



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION, TRAINING
AND YOUTH AFFAIRS**

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2012-2013](#))

Members:

**MS Y BERRY (Chair)
MR S DOSZPOT (Deputy Chair)
MRS G JONES
MR M GENTLEMAN**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

THURSDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2013

**Secretary to the committee:
Mr A Snedden (Ph: 620 50199)**

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

Submissions, answers to questions on notice and other documents, including requests for clarification of the transcript of evidence, relevant to this inquiry that have been authorised for publication by the committee may be obtained from the Legislative Assembly website.

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.03 am.

Appearances:

Burch, Ms Joy, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming

Education and Training Directorate

Joseph, Ms Diane, Director-General

Cover, Ms Leanne, Deputy Director-General

Gniel, Mr Stephen, Executive Director, Education Strategy

Wright, Ms Leanne, Director, Learning and Teaching

Ellis, Ms Anne, Chief Executive Officer, ACT Teacher Quality Institute

McAlister, Ms Coralie, Director, Human Resources

Gwilliam, Mr Stephen, School Network Leader, Tuggeranong Network

Mitchell, Ms Beth, Director, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education and Student Engagement

Johnston, Ms Jayne, Executive Director, Tertiary Education and Performance

Huxley, Mr Mark, Chief Information Officer, Information and Knowledge Services

Strauch, Ms Helen, Executive Officer, Office of Board of Senior Secondary Studies

Sullivan, Ms Susan, Manager, Children's Policy and Regulation Unit

Stewart, Ms Tracy, Director, Planning and Performance

Guy, Mr Gary, Executive Director, ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority

THE CHAIR: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this public hearing of the education, training and youth affairs committee. I welcome Ms Burch, the minister responsible for all areas to be examined by the committee today, and I also welcome all of the officials accompanying Ms Burch today.

This morning the committee will first deal with the Education and Training Directorate, followed by the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority. This afternoon the committee will deal with youth services and youth justice service areas and arts administration and policy areas administered by the Community Services Directorate. Following afternoon tea the committee will conclude its hearings with the Canberra Institute of Technology. Ms Burch, do you have an opening statement?

Ms Burch: I do, but, excuse me, Chair, can we just confirm the time for ETD? What time are we finishing ETD today?

THE CHAIR: About 12.

Ms Burch: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Just before we start, I remind witnesses of the privileges statement. Have you read that?

Ms Burch: Yes, thank you. Thank you, Chair, and I will make some brief opening statements, if I may. I thank you for the opportunity today to discuss the 2012-13 annual report. This report provides details of the significant work undertaken by the directorate during the year, and I firmly believe the directorate has delivered on an ambitious local and national reform agenda by placing students at the centre of all new and ongoing initiatives. The results show that the ACT's students are high performers in national and international assessments.

In the NAPLAN for 2012 the ACT was equal to or better than all other jurisdictions in 16 of the 20 measures, and it is pleasing to note in the 2013 NAPLAN that was 17 of 20 measures. So we continue to improve. A higher proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in the ACT achieved above the national minimal standards in all tests and year levels when compared with the national average results for Indigenous students. Year 12 results were impressive, with 88.3 per cent of all students and 86.2 per cent of Aboriginal students enrolled in public schools obtaining a year 12 certificate in 2012.

The directorate achieved the implementation of universal access to preschool education in all public preschool units in the 2013 school year. In 2012, 44 schools offered 15 hours of preschool education, which was extended to all public schools with preschool units. And with the opening of the Franklin Early Childhood School, the number of early childhood schools has now increased to six. Teachers and school leaders play a central role in achieving the above-mentioned results, and to enhance teacher quality through the implementation of the national professional standards for teachers, the certification process for the highly accomplished teacher and lead teacher standards was trialled during the reporting period.

Another notable initiative is the implementation of the executive teacher professional practice whereby 21 teachers commenced in the new positions to model high standards of teaching practice in the classrooms.

Vocational education and training also performed very well, with the quality of the ACT VET training system acknowledged at a national level. Last year the ACT had the highest proportion of VET graduates, 92.2 per cent, who were employed or studying after training. Apart from these achievements, the directorate managed the challenges of reducing the achievement gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and non-Indigenous students in preparing for the emerging national reform agenda.

To position the ACT as the leading jurisdiction, national agreements on education and skills reform were signed with the Australian government, and work has commenced on plans to put the emerging reform agenda into practice. The national education reform agreement incorporates a national plan for school improvement and includes both national and local initiatives to ensure that we improve outcomes for our children and young people in the ACT.

In closing, we, as a system, are completely committed to putting children and families at the centre of our education system, and I would like to thank all the principals and the teachers and, indeed, the P&Cs and board members of the schools that deliver

such commitment and such outcomes for our students. To the executive and to the officials who are here and the many who are not here, thank you for the work that you have done. What we have achieved this year is a testimony to your efforts. So, thank you. We are open to questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I might kick off with the first question, minister. My question is in regard to learning difficulties. On page 383 of the report, relating to the U-CAN read program, which the directorate has funded with the University of Canberra in the first instance, can you please outline what the program is and the rationale behind the funding?

Ms Burch: I am happy to. This is an established program. It goes to some commitment through UC but also just the general professional development opportunities within the directorate. I might ask Mr Gniel to talk to that.

Mr Gniel: The partnership with the University of Canberra is extensive, and this is one of the programs that have been running for a number of years in partnership with the University of Canberra, particularly as they are a significant supplier of our teaching workforce in terms of pre-service education but, then, also a number of in-service partnerships with them around professional learning for teachers.

We also have programs with them such as U-CAN read where we partner with universities and really draw on their extensive research and evidence-based programs and objectives that we meet with those. Particularly, U-CAN read is supporting students who are having difficulty with their reading when learning to read. It is particularly a program that works with parents and supports parents in terms of their support for their kids and making sure that the practices at home support what is happening in the school as well.

We know that one of the most important things we can do for young children is read to them on a daily basis. I think this program, in particular, helps to give some of our parents that confidence and the ability to work with some of the students that perhaps do not automatically pick up reading. We see that in our classrooms on a regular basis. We deal with the sort of whole spectrum where some students walk in the door and have been read to every day since birth, and others where that has not been able to be the case. And U-CAN read is one of those programs where we work very closely with parents and then also with those students.

The program has recently moved into the Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning as well. So we are now incorporating that within our other literacy and numeracy programs that support children and young people. That has been a very successful transition, whilst maintaining our very close relationship with the University of Canberra and the way in which they support that program through the latest research and evidence base.

THE CHAIR: How do families get referred to the program?

Mr Gniel: It is advertised quite widely. There are self-referrals as well, but also our schools are well aware of that, both government and non-government schools. Often that will be the teacher who is working with the students, the school counsellor,

principal, deputy principal, some of the other support workers that work in the school, literacy and numeracy coordinators or field officers in our public schools. In terms of how people hear about it, it is through quite a wide range of ways.

The other night I was walking out of work as a whole stream of parents were coming in to participate in that program. The parents that come are really dedicated to helping their children. That is something the minister talked about in her opening address, the importance of the teachers working in partnership with the families and the broader community, and this is an example of that in action.

THE CHAIR: How much does it cost?

Mr Gniel: The overall—

THE CHAIR: For a family?

Mr Gniel: It is free.

THE CHAIR: It is free. That is good.

Mr Gniel: Free as in taxpayer funded, yes.

THE CHAIR: I do not have any other questions.

MR DOSZPOT: A supp to that.

THE CHAIR: Yes, go ahead.

MR DOSZPOT: Congratulations, Mr Gniel, on the interaction with the University of Canberra. I think that is a very good initiative, especially when we are talking about the U-CAN read program. There are other activities at the University of Canberra that I have come across, such as the Lu Rees archives. Are you aware of that? It is an archive of all children's authors. There are about 400 authors that are archived at the University of Canberra. I am wondering whether there is any interaction with the Lu Rees archives, which should be a fairly good source for some of the initiatives that you are talking about.

Mr Gniel: I am not personally aware of that but I am sure our schools are, particularly those in that area. And we do have some schools that interact very closely with the University of Canberra too. Macquarie school, for example, has a particular partnership in working with pre-service teachers. So I am sure our schools do have some of that information. But I will certainly be following that up when I get back.

MR DOSZPOT: If I can just raise one other issue on that, I think their interactions are with the University of Canberra mainly but I think volunteers virtually man the centre.

Ms Burch: This is the archives at the Lu Rees centre that you are referring to?

MR DOSZPOT: That is right. I think they could use some assistance in terms of

perhaps funding. I do not aim—

Ms Burch: You are sounding like you are pitching there.

MR DOSZPOT: I am pitching, because I am quite impressed actually with what I saw there. I think it would be useful for our education to be aware of what has been done and perhaps how that can be used to further benefit the Canberra schools. That is all I wanted to add.

Mr Gniel: It is a university program, is it, that you are—

MR DOSZPOT: No, it is not a university program. The university is just giving them space and they are rapidly running out of space there. Initially it was all about Lu Rees, the author, but it has expanded beyond Lu Rees to cover every Australian children's book that has been published for the last 20, 30 years. They are now housed there. So it is a great initiative. I commend them, and I certainly recommend them to you.

THE CHAIR: We might leave that conversation for another day, Mr Doszpot.

MR GENTLEMAN: My supplementary goes back to the U-CAN read program. Can you tell us how you practically engage with the parents? You get the parents to engage with the kids. At what level do you ask the parents to talk to the kids or read to the kids?

Ms Burch: As part of the program?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes.

Mr Gniel: Ms Wright might be able to provide a little bit more detail, Mr Gentleman. A lot of people refer to how they might have been taught to read themselves. Obviously, things move on in education around the best way to do that. So it is giving parents the strategies that we know will support their children to learn to read. When kids come into that program, often those students will be struggling with their reading. Sometimes the parents might be frustrated about how to best help this child to learn to read.

The program really is about supporting the parent to be able to provide that best advice and information for their child. We do all that work during the day as well as at schools. But I think for any of us that have kids, we know how important it is to then follow that up either in the morning before they are off to school or at night, particularly for our younger students—getting them into that process or practice of reading.

The other thing I make really clear in this, too, is that it is about making sure that the students develop that life-long love of learning and that they are not seeing it as a task that switches them off, because we know that the reading and literacy abilities permeate through their abilities in all other areas. For example, if you are looking at maths and everywhere else, you have still got to be able to use those literacy skills. But Ms Wright might be able to add to that.

Ms Burch: U-CAN read is just one program amongst a whole range of school-based activities and directorate programs around supporting students.

Ms Wright: With regard to the role of parents and how they are engaged in the U-CAN read program, initially they are attached to a tutor. There are three tutors working in the unit program. That parent and child are attached to the tutor. They have some individualised sessions and then there are some group sessions for parents around skill development and the sorts of activities that parents can engage in with their children at home.

Those sessions are scheduled on an individual appointment basis. The program also operates on an outreach basis both in the north and the south of Canberra. The tutors go out into the community centres and parents are able to go to those locations as well if they are more convenient in order to be able to access their appointments with the tutors on the individual basis. Then their group sessions are during the evenings and at times that are aimed to really maximise parental participation.

Mr Gniel: Following up on the minister's point as well, this is one program that supplements all the work that we do within the school program. I think that is really important to understand. That, again, is across both government and non-government schools. In the government schools in particular, all of our primary schools and high schools have literacy and numeracy coordinators that work with teachers around the best practice for education.

We also have, I think, 21 field officers in our public schools. Those field officers provide coaching and mentoring support to teachers who are looking after literacy and numeracy outcomes for our young people. Schools are constantly using data. Mr Gentleman, you were talking about what levels the students are up to.

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes.

Mr Gniel: That is something that at the school level in particular they are very focused on. They are making sure that students are keeping up with their cohort. That happens on a sort of daily basis where we have interventions of sorts for kids who are not reading at the level we would expect. Schools arrange that through that literacy and numeracy coordinator, possibly the field officer or other experts around the development of reading programs. They work with individual students, groups of students, whole classes, depending on the needs of those particular students.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary on that. You mentioned that the various programs have to take place at night. Obviously, some parents can only attend then. Can you expand on that a little as to what sort of success you have had there?

Ms Wright: My understanding is that part of the scheduling of these forums and information sessions for parents is that they are out of hours to maximise that participation. It is a key component of the program. When parents enrol in the program, they are more or less committing to attendance and participation in those. All indications are that the level of engagement from parents and the feedback that we get around the opportunities, the success and the wonderful interaction that parents

have with the tutors around building those skill sets about what parents can practically do have all been very positive.

MR DOSZPOT: Fantastic. I presume grandparents are allowed to go there as well?

Ms Wright: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: Just before you go to your question, Mr Doszpot, I understand that there is a fair bit of interest in this from literacy educators across the country. Are there any quantifiable results out of the program?

Mr Gniel: There has been from the university side of things. I do not have them with me, Ms Berry, of course. But a number of reviews and papers in academic journals have been done around the program itself. Professor Kaye Lowe of the University of Canberra, who has recently retired I believe, was instrumental in establishing the program and then also following up from the research part of that.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, coming back to your opening statement, this might surprise you, but I would like to agree with you on your opening statement regarding the quality of—

Ms Burch: Everyone listen now.

MR DOSZPOT: I am in my second term. In the first four years I visited 99 per cent of the schools in Canberra. I am now on my second round of visitations. I continue to be impressed by the enthusiasm, the delivery through the principals and down through the teaching ranks that is evident in all our government schools as well as our non-government schools. I continue to be impressed and I will continue my visitation. I am now meeting people that I have met before. I am looking forward to re-engaging with all of those schools. I would thank the minister for relaxing somewhat the way that I have had to be constricted on visiting schools. I thank you for doing that.

Ms Burch: I just hope you turn up to the meetings—all of them now, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: I have always turned up for all the meetings, Ms Burch. Anyway, I am not trying to make this political. I am simply saying thank you for what you have done so far.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: A little bit more relaxing would not hurt, and I am very impressed with the schools. I will move on to curriculum changes on page 12. Through you, minister, what changes have been made to the curriculum delivered in ACT schools as they move to full adoption of the Australian curriculum?

Ms Burch: Perhaps you were too quick to vacate your seat there, Mr Gniel. We are certainly an early adopter of the Australian curriculum. Again, it is testimony to the strong systems that we have in place and the professionalism and the dedication of our teachers. We are certainly in the lead. We have also recently linked to the change to reporting, which is part of that Australian curriculum. All reports now will be

consistent across A, B, C, D or E. Regardless of whether kids are in a Gordon school or a Garran school, the parents will understand the consistency of reporting. But in terms of the Australian curriculum that we have adopted, I might go to Mr Gniel.

Mr Gniel: Thank you, minister. The minister mentioned that we are an early adopter of this. From our perspective, this is because the Australian curriculum that has been developed is a world-class curriculum. The decision for the ACT to take on that curriculum to be delivered in our schools was a really important decision. We are continuing not only to implement but also to help build that Australian curriculum through the opportunities we do have in consultation and the collaboration sort of process as well.

I would also mention that it is a cross-sectoral approach as well in the ACT. Our curriculum implementation task force includes members from both the government and non-government sectors when we are talking about how to best implement the Australian curriculum within all of the ACT government and non-government schools.

In 2013 all of our ACT schools—kindergarten to year 10—are implementing phase 1 Australian curriculum areas. This is for English, maths, science and history. We are then continuing to help build the phase 2 subject areas as well. They will be implemented through that implementation task force as well.

As the minister mentioned, one of the other significant achievements for us this year was reporting against the Australian curriculum in those areas for students up to year 9. The senior secondary curriculum is also being developed at the moment. I know that that is something the Board of Senior Secondary Studies is very heavily involved in as well. But in terms of that reporting against the progress of young people, it has been a significant initiative for ACT schools to report against a new curriculum, not just to be using that to implement programs and to develop the learning programs for those students.

The first time that happened was at the end of the semester. We are about to go into our end-of-year reports, which will again be assessed against the achievement standards in the Australian curriculum. Ms Wright might want to add a little bit of detail there as well.

Ms Wright: As the minister and Mr Gniel have said, it is a significant shift for all of our ACT schools to use the Australian curriculum achievement standards as the reference point for student achievement at each year level in those four phase 1 subjects. What we have is an online curriculum that parents can access. We have work samples at each year level that parents can look at as well as the important work that teachers do in using those work samples to moderate and compare student achievement from the classroom towards those national standards.

The national standards are annotated to provide additional information for both teachers and parents about what student achievement at that year level in that subject looks like. So those work samples are a critical part of interpretation and ensuring that we are building towards national consistency in both the delivery of curriculum and also reporting to parents across the country.

Those steps forward in all of our ACT schools in applying that in 2013 for the first time, as Mr Gniel said, are part of the outcomes of the cross-sectoral curriculum task force and the cross-sectoral curriculum implementation committee. That committee every year revisits the implementation plan for Australian curriculum and collaborates very strongly, having principal representation from all sectors and some teacher representation as well coming into that committee to provide advice on both professional learning for teachers as they move forward with these new initiatives but also to ensure that we are building a truly cohesive curriculum right across our schools in the ACT.

Mr Gniel: This is something we are really proud of; so could you indulge us to answer the question a little more. The minister mentioned the teachers, school principals and the leaders in her opening address. This has been a significant piece of work for them. They have embraced this change in terms of the curriculum delivery. They have taken that on board to make sure that we are providing the best information to parents about the progress of their child. I think we need to make sure we are mentioning that this work is being done at the school site by classroom teachers on a daily basis in their programming, their reporting, their parent-teacher interviews and how they explain those changes to the parents.

In terms of us demonstrating our sort of lead role in this across Australia, we have been developing the work samples and best practice examples for the ACARA—the Australian Curriculum and Reporting Authority—website. We host the Australian curriculum in developing that and also Education Services Australia in term of their support for that implementation of the curriculum too. So it is something that we are significantly proud of.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary. I do understand that we were the very first jurisdiction to sign up, I think under Minister Barr some years back. How many of the other jurisdictions have come on board with the same sort of delivery success that the ACT has had?

Mr Gniel: Across the country, it is at different stages, I would have to say, Mr Doszpot. Different states and territories came from a different base as well. Other states and territories were very much wedded to some of their curriculum that they had been developing over a number of years. All of the jurisdictions are committed to the Australian curriculum. However, the implementation of that, depending on the jurisdiction, differs because of those different starting points.

You would appreciate too that at the higher end of secondary, in years 11 and 12, that has significant implications around things like the higher school certificate in New South Wales, in Victoria and in other states that also use the testing sort of regimes as well. So there is a lot of work, particularly in years 11 and 12. There is an impact that flows from a change of curriculum. That is something that, again, I know the Board of Senior Secondary Studies has been heavily involved in as well.

But I think there is a commitment to that Australian curriculum and, more broadly, to a world-class curriculum for our young people. But, again, it is at different stages of implementation.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure, and I agree; I have seen the evidence of what you are talking about. I have spoken to the various schools that have embraced it. My question is along these lines: if there are negotiations with some of the bigger jurisdictions as to how far the national curriculum is going to be adopted, are we disadvantaged by being so far ahead in case we have to change direction in any of the areas? Is that on the radar at all?

Ms Burch: I am sure you will correct me if I have got it wrong, but in 2013 NAPLAN, 17 leading or equal to out of 20 areas shows that we are ahead, and I do not think we are disadvantaged. If you look at international assessment, whilst Australia ranked, I think, around 20, when you took the ACT and compared it to those other successful countries, ACT was in the top five at an international standard. From my interpretation, that tells me it does not disadvantage our students. Adoption of the Australian curriculum is embedded within the better schools reforms, anyway.

MR DOSZPOT: I think we are talking at odds. I fully agree with your assessment on NAPLAN. I am asking about whether the adoption of the national curriculum is universal and, if it is not, what impact it has on our curriculum development. That is all I am asking about.

Ms Joseph: All jurisdictions have agreed to implement the Australian curriculum, so nationally there is agreement to implement. The stages and time lines for implementation vary across the country. All states and territories have begun implementation. Where they begin and at what year levels varies. The other part, as we have been talking about, is assessment against achievement standards, which is another part of the Australian curriculum that adds rigour and depth to what teachers are able to do and what parents are able to understand is happening in the classroom. Again, there are different time lines for implementation of reporting against the achievement standards.

If anything, I would say that our schools, our teachers, our principals, our students and our parents are advantaged because of the work we have done. When the ACT adopted the Australian curriculum, we had just done a significant review of our own ACT curriculum, and we had developed “every chance to learn”, which was the predecessor to the Australian curriculum. Differently to other jurisdictions, we were lined up ready to go because of the prior work we had done. So there is an advantage because of the work we had done, because of the work we are doing and because of the work we will continue to do, and then there is the role that the ACT plays around the national table in being able to put up work samples that our teachers have developed, to have our board of studies representing what we need in the ACT as far as years 11 and 12 implementation are concerned. If anything, it gives the ACT and our community an advantage.

MR DOSZPOT: That is, I guess, what I was asking: is there an advantage in being first? I think you have answered that question, so thank you for that. The report, on page 45, refers to ACT public primary and secondary lead schools selected to produce exemplar assessment tasks and work samples. How were these schools selected?

Ms Wright: It was actually on a voluntary basis. We called for expressions of interest from our schools. Both government and non-government schools participated in the

work samples project. They voluntarily put up their hand to work directly with ACARA, and it included visits for those teachers to the ACARA offices to work with colleagues from around the country to look at work samples. Part of the key aspects of this work was designing assessment tasks that would provide the information that teachers would need to be able to assess according to the achievement standards. Our schools put their hands up and were selected by ACARA and have continued to be very active in those contributions at a national level. The opportunities for those teachers to meet with and discuss curriculum, work samples and achievement standards with colleagues from other jurisdictions have been fantastic professionally, for those teachers and schools engaged in that process.

MR DOSZPOT: Can you elaborate on the schools, on the split between government and non-government?

Ms Wright: I can get back to you on that.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay, thank you.

Mr Gniel: Mr Doszpot, if I can add to that, this is the significant advantage we were talking about before around the Australian curriculum. The Australian curriculum is all online. That has not been possible or has not been the regular way of operating for the past number of years. One of the advantages of that around the work samples is that those moderated work samples are available across the country. The way in which we would normally moderate is on a paper-based product, students' work, and then sharing that around the table. This allows teachers around the country to moderate their assessments against an online work sample that is annotated by experts in the area and assessed against the standards in the Australian curriculum. It is, again, a significant step forward in the way in which we not only develop our curriculum but implement and then assess and report against that.

MR DOSZPOT: In this process that schools went through, were there any particular problem areas that were addressed? Are there issues that were common to most of the schools that were looking at this?

Ms Joseph: In the process of developing curriculum, it is actually a dynamic process that, I suppose, never really ends. Teachers are always adding value to it and adding their practice expertise to it. In the design of the Australian curriculum there were expert groups at a national level that developed the first cut, the first draft. So continually there are changes. With respect to whether there have been common changes and concerns, at the national table, it has been more about not so much the content but the implementation time lines, and when will there be the great amount of work samples, particularly online, that all teachers can access.

As far as the curriculum is concerned, there has been no common thread or issue that has to be resolved. There are many issues for professional discussion for teachers to make sure we get a better and better curriculum all the time. Even without the Australian curriculum, that is the way teachers have generally developed the curriculum, anyhow.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Wright, I do not need the information now, but could you get

back to us later about the number of schools, the names of the schools, and also any issues that may have come out of discussions with them, that we just talked about.

Ms Wright: I am not aware of any issues. ACARA have worked very carefully to make sure they get the spread of samples. Our schools have been very cooperative. For example, if they needed more work samples at year 9 English, our schools worked to provide those samples. Obviously, as they are collecting samples from schools across the country, they needed to make sure they got the spread of samples at each year level. So that was one of the challenges nationally, to collect those work samples at each year level for each subject area, and all of the jurisdictions, and ours in particular, have come to the party to provide the samples in the gap areas as well. I should point out that ACARA did provide funding to release teachers that was passed on to those schools participating in the work samples project. That released them from their face-to-face teaching duties in order to undertake this high quality work.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. I had better let some of my other colleagues get involved as well.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, could I bring you to page 29 of the report. I think you touched on this in your opening statement as well. Under “emerging national reforms agenda”, can you expand on the importance of securing the \$190 million of federal funding over the six years and how that will translate into outcomes for Canberra students?

Ms Burch: We were very pleased to sign up to the better schools reform. Certainly the money we signed up for was a six-year agreement. So we need to keep making sure that we have a six-year commitment to that. Certainly, that will see growth funds into the public sector and also the Catholic system and the independent schools. Part of that reform package or that funding package is for some very clear, articulated reforms around leadership, around ensuring that every child, no matter what school they go to, has the benefit of a quality education by absolute design and commitment and not by chance, as, unfortunately, it could be said has been the case in some areas.

Mr Gniel: The reform directions, Mr Gentleman, include those ones that the minister has spoken about. They fit, importantly, with what the ACT has been working on over a number of years. The curriculum that we have spoken about this morning is one of those areas, around quality learning; and also ensuring that we have those best teachers in the classrooms on a daily and hourly basis with those kids as part of that reform. I refer also to having empowered school leadership around the decision making that can occur by principals and their responsibility for delivering on those outcomes for young people.

The needs-based funding is the other one that is a really important reform for us. As the minister talked about, it is about making sure that the funding is directed to where it is most needed, no matter what school, postcode or anything else that may be involved in attending a school. That is the work that we are doing now. We have a funding methodology within our public schools that is broadly consistent already with a needs-based funding model. We are doing work over the next number of years to make it even more consistent. I think I spoke at an estimates hearing around making sure that we do model our own funding model based on a base-plus loading. Those

loadings include those areas which we know to be of disadvantage for our young people. It is about making sure that we support our students with a disability, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, our students where English is an additional language or dialect and those from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

For us, a couple of the areas within the federal government's process do not necessarily match with the ACT environment. There is some stuff around remote location schools which, of course, we would support; that is an area of need in terms of loadings. It is not something that needs to happen in the ACT because we do not have those remote schools.

That is why it is really important for us to be talking to people about the needs base in the ACT community, because we are a unique community when you compare us with places like New South Wales, Northern Territory and Western Australia. There is not a one-size-fits-all approach to all of those jurisdictions. But, importantly, within the Gonski review that we saw, that really pointed to making sure that we are addressing those needs by attaching funding loadings to those students. That is what we have committed to in the ACT over the next number of years—the six years, importantly, as the minister has talked about, in terms of our agreement with the commonwealth.

MR GENTLEMAN: You touched on leadership, especially in the program. How do you practically involve non-public schools in that program, in leadership?

Mr Gniel: In the leadership programs? A number of those schools have their own leadership programs, of course, and in other systems. So the Catholic system itself will have leadership programs. It is also about making sure that our leaders are taking responsibility for their own learning and understanding where their development may need to be improved. That is about them selecting from a vast array of leadership programs that exist across the country as well. Those are provided through some of the peak bodies in Australia. We have the Australian Council for Educational Leaders, for example. They run programs themselves. They recently had a conference here for school leaders, and that was attended by a few hundred of those leaders from across the country. There is the work that we do cross-sectorally as well—Ms Ellis might want to talk about some of those programs through the Teacher Quality Institute—and also through the commonwealth body, the Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership.

Ms Joseph: One of the really important elements of the national reform agenda that we are able to translate to our local reform agenda is around leadership. A really important framework—and we have a number of frameworks—is around the national principals standard. We also have national teacher standards and they have been developed through collaboration by jurisdictions and the commonwealth over the last few years.

Our Teacher Quality Institute has started the process of assessing teachers against those national standards. For the first time in Australia we have agreement as to what good teaching looks like and what good principal leadership looks like. Those two documents, the national teacher standards and the national standard for principals, are key documents in what we can do cross-sectorally in raising teacher quality and raising the standards of our leaders as well. Ms Ellis might want to elaborate.

Ms Ellis: One of the important components in the establishment of the Teacher Quality Institute is that we came out of the teacher quality national partnership with a very firm and broad area of responsibility to work with all ACT schools and all ACT teachers and both universities in the ACT around the core elements that go towards teacher quality, which, of course, have a very significant impact on student outcomes.

As Ms Joseph has outlined, in our first three years of operation—and, interestingly, in the report we have in the annual report here, and it is at the end of the second full financial year of our work—but within those first couple of years, we have actually led three national pilots of using the professional standards for teachers to improve teacher practice and understanding and, therefore, have a direct impact on student outcomes.

One of those, Mr Gentleman, was in the first year of operation we led a pilot about using the graduate level standards to improve the way we can have professional conversations between pre-service teachers and their teacher mentors in schools. That was very significant and actually led to a national initiative which is now wanting to be picked up by other jurisdictions where, in fact, the focus of pre-service teacher assessment is a formative as well as a summative one, and it is based on the national standards for teachers.

We then had a pilot using the career progression approach where we moved from a pre-service teacher to a beginning teacher but as a continuing professional. Just in the last week we have co-presented with the University of Canberra a professional workshop on the incorporation of digital portfolios to assist teachers to reflect and provide evidence about their ongoing growth. All of this work has been aimed at improving understanding and conversations so that, in fact, it is always focused on student outcomes.

I know the minister is very pleased that in terms of the national reform agenda so much of the quality teaching component is part of the work that we do. The minister mentioned in the introduction about the certification pilot. Last year we ran a pilot, a cross-sectoral pilot, which is the way we do all our work, where we had a number of our teachers and a number of our assistant and deputy principals going through the certification process.

This drilling down into examining what actually happens as a teacher continues to grow in their professional growth and expertise has led to us this year being in a position where we are the only jurisdiction that has got reasonable numbers applying through the certification process. We have 35 trained assessors. The beauty of this process is that we have a deputy principal from a Catholic school working with an assistant principal from an independent school or a public school working around that understanding of what good practice is as a teacher continues to grow.

All of this work—and I think the most important part—means that we are able to partner with the directorate, we are able to partner with the Catholic Education Office and we are able to partner with 17 independent schools and two universities about unpacking what is teacher quality, how does that extend to leadership, what are the differences between a beginning teacher and an experienced teacher and how does

that continue to develop throughout their career. It is all about improved student outcomes.

MR GENTLEMAN: Well done.

Ms Burch: Can I just make a comment that I think TQI needs to be congratulated on the cross-sectoral work. I have spoken to other like institutions in other states. It is clearly evident that we lead the nation in that seamless understanding of professionalisation of teachers, regardless of which sector in the education system they are in at any particular point in time.

MR DOSZPOT: I have seen firsthand, Ms Ellis, the work that you do in all the areas you have described, and I commend you for your initiative and the work that you have done. I have got a supplementary. I have to go back a little bit, so do not feel neglected; I would like to come back to you. I would just like to go back to the supplementary question. I think, Mr Gniel, you touched upon language. One of the questions I have relates to the language subjects that are delivered in ACT public primary schools. How many schools teach a language and how are these languages selected?

Mr Gniel: I might get Ms Wright up to answer the specifics around languages, if that is all right, Mr Doszpot.

Ms Wright: With regard to language programs in the primary schools, the process for selection generally is attributed to historically what languages have been delivered at that school, the staffing that is attached to deliver the language and the expertise of those teachers. The process that we are going through now is mapping those language pathways. So we will have Mandarin taught in the primary school years and then we ensure that there is Mandarin in the secondary school in those clusters. They are largely cluster-based selections in the primary school that support ongoing language pathways through to the secondary level.

MR DOSZPOT: I guess I am trying to get a little bit more information on the number of languages that can be available to schools. So Mandarin—obviously Indonesian was quite prominent—and Japanese. I am just wanting to know whether the trends are changing.

Ms Wright: There are eight ACARA languages that have been developed through the Australian curriculum. Across our primary schools we cover all of those eight languages. So that is Japanese, Indonesian, Mandarin—I am sorry, Korean is the other language that is not covered in the primary years at this stage—and in the European languages we have primary schools that deliver French, Spanish, German and Italian, including a bilingual school in Italian and French.

MR DOSZPOT: Is the need changing from European languages to some of the Asian languages at the moment?

Ms Wright: As highlighted in the Asian white paper, there is a commitment. Through the bilateral agreement that we have signed with the commonwealth as part of the education reform agenda, access to Asian languages is becoming a priority. We have

signed up to that commitment. However, that does not change the delivery of some of those core European languages in some of those schools that have very specialised programs. But we certainly are moving towards increasing access to and pathways for continuous access in Asian languages in ACT schools.

MR DOSZPOT: So how do you as a department prioritise or look at what sort of teacher requirement there is in some of the ones that you may have a shortage in at the moment? How do you address that?

Ms Wright: Obviously, the challenges around language delivery in our schools do relate to teacher expertise and access to appropriate levels of staffing to deliver those programs. In order for us to address the challenges of that provision, we are actually looking at blended online delivery and, in some cases, the use of videoconferencing technology. For example, in the Melrose cluster of schools, they have an expert Indonesian teacher who delivers into Canberra High School on a regular basis so that those students have access to an expert teacher without actually having one on staff.

We are now also looking at online delivery of curriculum. There are a number of commercially produced online teaching resources for language learning, and through ESA—Education Services Australia—they host a number of those. There are actually some pilots that will go up in 2014 that will provide online access to Mandarin to schools who wish to participate, and free licensing. Those programs are designed so that you do not actually have to have a teacher in the room who is fluent in the language in order for students to be supported to develop language learning skills in those areas.

Together with, I suppose, improvements in technology, these are challenges faced by all jurisdictions around the country as we move to try to source and provide access to language learning. It becomes a case of ensuring that we stay in good contact with our colleagues in other jurisdictions to discuss and work together on how they are facing the same challenges that we are facing. Our non-government sector in the ACT will face similar challenges to the government sector. It is about collaboration and being innovative in our approaches to language learning delivery.

We have started with some pilots in our schools. We are having good success with those. Schools are also developing sister-school arrangements with countries across the world and, again, using Skype and videoconferencing technology allows our students to have direct interaction with other children, native language speakers, particularly in the Asian region. Harrison School has been an excellent example of that partnership, allowing students to interact with native language speakers to further enhance their language learning as well.

MR DOSZPOT: Terima kasih.

Ms McAlister: I just want to support what Ms Wright is saying and supplement that from the other end, which is around supplying the enabling procedures for principals to actually secure language teachers when they are in their school. Also we do target language teachers in our centralised recruitment round, and so while Ms Wright is talking about the flexible opportunities to address this shortage, we are also coming at it from the HR perspective to actually encourage them into our system.

MR DOSZPOT: That was one of my questions—the fact that obviously there is a problem, because, all of a sudden, if somebody wants to go down a particular path, have you got enough teachers available at various schools? So I am glad you are addressing that, obviously, and that is logical. Thank you. Coming back to what you said, Ms Wright, about sister-city relationships, I am aware of the Nara Japanese interaction. What other sort of international relationships have you got like that?

Ms Wright: I know we have sister relationships also with Beijing. A number of schools are in the process of establishing those. I have not got the list clearly with me, the ones that are currently in practice, but they are related to specific schools and sometimes we have an assistant program where native language speakers, students who are studying at University of Canberra or other universities in the ACT, actually take on a teaching assistant role in schools during their time of study here in their university program. Some of the links have been established through where those students have originated from in either Japan or China and also Indonesia.

MR DOSZPOT: It might be useful for the committee to know just how many of these relationships are in place and if there are any other ongoing options that you are looking at at the moment—and I suppose this is based on input from the community; is that correct?

Ms Wright: Yes.

Ms Joseph: Mr Doszpot, most of our high schools and colleges would have a sister-school relationship, some of them more than one. And many of our primary schools do as well. So it is a combination of what we are able to do from the central level but, more importantly, it is often about the relationships established from school to school at the local level internationally that sustains it. But we would be able to provide a list of what are the formal sister-school relationships that our schools have. In particular, with respect to our colleges and the opportunities for exchanges of students from China and Australia, it has been significant. Recently students from Erindale College and Melba Copland were invited to a leadership conference of students. It was in China—I think it was Shanghai—so that is a recognition of the quality of the relationships. But there is certainly a lot going on in our schools in that area.

Mr Gwilliam: I wanted to perhaps provide a bit of an example. Yesterday I happened to be down at Gordon Primary School in Tuggeranong. I—

Ms Burch: Wonderful school.

Mr Gwilliam: It is. And I attended actually a Japanese class that was in session. They had a room set up with a Japanese-style decor. But the language instruction that was occurring there was really quite interesting because not only had they actually had a staff member that has strong training in Japanese language instruction, but they also had other students in other years in the same room, working with the younger kindergarten students.

So to be able to get that exposure, to have them access the technology and the relationship with not only their school in the language development, but also with

other schools outside the ACT, is really quite powerful. The teachers were talking to me yesterday about how they actually engage with other language speakers that are Japanese overseas and they use the technology that we have within the school to be able to access that and also engage their community.

In terms of other work, we have had students participate in excursions, as our director-general was explaining, overseas. The Asian languages, particularly Indonesian and also visits to China, are increasing in terms of our overseas travel. So I think there is an openness and a desire within our schools and education, particularly across all of our networks of schools, to actually give a perspective so our students in Canberra have an advantage as to what that global citizenship means. I think that goes a long way in how we are actually trying to develop our young people for the future.

MR GENTLEMAN: And what feedback do you get from the students after those?

Mr Gwilliam: Very positive and powerful learning experiences for the students, and that is giving them the opportunity just to engage and embrace without having sometimes to actually physically travel to a place, but to form relationships with students overseas that are of a similar age. In school settings, talking about what they are doing in terms of learning is a very powerful experience.

You may think of it as a pen pal thing, but these days it would be a video arrangement and the relationship that can be born that way. Schools like Hawker College in the northern part of Canberra have had that relationship recently with Indonesian schools in Kalimantan. So it does provide significant opportunity for access and an understanding about being a global citizen.

MR DOSZPOT: Konnichiwa, Mr Gwilliam.

Mr Gwilliam: Domo arigato gozaimasu.

MR DOSZPOT: Domo arigato. I am very—

Ms Burch: I will just say g'day, thanks!

MR DOSZPOT: I have done some work in Indonesia, South Korea and Japan; I commend you for the initiatives that you are pursuing and I am a great supporter of that. Can you just expand on what you were saying about the use of technology in enabling this language learning to take place and any issues that may be related to—is it through Skype that you are doing this?

Mr Gwilliam: There is a facility that we have with our directorate called Adobe Connect: that is a videoconferencing facility that is part and parcel; it is available to and accessible by all of our schools. That facility allows a Skype-like connection with another party. It can be anywhere in the world as long as they have a connection to the internet. Relationships are starting to develop with sister schools overseas—and interstate, too, mind you. We have had connections with some of our schools—with local schools in Goulburn, for example, where we have connected up. And it is not necessarily just with languages, but with other schools too.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have another question regarding learning difficulties. Page 75 of the report talks about the learning difficulties task force. Minister, I wonder if you could take us through the recommendations of the taskforce and what the process is to keep task force participants informed about the progress and implementation of those recommendations.

Ms Burch: The report was delivered not so long ago now—time flies. We accepted and agreed to all of the recommendations. There were three planks. One was around professional development, how we upskill and maintain a supportive workforce within the directorate. Another was around consistency in language and information. The third was about partnerships with families.

A number of the comments from families to me were about just being consistent with language and recognising that the research and response in this field change over time. How can we be absolutely sure that any child—again, similar to principles in the better schools reform—should have access to consistent language and consistent responses from teachers no matter what school they go to.

We will work through that. Certainly, as I understand it, some programs of professional development have already commenced. And you may recall that just in the last sitting I committed to coming back and updating the Assembly in February. That will be an early update; certainly the work will continue over the next academic year and beyond. I might ask Beth Mitchell to comment on that.

Ms Mitchell: Minister Burch was talking about professional learning modules. One of the key areas of the task for us is to develop teacher capacity. We have already developed two modules, one on speech, language and communication needs, and another on dyslexia and significant reading difficulties. We have already trained 36 staff to deliver those modules in a train the trainer method. We have also—and this is the more exciting part—already had approximately 400 staff do that online learning on those modules. I anticipate that, come the start of the year, when schools all have their professional learning days, a significant number of staff would do that training then. But we have already got around 400 who have accessed it since we have rolled it out.

I need to add, though, that every day in our schools teachers are highly skilled in dealing with, catering for and making adjustments for students with learning difficulties, whatever they may be. That is one of the things that we do extremely well in the ACT right across our schools.

Our engaging schools framework is a new piece of work that we are incredibly excited about. We have been rolling out the workshops for principals and school leaders, and just starting to do them for the community. We have scenarios of different students and how a school might cater better for a student who, for example, has a learning difficulty. That is one of the scenarios. We are coming up with a range of suggestions in the four areas. It is not just in having high expectations and high performance, and in building respectful relationships and great relationships, which would be the obvious ones, but also in what we can do with the community and with

our parents, and what we can do around the school climate and making everyone in school understand and appreciate the different needs of all our students.

Mr Gniel: I can add to that, Ms Berry, if that is okay. I think what Ms Mitchell was talking about, in terms of our teachers every day doing a great job with kids that come to us with all kinds of different needs, was that one of the things that the task force highlighted for us was that teachers need to know where they can go to for assistance if they need it with other colleagues. With some of the things Ms Mitchell was talking about, with that online learning, you may have never had a student with dyslexia in your classroom before, for example. When one arrives, you have got to make sure that those teachers know where to go for that support. That is about that connection with the families which the minister is talking about: often they are the people that know how to best meet the needs of their own children. They have had them since birth, obviously, whereas the teacher may just be picking them up in one of the different years of schooling. That connection with families is a really important element of it. There is the element of building the capacity of our staff—all staff—in understanding about learning difficulties and that specialist expertise people can go to for that additional assistance.

It is also really important to recognise that students with learning difficulties are also some of our students with gifts and talents. We talk about twice exceptionality with our students: they may have a learning difficulty but they are gifted in different areas as well. The work of the task force also raised issues for us about addressing those. We are doing some work at the moment around the gifted and talented policy that is being advertised through the paper, and in community notice boards as well, and engaging with the community around expectations about how we work with students.

It is going to be important for us, through the minister, to report back to the Assembly and also to those people on the taskforce. They put a significant amount of time in. It was chaired by Irene Lind, who is a previous principal within our system. But it is about working with some of those key groups that provide support for parents around students with learning difficulties and also the support for those students themselves.

This is a really important piece of our work. As the minister said, it fits in with our sign-up to better schools reform. This will be picked up in the work that is currently happening around the loadings that are there for students with a disability as well. That is something where again we are seeing that transitioning to making sure that the funding is going to those areas of most need.

THE CHAIR: So did the task force make any recommendations? We talked about what has happened once the child has been diagnosed or identified as having a learning difficulty. Does the taskforce talk about any recommendations on how that diagnosis happens?

Mr Gniel: Yes. It does recommend that. One of the subrecommendations about that is that we do some work around the assessment processes for those students. That is really challenging work, because there is an ever-increasing body of knowledge around learning difficulties. Who is best to make those assessments is again ongoing work for us. Again the point in the minister's opening speech was about that student-centred approach, working with parents and other significant people to determine

what those needs are and then make the adjustments that are particular to that student.

I have talked before around the fact that with disability there is again not this one-size-fits-all approach. The response needs to actually address what those specific learning difficulties are. You can imagine that how you work with a student with dyslexia might be one way. A student who has got a learning difficulty but is also gifted is another sort of strategy in itself. Some of the assessment is really important, because that can help us know the best way to address those learning needs. But the key is working with the family, and working with health professionals that may be making those assessments, on the best way to cater for that child's needs.

THE CHAIR: Currently how are the assessments conducted at the school in those early years? How are parents and families getting their children assessed now? How does that happen?

Mr Gniel: Beth or the minister might have talked about this too—around the definitions. What we see as a learning difficulty is so broad. In answer to that, Ms Berry, it depends. Some of those things will be assessed by a school counsellor; others may need to be assessed by an outside expert in the field that we are talking about, in the health area. It depends on what that learning need is.

Schools try and pick up really early on when students may be falling behind. That is often a sign—behaviour can be a sign around learning difficulties as well—that we need to investigate. Not every student that falls behind or that has behavioural issues has a learning difficulty, of course. Schools and teachers have been doing this for many years—trying to get to the bottom of what might be going on. For some of those kids there are simple answers. For other kids, that means a more targeted approach. When students are diagnosed with a specific disability, for example, some of the response that we know about because of that learning difficulty or disability in that sort of sense is better known, whereas some of it can be a process of exploration—trying to work out what are the things that are blocking that learning.

Ms Burch: And it is around access to those standard recognised contemporary tools of assessment and working through the school psychologist as well as about how we methodically go through those different assessment tools. That is one of the things the families were saying. It is just making sure that there is that consistent, logical step-through through the process.

Ms Mitchell: I will add only one thing. Everything they have said pretty much covered it all except for one thing. There is also now in every school a disability education coordinator. I was recently meeting with a mother who had moved to the ACT—had come from interstate and, prior to that, overseas. She was talking about the service she received here by just being able to go straight to the DECO, the disability and education coordinator, and say: “My son is this age. He has this learning difficulty.” They straightaway knew what she was talking about, knew what the school could provide in response to that. She did not have to keep telling her story over and over. Then that person coordinated within the school, with all the child's teachers, what would be the strategies. They also offered an individual learning plan for that student if they wanted one. Even if the student is not funded for disability because it is outside that scope, we still offer the same sort of service.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. I have just been reminded that it is time for morning tea.

MR DOSZPOT: Do you have time for a supplementary?

THE CHAIR: A quick supplementary and a quick answer.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I understand that all of the recommendations of the task force have been accepted and you will be coming back with comments on it. Will you be also prioritising and putting a time frame on how you will address some of the recommendations?

Ms Burch: I am happy to do that. We can outline the work that we have done and how the directorate plans to do that. That would be part of the February statement.

MR DOSZPOT: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: We will break for morning tea.

Meeting suspended from 10.16 to 10.32 am.

THE CHAIR: Welcome back everybody. I just want to inform people that Mrs Giulia Jones, who is also on this committee, has been unable to attend this morning but we are expecting her to come sometime before lunch. Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: My colleague has a dental appointment so that is her—

THE CHAIR: Well, I did not want to—

MR DOSZPOT: Yes, that is fine. Minister, through you, I would like to ask a couple of questions of Ms Anne Ellis. Sorry I ignored you in the last round when you were up before the committee, Ms Ellis. Can I ask you to elaborate on the progress so far with the ACT Teacher Quality Institute?

Ms Burch: It is almost a case of where can you start. They are doing fabulous work on both teacher registration and professional standards.

Ms Ellis: Mr Doszpot, I suppose the best way of explaining it is in chunks of content. We work with a formal regulatory process for all ACT teachers. We have, in this reporting period, completed the first renewal of registration where all teachers had to pay. I have to say, because of the partnership approach with schools, it was done in a fairly painless way. We have 7,169 teachers who completed the renewal process in the reporting period. We have at the moment 7,830 teachers who are registered, because we continue to action registration processes for new people.

In terms of how it is going, one of the key things I think we have been able to do—and I have to say it is admired by other jurisdictions—we had a very lucky point in time when we were able to go to all our teachers and gather their registration data. We have now got a very comprehensive set of data so that all our schools and employers

now have qualification information on their teachers. So no employer needs to do surveys around teacher qualifications anymore. They can come to us to get that information.

We are in a position now with all our schools—Catholic, independent and public schools—where we have been able to gather data with teacher workforce elements that is, in fact, now going to be recognised in a case study in the national teacher workforce dataset report. That is important because, for employers and schools, just like teachers in working with students, having reliable and valid data is really important. So we have an online process, we have electronic records and document storage, and we are able to provide all our schools up-to-date, point-in-time information about registration. So that is the regulatory part with teachers.

The most exciting part of our work now—and it links into the renewal of professional registration—is that through a series of cross-sectoral forums, workshops, networks, think tanks, we have developed a unique approach to the recognition of ongoing, continuous and innovative teacher professional learning. That means we have a quality assurance process to actually accredit and formally recognise professional learning—that is, the sort of professional learning Ms Mitchell talked about before, the professional learning that every school will be doing, the professional learning that will come through both universities for teachers who are in service will be accredited by TQI.

That gives a formal recognition of the importance of it, but what is most exciting in the professional learning and development space is that we are developing a tool for teachers to actually record and recognise themselves with a great deal of teacher agency what they are doing. So they are doing accredited programs with professional learning but they are also doing teacher-identified professional learning which recognises professional research, action research, academic studies. And the way it has been developed is that it is actually owned now by the ACT.

We had one of our deputy principals from an independent school in the office yesterday talking to us about the certification process. And her comment about that was that in all of this partnership approach it has not been “down to them” but has been, “Let’s work together to make it work.” In terms of the progress and how things are going, I firmly believe that is one of the most exciting things we do. We can go and have some challenging conversations. We will need at times to deregister teachers. Again, we work in a partnership approach with employers and principals so that it is all about the fundamental purpose of the act.

There are some black and white things in the registration process and in the accreditation of initial teacher education and professional learning that we must adhere to. We have the focus all the time on what we are on about, which is teacher quality. It is very important to note that we are not called the teacher registration board, we are not called the teacher institute; we are called the Teacher Quality Institute. So our focus all the time is on how we work within the ACT to do the best we possibly can.

In terms of the first few years of operation, the national pilots I talked to you about before and the partnership that you know we have with all sectors and both

universities, has been a phenomenally good beginning. We are now cementing, I suppose, and consolidating the detail of that and the relevance for our teachers. That is why the professional learning and development component is really important.

Last week was a typical week for us where I visited a couple of independent schools. I went, as I do every term, to the Catholic principals meetings. We hosted at TQI a cross-sectoral mentoring workshop. We co-presented with the university on a professional learning program. In all of these things it is about a partnership always thinking about what we are trying to achieve.

What we have to do, I suppose, now is look at the next step of our work. Next year that will very much focus on partnerships with employers, schools and the universities around improving practicum. A key focus of the national plan for school improvement is looking at what is happening in terms of initial teacher education. Not only do we accredit the initial teacher education courses in both the ACU Canberra campus and the University of Canberra, but, again, we are able to offer an innovative way of developing an approach to the accreditation so it actually makes sense.

We are currently working with the University of Canberra around accrediting their first master of teaching course. That is being based on working with members of the profession to actually understand how professional standards come in. It is about quality assurance and it is about understanding the impact of a development, so it is not just something submitted to us as a registration body—I warned the minister that I could talk about this for hours—it is actually about a fundamental professional and professionalisation approach.

One of the other things we did this year was to develop one of the e-learning modules called making judgments. That is now on the AITSL website. As a small body we worked in partnership with the universities to do that, and it is providing innovative and easily accessed professional learning for our teachers. So we look at regulation and we look at accreditation. Throughout all of these things the professional standards for teachers and the professional standards for principals underpin our work. So when people come to accredit their professional learning programs, they look at how the standards are being involved. I think for all members of the committee it is an encouraging aspect that all of this work is developed with the profession.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you for that very comprehensive answer. Do you also take into account the CIT?

Ms Ellis: When our legislation was developed it is quite specific in the act that the registration process was for schools, and the definition of a “school” under the Education Act is both non-government schools and registered schools. We have recently been approached about the voluntary registration of teachers in a particular component of CIT who are working with the BSSS accredited courses.

One of the things for us—and this is where we have to be very clear about the purpose of the act—we have certain parameters beyond which we cannot go. There are clear definitions both in the act and in the regulations about what is considered to be a recognised school in terms of the requirement for registration. That is not to say that any CIT teacher or any early childhood teacher who is working in a childcare centre

cannot ask to be registered. We are not requiring them to be registered, and that is very closely linked to the definition of a “school”.

MR DOSZPOT: And that definition is a national definition or is there variation in some of the other jurisdictions on this?

Ms Ellis: The regulations actually specify in terms of school that it is about parallel legislation. So our legislation is the Education Act, and we have recently worked with the parliamentary counsel office to clarify the definition of a “school”, and it is a school that is recognised under similar legislation. So in the ACT it is the Education Act; in other states and territories it might not have the same name but it is similar legislation.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister and Ms Ellis, you touched on the accreditation programs earlier on. Can you expand on the accredited education programs for pre-service teachers?

Ms Ellis: Certainly. The way our legislation is drafted, we have a definition of “teacher education” being both for pre-service teachers and for in-service teachers. The accreditation process now for initial teacher education, which is the pre-service teacher education accreditation, is based on a national framework. So there are actually national program standards which relate very closely to the national professional standards for teachers at the graduate level. So there is a national process.

Our legislation requires us, in alignment with the national program, to look at the jurisdictional requirements. That is why we have a particular emphasis and one of our committees is working with professional experience as well as standards and professional practices. What we have to do in that accreditation process is work with the universities around what are the core elements that they need to do and what are the subject specific and content expertise that teachers need to have by the end of their accredited program. Very importantly, as my colleagues here are aware, is what actually happens when they go out into a school to do a practicum placement. So a key component is looking at what are they subjects they are going to be taught, what is the quality in terms of the expertise with the academics who are working with them, and what is the partnership with schools about what happens when the teacher goes out to do practical experience in the school?

What we are trying to do at the moment with the University of Canberra is look at a problem-preventing way to map it at the beginning so that when they present the courses to us in a formal accreditation way, we have to abide by fairly strict regulatory requirements, but we can do it in a way that is based on them setting it up for success.

MR GENTLEMAN: How does the in-service accreditation program fit in with the career progression approach that we heard about earlier on?

Ms Ellis: One of the things our board was very keen to recognise when you look at the chunk of teacher education accreditation that is in-service rather than pre-service was that we were able to recognise quality professional learning that is happening within a school. What we have at the moment is a standards-based process where,

online, schools will be able to become a recognised provider and they will be able to submit a program for accreditation.

That is based on adult learning principles, the integration of the standards, a focus on what teachers will get out of it and, really importantly in that, how they are gearing the program to encourage teachers to reflect. So the professional learning module that I talked to you about in terms of what will be available for all of our teachers at the beginning of next year is that when they complete professional learning they will also be completing a reflection on the outcome of the impact of that professional learning on their practice.

The accreditation process is about some criteria, standards-based, and it is about being a formal recognition which allows teachers to see connections all the time to how the standards impact on their work and all the time to how that relates to student outcomes.

MR GENTLEMAN: You touched earlier on quality assurance as well in those programs. How do you report against the QI?

Ms Ellis: We have a formal board committee called the teacher education accreditation committee, which oversees the accreditation process. That committee is chaired by Mrs Narelle Hargreaves, a community member on our board. We have to help set things up for success. This afternoon we are running the last of about 12 workshops we have run across the territory to look at how people understand what is required in accreditation. We have to be able to make a judgment in conjunction with the schools about have they covered the standards and are they accrediting in line with the required criteria?

Really importantly in that is it is not an end on, “No, you’re not right”; it is on a development approach. We have just run a pilot across the ACT in using this process led by school-based people with Catholic, independent and public schools involved and looking at what it actually means always in terms of professionalisation.

THE CHAIR: I have a question regarding the workforce. The report demonstrates there has been a lot of success in education in the past decade seeing women progress into leadership roles. Can you reflect on why education is succeeding where other sectors are still struggling? Is it an active policy or do you think it is driven by cultural differences from other sectors?

Ms Burch: Thank you for that question, Chair. I think there is certainly an environment within the directorate that is supportive of workforce needs. Certainly we are very committed to empowering women in the workforce and creating what is often referred to as a family-friendly environment to make sure that women who have lots of draws on their time and concerns are able to be accommodated in a professional workforce such as the directorate. I will ask Ms McAlister to talk more on that.

Ms McAlister: I think the focus on women and leadership is part of a suite of broader industrial mechanisms that allow school leaders to focus on excellence. What we have had in our recent enterprise agreement is the application of what we call the annual

professional discussion for each member of teaching staff on a yearly basis, which is a targeted professional discussion with the principal, deputy principal or team leader where we look at four aspects of career. One is around our expectations of performance and the other is around transfer. We look at opportunities for incremental progression. But the focus is really on looking at encouraging excellence and career planning through that annual professional discussion.

We have also introduced some mechanisms where excellence and outstanding practice can be acknowledged without the educator having to leave the classroom. So we have implemented executive teacher professional practice this year where we are recruiting up to 40 executive teachers with a focus on staying in the classroom and a reduced administrative load to free them up to model outstanding practice to others.

We are also applying accelerated incremental progression. This afternoon we start looking at over 20 portfolios of people who have been supported in their school setting to demonstrate what outstanding practice looks like. Through that they are able to be assessed by a central panel and acknowledged through skipping an increment in the pay scale. It is really around helping our school leaders in the first place get the stuff they need but then also acknowledge and develop the staff they have. That is a really strong focus within the directorate.

THE CHAIR: So do you think that it is a cultural thing within the sector more than anything? Or is it alongside the cultural element but also alongside the work that the directorate does to encourage and support?

Ms Burch: It is not done by accident. There are deliberate strategies within there. Coralie or Ms Joseph can speak more on that.

Ms Joseph: I will just draw your attention to the data on page 379. Typically, an education workforce has more females than males. However, if we refer then to page 120, we can look at the female-male school leader data as well. We do have a lot of school leaders that would be leadership within the classroom, deputy principals and principals. So there is a reflection of our workforce there. There are also opportunities to support women in the workforce. If we go to page 121 and we look at the opportunities for casual employment, permanent part time and temporary part time, we can see the considerable number of opportunities for females and males to take up those options. So besides career planning and supporting all of our staff, looking to the future and what their greater contribution could be as a leader, there are opportunities for flexible work arrangements within the directorate and across the ACT public service. There are also other affirmative action things like the way we make up our selection panels for all positions. I will need to call on Ms McAlister to define what we do in this area.

Ms McAlister: There is meant to be gender representation, usually two females and one male. We make sure that there is a gender balance in those selection panels. And I support Ms Joseph with that data. It is a really interesting snapshot. We have 77 per cent of our workforce that are female; we have 62 per cent of our principals who are female; 71 per cent of our deputy principals are female; and 74 per cent of our school leader Cs, our team leaders, are female. There is a real culture of systematically identifying and developing leadership within our system.

THE CHAIR: Just regarding that breakdown of the school principals, do you have figures—they might already be in the report and I might have missed it—for where the school principals sit in the school system? I mean whether they are in primary, high or college.

Ms McAlister: I can get that data for you, yes.

THE CHAIR: Okay; that would be cool. And just on the workforce, there are 423 temporary full-time staff in the directorate. Are the bulk of these classroom educators?

Ms McAlister: They would be our teaching and then our support staff as well.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: A supplementary. Ms McAlister, leadership and corporate development on page 26—that is still your area?

Ms McAlister: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: The report says:

... all schools were supported to select and develop the best staff for their individual setting, with less centralised selection of school staff occurring.

And it says:

New models of resource allocations to schools were developed to improve transparency and enable greater decision making by schools.

Is this putting in place or promoting school autonomy?

Ms Joseph: I will take the lead on that, Mr Doszpot. Schools in the ACT have always had a great deal of decision-making at the local level. Our school principals have always made decisions around how they use their resources; they have always made decisions about their staff profile; and there have been flexibilities that they can use.

When we did our school-based management review a number of years ago, the recommendation was that a lot of principals did not know about the flexibilities. So a lot of the whole program is about greater understanding of the flexibilities that are available. Through the negotiation through the last enterprise agreement, we gave additional decentralised processes to the schools. Instead of doing everything centralised—instead of the centre controlling, if you like, the selection process for staff—we devolved those processes to schools. We initially started with a number of schools, testing and trialling that. We now have all of our schools able to do their selection processes at the school level.

Together with that, with the understanding of what resources come into schools and what resources are used for, we have done work around that, because it has not been clear to principals what resources are coming into schools, when those resources are

coming in and how as a principal they can get the best effect in utilising those resources.

The work we did prior to the implementation of the better schools plan was to look at what are the issues. We looked at what are the needs of principals and school communities in understanding what resources go into schools. We still have a number of our schools helping us solve that picture. But the new landscape really is around how we have greater transparency and accountability for the resources that are given to schools. So it is about how we show schools and communities what resources are going to individual schools and for what purpose.

When we talk about the needs-based funding model in the ACT, we are designing, in alignment with the recommendations from the Gonski review, a base plus a loading funding distribution model. We have not had that before. We have had bits and pieces. We have basically funded on staff profile and a little bit on student need. The change in the landscape is that because we have signed up to the better schools reform, we will be funding on a base plus loadings. So we will be able to compare what resources go to what schools based on the population of the school rather than the history of the staff that are at the school. That will be cross-sectoral. Whilst the public school funding model might be a bit different from the Catholic school funding model and might be a little bit different from each of the independent school funding models, ultimately all sectors have signed up to say, “Our funding models will be transparent and accountable and they will align with the Gonski recommendations.”

What we have done in the resource allocations here in the last 12 months is leading into the new landscape and the new work that we are doing around transparency and accountability for resources going in, but, more importantly, accountability for what are the outcomes. It is about how we show communities the value out of the resources, how they have been used. And then that goes right back, I suppose, to where we started the discussion this morning—around NAPLAN as one of many indicators of school and student success. It is really looking at what are our targets, what is our benchmark, where are we starting.

At a system level we look at things like year 12 exit destination data, enrolments, NAPLAN, year 12 results, et cetera. At a school level, they have a mass of data to look at. What are the targets for individual students? What are the targets for individual classrooms and for the school—and more generally? That may be around different reading benchmarks, not necessarily NAPLAN; numeracy benchmarks; et cetera—absenteeism, student satisfaction and staff satisfaction.

The new landscape is not so much around autonomy or empowerment, which we have always had in the ACT. The new landscape is: how do we know what resources are going to schools and for what purposes? How is every member of the school community able to understand that? That is the work we have to do. And it is: what are we getting from those resources? What is the accountability for student outcomes at the end of the day?

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you for that. What sort of acceptance has been given to this new way of doing things, by principals, teachers or the Australian Education Union?

Ms Joseph: The Australian Education Union had a significant campaign around “I give a Gonski”, as I think it was called. They were really supportive of the direction of the better schools school improvement reforms. One of those keys was that we are going to have a new funding model; another one was empowered school leaders and transparency and accountability for local communities.

The AEU and the P&C in particular were very supportive of the national reforms and, I would say, our principals individually, knowing that they will be able to see what resources are coming in and we will have a more mature model and a fairer model of how those resources are distributed. I would say there is great support for going forwards, getting greater transparency and accountability into our funding models and our expectations on what we are going to deliver in student outcomes.

Ms McAlister: Could I add to that?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes.

Ms McAlister: This is the advantage of having a geographically small system. We have all of our principals involved in what we call action groups to help give input and build the landscape that Ms Joseph is talking about. I chair the HR action group. We met last week. We have got a high level of engagement from our principals, who understand the flexibilities that are being created but who also see themselves very much as part of a system of schools. The feedback we are getting from our principals is that they do not want to lose that connectedness and they are very engaged in building the landscape, as Ms Joseph has outlined.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. On the broader issue of leadership and corporate development, the ACT public service values and signature behaviours document was incorporated to ensure consistency of message and action. Was this as a consequence of the extent of bullying allegations within the ETD and the wider ACT public service?

Ms McAlister: Mr Doszpot, this is my world, so I am going to have to try and give you a very succinct answer. We have adopted the ACT values of respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation.

Ms Joseph: Excuse me, Ms McAlister; I will just interrupt there. The directorate has had a history of having its own values. Our previous strategic plan—we have only just released our new strategic plan for the next four years—was entitled “Everyone matters”. One of the key elements of that strategic plan was around values. Our values in that plan were honesty, excellence, fairness and respect. So that was already established, along with establishing our strategic direction for that last four-year plan. With the work across the ACT public service, we saw that as an opportunity to go back and interrogate those values that we were having consistently across the organisation and into schools. So the match to respect, integrity, collaboration and innovation was fairly seamless.

Ms McAlister: Thank you, Ms Joseph. Our focus is very much on raising awareness throughout the directorate; really being proactive around using alternative dispute mechanisms, which have been acknowledged as best practice; and then supporting

individuals.

In terms of raising awareness, we have implemented the respect, equity and diversity framework and had over 1,000 SL, school leader, As and Bs trained in that. And we have ongoing training around respect, equity and diversity. We are very much in line with the whole-of-government emphasis on raising awareness about respectful workplaces.

The directorate has also been very proactive in looking at introducing alternative dispute mechanism tools. We have our employee complaints and dispute resolution toolkit, which was acknowledged as best practice in the recent report *Colleagues, not cases*, by the ACT public administration commissioner.

We have also engaged in building a bank of what we call conflict coaches. We have staff from within central office and within schools who we have trained up to expertly deal with conflict. We have had two banks of people trained. When we look at our data about reports that come into the directorate, it demonstrates that through the use of these alternative dispute resolution mechanisms a smaller number are going to investigation.

There may always be that need, but what we are being really proactive about doing is offering tailored individual options to manage conflict and dispute in the workplace, which are proving successful.

MR GENTLEMAN: Just on the conflict coaches, what sort of training do they go through?

Ms McAlister: I have been trained myself. It is four days of intensive training around understanding the causes of conflict, actually working with individuals through a suite of questioning to help them identify what is an appropriate way of managing conflict and opening our minds to see that there are a number of ranges for individuals. It is an intensive training program.

MR DOSZPOT: Coming back to your last comment, and obviously the attention that has been paid to this issue is commendable, how many RED—respect, equity and diversity—officers are engaged within ETD, and how are they selected?

Ms McAlister: We look at cohorts. We have, obviously, our school leader As. Our principals are cohorts. We have got over 90 per cent of our school leaders trained. Then, as new school leaders come on board, we offer supplementary training to make sure that those new school leaders are inducted into that framework. We have also identified other cohorts, such as our building services officers, our business managers and our other executives within schools.

MR DOSZPOT: Do you have a number for the number of RED officers?

Ms McAlister: Every school has a REDCO. I will take that on notice so that I can provide you with the correct data, but every school has two REDCOs. We have also got four sites within central office that have REDCOs. They are promoted through those sites as officers who can support individuals. We have quarterly network

meetings for those REDCOs where we empower them as well. They take their role very seriously and do a great job.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure. Were they all appointed around the same time, or has there been a transition?

Ms McAlister: It is ongoing as staff may leave or change. They are usually fairly set, but as people come into that role, we make sure they get the training to support them in that role.

MR DOSZPOT: Obviously, with the amount of attention that has been paid to it, there must be some stats on how many cases there have been within ETD about teachers being bullied. Can you give us some stats on how many there have been?

Ms McAlister: I will need to get that for you, but some initial data I have is that it is less than 0.5 of our workforce that we are talking about.

Ms Burch: That is 0.5 per cent.

Ms McAlister: With all of those proactive approaches, it is a very small number. We currently have 10 investigations occurring.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay, so 0.5 per cent. Can you give us a figure on that—what the 0.5 per cent is?

Ms McAlister: The 0.5 per cent represents the number of reports that we get.

MR DOSZPOT: I understand.

Ms McAlister: We will apply alternative dispute resolution to that; then we have a much smaller number that will go to an actual investigation.

MR DOSZPOT: I am not sure if you can give me this figure now, but can you take it on board. Could I have indications of how many actual cases went forward from the number of initial cases over the last couple of years?

Ms McAlister: Yes, certainly; I can get that for you.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. Thank you, minister.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, if you could go to page 29 of the report, under “Workforce sustainability”, it talks about the executive teacher positions. I think we touched a little on the training for that earlier but it says that there is now provision for 15 hours of preschool education per week. How does this additional learning affect outcomes for students at the later stages of their education?

Ms Burch: On the professional practice, on the preschool—

MR GENTLEMAN: On the preschool hours.

Ms Burch: Certainly all government preschools now have implemented the 15 hours of preschool, and I think everybody in this room and in the community would understand and value those early years and the importance of those early years for a child's development. That is why we are very pleased at the quality of service offered through our preschools. Leanne Wright can go to some of that detail. But it has been a very well-received service, and certainly the enrolments in our preschools continue to increase.

Ms Wright: Since 2009 the ACT has been increasing preschool delivery from 12 to 15 hours, with, significantly, all public preschools delivering that increased level of service in 2013. For us in public education and through national and international research, the importance of early childhood education and access to early childhood education is unequivocal. We want the best start for every child in the ACT, and that includes delivery of high-quality preschool services.

All of our public preschools are implementing the national quality framework under the national law. That national law and that national quality framework are about improving the quality of preschool services and ensuring that children do access fantastic preschool programs provided by qualified and trained teachers and educators within those settings to provide that very best start.

There is also an increased awareness of the importance of making sure that access to these high-quality programs reaches our most vulnerable and disadvantaged families and students. We have identified a number of mechanisms to ensure that we continue to promote that access to those target groups. This includes the establishment of a cross-sectoral and cross-service delivery preschool matters consultative committee that is currently working on the development of improving the quality of information that is available for parents, as well as engagement with parents at the very earliest possible time to make sure that we establish those home-preschool relationships.

We are working with groups, from playgroups through to early day care and long day care sectors, to ensure that we have consistency of message around the importance of preschool and that role of parental engagement. The preschool matters grants program has just been launched and will provide, each year for the next four years, up to 20 grants to local preschool service delivery and community groups that support preschool delivery of up to \$500 to support activities at a local level that promote that parental awareness and engagement.

Under the new national partnership for universal access and early childhood education that goes through to the end of 2014, the ACT government is receiving ongoing funding to support that delivery of 15 hours of preschool to our services, and we are working very closely to make sure that, as I said, the message is very consistent, that we are accessing families. We are working across government as well, utilising the Community Services Directorate's child and family centres as an access point, again to promote that early engagement with preschool and preschool services.

We are also streamlining enrolment processes so that, when families enrol in preschool, their preschool enrolment takes them on to kindergarten enrolment. It is important that, as we establish these early childhood relationships between families and schools, we build those relationships and we ensure the very best transition from

first school or formalised schooling environment through to kindergarten. On the quality of the programs—and the focus is on a whole range of them—there are seven quality areas with 58 elements that are addressed through the national quality framework that ensure the very best staff for our children. So those transitions are important.

Early childhood education is important. We see our early childhood schools providing an additional focus in those six settings, as the minister said in her opening statement. With the opening of Franklin Early Childhood School, that raises the number of those environments.

We are looking at a whole range of mechanisms to make sure that we do target our most vulnerable and disadvantaged families through that collective work across all sectors, across all service deliverers, and are making sure that, as our directorate is now responsible for education and care services, we really build a strong public profile around our commitment to early childhood education through those mechanisms.

MR GENTLEMAN: Mine was at Reid preschool, and I have still got some very fond memories of that school. So with this success, are you planning on expanding into other schools?

Ms Burch: Expanding our preschool—

MR GENTLEMAN: The program, yes.

Ms Burch: Universal access is across all our schools now. As our community grows, in our new schools there will be linkages to preschools. But there are preschool programs that are offered through long day care services as well, which is within the community sector.

MR GENTLEMAN: And can you give us a practical example of how you communicate through child and family services?

Ms Wright: That work is relatively new work that we are undertaking now through the preschool matters consultative committee. So we are looking at strengthening those links. But we are going to be developing a range of both online and printed materials that will be available on site and in places like the child and family centres and through playgroups as well, ensuring that there is some cohesion.

The directorate will host information about preschool services, the importance of preschool and the importance of parental and family engagement with preschool, but those materials will also be shared with our partnering organisations. It is a cross-sectoral approach, as I said. We have representation from both the independent and Catholic sectors. Both the Council of P&C Associations and the non-government parents association, APFACTS, are working with us around making sure that we have a strong and cohesive message that we share with all of our community about the importance of early childhood education.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: As a supplementary, does the other end of student transition come under you as well, or—

Ms Burch: As in year 12?

MR DOSZPOT: Secondary, yes.

Ms Burch: Yes.

Ms Wright: Probably not me, but—

Ms Burch: Anyway, throw us your question.

MR DOSZPOT: I will ask the question of you, minister. Could you elaborate on the work the ETD has done with CIT, ANU, the Australian Catholic University and UC on developing curricula to facilitate transition for students from secondary to tertiary studies?

Ms Burch: I think we are going back to Mr Gniel. Leanne Wright can talk about the ANU extension program, because there are a number of those interconnections, yes.

Ms Wright: We currently have a partnership agreement with the Australian National University, which has run since 2006, the ANU secondary college program. 2013 will signal the transition of that program to the ANU extension program. The secondary college program has provided our years 11 and 12 students the opportunity to study one unit of study at ANU as part of their year 12 certificate and counting towards their ATARS.

Only last week I attended the graduation ceremony. There were 102 students, cross-sectorally, that graduated from the year 12 program, having studied at ANU for two years in that program. Ninety-six of those students have received an early offer of entry into the Australian National University, which clearly indicates the potential of that program to provide those opportunities to students. Between 100 and 120 students, on average, have attended and participated in ANU secondary college.

When the program transitions to the ANU extension program next year that ANU will be delivering, it will be through commonwealth-funded places. The number of places in the program will double to approximately 240 opportunities for ACT students cross-sectorally, and there will also be an increase in the range of the courses that students study.

In the current program they have access to physics, chemistry, extension maths. They are typically extension programs. Japanese language learning and conservation biology have been the subjects that students have had access to. Next year, through the new program, there will be the same subjects on offer but additionally there will be astrophysics and a number of other extension courses in languages as well. Those opportunities will be again available for government and non-government students in the ACT.

MR DOSZPOT: You answered my supplementary question. There were couple of other questions I was going to ask of you, though.

Mr Gniel: I just draw your attention to a few pages in the report that talk about that transition from our schooling education to the tertiary area, which I think demonstrates the success of those preparations for students to move into tertiary where that is their preferred pathway. Of course, our students do not just go to the universities you have mentioned. They travel all over the country to different universities and different programs, depending on what their interest areas are.

At page 37, the report states:

The ACT had the highest proportion of year 12 attainment in Australia.

The number of ACT students who are now 20 to 24-year olds and who have attained a year 12 certificate or equivalent is, again, higher than the national average.

I take you to page 42 and the percentage of public school year 12 graduates employed or studying six months after completing year 12. The actual figure for the ACT in that area is 93.5 per cent. Those are students transitioning to employment or further study.

At page 220 of the report, I note figures from the BSSS around the people receiving tertiary entrance statements from 1999 to 2012. This shows a fairly consistent rate for the number of students that then go on from there to further study.

I think Ms Wright has used one example of an effective partnership we have with the ANU. We have others that you would be aware of, Mr Doszpot. But importantly in regard to the transition by our students to whatever they want to do next, whether that be tertiary study, employment or other further training opportunities, we are preparing our students very well.

Ms Burch: And I think that also goes to those linkages programs into vocational education and training with school-based apprentices, and that is why we get such good results, way above the national average. But we are still improving on that.

MR DOSZPOT: And the CIT in particular? Have you got any figures on that, or—

Ms Burch: The number of students that go into CIT?

MR DOSZPOT: The transition programs to CIT.

Mr Gniel: From our schools into CIT in particular? I do not have any data in front of me about the numbers per se but, again, I refer to our work with the Institute of Technology and the way in which we interact with them during the school-based times as well. You would be aware of the access 10 program that exists at CIT. We have CIT offering accredited programs to some of our students with special needs through the Woden school, I think that one is, as well. There are a number of partnerships there that exist around making best use of what exists in terms of the total package of services across the ACT.

Ms Burch: And it is worth noting that there are 120 private providers that offer a range of training opportunities for students.

MR DOSZPOT: These are the sorts of questions I want you to elaborate on slightly. And before we go to Ms Johnston perhaps, what about the flexible learning centre established at Gungahlin College? Is that part of your area, or—

Ms Burch: That is CIT.

MR DOSZPOT: That is CIT?

Ms Burch: Yes.

Ms Johnston: I can elaborate a little around Australian school-based apprenticeships. Our relationship with a number of RTOs concerns established students in schools through our ASBAs. Currently, CIT is the registered training organisation for 125 of our students. That has been quite a strong relationship between our schools, both high schools and colleges. Even though our colleges are RTOs, of course, students choose the area of apprenticeship that they want to be in. Those connections and links between the schools and the institute really do assist with the immediate transitions, and also the post-school opportunities for the students.

MR DOSZPOT: How are these relationships developed in the first place? Is it through CIT or is it through the schools going to CIT?

Ms Johnston: I think it happens in both ways. With respect to the teams within central office, both the learning and teaching teams in the school sector and the training and tertiary education team, we build a very close relationship with CIT and have a number of ongoing conversations and pieces of work that we do together. So some of that translates into schools. But schools actively develop their relationships as well. Quite often it is around meeting the particular needs of students. Schools are very good at finding the place that is going to meet the particular needs of a particular student or a cohort of students.

MR DOSZPOT: I am glad to hear you mention particular students, because there are also a number of students with special needs who really are looking for post-school options. They would be covered in this area as well?

Ms Johnston: Yes. Ms Mitchell may want to talk a little bit more about that. Certainly, with the opportunities particularly for students with disabilities, I think the relationships that we have there have been really exemplary over the last few years.

Ms Mitchell: The directorate partners with House With No Steps in organising work experience and placements for students with disabilities. This year for the first time, with the big careers expo out at EPIC, that has been a joint expo. Students with disabilities also shared the same space. Rotary does a lot of work with students with disabilities as well, in work placements and post-school options.

As Ms Johnston was saying, every school knows their own students. If you are in a college with a learning support unit or integrated students with disabilities, you know

who they are, you are aware of their individual learning plans and what they hope to do after school, and you can facilitate, through what we call the TACO, the transition and careers officer in every college, a work placement.

Lots of them partner with external RTOs after college to do some further work experience. We often get success stories. About a year later a parent will come in to college and say, “Guess what? I’m so happy. They got a start-out job in the public service through your connection with this and this, and now they’re working two days, three days, full time.” When we hear those stories, it is very rewarding.

MR DOSZPOT: That is great. Do you have any figures for the number of students that are transitioning more and more into this post-school option for special needs students?

Ms Mitchell: Do I have—

MR DOSZPOT: Numbers.

Ms Mitchell: I have numbers of students with special needs who would graduate or get a year 12 certificate. I could take that on notice and get that. But in terms of knowing how many students with special needs end up placed, no, I do not have that data.

Ms Burch: We could explore it more through Disability. The transition is two years—

Ms Mitchell: Yes.

Ms Burch: and it is working with Sharing Places and other groups that make those connections. Beyond that two years, we consider them being supported through adult services.

Ms Mitchell: Exactly. What I am finding now, as I am exploring more what will happen in the future with the NDIS and everything around that, is that, between the ages of five and 18, a student with a disability has so many options and access to education and life experiences that when school stops it is a lot harder to access that. The community groups I work with and the Disability Education Reference Group are all very hopeful that that will make a real difference for the rest of a person’s life with disability.

MR DOSZPOT: I should add that, having visited quite a number of schools and colleges, I am very impressed with the work that is being done to assist students with special needs by the student population. In fact I think your previous college is one of the prime ones in that, so thank you for all the effort that has gone into that.

Ms Mitchell: It is something that is really important for us.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, could I bring you to page 40 of the report. Under “student satisfaction”, there is a graph on the other side, on page 41, of overall student satisfaction, and it is relative to a target set by the directorate. Minister, given there is

no comparable national data, how does the directorate arrive at this target?

Ms Burch: It is very satisfying to have that satisfaction with the schools and between the schools and the families. It is so critical because the parents in many ways are the first teachers of a child, and we need to always have that connection and conversation between the school and the families. Primarily, our system is to make sure that these kids grow up to be well-rounded, educated kids who are ready for the life in front of them. Tracy Stewart could give you the details about how we get to that and how that survey is implemented.

Ms Stewart: The targets around satisfaction, as you have acknowledged, are quite hard to set because of the lack of a national benchmark. So there is not a very rigorous methodology around setting—we do try to set targets that are aspirational and so that we work towards improving our results overall, but which are also realistic. We look at trend data over previous years to see how it is tracking and then set an aspirational amount on top of that in terms of what we would like to work towards in improving satisfaction.

This survey at the moment is undergoing some change. There has been implementation working towards a national collection around school satisfaction. The first stage of that is implementation of surveys for students and parents and carers. This work is being led by the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, ACARA. The first stage of that has been to develop a system that will enable all schools across Australia, both public schools and non-government schools, to collect and report data on the same basis, and the development of a set of standard questions that would be implemented by all schools across Australia.

At the moment there is no requirement for schools to participate, but ACARA is certainly encouraging schools to participate. In the ACT all our public schools participated in that nationally based system this year for the first time, and next year there will be a rollout of a similar type of national survey for school-based staff as well. So there is some transition in this area. In our targets we will be examining those in light of the implementation of the national collection and look at where we are heading in the future in terms of the collection of this data.

MR GENTLEMAN: How do you think you might be able to get more students to take part in the survey? You had a good response rate of 77 per cent, but maybe there could have been more take part in the survey?

Ms Joseph: Mr Gentleman, the really important thing to acknowledge here is that data is the basis of every school's improvement plan. Data is the basis of every teacher's own individual improvement plan, and, indeed, every principal's performance agreement. So whilst we have high level data here, every school drills down on their own individual data. It would be parent-student-staff satisfaction together with their student achievement data, be it NAPLAN, be it our smart data that we use, and many other statistics that we use.

In increasing the number of students who respond to a survey, it really does come back to what the school improvement program at the school is. Every four years our schools undergo what we call a validation process. That validation process involves a

panel external to the school, involving principal colleagues and also involving principals not just from our public schools but from non-government schools. We also do the reverse, when our non-government schools are looking at their registration processes.

Once every four years we have a significant review, if you like—a validation process of our schools. From that review schools come up with their three to five key improvement strategies and their key data that they are going to use to say, “Where are we aiming for and what data are we going to use?”

Each year schools do an annual operating plan. They then say, “Okay, we’ve got our four-year plan, our strategic plan, what do we do each year?” Each school would be looking at their data and the numbers of students, parents and staff who actually participated in responses, in order to say, “Okay, how do we improve that?” There has to be an outcome for the people participating in the survey, so how do students see that their feedback has made a difference?

There are different activities at the school level that would not be necessarily about, “We want you to answer the survey.” Whilst there would be logistical things to help students participate and give that feedback, it is around how students feel that their voices are heard. So there are a number of things that are done at the school level, and there are a number of things that are done at the network level and at the system level as well. I point to the really successful minister-student congress we had just in the last few weeks. We had a number of our school student leaders coming together from schools, from networks, and giving feedback beyond the survey results directly to the minister as to what they want to see in their education, and giving the directorate advice about how we could improve the student learning experience.

MR GENTLEMAN: Was it a grilling, minister?

Ms Burch: No, I have had worse grillings than that from students. They are very respectful. But it is really useful to have that voice directly from the students, and that is the purpose of the congress. Certainly at the previous congress I put to them: what did they see as a safe school? How would they implement a safe school policy? The feedback was actually very mature and very insightful, and will lead to some improvements and some enhancements.

They were calling for a stronger connection amongst the schools within the network. I think it is about how they share the different programs. They all understood respectful relationships as a key to a safe and respectful school, but different schools have different individual programs, and the students themselves said, “If it’s successful over there, why don’t we bring it into our school over here?” So it was very good. They vote for an executive, and that conversation will then go through the schools and the networks and the congress to me regularly over the year.

MR GENTLEMAN: I imagine those opportunities would give quite a bit of empowerment to students?

Ms Burch: It does. A number of students do not necessarily see themselves as leadership. They see that as the designated captain or position-holder within a school,

but there is very strong leadership. I think 150 students turned up at the last congress from high primary years through to the high school years. So there were a range of students from our student mix. But they are all very clear and articulate. They had an opportunity for some break-out sessions as well. At the most recent congress there was a keynote speaker, a youngish fellow, who talked about what leadership is, how do you as a leader make your own decisions, and how do you support your peers to understand that decision-making process about choice, control and respect?

THE CHAIR: I have a question on early childhood education. I know that early childhood education has now been transferred to the Education and Training Directorate. How has that transition gone, and what have been the opportunities for sharing information between early childhood education and the school sector?

Ms Burch: I believe the transition has worked well. The officials from CPRU—and you will hear from one of them in a moment—have transferred over. I think it has really embedded that notion of quality education and care for children starting at the get-go, from when they enter into an education and care environment, and that linkage beyond the term “child care” into an educational learning experience.

Setting it within ETD I think has been a good move. The linkages between our preschools have worked. At a research roundtable, when children’s services were in CSD, there was a children’s services forum that I hosted. We met for the first time about a month or so ago. The educators and the directors of early childcare services recognised the value of linking professionally into a whole professional development exercise as well. I will ask Ms Johnston and Ms Sullivan to talk more on that.

Ms Johnston: I will pick up where the minister finished in respect of the ACT Children’s Services Forum. One of the really significant signifiers of the shift has been that at that forum it was decided to rename it the Children’s Educators ACT Forum. That concept of being educators of children from very early years all the way through I think is one that has been really readily picked up by both the education and care sector and the school sector.

The opportunities that we have already been able to build on by bringing the children’s policy and regulation unit into the Education and Training Directorate have been a lot around the role that the CPRU has in supporting and monitoring and really building up a strong understanding that is then going to provide the bridge as children and their parents sort of move from education and care into the schooling sector. In a minute I will ask Ms Sullivan to talk a little bit about that.

I mention some of the other really important things. I have a role with the CPRU but also with tertiary education. There has been the opportunity to really think hard about the workforce issues and I think to join up some of the dots that we had not quite joined up before in terms of the training that we are providing, the opportunities for training and the links into the, if you like, education and care industry as an industry with workforce needs, and those relationships with our tertiary education providers. That has already borne fruit, and I think will continue to do so.

Another area is, of course, around planning. Increasingly I think we can see opportunities for ensuring that there are strong relationships between education and

care providers and the schools in the local areas so that we can really facilitate transitions in a way that we were just talking about. Tertiary transitions, the transitions from education and care into school, are becoming increasingly important.

My third point before I move on is that I have been visiting some of the childcare services. My observation is around the development of real educational leadership. I think we have heard a little bit about the success of our leadership strategies in our school sector. I think the contribution of the school sector to support the developing professionalism in the education and care sector is something that is also going to bear fruit over the next few years. I will hand over to Ms Sullivan to talk a little bit more about the role that CPRU plays, particularly in support, and how that bridge I think has been developed.

Ms Sullivan: Yes, just to build on what Ms Johnston has said about the links that we have been able to start developing and build on with our move into the directorate, I think we are seeing a lot of positives. An example I guess would be our last education and care sector meeting that we hold three to four times a year. We have really developed links with the government preschools to encourage them to attend those meetings. We focus the agenda of those meetings on things that are happening in the sector or on topical issues.

At the last meeting we had over 160 educators from across the sector, including the government preschools for the first time. That was really encouraging and that is one of the real positives. Our next meeting is coming up next week; so we are hoping for an increased number of government preschool educators to come along to that as well. That is just one example of the linkages that we have started to really build on. They were there previously, but we are really starting to develop them now that we have moved into the directorate.

Ms Burch: Part of that transition has been an asset transfer. We have made a commitment around investing in children's education and care services. Whilst it was in place under the banner of CSD, that commitment has certainly been maintained. That will be delivered through ETD both in some maintenance and upgrades and in expanding our services. Just to ensure that Mr Whybrow does not win a Mars Bar for not saying anything at an annual report hearing, I might ask him to talk a little more to this issue.

Mr Whybrow: I refer people to page 283 of the annual report. It talks about the administrative changes. While from a financial sense, it has been next to seamless when you talk about moving dollar values of \$2.4 million into an organisation of over \$600 million, the real opportunities for education, outside the operational ones that have been talked about, are also around opportunities of asset utilisation.

So the transfer also transferred 33 childcare properties that are owned by government to the directorate. While they have an asset value of \$34 million, there are great synergies at work in the organisation when you have a strong capital works structure in the education sector with an asset base of over \$2 billion.

It also builds on some of the existing relationships that you have. We have joint facilities. So our six early childhood schools have childcare facilities on site. We have

been doing progressions on a number of our other sites. You would be aware that the Taylor Primary School has an expansion on its childcare, in consultation with the school and in consultation with the community. It is not just about rebuilding what was there before but about getting the best from the opportunity of a new facility that meets community needs outside that old narrow focus of it just being a primary school.

We do have other facilities such as Ngunnawal that provide childcare. So we see that as a real opportunity. We have a very large asset base. We think that utilising the ACT Education and Training asset base in the broader support of the community is a really great opportunity that has also been strengthened here.

THE CHAIR: Just on early childhood education and the rollout of the national quality framework, has there been much angst in the sector or has it been relatively smooth sailing?

Ms Burch: In the transition?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Burch: Our sector was always 100 per cent on board to the national quality framework and well positioned in a sense itself. We had already met the over-two carer ratio requirements before the transition. A good percentage were meeting the under-two carer ratio; so that transition for me has not caused a level of concern.

I think it relates to the collegiate nature of the sector. They have a commitment to understanding and fully embracing the national quality framework. This was something that they have called for in many ways. So to me the transition has been fairly seamless. Certainly nothing has come to me. We showed our clear commitment around capital investment to expand the number of places. Services have expressed their concern about the pressure point for the under twos in terms of places. We have responded through a clear capital investment and also around workforce. We have responded with scholarship support.

The sector, government and the non-government providers, looks to us for support. The predominant long-care provision is with the community sector. Our investment and support have been clear and on the table. So for me, the transition has been very, very well managed.

Ms Johnston: In a minute I will again ask Susan to talk a little about the feedback that the CPRU has been getting from the field, but I will refer to one of the signals. A minute ago I talked about the increased professionalism within the sector. At the forum we had a month or so ago, really at the instigation of people within the sector, they were very keen to develop the professional networks and to work together to ensure that they are able to share their best practice, to really develop their own standards and to share the ways in which they can implement the national quality framework.

I think what that says is that the framework is sort of hitting the right mark because these are the providers. These are the directors of these services. They are really now doing more than saying, "We need to meet the national quality framework standards."

They are saying, “We need to develop the capacity to do even more and to be innovative in that space.” So I think that less than a year or so since we have started this, they are already at that point. As the minister says, we began from a fairly high base, and they have continued to really rise to the challenges of the national quality framework.

Ms Burch: Before we go to Ms Sullivan, there was a bit of angst around the impact on the number of services. We have seen nothing but growth, not only from our investment. We have got over 9,000 places in long day care and 3,000 in government preschool. We have seen more and more services open their doors, purchasing land and investing their own dollars. There has not been a stalling or a decline. In fact, I think it is enhanced, because there has been certainty and rigour. Parents at the end of the day want to know their kids are in a safe but quality service. That is what we have got here. Ms Sullivan, do you want to talk to that?

Ms Sullivan: I would add to what the minister said earlier about the Children’s Educators ACT Forum. At that forum there was overwhelming support for the national quality framework from the very broad cross-section of people that attended that forum—from the community sector to representatives from family day care, long day care, right across the sector to the universities. The support for the national quality framework is very strong here in the ACT. Any suggestion that the Australian government may want to wind it back was not taken on board by the people around the table at that forum. They were committed to keeping up with the requirements of the national quality framework regardless.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned the early childhood schools. I had a question regarding Lyons Early Childhood School and the cleaning contract there. I understand that it has been month by month—

Mr Whybrow: Yes.

THE CHAIR: since 2009.

Mr Whybrow: That is not the Lyons school itself. It is a central office site.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, the education centre, yes.

Mr Whybrow: Yes, which is where the BSSS is housed at the moment. In the majority of our schools, the cleaning contracts are undertaken through a panel arrangement, where there is flexibility for the directorate to ensure quality of service. There is an overarching framework there that enables the directorate and schools to ensure that there is quality of service.

If we go back five years, you are caught in a bit of a trap of the difficulty of moving to a different supplier if there was an issue. It became very hard, but because we have got a pre-existing qualification of service we have got determined prices, which ensures that there is equity in the market and that we are measuring on quality. It also ensures that there is not an issue of people, as has happened in the past, under-bidding and not providing the service.

There has been the capacity to ensure that we have a quality service in those sites, but I did notice in my review last night the issue that you are raising. I will look at that. That is because it has been month by month and the nature of that central office service provision. That raised an issue for me as well of why it is on month by month at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: I was trying to help you win your Mars Bar.

Mr Whybrow: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: But now the minister has dobbed you in, I have got a question for you.

Mr Whybrow: Okay.

MR DOSZPOT: Page 282 refers to management discussions and analysis. There is a key list included there on ICT. It refers to “increasing demand for the integration of information and communication technology”. Coupled with the items on pages 29 and 34, “ICT in ACT public schools” my question relates to the allocation from this year’s budget of \$10 million over four years—

Mr Whybrow: That is correct.

MR DOSZPOT: provided to the directorate for ICT upgrades and additional ICT infrastructure. Looking at your key risks and the amount of money that has been allocated there, \$10 million over four years over 80-plus schools and colleges does not really go a long way. What is that \$10 million meant to cover and is that impact—

Mr Whybrow: Sorry to disappoint you, but I am probably best to refer the question to our CIO rather than the CFO.

MR DOSZPOT: You will not disappoint me if you give me the correct answer.

Mr Whybrow: But essentially my knowledge, and I will pass over to the CIO—

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

Mr Whybrow: is that it is a capital injection into the organisation. If you looked at the financial statements, you would see, based on the normal time frames for our budget papers around capital injections and our financial framework for the organisation, that the organisation has an operating loss every year. That is driven by depreciation; so the use of your assets.

One of those assets for education, and a large component, is ICT assets. So the annual process is through the capital works program from government, which is an annual program each year. What you would see over time is that there is an investment from government one year. You will see another investment in the following budget, and in the following budget, depending on the current state of the asset base. That is our

normal framework of capital support. It is provided through capital injections on an annual basis.

MR DOSZPOT: Does maintenance of ICT equipment come under that same budget, or is that a separate budget item?

Mr Whybrow: In relation to ETD, ETD uses Shared Services ICT to purchase services. My understanding is that there is an element of both. There is a component within our budget under an SLA where we make payments to Shared Services ICT for ongoing recurrent costs and elements of repair and maintenance. Then primarily within our school setting there is capital investment within our schools which is supported by Shared Services ICT. I am probably best to pass over to the detailed knowledge of Mr Huxley.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

Mr Huxley: Thanks, Mr Whybrow. Mr Whybrow is correct in that—there is a base level of funding for ICT provision and services with Shared Services through our single partnership agreement we have recently updated with Shared Services. On top of that, though, we seek capital funding for the replacement of ICT equipment in our schools.

MR DOSZPOT: Could you elaborate on what that engagement entails? Do you have a set number of individuals who are available to service the schools' requirements?

Mr Huxley: Yes, we definitely do. We have a new model being rolled out with schools at the moment to centralise all ICT. As you have heard from the discussions this morning, increasingly teachers' interactions with the TQI, access to information about students' learning needs and strategies to look at that, access to the Australian curriculum, we have heard today even the expansion of learning opportunities both locally and nationally through languages are all dependent on schools' ICT being reliable.

We are moving into centralising ICT for all schools during implementation of the single education ICT network for teachers and students across all of our sites. That program is called schoolsNET. We are 74 schools in. This funding that has been allocated—you have identified the \$10.1 million—\$7.1 million of that will be used this financial year for the replacement of infrastructure and software as well as devices in schools. The management of a central ICT network means that we have rollovers and refresh cycles, and this is the replacement of ageing equipment that has already been out and in our schools and being used.

MR DOSZPOT: My question was: how many individuals are available for ACT schools?

Mr Huxley: In terms of the actual ACT school allocation, we have 26 ITOs in schools at the moment. They are in our high schools and colleges.

MR DOSZPOT: Twenty-six across 77 schools?

Mr Huxley: We have 26 in our high schools and colleges who are actually employed by the schools to help and assist in the ICT of those sites. We have approximately 16 central office staff who are available across other schools to support ICT. We also have a significant number of shared technical resources with Shared Services who manage our servers and infrastructure. They are available at a base level but also at request in times of need in terms of rolling over of infrastructure, and that number varies depending upon our requirement.

What you will notice, Mr Doszpot, is that the centralisation is actually removing a lot of the requirements for schools to manage their own infrastructure. It actually centralised all those servers. A lot of the support we can offer schools can now be done centrally and remotely directly to schools.

MR DOSZPOT: And do you feel that—

THE CHAIR: Our time has expired, thank you.

Ms Burch: If I may, before we close, Madam Chair, I want to draw your attention to Helen Strauch. Helen has been the CEO of BSSS for a very long time and has shown significant national leadership within the BSSS and making sure that standards of education for our college leavers is second to none. She has had a very strong sectorial approach, and certainly the leadership she has shown for all here in the ACT and nationally needs to be recognised. The reason I am drawing your attention to this is that it has come to my attention that Helen has the audacity to be retiring early next year. I am hoping the usual rules of retirement apply—that is, she is as busy as ever, because I think I have asked you to review English for year 12, Helen.

Ms Strauch: You have, minister. We are also about to go into year 12 certification, and I am sure we want another smooth production of year 12 certificates and ATARs at the end of this year. Thank you, minister.

Ms Burch: I want to put on record my personal acknowledgement and I am sure collectively from ETD and others involved in education of your leadership and your efforts. I hope you do not disappear completely when you enjoy your time beyond the BSSS.

Ms Strauch: Thank you, minister.

MR DOSZPOT: Congratulations. Minister, obviously there is valuable work contributed by members of our community all over the place who are reaching retirement age. What is the policy about retaining the expertise we are discussing at the moment and what opportunities are there for people to work beyond the retirement age?

Ms Burch: To be involved in our community?

MR DOSZPOT: In the education department.

Ms Burch: I would say it would be varied and many. I know there are folk of all ages and abilities working within ETD at various levels and in various positions, whether it

is front-line services, back-line services or consultative committees, there is a range of work. We always endeavour to make sure that the skills and the expertise that grow up through the ETD—Helen was the director of curriculum in ETD for some years as well—is retained.

MR DOSZPOT: My question is retaining the expertise of people like Helen on a full-time basis, even in their current roles. What can be done to retain them and—

Ms Burch: How do we stop them from retiring?

MR DOSZPOT: Well, not be impacted by the fact that most safeguards for people cease at 65. What are we doing about that?

Ms Joseph: We advertise vacancies regularly. People are able to apply for those positions. People make decisions on their own career options at certain stages, but leaving a job, from a personal point of view, there are always opportunities to come back in full-time or part-time employment. There are also volunteer opportunities and many people set up their own consultancies and so forth. Depending on the individual, there is a range of opportunities for continuing to contribute. Where we really focus on is the transfer of corporate knowledge. We hope to appoint someone to follow Helen before she leaves so we get that crossover and we retain as much of that corporate knowledge. I think we will always know where Helen is, just in case.

THE CHAIR: Minister, thank you very much for bringing that to the attention of the committee.

Ms Burch: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, I congratulate Helen on her commitment and service to the sector and wish her very well in her retirement.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a couple of questions for Mr Huxley. Further to what you were saying about the number of individuals employed to look after needs, what was the number of people you mentioned?

Mr Huxley: There are 26 currently employed by the school, 16 currently within the Shared Services central team and then there is a significant number of technical resources who manage the central infrastructure.

MR DOSZPOT: Do you feel that those numbers are adequate to cope with the issues that are occurring in schools and buildings?

Mr Huxley: In terms of where we are up to at the moment, Mr Doszpot, we have got a significant change process underway which, once it plays out, we will be in a better position to understand what the ongoing support requirements are. Anecdotally, we visit schools on a regular basis, both pre and post implementation. What we have noticed in a number of schools is, depending upon when you ask that question, you get a different response. We have actually gone into the schools. They are getting used to the new processes. Once they are bedded down, we are getting a really strong acceptance at the schools of implementation and an acknowledgement from schools

that it is a really good model in terms of support and less pressure on those schools.

That is our early indication with those schools who have been on the network for a period of time. We want to get all of those schools on board, and we will continue to work with Shared Services and monitor the resourcing in terms of performance measures and customer satisfaction.

THE CHAIR: Our time for the Education and Training Directorate has expired. Thank you to all of the witnesses for your contributions today. I remind members of the committee that answers to questions on notice are to be lodged with the committee office within 10 days of receiving the proof transcript. Answers to the questions taken on notice in today's hearing are to be provided five business days after the hearing, with day one being the first business day after the question was taken.

We will now deal with the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority. Good afternoon, Mr Guy. You are probably familiar with the privilege statement in front of you. Do you wish to make any opening comments?

Mr Guy: I wish to apologise for Mr James Service who was unable to attend today. He was called to do some interstate work for his business so he is unable to attend this morning.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, do you have a question?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes I have. Good to see you again, Mr Guy. We seem to have this meeting every year, and the questions do not change much, do they? Looking at page 9 of your annual report, there was a decline of 123,508 in entry level training in 2012-13. Have you got any explanation as to how that occurred?

Mr Guy: The reason for that was the numbers of apprentices fell off a little bit within the group training companies that we fund each year. We are always a little bit behind. We had a big year in 2011 and year 2012 dropped down again and we are up again this year. But the numbers dropped down due to the fact that they were not employing as much. Knowing that we are going into a situation where there could be a little bit less work available than normal, they just dropped their numbers down so they can be economically viable.

MR GENTLEMAN: My question is along a similar line actually. On page 23 of your report you projected a downturn in levy income over the coming year due to the weakening in commercial construction and housing sector. Can you elaborate on what factors led to that projection?

Mr Guy: In 2011-12 there was a lot of multistorey unit development work taking place around town. At this particular point in time there is not a lot of work in the commercial sector. The ASIO building was the last big building we built on a commercial basis in the ACT, and unfortunately we were unable to get any levy from that because it was a federal government job. But the unit development stuff has slowed off completely.

At this point in time on the books there is probably the one big job in Belconnen for

which the DA was approved the other day. Other than that, there is not a lot of big work to take place. The housing sector will fall off fractionally. The one which is keeping us going at this point in time but which will ease back a bit is the civil work. There is a lot of road construction taking place—the Majura parkway express and other civil work around the ACT.

THE CHAIR: I have a question regarding your training and what sort of relationship you have with the employers to ensure that the training is responsive to industry needs.

Mr Guy: Each year we do a training plan. The minister signed off on it on 31 October. We consult with everybody within the industry—all stakeholders; RTOs, GTOs, all employers, all small or large stakeholders—and find out what training they require for the coming year. We then put the training plan together and then we fund all those courses. We consult widely with industry.

THE CHAIR: That is good. There is an interesting note on page 38 of your report where you see the fund helping to implement the ACT government's property crime reduction strategy. Can you go into some of the details about what that would look like?

Mr Guy: We are not actually developing any plan in that sense; it will just be a consistent plan across the industry and across the ACT. We will look at other ACT departments and organisations and agencies and see exactly what they do, then we will follow suit with those particular organisations. We will not develop our own because we are a small staff and do not have a lot of need for that kind of item to be looked at really in an intensive state.

THE CHAIR: Do you have any examples of how the training authority would be working on being part of that strategy?

Ms Burch: There is a lot of theft from different sites. So there is an involvement through your members, or certainly your interest in that.

Mr Guy: Yes. Just recently, there was a young boy arrested in Wagga or Young and charged with stealing, earlier this year, a considerable amount of equipment from tradesmen working on job sites. We will look at that and discuss with the ACT government or the police association if we can possibly assist. If there is any funding we could put forward for training for people or anything like that, we would put it forward as we believe it would be our right to do that.

THE CHAIR: It is a bit of an issue on building and construction sites, isn't it—people borrowing equipment?

Mr Guy: Certainly.

THE CHAIR: I was looking at your staffing and board membership and there are quite long-term relationships with the fund. Have you thought about what could be done to balance this with the need for renewal and fresher perspectives?

Mr Guy: Out of the *Getting home safely* report which was done by ACT WorkSafe,

there was an item in that that said that expanding our board could possibly be looked at, and that putting more members on the board would be appropriate for the work that we undertake. The board has worked, since 2000, extremely well. We have expended probably over \$23 million in training construction workers and apprentices, entry-level people, young boys and girls in schools and people like that.

The board is very capable with all that it is doing. We have had a change in membership this year. Mr Hailey and Ms Just did not seek reappointment as from 1 July this year. Mr Stuart Sampson now represents the HIA on it, and Rod Mitton now represents the MBA on it. Mr Service has been the chair since its inception. I have been there since 2001, and I will be leaving at the end of this year. So there is a new CEO being appointed.

Ms Burch: Just on that, it is something that I have raised quietly, but if you look at a gender balance on this board, it is a bit reflective of the industry itself. I would have a personal interest in maybe saying, “How can we look to that?” But there is very clear representation from employees and employers. We have to satisfy the needs of the employers but also be responsive to make sure the training is delivered well and that it is reflective of what the employee needs as well.

MR DOSZPOT: The authority increased expenditure on access and equity programs, up 33 per cent on the previous year. What activities was that money spent on?

Mr Guy: There was an increase in the intake of Indigenous people within the construction sector and there was also an increase in the number of young women joining the construction sector. We pay employers who take people in those categories an extra \$4,000 each year for taking them on.

MR DOSZPOT: Can you give us an indication of the percentage—the number of Indigenous and female employees?

Mr Guy: Extremely low. It would not be two per cent. It is very low in the number of people employed.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there any idea why?

Mr Guy: Women joining the construction industry? It is a pretty male dominated trade. The number of women entering the industry now is picking up considerably. I have always found that when women come into the industry and work in the industry and they select that as their career, they are very good. They are dedicated to what they are doing, they work extremely hard and they are a huge bonus to any employer that takes them on.

With the Indigenous, it is a similar circumstance. If they select to come into a trade area, they are always very diligent in the work that they undertake. The majority of the time, they get through their apprenticeships to get their qualification, which is a huge bonus. With our retention rate for young males entering the industry, there is a bit of a drop-off in that—the number of people who drop out. But I have always found that the Indigenous, once they take it on, and the young women who take the trades on, have very good retention rates.

MR DOSZPOT: There is no impediment to Indigenous or female participation in the workforce there?

Mr Guy: None whatsoever.

Ms Burch: The Women in Construction group have really taken a leadership role. It is a male dominated role, but groups such as WIC are looking to change that dynamic and encourage young women to say, “Whilst it’s a fellas’ environment, women have the skills and should have a rightful place in this.” At the Telstra women’s awards a young engineer got recognised, I think from GHD. I think there is a cultural change, a generational change—and high time, I say.

Mr Guy: There is a national organisation called NAWIC, the National Association of Women in Construction, which is extremely proactive in the ACT and nationally. They have monthly meetings, social meetings monthly, to network all the people within the construction sector. Any women joining the construction sector have these meetings and social events that they can go to and network with other people within the industry, find out what is going on and how they should deal with any problems that they may have. It is a very successful program and a very successful organisation that is very proactive.

MR GENTLEMAN: Mr Guy has answered all of my questions, so I will take the opportunity to congratulate him on his time with the authority and wish him all the best for the future.

Mr Guy: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Just on that \$4,000 incentive, is that paid up at the beginning of the employment of the Indigenous person or the female employee? That is what it is for, isn’t it?

Mr Guy: They are paid \$2,000 after three months, once the indenture period is completed, and then we pay \$2,000 at the end of the 12-month period.

THE CHAIR: What has the retention rate been? Have you got a figure on the retention rate for—

Mr Guy: I could not give you exactly the retention rate, but it is extremely high.

THE CHAIR: That is good. What has been the uptake of that incentive to employ people? Was that the two per cent you were talking about?

Mr Guy: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Have you got an actual figure of the number of employers that have taken that up?

Mr Guy: I can get it for you if I can take it on notice.

THE CHAIR: That would be really good, thank you.

Ms Burch: The number of payments or employers that have taken—

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: I have one final question, so I have got the honour of asking the last question during your tenure. It has been good working with you, and I echo Mr Gentleman's comments. All the best. On page 11, expenditure on existing worker and professional development training for 2012-13 was down by \$351,000 due to a lower number of stakeholders and applicants accessing funds. Can you elaborate on this and is it of concern to you?

Mr Guy: It is not of concern, because the industry has started to slow up, so there are fewer workers within the industry. We only pay people who apply for funding and ask us for funding and undertake that training. So once they have undertaken it, we then pay the bill or whatever it is. It is just a matter of lowering the numbers within the construction sector. You may notice the figure at the bottom of the page there, for "general construction/civil", was 3,963. Normally that would probably run at about 1,800 or maybe 2,000 or so. So the civil sector has boosted this considerably, and overall.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Guy. I also acknowledge your contribution to the board over the years and wish you all the best in your retirement from the board.

Mr Guy: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: And thank you for your contribution today. I remind everyone that answers to questions on notice are to be lodged with the committee within 10 business days of receiving the question, and also answers to questions taken on notice at today's hearing are to be provided within five business days after the hearing. That completes the session.

Meeting suspended from 12.23 to 1.34 pm.

Appearances:

Burch, Ms Joy, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming

Community Services Directorate

Howson, Ms Natalie, Director-General

Nolan, Ms Christine, Executive Director, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Corben, Mr Greg, Centre Manager, Bimberi Youth Justice Centre

Overton-Clarke, Ms Bronwen, Executive Director, Housing and Community Services

Whitney, Mr David, Director, artsACT

Elvin, Ms Harriet, Chief Executive Officer, Cultural Facilities Corporation

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon everybody. We have the Community Services Directorate 2012-13 annual report before us. You have all noted the privileges statement in front of you? Yes. Ms Burch, did you want to make an opening statement?

Ms Burch: Briefly, thank you, chair. The work of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support is predominantly about supporting our vulnerable children and young people. There were a number of highlights in this past year: child and family centres continued to be of great service to the community, achieving a 99 per cent satisfaction rate in their customer survey this year; Care and Protection services' prenatal support services are now established in the three child and family centres; and a new pilot program called parent-child interaction therapy has been launched down at the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre.

I am also very pleased about the ongoing success and the progress of the child youth and family gateway which commenced operation in December of last year. The gateway is a primary point of contact for referrals to youth and family services, and community awareness is increasing about the range of services available through that.

The blueprint for youth justice in the ACT 2012-22 is well underway. We are already seeing a marked improvement in youth justice processes and outcomes in the ACT because of that blueprint. Narrabundah House Indigenous support accommodation has been redeveloped over this time and is now open for support services, and these outcomes could not be achieved without the close partnership between the government and our community agencies that are working together to better shape the outcomes for young people, children and their families.

Just before we go to questions, I take the opportunity to thank not only the executive and officials who are here but, indeed, all the staff who do an incredible job across CSD, particularly in areas around youth policy and care and protection. It is a tough job, and they do a fabulous job.

THE CHAIR: I will kick off with the first question regarding National Youth Week.

Can you elaborate how the National Youth Week grants program functions, particularly how it is advertised and what grants acquittal process recipients are expected to follow?

Ms Howson: Youth week is held at the beginning of the year. In terms of that particular process, we advertise prior to the week the opportunity for young people to respond to the grants program. We also are keen to ensure that the week is a week of showcasing the strengths and capabilities of our young people in Canberra, and it is about promoting access to community participation. Over the course of the term of this annual report there are a number of opportunities particularly targeted at vulnerable young people to participate in a range of community-based activities to grow their confidence capacity and help them develop friendships and networks that they can carry forward.

The Youth Advisory Council is our key advisory body to the minister in the design of that week, and it plays a pivotal role in the conduct of the activities throughout the course of that week and orchestrates a number of activities that allow the voice of young people to be heard and therefore inform some of its recommendations that go forward to the minister for further development in that area.

I will ask Ms Nolan if she has anything further to say on the specifics.

Ms Nolan: There were a variety of grants during National Youth Week this year, including: seeding grants of up to \$1,500 and six organisations got those; school grants of up to \$350, and 26 applications were approved there; youth beyondblue grants of up to \$4,000; and 13 applications were approved there, totalling \$33,000. So there was an array of different grant opportunities to support National Youth Week, which was a bit of a special week this year because of the centenary of Canberra.

THE CHAIR: For people who are not necessarily familiar with the process, is there a support network in place to help them understand how they can meet the acquittal responsibilities?

Ms Nolan: I believe so. Our youth engagement team would be ready to assist anyone having any questions or difficulties in acquitting their grants.

THE CHAIR: There was a lot happening with youth week this year because of the centenary year, but from your perspective, minister, was there an aspect of youth week you thought was particularly successful this year?

Ms Burch: To me it is us generally as a society and community taking stock and paying due regard and respect to youth. Often youth are not recognised as the future leaders and for the true participation and benefits they bring to our community. There is not one thing other than us just having a chance to recognise the volunteer work they do and the partnerships we bring together through youth week and recognising the benefits they provide, whether it is across sport, volunteering, supporting vulnerable people or, indeed, just learning life skills. I notice each year our partnerships with communities get deeper and deeper as well. Earlier in the year around youth week I was at Fyshwick Markets for a cook-off challenge. That was with one of our leading chefs who people pay good money for to go along and learn

and have a cooking experience. It was a cook-off amongst our schools, both government and non-government schools. It is great that that partnership really develops. In the not-too-distant future—later this month—we will be celebrating the ACT young person of the year, so, again, it will be time for us to stop and recognise and value youth, because they are our future leaders and carers.

Ms Nolan: I just want to add to what the minister was saying in that we are working very hard across OCYFS to really increase the voice that children and young people have in a range of our programs. Certainly that was reflected in youth week with some special events at Bimberi and some events down at Wreck Bay. We are generally trying very hard, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged youth. For children in care we are introducing Viewpoint, which is an interactive computer-aided interviewing technique to try and make sure we are capturing their wishes and views. We have done a lot of work at Bimberi and in youth justice around youth participation and hearing the voice of those young people in case planning and the operation of the centre.

MR GENTLEMAN: Ms Nolan mentioned earlier with regard to the grants program the youth beyondblue grants. Can you expand on that for the committee?

Ms Nolan: I might have some difficulty, I apologise, Mr Gentleman. My director of youth, Dr Mark Collis, who would be able to add to that really well is away chairing the national juvenile justice administrators meeting in Adelaide at the moment. He would have a lot more information around the actual detail of those grants. We will have to take that question on notice.

Ms Burch: We can certainly come back with the recipients of those grants, but it goes back to those partnerships we are developing. To me it shows a healthy society when you have government and non-government organisations coming into these partnerships. The youth beyondblue grants are important because mental health is something we need to focus on with our young people. Across the community, one in five people will suffer from mental health issues. We know there is an additional angst in our young people as they go through the turbulent adolescent and teenage years. So these grants and these partnerships are very, very important, as with other groups such as Headspace here in the ACT.

MR DOSZPOT: I missed the beginning of Mr Gentleman's question, so I apologise if I am going down the same route, but I want to know a little bit more about the implementation of the blueprint strategy. Certain milestones were set, and I would like to know how you are going according to those milestones.

Ms Burch: The blueprint for youth justice, I think, is progressing very well. It was launched in 2012 and it has a very long time to make the deep societal changes needed in the blueprint.

Ms Nolan: I chair the blueprint implementation progress and am very happy to answer that question. The blueprint implementation group is comprised of senior officers from a number of ACT government departments and representatives of the community sector as well. We are very excited about how the blueprint is going, and the minister will shortly be releasing quite a detailed report on progress in

implementing the blueprint. It has 45 actions within it, and only six of the action strategies are we yet to commence some action on. So we have got a whole array of activity underway.

I think we are already seeing a whole lot of really good returns. This year the number of offences young people were charged with decreased by 17 per cent. This is actual offending rates for youth offending. We had a decrease of young people on community-based supervision orders in youth justice of nine per cent, and we had a really amazing decrease in custody days at Bimberi of 22 per cent. When we look at custody days for Aboriginal youth, they have actually gone down by 45 per cent. So we are, in particular, having some very marked success in our engagement and diversion strategies around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who, you would be aware, are really over represented around Australia, including here, in the justice system.

We feel confident the kinds of major directions we have outlined in the blueprint are the right directions and that we are moving in the right direction in terms of actual outcomes from the blueprint.

Ms Burch: Certainly the after-hours bail service has been a significantly successful program.

Ms Nolan: It, in fact, won the ACT government's excellence in public sector administration award, so that was really exciting for us that that service was picked out of all of the activity happening across government for the excellence award. We have had an evaluation and that has shown it has been quite successful in diverting young people from custody and helping them to meet bail and other order conditions.

MR DOSZPOT: You mentioned that there are only six more initiatives to be progressed. Can you tell me what those are?

Ms Nolan: Yes. They are particularly around issues of the young people's past adverse histories. There are very few children that end up in Bimberi who have not come from really troubled and disadvantaged backgrounds. I am sure you are all pretty well aware of that. Nice, middle-class families sometimes have kids who get into the trouble with the law, but usually they are into corrective action pretty quickly and they do not go down a path that some of our kids end up going down. It is very, very sad when you talk to a lot of these children about what has gone wrong and the lack and supervision and support they have had from families that they get to that point in their life so young.

A lot of the actions that have not yet started are related to the early intervention and prevention plan which Mr Wyles, who is in the audience today, my Director of Early Intervention and Prevention Services, will be carrying forward over the next one to two years. They relate to very early interventions, very early in the life of the problem. They are things like making sure we have the best possible service for children who show behavioural disorders early in life. There is some very good research evidence Dr Collis would quote if he were here which suggests that if you have a child who enters school and is still a behavioural problem and has not settled down after six months, unless there is some intervention with that child, they are likely to go in a

very difficult trajectory.

We are particularly targeting the early years and kids in the five to 12 age group, primary school age group. We are also looking at strengthening the skills of youth workers and therapists and people that work with troubled young people around an understanding of trauma as a basis for juvenile misconduct and offending behaviour and developing our strengths around trauma informed practice.

We have had a couple of very good Aboriginal family engagement officers at Bimberi over the last year or 18 months but we are yet to finalise a family engagement plan, which is another outstanding item. It is very much actions around work with families, work around better trauma informed practice and getting on top of conduct disorders very early in the piece.

MR DOSZPOT: You mentioned early intervention for the five to 12-year age group. How many would you have, roughly, in that cohort at the moment that are part of the program?

Ms Nolan: Difficult for me to answer across the whole of the ACT government services because, of course, we have child and youth mental health services in Health. They do not have a lot of clients, to my understanding, in the younger age groups. They have tended to concentrate on the older age group. This area of services for the missing middle—that is what it is generally called in public policy circles—is something we really want to strengthen. So our child and family centres provide services to assist children from zero to eight years and their parents.

A new trauma recovery centre for children in care will provide services for the zero to 12 years age group. We primarily picked that age group not because we do not think the older children are suffering from trauma but because we know quite a few of them are getting a service from CAMHS in health. So it is very difficult to answer that question without doing quite a bit of background research, Mr Doszpot. But we believe, as do other jurisdictions, that we need to concentrate a bit more on that missing middle. We have had earlier services, we have had teenage services, but not so much for kids in the middle.

MR DOSZPOT: Why would it be difficult to just know the numbers?

Ms Burch: Well, it depends. If you look at early intervention, secondary and tertiary programs and universal access programs, it could be a family coming through the child and family centre seeking some advice, it could be somebody going through a gateway program seeking advice or dropping in to one of the local regional services—up to those that are engaged in statutory arrangements. It depends on what category you are looking at. I think that is the better answer. If you are looking at how many between the ages of five and 12 are in the statutory system, as in the statutory youth justice system, we would be able to find that number. But how many broadly are accessing—

MR DOSZPOT: I applaud early intervention; I am just trying to get an understanding of how serious the situation is in terms of numbers. I do not expect you to be able to answer it now, but if you can get back with some figures on that—

Ms Burch: We probably will need some clarity about what is the category or cluster that you are seeking to understand.

MR DOSZPOT: I am talking about the five to 12 age group. What cluster does that belong to?

Ms Nolan: How many need services? Is that the question, Mr Doszpot?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes.

Ms Nolan: We will try and triangulate some information from some different sources and see if we can provide some advice.

Ms Howson: I think the one thing we can say with some confidence is that the children that are in out-of-home care are more likely to require the sorts of supports that Christine has talked about.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

Ms Howson: In terms of that age cohort, we would have that sort of information. We have information about the number of families that are accessing and utilising programs within our child and family centres, so you might extrapolate that, as their children get older, some proportion of those families might be there. But because they are not actually children that are identified in out-of-home care, under orders or in other parts of the statutory system, precise and accurate numbers are not possible to provide.

MR DOSZPOT: I understand.

Ms Howson: It is simply modelling.

MR DOSZPOT: I am not trying to ask a difficult question; I am just trying to understand, if you like, the magnitude.

Ms Burch: We will bring it back to the gateway. We would have numbers through referral from the gateway. We will give you what we can.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: My final question is this. With most of these children that fall into this category, and I guess into the older category as well, are they people who are living in Canberra or are they new to Canberra? Is there a transitional issue here? Are people transiting in and out of Canberra?

Ms Nolan: In the main, they are people that are living in Canberra.

MR DOSZPOT: People living here?

Ms Burch: But Canberra is a transient community as well.

MR DOSZPOT: Yes.

Ms Nolan: I think it goes to the fact that we are a very affluent community here but there is also significant disadvantage. Our research around SEIFI as well as SEIFA suggests that a lot of it is hidden, but there could be as many as 40,000 Canberrans that are really not well off and are seeded through our communities. We do not have the big broadacre public housing disadvantaged suburbs you see in some other states, but there are some very entrenched disadvantaged families here in Canberra.

Ms Burch: I think that was highlighted in poverty week just recently as well.

Ms Nolan: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

MR GENTLEMAN: I might continue with Mr Doszpot's theme on the blueprint. How would the promotion of education help young people who have engaged in the youth system in the ACT?

Ms Burch: Before Christine makes comment, I will say that I think it is absolutely critical. I have been a very strong supporter of having as many educational opportunities as we can for the young folk at Bimberi and others that are involved in youth justice. I am quite convinced it is the key to changing their lives and giving them opportunities.

As I looked through the annual report, I saw that 48 young people received training certificates, including a cert III in business, a cert III and a cert IV in fitness and a cert II in horticulture. That is just in this year for Bimberi. Twenty-six young people participated in other skills programs, such as barista and work-ready training. The barista course has been much maligned, as it perhaps was not a strong enough educational opportunity, but for some young folk that have not succeeded well in mainstream education this is the first time they have got a certificate saying they can do something. Indeed, for the first time they are able to open up a weekend paper and have a skill set—a ticketed, accepted skill set—for a job that is in the paper. To me, you cannot overvalue what that change can be.

There is a very close relationship, through the Murrumbidgee education and training centre, with ETD plus other private providers. It is not just education and training; it is other vocational training through either CIT or private providers in town.

MR GENTLEMAN: So there appears to be a focus on vocational education in that program?

Ms Burch: I think so. It could reflect the background of the residents in Bimberi. They have often not succeeded within mainstream school. And it is the age group as well. Predominantly they are 16, 17 and 18-year-olds. The thought of re-entering to a mainstream college could be difficult for them. But giving them an opportunity for

employment and independence is something that they have a clear interest in. If you look at this business and fitness training and horticulture, they are all job-ready skills that would be useful.

Ms Howson: In addition to that, there is a focus, though, on ensuring that young people that can and want to pursue other educational qualifications can do that. So there is a focus on completing the year 10 certificate. And there is extra support for young people around literacy and numeracy.

MR GENTLEMAN: And if they did not want to go into voc ed but they wanted to go into tertiary, there would be support for them as well?

Ms Howson: That is correct. We have had young people from time to time that have been supported through independent studies to be able to pursue the year 12 certificate and tertiary studies.

Ms Burch: There is also access for distance ed for year 12. Recently we had a year 12 or a year 10 graduate who completed their studies. So whilst I am happy to talk about vocation, it is that broad spectrum of education, about setting them up so they have got better opportunities in their life beyond this.

Ms Nolan: I might add to that, if I could. I think the Education and Training Directorate have done an absolutely fabulous job with the Murrumbidgee education and training centre. At the moment, I think they have 10 different teachers employed there. Some of them are full time; some of them are part time. That includes a transition teacher and an Aboriginal transition liaison officer, who really support the kids to make that transition from the education centre out into further training or work. They have also engaged the community in really great ways. We had a “day in the life of” session in the course of the last year where a whole lot of people that are in different trades came in and spoke to the kids about the kinds of things that are involved in their day at work. That has been a real area of success and improvement for us over the last couple of years.

MR GENTLEMAN: What sorts of trades did you have come in?

Ms Nolan: There was an array. There was automotive; there was horticulture; there was fitness; there was construction. They were the kinds of things that the kids tended to be doing certificates in and were interested in. They had been constructing various things around the centre, including barbecue areas, fire pits and different facilities for us that we can have them construct that will be learning opportunities for them and add value to their life at the centre as well.

MR GENTLEMAN: Did you get any feedback off those speakers after they had made their presentations?

Ms Nolan: Again, it is difficult for me to comment, because I was not personally part of that. Perhaps Mr Corben, who is the senior manager of the centre and who is here to help us today, might be able to say a bit more about it.

Mr Corben: Just to follow on from Ms Nolan’s answer about the feedback that we

got from some of the visiting “day in the life of” business owners who came to visit us, there are a couple of gentlemen that I ran into about that. They were particularly keen to come and talk with me and the other managers at the centre and to tell us how impressed they were with the engagement of the kids and their behaviour while they spoke to them. They thought they would be quite unruly, rude, et cetera, but they were quite engaged. They asked a lot of good questions, which is not the easiest thing to do as a teenager, if you can remember—in a group, ask a visitor about a particular industry and things. The fellow was really impressed, to the extent that he wanted to come back to meet with the population as it changes over time—to come back and to do that. But also, because he had some business connections and other philanthropic connections in the community, he was going to take that away and spread some good news about how much he enjoyed his visit and how engaged the kids were. And the reception he got from the staff, obviously, was very good, as some of you would know from your visit.

The impact that that had on the kids afterwards was about just that idea of hope—that there is something out there; they are not in a dead end with nowhere for them to go. It was really just a bit of a question and answer thing for young people to hear about an industry—different ones, for a start—how they might get into that and the fact that there are a lot of opportunities in employment for kids outside the centre and within the youth justice case management sector as well.

We will keep that going. That is a really good collaboration between the centre and METC, which is the school principle. We meet regularly to make sure we are coordinating those sorts of efforts and opportunities and giving that exposure for kids. We do not need to duplicate things, but we need to continue to build on the good foundations that we have been able to set over the last couple of years, to start to ramp up that sort of engagement for young people, to give them exposure to folks who are good role models and who have opportunities and connections that they might be able to relate to and see when they have left.

They are also guiding us towards the different types of work that kids could do—so not just dig a hole or a be a traffic controller. They talk at length about the fact that if you are good on a computer, there is all this logistics work that someone has got to do about how to move material these days; it is all done by computers, forklifts and things like that. They have got a lot of interesting things to talk with kids about. Kids who are 16 to 17 think they know everything, but we have been able to guide them into knowing that there are a few things they are not fully conversant with. This was one. The people that come are really high calibre and really keen. They do a great service for us, and we really appreciate them coming. We will continue to do that and to build on those relationships.

MR GENTLEMAN: Well done.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary?

MR DOSZPOT: Mr Corben, can you tell us how many young people there are currently at the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre?

Mr Corben: When I got out of bed this morning, there were 20. I am happy to say

now that there are 17. They did not escape; I should clarify that.

Ms Burch: I am glad that you clarified that.

Mr Corben: They have been released.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you for that clarification. I note the dream, believe and achieve program was recently conducted there with Alan Tongue. It is a very good program from what I have heard. How was that accepted by the young people there?

Mr Corben: This is the second time we have facilitated the Alan Tongue program at the centre. Once again, it is a highly engaging and really well-accepted and appreciated program that the young people get to engage in. It is not an easy program. It is not, “Let’s sit and talk about the sun coming up,” et cetera. It is a high-impact, physical activity. There are some really clear rules in the group. If Freddie swears, for instance, then everybody has got to do 19 or 20 squats or push-ups or something. It is not about a punishment thing; it is about this is a team environment, and we are only as good as the weakest member of that team. It is about supporting those and learning how to work in a group.

Alan does not talk about those sorts of things with young people. They are inherent and underpin the understandings of growth in there for young people. We have witnessed young people consciously make a decision about whether they are going to have a hissy fit or not, knowing that—

Ms Burch: Definition?

Mr Corben: A definition? To have a little tantrum, perhaps. Knowing that that might put them at risk of not being permitted to then participate in that program, to consciously say, “If I do that, I won’t get that; so I won’t do that, because I really like this,” that is a real practical and important step for our clients to be able to start to make some of those connections about cause and effect, consequences, delayed gratification and all those things that they might not have learnt when they were younger as the result of trauma or stress in their lives—to make those little steps in a safe environment like ours so that they get to participate in things that they really like. If you do something that is a bit hard, then there is something in it for you. If you can change your behaviour a little, with us supporting you and helping you, and you get used to doing that, then that is all good for when you do not have us around you to provide that environment and support.

The fact is that it is open to every client at the centre, the staff really enjoy participating in it as well and Alan continues to come back. He is a great role model for young people. He is very engaging, and he is a bit of a local hero; so the kids know him.

I think all those things, combined, go to make this a really productive and effective program around helping young people change themselves a bit. We cannot change them. We just provide the environment and the opportunities for that. And it is up to them if they choose to engage in that or not.

MR DOSZPOT: I am aware of the program, and I am very supportive of the impact that his program has. I was not aware that he had been back. I would imagine that his program would be very useful if you did it on a periodic basis. How often have they been exposed to that?

Mr Corben: If he wanted to become a youth worker, I would be very pleased, but at this stage he is not interested in joining us permanently. But he has been back. He was here last year, about the same time, and I think that is to fit in with his other commitments. We are certainly keen to continue his engagement with the centre. If we could facilitate it a couple of times a year, I would be really pleased.

I also am conscious, with programming of young people in secure facilities, more is not necessarily better. We do not need to devalue it so that it does not have that attraction and enticement. It is quite a special event. It is highly valued, and I would not like to jeopardise that.

I like to see the impact that it has on kids. But it actually helps the whole demeanour of the centre, not because they are tired and worn out from these physical activities but because it is about looking after each other, which is what they do in the team. There are conversations between young people where, "If Chris is struggling a bit, then my job is to actually help him a bit, not embarrass him or tease him or belittle him a bit. It is actually to do the opposite of what we maybe would normally do." So I would be really keen for it to continue, but if we can get another one in each year, I would be really pleased with that.

THE CHAIR: I want to ask a supplementary on that. It is always very heartening to read all about the great programs that are running out there and giving those kids some hope for their future. I want to talk about some of the staff, ask questions about the staffing out there, because, of course, they play a very important role under some really challenging circumstances. It has been good to see in the report that the directorate has been working really hard to address the staffing issues at Bimberi. Can you give us a picture on how this process has been going?

Ms Burch: Certainly there has been a focus on recruitment and good, solid training, introductory training, but also ongoing training through the year. The youth workers have one on professional development and opportunities, but the ripple effect is that they are good workers, and the benefit to the campus and to the kids is second to none.

Mr Corben: Our recruitment strategy has been to do everything we can to fully recruit to our establishment. The fact that we have recently secured more funding for two years to continue with that, with the Bendora transition program, is a really terrific outcome for us. We know we will get some really good results with that, and we are working on our evaluation plan so that we can report on that. I think that is a really important part of the whole change that seems to be happening across youth justice in terms of the rate of young people being in detention and in the statutory system.

Our process for recruiting youth workers is really quite clear, but it is quite onerous on the applicant. There is obviously a usual application process, there is psychometric testing, then there is interviewing and then we do referee checks. There are quite a

number of hoops that we get folks to jump through.

I am really pleased to tell you that we have recently undertaken a recruitment round, and we had over 40 applications for casual and permanent youth worker positions. Out of that, we interviewed 28 people over three days and we have offered 14 positions to those people. I do not make any apologies for us actually filtering through those rather large numbers, because, as we said a few times today, this type of work is really difficult and it is not for everybody. It is quite different from a lot of other jobs that people would have.

So we are actually looking for people who have those interests in engaging with young people, who have got some skills in how to not take everything personally and how to look after themselves a bit, because it is a tough job, and you will get abused and you will find stories that upset you personally and emotionally. And we need folks that have some boundaries around that and can look after themselves. So it is not for everybody.

But the folks that we do get, I think, are doing a really terrific job. The current round of new recruits only started their induction about two weeks ago. And I am really impressed with them. They are really engaged in the training. They are really happy and keen, as are all of our other staff. My staff surveys that I do indicate that they feel really safe at work. They feel supported by management. They feel supported by their colleagues. They have got the equipment and training that they need to do the job.

I know your question was around training and how we do it, but I think we need to contextualise how we actually get people to the centre. It is through that rigorous assessment and recruitment strategy. And we do that deliberately, because I need to be sure, when I go home at night, that the folks that are there are there for the right reasons, have the right skills and aptitude and attitude to help the kids, not work on their own needs and values around that. So we talk to people about leaving their values and personal beliefs in their locker when they come to work, and they need to put the corporate one on as they go through the metal detector, as you would have all done, and to become the Bimberi youth worker person and team leaders et cetera.

The last round of recruitment was really good for us because we offered permanent positions, and I was really pleased to be able to offer some of our existing casual staff permanent positions. I really like that type of incremental introduction into the organisation, because they have been able to demonstrate to us really clearly, not only through their training and the recruitment process but through their ability on the floor to work with other staff and with really difficult kids, we have made a good choice, this is a good person to come and join us in this quest for helping difficult young people. A few of those people got some permanent jobs, and that is really good.

We need to keep training people. We have got a system in place to refresh people in a whole range of important things like fire safety and how to use force properly, not because we want to use force but if we have to do it. It is unpleasant, but let us make sure we do it really clinically, carefully and considerately and go through all those processes and steps so that we can avoid getting to the use of force and we can de-escalate things much quicker.

All the data we have got indicates that the use of force is down. The number of assaults by kids on each other is down. The number of assaults on staff is down. Use of force overall is down. I think we have got that mix pretty well there. We have these refresher training sessions that we call skills maintenance sessions. And they have been developed by practitioners across the centre that look at the short checklist or the ready reckoner or the quick guide about how to write an incident report properly, what are the critical things in that, how to do an escort properly, how to put a case note on properly, how to handcuff people properly—all those simple things that we do on a day-to-day basis, not because people cannot do it but because it is just a reminder that this is really important, we need a little bit of a toolbox talk or a little half-an-hour refresher about how we do that, and then off we go. That is another aspect of the training program for staff.

About a dozen staff applied for study bank to enable them to undertake degree level studies at university. So they would have got their certificate IV through us. Some of that was through a traineeship and some of it was through an earlier grant program. Some of those people were really keen to go on with further study. I am really pleased to be able to support them in that. I do not write their essays for them, but we offer some editorial support just to give people some ideas and some resources. And there are some that are doing extremely well in those and are doing placements within our own organisation and outside with others.

I see part of our recruitment strategy as not only attracting people, and the right people, but helping them. We help educate them and train them in this difficult work and we help them then if they want to go on to know a bit more about it at a bit higher level in education. But unfortunately for me and fortunately for them, some of them leave and they get better jobs. And that is not a bad place for Bimberi to actually be. It is a bit of an entry point for people to the industry and to the organisation. They get some experience in really difficult environments, learn from that, get to reflect on it, apply some theory and education from university and higher level education to that and, as Christine was alluding to earlier, they might be able to get further upstream and help kids from falling into the river that we have got to fish them out of all the time. So they might be able to help with those earlier intervention strategies that we are talking about.

Ms Howson: I think it is also worth mentioning the approach with the casual staff pool in the way that it compensates for that movement of staff into other roles and its intersection with the community at large through Narrabundah.

Mr Corben: Yes. We have got a substantial casual pool, and I need a substantial casual pool, because everybody gets to have a holiday, people get sick, someone's children are sick and they need to be supported. So we need a casual pool to be able to cover that. We have been working really hard to build up our numbers so that we can continue to do that. And we have been able to do that. The casual pool and some of our permanent staff have elected to work at Narrabundah House as well so that people actually get to wear two hats. So it is even a bit more about multi-skilling and being able to work across an environment.

Bimberi, as you know, is really quite a secure environment, highly structured and lets us do lots of risky things because we have got those processes and procedures in place.

Narrabundah House is a house in the community. There are no fences, there are no cameras. Staff are on their own a lot. They are also working with different young people who have different needs, and it is a different program. So staff are able to work across those two sites over a period. It helps them develop those other skills about working with young people in a much more relaxed and flexible way and much more personable environment than what they would in detention.

The Narrabundah House program that Natalie was mentioning was around contact with the community. To help us to remodel that Narrabundah House program, we engaged the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and our program and services steering committee helped us do the development of the model for it. They are part of our governance group as well. But the contact that we want to have with the community there is about young people from the house going into the local community and engaging in activities and some community service opportunities if they arise and education and training and employment and be able to live in a community and feel safe and part of it as opposed to behind a fence at Bimberi or released into the community and not knowing where they fit and where their supports are. So there has been a real lot of work done about how we build those sorts of networks and supports for young people around the program at Narrabundah House.

I should mention also, before I stop, the other aspect around our training for staff, to get back to the original question. Our integrated management system has been live now for a number of weeks. I am really impressed with the product we got to in the end. It took us a long time, but we have got a really good product. The engagement with staff around that has been really impressive. I am continually impressed with the way that the staff at the centre adapt to change really quickly, and I think that is a credit to the managers and the people that work with them, because there is a level of trust. I think that is something we need to look after and continue to nurture.

But the fact is that we can change radio calls, for instance. People will muck it up for the first day or two but after that it is, "We're just going to do it." And my experience would be that it is slightly more drawn out in other jurisdictions, but here I think the people have really taken to those sorts of things really easily, as they have done with the new electronic system around policies and procedures and guidelines and the way that we are going to do reporting. It will actually help us collect data so that I can be much closer and report better on things and help us analyse information so that we can continue to plan ahead.

MR DOSZPOT: Just a brief supplementary, Mr Corben, are the 17 young people you mentioned who were there this morning when you left all males?

Mr Corben: No, we have one young female.

MR DOSZPOT: And that is manageable, having a mix?

Ms Howson: Yes.

Mr Corben: Yes.

Ms Burch: It is designed as a mixed facility, yes. I think one of the considerations is:

how do you manage to offer the support programs when there are one or two young women in there amongst a larger group of young fellows? But it is something that, every time I go out to Bimberi, I walk away very impressed and pleased with the work that they do there.

MR GENTLEMAN: I have a supplementary. Mr Corben, you were talking about the integrated management system and you showed us some of the benefits there for staff with the system. What are the benefits for the young people at Bimberi?

Mr Corben: Thank you for that question. It was remiss of me not to mention that it actually helps us to do some of our processes a lot quicker. For instance, a paper version of assessment and induction into Bimberi when you first get there could have taken up to two hours previously. We can do it in 45 minutes now. That means if you come into detention, you might be a bit tired and cranky and a bit upset, or not particularly keen on having a number of questions asked of you. Our new system will help staff to collect the information we need really quickly. It removes duplication and double handling of information because we enter it directly into our system.

It is not foolproof but it is quite methodical in that staff have to follow a bouncing ball. So you cannot progress to question 3 if you have not answered question 2. It could be “yes” or “no” in question 2, but you need to answer it. Those simple things help at the end and it generates a comprehensive induction report for us, and that is what we would share, then, with Education and with Health. So everybody has got the same information and we can do that much quicker, more efficiently, while cutting down fewer trees and also while not traumatising or annoying young people who could be in a slightly agitated state while just coming into detention. So it has given us that ability to do our job much more efficiently. We are not missing information. We are actually getting better information. We get it quicker, and we get it in a format that we can continue to use and analyse.

I think they are really important progressions for us. I am waiting for the whole system to gear up so that we can use that. My staff come to work with children. They do not come to work on a computer. They are not terribly interested in sitting at computers all day. But I need the system to be really user friendly, intuitive and productive. And that is what we have got, and I am really impressed with it. We will just keep improving on those things, but I am really pleased with it.

MR GENTLEMAN: Have you noticed a change in the inductees at all, in that it is now only taking 40 minutes?

Mr Corben: The feedback we get from young people is, “That didn’t take long.” If we give them a drink of Milo, a piece of toast, take their picture and they have a shower in that sort of time period, it is not a bad experience. It is over with fairly quickly and they get to go to bed, lie down and think about what has happened or have some time by themselves.

At other times we have had to pull up some inductions because it is going on a bit long, and young people can get agitated. We need to manage the risk around that and say, “Well, thanks very much. We might finish this tomorrow.” It has got some inherent risk around that, because we might miss something, but we usually make sure

we cover those risk indicators really early on so that we can do that. But it is certainly better for the young people and for the staff to get through stuff quickly.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you very much. That was very informative.

THE CHAIR: I will kick off with arts, then. I have a general question. It is clear that there has been a lot of thought and strategy going into the ACT arts program. Can you give us a system-wide view of the role that the arts program plays in building a smart and inclusive community? It is on page 75.

Ms Burch: Arts is an important part of any mature and civilised society in allowing participation by a whole range of our citizens. I launched last year or the year before, I think, the ACT arts policy framework that has a clear focus on participation and access to the arts. I have had a very clear interest around participation in the arts being open to and accessible by all. In addition to that, it is also about recognising and celebrating excellence within arts and how we can have a sustainable arts organisation within our community. We fund a number of key arts organisations, and we have a number of arts grants and arts funding streams that support the beginner, the new emerging artist, right through to very high level artists of excellence.

Ms Overton-Clarke: One of the other aspects, particularly in terms of social inclusion, is the great work that is being done by the cultural inclusion officers at the Tuggeranong and Belconnen arts centres. There are a number of projects where they work very closely with the local communities and in conjunction with other parts of ACT government and community organisations, really making sure that there is a very local solution and integration amongst those community areas. Mr Whitney may want to go into a bit of detail about some of those projects that have been happening out at Tuggeranong and Belconnen.

Mr Whitney: The community cultural inclusion program has had some very positive local results. With the important projects at the Belconnen Arts Centre, there have been some great projects with the multicultural women's network involving an international artist who has been working with them on a program of exhibitions that were happening both at Belconnen and also in the city, and engaging with over 100 women involved in that project. The exhibition at the end of it was one part of it but what was very important was the engagement of the community through that process.

Coming out of the Tuggeranong Arts Centre was the 100 bricks program, which has recently been on display at Belconnen but it was driven out of the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, where the community cultural inclusion officer worked with people through the open art program that was involved there. So with the 100 bricks, it was literally about painting on bricks, and that was part of the exhibition program that worked there. So the 100 years of Canberra, 100 bricks—that is where the idea came from.

Some of the other activities have occurred by collaborating with things like the National Folk Festival and also linking in with activities throughout the centenary. Also, very importantly, they have linked with other arts activities that we provide support for through our key arts organisations and our arts facilities and organisations. The project has had a very strong influence through a dance program and working with people with Parkinson's disease. So dancing with Parkinson's is now one of

those projects. Another dance program has been working with people who are senior, people in the community who have been raising money and will now be taking themselves to and representing the territory at an international dance program happening in the United Kingdom. So these are the sorts of activities that are being created and developed out of that community cultural inclusion project.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Can you please go into some of the detail of the work that has been undertaken in the Street Theatre?

Mr Whitney: The capital work that has been happening?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Whitney: Certainly, the Street Theatre has for many years now been a great place of showcasing work. One of the activities that we undertook some years ago was a study into the development of theatre in the territory. What came through that theatre statement was the need for rehearsal space. Often artists and community groups had to work in other halls or other facilities and had to pack up at the end of each night. It was not very good for the creative process to spend all their time bumping their work in and bumping it out again. So the need was for a rehearsal studio that was dedicated to creating new work.

Part of that project led to the development of not only that new rehearsal space but also some proper administration offices for the Street Theatre staff. They had been working out of a demountable for about 18 years, which was slightly uncomfortable. We have now removed the demountable, built proper offices for the staff, expanded the size of the cafe so that it can now not only service better the community around it but also assist in the cost of the facility, of running Street Theatre. It is the rehearsal studio at the back that has become very important. There are now three productions that have actually been rehearsed in that studio. Just last week the Warehouse Circus launched their latest production in that facility.

It is a great space. It has a dedicated dance floor. It has a sprung floor that people can work on. It has got height so that physical theatre and circus work can occur in that space as well. It is acoustically isolated from the rest of the Street Theatre, so that it can operate with a degree of noise and other activity happening without disturbing the rest of the activity of the Street Theatre.

Part of the project was to replace all of the seats in Street 1. I guess that is a good indicator that, after 20 years, the seats were wearing out, which indicates how many people have been going to the theatre. It is always a good measure in any theatre when you have to replace the seating. In Street 2, which is the smaller of the performance spaces, we did some work around the dressing room. It still is a very small room but it is actually now created as a proper dressing room rather than a broom cupboard being used by the artists. So there is quite a bit of work that we did on that site.

MR DOSZPOT: On page 76, “public art”, two artwork commissions in the public art scheme were delivered in 2012-13—*Culture Fragment* by artist David Jensz and *The Other Side of Midnight* by artist Anne Ross. What was the cost of these artworks?

Mr Whitney: I have not got that with me. I can certainly find those figures for you. Whether I can do that in the next short while—

MR DOSZPOT: Yes, that is fine.

Mr Whitney: I am very happy to take that question and provide that answer for you.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay. Of a more general nature regarding the artworks, there have been comments that children tend to play around this artwork—

Ms Burch: *The Other Side of Midnight?*

MR DOSZPOT: Yes, and even climbing on top.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: What safety precautions have been put in place for that?

Ms Burch: Some of the thinking behind it was to actually engage with young kids so that they can touch it, feel it and explore it.

Mr Whitney: The scale of the artwork is of a scale to encourage children to climb on it. Certainly, the amount of photographs that must have been taken now of young people riding the dogs is terrific. With the treatment underneath, there is no particular treatment. It is not a playground, so there is no soft fall area built underneath that to protect children should they fall off. Certainly, with the work, we have had no reported incidents of children falling off and damaging themselves, hurting themselves. It has lots of areas to hang on to, so children engage in and climb on it. Invariably, parents are pretty close; they place the children on and take photographs with that work as well.

Further up the mall, with the *Running Dogs*, lots of people sit on those dogs, and, of course, with *Ainslie Sheep*, they not only sit on the squatter's chair with the sheep but also on the sheep itself. I think there is a different understanding about an artwork as opposed to a piece of playground equipment. Yes, we do have to be very careful about things like finger entrapment, that kids do not get their fingers caught in there, or that there is work that kids can run into and damage themselves without actually seeing what they are walking into. But there is no particular playground treatment of those artworks, because they are artworks.

The Other Side of Midnight is just past a grassed area, and, invariably, people sit and play on that grassed area as well. There is a distinction between the grass underfoot and the concrete or the stone work which is under the artwork.

Ms Burch: It has been a well-loved installation since it has been put there.

Mr Whitney: It is the one that we have to clean the most. We do not have to clean off graffiti; we have to clean off children's scuff marks, because they love sitting on it, and ice cream and finger marks. So it is a very successful piece.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks. Minister, could I bring you to page 76 in the report. I can see at the top there that the arts fund is the subject of an evaluation by artsACT to ensure it continues to meet the needs of government and the community. Can you elaborate on the detail of this evaluation?

Ms Burch: I will go to Mr Whitney for the detail, but it is one of those programs that you have to regularly revisit to make sure that it provides that assistance and lever not only to beginning artists but to others in their careers, and organisations and programs. You can talk to that, David.

Mr Whitney: Certainly. We do evaluate the program each year to make sure it is still consistent and efficient and is a program that is satisfying the arts community. Internally, we undertake that work by looking at the number of applications we receive in each of the various categories of the fund and also the quality of some of those applications that are coming in. Sometimes there is a bit of waxing and waning. Each year there is a more popular area than not.

A few years ago, when the screen sector was beginning to grow, there was a lot of interest in screen. That led us to rethink how we would deliver the screen program. We worked with what were then two different film organisations. They have now merged to become ScreenACT. We support ScreenACT in the infrastructure program, but also we have transferred the funding arrangement for screen development across to ScreenACT. That was one of the maturing directions that we moved across. They have an independent panel to assess their applications. We have somebody that sits on that panel just to ensure that the probity of the money is correct. It is that sort of maturity that has happened.

Recently we have been looking at the whole world of poetry. It is interesting how poetry has moved. Poetry slams are all the go at the moment. We work with the Australian National University to develop poetry slams through schools, both north and south of the lake. There is a bit of a slam-off between the north and the south. What is interesting is that just yesterday the University of Canberra announced that they have got a \$15,000 grant for new poetry. So the other parts of the community take that responsibility on. We can step away from what we have always been funding to look at where the innovation can be introduced and can be put in.

That internal evaluation program happens each year. Depending on what the issues may be, we some time ago moved to a new category called our program category. There are some organisations that were not necessarily of a scale of delivering a whole program each year, which is our key arts organisation area, but that might be delivering a one-off program. The International Film Festival, the International Music Festival and those sorts of organisations did not need to be bogged down with the red tape of managing as we require them to do under a key arts organisation grant, but we could move them to this new category called a program category. They are the sorts of developments that we change as we move along to review the program.

MR GENTLEMAN: Did the evaluation make any recommendations about the administration?

Mr Whitney: The administration of the fund is very rigorously looked at each year

internally, with our internal audit. In this current year, we have just been subject to an external audit by the ACT audit office, which we are quite comfortable with. With some of the mechanisms that we have been running, we have been, I think, the leaders. We are the national leaders in that area of grant management. Working with the Australia Council and our colleagues around the country, there has been a grant harmonising program so that we are all consistently working on the same delivery of administration around our grants program. The introduction of the online application process for the grant fund, called SmartyGrants, which is the program that we use, has provided a very significant and clean, transparent process for the application process, the assessment process and then the managing of the money and auditing that money at the other side of it.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth has joined the committee. I believe you would like to ask a question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Thank you, Madam Chair. Minister, how many community arts associations are funded in the ACT, and how much do they each receive?

Ms Burch: David Whitney may have that to hand. If not, we can provide it to you.

Mr Whitney: It would probably be much more accurate to provide that to you. When you say “community arts organisations”, are they those that have particularly the phrase “community arts” in their organisations? All of our arts organisations work within the community and deliver programs through—

MR SMYTH: Facilities like Tuggeranong community arts and Belconnen community arts. Are there any others on that type of organisation?

Ms Burch: Maybe referencing key arts organisations?

Mr Whitney: I think so. Tuggeranong and Belconnen very much began from that notion of delivering community arts programs, as did the Ainslie Arts Centre. That would be probably the third. Those three organisations would be the ones that may more directly answer your question. But when we look at organisations like Music for Everyone or Canberra youth theatre, they are specific in the art form that they work in but they certainly work in that community context.

MR SMYTH: Right.

Mr Whitney: So is your question more about Tuggeranong—

MR SMYTH: Let us focus on those three. How much do Tuggeranong, Belconnen and Ainslie arts centres receive?

Mr Whitney: Again, I have not got that right at the top of my head, but we could find that, I am sure, fairly smartly for you.

MR SMYTH: All right.

Mr Whitney: The Ainslie Arts Centre is more of a self-funded organisation, because of the number of studios and activities that it has there. We do provide them with project funding for particular activities that we invite them to undertake. Gorman House Arts Centre provides management services for the Ainslie Arts Centre. But as to the degree of funding for Tuggeranong and Belconnen, I might need a few moments to find that.

MR SMYTH: All right. I will help you out with Tuggeranong. Tuggeranong got \$567,750—in answer to a question on notice to the minister. Minister, are you concerned that there have been calls for an independent audit of the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association given the significant amount of funds that the ACT government puts into the organisation?

Ms Burch: As I understand it, there was a level of independent auditing into Tuggeranong Arts Centre. The new CEO has certainly looked into the operations of the organisation. It is my understanding that it has met all its requirements under a funding contract through to artsACT.

MR SMYTH: Given the request for an independent audit, you are not going to do anything about it?

Ms Burch: That is for the Tuggeranong Arts Centre to look at. In relation to its requirements in reporting to us, it is my understanding—is that right, Mr Whitney?—that it has satisfied all the requirements that we have asked of it.

MR SMYTH: Again, given the concerns raised by the community and members of the association, given the significant funding that the government puts in, and given the level of equity that was available when the former chair of the board left with quite a generous financial legacy that is now apparently not there, will you investigate and do as the community has asked and have an independent audit of the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association?

Ms Burch: Mr Smyth, as I understand, there was a special meeting held last week or the week before where there was a vote from the floor that showed confidence in the board and the CEO.

MR SMYTH: So concerns have been raised but you as minister are not going to take any action despite significant funding from the ACT government?

Ms Burch: As I have said to you—I have said it in the Assembly, and you can try and rattle this around any which way you like, Mr Smyth—its requirements and obligations in relation to artsACT have been met and artsACT is satisfied with that. Internal discussion on the Tuggeranong Arts Centre is an internal governance matter. If the board feel that they need to interrogate their accounts, that is a decision for the board. But again—

MR SMYTH: I am asking you as minister—

Ms Burch: I have just answered your question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Given the call for an independent audit, will you take action?

Ms Burch: Let us just balance it out and refer back to the special meeting that was held last week where there was a vote of confidence to the board and to the CEO.

MR SMYTH: There was a report in the *Canberra Times* of a town hall stack claim. I know that, in answer to a question last week, you were able to say that none of your staff had joined. Are you aware of any other MLAs or their staff in the Assembly having joined the Tuggeranong Community Arts Association?

Ms Burch: The board has also engaged the services of a chartered accountant to review the financial and administrative arrangements and reporting for Tuggeranong. This will include a forensic review of accounts for the last three years. That is my understanding.

Mr Whitney: That is correct.

MR SMYTH: So there is going to be an audit then?

Ms Burch: I am reading from some advice that is in front of me now—that the board have engaged. As I have said, that is consistent with my view that if the arts organisation, or indeed any organisation that is funded through arts, meet their requirements to us, other decisions are internal for them.

Mr Whitney: Tuggeranong Arts Centre is an independent organisation. We work with them. They are required to acquit their grant each year. We meet with them twice a year to ensure that their program is in alignment with the grant that we have given them and that their finances are consistent with what they are delivering. Certainly, the advice that we received is consistent with what the minister is saying: they are undertaking their own audit process of their accounts. We were advised of that in advance of that special meeting that was called.

MR SMYTH: When were you advised of that?

Mr Whitney: I cannot remember the exact date, but it was probably three weeks, I think, before that meeting.

MR SMYTH: Three weeks before the meeting last week?

Mr Whitney: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Could you find out when the exact notification was?

Mr Whitney: Sure; certainly.

MR SMYTH: Thank you.

Mr Whitney: I have some information for you about the funding for Belconnen, Tuggeranong and Gorman House.

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Whitney: It is in the report, but it is in different parts of the report because we fund different elements of the organisation. There is core funding, project funding and the community cultural inclusion funding. For Belconnen Arts Centre—we fund these organisations on the calendar year, so again it is a little more complex than it might seem in the annual report—it is \$300,000 plus CPI and \$166,500 for the community cultural inclusion program. For Tuggeranong Arts Centre, it is \$386,000 plus CPI and \$166,500 for the community cultural inclusion officers. And for Gorman House it is \$94,000 plus CPI. I mention the CPI because these are five-year funding arrangements, so each year there is the incremental step because of that.

MR SMYTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have a supplementary question regarding the Belconnen Arts Centre and its stage 2 development. I wondered if you could just take us through that process and where that development is up to.

Ms Burch: I think they are up to design. David, you can talk to that.

Mr Whitney: We have engaged Cox Architecture to do work building on the cultural planning exercise that was done last year, and the arts centre itself undertook its own community engagement program, to look at what it was requiring. Cox Architecture is working to a final sketch plan phase of the arts centre. We are very close to having that resolved; then we will be able to get a costing for that and work through the budget process to see how that can be unfolded.

In relation to the response from the community, we are supporting the responses for additional opportunities to generate income so that the arts centre can sustain itself in a much better manner. The current programs that are very successful are the visual arts program and the dance program. We are looking at increasing the dance studios from one studio to two studios. With the visual art program, there is a formal program that happens in the gallery; we are looking to expand the informal program that would occur in the new foyer area.

We are also looking to build a performance space—not a replica of a theatre that exists currently in the Belconnen area, but a performance space that has a multi-use capacity, very much like a flat floor auditorium that could be used not only for performance but also for activities, whether they be citizenship ceremonies or other meetings or arrangements. That will be a feature of the new centre as well. And it will pick up some of the issues that have grown out of the use of the Belconnen Arts Centre, to expand some of the workshop spaces. A series of small spaces were built; the call now has been to say that we actually need a larger workshop space. So it is moving a few of the walls and doors around.

Also, the centre has now developed very strong relationships with organisations such as the University of Canberra, who are looking at delivering some programs and activities through the arts centre. The building of stage 2 and the reworking of stage 1 can provide that capacity.

I have got some advice on the question about the cost of the artworks. *Culture Fragment*, the David Jensz work, had a cost of \$140,000, which included the commission cost to the artist of \$115,000; then a balance would have been made up for site works and other engaged activity around there. With *The Other Side of Midnight*, the total cost was \$210,000. The artist commission fee was \$187,000, but the other associated costs would have been the groundworks, establishment and installation.

MR SMYTH: Madam Chair, I have a supplementary on the artworks. How much has it cost to refurbish our little men climbing the stairs? How many times has it been damaged and how much has it cost to maintain it?

Mr Whitney: It has been damaged twice. The first time the little man at the top was taken and we replaced that. The second time, the little man at the top and the next little man were removed. So we have now replaced both of those characters. I need to take that question on notice because I am not sure of the exact detail. There were two associated costs. One was the work being remade by the artist, which he sent from Denmark. There was also the cost of the local fabricator to reinstate those works; so I need to take that question on notice.

MR SMYTH: Will the repairs on the staircase ensure that it is vandal-proof?

Ms Burch: I do not know—pretty much. With the work that has gone into this now to strengthen it, even the artist remarked, “If anybody takes these now it is almost super human powers.”

Mr Whitney: Yes, I am very reluctant to say that they are completely vandal-proof. However, the works have included filling the core of the statue with concrete. The two little men that we have replaced now have attached to their feet cores of steel that go into the concrete. The little man at the top step has been reinforced with steel so that that will be much harder to remove. The issue in the first place with the little man was that the person who took him was able to actually use leverage to twist and turn. The second one was removed with a hacksaw.

So I think if someone turns up in Civic at night with a hacksaw with the intent to cut off one of the little men, I do not think we can do anything to prevent that. We have got a CCTV camera on there now. We are talking with JACS and the intention is to roll out their loudspeaker system to that camera as well. They are trialling that at the moment at the interchange. The plan would be to have a loudspeaker so that if work is being undertaken to vandalise the artwork, somebody can watch that from the Winchester centre and then beam down the microphone, “Please move along!”

Ms Burch: “Move along!”

MR SMYTH: So the CCTV is monitored by the AFP?

Mr Whitney: That is correct.

Ms Burch: Yes, the artist was down last week or the week before. It is all in situ, but

you cannot see it because of the building construction area that is attached to the Canberra Centre.

THE CHAIR: We might move on to facilities.

MR SMYTH: Sorry, before we do can I ask about the annual satisfaction survey?

THE CHAIR: You are asking another question?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Ms Burch: And then we have to go.

MR SMYTH: The annual satisfaction survey came in at 43 per cent.

Ms Howson: Yes, that is right.

MR SMYTH: What was the cause of this and what will happen to correct that?

Ms Howson: This is the first year that we have actually surveyed the arts facilities managers. The actual number of survey respondents I think was six in total. So it is a very small sample, but that said, it is evident to us that we will need to discuss with each of the arts facilities what their expectations are around satisfaction and seek to address it.

There are a number of arts facilities that were undergoing refurbishment at the time the survey was conducted and we expect that that influenced their sense of satisfaction at the time. One of the facilities was actually relocated to an alternative site to make way for that refurbishment. But we will certainly be speaking with each of the managers about the issues that they highlighted in the survey and be able to more specifically respond to their concerns over the course of this year.

Ms Burch: And also there was only about a 50 per cent return rate. But some of them were organisations that were going through major rebuilds; so perhaps the return of the survey was not first and foremost on their mind.

MR SMYTH: But the 43 per cent is calculated on the surveys that were returned, surely?

Mr Howson: That is correct.

MR SMYTH: So the fact that some have been refurbished is, in fact, superfluous to the survey.

Ms Burch: Yes, but I am just pointing out we need to do better to get a return rate of above 50 per cent.

MR SMYTH: Is it possible to have a copy of the arts facility part of the survey provided to the committee?

Ms Burch: The survey tool?

MR SMYTH: The actual survey results.

Ms Burch: I do not see why not.

Mr Whitney: We do not know, because we do not—it is an anonymous—

MR SMYTH: Yes it is done blind, yes.

Mr Whitney: report; so we do not know who the people responded were. It is interesting that with such a small number of respondents, two of the organisations can skew the result quite substantially. That is what we believe has happened.

MR GENTLEMAN: Just a quick question for Mr Whitney before you leave. Mr Whitney, I understand you have done a bit of acting in your time. Last night we heard that Russell Crowe is doing a new film. Were you able to provide him with any tips last night at the *Mapping our world* exhibition?

Mr Whitney: Judged on the performance of Mr Crowe last night, there is absolutely no chance that I could offer him any tips whatsoever. His performance was very impressive. I think it typified the wonderful advantage of using artists for activities such as launching an exhibition. Whilst there is a formality to those occasions, the familiarity generated by his ability as an actor I think carried the evening very strongly. The fact that he was also a “map geek”, in his words, was very useful. But his ease and comfort at working that crowd was very evident. I think that shows the advantage of training for people who are in public office. It was great that he was able to do that. And no, I had no opportunity to offer him any tips whatsoever.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what is the agenda of the government’s public art program?

Ms Burch: Pardon me?

MR DOSZPOT: What is the agenda of the government’s public art program?

Ms Burch: What is the agenda of the—

MR DOSZPOT: How many public art pieces are there left?

Ms Burch: To install—I think there are two. I think there are two pieces that are yet to be installed. Last time I spoke about these they were looking to be relocatable at the arboretum. Is that right?

Mr Whitney: These are works that were intended to be located where the new extension is coming down Majura parkway—

Ms Burch: Majura parkway, yes.

M Whitney: In respect of the location for those works, we have been watching to see what the impact of that work would be. It is clearly going to detract from the artworks

being located there. So we are investigating other sites—

Ms Burch: Including the arboretum.

Mr Whitney: and the arboretum is one of those sites that we are looking for installing those artworks across the—

Ms Burch: Because they are quite large kinetic pieces.

MR DOSZPOT: So how many—

Mr Whitney: I apologise. There is one other work that we are working with our colleagues in TAMS to install, which is at the Red Hill shops. The two artists that have made that work live locally at Braidwood. Very sadly for them, they had a studio fire. So the artwork, which was just about ready to be cast, was captured in that fire. They lost their studio and the model for the artwork was destroyed in that process. They are undergoing the process of reworking the model to get it cast.

MR DOSZPOT: Have they been paid for that artwork already?

Mr Whitney: No, the work had not been delivered to us. So that is one of their liabilities. We had paid them a series of—often these payments are made in instalments. So the instalments had been made for the commissioning of the work and then for the first part of it, but we have no obligation to pay them beyond that.

MR DOSZPOT: Are there any other artworks that have been commissioned?

Mr Whitney: There are no other artworks commissioned, no.

MR DOSZPOT: In respect of the one that has been delayed, do you have any idea when that will be delivered? They are recasting it, I think you said.

Mr Whitney: No, we do not have an answer for that. I am not sure. It is connected to the reworking of the Red Hill shops, but in respect of the delay in the artists' schedule, I do not know what the time frame for that is going to be. Clearly, they lost all in their studio. So they need to recover from that. We are not pursuing them with vigour to build it in a hurry, because there are much greater things for them to worry about, but that is—

MR DOSZPOT: There are no thoughts about a replica of the *Skywhale* anywhere in Canberra, are there?

Mr Whitney: There is a replica of the *Skywhale* in the tapestry which has now been handed, or I think will soon be handed, to the Speaker. It will be in this building; so that will be the reference into future.

THE CHAIR: I thought there was a glass work as well?

Mr Whitney: Thank you, yes, the Canberra Glassworks hosted the *Skywhale*, as indeed have other art centres. The Belconnen Arts Centre and Tuggeranong hosted a

flight of the *Skywhale*. Very interestingly, the glass artists at the Glassworks took the images from Patricia Piccinini's drawings and actually made a glass *Skywhale*. I think about four of the artists took about two hours to make that work. I have seen photographs but I have not seen the finished work. But it is meant to be quite spectacular.

Mr Howson: I might add that I was at the Telopea Park School fete on the weekend, and the hottest items on sale were pendants and earrings made in the image of the *Skywhale*.

MR SMYTH: You mentioned that the *Skywhale* was appearing at some of the community art centres. Have they had to pay for that or is that included in the cost of flying the balloon?

Mr Whitney: I do not know the answer to your question. The centenary look after the management of the *Skywhale*. I would be surprised if the organisations had to pay for a viewing. There are a number of flights for the *Skywhale* that have been conducted in Canberra as part of the commissioning of the *Skywhale*. I do not know if they have had to pay a fee for that.

MR SMYTH: Can you take that on notice and find out?

Mr Whitney: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will move on to the Cultural Facilities Corporation now. Welcome to the committee hearing, Ms Elvin. I ask that you familiarise yourself with the privilege statement, and I will kick off with the first question, which is about CMAG. A lot of people in this building travel across the concrete to get a coffee from Grant, the barista at CMAG. We often see when we are over there groups of children being given the opportunity to use that space with all the story books and the play tables and the child-friendly spaces. Is this program overseen by the corporation or is it overseen by CMAG?

Ms Burch: CMAG is part of the Cultural Facilities Corporation, but Harriet can go into that program. I agree with you, it is a fantastic program that is well received by parents and kids. It is a wonderful way of introducing kids into the museums and books and cultural facilities that we have in Canberra.

Ms Elvin: Just to clarify, the Cultural Facilities Corporation is like an umbrella organisation that covers a number of different cultural venues, including CMAG. I think the program you are referring to would be the toddler Tuesday program. This is a spinoff of a very successful family program called CMAG on Sunday. That program is for a slightly older age group and it happens on the first Sunday of every month. But we recognised a gap in the market, if you like, for the very young children, so the early childhood group. So we introduced this toddler Tuesday program that has many of the same successful elements as CMAG on Sunday. It is an opportunity for parents or carers to come in with their children and for those children to be introduced to the museum environment. It is a little bit of teaching them how to behave in a museum environment—you do not run around, you do not scream, you engage quietly with it—but making them feel very familiar and comfortable in that environment.

We find that CMAG is on quite a comfortable scale for young children. I sometimes think the national institutions can be a bit big and confronting for them, but I think we are of a much smaller scale that they really feel quite comfortable with. We hope that then they are able to establish a lifelong connection with museums and galleries.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, the annual report notes that CFC achieved or exceeded its 2012-13 targets for all seven indicators.

Ms Burch: Well done, Harriet.

MR DOSZPOT: And actual numbers of people attending CFC events were much higher. What was the driver for these increases?

Ms Burch: I think it is twofold: one, it is just the good work that CFC does with engaging with community about putting on the different programs, and being quite in tune with the market. Ms Elvin has just discussed the introduction of the Tuesday program. But I also think the centenary of Canberra has played a role in additional activity across Canberra as a whole but particularly with CFC because substantial pieces of work have been coming through the Canberra theatre as well that have been attached to the centenary.

Ms Elvin: If I could enlarge on what the minister has said; there are some variance notes at page 225 to the annual report that delves into a bit more detail about the reasons for those variations. The additional visitor numbers were particularly driven by additional visitors to CMAG, in particular, and also at Lanyon. CMAG, as the minister has said, enjoyed a lot of increased visitation from centenary activities. I think Grant, our friendly barista who has just been mentioned in glowing terms, is quite an attractor and brings people in with the quality of his coffee and the quality of his philosophical observations. But, broader than that, I think the centenary year has provided a great opportunity to introduce a whole range of different elements into our programming and perhaps reach out to different audiences.

MR DOSZPOT: So the things that you did differently, are you going to maintain that differentiation?

Ms Elvin: I would like to think we can draw on that experience and capture those successful elements. For example, this year CMAG is acting as a sort of centenary hub. We have volunteers stationed there each day and we have dedicated touch screens in the foyer where people can access centenary information. So I am hoping we can continue that focus of CMAG as being a centre for information in the city in the future.

MR DOSZPOT: Will this level of performance be sustainable over the longer term?

Ms Elvin: I hope so. Particularly on the theatre side, which is much more dependent on what productions can tour to us. We are not a production house at the Canberra Theatre Centre and are reliant on what productions we can bring in from interstate or overseas for the most part. So we are subject to the volatility of the performing arts industry, much more so than our other sites where it is much more a case of us

presenting what we develop ourselves. But, certainly, our intention is to try to maximise the number of visitors across all of our sites.

MR DOSZPOT: Will your performance indicator be adjusted accordingly?

Ms Elvin: I think we have increased our target for this year on the back of successful results for last year.

MR GENTLEMAN: I would like to ask what your plans are now for the old Nolan building at Lanyon after Tuggeranong arts has moved out?

Ms Elvin: As you are probably aware, Mr Gentleman, the Tuggeranong Arts Centre has been using that very successfully this year while its premises were being refurbished in Tuggeranong town centre. It operated its arts programs from there, and that was great for them and great for us in bringing new visitors to the site.

They have now vacated the building and moved back to their own building, so we are looking at a range of short-term and longer term uses. Longer term, we have been talking to the minister about conducting a major study into how the whole precinct can be refocused as more of an arts, heritage and tourism hub. We are talking with the minister about some ideas and possible funding there.

In the immediate term we want to try to capture some of the community engagement that came out of that experience with the Tuggeranong Arts Centre, and the two particular needs at the moment are for a site for our larger education programs. At the moment when we have large groups of school children on the Lanyon site it is difficult to accommodate them in an environment that is not weather dependent. So we are looking at a usage for that education program. Also we are hoping to use some of the building for display of our heritage objects, which, again, ties in with education and research. So, in both cases in the immediate term, we are trying to retain a level of community involvement whilst looking at those sorts of broader range of options for future.

MR GENTLEMAN: It sounds exciting.

MR SMYTH: There was a notion that it might become the rural fire service museum. Is that still in the mix?

Ms Elvin: We remain very willing to provide advice on that whole concept, wherever the actual facility ends up being located. But, to be honest, it all seems to have gone a bit quiet on that front. I have not heard anymore about it myself. I am certainly willing to work with the bushfire community to develop the concept further, but at this stage I am not aware of how that is developing.

MR SMYTH: On page 21 of the report, section A.3.2 is entitled “Major challenges”. In the context of the operating deficit of \$1.634 million, the second paragraph talks about the centenary-related theatre programming but that commercial theatre activity was generally not as strong as in the previous years. Is there a reason for that?

Ms Elvin: I think the reason is simply the continuing volatility of the performing arts

industry. We are very subject to fluctuations in that industry. We have limited control over it and it tends to ebb and flow with macroeconomic factors. So there is an impact both on supply of product coming to Canberra and also on the demand side. Obviously buying a theatre ticket is always the most discretionary expenditure you can make. So when you hear about possible major cuts to the federal public sector, for example, that tends to send a bit of a shockwave through the community and tends to make people tighten their belts. I think those factors impact on the health of the industry and, therefore, on income levels for us, in terms of theatre.

MR SMYTH: Is there no link or alignment between your performance measures and financial outcomes? Following on from Mr Doszpot's question, if all your targets were passed yet you are still running a deficit, why is it you have more visitors than you thought, but still have a—

Ms Elvin: Sorry, are you asking why we have a deficit overall?

Mr Smyth: Is there a connection between your performance indicators? On all your visitation numbers you overachieved, and yet you are still running a \$1.6 million deficit. Your commercial theatre activity was not as strong as the previous year. Does this all contribute to the debt or is that independent?

Ms Elvin: All of those things certainly go into the mix. The main factors that were driving the better-than-target visitor result were visitor numbers at Canberra Museum and Gallery and historic places, not at the theatre. In fact, I think theatre numbers may have been slightly down. I will just check that if I may. Yes, there was a very slight drop in visitor numbers from 2011-12 to 2012-13. There was a drop there, but there were increases in Canberra Museum and Gallery visitor numbers and historic places. So while it is great to see those visitor numbers, I guess they are not bringing the price of a theatre ticket with them.

I think also, Mr Smyth, in terms of your comment about the deficit, we always budget to a major deficit position because of the large depreciation costs that we generate—about \$2 million per annum. So we will always budget for a large deficit. That in itself is not really speaking of the health of our budget.

MR SMYTH: The drop in the theatre numbers; what was the number and the percentage?

Ms Elvin: It was from 198,000 to 195,000, in rounded terms.

MR SMYTH: The next challenge is uncertainty over the future of a collection of objects at Lanyon owned by the ACT branch of the National Trust. What are those objects and what is the outcome?

Ms Elvin: I suppose there is no fully resolved position at this point in time. We remain in close discussions with the ACT branch of the National Trust. In fact, the president of that branch attended our board meeting last week and we talked to him about the fact that we are very interested in retaining those objects at Lanyon. The trust recognises that. They are in a financially viable position this financial year. They have assured us of that. They are also prepared to consider a proposal that we have put

to them whereby we have offered to buy the collection of objects over a period of years. That would mean they have a guaranteed income stream for those years, and the hit on our budget would not be too great in any one year. We are still in very active discussions with them, and I think both organisations are committed to ensuring that the objects remain at Lanyon.

MR SMYTH: Sure. What are the objects?

Ms Elvin: There is a whole range of objects; I think there are 200 in all. This really goes back to when Lanyon was first set up as a house museum whereby the authorities at the time worked very closely with the National Trust setting it up as a house museum and sourcing appropriate furniture and other objects to present it as it is currently presented. So there is that lengthy history with the National Trust. The majority of objects, however, are owned by us. I think 600 of the 800 or so objects are owned by us.

MR SMYTH: And the approximate value of the national trust collection?

Ms Elvin: That is a little bit debateable. I would say somewhere around \$100,000.

MR SMYTH: The last of the major challenges listed is capital works. What were the capital works that presented challenges in the financial year?

Ms Elvin: There were two main projects: one was the fourth and final year of the historic places major project. That is now completed and that invested \$3.7 million into all three historic sites. The other major project was the first year of a three-year project for the Canberra Theatre Centre. In both cases they were some operational challenges managing around the need for the sites to be accessed by tradespeople. In some cases, for example, with the theatres they have actually got to close off the theatre laneway while large pieces of equipment—chillers and so forth—are actually delivered. Those sorts of challenges all can be managed but they add an extra factor into day-to-day challenges.

THE CHAIR: We will adjourn now—

MR SMYTH: Will the Cultural Facilities Corporation be returning?

THE CHAIR: No.

Ms Burch: No, we are finished.

MR SMYTH: Could I just ask the last question? There were some reports done that assisted—

THE CHAIR: We are adjourning. We are already over time, so we will adjourn for afternoon tea.

MR GENTLEMAN: Just put it on notice.

MR SMYTH: It is not unreasonable to ask for some reports.

MR GENTLEMAN: Just put it on notice.

THE CHAIR: You are welcome to put it on notice, Mr Smyth. Thank you, witnesses.

Meeting suspended from 3.23 to 3.37 pm.

Appearances:

Burch, Ms Joy, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Women, Minister for Multicultural Affairs and Minister for Racing and Gaming

Canberra Institute of Technology

Dodd, Ms Jenny, Acting Chief Executive

Stenlake, Dr Nicole, Executive Director, CIT People and Organisational Governance

THE CHAIR: Welcome, everybody. We now have the CIT 2012 annual report before us. I want to check with everybody that you are familiar with the privilege statement that is before you. Before we go to questions, Ms Burch, do you want to make a statement?

Ms Burch: I will make a brief statement. Thank you for the opportunity to appear today to talk about the programs of the Canberra Institute of Technology in the 2012 annual report. The provision of vocational education and training through CIT is an important element of the government's commitment to assist people to be part of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce.

2012 was a challenging year for the national VET sector, with a significant change to public providers in Queensland, South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria. The way VET is funded and delivered across all jurisdictions is now undergoing changes through the implementation of the national partnership agreement on schools reform, which is expected to increase the skills and qualification levels in the ACT.

CIT is the largest RTO and public provider of VET in the ACT, offering over 400 courses ranging from certificates, traineeships and apprenticeships through to diplomas and degrees. In 2012 CIT educated and trained over 21,000 students, including over 1,000 international students, with just over 1,000 staff.

The publication of the WorkSafe report and improvement notice resulted in the CIT taking appropriate action. The work done in addressing the requirements of the improvement notice has been acknowledged by the Commissioner for Public Administration in his report released in September this year, which I am sure most members of the committee would have considered. CIT's response to the improvement notice is covered comprehensively in this annual report, on pages 25 and 149.

The commissioner's report found that CIT does not have a culture of systemic bullying but that management of workplace issues in a small number of areas could have been managed better. CIT has acknowledged the problems with management and has worked hard to address those concerns. Investigations into the allegations raised are continuing and all of the complainants have been notified about the progress.

Despite the disruption to CIT through this difficult period, CIT continued to provide excellent education and training. Students were awarded the Australian vocational

student of the year and the Australian apprentice of the year—a rare feat for the two most prestigious national awards going to students from the same institution. On top of this, CIT was awarded the ACT large registered training organisation of the year at the recent training awards for the sixth year in a row. A full list of awards received by CIT has also been acknowledged in this year's annual report.

Employment outcomes for students are a priority and are used to measure the success of CIT. The strategic indicator on page 111 published by the National Centre for Vocational Education Research shows that 92 per cent of CIT graduates are employed or in further study after training, compared to 87 per cent nationally. CIT graduates exceeded the national benchmark in four out of the five measures. Data similarly indicates CIT employer cohorts are satisfied with CIT. Year on year, CIT has seen improvements in preparing employees well for work, integrating training into employer organisations and acting on feedback from employers.

The government is committed to public provision of VET and provides CIT with close to \$70 million annually for agreed outputs. The CIT commercial enterprises contribute close to 35 per cent of its total revenue. In an increasingly contestable market, it is thought that this figure is likely to increase.

In closing, I would like to thank the executive and officials, plus all the team at CIT, for the work they do. Over 1,000 staff and over 21,000 students, I think, is a testimony to the work that they do each and every day. I know that I could not get up and have my morning cup of tea, turn the lights on or do many things if we did not have the VET sector in town making sure we have got the trades, the skills and the experience that keep our city going. So thanks to all.

THE CHAIR: I will kick off with the first question. I know that you have very high satisfaction levels with employer groups. Could you expand on how you engage with employers on crafting the CIT's training?

Ms Burch: There is high satisfaction. I might go to Ms Dodd to talk more on this. I think it reflects the fact that vocational education and training does have a very clear focus about employability and job readiness. It is around those practical skills that come through many of the offerings through CIT. A successful training organisation needs to be linked to those employer desires and wants. I invite Ms Dodd to talk more on those results.

Ms Dodd: Thank you, Minister. Thank you for the question, Ms Berry. We do a lot of work in engaging with employers. Today, this morning, we have had a staff leadership forum where we have had Jodi Schmidt, who is the new Chief Executive of TAFE Queensland, join us. One of the things that she said was that often TAFE does not talk about how well we do in that capacity. Yes, you are right: we have 89 per cent employer satisfaction. To achieve 89 per cent employer satisfaction there are a range of strategies we use that are about finding out what employers want. As we all know, it is industry that the VET sector supplies an employment base for. Therefore, even though our client base is students, we are working to industry.

With respect to some of the strategies that we have for engaging with employers and working out what they need, firstly, we have industry advisory groups. Those industry

advisory groups are at program level and they operate via a committee for each of the areas that we have major delivery in, and that committee guides us.

I will take health, community and wellbeing as an example. We will have representatives from ACT Health. We will also have representatives from the medical profession. We will have representatives from the community services area. We will have representatives from disability. We will have representatives from a range of industries that are connected with that particular industry area. Similarly, we would then have a committee for other areas of our delivery.

With respect to those industry advisory groups, we have just refreshed our terms of reference for them and we are engaging much more directly with them. They also engage with CIT council. CIT council is also a way in which we keep abreast of the needs of employers and industry because a number of the people on CIT council are actual appointments from industry.

Additionally, we have direct networks. Our teachers are required to have vocational competence, which means that they are directly in touch with their particular employers and their particular industry bases. That is a requirement that is essential through our regulatory environment but it is also fundamental to the quality of our delivery. Those direct networks are essential for us being able to have the ongoing employer relationships that we do.

On top of that, CIT has been around for 80 years and touches a lot of families. We have a huge alumnus. That alumnus then become employers in their own right, and they are also engaging with our students. We have an apprenticeship workforce. As you know, we are not just dealing with apprentices; we deal with their employers. It is that group of people as well who are constantly providing us with feedback and constantly ensuring that the delivery we do is meeting their needs.

The most important thing about the way we engage with industry is that we do a lot of listening. We listen to what their needs are and we are crafting and changing our delivery to be able to meet their needs all the time through a range of formal and less formal means of interacting.

MR DOSZPOT: Further to the minister's opening remarks, page 25 of the annual report states:

The year was not without its difficulties, however. The WorkSafe ACT Report (11 April 2012) in response to allegations of workplace harassment and bullying found that CIT had failed in its duties under the *Work Safety Act 2008* and its successor the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011* ...

I have a question for Ms Dodd. In respect of the time frame you mentioned, with the WorkSafe investigation and improvement notice and the Commissioner for Public Administration's investigations that occurred, when did you assume the position of acting CEO?

Ms Dodd: On 1 March, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: 1 March?

Ms Dodd: 2013.

MR DOSZPOT: The Commissioner for Public Administration provided a report to CIT in December 2012. CIT did not respond until June 2013. Why did it take so long?

Ms Dodd: Thank you for your question. I think it is very important that we address it, because the report was a very significant report. It had a lot of data, a lot of detail in there, and there was a lot of impact on a lot of different people. It was important that it be read thoroughly and considered properly. The decisions that needed to be made needed to be well thought through and the recommendations needed to be appropriate, because the impact on all parties was going to be and has been significant.

Additionally, the Government Solicitor's advice was sought in terms of making a response, and there was a five-week period between seeking Government Solicitor advice and being able to respond. As you would appreciate, Mr Doszpot, I assumed the chief executive role on 1 March. There was a period earlier in the year when Mr Marron had been not particularly well and there were a number of key things at CIT that needed to be addressed. This was a priority. It was an important priority. It needed to be handled with care and due consideration, and we gave it that.

Once the recommendations were made, we have moved very swiftly since then to implement those recommendations at every point that we have been asked to respond. I think the executive team who have worked with me on that, as we have been able to move forward very quickly once we moved into that phase.

MR DOSZPOT: Given the extensive and drawn-out efforts of staff and former staff over two, nearly three, years to have their complaints treated in an appropriate manner, do you believe that a seven-month delay in response by CIT was appropriate?

Ms Dodd: It is very important to recognise the impact of such a process on all parties that are involved, the importance of procedural fairness and natural justice and of making the right decision. Those decisions were very important decisions from my perspective, and I needed to be able to make sure that we gave them the due consideration that we did. I do not underestimate the impact that has had on some of those individuals, and we have sincerely apologised, as per the commissioner's report, in terms of the management of those cases.

It was important in this process to recognise the situation that existed at the time, and also to recognise what we have done since. Since that moment we have worked very closely, very quickly, we have kept a very close eye on it to keep it moving, and keep it moving quickly, and that has been very important. As soon as the commissioner's report was released, we responded immediately. We have implemented the first recommendation. We are part-way through implementing recommendation 4. We have got something in train. We are just waiting to finalise that. We will then, before the end of the year, consider all the other recommendations as they relate to CIT in what we need to do to respond.

As you are aware, there are only two specific recommendations relating to CIT. The

others are more generic, more general, for the ACT public service and we are waiting for a response there to those. But we will nonetheless move forward to look at the recommendations in our own way as to how we can implement them. So we have moved very quickly since that moment in time.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, the commissioner has written now to CIT and advised that you have complied with the relevant notice. Is there any other advice that the commissioner has supplied to you from that writing?

Ms Burch: Ms Dodd can go to the detail, but in the WorkSafe report, towards the end of last year, he notified in writing that he was satisfied with the compliance and the effort that have been made. The recent report from the commissioner also recognises the effort that has been made and described it, I think, as leading practice or best practice.

There is no doubt I think he has described, again without going to the detail, some areas where management could have responded and managed incidents certainly better. But it is very clear that CIT does not, as I said in my opening statement, have a culture of systemic bullying. I think that is important for us to really acknowledge and understand. It does not take away any of the concern or grief by the complainants, but it is being managed. I think it really is important for us to recognise the effort from CIT and I think it has been validated through the public service commissioner.

Ms Dodd: We were very pleased to welcome the Commissioner for Public Administration to our leadership forum this morning. He gave findings to the 100 staff who participated in that forum and he reiterated the importance of his findings. He acknowledged the work that has been done since and the seriousness with which CIT has taken it. Let me quote from the report:

CIT leads the ACT public sector in terms of staff accessing training on behavioural expectations and managing workplace bullying.

I am very pleased to report that we have implemented, for the second year, anti-bullying training and awareness. Seventy-one per cent of our staff have completed that, without very much encouragement at all. So we are really moving well in terms of changing that culture and of understanding that we need to be actively participating. I would like to hand over to Dr Stenlake to talk through a little bit about what the Work Safety Commissioner said and how we responded once we got the WorkSafe notice.

Dr Stenlake: Thanks, Jenny. I think it is really important to talk a bit about what we did. It was a very considerable amount of work that we undertook during 2012, and we did work quite closely with the commissioner's office in this regard.

One of the main things that we needed to do was improve our policies and procedures. We developed two new policies, one responding to workplace issues, the other one in the prevention of bullying and harassment in the organisation. As Jenny has just stated, those policies are now leading practice in the ACT public service. The other important part of that work was the training that we rolled out to all staff within the organisation. We have a considerable number of employees, close to 1,000. A considerable

percentage of these are casual teachers. And 96 per cent of those undertook the training in 2012. It was made available to everybody to do that. Those numbers include people that were just teaching for maybe a few hours during the year.

It really has increased people's awareness across the organisation. In my role as Executive Director, CIT People and Organisational Governance, I connect quite closely with the staff, particularly those that might be experiencing issues in the workplace. I have heard a lot of commentary about how helpful they have found that training, how that has changed their perceptions. And we are seeing that day to day in our work at CIT.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. Madam Chair, can I get back to some of the supplementary questions that I had not asked where Mr Gentleman came through you, because it did interrupt the flow of our questioning.

THE CHAIR: I will chair the meeting, Mr Doszpot. Thank you for your advice, but please go on.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. Ms Dodd, we were talking about the delay. Commissioner Kefford also commented in his report about the delay being of some concern—the seven-month delay. How many complaints are still under investigation?

Ms Dodd: There are a number of matters that have not yet been resolved, Mr Doszpot; they are currently underway.

MR DOSZPOT: Are any staff who are subject to investigation still employed in their substantive positions while the investigations are being conducted?

Ms Dodd: I do not believe that this is the place for us to be talking about individuals at this point in time.

MR DOSZPOT: I am not asking for names, but I am asking whether there are any staff who are subject to investigation.

Ms Burch: Is your question that somebody raised a concern and do people keep their jobs until that concern has been investigated and any findings found?

MR DOSZPOT: My question is quite straightforward. I am asking: are any staff who are subject to investigation still employed in their substantive positions while the investigations are being conducted?

Ms Burch: Some yes and some no.

MR DOSZPOT: I was asking Ms Dodd.

Ms Dodd: We have also, Mr Doszpot—

Ms Burch: I am sorry, Mr Doszpot, but I can also answer the question.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay. I take your point, minister. I will accept your answer: some

yes—

Ms Burch: And some no.

MR DOSZPOT: Some no.

MR DOSZPOT: And you were going to say?

Ms Dodd: We have had an organisational structure change as well. We have had quite a bit of movement of our senior staff in that organisational structure change. That organisational structure change is designed to reposition CIT to compete in a more competitive environment and the changing VET reform that exists in our context. To reiterate the minister's comment, people have moved around in different ways because of our organisational structure change as well.

MR DOSZPOT: Coming back to the minister's statement about some are and some are not—again, I understand privacy issues; I am not asking for individuals to be identified—how many individuals are still employed who are under investigation?

Ms Burch: Can we just clarify this? I am anxious that CIT is being defined by an incident or an investigation that was led through the commissioner for public service. I am very anxious that CIT not be defined in the negative about some relatively small number. And it is a small number. I think, again, without going to the words used in the report, that they were the words used by the public service commissioner. I would rather see CIT defined by its achievements.

Going back to your comment about who is still in a job, it is my understanding that it is not incumbent upon any employer to dismiss or suspend anyone that has had an allegation made against them. In that context, under that pretext, it will remain that some are employed and some are not employed.

THE CHAIR: Can I ask a supplementary question, Mr Doszpot, which goes to the questions that you are asking so it will not interrupt the flow. It is about the new complaints management system that you have implemented in addressing the concerns that were raised under the WorkSafe notice. So it goes to how you are dealing with complaints now. Would you take us through what that process is and how it is being implemented?

Ms Dodd: I will hand that one across to Dr Stenlake, because she manages the complaints processing in her new role, which was created as part of our response to this, as Executive Director, CIT People and Organisational Governance.

Dr Stenlake: Thank you for that. I might start by talking a little bit about “natural justice”, because they were words that were used quite heavily around the time in relation to the original complaints. What natural justice means is that if a complaint is made against you, you have a right to respond to that complaint. These investigations that are going on are in process. As part of that process, the respondents are being given natural justice and they are being given an opportunity to provide a response to those allegations. That is a really important part of the work that underpins—

MR DOSZPOT: Can I just ask what natural justice is being given to the victims who have been on the receiving end.

Dr Stenlake: They have also been given natural justice, in that they have had their opportunity to fully explain their concerns to a number of people and they have all given fairly lengthy statements as part of the investigations. They have had their opportunity to have their say. Now natural justice means that respondents also have the opportunity to respond to the allegations that have been made against them and give their side of the story. That is the process that is underway at this point in time. It is really important. Those processes are going on, and it is not really appropriate for us to talk about those individual circumstances.

MR DOSZPOT: I agree. I have not been asking—

Dr Stenlake: Just going back to the complaint policy, one of the key changes is that there is a lot more oversight now at the executive level about complaints that are raised. We have done quite a lot of work in encouraging people to raise any issues that they have. That early intervention in the management of complaints is really a key to producing a happy and productive workforce. So we—

MR DOSZPOT: Can I just come back to it? I think we are talking around the same issue here. I should address this to Ms Dodd as the acting chief executive. Ms Dodd, the first recommendation of the Kefford report, on page 13—

MR GENTLEMAN: Madam Chair, it would be good to be able to hear the answers.

THE CHAIR: Yes, thank you. I was just about to say something. Thank you for your advice as well, Mr Gentleman, but I did ask a supplementary; Ms Stenlake was answering my question, so let her continue and then we can keep going.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Dr Stenlake: The policy quite clearly articulates a number of avenues in which people can raise concerns. It articulates quite clearly that in some instances people may feel that they are not comfortable raising a complaint with a direct supervisor or even their supervisor's supervisor. The complaints policy itself gives a lot of different options or mechanisms through which people can raise concerns. It expresses the seriousness with which we deal with complaints and it also includes a clearly articulated risk assessment.

This risk assessment is really an aid to managers—when they should alert me, as Executive Director, CIT People and Organisational Governance, that there needs to be executive oversight of this particular concern. This has been working extremely well since it has been in place. It does mean that, as an executive team, we are really aware of anything that might be happening in that sort of issue space across the whole organisation and we can then ensure that appropriate action is taken. People are given training if that is required. We are able to put in some positive things to support people in the workplace. That is the approach that we have been taking during 2013.

Ms Dodd: And the system works very well. Dr Stenlake has recently returned from five weeks leave. We had cause to have to find out about one particular matter that was underway, and the system proved itself to be very robust in being able to find where that matter was up to. We were very pleased with that.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: If I can now get back to my question, Ms Dodd, the first recommendation of the Kefford report was:

That CIT acknowledge and apologise for past failures ...

I have to hand a copy of an email that was sent to you, as well, Ms Dodd, from one of the complainants in response to your letter of apology. I would like to read parts of it. It reads: "I do not accept your apology for the following reasons. The letter was only sent because you were directed to by Andrew Kefford. Apart from my name and address appearing at the start of your letter, it is the same worded document received by all the other complainants. It has no personal value to me. As investigations are still proceeding the apology is premature." Were all the letters that were sent out the same, Ms Dodd?

Ms Dodd: No, Mr Doszpot. There were a range of different letters sent out.

MR DOSZPOT: My office is in receipt of three of them, and they are identical.

Ms Dodd: They were grouped according to certain categories of where their matters were up to. Can I make a comment, though? You are in receipt of a letter like that. I have been in receipt of a number of letters of positive thanks: "Thank you for sending me such a letter. Thank you." In particular, from staff who are currently employed, I have received letters. One letter says: "Thank you. I have seen changes. I am really pleased with the changes that I have seen. I believe that the workplace culture is such now that should I have a matter I can bring it forward." I have also had letters from people who have said: "I withdrew my complaint. I saw change and I withdrew my complaint." I have also had a letter from one of the five students who said, "I was grateful to have the opportunity to say what I needed to say and I thank you for that and I thank you for your letter." So yes, Mr Doszpot, you may have been in receipt of some. I have been in receipt of a range of letters, and some of them have endorsed and supported the process.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Dodd, I have full respect for the attention you are paying to the staff, to the current staff. I also feel it is my responsibility, and yours, to have full respect for the people who have had some very tough times. And their tough times are continuing, because in their hearts they feel that an apology has not been made of your own accord.

Recommendations 2 to 9 of the Kefford report go to the management of issues across the ACT public service. In respect of recommendations 4, 5, 6 and 7, recommendation 6 relates to training. What induction training do new managers undertake, and what ongoing program of training and support is provided to managers?

Ms Dodd: Let me just clarify the question. You are asking about induction training for new managers and ongoing training? Is that correct?

MR DOSZPOT: I am, in respect of Mr Kefford's recommendations in his report.

Ms Dodd: Okay.

MR DOSZPOT: Directly related to them.

Ms Dodd: Firstly, the anti-bullying and prevention training that we mentioned a bit earlier on is part of the suite of training, and it is an important part of how we actually now go about doing our business. We bring that right up front. This morning, Mr Kefford acknowledged that CIT is possibly one of the organisations that has had such high staff compliance in that sort of training, and that it is a model that should be replicated. We will be encouraging it to be replicated more fully.

In terms of induction training, we have an induction process in place for new managers. This morning was a good example where we had our leadership forum. We had two speakers. Mr Kefford was speaking about performance management to the leadership team, and performance management is part of that process. And, as I mentioned before, Jodi Schmidt, the CEO from TAFE Queensland, was speaking about VET reform in Queensland and their response. These are important forums in terms of bringing to the forefront the importance of some of this training to our new managers. In that forum, I asked for a show of hands as to how many people were actually acting in higher duties roles. We probably have about a quarter of our leadership team at the moment in acting roles. That demonstrates to you the importance in which we are placing that induction training.

On top of that, we have a series of other parts of our HR management training for managers. I will pass to Dr Stenlake, because this falls under her divisional responsibility in terms of induction training for managers.

Dr Stenlake: Thanks, Jenny. One of the other learnings from the WorkSafe report was really about the need to upskill our managers. We have made that a priority for 2013.

Jenny spoke about the online training in bullying prevention. That is in two parts, and there is a separate module for managers. So even if somebody is in an acting position, they have to undertake an additional module which looks at your responsibilities as a manager in that space.

In addition to that, we have provided four different opportunities for managers across CIT to be involved in management training, particularly in the HR space. We have got one program which allows people to complete a diploma for those that want to make that commitment and get a qualification around that. We have got another program that is some more short and sharp workshop-based HR classes. And we have got another program which is webinars for people that find it difficult to find the time to actually attend something and can do that in the workplace. The uptake of those courses across CIT, considering how busy our managers are, has been really strong.

And that is something that we are looking at continuing in the future.

MR DOSZPOT: Have you also implemented the RED framework as part of that?

Dr Stenlake: Yes, we have.

MR DOSZPOT: When did you appoint the RED officers?

Dr Stenlake: They have been in place for a number of years now.

MR DOSZPOT: A number of years now?

Dr Stenlake: Yes, they have. They were in place at the time that the WorkSafe report was released. We actually implemented the system before the RED framework came out. We called those officers CIT concern officers. When the RED framework came out, we did not make that name change but they undertook that same role. Because that caused a little bit of confusion, we have since changed the name to RED contact officers, but that particular role was in place even prior to the release of the RED framework.

Ms Dodd: We will be expanding that program in 2014. We will be inviting more staff to be involved and we will be training them—because your question was about training—to be RED contact officers, and they will be part of a broader network. So we have taken that very seriously and we will be expanding that program. We are looking at how to do that now.

MR DOSZPOT: My questions are all related—

Ms Burch: Can I just add that if you look at the commissioner's report, he notes:

CIT leads the ACT public sector in terms of staff accessing training on behavioural expectations and managing workplace bullying.

He also notes:

... CIT's frameworks for managing workplace issues demonstrate leading practice in the ACT public sector. CIT has certainly not ignored the concerns that have been raised in this process. It has responded genuinely and with good will to the changes required of it.

Mr Doszpot, again, I ask that you consider and recognise the work that CIT has put into place and the genuine commitment. I find it distressing that you have spent over half an hour now, or three-quarters of the time or thereabouts, on this matter which has had a WorkSafe report, and the Work Safety Commissioner has acknowledged and recognised the improvements that are in place. It has been thoroughly investigated by the public service commissioner here in the ACT. That acknowledges, rightly, that there were practices that could have been done better, but also goes on to acknowledge the work that has been put in place.

The public portrayal of CIT has somewhat been of an agency characterised by institutionalised misconduct and a toxic workplace. This is not, and has not been, the

case. While there were issues to address, CIT has continued to provide quality education and training to its students and to produce success on a national stage.

When I tabled this report and made a comment on this in the Assembly, I was appalled. I ask you to clarify: do you really consider this to be a whitewash? You used the word “whitewash” regarding a report from the ACT public service commissioner, and you also used language that—

MR DOSZPOT: I think you are misquoting my statement.

Ms Burch: No. I will go to *Hansard*—

MR DOSZPOT: That is okay.

Ms Burch: and I will check it, but you described this toxic culture within CIT as a cancer, and I find that appalling.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I have as high a regard, if not higher regard, for CIT than you have.

Ms Burch: Well, nothing in the last half an hour—

MR DOSZPOT: One of the questions—

Ms Burch: has gone anywhere near your regard for CIT.

MR DOSZPOT: One of the questions we are trying to get to the bottom of is: if 42 is a small number, in your estimation, out of 800 staff—42 complaints or 57 complaints earlier—if you are saying that is a small number out of 800-plus staff, when we consider—

Ms Burch: I think those were the words in the public service commission report, weren't they?

MR DOSZPOT: We can consider that just this morning we also heard the same question being addressed by the Department of Education and Training, and from 3,000 staff they have had 10 complaints. How do you account, minister, for the fact that there are a very large number of people that have been affected? And it is those people that have been affected that also concern me, as well as the good of CIT to continue as an institution that we all respect. That is what we are trying to get to.

Ms Burch: With all due respect, Mr Doszpot, I do not know what you will achieve that the Work Safety Commissioner has not investigated and considered, that the public service commissioner has not spent considerable—

MR DOSZPOT: The Work Safety Commissioner has not finished his inquiries.

THE CHAIR: Just a moment please, minister.

Ms Burch: The Work Safety Commissioner—

THE CHAIR: Just a moment please, minister and Mr Doszpot. There has been quite a lot of dialogue across the floor. I would prefer that the questions came from this side of the room to the witnesses and that we treat each other with respect. I also would like to say that we have, I think, given this particular issue—

MR GENTLEMAN: 13 questions.

THE CHAIR: It has been quite overly generous on this particular issue and I think it is time that we moved on.

MR DOSZPOT: I will move on, thank you. There will be some questions that I will put in writing but I will move on.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman.

Ms Burch: Check *Hansard*, Mr Doszpot, and see what you think of it.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, chair. Minister, I bring you to page 20 of the report. Page 20 begins talking about partnerships and CIT's drive for a diverse range of partnerships. Could you please take us through the benefits of those partnerships for CIT—and, of course, for its students.

Ms Burch: Partnerships are incredibly important for a training institute and its link to industry. Particularly down at the Fyshwick campus, there were a number of fabulous partnerships down there around motor mechanics, plumbing and a range of things. I can go to Ms Dodd or Nicole Stenlake, who, until recently, was a director of training down that way. I know, for example, it is about being industry-ready and looking to the future. The work and the partnerships around electric vehicles are probably nation leading. That is the narrative that is important for CIT. The narrative about being a leading public vocational education and training provider is something to be very proud of, and that is what we should be promoting.

Ms Dodd: I will let Dr Stenlake talk about automotive; then I will talk more broadly about some of the other areas of CIT.

Dr Stenlake: The electric vehicle partnership that we have in place with Nissan is a really exciting opportunity for CIT. In terms of automotive training, CIT is, on the national scale, a relatively small player compared with places in Melbourne, for example, that have much larger numbers. But Nissan has selected CIT to deliver all the electric vehicle training nationally, and to some degree internationally. This is a really big achievement for CIT and for that relatively small team of committed teachers at the trade skill centre. It also is an indicator of our currency in this space. The fact that we have both the skills with our teachers and the appropriate equipment to deliver this state-of-the-art training on a national and international level shows the commitment that both we as an organisation and our staff have to making sure that we really have the currency in the relevant industry areas.

The partnership with Nissan was built on our ongoing relationship with Toyota. Most of you will be aware that Toyota was one of the main players in terms of introducing

electric vehicles and hybrid technology. We had a partnership with them going back to 2008, I think. That partnership allowed a lot of training of our staff and a lot of sharing of resources, which allowed us to be positioned to capitalise on this Nissan opportunity.

Ms Dodd: In terms of partnerships, yes, we have our industry-based partnerships; they are very fundamental and very important, and they drive a lot of the work that we do. But we also have our tertiary partnerships. If I can particularly cite this year, we had seven ex-CIT students who had come through our community work program graduate with a social work degree from the Australian Catholic University. That is a really good outcome. Those students would not necessarily have ever seen a degree as in their sights.

The partnerships that we have with that university, with Charles Sturt University, and with the University of Canberra, where we have strong partnerships, and also developing and growing partnerships with the Australian National University, are really important. As you would be aware, we are auspiced by Charles Sturt University to deliver their degree on site. The students live in Canberra and therefore give economic benefit to Canberra. That is a very important part of our delivery.

So our tertiary partnerships are strong. We also have the partnership with the Academy of Interactive Entertainment, still often quoted as one of the most successful public-private partnerships in this vocational education space that exists in Australia. And that has expanded beyond the Canberra borders as well.

So it is right across the area. Another key partnership that is worth identifying is our partnership with ACT Health. In terms of the skill needs for the ACT economy, it is a fundamental part of what CIT delivers. That partnership with ACT Health, right across the spectrum in terms of the range of the courses that we provide, is critical both for clinical placements and for servicing the ACT and making sure that we have the right work-ready graduates in the health industry where we need them.

MR GENTLEMAN: If I can just go back to Dr Stenlake's comments on the commercial partnerships, what have you learned from there that might be able to help you grow partnerships in other parts of industry across Australia and perhaps internationally?

Dr Stenlake: As I said, we started with Toyota. That gave us a lot of experience. It is really about making sure that our staff have currency of skills and that we are able to connect with relevant industry players and build on those initial opportunities. So you start delivering perhaps to a small number, and you have expertise in a particular area, and you are using that same expertise not to train a handful of people but to train hundreds of people, and therefore bring some more income into CIT to support our publicly funded activity.

Ms Dodd: We also do due diligence—that is one of those expressions—in those partnerships. I think we have learned that making sure that our partners come with the same value structure that we do, that they have the same commitment to students and learners, is fundamental. There is our success in 2012: I do not think any other RTO in Australia has ever won both the Australian Apprentice of the Year, for Sara Burke,

who won for hairdressing, and, in the same year, Vocational Student of the Year for Gloria Davison for nursing. That was monumental for CIT in terms of demonstrating the quality of the partnerships that we run. Gloria will be one who says that the relationship and experience that she had in the workplace, and a partnership, with real live authentic learning, was able to be translated into her learning.

We are a small business community here in the ACT. Our hairdressers work in salons—small business, keeping small business going. Having Sara be an example of a successful small business in the ACT, a successful hairdressing business, is a great accolade for the ACT overall.

MR GENTLEMAN: Congratulations.

Ms Dodd: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have a question about the second chance year 12 program at CIT. I recently had a student undertaking that program do some work experience in my office. How does this program differ from the college-based year 12 programs?

Ms Dodd: Our year 12 program is predominantly for more mature-age students, although over the last few years we have seen that come back a bit in age group. We also try and encourage them to pick up some vocational learning in that context. Most of our students do an accredited package. Some do a tertiary package, but many do an accredited package. It is the relationships that we can offer in terms of vocational learning that work so strongly for students who are in a post-school environment. They are also in an adult learning environment, and that contextual place for a year 12 student really makes a difference in terms of how they go about their learning.

It has been quite a successful program, our year 12 program, and the students there are very strongly nurtured and encouraged in a pastoral care environment. We do receive students into that program who have sometimes been disadvantaged in learning, so we provide extra scaffolds and extra support, which we have received funding for, to enable those students to be able to participate fully. Keeping them coming in a program like that is really important—and having the support structures that enable it. So we have a student advisory team that also supports those students quite directly and intimately in the process of their learning.

THE CHAIR: I reckon it is a great program, and the student that I hosted was clearly very well prepared for entering the workforce. He had lots of good knowledge and all the relevant IT and written communication skills. Are these the sorts of skills that the CIT focuses on?

Ms Dodd: Absolutely. Just moving a little away from year 12, and it is fundamental to what we are doing, we have just done an organisational structure change, and one of the things that we see as fundamental is the embedding of literacy, language and numeracy right across our programs. We have created a new college which will have most of our apprenticeships in it as well as the year 12 program. It will be embedded with the apprenticeship delivery as well as our access 10 program. The concept of that is not to necessarily directly bring together the apprentices, the year 12 experience and the access 10, but to have in an academic and professional sense that engagement of

discussion about what it means to help an apprentice complete their apprenticeship, to equip them with the language, literacy and numeracy they need to do that, and to have year 12 students also seeing that there are many pathways there for work opportunities.

So we are trying something that is really quite new. It is a national imperative to get more apprentices completing. We heard today that Queensland has just the same problem that we do. We are trying something a little bit innovative to try and get year 12 and the apprenticeship program integrated in one structure, where those conversations between teachers and professionals are occurring, looking at best and innovative learning practices for students.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that. I think we will leave it there. I have a few more questions, but I will put those on notice; other committee members can do the same. Thank you very much for coming along today. There was lots of really good information, and congratulations on the work that CIT and the staff are doing out there.

Ms Dodd: Thank you very much.

Ms Burch: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: There is just a reminder about questions and answers: answers to questions on notice must be lodged with the committee office within 10 business days of receiving the question, and questions taken on notice are to be provided within five business days.

The committee adjourned at 4.28 pm.