about the same strength as it has been for the last couple of years, or is it fluctuating? Can you tell us a bit about how you man that operation. It is targeted policing and I know you have told me in the past, minister, that police are taken from particular stations to man that team from time to time. What is happening now?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Before the Chief Police Officer responds, I have to advise you that I visited the officers in Halite to get a flavour of where they have come from, what they do and that sort of thing. What impressed me was the fact that we take officers out of a station, out of a particular area in town, and they work on Operation Halite. They bring their level of expertise and their corporate knowledge, which is really important, into that team. They stay there for a period of, I think, 13 weeks or something like that, and then there is a change. Again, it will depend on whether we are going to do a burst or whether we are going to be continuous.

I will get the Chief Police Officer to answer your question specifically, but I would just like to reiterate that it is, if you like, an expanding pool of expertise. As each officer goes in there, they bring a certain amount of expertise in, but they also gain an enormous amount of expertise while part of the team, and the team has components in it. It is not just one amorphous glob of police officers doing one particular job; it has components in it and they will be responsive to the particular situation at the particular time of year.

**Ms Fagan:** With Operation Halite, it is the same strategy that we have employed and we do have about half that are permanent and then we get our patrol people to come in and join, supplement, for a shorter period and then they leave again. So it gives a churn but it also gives them experience in a targeted group. Similarly, within our districts we have suburban crime teams that are working and providing intelligence into Operation Halite. Again, when we talk about crime prevention, there are crime prevention officers sitting within Halite, so they work across the various areas of focus.

Operation Halite has taken a leading role in ACT Policing in meeting the property crime reduction strategy requirements of the ACT government. One such example is the partnership crime group, which meets on a regular basis. This has representatives from various external agencies, including the Department of Urban Services, the department of housing and community services, ACTION, ActewAGL, the ACT and Region Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Canberra Cabs, the Australian Security Industry Association Ltd, the ACT Office of Fair Trading and ACT Corrective Services. So Halite has a broader focus than just the recidivists and the burglaries themselves. Another example is that the focus has been on the receivers of stolen property as a way to tackle

property crime, as I mentioned earlier. That, again, gives us a further avenue to tackle the trail left in burglary crime.

**MR PRATT:** You say that half of Halite is full time. Has that replaced the old burglary squad? Was that squad subsumed or does it still exist as a stand-alone crime prevention or crime clean-up team?

**Ms Fagan:** There is not a burglary squad. Operation Halite is the focus and we have taken a decision internally to extend its charter to the end of this financial year, given that it has this current success. We do not have the stand-alone burglary task force; we have Operation Halite with its goals and focus.

**MR PRATT:** Which include burglary.

**Ms Fagan:** That includes burglaries, property crime and the recidivists that I spoke about.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I would like to make a comment about this, Mr Pratt, and I am sure you will appreciate it very quickly. If you have too closely defined operational teams, you can miss out on a lot of cross-fertilisation of information. As the CPO just told you, there is this collaborative arrangement with industry, other departments and all that sort of stuff. You can do that because of the critical mass of something like Halite. You also find that there is a connection sometimes between the burglaries and drug offences, and sometimes domestic violence. The success of Halite is that all of this information is put in and synthesised. Whilst it is tempting to say that we have a problem with burglary so we will create a burglary team, we have to be careful to avoid the narrowness of that focus.

I believe the police are doing exactly the right thing in saying, “We won’t have a team doing this; we will change the focus of Halite, because they have the information.” It may be that we have an increased incidence of drug trafficking or drug usage in the ACT and a lessening of burglaries. But the two are connected, so we change the focus of Halite for a while. Do we have a dedicated burglary team? The answer is no. Do we have a dedicated approach to tackling burglaries? Yes. That is by way of explanation to you.

**MR PRATT:** And that team is constant?

**Ms Fagan:** That team is constant.

**MR PRATT:** At least there is a core element that is constantly there, around which you add other teams?

**Ms Fagan:** There is, and those teams operate. But, in addition to that, you link that knowledge into our operations management, and intelligence area will feed information in. They have intelligence officers working in both areas. As things may grow in complexity, the territory investigations group also can launch an operation to support them. So they work hand in hand. This is where the superintendents meet regularly and adjust and respond to the crime. Similarly, the suburban crime program within the districts feeds that information through, so we attend appropriately to the priority work.

**MR PRATT:** With the intelligence-led policing concept, which is clearly one of your major engine rooms, can you quickly describe, apart from what we have already covered—the various intelligence that is put into your intelligence people by the crime prevention teams, by Halite and those other capabilities—where else you are collecting intelligence from?

**Mr Hargreaves:** The first one we collect it from is the general public through Crime Stoppers. That is the big one, quite frankly. Just by way of example for the record, you might remember a spate of burnouts earlier this year. It was terrifying the whole place. Nobody suggested it wasn't an issue. The intelligence into Halite and the intelligence professionals indicated there was a need for a specific operation to be mounted. So resources were then brought together, Operation Globin was created and then, in the course of around three months, I think, 50 cars were impounded—all based on intelligence that was provided by the community, synthesised by the intelligence professionals and then predictions made. That is how it kicks off. The CPO will expand on that.

**Ms Fagan:** We have an operation monitoring centre that sit within our intelligence area and they feed data to our operations committee, which is made up of the superintendents and the operational OICs of all the areas. Together as a collective, they sit down and look at the data and will build a picture and articulate a response, matching it with our 37 KPIs and matching it with government priorities. So these other meetings that we have with other stakeholders are very important in informing that process of priority as well.

**MR PRATT:** Minister, earlier you said to Mr Stefaniak that intelligence-led policing was a major driving force to how we prevent, combat and then follow up crime. I think those were the phrases you were using. Picking up on Mr Stefaniak's point: surely intelligence-led policing also relies very heavily on a police presence. If you haven't got regular patrols and regular visits to, particularly, shopping centres and other areas, you must be missing out on a lot of intelligence. So how can an intelligence-led policing strategy work when you don't have an appropriate presence of police in the community to talk to people—not simply relying on Crime Stoppers but talking to people face to face—to gather that vital intelligence?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I understand your question, and I think you need to take my response in two bites. The first thing is that the process that we are employing at the moment is producing the goods for the people of the ACT—and, yes, if I had a whole stack more officers, we could do even better. Against that background, however, we have to understand—a lot of people out there don't understand this—that from time to time we change the focus. One of the focuses that the Chief Police Officer and I agreed on when she came on board was that we needed to increase police visibility. You will have noticed an increased police visibility in recent times. You will see patrol cars regularly through Civic. You will see, for example, in the Manuka and Kingston area on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights an increased police presence on the streets. We have an increased engagement with the community through the suburban ownership program. You will know of it, because we may even have responded to some of your constituents; certainly we have to some of mine. We have an officer in each station dedicated to a specific set of suburbs. Where there is a feeling that there is a particular issue in a particular suburb that is causing concern, that officer goes and talks to them. So we do have that response. You did not go to the opening of the police station the other day, did

you?

**MR PRATT:** No, I was interstate, in Brisbane.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Fine. There was a reason why I mention this, because as I went down Yarra Glen on my way to the opening there was a police car on the main road, with a radar gun. People in the ACT are being led to believe through conversations in the media that we do not have enough police visibility on our roads. I don't believe that is true. The figures that we have produced today for this 2004-05 year, the increased visibility of police on the streets, show that we are making effective use of the resources. As I said to Mr Stefaniak, of course we could do a heck of a lot more with a heck of a lot more police officers. We could teach a heck of a lot more kids with a heck of a lot more teachers and we could stop people being sick with a whole stack more doctors and things like that. What we need to do is to make sure that we are making effective use of the resources, and I believe that we are at the moment.

I just reiterate that from time to time the focus will change. The Chief Police Officer and I have conversations quite regularly about whether or not our approach is targeted to the right spot, and you also see those changes reflected in the agreement that we sign off on every 12 months. In those four KPIs you will see changes in the application of resources to those things depending on the outcomes that we believe are appropriate.

I think people would benefit from a little bit more understanding of what constitutes the Australian Federal Police ACT. It is not just a stack of police uniforms sitting in a motor car on the street. We have already been down the track of Operation Halite. We need to understand that we have quite a number of unsworn officers who are policing professionals—highly qualified people whose job is professional policing—and they are having their effect as well.

**MR PRATT:** I would like to ask you a question later about the key performance indicators and the outcomes and the agreement, but I will come back to that later. On the police presence, intelligence-led policing and obtaining intelligence from the community, given what you have just said, minister, about the increased performance—I agree that I have seen a lot more radar gun cars out and about in the last three months than I had in the previous three years—why do I get information from the supermarket managers at Richardson, Calwell and Monash about constant bad behaviour, particularly juvenile crime, as well as break-ins to those places? I am told by the managers of those three complexes—and they are speaking on behalf of their fellow shopkeepers—that they haven't been visited by police in a proactive way; that is, they haven't seen police patrols who come and say, "How is it going? What is going on and what can you tell us about what is happening in the area?" I was pleased to see, by the way, that there was apparently a police operation carried out in Richardson to target a number of youths who had been harassing that shopping centre for a very long time; but why has it taken so long for those places to see police, except when police have had to follow up after a crime? Where is this presence? Where is this patrolling that is gathering intelligence from these areas, which of course are good areas for gathering information about suburbs?

**Mr Hargreaves:** It is a very interesting question for you to pull out three shopping centres and ask why the police haven't been visiting them enough. I have to tell you that

in some of the shopping centres that I have been to quite the opposite comments have been made to me; they are very grateful that police are visible around the place. Kambah is one of them, and we have some up north. You need to understand, and convey to your constituents, that, firstly, we are not talking about police on demand here. It is not a case of, “I need some police, so I’ll ring up and get them around the place.” It’s not like that; it doesn’t work that way. We have talked about this ad nauseam, and if you had had a look at the responses to the questions on notice that you have asked, the answers to your questions are in there. It is an intelligence-led process. If we have sufficient information provided to the police by the public, by business owners and all the rest of it, a profile of these offenders is determined and then a response is made. We have a 24 per cent reduction in burglaries. We haven’t stopped 100 per cent of them, and we are never going to do it. You’ve got to understand that when there is a rumble going on in one particular shopping centre around town, you cannot necessarily expect the police to attend each and every single one of them. It will never be the case.

**MR PRATT:** That’s not what I’m talking about, a single rumble.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I ask you: have these people contacted the police and said, “I wouldn’t mind having a chat to you about this area?”

**MR PRATT:** They absolutely have, minister.

**Mr Hargreaves:** And what was the reaction from them?

**MR PRATT:** That is just a cross-section; I have just taken a cross-section—

**Mr Hargreaves:** Come on! Tell me the answer to the question: did they ask the police to visit them?

**MR PRATT:** which does reflect the trend across the Tuggeranong Valley. They have spoken to police and called police to say, “Look, we are being harassed by teenage kids who are shoplifting and/or harassing customers coming into the IGA or the other major shops,” and they say that the police have simply said: “Look, we’re a bit overstretched. We haven’t got the people. We can’t come out.” The point is that these people are saying—and I want you to tell me why this is the case—that they don’t get regular visits by police asking how things are going and what is going on. Isn’t that preventative policing? Isn’t that proactive policing? Isn’t that gathering intelligence, going back to my previous question?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Quite frankly, Mr Pratt, I think it is a simplistic and a puerile view. I have told you—

**MR PRATT:** Okay—just disregard the feedback from the community.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I have asked you a question and you haven’t answered it: did those people, those ones that you named, approach the police to say, “Come down and let’s map out a strategy for this.” Have they done that? Have you done that on their behalf? I doubt it very much. Every time that I have had this sort of conversation with people in the community, I have said to them—

**THE CHAIR:** It has been pointed out to me, minister, that we should not get into too many questions and answers between the two of you and also that it is not appropriate for witnesses, including you, to question members of the committee—

**Mr Hargreaves:** It was a rhetorical question, chairman.

**MS MacDONALD:** He's not a member of the committee.

**THE CHAIR:** or people asking questions for that matter—I think you will find—members of the Assembly.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I thought I was a member of the Assembly at one point in time.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, but you are also a witness.

**MR PRATT:** So, given that, minister, can you answer my question?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I did answer your question, Mr Pratt. It was simplistic and puerile.

**MR PRATT:** That is not an answer.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The thing is that, if these folks had contacted the police, the suburban ownership program would have—

**MR PRATT:** But they have, minister.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chairman, if Mr Pratt doesn't want me to answer the question, we can pack up and go home now.

**THE CHAIR:** Could you answer the question, minister.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I'm trying my best.

**THE CHAIR:** Having listened to this exchange, I think he has made it quite clear that these people have contacted the police.

**Mr Hargreaves:** If you gag him, chairman, I will answer the question.

**THE CHAIR:** I might gag both of you. Could you just answer that, and then we will go to Mr Gentleman, who has been waiting patiently.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will say this for the third time: if these constituents of Mr Pratt, who he has quite clearly stoked up, contact the police and talk to the police officer responsible for their suburb under the suburban ownership program, an officer will visit them and map out a strategy to address their concerns.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, minister.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I will go on a different tack. I am a resident of Calwell, I visit the Calwell shops every day and I see regular police patrols, so I am a bit astounded by the



questions. I understand that the staffing profile on page 92 of the report provides a snapshot of police numbers on a single day. Can you advise me of the number of funded positions over the course of the entire financial year?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes. Prior to the CPO giving you this detail, I think it is important to get it on the record that there is a need to understand that one of the measures that people keep popping up with is that we have to be on the national average. They keep saying it. We are playing numbers at 50 paces. The conversation in the community has to change in terms of average operative staffing levels throughout the year for a response agency like this one. For example, over the Christmas-New Year period there will be additional policing resources as we know that there will be antisocial behaviour then. So you are going to have a number greater than the particular figure at the start of a year. At other parts of the year there will be a lesser figure.

We will go through those in a bit more detail, Mr Gentleman. We give the police a certain amount of money for an average full-time equivalent across the year. So on any one day there will not be a figure resembling that one, and there never will, because it has to expand and contract during the year. What is important is that at the end of a financial year we have a look and say, "How many police officers did you get money for on a full-time equivalent basis?"

You will see at the bottom of page 92 the figure 791. It is quite possible that at Christmas 2004 it was something like 810 or 815 and it is quite possible that at some time during winter, when things were a bit slow, it was 770 or 780. It can expand and contract according to the priorities set. I am not suggesting, Mr Pratt, that you should not have this argument about police numbers. I am saying that, if we start talking the same language about this and we start talking about average operative staffing levels, maybe our conversations about it will be more meaningful and our understandings of it will be shared.

**MR PRATT:** But you budget for an FTE, don't you?

**MS MacDONALD:** Chair, Mr Pratt does not have the call.

**Mr Hargreaves:** An average FTE, and you will see that it is 791. I hand over to the Chief Police Officer.

**Ms Fagan:** Staffing numbers do fluctuate throughout the year for a variety of reasons. They can include recruitment patterns, attrition and retirement as people finish their work in policing. I have quarterly snapshots which may be useful to the committee. We did finish the year at an equivalent FTE of 791.51, which is recorded in the annual report. Prior to September 2004, we were 792.85. At December 2004, we were 804.43. At March, we were 810.72. That gives you an indication across the reporting period.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That is a perfect example of what I was saying about having to talk about the average across the year. If we talk about there not being enough, let us talk about it in the context of an average across the year, not by taking a snapshot in time, because you might be picking the wrong time. If you picked, for example, December, I would say that we had 804.

**MR PRATT:** But you do budget for an annual average, don't you?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes.

**MR PRATT:** That is how you manage your budget and that is what some of the argument is about, too.

**THE CHAIR:** One at a time, please.

**MR PRATT:** I am sorry, he did refer that answer to me.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chair, it is useful and Mr Pratt is quite right: we do that. What we do is we say that for the year there will be a full-time equivalent of, to pick a number, 791, but the police numbers on that will expand and contract during the year, according to the need to do so. At the end of the day, you get the money for 791 across the whole year.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** Minister, the chair directed us earlier to table 2.1 on page 15. Recently, there has been some discussion in the media about offence clearance rates. Those rates against person and property both exceeded target levels on this graph. Can you expand on how these results are achieved and how they compare with previous years?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will get the Chief Police Officer to do that because she is eloquent.

**MR PRATT:** I am sure you are, too, minister.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I can be.

**Ms Fagan:** I think that in achieving those results we can point to a combination of intelligence-led policing strategies and police targeting of recidivist offenders. Community cooperation in prevention and detection of crime is pivotal. I also think that our focus in recent years on customer service by police is making a difference. I point to our family violence intervention program. The ombudsman has commented on the reduction in complaints, maybe as a result of customer service being a particular focus. I see that as well as useful in crime reduction.

Our solid investigative and forensic techniques continue to show dividends. Also, the fact that we have now confirmed Operation Halite to 30 June 2006 as a supporting the ACT government property crime reduction strategy. I am confident that this, coupled with the processes and structures that we have in place through our operations monitoring committee that I spoke about earlier, enables us to adjust appropriately and make those adjustments at the right time to target crime.

If we go to property offences that have been cleared, the trend showing is of a reduction. The percentage of offences being cleared has continued. If you go back, they are between 13 and 15 per cent, with 13.6 per cent this year in property. Similarly, our concentration on receivers of stolen property—I do have the statistic with me but I just cannot put my hands on it at the moment—also shows that that is a useful strategy in tackling the totality of crime.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** My last question is about page 54. Minister, earlier you touched on Operation Globin. Can you advise me how you have involved the community in that program and how the community has responded to this involvement?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I think we mentioned that the last time we were here as well. As I mentioned earlier, the intelligence folk worked it out that we needed to have a specific targeted program around burnouts and street racing. In fact, Calwell was one of the suburbs which was giving us a bit of grief. So Operation Globin was mounted and some officers were dedicated to the process. We had a specific telephone number that people could ring and what happened was that you would get three, four or five people in the same street sending in information. That information was not always the same, but the collecting of that information enabled police to target a particular offender. I remember speaking to the Operation Globin fellows at Tuggeranong. You might have been there.

**MR GENTLEMAN:** I was there for one community briefing.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, at the station. The guys there were saying that they would get slightly different descriptions of offenders but they were consistent enough for them to do rego checks, work out roughly where these people were, and then do a prediction on where they were going to turn up. So the community would not see any action for a week or two and then from the third week or so there was no more street racing. The result: 50 cars impounded. That was because the community got into Crime Stoppers and got into Operation Globin and told them what was going on and when it was going to happen and those predictions were made. That was a specific operation as a target and it had a particular effect. If the community continues to have that kind of approach, it will continue to tell us a little bit more.

One which was really strange was that that there were a couple of blokes with a couple of cars who were doing this thing. One of them got pinged. You would have expected the other fellow to say, "I do not want to lose my car." No. He was a bit on the thick side; so he lost his a couple of days later. We had hoped that pinching that number of cars would have had a positive effect in reducing the amount. I think it has. I do not have anywhere near the number of representations to my office about burnouts as I used to. I think I get something like one a month, whereas I was getting two or three a day before Globin. So I think that it has been effective. If it had not been for the information that the community had put in as the eyes and ears of the police, we would not have been able to do a thing.

**MS PORTER:** Mention was made before of the unsworn officers. On page 92, you give details about the number of unsworn officers. I note that it has risen quite considerably over a number of years. I think that there are about 220 now. What were the reasons for the increase in the number of unsworn officers? What kind of work do the unsworn officers undertake?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I think this requires a level of detail. As I said before, I think that it is important that people understand the role of unsworn officers, because I think that there is a misunderstanding about that, so I will ask the Chief Police Officer to tell you the types of activities that they engage in and the qualifications that they bring to them, and then address the numbering issues, if that is okay.

**THE CHAIR:** If it is too detailed, you can take it on notice.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, we have it here.

**Ms Fagan:** The increase is partly due to a comprehensive review internally between the commonwealth and ACT Policing—AFP. The review has improved our ability to clearly identify those specialist personnel, professional operational support people, providing enabling support services to ACT Policing from within AFP national. For example, our IT services and our forensic specialists particularly who attend crime scenes are not necessarily sworn officers.

This increase also reflects the AFP's integrated teams-based model, where a large proportion of the specialist personnel, professionals, are unsworn. We do work within an integrated work force and the unsworn staff have a range of specialist skills which complement and support operational policing outcomes. Unsworn staff are utilised across the whole of ACT Policing to perform a variety of roles where they are not required to exercise sworn powers. ACT Policing has specialists in disciplines including finance, logistics, community liaison, media and marketing, and the provision of legal and policy advice, in addition to the forensics and IT that I mentioned earlier.

ACT Policing also employs unsworn staff and civilian communications staff to support sworn members in its communications centre. Approximately 40 per cent within the communications centre are unsworn and supervised, with operational officers there to assist where needed. In addition, we have volunteers in policing and the total package builds on that. To date, we have 35 volunteers in policing. Their average age ranges from 24 to 76 years and they have given some 32,000 hours of work to policing since 2001 when they began. So it is an integrated teams approach essentially that gets the right people to do the operational work that we require.

**MS PORTER:** I believe that the number of volunteers in policing is about to be increased. Will you be advertising for more volunteers in policing?

**Mr Hargreaves:** We have advertised for them. It is in the paper now.

**MS PORTER:** I presume, therefore, that the program that started in 2000 or 2001, somewhere about that time, has been successful. What tasks do these volunteers in policing undertake? Also, is there an overall acceptance in the service of this type of volunteer?

**Ms Fagan:** The staff have been in place since 2001 and the initiative has been developed appropriately for the ACT, based on other models overseas. They supplement and assist our sworn officers. They do not replace that sworn duty; it is not part of their charter. If you go into a police station, a volunteer may assist you to fill out forms, have your inquiries targeted and then speak with a police officer afterwards, and it creates its own efficiency.

In addition, you may have noticed in the murder investigation about Mr Frank Campbell that there was major search of a tip—the Mugga Lane landfill—looking for particular evidence. In such an instance, our volunteers would go out and provide the catering and the cleaning areas for our staff. At the opening of the Woden police station, they assisted with hosting, putting people into their seats and providing that support. From a cultural

perspective, I can think of no better way, given the age range of 24 to 76. Having those people, particularly the more mature amongst them, in the police station creates a particularly welcoming environment and that then links into the customer service approach that I want to encourage both internally and in dealing with the public.

**Mr Hargreaves:** If I could add for the record that police volunteers are integral to our attempts to increase the confidence level and acceptability level in the community itself by saying that there is a real partnership there. Having this number of people as police volunteers is a credit to them and to the police. People ought to understand, though, that we do not just put a shirt on them and stick them on the front counter; we actually train them. These people are trained volunteers. We can now point to them and say, "There is a true community-policing partnership and they are evidence of it."

**THE CHAIR:** I have a few question for you, minister, or the Chief Police Officer. How many people, sworn police or otherwise, are involved in monitoring the CCTV cameras used to observe Civic and do they monitor the surveillance areas constantly or only at certain times? When was the last occasion that officers were stationed at monitoring the screens in real time?

**Mr Hargreaves:** We will get you some details on that. Generally speaking, the monitoring is done according to what the officer-in-charge of the police station believes to be the need. For example, we will have a person sitting there watching the screen over the New Year celebration period, over Summernats, over the period of the multicultural festival and those sorts of things. At times when we know that the Civic area in particular will be quiet, we do not have a person just sitting there watching the screen all night, but we do review things in the event of something going on. I will get the Chief Police Officer to give you specific details.

**Ms Fagan:** The system is actively monitored during major events such as New Year's Eve and Summernats and at other times it is used reactively by officers to assist in police responses to reported incidents and can be a very important investigative tool. City patrol considers that the CCTV system is also useful in deterring antisocial behaviour when employed with other policing measures. We have two city patrol officers fully trained to perform CCTV downloads as required. We do not permanently allocate resources to CCTV monitoring because they will attend to other high priority work. They are operational decisions that we take on a day-to-day basis in the context of what other events are going on. The value of continuous CCTV monitoring really does need to be balanced against maintaining the visibility of the proactive role of a police presence in Civic.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chair, can I just advise you and the committee, wishing to be of some assistance, that, as you would know, a review is being conducted of CCTV capability right across the town. That is being done under the auspices of the Chief Minister and I really think that you would be assisted more by directing a lot of those questions to him, because at the end of the day we are saying, for a range of reasons, the CCTV situation in the ACT needs a good look at and I do not have carriage of that responsibility. We need to understand, I suppose, that there are some CCTVs placed within police jurisdiction, some by DUS, some by the banks that own them, and some by the businesses that own them. I do not know how many cameras we actually have in this town, but there are something like 1,600 of the things. That review is where you would

be better placed to seek the answers.

**THE CHAIR:** Whilst I thank you for your comment, I would ask the Chief Police Officer in relation to the cameras that the police monitor from time to time in Civic to say how many of them are actually in operational order. I understand that you have 20 or so. If you do not have that information here, take the question on notice.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will get that for you. None of them is managed by the police force. I have to retract on that; we cannot get it for you as they are not managed by the police force. I suggest that you ask that question when we bring back the officials from urban services. I am happy to have that question tacked on then.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The police would not know the answer to that question.

**MR PRATT:** What is the relationship between the urban services supervisors of that CCTV system and the police who want to carry out surveillance? How often will you have police operators using that DUS system?

**Mr Hargreaves:** The DUS system is employed not only by the police but also by ACTION and for a whole stack of things. It is part of a total system. When a system is not used every day and it is used reactively, you do not actually realise that the thing is not working until you try to download from it, unless there is a maintenance regime. The issues that were raised recently indicated that our maintenance regimes could be looked at rather closely. That matter has been addressed in the context of that CCTV review.

**MR PRATT:** So the maintenance regime has been upgraded as a consequence.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes. We have to address that with DUS; that is the first point. The second point is that you are only talking about the DUS ones. We have a heck of a lot more out there in the system and they need to be brought into a total policy approach. That is what that review is all about. I think it would be better to ask those questions of the Chief Minister, quite frankly, because collectively he has put the whole thing together and DUS is only one bit of it, as are the police only one bit of it and ACTION is only one bit of it. I do not have carriage of the ACTION ones either; so I cannot answer questions regarding the efficacy of the ACTION ones.

**MR PRATT:** My question was in terms of the Civic CCTV system. At what time do police have an input? When can they carry out their own surveillance through that Civic system? How often will you have police operators?

**Mr Hargreaves:** All the time. As the CPO has said, it depends on the events we are talking about. It is an operational decision whether they are going to sit there and watch it or they are going to do it reactively. You have to remember with respect to the one which was down and which was the subject of some media scrutiny recently that the actual camera was not down at all; there was a data capture problem. However, the camera on the other side, near section 84, was down because it was connected to the same power source as section 84 and it had to be down while ever that particular building and construction was uncompleted. Once it was completed the camera came

back on line again. You are going to get that but, quite frankly, I think that the issue of CCTVs in the Civic and Manuka areas really ought to be addressed through the review that the Chief Minister has got going.

**DR FOSKEY:** I seek some clarification. Is it true that the tapes are cleaned off after 12 days and that it can take up to 10 days for a citizen's request to have a tape reviewed come through?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will have to take that one on notice, Dr Foskey. I will have to look at the operational standing orders on that. I do not know the answer off the top of my head. I will have to get back to you.

**DR FOSKEY:** Okay. That is what I have been informed by constituents.

**Mr Hargreaves:** In that case, it has to be true.

**DR FOSKEY:** It could be. I am asking you because I would like to get a couple of opinions.

**Mr Hargreaves:** We will find out for you.

**DR FOSKEY:** The ACT ombudsman has asked watch-house staff to advise him immediately of all video failures as they occur until a new system is installed. Has that occurred? Was the ombudsman notified immediately in all cases? How many times has this notification occurred?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will try to get you the information now. Remember, Dr Foskey, that the predominance of conversations around CCTV are better off being addressed to the Chief Minister.

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes, that is the case, but I guess that the police do rely on them quite a bit.

**Ms Fagan:** In relation to CCTV and the city watch-house, we have had \$250,000 allocated by the Department of Justice and Community Safety to install it within the watch-house. That will replace the current system by June 2006. I do not have the data.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Many of the questions that you seem to be asking about CCTV were actually asked by Mr Pratt in question on notice No 499. I will address some of those.

**THE CHAIR:** Perhaps you could table it.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I cannot table it.

**THE CHAIR:** Hand up that piece of paper or tell us the number for it.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It is 499.

**MS MacDONALD:** It is accessible by everybody.

**THE CHAIR:** We will look at that. I have been told by the committee secretary that we will write to you in your capacity as Minister for Urban Services and to the Chief Minister in relation to some of the questions about cameras.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Okay. Please understand that I am not trying to dodge anything. If it is within the context of that review, I cannot answer it for two reasons: firstly, it would be inappropriate and, secondly, I do not know the answer.

**THE CHAIR:** That is all right, but we will go through that process. I note the number of full-time equivalents for the former reporting period, 2003-04, was—

**Mr Hargreaves:** Where are you at?

**THE CHAIR:** I refer you to page 97 for this question. I need to indicate by way of background that the number of full-time equivalents decreased from 826.33 to 791.5 between the last reporting period and the one we are doing now. If you go to page 97, table 3.3 talks about annual rates and the total number of hours worked. You will see a small increase in the total number of hours worked, from 1,595,748 in 2003-04 to 1,629,470 in this reporting period. From that, coupled with the drop in the number of FTEs, it would seem that, on average, individual officers are working longer hours compared with last year.

It would seem that they are working longer and therefore they are working harder. Also, it would seem that that may well be seen by the increased number of incidents reported that require a police response. Again, it gets back to the resourcing issue, minister. Do you have enough police officers and full-time equivalents and are we actually looking at a bit of a burnout there in relation to the officers because of this increase in working hours and what would seem to be a small decrease, about 36, in the number of full-time equivalents from 2003-04 to this reporting period?

**Mr Hargreaves:** You have to understand that there is no direct correlation necessarily between the number of hours worked and the effect on individual officers in the police as there is such a correlation between other parts of the work force. Part of the reason for that is that other parts of the work force work regular times, a regular day, because they have a regular task to achieve. The police, as I am sure you would be aware, respond to specific issues. For example, come Summernats, we have a whole heap of police applied to that particular process. When it is finished we do not necessarily need that number of police about the place.

Sometimes operations are mounted, some covert and some not so covert. You might recall when we did some raids on the Stuart and Gowrie flats and the Northbourne flats. They were done at night time. They were done in combination with a number of other agencies. They are done in addition to normal duties because of the particular operational imperative at the time, because of intelligence which is received at a particular point in time. We do not have people sitting around idle that we can just apply to that. So there is not necessarily the same correlation. It is a simplistic correlation which I would have to say I do not agree with.

So, in answer to your question on whether we have the right number of police officers, I go back to the original statement I made. The processes are actually bearing fruit. The



processes are actually very efficacious. Can we do better with more people in the same process? Of course we can. Are we doing well right now? Very much so. Are we going gangbusters on the numbers? Very much so. We will just have to wait and see. Do you want to add to that?

**Ms Fagan:** Yes, minister. In the previous financial year we had 28 people in our inoperative paid pool. That reduced to 11 in the current report that we are attending the hearing about. Similarly this figure, the 2004-05 one, does not include an inoperative unpaid pool. It was counted in 2003-04 and that equated to nine.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Is that a total of 20?

**Ms Fagan:** Correct. There are more now in general duties, in 2004-05, than there were in the previous year. That number is 22. We did expend a total of \$3,783,503 on overtime in this annual report. Overtime is used to facilitate the flexible delivery of staff to ensure operational outcomes. This equates to an average of \$6,821 per sworn ACT member, just to outline the overtime expenditure and its use.

**THE CHAIR:** Are there any questions on that? Mr Pratt and then Dr Foskey.

**MR PRATT:** Following up on that question—

[tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:36:59&quot;?Data=&quot;df8975cc&quot;](http://tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:36:59&quot;?Data=&quot;df8975cc&quot;)

**MS MacDONALD:** Excuse me, chair. Can I make a point here? Mr Pratt is not a member of this committee and he has been given quite a large number of questions. I know Dr Foskey has a number of questions.

**THE CHAIR:** Yes, I know that.

**MS MacDONALD:** You have not asked me.

**THE CHAIR:** I am going to ask you soon. I am just asking if he wants to ask a supplementary on that.

**MS MacDONALD:** I ask you to abide by the usual practice, which is to give precedence to committee members.

**THE CHAIR:** I have been very fair in doing that, Ms MacDonald. I point out that Mr Pratt has come down especially from Queensland to be at this committee hearing.

**MS MacDONALD:** I am sorry, Mr Stefaniak, but that is not a reason—

**THE CHAIR:** I think that, for good manners, as much as anything else, we should give people a decent go. He is also the shadow. I take your point.

**MS MacDONALD:** Mr Stefaniak, he is not on this committee.

**THE CHAIR:** I will allow him to ask his supplementary; I will then go to Dr Foskey and then to you. You are quite right; Dr Foskey has a number of questions. Ask your supplementary, Mr Pratt, and we will then go to Dr Foskey for another line of questions.

[tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:37:55&quot;?Data=&quot;4e5c1370&quot;](http://tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:37:55&quot;?Data=&quot;4e5c1370&quot;)

**MR PRATT:** On that last point, Queensland aside, what is the ruling regarding the proportion of time shadow ministers are allowed to have when they come to these meetings?

**THE CHAIR:** There is no ruling but, traditionally, members of the Assembly are able to ask questions in open hearings such as this.

**MS MacDONALD:** By leave of the committee.

**THE CHAIR:** That has always been the case.

**MS MacDONALD:** By leave of the committee.

**THE CHAIR:** Particularly, leeway has been given to people who have shadow responsibilities.

**MS MacDONALD:** Would you like me to get the standing order out?

**THE CHAIR:** I am well aware of the standing order. I rule that I will let Mr Pratt ask a supplementary. We will then go to Dr Foskey and then to Ms MacDonald.

[tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:38:48&quot;?Data=&quot;786090db&quot;](http://tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:38:48&quot;?Data=&quot;786090db&quot;)

**MR PRATT:** Thank you, chair. I am sure Ms MacDonald will enjoy my questions. Minister, following up on the last exchange with Mr Stefaniak about FTEs, strengths and increases in overtime, what proportion of police station shifts now have to be met by overtime? Do you have a feeling for that?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I thought that I and the chief police officer had explained it but, clearly, I will have to do it in language that even Queenslanders can understand. The overtime worked by officers is responsive overtime, driven by operational imperatives. It is not true—and I believe it is an inappropriate inference—that overtime worked by the officers means we do not have enough officers in stations. We do not set a particular amount of money aside for every station and say, “That is what you have to work within.”

As I explained before, the intelligence officers work where we are going to apply the resources, and for what. We gave you a couple of examples, one being the recent raids on some of the multiunit complexes that resulted in one person being arrested, from my understanding, and stolen vehicles being recovered. It does not happen that way; it is a responsive thing. It is not a case, as exists in bureaucracies, of applying overtime to address excessive workloads; it is responsive. That is the answer to the question.

I would be interested to see the same set of standing orders. I understand that members of the Assembly are recognised by the Assembly in these committees because they are appointed by the Assembly, but that the shadow ministry has absolutely no standing whatsoever within the context of the Assembly. So a person’s shadow ministry means diddly-squat.

**DR FOSKEY:** Can I ask a question?

**THE CHAIR:** Certainly.

**MR PRATT:** So you don't require a question from the shadow minister.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I am saying to you, Mr Pratt, that the Legislative Assembly does not recognise shadow ministers.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 27 of the policing report it states that there are only four substantiated claims.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes. It's good, isn't it?

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes but then, when one goes to the ombudsman's report, on page 19 it states that there were 460 issues arising from complaints that were managed through a workplace resolution process, and that 246 of those were successfully conciliated.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I am sorry about this, Dr Foskey, but you have us at a disadvantage. I do not have the ombudsman's report here and I have not read it.

**DR FOSKEY:** If there were only four substantiated complaints against ACT Policing, why was there a need to seek conciliation on 460 issues?

**Mr Hargreaves:** There are a number of issues. Firstly, I think you will find that the figure was 697.

**Mr Williams:** The figure is 637.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Thank you. There were 637 complaints lodged against the AFP, both in the ACT and nationally, four of which were found to be substantiated. I think it is cause for congratulations that those were finalised. There were 443 complaints in 2004-05—down nearly 12 per cent from the previous year. When we talk about conciliation, the complaints against police can range from somebody being barked at while being given a speeding ticket to somebody who has been beaten senseless.

I would argue that the person who has been barked at in the car is a good case for perhaps a little bit of mediation. The other scenario is more substantial and is the sort of thing that cops a full-on investigation. Having four substantiated out of 637 or 400—and something is nothing short of brilliant. I suggest to you that the complaints substantiated against security officers in this town considerably exceed that number. Indeed, I would like to see complaints levelled against David Jones menswear staff. I will bet that that number is considerably greater. I take offence at any insinuation that we are trying to hide something here.

**DR FOSKEY:** I think it is fair enough to cross-reference reports.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You would have to give us some notice about that; otherwise you could be talking in Queensland dialect, for all I know.

**DR FOSKEY:** Possibly other officers can help. On page 20 of the ombudsman's report,

there are five issues listed regarding the watch-house alone. On the same page there is a case quoted involving a substantiated incident of excessive force. I am wondering if this is one of the substantiated complaints referred to on page 27 of the ACT Policing annual report.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I cannot answer your question unless I see whether or not the ombudsman's report you are talking about refers to the same year the police report refers to. You are saying, "I have four reports on this hand and five on that hand. That means I have four dots on this orange and four dots on that apple." Maybe one of those dots is, in fact, the same piece of mould. I don't know.

**DR FOSKEY:** I suggest that these matters are of deep interest to the community.

**Mr Hargreaves:** What, the four of them? They have been dealt with.

**DR FOSKEY:** I have a number of other questions.

**Mr Hargreaves:** In answer to your first question, I am advised by the chief police officer that that excessive force one was in the same two sets of numbers.

[tr:///?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:45:35&quot;?Data=&quot;2d140c1a&quot;](http://tr:///?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:45:35&quot;?Data=&quot;2d140c1a&quot;)

**DR FOSKEY:** One of the things that becomes clear about that particular case is that, while this substantiated excessive use of force was happening, other officers were observing and not seeing this as something they felt obliged to intervene in.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Are you suggesting that we have Abu Grabe down at the city watch-house?

**DR FOSKEY:** Of course not.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Then I suggest you retract the insinuation that officers were watching this thing going on.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am just quoting from the ombudsman's report.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Then you can take it up with the ombudsman, because he has the responsibility to address it. I have not received any request from the ombudsman to do anything about it.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am sorry you are reacting like that. I thought we were investigating—

**Mr Hargreaves:** I am going to be very touchy about that sort of thing.

**THE CHAIR:** Hold it. Dr Foskey is asking legitimate questions. Let us keep it reasonably civil.

**Mr Hargreaves:** She is asking the wrong person.

**THE CHAIR:** If she is asking questions which might refer to some sort of problem—relevant or otherwise—or something you simply cannot comment on, minister, please

just say so.

**Mr Hargreaves:** All right.

**THE CHAIR:** Indeed, perhaps you could take it on notice.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No. I am not taking that garbage on notice.

**THE CHAIR:** Let us not get too emotive about it.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will, if there is an insinuation against the police. I just won't cop it.

**DR FOSKEY:** That is an amazing thing to say, Mr Hargreaves.

**THE CHAIR:** She is asking questions on the report.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Well, try it again. If you want to rephrase the question, I will be happy to answer it.

**DR FOSKEY:** It is a little difficult. I am quoting from one report. I understand that the ombudsman and the police work together to investigate complaints. I consequently felt that the ombudsman's report was quite relevant to refer to because it says on page 27 that all complaints are thoroughly investigated.

**THE CHAIR:** Relate it back to the police report, Dr Foskey.

**DR FOSKEY:** I am investigating the report, so I consequently go to the ombudsman's report and check that out. I see that as my job.

**Mr Hargreaves:** And check what out?

**DR FOSKEY:** The thorough investigation.

**Mr Hargreaves:** What is the question about that? There was one done; it was resolved.

**DR FOSKEY:** After a substantiated complaint concerning the detention of a minor, the ombudsman recommended that the AFP alter some of its procedures to ensure that parents or guardians are more promptly advised of the arrest and detention of a young person. Have those recommendations been implemented?

**MS MacDONALD:** Chair, with all respect, can I suggest to Dr Foskey that this is not in relation to the annual and financial reports, which is what we are here for today, and that it might be best to seek a meeting with the minister about this at another time, in which he could answer those questions. There are other questions we should probably move onto.

**DR FOSKEY:** That is an interesting response.

**THE CHAIR:** I believe it is a question for the ombudsman. It seems clear that these witnesses don't know. It may be that they can answer something on notice, but that is the

ombudsman's report and the ombudsman did it, rather than the police.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chairman, the chief police officer can very quickly respond on this particular issue but I have to say for the record that, to pull one instance out of 700 things really gives me the irrits. I think it stinks.

**DR FOSKEY:** I do not think I would be allowed the time to pull out 700.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The chief police officer will respond to the question.

**THE CHAIR:** You can respond if you like. I do not particularly require a response in relation to the ombudsman because the ombudsman is not here.

**Mr Hargreaves:** This one is a result of the ombudsman's report.

**Ms Fagan:** I can explain. Of the four complaints reported by the ombudsman and substantiated, I sought advice from our professional standards. Some of the four substantiated complaints still have OH&S and confidentiality requirements around them. The first was a complaint of police verbal harassment or threat; the second related to inappropriate use of force in the watch-house, which is the case study referred to earlier; the third was a complaint relating to the damage of the property of an offender in the watch-house, and the fourth was a complaint of failing to apply ACT Policing guidelines in relation to the conduct of an investigation. That is a description of the four substantiated complaints. With any of these, recommendations are made in concert between the ombudsman and professional standards. They are given to ACT management and we action those with the appropriate measures and recommendations from the investigation.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thank you.

**MS MacDONALD:** At page 32 there is discussion about the implementation of the new roster. That talks about a better way to deal with rostering, catering, being better for demands in peak periods, et cetera. I note that you speak specifically about balancing work and family commitments. I am curious to know how it is going and how police officers have responded to that, having an ongoing interest in providing work and family balance in all areas we have a say in.

**Ms Fagan:** The new rosters were initially worked up through Detective Superintendent Charmaine Quade, a busy mother who is now serving in Singapore. We undertook an extensive consultation process prior to the rosters being put in place. Seventy-two per cent of our members supported the new roster approach, which is very encouraging. The new rosters enable police to be effectively deployed during specific peak periods and to focus on those crime types, to better serve the ACT community. The philosophy sitting behind the implementation of the roster was flexibility, creating surge capacity, particularly around Fridays and Saturdays—weekends in particular—and peak periods. [tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:52:15&quot;?Data=&quot;57ecd7c1&quot;](http://tr:////?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:52:15&quot;?Data=&quot;57ecd7c1&quot;) It is quite normal for the executive to move police from their portfolios in order to meet specific requirements at different times, not all of which can be planned ahead. Sometimes the

very nature of our work requires imminent change to those rosters, and our staff understand that. With that in mind, where policing parents are put out, we have a dial-an-angel nanny service. We have emergency facilities to assist them in those stations. No-one is forced to do any shifts on overtime unless they are willing to do so. That is another way we supplement and use overtime where appropriate on operational targeting.

The rosters work in a variety of ways—12-hour, 10-hour and eight-hour shifts—and they are quite complicated. I have an example of a northside roster here, done on a colour printer, that runs on five lines. It shows the eight-hour, 10-hour and 12-hour working shifts with, in many areas, four-day breaks. So staff get longer breaks with their families. For example, in the first line of that five-line roster, officers would work 70 hours in the fortnight; in the second line they would work 74 hours; in the third line they would work 76 hours; in the fourth line they would work 76 hours, and in the fifth line there are 102 fortnightly hours. So they build up to 400 hours over 10 weeks. Our certified agreement is 40 hours per week and that balances out across the time. It is complicated—when you read them, the numbers will all make sense, I am sure—but it is working. There are some areas where we do not use it. Our traffic operations section works predominantly on an eight-hour shift. We find that that is the best model for our traffic operations staff. Management generally work more flexibly through the day and, as required, out of hours.

**MS MacDONALD:** I have always had a great deal of admiration for people who can do rostering. I look at them and my eyes start going around and around. How long has the new roster been in operation?

**Ms Fagan:** Since December last year—before my time.

**MS MacDONALD:** Have there been any feedback forms or surveys done on how officers are reacting to it?

**Ms Fagan:** That is monitored within each station by the officer in charge. The traffic example is an adjustment. The eight-hour roster is a better model for them at this time, depending on peaks and troughs. We have a staff survey every two years. The next is due in March next year, I believe. That will give us an opportunity to measure and understand how they are working. I do not have knowledge of a particular survey on this per se, but we survey constantly.

**MS MacDONALD:** I suppose you need time to see how they are operating but, anecdotally, it sounds as if they are going well. You mentioned the issue of nannies being available. Is that being taken up by male sworn officers as well as by female sworn officers?

**Ms Fagan:** I am aware of cases where it has been. It is particularly useful in stations where mum and dad are police officers, or one sworn and one unsworn, when we have an operational imperative. In a current recruit class that will be graduating very soon, their chief instructor utilised it just recently for a situation in the training facility. So it is open and available in an emergency situation where we do not have the availability of normal care.





operational support roles.

<fr:///?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;10:59:43&quot;?Data=&quot;70ad83bd&quot;>

**Mr Hargreaves:** Another thing is that, if you have a look at the list on page 87, they are just places the person will interact with. So the issues of how much service they provide are not really relevant. When I went to talk to the people down at Gugan Gulwan a couple of months ago there, the indigenous liaison officer was there. That is a drop-in service as well. As the two police officers said, we are confident that the number of resources we have are proportionate to the amount of response expected of us. We would like to see more. When we do police recruiting, that is one of the target areas, as are women and as are qualified women and qualified indigenous people. Your question is quite well placed, but I think we are doing fairly well. Again, it is one of the areas we would like to do a bit better in.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Pratt, you may ask one last question and then all further questions should be placed on notice.

**MR PRATT:** Going back to the discussion on page 126 of the ACT Policing review, I understand that that was completed in 2004-05 and that it is with the government.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The review?

**MR PRATT:** The joint report is with the government and has been with them for about four months.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes.

**MR PRATT:** Are you able to guarantee that that report will be made public, including all of the input and contributions from all police and academic sources?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I cannot give you that kind of guarantee without having a look at it. We are sensitive to such things as privacy concerns. Let me put this to you. I am not trying to hide a thing. As I mentioned earlier, if the joint studies and all these reviews coincidentally come at the time we need them, it would be irresponsible of us not to include them in our considerations of the outcomes we want in the policing agreement—basically that. There needs to be a government response. There is always a time lag with the government response because it needs to be cleared by cabinet. The biggest hold-up for us, I can assure you, is the coincidence of needing to settle on the agreement. This year, for the first time in five years—you will obviously appreciate this—we had to sign off on the arrangement. We then had to compile and agree on the agreement.

**MR PRATT:** Those two exercises have clashed?

<fr:///?location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Comittee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;11:03:27&quot;?Data=&quot;c69bb387&quot;>

**Mr Hargreaves:** The timings of them coincided. For example, had we not needed to do the arrangement, we may have been able to deliver the thing earlier. But we had those coincidences. I believe the information contained in the study should be factored into what we expect the police to deliver over the next 12 months. It would be irresponsible of us not to. We needed to make sure that those coincidences were taken care of. That is pretty nigh done. I have to get the cabinet tick, and away we go.

<fr:///location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Committee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;11:03:36&quot;?Data=&quot;de42e8f1&quot;>

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, Mr Hargreaves. The last questions will be from Ms Porter, who has been waiting patiently. Members, I would ask that any further questions on policing for this hearing be given to the secretary by close of business on Tuesday.

<fr:///location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Committee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;11:03:50&quot;?Data=&quot;8c9533c5&quot;>

**MS PORTER:** I note that on page 30 of the report there are some pleasing results in Gungahlin. The number of concerns coming from people in that suburb about the level of policing in that area does not seem to be borne out in these figures, because good results have been achieved in that area. How have you done that, given that there has been this disquiet?

<fr:///location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Committee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;11:04:25&quot;?Data=&quot;468d0d15&quot;>

**Ms Fagan:** The Gungahlin station is operational between 7.00 and 11.00 pm seven days a week, with the front office/public reception area open between 10.00 and 6.00 daily. The team consists of one sergeant and nine constables. It is pleasing to see those results. Our operation of the police station is determined in response to existing crime trends in Gungahlin and demand for police services elsewhere in Canberra. The available data indicates that Gungahlin has a low crime level for its population compared to offence rates in other areas of Canberra.

<fr:///location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Committee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;11:05:05&quot;?Data=&quot;7869f0cb&quot;>

When the Gungahlin police station is closed patrols from north district and across the ACT regularly patrol Gungahlin—for example, traffic patrols. These patrols are able to respond to any incident that may arise in the Gungahlin area or elsewhere in the ACT. The ACT Policing specialist teams, including operation Halite, which we have spoken about today, and operation Globin, which we gave you some statistics about earlier regarding burnouts and traffic-related issues, are deployed in Gungahlin for specific investigations and targeting as may be required.

<fr:///location=&quot;Legislative&nbsp;Committee&nbsp;Room&nbsp;1&quot;?date=&quot;04-Nov-2005&quot;?position=&quot;11:05:42&quot;?Data=&quot;3021ced0&quot;>

The good results for operation Globin in respect of curbing burnout and street racing behaviours have been achieved right across the ACT, so it is not unique. Gungahlin patrol vehicles are not allocated outside of the Gungahlin patrol area. They get supplementation in, but there is no allocation out. That also adds to the service to those residents—unless, of course, there is an urgent or very high priority matter where every other option has been exhausted. In that, you would be dealing with a very remote situation. I think that combination, and working as part of the north district with Belconnen and city station, gives a critical mass to serve the people north of the lake very well.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, minister; and thank you, officers.

**Meeting adjourned from 11.06 to 11.28 am.**

**THE CHAIR:** I welcome the witnesses from the Emergency Services Authority. You should understand that these hearings are legal proceedings of the Legislative Assembly protected by parliamentary privilege. That gives you certain protections but also certain responsibilities. It means that you are protected from certain legal action, such as being sued for defamation, for what you say at this public hearing. It also means that you have a responsibility to tell the committee the truth. Giving false or misleading evidence will be treated by the Assembly as a serious matter.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Do you mind if I make an opening statement, chairman?

**THE CHAIR:** No, go right ahead.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Before we begin, I would like to express my sincere apologies to the committee for the late changes to the ESA annual report that occurred this week. Following publication of the original report, the authority became aware that a number of changes were required and consequently the report has been reprinted. The copies you have are the revised versions and additional copies will be distributed to the Assembly next week, as soon as they come off the press.

This is the first annual report that the ESA as a new agency has had to put together and, despite the late adjustments, I think it's a clear and easy to understand document. I think in fact you will find it is very, very easy to read. The general public, who may have an interest in seeing the ESA's performance over the last 12 months, will find it equally easy to read, and I congratulate the authority on that.

The ESA has gone through many changes following the fires in 2003 and the introduction of the Emergencies Act in 2004. This report covers the first 12 months of the ESA as a stand-alone agency and some of the achievements that have been made in that short period of time. The ESA have taken heed of the recommendations of the McLeod report following the 2003 bushfires and worked diligently to act on those recommendations.

But, more than this, many of our paramedics, firefighters and SES have gone beyond these requirements and taken a personal interest in ensuring the safety and preparedness of our community and our city. I believe one of our most significant achievements has been in the area of bushfire preparedness. I truly believe we are better prepared for this bushfire season than ever before. The significant rain over the past few months has allowed us to delay the beginning of the season to 1 November, just gone, following advice from the ACTESA, the ACT Rural Fire Service and the ACT Bush Fire Council. Through measures in the Emergencies Act, the ESA has been able to oversee the bushfire operational plans submitted by land managers in the ACT to make sure we have a coordinated approach to hazard reduction. At the end of the 2004-05 financial year, land managers had carried out 18 hazard reduction burns, totalling 628 hectares, plus the burning of 1,355 hectares of log piles in Stromlo, Uriarra and Pierces Creek. A further 3,577 hectares of land has also been mown or slashed to reduce the threat of grass fires. A very extensive physical removal program, by both hand and machine, has also taken place along the 198 hectares of ACT's urban edge, with an enormous amount of woody weeds, damaged and dead trees, bark leaves and shrubs being removed. This is a significant physical hazard reduction that is reducing the threat from bushfire.

Our emergency services are responsible for consequence management following any sort of emergency, whether it be man made or natural, and they manage these consequences with the community. This weekend, Canberra households will receive *Emergencies and the national capital: a residents guide*, one of which I have here. I would be delighted to have it tabled. This provides practical advice on what to do before, during and after a major emergency. It is the first of its kind in Australia and the officers of ESA should be congratulated on their initiative and professionalism. This guide is designed to be used in any type of emergency no matter what caused it. It contains information on what to do in that first critical hour after an emergency and how to plan evacuations. I encourage all Canberrans to take the time to read and absorb the information and to keep it handy. By doing this, we will be able to help make the emergency services jobs that much easier. Chair, we are happy to answer questions you may have.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, minister. I'll start off with a couple of questions. How well is the so-called portal development by Plumtree operating, and is it still running to budget? It was stated in, I think, the Yellow Edge internal report into the 2003 fires that the portal wasn't functioning well. Perhaps you could give us an update on that.

**Mr Dunn:** The Yellow Edge report referred to the communications that were needed internally in the organisation and the portal is one of the products that is part of the communication project, the radio project. That portal has been running for the best part of 12 months. The portal is running effectively and, in terms of bedding it down, it is now moving into the operational mode. To get into the operational mode—that is, to move away from just administrative traffic—required us to link our stations with broadband and put the portal out to the stations. That project is now almost completed, and we are moving to build on the learning capacity of the portal, which was used to introduce the radio project in other areas as well. So I am very satisfied that the portal is now bedded in to the organisation. It is now moving into the operational sphere as planned and it is running according to budget at this stage.

I would point out that portal technology, as you may well be aware, is something that changes the way people do business fundamentally. That's why we have taken approximately 12 months to get people used to the portal before we shift it to being fully operational. I would estimate that it will take us another 12 to 24 months before we can say that we're achieving the maximum benefit from that technology—not because the technology has any deficiencies, but members of the ESA have to become used to using the portal as a means of communicating, having shared work groups—communities, as they're called in portal jargon—to conduct conferencing and share technical information. Also, it will take us that long to link it to all of the sources of reference material that you can pull off a portal. Some of that material needs to be loaded up and that will be occurring over the next 12 months.

**THE CHAIR:** After the next 12 months, though, it will be fully operational and everyone will be trained up in the use of it?

**Mr Dunn:** I'm expecting that in about 12 months. I'm not going to commit to an exact date because we are talking about changing people's way of doing work here. In about 12 months we'll be running that portal to a very high level of efficiency in the operational sense. We've already achieved administrative advantages from that. But it's

there for operations, that's its prime role, and that's what people are training up to use it in now. So, yes, 12 months or thereabouts.

**THE CHAIR:** On page 31 of the report it states in the outlook column "rolling out Phase 2 of the TRN to provide improved coverage beyond the urban-rural edge". What coverage exists at the moment and will stage 2 be completed before this fire season? If it hasn't, I suppose the fire season has started. Will it give 100 per cent coverage to the ACT, which I understand it was meant to do, and, if not, why not? My final question on that area is: how many additional towers are in stage 2 and how many are established currently?

**Mr Dunn:** The coverage of the TRN at the moment is over the complete city area and also over the complete bushfire abatement zone. We have previously presented to members of the Assembly coverage maps, and I would be happy to do that—I don't have them here with me now—which cover the entire bushfire abatement zone and also further outside the bushfire abatement zone. The TRN is the means of communication that will be used when we are combating bushfires close to the urban area, that is, inside the bushfire abatement zone. By doing that, all agencies will be able to operate on the same radio system and therefore have full interoperability. Also, over 40 New South Wales agencies will be able to operate on that system, and other interstate agencies also.

**THE CHAIR:** Does that include all the agencies? You say 40 New South Wales agencies; are they all the ones around our immediate region—all the local fire brigades around the ACT?

**Mr Dunn:** They can certainly use that. There is a system in use by the New South Wales Rural Fire Service called the PMR, personal mobile radio. That is a system that is in place because the New South Wales government radio network coverage is not good in this region, because when the project was rolled out funds limited the amount of deployment of infrastructure, particularly towers, that could be conducted in the south-east of New South Wales. Part of the TRN project in fact gives that additional infrastructure that is necessary in New South Wales to allow New South Wales agencies to fully adopt the GRN, which of course will give 100 per cent compatibility. Those PMR systems are compatible, by loading the appropriate software into our radios, with our agencies, and there are training issues with that, in that we do need to constantly keep working with New South Wales around this region to ensure that their people are aware of how to do that. It is a simple process but, if new people come aboard and they are not familiar with it, we need to make sure that training is provided to allow them to swing onto our networks. So, yes, we do have interoperability with the New South Wales agencies around this area.

The TRN in its current state, phase 1, covers areas well outside the bushfire abatement zone. There are numerous tests now where people in the rural areas have expressed very great surprise at how effective the coverage is even with phase 1. So we now have a single system over the urban area, the BAZ and further outside. Stage 2 sees us upgrading some existing towers, for example Mount Tennant and Mount Ginini, and with that upgrade our coverage will be extended into the southern areas of the ACT. To get the 100 per cent coverage that you describe, we require a new tower to be constructed and we are in discussions with New South Wales right now, have been for some months, to hopefully construct a tower at Mount Clear, to the south in New South Wales.

However, a joint venture with New South Wales government radio network teams is occurring at the moment and we are very near to the point where we will be able to proceed with that construction. The Mount Tennant and Mount Ginini towers are, of course, within our gift to improve; that is contained in phase 2 and will occur. We are awaiting final confirmation now of the dates for Mount Clear. All indications are that that will not be delayed, because there is a high level of motivation in New South Wales to have that tower placed into service because it will give them great operational capability.

The other perspective from New South Wales, if I may just comment on their view, is that, as already the ACT have been asked to assist New South Wales in bushfire situations down towards Cooma—there was a particular request where a major hazard reduction burn was undertaken, and we provided assistance to New South Wales—it is clear to New South Wales that, as we have a very large and very competent rural fire service here in the ACT, they need to facilitate the entry of ACT services into New South Wales as well. So this is not a one-way street; this is a two-way street, which gives advantage to New South Wales. That construction at Mount Clear will be shared in cost and they're the sorts of negotiations that we're going through now. Once Mount Clear is in place, we believe that we will have a very high percentage—I will say full coverage—of the whole of the ACT. However, in any voice radio network there will always be some areas, because of deep valleys and gullies, that will get less than optimal voice communications. To cover that, part of phase 2 involves portable repeater boxes. These are small suitcase-size boxes that can be placed in position by helicopter or by four-wheel drive vehicle travelling up to the top of a hill, the ridge line, something of that nature, and then from there supplementing that communication while we're operating in a particularly deep valley. That will always be the case. These boxes, however, are very robust, have their own power supplies and will power for a lengthy period of time. That will give us an extraordinarily effective single means of communication. It will not be, however, the only means of communication.

**THE CHAIR:** Thanks. Ms MacDonald?

**MS MacDONALD:** On page 14 of the report you've referred to the operational support unit for the ACT Ambulance Service. Has that been commissioned and, if so, what value is it adding to the ambulance capability?

**Mr Dunn:** The operation support unit has been commissioned; it is an extraordinary addition to the ambulance capability. In particular, it allows us to handle a large number of casualties, a mass casualty event, and conduct triage at the site in order for the transportation, then, of casualties from the incident site. It gives us the capacity to place out stretchers for a large number of people. The paramedics, the crew, the operational support unit, can then go through the triage process and we can therefore ensure that those most urgently in need of transport to the hospital facility get it and that the right priority is applied.

Further, the OSU also has extensive communications facilities. It has the trunk rated network that we've just described and it also has satellite telephone and other communications facilities, which allow it to operate as a control centre for a major casualty event. It, of course, also carries quite a volume of medical supplies, which means that we can keep that operating in situ for a longer period of time. Also, it allows

us to have supplies there without taking supplies from stretcher ambulances, which are required, of course, to transport the most seriously ill or injured patients back to hospital. So it has stepped us into a new dimension.

The operational support unit was used to its full capability during the recent counter-terrorism exercise, Mercury 05, and that has been the most extensive workout that it has received. It is not the only workout that it has received; it is regularly deployed to incidents, either for a command patrol function or to conduct triage. But Mercury 05 saw all the capabilities of the vehicle used, and used over a period of several hours, which gave the ambulance service a really good opportunity to test it and look at its capabilities, and it was found to be a very, very good design. I would add that the design of the vehicle flowed from members of the ACT Ambulance Service themselves. This was designed by paramedics, so there is a huge amount of practical knowledge involved and demonstrated in that vehicle, and I'm not surprised at all, given the very high skills of our paramedics and their enormous interest in improving their ability to deliver care to the community, that the vehicle design has proved to be so excellent.

**MS MacDONALD:** Thank you, commissioner. Minister, page 48 states that the ESA is developing OH&S programs to suit the four services and improve OH&S and rehabilitation management. Can you or the commissioner inform the committee of what is being done in this area, please?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Sure. I'll get the commissioner to give you specific details, but we need to understand that the authority is only 12 months old and one of the things that have come to light is a real understanding of the nature of the business. The nature of the business is not just like a bureaucracy where you get people sitting in chairs looking at screens all day. Certainly, there is a lot of that, but we also have the need for the response officers to be physically fit and to be physically careful about maintaining their own health. We're conscious about things like manual handling techniques, maintaining body tone so that it assists with manual handling techniques and having, in fact, an OH&S awareness not only for oneself and for the work environment but also for one's colleagues, because most of the activities that ESA do are in a team. I'll get the commissioner to give you specific details about that.

**Mr Dunn:** The business of the front line agencies in the ESA is dangerous; there is no question about that. Our emergency services personnel, on a daily basis—there are sometimes as many as 120 responses a day—put their lives on the line on a routine and very commonplace basis. For that reason, OH&S to all of us in the ESA takes on a new dimension. It is not the routine trip hazard—if you can have a routine hazard—not the common hazards, that we deal with. There are some examples in the report that might seem a little surprising. But, when you find that the ACT Fire Brigade, when they are attending a motor vehicle accident, often have other vehicles leaving the road because they are coming through at speed and not observing the signs to slow down and are sliding off roads and barely missing Fire Brigade officers, you take a very serious interest in road traffic control and road safety cones, for example. So we have a very active campaign to ensure that not only the community but our officers are safe. Of course, it takes us a long time to train our officers too. So, if people are not available for work because they're injured, we have a major deficiency. So we would seek to prevent that injury in the first place. Everything from sharps hazards with the ambulance service, through to the provision of slip-on units for rural lessees to fight fires, falls into the

category of OH&S for us. In the latter case of the slip-on units, our philosophy is to keep fires small and put fires out very quickly. If we give equipment to the rural lessees to allow them to do first attack and to keep any fires that might start on their property very small, that helps avoid the instance where our firefighters are threatened by a major, possibly catastrophic, fire and burn over their vehicles.

But it's not just the OH&S programs that we have in place. What I'm indicating here is that they are very, very active. We have full-time OH&S officers who are dealing in these sorts of areas at all times. It is also managing back to work those people that do sustain an injury. I am particularly proud of the record of the ESA rehabilitation staff and the OH&S staff in decreasing the amount of time people are spending off work, increasing the care that's provided to people who are injured, making sure that they remain connected and getting them back into work very, very quickly. The graphs are all showing a downward trend in the time lost from injuries and that is drawing back, comparing also right back to 2001-02. So, whilst it can be seen in the report that there is a spike as a result of the January 2003 bushfires, the underlying return to work rate is improving quite significantly for us, and this has been reflected in a reduction in our Comcare premium, which I'm very pleased about as well. So it is something of great importance to us. It does reflect the dangerous nature of the activities that occur on a day-to-day basis in the authority and it will continue to get very intense focus by all services and all emergency managers in the organisation.

**MS MacDONALD:** Thank you, commissioner.

**DR FOSKEY:** I was just wondering if any progress reports on the McLeod inquiry have been issued and when the latest one was delivered.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Progress reports in what sense, Dr Foskey?

**DR FOSKEY:** On implementation of the McLeod inquiry's recommendations; is that the usual practice?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, we have, in fact, tabled certain ministerial statements in the house, indicating progress, but my understanding is that all of the recommendations have been discharged bar one.

**Mr Dunn:** Two.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That's right—two—and the two are linked; that's why I thought there was one. Those are the creation of a new headquarters and training facility. All of the other recommendations have been discharged.

**DR FOSKEY:** Thank you. On page 23 of the report it mentions that the ACT Rural Fire Service needs to engage the scientific community, but it doesn't outline how it did this. When you state "the scientific community", does this also include people with environmental and/or ecological expertise?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Firstly, Dr Foskey, you need to take that in context. The sentence does not read, "The ACT RFS must engage with members of the scientific community." It says that we need to engage with members of the general public, residents who live in



the areas that are affected, volunteers and brigade members themselves, members of the scientific community and government agencies—in other words, we have to be a little bit comprehensive in the nature of our engagement with people who can contribute to the mitigation of bushfire risk. So we don't exclude anybody; we have a very professional bunch of risk managers within the ESA and, as you would appreciate, we're very, very sensitive to matters bushfire. I am aware that there are differences of opinion between some purported bushfire experts and other purported bushfire experts, but the ESA itself as an agency doesn't exclude advice from anybody. I have every confidence that our risk managers will seek information from anybody.

You talk about hazard reduction and burning off and getting rid of litter underneath trees. We are sensitive to the fact that some of that is going to completely stuff up somebody's habitat, so, yes, we will take advice on the ecology, but can I just say to you that most of our advice would come from the environment people. If they suggest to us that there is a range of other experts in the field that we might like to talk to, of course we'll talk to them.

**MS MacDONALD:** Dr Foskey, you wanted to seek clarification?

**DR FOSKEY:** I actually asked whether the scientific community that were involved included people with environmental, ecological expertise—

**Mr Hargreaves:** And the answer to that was yes.

**DR FOSKEY:** So I will move on to how they were engaged and what were the outcomes of that engagement.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Firstly, as I mentioned to you before, we engage with Environment ACT. That is our first port of call. It's an agency that we're paying, and we're going to use them, but I'll get Commissioner Dunn to give you a further example of how that engagement is—I had a caveat on it but I won't put it just yet.

**Mr Dunn:** Dr Foskey, the first point that I draw your attention to is the mission of the authority, which is that the authority is there to protect and preserve life, property and the environment. That latter part, protecting the environment, was placed in during public consultation on the new legislation with the staff of the authority, and was placed in there to make us unique amongst other agencies, to ensure that we do consider the environment when we're responding particularly to fire but also to other hazards.

The engagement started with that and has continued in many other areas. For a start, when we produced the strategic bushfire management plan, there was very extensive consultation in addition to that that was undertaken with the new legislation, the Emergencies Act 2004, and that consultation included engagement with people with environmental and ecological backgrounds. They all have ownership of large parts of that strategic bushfire management plan and they continue to be involved.

In addition, the ACT Bush Fire Council, which is an independent advisory body to both the minister and me, has a specific provision in the legislation to have at least one person on the council who has a background in managing the environment—an environmentalist as opposed to just a land manager. That position has been filled, and that exchange

occurs and is fed to the ESA by the advice that the council gives.

Further, the ACT Rural Fire Service is very engaged—the whole of the ESA is very engaged—with one of the major national cooperative research centres, the bushfire CRC, that is headquartered in Melbourne but, as with all CRCs, is a distributed research project. That CRC contains as one of its subsets particular research into what is known as high fire, mountain fire, and we are the lead agency working with the CRC on that project. The CRC contains eminent scientists from around Australia, many of whom are deliberately brought in because they bring environmental skills or ecological management skills.

There are additional forums where we engage with environmental and ecological groups and I would also include in that statement a new forum we're establishing that will include the national parks association to engage with us. We believe it's necessary to do all of that in order to make sure that we don't simply have a response focus but we have the ability to protect the environment and also move directly into recovery, as we did after the Lone Pine fire 18 months ago when we left the plant equipment and personnel in situ and, under the control of Environment ACT, immediately commenced rehabilitation of the control lines that we had put in with bulldozers once the fire was blacked out. That was the first time that that has happened in the ACT but is now a standard practice.

**Mr Hargreaves:** As far as I'm concerned, the list of agencies, the list of organisations, that have environmental credentials that we have contact with is quite extensive, even if it doesn't include the ACT Greens.

**DR FOSKEY:** Can I ask some questions now about financial performance?

**Mr Hargreaves:** You can ask it; go for your life!

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 64 to 65, am I right to observe that ESA finished with \$5 million in deficit in 2004-05?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Where did you get that? I think that's page 68, Dr Foskey, isn't it?

**DR FOSKEY:** Well, the whole section.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Are we talking about the same figures?

**DR FOSKEY:** My questions may range over that whole section. I was just noting that ESA's assets reduced by \$20 million in 2004-05, and the report mentions the transfer of JACS land and discontinuation of the Belconnen centre as the reason. Was there any reason why the JACS land did not get transferred?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I'll have to get back to you on that one, but your original question was, "Was there a \$5 million deficit?" That amount was accounted for in the Treasurer's advance and an explanation was given of that in the Assembly. The commissioner will talk to you about the JACS question.

**Mr Dunn:** The situation, when we separated from JACS and became a department under

the FMA, was that we then had to go through a process, which essentially commenced with the start of last financial year, to identify land and separate it. That was an unexpected requirement as we moved to create the new authority, and so therefore it's reflected in this annual report; it was not done prior to the establishment of the ESA.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Can I also advise you, Dr Foskey, in general terms that this is the first full financial year of the agency's existence and of course there is going to be some bedding down of the establishment costs and listing of assets that can be taken to book on this sort of thing. So you can expect a little bit of volatility in their numbers for the first couple of financial years; anything otherwise would be an incorrect assumption. For example, it took some time for the agency to come to grips with what exactly it had by way of assets, when you consider that the definition of assets can be a bit difficult. Take a big fire truck, for example: what is an asset? Is it just the fire truck or is it the bits on it? The answer is that it's the bits on it, so we've got to take those to charge as well. To that end, the agency has developed a strategic asset management plan, SAMP, and, as far as I know, it's the first or the most comprehensive within the bureaucracy at the moment and a lesson for other departments to pick up, because it gives a full declaration of what their assets are, non-fixed assets, and also gives a whole of life cost on them. So we can start to predict a bit more. That takes a certain amount of time to come up and that's why you'll see some volatility in the numbers over the next year or so.

**DR FOSKEY:** A lot of my questions are really just because I don't know and I need the answers.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That's fine; I'm happy to tell you.

**DR FOSKEY:** So they may seem naive. Why was the Belconnen centre discontinued?

**Mr Hargreaves:** The commissioner can answer that one, quite happily.

**Mr Dunn:** Dr Foskey, the ESA undertook a complete review of its strategic basing—there is a study known as the strategic basing study—to understand better just what the requirement is for stations, both ambulance and fire stations, and rural fire and state emergency service assets. That was undertaken as soon as the Canberra plan was released. We had a unique opportunity—or still have, and are taking that opportunity—with the Canberra plan being released, to look forward 15 to 20 years to the development of Canberra and to start to plan where assets need to be based to best respond to community need.

An additional factor in that consideration was whether the concept of a JESC, a joint emergency services centre, is the best way to approach things or perhaps we should have co-location rather than direct combination of the services. There are many differences in the way the services operate. That required a rethink and we had the benefit of the experience of the Gungahlin joint emergency services centre to look at and to see whether that was indeed the most cost-effective way to go. The combination of our rethink on JESCs, the launch of the Canberra plan and the opportunity that presented us, and then our strategic basing study, led us to conclude that we needed to step back and rethink. You will recall that in the budget for this year, stepping into this financial year momentarily, there is money there for us to conduct feasibility studies to verify the steps that we should take in the future. So that money was withdrawn because we were clearly

not going to expend it in the year because we needed to take a more strategic view of our locations.

**DR FOSKEY:** Was there another \$8 million of assets lost? Is that explained through the processes that you've just described?

**Mr Britt:** This was part of the issue the minister was referring to do with volatility. When the original estimates were put to the test, when we were preparing our financial statements and dealing with actuals rather than estimates, it was found that there were balances that weren't there. That is a simple explanation.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It is part of the teething process of setting up the budgets in terms of operating costs and assets and liabilities and trying to match the two.

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Pratt and then Ms Porter, as my colleague Ms McDonald indicates.

**MR PRATT:** Minister, I refer to page 10. Incidentally, I have still got the older report. I gather that there has been a new report issued. I am operating off the old one, I am sorry.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Mr Pratt, before you go to your questions, as I have already done with the opening statement but you were not here, I extend our apologies for that. We have done some changes and we have given the committee revised copies. As soon as the printer has done the run, we will make those available to you. If that raises other issues, I am happy to talk to you privately about those issues later.

**MR PRATT:** Okay. Provided that it has not been changed, the first dot point on page 10, under "Achievements", refers to prevention and "measures taken in advance of an emergency to decrease or eliminate impact". How can that statement be absolutely correct when the strategic bushfire management plan is still only in draft form? The SBMP is a very useful document. I think that it is a great discussion paper, but I have said here before, I think in estimates, that I do not believe it is a concrete action plan detailing clear tasks, responsibilities and deadlines that the territory deserves for bushfire threat. Don't you think that we do need a plan which does just that?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Firstly, Mr Pratt, I disagree with you about the strategic bushfire management plan to the extent that to have something final and set in concrete would be inappropriate and irresponsible. We need to make sure that such plans are evolving and constant works in progress and are being updated every time they can be. You would know that we have volume 1 out already. You would also know that a lot of the initiatives contained therein are going to happen and have happened and that, in fact, we are proceeding apace with those sorts of things.

For example, part of the bushfire operational plan has kicked in already. That is already in the legislation and we are picking it up and running with it. In terms of our prevention and preparedness, the work that people contributed to the creation of this strategic bushfire management plan in itself has put us so far ahead of where we were before. I am very sure that our preparedness is way ahead of where we thought we could have been. I do not think I would like to see something like the strategic bushfire management plan signed off and then shelved. I think that we need to have it as a living document. At the moment, we are at the stage of engaging with people to refine it. It is a very valuable

document, I believe. It sets an enormous number of scenarios for us, targets for us, ways to go forward for us, and it can only get better as we go on. You will see over the life of your tenancy of this place, I hope, probably three or four versions of it.

**MR PRATT:** I agree with you that the SBMP is a lot better than we have had in the past.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, which was nothing.

**MR PRATT:** It has come out of McLeod and it is certainly a lot better than we have ever had before. But three years down the track and going into the third bushfire season since January 2003, we still do not have a concrete action plan that lays out those tasks and responsibilities.

**Mr Hargreaves:** We actually do.

**MR PRATT:** Are you saying that it is simply going to be a live document and you are not going to have action plans which are clearly there for the public to see and for people to operate against?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Mr Pratt, that is an inference based on the possibility that we will say that the strategic bushfire management plan is the be-all and end-all of everything. It is not. It is a component of our preparedness and of our planning and there is considerably more. You were not here also, I think, when I tabled the document for which you were at the opening, the one that will be going out to every household in the place telling them how to prepare for a disaster, whether it be a bushfire or not.

That is part of the planning. That came out of the thinking that created the SBMP. I think that the actual planning and the documents that pertain to that, whether they be public or operational planning, are very responsive and I would say that we are now at the stage where we are into enhancement mode, I would hope sharpening up mode, but not building mode. I will get the commissioner to explain it to you in more detail.

**Mr Dunn:** Mr Pratt, the SBMP certainly requires—the transition of it from version 1 to version 2—some information that is simply not yet available. For example, we need to finalise, and we are very close to this now, the management plan for the catchment area, particularly the lower Cotter. This is not something we should rush, for obvious reasons. We also, sadly, have little time to do this—we have about 12 months to make this decision—because we have to decide the balance between ensuring maximum water yield and maximum water quality with the regeneration of forest of whatever type in the catchment area and understand the impact of fire on the catchment area. Then we can finalise the approach that we will take to the design of the catchment area. In saying “design”, I am talking about vegetation or revegetation, I am talking about roads, I am talking about accessibility for helicopters, et cetera.

I returned this week from three days of on-the-ground work with colleagues from Actew and from Environment ACT, three days on the ground with the Water Corporation of Western Australia and the conservation and land management department in WA, and with Melbourne Water in the catchment north-east of Melbourne in the beautiful mountain ash forests. We were there to understand the science that they have developed about managing fire in the catchment area in order to ensure maximum quality and yield

of the water. There is a lot of science and there is a lot for us to learn. That was the final step before we would be able to start to make the final decisions to allow us then to write up that component of the strategic bushfire management plan.

I am not anxious about us not having done that yet. I think it demonstrates that we are being very rigorous in making sure that we do get a plan that, when version 2 does come out, will last for the 10-year period required under the act. However, we have introduced this notion of versions to allow us to keep modifying the document. It would be an error, we think, simply to have a document that we produce, hail it or read it and then put it away for 10 years and then bring it out to see whether we produced it or not.

Two other areas require us to keep a close watch on developments and be engaged in shaping those developments in order to get a final plan. Those two pieces of work are the move of the Namadgi park plan of management from draft to final status. The submission period for that plan of management has just about closed. We have been very active participants in the development of that plan. I am very pleased to say that there is no conflict. The consultative process has worked very well to ensure that the plan of management for the park is totally consistent with the strategic bushfire management plan. So we need to finalise that.

The third part is the Brindabella park management plan, which is out for consultation at the moment within New South Wales. It is an area of intense interest to us and will affect the way we manage fires. So I am very comfortable that we have deliberately taken a step back to work with version 1. Version 1, as the minister has said, has spawned all of the necessary bushfire operational plans and, in accordance with the legislation, we are auditing those. They are two-year plans; so, when we sit here next year, I would expect to have in our report the report of the audits of the two-year plans, and, of course, then we will be into the next two years.

**MR PRATT:** If I do get the opportunity after, if I can get past the gags that have been thrown around here this morning, I might ask you if you can clarify whether version 2 is actually going to be much more of a document of authority. The bushfire management plan for the catchment area is work in progress and I do know that you have almost got a bushfire operational plan completed for Black Mountain. Of the other 20 or 30 vulnerable areas that I can think of around the ACT, how many bushfire operational plans or bushfire management plans do you have either in draft or complete?

**Mr Dunn:** Mr Pratt, we have bushfire operational plans for the entire urban fringe of the ACT and extending out into the entire ACT. They are there. Those plans are produced by the land managers and passed to the ESA for approval. Before they are approved they are passed to the bushfire council for their advice. The bushfire council process is that council forms a subcommittee to review those plans to ensure that the overall strategic aims are being met and that resources are being directed into the areas where the risk is the highest.

**MR PRATT:** So they are before the council at this stage.

**Mr Dunn:** No, that has happened already. Those plans have been approved. Those plans are being implemented and we are already into audit.

**MR PRATT:** For all of the vulnerable areas.

**Mr Dunn:** Correct.

**Mr Hargreaves:** For the whole of the ACT; that is what the commissioner said.

**Mr Dunn:** The Black Mountain plan is a different kettle of fish.

**MS PORTER:** I have the old report, too.

**THE CHAIR:** I think the page numbers are fairly similar.

**MS PORTER:** Let me know if I am reading from the wrong hymn sheet. Page 45 mentions the total number of volunteers as being 1,332 for the period, a fantastic number. Page 33 mentions the statements of attainment and different other comments on training that staff and volunteers have been undertaking. I was just wondering whether you would be able to enlarge a bit for me on the training of both the volunteers and the managers of volunteers, such as people managing volunteers in community fire units and other management areas.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Is that in respect of whether we train them?

**MS PORTER:** Yes, whether managers of volunteers are receiving some training in the management of their volunteers as a specific skill and whether the commissioner wants to touch on any work that they have been doing with regard to the spontaneous volunteer issue. He may be able to enlarge on that for me.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Okay. I will answer that question very briefly and then the commissioner will give the detail. You need to understand, particularly with the SES and the RFS, that we have people within the agency's headquarters unit dedicated to providing support to those parts of the agency, and training is one of them. Do we train people? Yes, we do. Do we use the people to train themselves? Yes, we do. We have train-the-trainer qualifications. I will get the commissioner to talk about that. In terms of spontaneous volunteers, that is a topical issue.

I need to advise the committee with regard to the issue of volunteers in emergency services of an issue I first raised in the Ministerial Council of Emergency Services Ministers about nine months ago. In fact, I supported a Western Australian resolution at the most recent one in Brisbane—I think it was Brisbane; God only knows where it was as they seem to come and go—with respect to out-of-pocket expenses of volunteers. I recognise that volunteers do not get paid; if they do, they are not volunteers anymore. The army reserve people are not volunteers; they are part-time or casual soldiers and they are actually paid an amount of money to do that.

Our SES officers and RFS officers come from a unique perspective in that, whenever a disaster strikes, it is those people that get to the fighting end of it as distinct from the support function, such as the Red Cross or the Sallies who provide foodstuffs at the rear of the fire ground. These people, whether they are SES or RFS, will be at the danger end. I put it to the council of ministers that we should, in fact, recognise that in some sense they have to go through considerably more training than the other support agencies,

which can do it with coordination rather than a specific bit of training.

There are lots of out-of-pocket expenses, notwithstanding that we give them personal protective equipment and that sort of stuff. We do not give them any reimbursement for petrol to go to and from the training ground. We do not give them reimbursement for other costs that they may incur, personal costs. I put it to the ministerial council that, in fact, we needed to have a taxation relief whereby, with a ceiling, they could claim a rebate from their income tax. It was supported by eight jurisdictions, seven plus me, and the federal minister spun on a stick and would not support it because he considered it to be cost shifting from the states to the commonwealth.

We rejected that out of hand and said to him that disasters do not recognise borders, that it was a federal issue but we happened to be able to do it locally. So, for the committee's benefit, we will continue that fight and I would be looking for support perhaps from the committee to further this recognition that there is something different about RFS and there is something different about SES to those normal support agencies on a volunteer basis and we really do need to consider seriously some reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses. But it should not be a state responsibility. If they were paid like, for example, the army reservists are paid, they could claim other expenses off their tax because they would be paying tax on it now, but they cannot do that because they are not being paid. Therefore, in this instance our volunteers are disadvantaged in that sense. I still think it is the same philosophical regime vis-a-vis the taxation regime. I advise the committee that I will continue to fight this fight and I look to the committee and the Assembly for some bipartisan support on this.

**Mr Dunn:** Ms Porter, in terms of training in volunteer management, the answer is yes, we do that. I would add also that, as I think you are aware, we have full-time volunteer managers in the Rural Fire Service and the State Emergency Service, and now also the ACT Fire Brigade. What is remarkable about this report is that in a very short space of time the ACT Fire Brigade has moved to have the largest number of volunteers in its ranks of any of our services. This is because of the uptake of the community fire units and it is certainly now making sure that all parts of the ESA are involved in the special requirements of volunteer management.

Secondly, in relation to your question on spontaneous volunteering, that issue is now at the national level. The Australasian Fire Authorities Council and the Australian Emergency Management Committee are addressing that and we have put forward the ACT model as one that should be looked at because it is evident to all jurisdictions that, given the Australian nature to volunteer in a disaster, to want to help, that needs to be properly organised. The lessons that have been learned in the ACT and put into a plan by Volunteering ACT are very much at the forefront of our minds.

**THE CHAIR:** Ms MacDonald has to leave us in about 10 minutes. Ms MacDonald, would you like to ask some questions?

**MS MacDONALD:** Minister, the introduction of the new radio communications system is mentioned on page 30 of the report. Did you cover radio before?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Cursorily. It is a very complicated exercise and I think that we do need to have it on the record.



**MS MacDONALD:** I thought I had heard something but I do not recall its being discussed in great detail.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I presume you are not talking about ABC radio, because nobody really does.

**MS MacDONALD:** No, I am talking about radio communications and the introduction of a new radio communications system mentioned on page 30. Given the amount of money spent, a significant amount, has the radio project been successful in providing reliable communications for the Emergency Services Authority?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will get the commissioner to give you some detail. I think it is important to get this stuff on the record because it has been the subject of some inappropriate criticism by some in this place in the past. Chair, you will be absolutely blown away to know that the information manager and command and control communications group people who have managed this process received two awards recently for their work on that. The Australian Institute of Project Management gave the project an award; it is a national award.

You might also like to know—I am sure Mr Pratt would love to know this—that it was your beloved leader, Mr Smyth, beloved by all of you in the chamber, who actually presented that award. I took that as meaning that the opposition were congratulating the team for their achievements. They also received the Emergency Management of Australia safer communities award, the same group of people. There has been a lot of concentration on how much money is being spent and is it working in black spots and that sort of stuff, whether FireLink works and that sort of stuff. The answer is that it does, as recognised by these awards.

**THE CHAIR:** I think that that is fairly important, minister.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I think it is very important, to get it on the record, that one's colleagues and one's peers, as recognised by the Leader of the Opposition when he presented the award, say that we are doing particularly well. I was really impressed with the FireLink one. I will ask the commissioner to give you some more information on that.

**Mr Dunn:** Ms MacDonald, the project itself does have many components, as covered by the report on page 30. I must say that communications projects are some of the most difficult to introduce and implement. This one is no exception. It is a challenge. However, the teams introducing it have done exceptionally well. It was an extraordinarily short time from contract signature to operational use of the system; 15 weeks, which would be something of a record. It will however be with us as a project for quite some time because you can move very quickly to get it operational but, as I was discussing previously with the chairman on the portal, people do need time to learn how to maximise the use of these new systems. It is like any of us with a home computer; we need time to come to use it properly and to its maximum efficiency and effectiveness.

The computerised dispatch system that forms part of it is working exceptionally well. I must comment that the FireLink system that we now have in service and will declare fully operational—it is operational now and we will go through a period of introduction

into service with that—is receiving intense overseas and national interest. The Royal Australian Navy has purchased the FireLink system known as the mach II system. It is the same system. There is now a very busy program of other emergency service organisations in Australia and overseas looking at that system.

We are also installing that system into the Snowy Hydro SouthCare helicopter and we will be installing the FireLink system in our aerial fire suppression aircraft, two of which arrived in Australia this week and we will see very shortly in the ACT. This will represent the first time that this capability has been used for aerial fire suppression of bushfires. It has now attracted the direct attention of the major Canadian wildfire suppression company. They happen to be supplying one of the helicopters to the ACT and this system will be taken back into Canada as well. Whilst we still have challenges and I am sure that we will still be answering various questions on this subject over the next couple of years—I recognise that it is such an important capability that we should be asking and answering questions on it—it is working and working well.

**MS MacDONALD:** It is very interesting that it is being taken back to Canada, which has its own issues and a different type of fire fighting, presumably.

**Mr Dunn:** Yes. The particular issue that we have is the danger that aircraft experience in major water bombing operations, flying at low levels in very thick smoke. It requires positive control of those aircraft. This capability will, for the first time, allow that safety umbrella to be put over our aircraft. I have spoken personally with the pilots and the director of the Canadian company, Wildcat Aviation, about this particular capability. They have been crying out for it in North America. It is not there. As I said, we are installing it now into their aircraft. It has been fully cleared for flight and this is all produced by a Canberra company, ATI. It is a success story and the navy has purchased it. I do not think it is appropriate for me to name the other companies that are interested as it is a commercial venture, but I am aware of the massive interest now being expressed in it.

That, of course, links in with our tower end and provides additional back-up and provides automatic vehicle location. We are moving into new technologies there as well for the urban fire brigade. All of these projects—the portal, CAD, FireLink, TRN—do need to be seen as a whole, as I am sure particularly Mr Pratt would appreciate. Communications projects are systems of systems and that is exactly what this is.

**MS MacDONALD:** Thank you very much, commissioner. I will leave it at that.

**THE CHAIR:** If you think of anything else, please put it on notice by close-of-business on Tuesday. Mr Pratt, you have to leave shortly. Do you have any questions?

**MR PRATT:** Yes. Minister, to follow up on the last statement made by the commissioner, what proportion in very rough terms of communication time is still being taken up by the use of VHF? How much reliance do you still have on VHF as you introduce TRN and other systems?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will get the commissioner to answer that, Mr Pratt, because I do not have a clue.

**Mr Dunn:** Mr Pratt, we are still using VHF as the primary means of communication for the Rural Fire Service outside of the bushfire abatement zone. Also, we will use it for the State Emergency Service should they be required to do a land search outside that area. The State Emergency Service and RFS will, of course, have FireLink. That is a VHF system and will therefore always be there, so we will always have a VHF capacity. We want that. We need that for redundancy. With any system other than FireLink you need infrastructure. You might recall that the FireLink system does not require infrastructure. So the combination of those systems is what will give us the guaranteed communications that our firefighters need to ensure their own safety and effective attack.

**Mr Hargreaves:** As you would appreciate, Mr Pratt, we need to make sure that we can cover the other side of the border as well, which we can, but there are some parts of the region in which we will always need VHF. Of course, we need to have the best technology that we can—the FireLink stuff, self-replicating technology. It is state-of-the-art, but we have to make sure that we don't chuck the baby out.

**MR PRATT:** Even when all the towers are in, you will still expect gaps and you will need to have those covered by VHF.

**Mr Hargreaves:** We would want to make sure, if gaps are identified, that they are plugged with something, until we can be 110 per cent sure of the technology we have at this particular time, remembering that the technology that we are using is actually leading the world at the moment. We could just sit back and follow the rest of the world, but we would rather not; we will lead it. It would be silly to release ourselves from VHF when we are connected with it with FireLink anyway, so we will have both types of communication running. We have great coverage now. It is something that we can have a lot of confidence in. As you would know, with the big fires of 2003 we could not be absolutely sure. Talk about going into buildings, we could not be absolutely sure, but we can now.

**MR PRATT:** I turn to page 37 and the ESA headquarters project. It is stated there that the project was referred to the ACT government for request for construction funding for 2005-06. How much funding was requested and what is the time line now for that project? I know that in the recent budget money that had been allocated previously was pushed back. What is the current state of play?

**Mr Hargreaves:** The amount of money in the budget that we kept going with was project development funding, just over \$1 million. That kept going and we have used it for just that, for the continuing development of concepts and things like that. I am not about to be telling the committee how much money I asked for in budget cabinet.

**MR PRATT:** What is the current state of that project? Are you still on track? What is the case?

**Mr Hargreaves:** There is work continuing at the moment about the statement of need, shall we say. You take the opportunity over time to refine that with knowledge that pops up. We have an idea of what we would like to see in a headquarters unit and we know what we would like to see with JESTA—the Joint Emergency Services Training Authority. Some questions come to mind, such as do we need them co-located? Answer: yes/no. Do we need them separate? Answer: yes/no. What would be the implications of

that? There is further work to be done. There will also be further work as a result of the work we did on the DA out at Hume. We need to take the opportunity to take a breather to think about what we are going to produce and whether or not it is appropriate. We will see what the budget discussions reveal later on. In the year. I say to you: hang onto your hat and wait and see.

**MR PRATT:** Are you reconsidering whether you may wish to build a new headquarters—or are you looking at a rental option?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No. The government is committed to a new headquarters—in other words, to exit Curtin. I have yet to take a proposal to cabinet. You can appreciate that budget cabinet has not started yet. I shall be taking a proposal to cabinet to kick that discussion off again with cabinet very shortly. I do not propose to discuss it. You can ask me as many questions as you like on proposals for the headquarters unit, but I will just skirt around them.

**MR PRATT:** Mr Dunn gallantly said last year that he would be quite prepared to operate out of a tent.

**Mr Hargreaves:** We are only arguing on the colour of the tent at the moment.

**MR PRATT:** I thought that was rather colourfully said, commissioner.

**Mr Hargreaves:** He wants army green and I reckon it is fine.

**MR PRATT:** You cannot take the soldier out of a man. I know that as well as he does.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Are you insinuating that the chairman does not know that?

**MR PRATT:** Is retaining Curtin still an option?

**Mr Hargreaves:** In the long-term, no.

**MR PRATT:** Going back to page 11, under the last dot point of “achievements”, it states:

A comprehensive evacuation strategy based on all-hazards evacuation guidelines and integrated with ACT Community Recovery arrangements was developed...

I was privileged to see the residents guide book launched. I think it a pretty good book; I am quite impressed with it. It is certainly very useful for suburban household use for those types of threats. I do not think I have asked you this before: when will you be producing similar guidelines for the urban terrorist threat, the sort of booklet that might be issued to building managers and business owners in areas considered by your government to have some risk of collateral terrorist attack?

**Mr Hargreaves:** You are quite correct, Mr Pratt; you have not canvassed that with me. In fact, you canvassed that through the media on the day of the launch, if my memory serves me correctly.

**MR PRATT:** Can I ask you directly?

**Mr Hargreaves:** You did not have the courtesy to ask me at the time.

**THE CHAIR:** He is asking you now.

**MR PRATT:** May I ask you directly, minister?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I am not going to give you the courtesy of an argument through the media. Mr Pratt, when it comes to terrorist activity, you would know because your political master is the one who has put the scares into all the people of Australia, including those in the ACT.

**MR PRATT:** We will just roll our eyes, chair.

**Mr Hargreaves:** In respect of emergency planning, it a little bit hard to predict when the nuclear bomb is going to go off. We have a set of plans. You would know—I hope you have read that book, even though you were at the launch, rather than just looking at the pictures—that it is, in fact, an all-hazards approach. In respect of sensitive buildings—I do not propose to list them because that would be really stupid—within the context of our counter-terrorism plan, some of the potential targets have detailed evacuation plans in place as part of their processes, the same as any other city in Australia. Some other targets do not have a lot of human activity around them anyway.

When it comes to evacuation plans for buildings, those things exist as part of the planning approval. Quite frankly, I do not see a difference between a major terrorism event here and, say, an earthquake. We are on an earthquake belt. I do not see a difference between that and an accident caused by a gas leak and explosion. I see the process employed in the same way. You will note that we have the early warning system now and we have the MOUs in place. If intelligence is brought to us of an imminent threat, then all those processes are ready to kick in.

We had the Mercury 05 exercise just the other day, dealing with that sort of possibility, and there were lessons learnt from that. Remember too that, in respect of counter-terrorism activity, we do not do it as a one-man band—particularly not in this town. We are part of the National Counter-Terrorism Committee which, incidentally, was excluded from the Prime Minister's largesse only recently, which I felt was an appalling piece of counter-terrorism preparedness. What he does with first ministers is one thing, but to exclude the National Counter-Terrorism Committee was nothing short of stupid.

**THE CHAIR:** Stick to the point. This just wastes time.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No. The point is that we do this in conjunction with the commonwealth, ASIO and the national AFP, and we have a counter-terrorism committee.

**THE CHAIR:** Just continue, thanks, minister.

**MR PRATT:** On that issue, you say that there is no requirement for guidance material of

the same calibre for purposes of community information to people who work, and perhaps even live, in the urban landscape.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That is not what I said at all.

**MR PRATT:** We are talking here about terrorist threat management, which may or may not include evacuation plans, but it clearly includes a range of options available to incident controllers, the commissioner of the ESA and the CPO.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes.

**MR PRATT:** But you say you are not going to put that sort of information out there.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I did not say that at all; you said that. Those are your words, not mine. That is the second time you have Gary-ed me.

**MR PRATT:** Does the absence of such planning and the absence of such documentation, which lays down clearly what these plans are, not fly in the face of the Chief Minister's recent statement that we have a comprehensive evacuation plan for the terrorist threat?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chair, Mr Pratt seems to be the only person in the ACT who sees an absence of these plans. You were at the launch of that document. I did not say there would be stuff sent out to people.

**MR PRATT:** I do not want to talk about the detail of that briefing.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It says in the document that there are building evacuation plans; that you need to talk to your colleagues at work so you know what to do. It is an all-hazards document.

**MR PRATT:** It a very good document.

**Mr Hargreaves:** In that case, why don't you just leave it at that?

**MR PRATT:** It covers a range of threats, but it does not cover the terrorist threat in an urban area.

**Mr Hargreaves:** For example?

**MR PRATT:** It does not, and it does not look as if you are going to put out anything of that calibre.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chair, I cannot answer the question because he has not given me an example.

**THE CHAIR:** To put it another way, where does it answer the question about a potential terrorist threat? It is a short document. Perhaps you could indicate the relevant parts.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It says it inside the document; it is an all-hazards document. If Mr Pratt

wants to give me an example of a terrorist attack which would not be covered by the regimes in that book, I would love to hear it, although he probably cannot think of one.

**MR PRATT:** I am not here to answer questions, you are.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I know that, but I cannot answer the question. If you are going to be so obtuse and so dumb and so stupid as not to tell me what is going on, I cannot work it out.

**MR PRATT:** Where is the guidance?

**THE CHAIR:** Minister, please. I do not want you abusing members of this committee or members of the Assembly.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I cannot answer the question if I cannot understand it.

**MR PRATT:** In the same framework as the residents guide book, where is the guidance to the community?

**Mr Hargreaves:** In that book, Mr Pratt, for the fifth time!

**MR PRATT:** For example, people might go to an iconic area such as the war memorial on Anzac Day, where one could say there may be a terrorist threat. What would be their actions and responsibilities in that event? Where are the guidelines for the general public about those sorts of issues?

**Mr Hargreaves:** In the war memorial's evacuation plan.

**THE CHAIR:** But not in this book?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No. Why would they be in that book?

**THE CHAIR:** I thought that was his question.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, it was not. God knows what his question was.

**MR PRATT:** We are talking about information to the public. That is what the residents *All Hazards Guide* is for. It provides information to the public. Where is the same amount of information for that other component of disaster threat—the terrorist threat? There is silence, chair.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, there is not silence, chair.

**THE CHAIR:** Would you like to answer it?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Mr Pratt is fishing around trying to find some other way of frightening the people of the ACT, and he has become very good at it. There are evacuation plans, points of general awareness and action contained in that booklet on how people should behave. If Mr Pratt suggests that we need to produce an *Encyclopaedia Britannica*-sized tome for people to carry around in their handbags to tell them what to do in the event that the elevators do not work because a terrorist has cut the cord, I cannot help him.

**THE CHAIR:** Who has the evacuation plans, then?

**Mr Hargreaves:** If we are talking about Parliament House, they have their own; if we are talking about the war memorial, they have their own; if we are talking about the FAI building across the road, they have their own.

**THE CHAIR:** Okay.

**Mr Hargreaves:** They also have trained people there, to assist people in the event of something rather large. You would know that, within the context of the war memorial, there are trained marshals there who will direct people to evacuation spots, in the same way as the fire evacuation process works. It is exactly the same process. Unless Mr Pratt has some other process up his sleeve that he wants to share with us, I cannot see the difference. He has not given me an example of a terrorist incident that would not be covered by that book. If he can do so, I will be happy to address it.

**MR PRATT:** We know that the ESA and the emergency agencies have very well-prepared contingencies and capabilities at the tactical level. That is excellent, but we do not have the overarching strategic policy areas where government—you—are able to ensure that the general public has some idea of how they should react to these sorts of threats in urban areas and other vulnerable areas. I am not talking about suburbia and the average household.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That is not right at all. We have our own counter-terrorism committee; we have our own emergency coordination committee; we already have MOUs in place with all the media outlets, which the other states do not have; we have the contingency plans; we have a meeting of the minds of all the support agencies—such as the Salvation Army and St Vinnies—and a whole stack of non-government organisations and government agencies that come into play either to prepare for or to engage in recovery after an incident. We sit in a meeting and discuss that—before the balloon has gone up if we know about it, or after it has gone up if we do not.

Evacuation planning then kicks in. There is an arrangement between the ESA and the AFP about how evacuations will be managed. They are operated in concert with the evacuation plans of the particular area we are talking about, whether it is EPIC, the FAI building or a suburban street. All those plans are in place and kick in. In fact, some of them were tested in theory only recently. What Mr Pratt seems to be asking me is: when are you going to produce a booklet which tells people what to do in the event of a terrorist attack in a given building of significance?

**MR PRATT:** What a great idea!

**Mr Hargreaves:** Is it? Why don't you have a chat—through you, chair, rhetorically he says—with your lord and master, Mr Howard, who has frightened everybody and who, through his National Capital Authority, is responsible for the war memorial, for the parliamentary triangle and for far too much of this territory than he should be. They have the responsibility to do that sort of thing but they have been excluded from the discussions in the same way the National Counter-Terrorism Committee was excluded by Mr Howard when he talked about the so-called terrorist threat that we were all



supposed to be worried about in the past 24 hours.

**MR PRATT:** When are you signing up to it?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Where is that terrorist threat? I think went to Queensland. It has just come back from there.

**THE CHAIR:** Gentlemen, we are straying from the annual report.

**MR PRATT:** If I go to another question, perhaps we can get a little more transparency from the minister.

**THE CHAIR:** That will be the last question from you.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You will get a lot of transparency.

**MR PRATT:** the annual report says that the two temporary contractors who commenced at ESA headquarters in mid-2004 specialising in voicecoms, e-learning and information and communication technology—ICT—business implementation, et cetera, were remunerated at \$1,100 and \$780 per day respectively.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes.

**MR PRATT:** Are they still employed at the ESA?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Before I answer that, I want the *Hansard* to record something. Just a minute ago, Mr Pratt explored a stack of questions on evacuation. He was given confidential briefings by my officers on that very subject. I am just considering whether or not it is a good idea to raise those sorts of issues in this place. I shall be examining, in *Hansard*, the questions you have asked to see whether you have had your last confidential briefing. I will get the commissioner to address the financial aspects.

**MR PRATT:** I have a point of order, chair. The first point is that I refute the threat—I would like to record here that the minister has made a threat—about future activities. The second point is that my line of questioning here today has been about general policy, supplementary to what was discussed and what I was briefed on in those confidential briefings.

**Mr Hargreaves:** No; it has not.

**MR PRATT:** It goes to the heart of the government's general umbrella policy about terrorist threat management.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I will have a look.

**MR PRATT:** It does not go into the detail of what I have been briefed about; nor do I want to discuss the detail of the information I was briefed about in those confidential briefings. That is for the record.

**Mr Hargreaves:** We will see.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you both for putting that on the record. For the record, as far as I am concerned, having listened to questions and answers, I would be surprised if there is terribly much there that would breach a confidential briefing, having had a few confidential briefings myself. You are probably both reasonably safe in relation to that, but let us have a look at the *Hansard*.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It was terrorist oriented.

**THE CHAIR:** You have asked your last question, Mr Pratt. I think the minister, or someone else, was going to answer it in relation to the two individuals and the costs you mentioned.

**Mr Dunn:** There were a number of individuals engaged on a contract basis for the communications project. I am not quite sure which two in particular are represented by those figures. We still have one contractor working with us on that project at the moment and we are currently in the process of renegotiating the contract. We hope to get the same excellent contracts as we have had with people on that project over time. I think you would be aware that, for specialist information communications technology officers, the general rate is in the order of \$2,500 per day. In this project we were able to attract people because of the innovation the team was putting forward, because of the speed with which this was required to happen and because of community need. This was recognised by a number of people who came forward to work in this field. We got them at very good rates, but we are now down to one person. It was always the intention that they would come in, bring their expertise, help deliver the project and then leave.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 69 it is noted that the \$1.4 million in expenses comprised technical adjustments, capital works in progress, money to JACS and bad debts. Could you please outline what those capital works expenses were and indicate the nature of the bad debts?

**Mr Britt:** The capital works projects are the ones we talked about before—the Belconnen and West Belconnen JESC projects—whereby, because the projects were cancelled, there was no asset to support the money that had been expended on those projects. Therefore, the figure that had been recorded as capital had to be converted to an expense. That advice was cleared with the audit office. In respect of bad debts, we have an ambulance transport service whereby we charge for transporting patients under certain conditions. Often people cannot pay those debts.

**Mr Hargreaves:** After a period of time you weigh up the size of the debt on an individual basis and the cost of recovery. If the gap between the two is too severe, we write them off. They have to stay on the books as doubtful debts for a while. They then become a real bad debt and, after a while, they are canned. Sometimes if it is only, say, \$100 and it costs us \$150 to recover we might say, “Yes, we will have a go.” But if it costs \$250 to recover \$100, we would not bother. We do not release the details of that out in the public arena because no-one would pay their bills.

**DR FOSKEY:** According to page 94 of the report, that is a fairly large amount. The

amount of \$278,000 is categorised as irrecoverable debt.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I suggest to you that that is in fact not a large amount. When I was project officer for the ambulance subscription scheme in the old capital territory health authority the figure was \$675,000. There are a lot of little amounts. The figure of \$278,000 is not significant in the scheme of things.

**DR FOSKEY:** There were a large number of trips involved.

**Mr Britt:** Yes. You can see that there were 913 cases making up that amount—there is a note there explaining it. The majority of those relate to ambulance transport.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The majority of that \$278,000 predated the creation of the authority. There are new regimes in place to recover costs, such as the employment of debt collectors. That is why we have seen that amount shrink over time—because we have either recovered the money or written it off.

**DR FOSKEY:** The next series of questions around financial issues relates to sources of labour—pages 110 to 114 in the report. I am curious as to some of the items, if you would not mind expanding on them.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Which one?

**DR FOSKEY:** It is in alphabetical order. First of all, on page 110 there is payment of \$135,261 to Bel-Air Dry Cleaners.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That was for the dry-cleaning of personal protective equipment—the big orange overalls.

**DR FOSKEY:** Is that an annual recurrent expense?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes. It is a recurrent expense but it depends on the level of activity. When these people go out in a storm, they get onto your roof and get grubby. When they go out in a fire, they get black. Those overalls have to be dry-cleaned.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 111—I know there is a bit of confusion because I think I'm using the new version of the report—under Chubb Protective Services it gives the reason for selection as “urgent need”, which is obviously shorthand for something, and I'd be interested to know what.

**Mr Hargreaves:** I'm just trying to find that one. What's the amount Dr Foskey?

**DR FOSKEY:** It's for \$61,853.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That is for security guards at the ESA headquarters.

**DR FOSKEY:** Okay. So urgent need in this case doesn't mean that you suddenly found out you had to have one, it's a high priority expense or—

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, Dr Foskey. In the evolution of the ESA, there were certain

activities that came on which were more security sensitive than others. For example, the comms centre: there used to be a bunch of them and then they were brought together in one spot. That made the vulnerability of the communications centre enhanced. Furthermore, there was the creation of the emergency control centre, which is the nerve centre in the event of a disaster. It has been activated at least three times since I've been minister, and that is particularly vulnerable. So the decision was taken that urgently we needed to make sure that access and egress from those particular sensitive spots was controlled. It was considered to be of greater value to contract this than to put on our own people.

**DR FOSKEY:** What was the role of Phillips Group in supporting the public consultation process of the strategic bushfire management plan?

**Mr Dunn:** The Phillips Group supported the public consultation process for the strategic bushfire management plan. That is certainly the largest public consultation the ESA has ever conducted—it's one of the largest in the territory. They were engaged to assist once the process had commenced. We were already under way and it was getting such a response that we needed to analyse vastly more data from those consultation sessions than we had expected, and they have expertise in that field.

**DR FOSKEY:** Okay. So that was more about the analysis of the data than the actual holding of the consultation?

**Mr Dunn:** Absolutely. And it was also analysis of the types of groups that came forward and that we engaged with from that. For example, we have a blueprint for consultation on any issues that deal with bushfire right across the territory. We have all of the groups mapped as to particular interests—for example, environmental, ecological—and we are able to ensure that when we do do consultation we cover all elements within the community, rather than just those that might perhaps attend a given public meeting.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The “reason for select” is whether or not it's a select tender. That's the reason why we only go to one company and not to open tender; that is what that column is about.

**DR FOSKEY:** I see. It sounds like an interesting analysis. Is that available?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I'll give it some thought to see whether or not it is a sensitive one, Dr Foskey, and assure you that, if it isn't, we'll be quite happy to provide you with a copy—and, if it is, we'll tell you why.

**DR FOSKEY:** Good. Finally in this section, what was the nature of the business analysis that Spherion provided?

**Mr Dunn:** That was in relation to our overall communications system—not necessarily just the radio project but our communications centre, CAD, the whole bringing together.

**DR FOSKEY:** So Spherion isn't the company that created the technology?

**Mr Dunn:** No. It was an independent assessment, particularly looking at the integration of those technologies.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That'd be clever, wouldn't it, to get someone who's given us stuff to analyse it for us—I don't think so.

**DR FOSKEY:** So was that in assisting with the selection of the tender, or to just work out how to apply it? You have to explain things quite carefully for me.

**Mr Dunn:** I would need to take that on notice, their specific task. They are part of the group of contractors that I mentioned earlier to Mr Pratt that were used in the radio project.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The contract is on the public record, so perhaps it would be useful for you to have your staff have a look at the thing and, if there's a specific area of that contract you want us to clarify for you, just let us know. We're happy to do that. Just drop us an email or a letter or something and tell us where it is and what you want us to do and I'm happy to respond. We've got nothing to hide about it; it's on the public record, that one.

**DR FOSKEY:** No. Thanks for directing me that way.

**Mr Hargreaves:** The same thing applies to any of the other ones you see there too.

**DR FOSKEY:** Just a question about fire trails. It's not actually covered in the annual report, but I guess it's something that seems relevant. My office has received reports that fire trails have been fixed up on the Brindabella side but not the Cotter Dam side.

**Mr Hargreaves:** That's something that I don't think is for the purpose of this particular hearing, chairman. With respect to Dr Foskey, these documents are historical documents. I'm happy to respond to that one, but in some more detail. Dr Foskey, could I invite you to drop us a line about that and we'll get you the response?

**THE CHAIR:** Could you just respond to the committee on that? I don't mind if you take it on notice.

**Mr Hargreaves:** It may take a certain amount of resourcing or research. I hate to say this, but we've received an enormous amount recently of questions on notice for X number of financial years, with in-depths, and some of them are up to 70 questions long. It is a battle to keep up with the deadlines imposed by the Assembly on these things. I'm happy to do it, but I can't guarantee you your deadline if it's going to take a fair amount of research.

**THE CHAIR:** That wasn't a terribly difficult one, just in relation to fire trails this side of the Brindabella.

**Mr Hargreaves:** If you're happy with a general answer, we'll give you a general one.

**DR FOSKEY:** You are able to answer as you like.

**Mr Dunn:** All of the fire trails, the improvement of access, in the ACT form part of the bushfire operational plans. All of the development of the fire trails, the improvement of

fire trails, the introduction of new fire trails where they're required and then approved, is proceeding. There are some areas that require environmental assessment and heritage assessment first. Those assessments are being undertaken at the moment, so there are some trails that are planned and which have not yet been pushed through. There are some of those in the Cotter area; I believe they're the ones that you're referring to.

This is not of concern to us at the moment, given that the operational plans exist for two years. It is possible that some work will spread further than the two years, but that will be dependent on—after the heritage surveys are done et cetera—engineering surveys, to make sure that the roads can go in the areas that are planned. So the ones that you are referring to I'm certain fall into that latter category, where the assessments are currently being made and you may not actually see a road there for a little while yet. But that also connects with my previous answers in relation to the trip that I've just been on with colleagues from ActewAGL to make sure that the access that we produce is the right access, does not lead to increased turbidity in the water—so that it doesn't impact on the quality of water or yield. So there is work going on there and it will take a little while. But I prefer to get that right, to have proper access that assists our water supply, rather than just shove a track through.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Otherwise, you'll get Save the Ridge popping up all over the place.

**DR FOSKEY:** It does sound as though your trip was very useful in regard to all that.

**THE CHAIR:** I think you've narrowed it, too, so he can certainly just answer that on notice if need be. If there's anything specific—

**Mr Hargreaves:** I think I've answered the question.

**DR FOSKEY:** I feel satisfactorily answered, thank you.

**THE CHAIR:** You do? Okay.

**DR FOSKEY:** In relation to the staff profile in the women's plan, on page 41, in your report your comment on the women's plan is in relation to domestic violence, but I guess that one of the things that could have been referred to is staffing ratios.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes. I thought you'd go down there.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 43 we see that, while there are a number of women employed by the authority, there is a predominance of men. With no disrespect to the men in these positions, it is incumbent upon me to ask the gender question.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, I think it's a good question. I'm very pleased that you asked it, because I have a response.

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes. I'm just interested in that situation—why you think there's such a low level and whether anything can be done.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, I can answer that. There are a couple of things I'd like to draw your attention to. The ratio, for example, in intensive care paramedics is very, very

healthy compared with across the country. The ambulance service is particularly good about that sort of stuff. Have a look also at the ratio of volunteers, Dr Foskey, on the next page.

**DR FOSKEY:** There'll be more women, I think.

**Mr Hargreaves:** You'll see a total of 317; it's about 30 per cent, which is greater than in a lot of other organisations. Have a look at them by agency on table 7, which I think is probably a better one for you to appreciate what I'm about to say. The emergence of women in the upper ranks is something that we are encouraging, is evolutionary and is actually dependent upon the number of people that we can get into the services at the lower ranks and mentor them through and also that we can attract through lateral recruitment. We are keen to see that occur. Some components, such as the fire brigade, are predominantly a male service. You can see that. Prior to recent times, we had not had an interest from women wanting to become firefighters. It has just started to happen. We are starting now to encourage it through our advertisements. We want to see them in there, and we want to see them in the middle ranks, but they have to go up through the ranks first. It's the same in some other areas. We haven't had a sufficient critical mass of women in the fighting arms to have them graduate through to the executive level at this point. If you flick across back to table 7 again, you will see that the administrative officers ratio is quite healthy. In fact, for such a male dominated service it's quite healthy. You will see the point that I'm trying to make when you look under district officer, station officer and superintendent; there's only one woman in that group. That's because the women haven't been in the service long enough to get to that point. As the organisation grows and as we are proactive about bringing those members forward, you will see those dynamics change—and we're very, very keen to see them change.

**DR FOSKEY:** Yes, I'm aware of the difficulties, the physical requirements of joining fire brigades, for instance. I know a young woman who's tried very hard—

**Mr Hargreaves:** Dr Foskey, you'd also be aware of culture issues that existed some years ago. I have to say to you that I don't think those cultural issues exist today, but what we're doing is suffering the effects of those cultural issues from yesteryear and we are actively trying to fix that. But it will take some time to get through the wash.

**DR FOSKEY:** I note from the strategic bushfire management plan, version one, that we should have the final version now. Do we have it?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No. Are you going to get it? Not yet.

**DR FOSKEY:** When do you estimate that—

**Mr Hargreaves:** Commissioner Dunn explained this a little earlier on when he said that what's holding us up at the moment is our catchment area work.

**DR FOSKEY:** On page 40 of the report it says that indigenous community groups were consulted on the plan. I was just wondering which groups they were, how and when they were consulted and if their advice was incorporated into the plan.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Their advice was incorporated into the plan, as every person's piece of

advice was incorporated into the plan. To nobody's did we say, "That's a load of rot, goodbye." We consult with the Ngunnawal people the best we can—and you'll appreciate the difficulties that that brings with it—and also through our contacts with indigenous groups themselves, through Environment ACT and heritage.

**THE CHAIR:** I've just got a couple of questions on page 49, figure 3, the average lost-time rate compared to targets for 2002 through to 2012. The average time lost per 1,000 employees within the ESA has been trending upwards since the targets were initiated in 2002. However, the targets are identifying an actual decrease. What has been done to reverse this trend if these targets are to be met?

**Mr Dunn:** This relates to the huge emphasis that we have placed on our return to work program. That program has been in receipt of intense focus and reorganisation. We have a particularly effectively manager in that position now and have had certainly for the last period. This is an example of all of the services making sure, through education of their members, that it is very important to report incidents as soon as they occur; that we have people assessed immediately. From the moment we are aware that an injury has occurred, we engage with those individuals very, very closely. The engagement will be at a personal level through our rehab manager. It will also be through immediately organising appointments with rehab specialists. We have an officer on staff who assists once the specialist rehab work has finished, who takes over the assessment and management of physical fitness regimes put in place by, for example, physiotherapists or rehab specialists. I think it's clear from evidence that, if people treat this as a very important thing to report and then manage it very closely, you can slowly pull down the time lost and, as I mentioned earlier, as a consequence reduce the Comcare premium as well.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chairman, can I just make a correction to what you said before. You said that there was an upward trend. There was, in fact, an upward trend in only the first three years. The last 12 months is a downward trend, and this has to be seen against the background of the general ACT Public Service one, and, given that this is a very dangerous occupation, I might suggest to you that figure 3 is particularly salient. I would have expected a wider gap between those two.

**THE CHAIR:** I would, too, minister. It's interesting you mention figure 3, because for 2001-02 and 2002-03, maybe surprisingly, the average time lost was less than the average time lost for the ACT Public Service. It is a more dangerous occupation one would think. Yes, the third year is trending further upwards and is down a bit this year and a little bit over the ACT Public Service, but I'm interested that even in the last two years, given that it is coming down, in this reporting period it is higher than it was in the two earlier reporting periods.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, there were significantly fewer people involved in the system in those days, in 2001-02, but also you will notice that in the middle of 2003-04 we had the bushfire.

**THE CHAIR:** No, that was January 2003.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Yes, but we had post-incident stress.



**THE CHAIR:** All right, if that kicked in from 1 July 2003.

**Mr Hargreaves:** What we're talking about is residuals, and we're also talking about essentially the bringing together of this organisation. Before this, you had four disparate organisations doing their own stuff. We didn't have them coming together doing training together; we didn't have them coming together doing incident management together. We do now. You might also note that in the years basically 2001 to 2003 we had a lot of things going on, but not a lot of people doing it.

**THE CHAIR:** I do note at least it's down from the last reporting period, so will note with interest what happens next year.

**Mr Dunn:** I just might add that the first quarter of the reporting year that we're in shows a 21 per cent reduction in time lost.

**THE CHAIR:** As opposed to the first quarter of last year?

**Mr Hargreaves:** No, as opposed to the whole lot last year.

**Mr Dunn:** The rate of decrease has accelerated, so you're now starting to see the impact of the strategies that are showing a relatively slow decline. That decline, pleasingly, has accelerated and, if that continues through the year, it will be a good question next year.

**THE CHAIR:** It will be a very good graph next year. My final question simply is about the community fire units, CFUs; what has happened with them?

**Mr Hargreaves:** What about them? What has happened to them? They're functioning beautifully in the suburbs, thanks very much.

**THE CHAIR:** How many have we got, and are there any more coming on stream?

**Mr Hargreaves:** We have 28 CFUs.

**THE CHAIR:** Any more coming on stream over the next six months?

**Mr Hargreaves:** Sit back and watch this space, chairman.

**THE CHAIR:** What does that mean?

**Mr Hargreaves:** I can't confirm or deny anything until it has been through budget cabinet; you would know that.

**THE CHAIR:** I'm just saying in the next six months—

**Mr Hargreaves:** I intend to take "a" submission to cabinet. I have talked to Garth Bryce and a few other people, and some of our professionals within ESA. There are a number of ways in which we can produce firefighting capability in the suburbs, utilising volunteers. We'll have a look at all of that in the context of a submission later. There is a mixture in there. We have had discussions with the CFU captains. I am confident that the professionals within the ESA will come up with a good mix and we'll be taking a

proposal, which is yet to be developed, to cabinet. Budget cabinet has not met yet.

**THE CHAIR:** I understand that. I was just concerned that—

**Mr Hargreaves:** But I will be taking a proposal to cabinet to address areas of the urban fringe which require some volunteer—

**THE CHAIR:** It seemed to be an understandably popular move with the general community, especially people who live in those suburbs, which seemed to have stalled, and I just wondered whether there was any likelihood of it being kick-started again.

**Mr Hargreaves:** As I say, I propose to take a submission to cabinet on it. But we've got to understand that you can't just stick a trailer out there in the middle of the suburb and expect it to function. There are also stresses on the training regime. There's the provision of consumable materials that have got to go through this. The training regime for the volunteers has to coincide with their availability to do it. There is a whole range of things. It's not just a case of saying; "Okay, it's 10 grand for a CFU" because it isn't. You've got all of those other costs on top.

The conversations we have been having with the people actually out there doing it are around a number of models, and the number of models will mean what the proposal will be when it goes forward. I have spoken with all of those captains and discussed the issue with them, so we're not doing it in isolation of them.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, minister and officials. All further questions should be placed on the notice paper by close of business on Tuesday. I thank you all for your attendance here and for the assistance you have given the committee.

**Mr Hargreaves:** Chairman, can I put on the record my appreciation to the officers of the Emergency Services Authority and the AFP for their assistance to me in providing you with the information today.

**THE CHAIR:** Thank you, minister.

**The committee adjourned at 1.29 pm.**