



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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

(Reference: [Annual and financial reports 2014-2015](#))

Members:

**MS M PORTER (Chair)
MR S DOSZPOT (Deputy Chair)
MS M FITZHARRIS
MRS G JONES**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

MONDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2015

**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.

APPEARANCES

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.07 am.

Appearances:

Burch, Ms Joy, Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Police and Emergency Services, Minister for Disability, Minister for Racing and Gaming and Minister for the Arts

Education and Training Directorate

Howson, Ms Natalie, Acting Director-General
Gniel, Mr Stephen, Deputy Director-General
Garrisson, Ms Joanne, Deputy Director-General, Education Strategy
Brighton, Ms Meg, Deputy Director-General, Organisational Integrity
Huxley, Mr Mark, Chief Information Officer, Information and Knowledge Services
McAlister, Ms Coralie, Director, People and Performance
Wright, Ms Leanne, Director, Learning and Teaching
Bray, Mr Rodney, Director, Business Improvement
Whybrow, Mr Mark, Chief Financial Officer, Strategic Finance
Cuzner, Ms Jane, Director, Governance and Assurance
Ellis, Ms Anne, Chief Executive Officer, ACT Teacher Quality Institute
Stenhouse, Mr John, Director, Office of Board of Senior Secondary Studies
Miller, Mr David, Director, Training and Tertiary Education
Lucas, Ms Christine, Senior Manager, School Leadership
Stewart, Mrs Tracy, Director, Families and Students
Evans, Ms Jacinta, Director, Student Engagement

Canberra Institute of Technology

Cover, Ms Leanne, Acting Chief Executive
Sloan, Mr Craig, Board Chair
Grayson, Ms Carolyn, Deputy Chief Executive, Brand and Business Development
Kay, Mr Shane, Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services
Stenlake, Dr Nicole, Executive Director, People and Organisational Governance
Maslen, Ms Sue, General Manager, Student and Academic Services

ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority

Carter, Mr Glenn, Chief Executive Officer

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate

Dawes, Mr David, Director-General, Economic Development
Gilding, Ms Louise, Deputy Director-General, Arts, Business, Events, Sport and Tourism Division
Stankevicius, Mr Adam, Director, artsACT and Events ACT

Cultural Facilities Corporation

Elvin, Ms Harriet, Chief Executive Officer

THE CHAIR: Welcome, everybody, to the public hearing of the education, training

and youth affairs committee into annual reports. Welcome, Ms Burch. This is our last annual reports hearing, I believe. I do not think there is another one.

Ms Burch: Hopefully, it is not your most exciting, chair.

THE CHAIR: No. It will obviously be interesting, as it is my committee. We are due to report to the Assembly by no later than the last sitting day in March 2016. The committee has resolved that all questions on notice from members should be lodged with the committee office within four business days of the uncorrected proof transcript being made available. Answers to questions on notice are to be lodged with the committee office within 10 business days. Answers to questions taken on notice at today's hearing should be provided within five business days after the hearing.

This morning the committee will deal with the Education and Training Directorate. This afternoon we will deal with arts administration and the Cultural Facilities Corporation, followed by the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority and then CIT.

The privilege statement is on the table in front of you. Could you indicate that you understand the implications of that?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Burch: Thank you, Madam Chair. It is indeed a pleasure to be here before the standing committee to talk about the 2014-15 annual report for Education and Training. Students are at the centre of our education system, and every child deserves the opportunity provided through an excellent education irrespective of where they live, their circumstances or the school they attend.

Over the past 12 months there have been a number of significant achievements in education. The ACT continues the successful implementation of the Australian curriculum, now providing national consistency in the remaining areas of geography and arts. I welcome the commonwealth's recent decision to remove their objection to the technology curriculum so that ACT schools and schools around the country can benefit from quality education in that key area. I am also pleased to report that the ACT appears to have bucked the national trend in language studies, with increased numbers of students studying a language other than English. We have grown by almost 3,000 students to a total of 25,948.

Teacher recruitment, development and retention have remained a focus for ACT public schools. The ACT teacher scholarships program was established with funding of \$250,000 to support teachers' professional development and quality learning outcomes for students. The directorate has achieved a 95 per cent retention rate during this reporting period, and welcomed more than 220 new teachers at the beginning of 2015.

This year will also be the first year for all those seeking to be employed permanently as teachers here in the ACT public education system to be asked to demonstrate a

level of personal literacy and numeracy that sits them in the top 30 per cent of the Australian population. The test, known as CANTRA, took place last week. Already over 200 people have sat this test. I expect this to lift the quality of teachers in public schools and to continue to provide assurance to parents about the high standards and quality of ACT public education. This is indeed a significant achievement for the ACT, and a national leading example. It is expected that this test, or a test very much like it, will soon be required as part of all initial teacher training education. This shows that the ACT is ahead of the game.

Also in relation to teacher quality, I draw the committee's attention to five years of operation of the Teacher Quality Institute. Over the years TQI has provided leadership in developing teaching as a profession here in the ACT. There has been substantial progress on implementing the regulatory framework for the teaching profession, as well as measures to improve professionalism of teaching and the quality of teaching practice. In particular, embedding the Australian professional standards for teachers into the ACT framework for continuing professional learning of all teachers is worthy of the committee's attention.

The institute has continued its very successful emphasis on cross-sectoral collaboration. The teaching profession, and much of its work, has been recognised as best practice at a national level. It was a great tribute to the institute, and demonstrated its achievements, when so many teachers and professionals from across this sector came here to the Assembly to celebrate their five years of operation.

ACT public schools continue to benefit from strong parental engagement. As part of our project with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth, we have developed support materials to assist families and schools in their understanding of why it matters, how it works and how it is best achieved.

The government continues a strong track record of investment in school infrastructure. I was pleased recently to announce the name of the new Coombs schools as the Charles Weston school, in honour of one of our pioneering men. The school is on track for opening at the commencement of next year. The principal is already there and is meeting with the community and taking enrolments. The government has expanded its wireless infrastructure through the SchoolsNET wireless expansion program to meet the growing need for the use of personal devices.

In conclusion, I would like to thank ETD, their executive and all of their teachers for the dedication that they provide. I want to put on record my admiration and support for all the executive, teachers and staff who demonstrate their professionalism every day, in every classroom and in every school, to make sure that every child gets the best we can offer.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. Before I go to my first substantive question, I want to ask you about the test in literacy and numeracy that you mentioned. You said it was called CANTRA. Is that an acronym?

Ms Burch: Yes, it is an acronym. I will ask Ms McAlister to talk about it. This follows on from a decision I made about 18 months ago. As part of raising the bar and making sure students in public schools had the best teachers we could find and

employ, we explored setting a literacy and numeracy test. We have worked with various other bodies across the country to get this into place, and we are the first jurisdiction to implement this testing.

Ms McAlister: The acronym stands for Canberra teacher recruitment assessment. It is for our new teachers. We have rigorous processes in place to ensure quality practice from our teachers. This is to ensure that our new teachers coming into the directorate are at that standard, and 212 applicants sat the test last week over three sessions.

THE CHAIR: On page 23 of the report it says:

The Directorate commenced a review of the Reporting on Student Achievement and Progress to Students and Parents Policy.

You were talking before about parent engagement, minister. I would like to hear a little more about that parent engagement in your answer to this question, but my main question is: what areas of the policy were revised, how will this revision ensure that parents and carers receive high quality information about their child's achievement and how do you intend to increase that parent involvement?

Ms Burch: Ms Wright, who has been leading some of the work on this, can go to the ARACY project that is working in our schools and across independent and Catholic schools. We have developed and finalised materials, but that work continues and will be enhanced.

The reporting template also follows discussions with parents. Parents really want to be able to follow the story of their child's schooling as they move across years and across from primary school to high school. It needs to be recognised that some parents will have kids in different schools, so it is about trying to understand what their outcomes are, so that they can really be that first primary educator and have that conversation with their school and the teachers. We have worked through almost a common template, and each school will add to that. Ms Wright can talk in detail about that.

Ms Wright: As the minister said, the work around reviewing the existing reporting student achievement policy commenced back in 2014. There was a working group at the time, including representatives from the P&C council and a number of principals, to identify some initial issues that required further looking at in relation to the existing policy. We wanted to make sure that the new policy aligned with the work that we are doing with ARACY around increasing parental engagement, and that alignment would come through in the form of the policy.

The policy was drafted and went to open community consultation through the ACT government website. There were 322 responses from parents, community members, teachers and students. Along with that there were 22 significant written submissions put forward for consideration. That represented a considerable amount of feedback for the directorate to work through in relation to the policy and what types of things would be important to be looked at in that policy. The submissions were received from the Council of P&C Associations, the ACT Principals Association, the Australian Education Union, ACT branch, and the Government Schools Education Council.

There were a number of key themes identified in relation to the policy: the importance of engaging parents and carers in their children's education; the importance of providing accurate, timely and consistent information to parents and carers about their children's learning and progress at school; that parents and carers value information about their children's engagement in each learning area; and areas for improvement and their strengths.

The need was identified to communicate policy requirements and the introduction of a common end-of-year template, as the minister has mentioned. Also identified were requests to clarify reporting requirements for students with a disability, those where English is an additional language or dialect or for those students that have an individual learning plan.

The reporting aligns with the Australian curriculum achievement standards. This is a change in reporting at the school level in that we now have a national standard which every student in the ACT will be reported against through this formal report. That achievement standard is nationally standardised and is publicly available on the ACARA website for parents to see.

We are at the stage now with that policy where the policy is being finalised following all of that feedback. Currently, in this semester seven schools are trialling the common reporting template in order to get some firsthand feedback from parents, students and teachers in those seven school communities to finalise that template and make sure that it reflects community need and that, in practice, it actually delivers what we say the policy is going to deliver.

THE CHAIR: Are these seven schools a mix of different types of schools and are they spread across the whole of the ACT?

Ms Wright: Yes, they are. They include primary schools, P-10 schools, Namadgi P-10 and Melba Copland high school, and another five primary school settings as well.

THE CHAIR: And they are across the ACT?

Ms Wright: Yes, they are across the north and south.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot has a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: Yes; I have two supplementaries, in fact. The first one is on parental engagement. Can you tell us how you measure the success of increasing parental engagement?

Ms Wright: With regard to the project that we have with ARACY, during this second semester there has been a trial going on across four schools, both government and non-government sector schools, to trial a survey measurement tool that will allow us to identify a number of survey items which will allow us to get some baseline information on parental engagement and also allow us, over time, to track and monitor schools' progress in increasing parental engagement. That trial is coming to a close at this particular time. ARACY are now working through identification of the survey

items which, from 2016, will be included in our school satisfaction survey. So it will not be a separate survey; it will be embedded as part of that, and available, as are those results.

MR DOSZPOT: Does part of the measurement include school P&Cs and school boards? How many people are engaged in supporting the schools through those activities?

Ms Wright: The focus of the work is around parents' engagement with student learning. There is a definitional, I suppose, difference between what we consider parental involvement in school activities and school life, which in and of itself is highly valued by our school communities, teachers and parents alike. But parental engagement in this context really focuses on engagement with learning and learning outcomes, and strategies that parents can use at home and in partnership with the school to enhance learning.

MR DOSZPOT: Can you remind us about the budget that was allocated for this purpose?

Ms Wright: \$293,000 was the initial investment. There has been a contract variation to extend for some specific work to be done around parental engagement in high schools for an additional \$20,000; on my calculation, that takes it to \$313,000 over the—I think we started with the 2013-14 financial year.

MR DOSZPOT: Was that across all sectors?

Ms Wright: It is a cross-sectoral project. The steering group consists of representatives from the Catholic and independent sectors and each of the three parent peak bodies, the P&C council and the two non-government councils.

MR DOSZPOT: What is the breakdown between the sectors?

Ms Wright: In terms of?

MR DOSZPOT: In terms of budget.

Ms Wright: The budget—

Ms Burch: It is a global budget. They are being supported through the resources and being part of the trial.

Ms Wright: The budget is the cost of working with ARACY. There have been a number of deliverables, the first being the published evidence base and literature review and the creation of a definition of “parental engagement” here in the ACT, which is now being looked at nationally as part of the commonwealth government's work on parental engagement. The second phase has been the creation of a number of fact sheets and online resources. Another suite of those is due to be released in the coming weeks.

MR DOSZPOT: My second supplementary was regarding the common reporting

template that you mentioned. When did the trial begin through these seven schools that you mentioned?

Ms Wright: That is for this semester's reporting. The common template was provided in July to those seven schools—a draft common template. There was a draft template that went out as part of the consultation, and there was feedback received on that. Some of that was incorporated into the template. A couple of schools did an informal trial of the first version and also provided feedback into a revised version. That went into the seven schools. An expression of interest was put out for schools to nominate to be part of that trial. That is how the seven schools were selected. Then they have been working with that. Parents will receive those reports in about week 7 or week 8 of this term, and accompanying them will be some feedback opportunities for them.

MR DOSZPOT: With the other schools that are not part of the trial, I believe the principals have their own autonomy as to how they apply the reporting within their schools. Is that correct?

Ms Wright: In relation to the way forward from 2016, all schools will use the common template. Within the template there is the opportunity for each of the schools to describe their curriculum delivery and aspects of their curriculum organisation as well as their other reporting processes. When we talk about common templates and written reports, they are actually part of a suite of strategies and mechanisms that schools use to report student achievement to parents, including interviews, portfolios, learning journeys, three-way conversations with students, and a range of goal setting and other activities within the school.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Do you have a substantive question, Mr Doszpot?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes, I have. If we go to page 6, in relation to student resource allocation, it says:

Intensive research and analysis was undertaken to inform the development of a new funding model for ACT public schools—the Student Resource Allocation (SRA), consistent with our commitment to National Education Reform.

Minister, did the ACT undertake its own intensive research and analysis to develop a new funding model for the SRA?

Ms Burch: We have done some work with national experts about this and we have always committed to implementing a student resource allocation. Mr Bray can talk to how we have gone through that process.

Mr Bray: The ACT government started its analysis and development plan through Professor Stephen Lamb. It prepared a report on a review of government school funding in the ACT, completed in August 2014.

MR DOSZPOT: Did you mention when that was started?

Mr Bray: I could not tell you the start date. I do not know that; I would have to take that on notice.

MR DOSZPOT: Has it been completed, or is it still ongoing?

Mr Bray: Yes; the report was completed in August 2014.

Mr Gniel: Mr Doszpot, I will just jump in and add to that. I think we spoke about this at one of the other annual report hearings or even budget estimates—around the fact that the school resource standard that was put out by the commonwealth government included a number of key loadings. Of course, they were not all the same as what we required in the ACT. Previously in hearings, we talked about the fact that when we have a remote location loading in the Australian standard, that is not something that is required in the ACT. The research initially was just to make sure that the Australian model was fit for purpose in the ACT, which is the research that Mr Bray is talking about. That then formed the foundation, last year when that was completed, for the work we have done in this reporting period in terms of the implementation of the SRA.

MR DOSZPOT: What is the ACT's position in respect of per capita funding for schools?

Mr Bray: Per capita funding is the amount of money allocated through the model for each student. The amount is then modified through a factor called stages of schooling. The stages of schooling factor reflects the different costs of the different sectors in the schooling. We have identified four different sectors in the model—K, kindergarten to year 3; years 4 to 6; years 7 to 10; and years 11 to 12.

MR DOSZPOT: How does this compare to other states?

Ms Brighton: With the SRA in the ACT, we have modelled it on the principles of the Gonski reforms. As you will find with all the per student data that is available nationally, they all have different inputs and different calculations or methodologies. The ACT methodology is having regard to the principles of Gonski, and we have built it up from there.

As you will see when the budget papers are out in other jurisdictions and My School websites are out, they have all got slightly different methodologies they use for the inputs to that per student price. We are in a position in the ACT where we are a really well-resourced jurisdiction in terms of our education funding. ACT continues to invest an additional three per cent per year into that portfolio, and that is what is then reallocated out into all the schools.

MR DOSZPOT: That does not quite answer my question about how we compare to other states. Are we above the national average?

Mr Whybrow: There are a number of datasets that are published nationally, and Ms Brighton has already mentioned My School, but total jurisdiction comparisons are only provided through the report on government schooling data. The most recent report on government schooling data, I believe, is two years old. In that data we have seen a consistent trend. The ACT's total investment, compared to the Australian

national average, is in the order of 30 per cent higher than the total national average. That is why we would have heard, earlier in these hearings—would the move to a school resource standard see significant change to ACT public schooling? The answer to that was no, because there is already a significant investment from the ACT government in ACT public schooling. For comparative purposes, the ACT government currently invests significantly more than the national average. Other states and jurisdictions are being brought up to a student resource standard. Hopefully, that answers your question in relation to investment and comparisons.

MR DOSZPOT: Yes, it does, partly. In the old model, how were the movements of students with special needs catered for in mainstream schools?

Mr Whybrow: Let me go into some of the detail of the national model and also the ACT model. We have a national education reform agreement, and in the ACT we are one of only two jurisdictions that have a signed bilateral agreement with the commonwealth government. I believe it is us and New South Wales who are the jurisdictions in that position.

In our bilateral agreement, while the work of Gonski, which led to the commonwealth government student first allocation, which is currently the basis of the school resource standard—it has loadings, and within those loadings there is still further work to do, particularly in the space of students with a disability. I believe that the current loading is 1.86, or 186 per cent, as the value of a student with a disability in the commonwealth loading. However, in that commonwealth loading it is very much a blunt tool at the moment. What I mean by “blunt tool” is that if you are categorised as a student with a disability, you get that allocation. There is no definition of a breakdown of further need within that commonwealth allocation.

Within the ACT, for a number of years we have had a student-centred appraisal of NEET or SCAN, which we have talked about in this space. The ACT, being, I believe, ahead of the game in resource allocation in that space, because it was around an assessment of need, has kept that allocation basis until the national work, in my blunt term, catches up and moves ahead to provide a more detailed allocation of students with a disabilities need. There is a significant range of needs of students with a disability. That is why, within the ACT, we have kept that model in operation. It still does the individual assessments of all students—so students in both the public sector and the non-government sector—to determine a need. The overall funding allocation is, though, consistent with our national education reform agreement obligations and that school resource standard.

MR DOSZPOT: That 1.86 per cent you mentioned—how is that applied when students move between sectors?

Ms Burch: Sectors or schools?

MR DOSZPOT: Sectors.

Ms Burch: Because I think SCAN just applies to public schools.

Mr Whybrow: With SCAN, actually the base assessment goes across all schools, but

the minister is right: there are slightly different implementation issues for public schools versus non-government schools.

Like any business arrangement, and the school resource standard also recognises this, the adjustment happens at the end of the year. You have to actually staff and run your school on the total environment. That means you have to set up your teachers and the support elements in that school. There is not an adjustment midyear for movements. There is an adjustment in both the ACT funding and the commonwealth funding, which is on an annual basis, which is set around the census of August. You need a time frame to determine the need, and the basis for that allocation point is the August census each year.

THE CHAIR: We might move on.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I wanted to ask about digital learning. Recently there was a report that said that perhaps we could do better. The annual report has a number of points in it where it describes things that are actually happening. For example, five primary schools participated in a trial using digital technology and 3D printers. Could you talk broadly about the digital learning space and, in particular, some of the examples over the course of this year?

Ms Burch: That report did show an assessment across all states on the measure that they were doing of losing some points, but it still showed ACT to be again leading the nation. We do fabulous work in ICT across our schools. I might give Mr Huxley an opportunity to talk to the breadth and depth of that.

Mr Huxley: We are very cognisant of and on top of the research as it relates to ICT and student learning. We have some really good emerging practice in our schools in the use of ICT. Just to give you an idea about the research base, a recent OECD report looked globally at the adoption of ICT. Just like many other areas of our society—whether it be social interactions, business or the economy—ICT has the opportunity for a transformative effect, and education globally is looking at those opportunities as they relate to schools and student performance.

The three areas of the key OECD report, which was titled *Students, Computers and Learning: Making the Connection*, was really focusing on the areas that needed to be focused on for leading systems. One was on change management. The second element was on effective practice. The third element was on sustainable funding from government to ensure that schools are in a position to meaningfully implement changes with technology from a reliable funding base. I am pleased to say that in the ACT we have been addressing all of those three already and we have effective change management.

In the last 12 months we implemented Google apps for education across all of our schools. That has been really well received, with 67 schools on board with that platform. We had 22,000 students on board with that platform, with parental consent,

and we also had close to 900,000 resources actually created within that space in just over 12 months. So it has been really well received.

In that implementation change management has really been the focus to ensure there is a framework there to support schools in the adoption, ensuring that they have a clear vision for how that technology is going to be used at the school and that they are engaging with parents in that conversation to make sure that it is not just about students staring at screens all day. There is a really balanced approach to the implementation. They know when to use it, but just as importantly they know when not to use it as well. That has been a really important framework to enable schools to take that step.

The second element has been around effective practice and uptake. Every week 5 we run a Google app for education and ICT integration sharing across all of our schools. That is identifying effective practice. We have had lead schools like Macquarie Primary School and Alfred Deakin High School, which have been leading, not just locally but nationally and globally, some of the implementation of these new tools. They have been sharing that practice with schools across the territory, making sure that effective practice is identified and shared locally. Also, we have been very fortunate with the ACT government investing in the next four years in ICT in our schools so that schools have a reliable base to make sure their technology is up to speed, using best practice, so it can be used effectively and efficiently in the classroom.

MS FITZHARRIS: Could you just explain for us what Google apps might mean for students on a daily basis?

Ms Burch: When I mentioned it in the chamber there was a somewhat dismissive response. It is quite deep and intelligent.

Mr Huxley: The key schools learning technology advisory group said, “What are the key things that we need to run effective schools?” One was connectivity across the school. We have put a lot of money into wireless. We have put in over 2½ thousand wireless access points. We have enabled students to use personal devices as well. We have also included the use of real-world learning platforms, which are Google apps. That allows the students to learn anywhere. They have access to the tools that they need at home and at school on their device of choice. With a growing connectivity throughout the ACT at the moment it means that they can connect with their learning throughout the day.

It also allows teachers to structure leaning opportunities for students. Not every student likes to learn maths at exactly the same time or day of the week. It allows teachers to structure learning so it is accessible and available to students throughout their day-to-day lives. It really enables the connectivity between students and teachers. It provides a range of things, such as traditional word processing and Excel spreadsheets. It also provides more contemporary tools—communication tools, collaboration and Google hangouts—so people can connect through videoconferencing and access external speakers into school through those opportunities. It really does consolidate and extend the learning that can happen every day in schools.

Mr Gniel: Can I jump in there, Mark?

Mr Huxley: Please do.

Mr Gniel: I will just try and translate some of that—

Mr Huxley: Yes.

Mr Gniel: to the members as well. Ms Fitzharris, if you remember the days when you would work on a computer at school, you would save something at school and go home and not be able to access it. Then we moved to burning it onto a CD or taking a thumb drive with you. I think one of the great advantages that Mark is talking about with Google apps is that it is a web-based platform. I think we all understand what that means. And there is access anytime. Is that right, Mark?

Mr Huxley: Yes.

Mr Gniel: You are taking it on a flash drive that you can drop somewhere, or whatever it might be. This allows you to access all of those programs—

THE CHAIR: In the cloud?

Mr Gniel: Yes, in the cloud or wherever you need to. I wanted to add to that because I think all of those other things Mark is talking about just build on that accessibility. When Mark talks about wireless access within schools, 2½ thousand extra points, you can imagine the connectivity increase that we have seen across all of our schools.

Ms Burch: When we launched Google apps down at Tuggeranong college there were students in the classroom, but one of the students was actually offline or out of the class. This is a year 12 student who, through Google apps, is keeping in touch with his class, keeping in touch with his teacher, and doing a grad placement program in an ATO. He has finished his year 12 and has now got a job with the ATO. All of that has been driven and made accessible through Google apps. So it should not be dismissed.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. I know, minister, that you have often talked about students not just as users of technology but becoming producers of digital content as well. In particular, do Google apps help that and, if so, how?

Ms Burch: They do, but there is also the focus on STEM. When we get the centre for excellence for STEM at Caroline Chisholm that will be a real driver, a real hub, to crank up that innovation to another level.

MS FITZHARRIS: Will that start next year?

Ms Brighton: No. Regarding the STEM centre at Caroline Chisholm, we are going through the design phase at the moment. Once the design is settled we will then move into construction. I think we are looking at a 2018 commencement.

MS FITZHARRIS: The trial of digital technologies and 3D printers at five primary

schools—is that continuing? What is the status of the trial?

Ms Burch: I saw that on display up at Harrison School. You are looking at primary schools, and their attitude to 3D printing technology is that if you can draw it, you can create it, which really does unlock their creativity. Ms Wright can talk in more detail about that.

Ms Wright: The particular pilot you are referring to, Ms Fitzharris, was undertaken in six of our schools—Harrison School, Lanyon high, Bonython primary, Lyneham primary, Lyneham High School and Aranda Primary School. That was a very generous partnership with a company called A3DMA, where they placed the 3D printers, free of charge, into the schools along with the associated software that students would need to engage with in order to maximise the experience with the printers.

The whole aspect was really to build the profile of the opportunities in education that 3D printers provide and also for students to really tap into, as the minister said, the digital technologies that the Australian curriculum has recently endorsed. It has very strong links to that particular curriculum being able to access technologies and go through design principles as well. It goes across both the design technologies and the ICT technologies aspects of the curriculum.

The particular program was done in partnership with A3DMA, which also run a recycling program. Part of the reason they engaged with schools was to promote their recycling of unwanted but still functioning ICT devices where the schools collected those from their communities and donated them on. That particular process was taken up by a number of the schools as well.

In terms of the use of the technology, it is growing across our system. The use and the engagement of students with the 3D drawing design technologies and those types of software applications are increasing, and we are seeing much more of that down in the primary school level. At one stage it used to only be in the colleges through the CAD programs and computer-assisted design-type things. What we are seeing is this technology is engaging students at a much younger level and also their degree of competence and capacity to participate in it. As I said, it is part of the digital curriculum now to be exposed to this, so that will be the opportunity moving forward.

MS FITZHARRIS: Will 3D printers become—

Ms Burch: They will become standard. Increasingly you see them more and more across our schools.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot has a supplementary and then Mrs Jones has a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: My supplementary relates to some of the areas you touched on, Ms Wright. I am not sure if this question is for you or for the gentleman who was sitting in your chair. Can you elaborate on the professional development or assistance that is provided to teachers in order to be able to look at the ICT aspects of the school curriculum, such as digital technology, 3D printers and apps? How is this given to the

teachers?

Ms Wright: I think probably Mr Huxley and I can both contribute to the answer. From a curriculum point of view, we know that the Australian curriculum does have some content, particularly in the primary years, that, having recently been endorsed, is new to some of our primary school teachers. We have identified a need to increase professional learning before starting in 2015 and through to 2016. All schools in 2017 will be implementing the curriculum. That is crossing sectors. We work cross-sectorally with Australian curriculum professional learning. This year we worked with ACARA and the actual curriculum writers who visited the ACT on one occasion to host a forum with some 75 educators representing their schools around familiarisation with that curriculum and how to use it. The work samples are being developed now—

MR DOSZPOT: Just on that, those 75 targeted educators across the sectors, are they teacher librarians or who are they?

Ms Wright: They are generally nominated by the principal. It may be for any number of reasons why they would be taking the lead. Sometimes it is around expertise that a teacher holds or in some cases it may be related to their teaching role. In some cases it may just be an area of interest for the teacher. All of our teachers generally somewhere along the line, if we are looking at the primary sector, have areas of interest and expertise. They will often put their hand up to take the lead and work in leading their colleagues and mentoring and building capacity back at the school level.

In 2016 we will be working with ACARA again to further expand on those professional learning opportunities in relation to the curriculum and the implementation of the curriculum. As I said, they are cross-sectoral opportunities. We work in partnership with the non-government sector.

MR DOSZPOT: I understand and all that is good. My question relates to teacher librarians used to fill this sort of space in the past, as I understand it. Is that still the case? Are you still relying on them to do some of this?

Ms Wright: In terms of teacher librarians, I would say that the capacity where they have worked is actually more in relation to what we call information literacy. That is the use of digital technologies in research. If you think back to the days where the library was the place where students used to learn to use books, the reference library and those kinds of things, current teacher librarian qualifications include a focus on digital technologies.

A lot of that is also really embedded within classroom practice. We have interactive whiteboards in the classroom where all of our teachers are actually demonstrating, modelling, engaging students with learning about how to access information and research. In terms of requiring specialists to do that work, included as part of the Australian professional standards for teachers is that capacity to engage with ICT and use it as a tool for learning and to build capacity for students.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Huxley, did you have something to add?

Mr Huxley: Yes, I can add to that. In relation to the specific initiatives that we run, we actually ensure that we have professional learning opportunities available for them. For example, we released an e-book implementation in the last 18 months which actually focused on the Oliver library management system. We offer regular training to teach librarians across the system in the use of the e-book tool. We have 2,900 e-books now available. We add to that every year to build the collection. This year alone we have had 2,500 e-books borrowed through our schools. That is just one way that we are supporting that group in our schools and to enhance those tools.

In relation to Google at the moment, we have got a whole school adoption program for Google every week 5. We actually have a team of international experts in the use of Google. In classroom practice we actually bring them in every week 5. We have had over 600 teachers go through that program so far in 2015. That includes school leadership to make sure that they understand the opportunities for the use of these tools in their schools and that they can support their teachers when they return to school on the use of adoption.

Cross-sectorally, we also ran the third ever Google apps for education summit here in the ACT at Gungahlin College in early 2015. We had over 200 participants. It was cross-sectoral representation. It was a very, very well received event.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Jones, you had a supplementary?

MRS JONES: Yes, thank you. With regard to the Google apps, is it a series of apps? What is the structure of it? Is it just a portal that everybody goes through? How does it work, just briefly?

Mr Huxley: The Google apps for education is a series of apps. It is a range of apps available that Google provides to education. We created easy access to that because we have used our identity systems to provide a single sign-on. A student just uses their same username and login to log on to the computer and through to the Google apps. That is through a little portal we created called the digital backpack. We wanted to make it as simple as possible for everyone in our schools to access all of the online applications. Google is actually part of the suite of applications in our digital backpack. The kids can go onto their mobile device, their personal device, school device and it is the same look and feel site.

MRS JONES: Then do they pick and choose which apps suit their current situation, get a profile going in them and then dump their work in there?

Mr Huxley: Yes, what we have been able to do, through the piloting of Google apps for education, is look at all of the different apps that were available within the platform and work with schools in the pilot but also look at the needs of the Australian curriculum and make sure that those apps were available to ensure the students had access to the learning opportunities they needed.

MRS JONES: Just briefly, is there an app within that collection which is like Seesaw or something where teachers can upload pictures and videos of what is going on during the day for parents to look at?

Mr Huxley: There is a range of different ways and applications to increase parent engagement within Google apps.

MRS JONES: There is a school in Canberra that started using Seesaw and it is a huge improvement for parents knowing what their kids are doing all day.

Ms Burch: Ms Brighton has got her own digital backpack on her phone, if you wanted to have a look.

MRS JONES: In the morning tea break, maybe. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Did you have a substantive question, Ms Jones?

MRS JONES: Yes, can I come back to it after Nicole? I need to clear my throat.

MS LAWDER: I have a question about the childhood education and care assurance section. Whereabouts does that section fit into the org chart on page 13?

Mr Gniel: Under the middle, my name, Ms Lawder, under governance and assurance. On the left of that branch is the children's education and care assurance section. It sits in there.

MS LAWDER: Following on from that, on page 18 it talks about the number of education and care services assessed against the national quality standard being 88, bringing a total number with a quality rating to 224. Do you see what I mean on page 18 under "Priority 1"?

Mr Gniel: Yes.

MS LAWDER: How does that compare to the previous year? How is the progress tracking?

Ms Burch: I think we are on track to have it completed. By the end of the year, our target was for services up to March of last year to be all assessed by the end of this year. I understand that we are on track with that?

Ms Cuzner: We have got one more to assess.

Ms Burch: There you go; and a month left in the year, yes.

Ms Cuzner: Yes, so they have been assessed. They have not all been rated yet but we hope to have all of them completed by the end of the year.

Mr Gniel: I think the numbers, if I remember rightly, Jane, are 317; is that right?

Ms Cuzner: Yes, 317 services and we will have them all assessed except for two by the end of the year. One has been suspended and the other one—

Mr Gniel: Is the holiday care program—

Ms Cuzner: The holiday care program, yes.

Mr Gniel: It runs in January; so we will be doing it then.

MS LAWDER: Fair enough. On page 25, reference is made to the number of approved childcare service providers. It is about halfway down that table on page 25.

Mr Gniel: Yes.

MS LAWDER: There were two more that financial year than in the one before. How does the government assess the need? Does the directorate have any input to approvals or is that simply a planning exercise?

Ms Burch: Mr Gniel will respond to that.

Mr Gniel: I will talk to that in the first instance and then Jane might come in with some other material. The government has invested quite heavily, as you know, in increasing the numbers of childcare services across the last number of years. In fact, I think for the last few years we have been questioned about needing more.

Ms Burch: Yes, that is right.

Mr Gniel: So it is an interesting period now.

MS LAWDER: That is a bit of irony.

Ms Burch: Yes, I know. There was a desperate shortage and we have been quizzed by those opposite year on year on year about, “Why don’t we do more to bring on more places for child care?” We have done that. We have effectively—

MS LAWDER: Doing our jobs.

Ms Burch: doubled over the last decade on that. Our last build was Holder. That was our last build. The private sector predominantly has come in, bought land, built and opened their doors, yes.

Mr Gniel: We have seen increasing numbers of services and also in the family day care service area. That has been occurring across Australia. I think what we are now seeing is a market adjustment that we saw with the government’s investment, which was to create more places. I assume that we are going to see a market adjustment again over the next couple of years because we have seen that there have been some people talking about oversupply in some of those areas, although I think the anecdotal information I have is that it is not necessarily across the board.

Because of the ratios in different age groups—in very young children it is, I think, the one to four, one to six sort of ratio—those places are perhaps sometimes harder to come by. Once you get up into those preschool areas where you have got a much higher ratio, I think those positions are the ones where we are seeing an increased level of availability.

Ms Burch: But then you still hear from some families that say they cannot get a childcare place in their suburb, in their area of choice.

Mr Gniel: That is right; thanks, minister. I think that is what we are seeing. Again, some of those adjustments will be made about people that have previously been travelling quite a long way to get to their childcare service. I see Mrs Jones nodding. I think we have all dealt with some of these before.

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Mr Gniel: So as some of those other ones are opening up, we are seeing some shifts from people as well. But that will take time. I am talking probably more from personal experience. Once you have got a centre that people are very comfortable with they tend to stay through.

MS LAWDER: I have heard, as you have alluded to, that there are starting to be available places at many centres. Whilst I know the pricing is outside your control per se, do you think that will translate into a reduction in cost for parents? Will there be a market adjustment?

Ms Burch: If you believe in market pressures, you would think an oversupply would reduce cost. I do not know whether there is a clear answer. But if you look at fixed costs with services, we did some work a couple of years ago and I do not think it has changed much. We compared not-for-profit community-based services in subsidised rental accommodation to private providers in their own premises or full cost rental premises. There was not a lot of difference in the cost. Mr Gniel made mention of the under twos having a ratio of one to four. That is a fixed cost. I do not think anyone in this room would think that early educators are paid too much. I do not know how in this market the supply would actually impact on costs.

Mr Gniel: The thing I would add to that too is the changes to the commonwealth's family assistance package. That is probably going to have more of an impact. We are yet to see really what that will look like.

MRS JONES: If they get it through the upper house.

Mr Gniel: That is right. I think that will have an impact. As the minister has alluded to, it is hard to differentiate between which one will have a greater impact. It is, I think, more of a smoothing effect across all of those different factors around the affordability for people and also the costs for service providers.

Ms Burch: But the growth in numbers has come from the non-community area. Our community providers have grown a little, but the main growth has been new providers coming in and setting up.

MS LAWDER: Finally, if the federal government's no jab, no play gets through—I think we have very high rates of immunisation in the ACT—would it be the case that you would not see it as having much impact in the ACT?

Ms Burch: I remember discussing this with the previous minister for health when this was first raised. It is about whether you would have a blanket ban or whether you would just exclude. So if there is an outbreak and someone is not immunised, would it be just an exclusion policy rather than a blanket? But we have to look to what comes in federally. There is no firm policy position. But you can manage that, and I think most parents that choose not to be immunised understand that that is their choice and that it would accommodate the wishes of others.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris had a supplementary.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. You mentioned an increase of availability of family day care. Is that demand from families wanting more providers of family day care or is there anything else that might be driving that?

Ms Burch: I think it is a mix of demand but also flexibility—shiftworkers, early starts, late starts. I know that when I was a nurse I used family day care rather than a centre.

MRS JONES: Is there an impact on the availability of new immigrants and so on who often take up that opportunity for work as well?

Mr Gniel: I am not sure I can comment on that, Mrs Jones. I would have to look into it. I think the other factor is that families that put their children into family day care also receive the subsidies from the federal government; so I think that has been part of it as well.

Ms Burch: And it is choice, wanting a smaller family environment.

MRS JONES: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: I think the federal education minister floated the idea just this morning—

Ms Burch: I heard that on the way in.

MS FITZHARRIS: of paying for child care by the hour rather than by the day. Do you have any initial thoughts on that?

Ms Burch: Other than that it was an interesting conversation and I did catch Samantha Page, I think it was, come in after that as well. We will have to look at it. I do not know if this is a new policy position from the federal minister or whether it is a floating. I do not know; watch with interest.

MRS JONES: They will have to be careful not to get the whole community in hot flushes.

MS FITZHARRIS: No, it is topical this morning.

Ms Burch: Whilst you could appreciate some families will say, “That would be useful,” other families will just say, “I want to secure my time, whether I’m there at 8 o’clock in the morning or 10 o’clock in the morning.” As a family they need that

assurance. As an operator, how do you manage?

MRS JONES: I have my substantive question. I want to go to learning support assistants. On page 8, dealing with the organisational overview—there is not a great deal of detail—reference is made to quality learning and relevant learning experience. But also it is stated that we want to create a system with high expectations and hopefully high performance in new areas as well as in old areas. During the reporting period how many learning support assistants have you employed in ACT public schools?

Ms McAlister: You can break our workforce down. Of 6,200 staff, about 3½ thousand are classroom teachers, about 750 are school leaders and then around 2,000 are, we call them, staff other than teachers. The majority of that group are our learning support assistants.

MRS JONES: On notice, would you be able to find the number for the reporting period, if you have an official number, of that group? Also, what is the calculation made to determine how many are required or should be in a school?

Ms McAlister: Learning support assistants directly support the learning needs of a particular child or a group of children. Principals will make site-based decisions about how that learning program is best supported. They will use the resourcing that you heard about earlier on this morning—

MRS JONES: The dollar figure.

Ms McAlister: to support that learning program.

MRS JONES: There is an application of money based on need that is assessed through a methodology?

Ms McAlister: Correct.

MRS JONES: Is there a standardised methodology across the system?

Ms McAlister: Mr Whybrow spoke about the student assessment of need methodology, and it is standardised.

MRS JONES: Consistent.

Ms McAlister: Yes.

MRS JONES: I remember in one of these hearings earlier this year or late last year we were talking about—I think Ms Berry raised the issue of how difficult it can be to get the assessment of your child if you need a more in-depth assessment. Basically, there is a broad-brush assessment, but then is it privately funded if you want to have more information as a parent?

Ms Burch: It depends what assessment you are looking at. If you are looking for an assessment of autism, that can be done through our school psychologist, but also some

parents may choose to get an external provider to link to that.

MRS JONES: As well, yes.

Ms Burch: And on LSAs, I might have either Ms Brighton or Mr Gniel talk about this. There are LSAs attached to students identified as having a disability, but then LSAs are used. Principals and school leaders will bring them into the classroom for a whole range of things.

MRS JONES: Yes.

Ms Burch: Perhaps Mr Gniel or Ms Brighton could talk to that.

Ms McAlister: I would like to acknowledge a broad body of work that is going on around creating career pathways for our staff other than teachers. We have done our very large analysis—I have just seen today that the report is back—creating a career pathway of great rigour for our staff other than teachers who support learning programs in schools. What we have had in the past is some administration staff in the front office; we have had business managers; we have had staff in classrooms. There has not been an interconnectedness that is clear for those staff to see and a pathway for them to follow through the course of a career.

MRS JONES: Did that body of work begin some years ago?

Ms McAlister: It was a result of the bargaining for the administrative and related classifications.

MRS JONES: So for non-teachers?

Ms McAlister: Yes, for our non-teaching staff. It is a body of work that we are working collaboratively on with the AEU and the CPSU.

MRS JONES: What year did that body of work begin?

Ms McAlister: That was 2014. It was one of the outcomes from the agreement. We have implemented that. Our end point will be a career pathway which articulates the range of work that occurs in a school by our staff other than teachers. It raises the status and the profile of those staff.

MRS JONES: What is the salary structure for those staff?

Ms McAlister: I could get that for you, but it will draw that career structure all together as well.

MRS JONES: It is in the EBA, is it?

Ms McAlister: It is.

Ms Brighton: It is in the EBA, which is published on the CMTEDD website. It is the administrative and related classifications enterprise agreement.

MRS JONES: Given that the salary structure is done in the administrative space and those people are probably working as supports within the classroom, is that the appropriate place to be doing their enterprise agreements when they are working in the classroom? Is there a structural need to change over time so that those people are seen as parts of the educators?

Ms McAlister: We have traditionally had a number of different classifications in schools; so we have traditionally negotiated different agreements. In the round of agreements, at a whole-of-government level classifications have been aligned. That has had great impact in schools. It has not been a detracting factor at all.

MRS JONES: Okay. In respect of the current level of education of those people, is there a basic requirement or is it a judgement thing on behalf of school leaders?

Ms McAlister: Different settings require different qualifications. There is a certificate qualification that is required in our early childhood setting.

MRS JONES: Right.

Ms McAlister: The work that this review—

MRS JONES: Is that because of federal requirements or—

Ms McAlister: I think it is, yes.

Ms Burch: Anyone should have a cert III or be working towards it.

MRS JONES: Right. But in the primaries and in the secondaries, it is a little more flexible. Is that what you are saying?

Ms McAlister: Yes, and this review that we are doing as a result of the agreement is to create greater clarity about what pathways are available, what the remuneration streams are, what the professional learning requirements are.

MRS JONES: Yes. I have another question, maybe for the minister. When we go back to 2009 to the task force on learning difficulties, one of the suggestions that was made then was that learning pathways be established and that there be targets established for training completion. Was that work undertaken?

Ms Burch: Was that LSAs?

MRS JONES: Yes.

Ms Burch: I think it is part of the professional development and the suite of offerings within the PD. Whether the targets—I am not quite sure; I am sure we have met the targets. Were their targets in that?

MRS JONES: No, the targets were not in the task force on learning difficulties. I think it was suggested that targets be established for the completion of training to get

more people up to a cert IV, I guess.

Ms Burch: And in respect of LSA, in addition to this work I think just recently with the expert panel we saw a recommendation there to consider minimum certs of LSAs.

Ms Brighton: Part of what we will do in response to the expert panel is work with both the Australian Education Union and the CPSU about that recommendation. Ms McAlister has just talked about that extensive body of work we have done about building a career path for those officers in our schooling system. What we will do is take that recommendation, discuss it with the unions and we will weave that into that work we are doing.

MRS JONES: I know this was a long time ago but it is something that has been raised specifically and with very specific suggestions since 2009. We are just getting on to the detail now. I think that with the attention it is getting, we all obviously want to do better in this space, but why has it taken so long?

Ms Garrisson: Thank you for the question, Mrs Jones. I think we have had since 2009 a heightened increase in wanting to provide professional learning in a whole range of areas following Tony Shaddock's report then. That has been for all staff; so it has not just been for teachers—

MRS JONES: Yes, because classroom teachers need to understand it.

Ms Garrisson: Yes, for all staff. So there has been a really strong commitment to provide that level of learning, rather than necessarily being aligned to a certificate qualification, in a whole range of areas. There has been a strong commitment to the professionalisation of all staff involved in this. Certainly, going to specific cert IVs or cert IIIs in those areas is a recommendation that has come out of the expert panel. As I think Ms Brighton has said, we will be exploring that.

MRS JONES: Out of the new expert panel?

Ms Garrisson: Out of the new expert panel.

MRS JONES: So it was part of the report in 2009 and again it has been suggested in the new—

Ms Garrisson: Absolutely, and I think we need to be cognisant of some of the staff that are working those areas. They have been working there for a very—

MRS JONES: Sure; it is the same as what has happened in child care. That is right.

Ms Garrisson: long time. They do have a great passion for and commitment to the work that they are doing. So we have been committed to ensure that they have the professional learning that they need.

MRS JONES: If they wanted to increase their learning and they are in a job now, is there a system for that? Is there support for the cost?

Ms Garrison: Yes.

MRS JONES: How many people are taking that up? Have you got a reporting mechanism?

Ms McAlister: We have a strong culture of evidence-based performance and development and so—

MRS JONES: Will you tick off certificates based on outcomes in the workplace?

Ms McAlister: We talk with every single staff member about what their role is and what their professional learning requirements are to support that role and that happens on a regular basis.

MRS JONES: So does that mean you have a recognition of prior learning system going where you are actually ticking people up to a higher certificate once they have established these things in the workplace?

Ms McAlister: We have a focus on ongoing learning and development. So on a year—

MRS JONES: Is there a recognition of prior learning system, as in a TAFE cert structure?

Ms Burch: Like a formal structure?

MRS JONES: Yes.

Ms McAlister: For our teachers there is, yes.

MRS JONES: But not for the learning assistants?

Ms McAlister: Not for our learning assistants.

Ms Garrison: However, some of the training that they will have taken over that time, if they then wish to convert that to a cert IV, the recognised prior learning could be applied then.

MRS JONES: Yes. It is a good system. Is that going to be part of what you are looking to now?

Ms Garrison: When we explore further how we are going to look at this, certainly we want to value the learning and the experience and expertise of these staff. As I said, some of them have been doing a fabulous job for a very long time.

MRS JONES: And that is where RPL could be so good.

Ms Garrison: That is where RPL can be good.

Ms Burch: It is like early education and care.

MRS JONES: Absolutely.

Ms Burch: Someone is skilled and great at the job; they just have not had a formal qualification attached to it.

MRS JONES: Can I have on notice the numbers of staff working as learning support assistants, the numbers that are up to the cert IV and any systemic method you have, like data on how they can get up there or what they are offered?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MRS JONES: Finally, as for the general teaching staff, which is where some of the focus has been, obviously there is a massive cultural shift from a number of years ago when children were to do what they were told and maybe the classroom was a lot more structured for a child that needs everything the same every day. I deal with this in my own family so I understand it in detail. Given the need for change in staff who were trained sometimes a long time ago, how are you measuring the change in understanding of these issues? If you have a child who sits under the desk with anxiety and will not get out, do you feel confident that, say, all your primary school staff are totally on top of that? There is a real patchwork across private of what people know how to handle and not. What are your outcomes measuring of this training that you have had going on since 2009 or that sort of time directed at all staff?

Ms Garrison: We have certainly through the task force on learning difficulties also looked at providing online learning for staff; some face-to-face work with teachers and parents. It is about building that capacity but there is no one-size-fits-all and—

MRS JONES: No, but is there a system for measuring improvement? It is a complete cultural shift when you are saying that a child who has anxiety or learning difficulties and is under a desk, for example, will not come out, you are not treating them in the same way as a kid who is being defiant. I empathise that that is a massive shift for someone who entered the teaching profession at a time when children would do what they were told, more or less. We have seen an increase in these cases and every system is trying to grapple with it. I know you have offered things, but is there any methodology for measuring the change? It is a huge change for some teachers to make.

Ms Burch: We might ask Anne Ellis to comment on teacher quality, professional standards and learning.

Ms Ellis: One of the most significant things affecting all teachers across all sectors across every jurisdiction is the implementation of the Australian professional standards for teachers. One of the really significant bodies of work in the ACT that we have led with Catholic, independent and public schools is that now all teachers are accountable for professional learning every year. The significant thing about that, Mrs Jones, is that they are actually required to reflect on the impact of the professional learning on their practice. What the standards have done is brought—

MRS JONES: Self-assessment?

Ms Ellis: Absolutely. They need to record their professional learning against the professional standards. The compliance bit which, as a teacher myself, I think is wonderful, is what it has done for you in terms of how you work with students.

MRS JONES: If teachers are self-assessing a change of attitude but it is a whole new area and it is scary and it is stressful, how are you assured that the information you have really reflects changes at the school level? Every school, as you say, is dealing with this, and I think a lot of parents are quite confused. There has been a real change in the student population over the last 10 or 15 years.

Ms Burch: Part of the PD is that self-reflection and tracking how it changes your practice.

Ms Ellis: Yes, but it is also based on professional data and providing data to schools. One of the things that will be happening for us in terms of the expert panel work is that we will be able to work around some frameworks so that principals will be able to request some common questions for teachers. They will be able to look at the data of the teacher's self-reflection, so there is now language—

MRS JONES: There is information available to them about people's self-reflection and about the student population?

Ms Ellis: Absolutely.

MRS JONES: I will give you one quick example to finish off with. One of my friends has a son in school, and he has massive anxiety. One of the things that was instigated by one of the two classroom teachers who share the week is that they had a set of cards that the student had and the teacher had. The teacher showed the student how she was feeling on her set of cards and in an equal relationship kind of exchange, the student showed how he was feeling. Without embarrassing that highly anxious child in front of the whole classroom, you have achieved an outcome.

The other classroom teacher was an older person who had not perhaps understood this area as well or learned about it. The second teacher was younger and had done her training more recently. She was flatly refusing to engage in this system. I understand it; I empathise with it. Change keeps happening and people find it difficult. Is there a principal reporting back or are parents asked for feedback on how they think things are changing? Is there an intention to change that system? I do not think we have enough information?

Ms Howson: Mrs Jones, I have had an opportunity in the very short time I have been with ETD to examine just those sorts of scenarios you are talking about through the expert panel's presentation of how we deal with students with complex needs and challenging behaviours. As a consequence of that, I have a handful of examples just like yours, I think, where we can see real innovation being applied by teachers in classrooms.

MRS JONES: Yes. It can change the whole situation.

Ms Howson: Exactly. The thing that Professor Tony Shaddock really emphasised last

week in presenting his report is there is no one-size-fits-all response.

MRS JONES: Yes, a suite of options.

Ms Howson: It has to be a holistic approach by schools, which I think is the point you are making. The emphasis really needs to be on the culture of inclusion, moving through to increasing the skills and competencies generally across the school and then most particularly for teachers and learning assistants that are working with a child.

MRS JONES: And that the teacher gets what they want out of it in the end.

Ms Howson: That is right.

MRS JONES: If they are willing to engage in something totally new and different.

Ms Howson: Yes. What I can see in ETD is a very comprehensive and multifaceted approach to that in a whole range of areas in terms of lifting schools' ability to respond to this.

MRS JONES: But is there a commitment to measuring the change? Or are people at least being able to feed in, from parents, teachers, learning assistants? Is there perhaps some anonymous place where they can go and say, "This school could embrace this area better," or something so that—

Ms Howson: It is a really good question.

Ms Burch: From families?

MRS JONES: Often parents have no idea themselves how to deal with these things, and it is a really big learning curve for them. To start with they sit there and say, "Oh, gee, does my child have a problem? Are they going to be defined as having a problem? Do I even want to address this area?"

Ms Howson: As I said these complexities require a holistic and often multifaceted response. We have heard today around where we are measuring change—for example, change around parental engagement in school, and whether that is effective. We are measuring that. With teachers' competency, Anne has already spoken about the methodology that is quite rigorous around that.

MRS JONES: But even an anonymous phone line or email—

Ms Howson: Going to your point, the government recently announced a specific position, the director of families and children, I think that is—

Ms Garrison: Students.

Ms Howson: Thank you. I have to get used to the different terminology in education—"children and young people" are "students". A director of families and students has been appointed. Mrs Stewart, in fact, is that person. It is her responsibility to ensure that parents, students, if you like, as well as teachers and

members of the community can go straight to that point.

MRS JONES: Is there an anonymous option? I really think that some parents find the whole thing so scary and they do not want their child reflected on or they do not want their teacher to be made to feel awkward.

Ms Howson: We might ask the director to come up to have a chat about that role.

THE CHAIR: While the director is coming up, I would like to stop here and reflect on the questioning and answering that is going on. People are starting to talk over one another. While a person is answering the question, can we hold off before we ask the next question that is in our mind. I am worried that Hansard might be having some difficulty in interpreting all the conversation that is going on. It is really interesting and it is very important, and I am sure everyone is really interested in hearing from you as to what is happening in this area that Mrs Jones is talking about. It is a really good area for us to be able to talk about. I know we are all anxious because we can see the clock ticking over, but we need to slow down a little bit and let someone finish talking before the next person starts talking.

Ms Burch: We will take your advice, chair.

THE CHAIR: That is okay, minister; it is for all of us. Mrs Stewart.

Mrs Stewart: Thank you, Ms Porter, and thank you for the question, Mrs Jones. As Ms Howson just explained, I am the Director, Families and Students, and I have recently been appointed to that role. I have a number of mechanisms for families, members of the community, students and our staff in schools to approach me with concerns they might have about how things are going for them with the education experience of our students. There are no definitive rules around how I can be approached. I am there for anyone to provide feedback. In most cases I find that the people that come to me want to be identified. They want an issue or a concern that they raised to be followed through and they want a response to be provided back to them. In most cases I have an ongoing dialogue with the people that come forward and I provide them feedback in terms of how we are responding to the issue or the concern they have raised.

I sometimes have people approach who might provide an email without any further contact details, and if that is the way that they want to engage and they want to have their concern addressed, then we do it in that mechanism. As I said, I will help and respond to anyone that comes forward in the way that suits them.

MRS JONES: Regarding that and to wrap up: what are your contact details if people want to contact you? Also, where is that advertised within the school system?

Mrs Stewart: The contact details are on our website—

MRS JONES: Whereabouts?

Mrs Stewart: The phone number is on the contacts page on the Education and Training Directorate website.

Ms Howson: Excuse me, Tracy; Mrs Jones, we would be happy to provide that detail to have it written into *Hansard* if you would like.

MRS JONES: Great.

THE CHAIR: That is taken on notice.

Ms Burch: Also, listening to your questioning, we are happy to have a look. We have redesigned some areas of our website to have a very clear point of contact for students and families. We will make sure that that is really easy to find.

MRS JONES: Front and centre.

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot had a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: My supplementary is in regard to Mrs Jones's question on LSAs. Can I get some clarification on how many of our LSAs since 2009 have reached certificate IV level?

Ms Garrisson: Mr Doszpot, I would have to take that on notice to get that information for you, but we would be happy to do that.

MR DOSZPOT: There are a couple of minor parts to that as well: is it going to be a prerequisite for LSAs to become certificate IV trained, or is it going to be an option?

Ms Garrisson: Mr Doszpot, I would have to ask our people and performance person to do that because it is actually an industrial decision that has to be made in that space.

Ms McAlister: Mr Doszpot, there was much discussion about this in the negotiation of that relevant agreement, and the combined agreed position on this was we need to have a systematic analysis of the work that they do, the varied work that goes on in schools by staff other than teachers, to systematically look at that and then target the appropriate learning and development requirements for different classifications within that group. There is not yet a standard cert IV requirement; there is the development of an evidence base which we are now going to apply moving forward in the life of that agreement.

MR DOSZPOT: But given that this was mooted five years ago, do I detect slightly more urgency in obtaining answers to this?

Ms McAlister: The urgency from the industrial perspective is to provide a systematic, sequential, transparent model for all staff. I believe what you are alluding to in 2009 was an important element for some staff, but we have a really broad number of non-teaching staff in our schools and we want them all to have that clarity and certainty and training. It is lifting it up, yes.

MR DOSZPOT: The other part of that is I think you alluded to the fact that there are

around 2,000 in the LSA category or thereabouts.

Ms McAlister: I need to correct that, if I may. It is 2,000 staff in education who are not teachers—you are looking at some of them today—of which LSAs break down to a pool within that group.

MR DOSZPOT: My final question is: is there a move towards LSAs having to be registered or accredited with TQI? Is that part of the process?

Ms Burch: TQI is around the definition of teachers—

MR DOSZPOT: I understand that.

Ms Burch: and LSAs are not—

MR DOSZPOT: They are getting pretty close to it.

Ms Burch: Well, they do not have the formal qualification in initial teacher training. Anne Ellis might just want to give us a very quick definition of teachers, and what is captured in the registration requirements.

Ms Ellis: The registration requirements are not for pre-service teachers and not for school assistants; they are for people who have teacher qualifications. There is some provision in the legislation for people who have qualifications that do not include the full teacher qualifications for them to receive a permit to teach so that they can go to perhaps a secondary trades course that needs particular trade qualifications but not teacher qualifications. It does not include LSAs.

MR DOSZPOT: I think Professor Shaddock was pointing towards other directions. But I will let that sit; you have answered my question at the moment.

Ms Burch: Professor Shaddock in his recommendation was suggesting that we explore LSAs across ETD, Catholic education and the independent schools, commit to the professionalisation and, in the process, attaining at least a certificate IV. That is what he was looking to.

MR DOSZPOT: I am well aware of that.

Ms Burch: We have agreed in principle. I think we have been very clear in our response to that. It follows on from EBA industrial negotiations and other professional development attributes that we need to consider across the LSAs, given their various jobs and functions across our schools.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. We will break now until 10.50.

Sitting suspended from 10.32 to 10.50 am.

THE CHAIR: We have a quorum so we will resume. Thank you, minister.

Ms Burch: At the outset, can I just recognise Diane Joseph. I want to put on record

my thanks to Diane Joseph and appreciation for her support over the last 12 months. Ms Joseph's husband was involved in a serious accident 7½ weeks ago. He is still in hospital; hence, she is putting her focus on supporting her husband through this time. I just wanted to place on record my appreciation for her over the last 12 months.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, minister. I am sure all of the committee would pass on their best wishes to her and her family.

Ms Burch: Thank you. Just before we broke, there was a lot of discussion around training opportunities and how LSAs and teachers broadly are supported to deal with challenging, difficult behaviours and students with disabilities. I will ask Jacinta Evans to go into some more detail; I think it would be useful for the committee.

Ms Evans: There is a whole range of training that we felt it was useful for the committee to hear about this morning that both LSAs and teachers are eligible for, specifically some online modules.

Coming out of the 2009 report that has been referred to a number of times, there was a focus and an emphasis on what teachers and LSAs need in schools, and specifically what kind of training would benefit them. You would know that the learning difficulties task force took on a very significant review of that area.

There was a whole range of online training that was made available. To date, more than 1,500 teachers and LSAs have engaged in that online training. That 1,500 might not just represent 1,500 people, because schools have taken a very proactive approach. Sometimes a whole staff meeting might sit and go through a module together or a small group of school leaders might look at it—or whatever configuration. There has been very good uptake of these modules. They are around specifics of autism spectrum disorder, dyslexia, coordination difficulties in students, behaviour difficulties—a whole range. There is a whole range of modules that teachers and LSAs can engage with. As I say, more than 1,500 have completed those since 2014.

The other area of training that we thought it was really important that the committee be aware of is the disability standards for education training, which is a national approach. It is online training. We have had more than 1,130 staff complete that training as well. The modules for disability standards in education are actually tailored for either teachers or LSAs, so you can understand what is useful in your setting, in the area of your responsibility, through engaging with this training.

With both our LSAs and our teachers, it is quite a large suite of training on top of the other training that has been referred to already this morning.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Evans. Thank you, minister, for that.

MRS JONES: Is there a curriculum document or something for that training that we could be provided with, to have a look at what they do?

Ms Burch: The training on offer? There is an internal training offer, but it is also the list through TQI. Would there be both?

Ms Evans: We could certainly provide a summary of what is being provided.

THE CHAIR: We will take that on notice. Thank you very much.

Minister, I have a question. I noticed that on page 36 it talks about continuing to have a focus on improving attendance for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. On page 37 it talks about the plans to improve school attendance. I was wondering what is involved in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education inquiry projects and how these projects will improve school attendance.

Ms Burch: Ms Evans can go to that again. ETD has a very strong focus on supporting our Indigenous students through the various transition phases from primary into high school, from year 10 through to year 12, through a number of direct mechanisms and curricular support.

Ms Evans: We have a great focus on our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. As you have mentioned, we had the accepting the challenge action inquiry focus. In 2015, 11 schools have undertaken action inquiry looking at supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in a whole range of different ways. We have about 1,600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Obviously there is no one-size-fits-all approach: it is about relationships; it is about getting to know students and understanding what supports them well. We have 11 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education officers across our schools, and they take a particularly personal approach to the way that students are supported. We also have a student engagement and transitions officer who works particularly with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. Does that answer your question, chair, or was it more specific?

THE CHAIR: No; it was just around how to keep them engaged in the school. I was wondering if you are seeing any success, any difference. Would we have something to measure what was happening before and what is happening now?

Ms Evans: I guess we would be looking at our numbers, around the number of students that are completing their year 12 certificate and the number of students who are taking on flexible learning options, which has been a very positive approach for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who might be finding the formal aspect of their schooling more difficult and who have taken on a more flexible learning approach. Then there is a range of other measures where students are engaged in, for instance, ASBAs or other flexible opportunities.

Ms Burch: We certainly do count. Ms Garrisson may explain where that is reported in annual reports.

Ms Garrisson: It is reported in our annual reports. Also, I just want to make note that we have actually got more of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in education through to year 12. That, to us, has been a great success story; that is encouraging for us. But I also wanted to mention that not only are we looking at the end rate here but also we have Koori preschools where we try to engage early and, through early intervention, support families to engage with schooling, some of whom have not always had the best experiences themselves. With Koori preschools, we are also monitoring some of that work, and Leanne Wright could talk a bit about

how that translates into encouraging attendance throughout schooling.

Ms Burch: Leanne Wright will be able to provide additional information.

Ms Wright: The Koori preschool program is a program that the ACT is very proud of. We have five Koori preschool settings, at Kingsford Smith School, Narrabundah Early Childhood School, Ngunnawal Primary School, Richardson Primary School and Wanniasa School. Students are enrolled in the program from three years of age, so it is for three-year-olds and four-year-olds, but we actively encourage parents to come along with babies in arms. Basically, we say that if parents want to stay and be part of the program, we take the families in and there is parent attendance as well. The program runs over two days a week for 4½ hours each day, so it is nine hours per week at those five settings. Eighty-one children in 2015 were officially enrolled, but, of course, we are not actually counting the numbers of unofficial enrolments.

The Koori preschool program provides a culturally inclusive environment for students. We interface with a number of other services for those families. It is about establishing those strong relationships with parents who may have had not so positive experiences with schooling themselves, from the earliest stage. We are finding that the transition into the formal preschool year—during that four-year-old preschool year, parents can have their child enrolled in Koori preschool and in mainstream preschool, which means they attend for 24 hours a week. Additionally, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students can enrol in the mainstream preschool program at 3½ years of age, so they actually do 18 months of the formal preschool program.

All of this is built around the fact that we know that the very best start is what we want for all of our students, and we want to establish those relationships and really work on those early skills. We interface very directly with the Community Services Directorate through the child and family centres as well, and we aim to ensure that there is a kind of wraparound service provision and that the Koori preschools, with the Winnunga health service, are doing hearing checks and really looking for any indication that there are any of those issues for children. Also, we are working in partnership with speech and occupational therapists to go on site into Koori preschools, again building relationships with families around trust and early identification of anything that may inhibit smooth and successful transition into formal schooling.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. On page 37, minister, it mentions some research to identify barriers to accessing and successfully completing training for equity groups. I was wondering: is this a separate body of research that has been undertaken?

Mr Miller: That is referring to some work that we are doing to understand what things might impact on people's engagement in training and their ability to get through to completion of training. There are a number of things that are contributing to that. One of the fundamental parts of that is the engagement of a range of field officers that we have who go out and conduct a range of visits with apprentices and employers, particularly early on.

THE CHAIR: So it is in the VET area?

Mr Miller: Yes, it is in the VET area. The point of that is to understand what sorts of things might be impacting on an apprentice's decision to continue in their training or if they are running into particular areas of concern that might be leading them to think about cancelling their training contract and withdrawing from their training. Again, that is fairly new. The field officers have been established over the last eight months or so and are just getting into their full swing.

We do know that lots of decisions are made very early in the training contract for people to sometimes withdraw from training if things are not working out. It is about getting out there as quickly as we can following the commencement of training and having those conversations not just with our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in training but with all of them to make sure that any little issues that are arising can be identified, that they have relevant information about what their entitlements are, what is the responsibility of the employer to address their needs, what additional supports are available et cetera. We work very closely with the registered training organisations to make sure that they are also aware of what additional supports can be provided when they are providing training to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to ensure that simply by the nature of their identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, that does not act as any kind of disincentive or deterrent for their participation in training.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, I also have a question—I cannot find a reference to it; it is probably in here somewhere—about that culture exchange that goes on in a number of schools where the mainstream children, for want of better terminology, are given some experience of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture. I think of Giralang Primary School; I know there was a very strong program there for quite a while and no other schools have had that. I was just wondering about that. Sorry; I am making you hop up and down as though it is musical chairs.

Ms Burch: Leanne Wright will welcome the opportunity to talk more about it, but it is important to recognise that. I know a number of our schools have taken significant leadership in that exchange, in that cultural awareness space for students and the broader community.

Ms Wright: Thank you for the question, Ms Porter. I will go back to my other area, which is curriculum. As part of the Australian curricula, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and cultures is a cross-curriculum perspective of the Australian curriculum. As such, all of our teachers, from preschool right through to year 12, are looking at ways of incorporating those perspectives into curriculum across the board.

There are some very successful programs and practices that are established to build that cultural awareness for students and build engagement with it. You mentioned the program at Giralang. There have been strong partnerships with Duncan Smith and the Wiradjuri dance groups, and those types of activities, that allow students to really gain a deeper understanding of Aboriginal culture. We have a number of other programs that operate across schools that allow students to engage with what is called the Ngunnawal language, which is a derivation of language that was spoken here on Ngunnawal land. We have a number of groups right down as young as preschoolers engaging in using some of that language, trying to sort of rebirth it, I suppose, through

a partnership with AIATSIS and those trying to make sure that culture is not lost from our local area.

So there are lots of opportunities for schools to work with their families and leverage off that cultural understanding for students enrolled in a school. Also, the focus for us as an education system is to ensure that our teachers and school leaders are building their own capability, capacity and understandings about Aboriginal culture and histories. In the last 12 months, right from senior executive level, we have had our people participating in a range of professional learning and development. We have had Chris Sarra and a number of other highly eminent Aboriginal people from right around Australia coming in and working with our senior executive and staff to build that capacity. Ms McAlister can probably add a bit there; I may have stolen your words.

Ms McAlister: I was just going to emphasise that our director-general believes that this has to start from the top, and in this annual reporting period there has been a great deal of activity in increasing the cultural awareness of our senior executive staff. We had Grant Sarra come and do a workshop with us where our director-general asked every corporate executive member to bring a senior manager. That work is supporting the work that Ms Wright was talking about, but also supporting the implementation of our employment action plan. This is about increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees, which is a whole lot of pathway I will not go down, but it is important to state that it is a very clear commitment within the directorate.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I take you to page 16, the principals advisory group, formerly called the schools network reference group. Can you elaborate on how the members of this group are selected? Are they all principals at ACT public schools?

Ms Burch: Mr Gniel will be able to give you the information.

Mr Gniel: The principals advisory group is made up of principals from across the public school network. The four networks are represented at that group. They are chaired by one of our school network leaders. The director-general also participates in those meetings. We have a varied agenda for those meetings, depending on what is topical at the time. It is also an opportunity not only for principals to provide their advice on something that we present to them but also on emerging issues that they are finding through their school structures and through their own staffing groups. As it says in there it did replace—it might not be in this part but a bit further on in the report—the previous school network reference group. This is the next iteration of that group.

MR DOSZPOT: You touched upon some of the questions I am going to ask but if you can elaborate a little. How are matters for discussion selected? Is there a process for that?

Mr Gniel: Yes there is an agenda put together. Our senior executives look at the agenda as well, whether there are things that we need to speak to principals about, policy that is coming through. For example, I think Ms Wright has spoken about the reporting policy at the principals advisory group, if I remember rightly, and some of the other policies that come through. If principals want to put that on, they are more

than welcome to.

I think you asked about selection as well. They are determined from the networks themselves.

MR DOSZPOT: As to the number of times it meets, is it as required or—

Mr Gniel: No, generally once a term.

MR DOSZPOT: The matters that they discuss obviously include some fairly heavy topics that they must come across. What influence does the commentary and opinions have and on whom?

Mr Gniel: We generally have the director that is responsible in the area. Quite often we have present the deputy director-general responsible for that area as well. The feedback that is provided is taken into account with our policy work. And obviously we have other groups that are more topic specific. The school leadership group, for example, provides information for our area about how we can improve school leadership. We have one on their SRA, the student resource allocation, as well. There are a number of avenues for principals to provide us with advice and feedback on the work of the directorate.

MR DOSZPOT: Did this group have any commentary or input into the treatment of the principal involved in the south side primary school with the student with the challenging behaviour?

Mr Gniel: No.

MR DOSZPOT: Why not?

Mr Gniel: It is not part of the terms of reference for that group to address matters such as these.

MR DOSZPOT: I thought it was pretty broad ranging.

Ms Burch: That is an industrial matter you are referring to, a HR matter, and Ms Brighton could respond to your question on that.

Ms Brighton: The matter you are referring to is a matter that was investigated and dealt with under the enterprise agreement and we do not generally discuss the specifics of those matters with any consultation group in the directorate. At a higher level, principals were briefed, just as members of the community were briefed, on the outcome of that investigation.

Mr Gniel: Just to follow on from that, I would expect that the principals advisory group would be included in our next steps around implementation of the government response. That would be the forum for that work.

MR DOSZPOT: I thought it would have been of some interest to principals to get some clarification on that whole process. Professor Shaddock has attempted to

address the lack of clear response pathways schools can travel when a student reaches a crisis point; and also staff when they have to deal with complex needs while undertaking normal classroom duties—I would have thought this would have been a pretty important topic—and the increased responsibility that all of these principals have to face without either the guidelines or the apparent assistance higher up in the bureaucratic chain when such a situation occurred.

Ms Howson: I was going to add that I think that principals are clearly a very important stakeholder group for assisting us with the form of our implementation of all of those recommendations. As you know, the government has agreed or agreed in principle to all the recommendations made by Professor Shaddock. Any that impact on schools, we would want to engage principals in a discussion around that. The principals advisory group would clearly be one group that I would use to provide some guidance in relation to how we implement those recommendations.

Ms Burch: I think, with all due respect, that was a matter that was a HR matter investigated under the conditions clearly put out through an EBA, and it would not be appropriate to take that matter for discussion to a public forum. I would imagine every principal in the room, if they had every HR matter discussed with another group of people, would be horrified.

The expert panel made reference to the good work we do; that there are policies in place—I think Professor Shaddock, in his briefing with you, also spoke at length about how sometimes it is complicated—they are dense, and when someone needs a quick, ready reckoner, that ready reckoner, so to speak, was absent. That is the work that we have committed to do, and it is that work that the principals, individually or as part of this principals advisory group, however they choose to be involved, will be involved in making sure that we work through this and offer this information also to the independent schools and the Catholic schools. Let us remember that all schools here in the ACT are faced with challenging behaviours and all schools want to be able to benefit from the expert panel's advice.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, you keep referring to it as a HR matter. It might interest you to know that the community, including the education community, seem to think it has quite a bit more to do with the guidelines that principals have to work to. And this is what Professor Shaddock has addressed. It cannot purely be HR when the directions are not clearly stated. That is the reason I am asking—

Ms Burch: You asked whether the principals advisory group had a comment about the treatment of the teacher. That is a HR matter. If they wanted to have comments about some clarification of the policy, that is a different matter. That is not—

MR DOSZPOT: It is a HR matter, based on your statement.

Ms Burch: That was not what you asked.

MR DOSZPOT: We will agree to disagree on that. But the fact is that there are other points of view as to what the issues really are. And taking—

Ms Burch: I beg your pardon?

MR DOSZPOT: There are other points of view by educators as to whether it is a HR matter.

Ms Burch: The matter has been resolved. The findings have been made public. The principal has accepted those findings. And that is indeed the end of the matter.

MR DOSZPOT: Maybe in your explanation, but there are still a lot of questions to be answered. One of the questions I want to put to you is: taking into account the views expressed by Professor Shaddock about the guidelines that have been laid out for principals to follow, it appears that those guidelines were not in place to handle the specific instance of this boy in the cage affair. In light of Professor Shaddock's statements, do you think you should re-examine the way this principal has been treated?

Ms Brighton: The directorate's response on this matter is a matter of public record but I reiterate that the decision to erect that structure was the decision of one individual, the principal. That decision was made without the input of the directorate or the advice of the directorate. That decision was unacceptable, and under the enterprise agreement action has been taken.

I stress that that decision was made without input from the directorate, because if that had happened there are mechanisms in place to support all schools. Professor Shaddock's work on the expert panel has outlined a series of recommendations for the directorate and for the government to have regard to as we go forward in this system. Ms Garrison, did you want to add to that?

Ms Howson: I might come in if you do not mind. I think what is really evident here is that increasingly complex environments operate right across human services. I am in a good position, I think, to make this assessment. Multiple pieces of legislation are in place, and directorates such as ETD, and CSD for that matter, provide guidance for staff on how to implement their obligations under those pieces of legislation.

I propose, or postulate, that in fact the guidelines exist. What Professor Shaddock has made clear is that we have to work better at making it more accessible and easy for teachers to use and principals to apply in the context of a school environment, and that is really where the response from the government is taking us. We need to do more work on improving the accessibility of those legislative obligations and the guidelines available to principals and to teachers; I think Professor Shaddock in the multiple presentations he did on his report last week constantly called it a fridge magnet. We can probably apply that concept to what might be applicable in a school setting. How do we actually simplify this complexity within which front-line workers have to operate? It is an important issue for all of us.

MR DOSZPOT: We all accept the difficulties that teachers and principals work under, and that is why my questions keep coming back to the fact that it is fairly clear that Professor Shaddock refers to the systemic inadequacies where the guidelines were not there for the principal to follow. If the guidelines are not as specific as they should have been or could have been, how can you punish the principal for not following the guidelines?

Ms Burch: I think if you read through the report—and you may make comment about withdrawal space or restrictive practice—there were some limitations in the documentation that was there. But he also went on to say that withdrawal space was an understood practice, and whether it was a tent or a soothing blanket or a corner or a reading nook, people understood the concept.

He was very clear that there are some things that are just absolutely unacceptable in any way, shape or form, regardless of the guidelines being there or not, and I think that is what you are referring to. I find it difficult to understand; this is something that has been resolved, and the school now wants it behind them, the family involved wants it behind them, the principal involved wants it behind them. We have an expert panel report that shows a clear way forward for government schools, independent schools and Catholic schools alike.

I have written and sent a copy of this to my interstate counterparts, because every state can learn from what is in this expert panel report. I would much rather focus on the way forward to what we can be rather than thinking that a single series of poor decisions—which led to something that was, to me, absolutely unacceptable—in any way portrays this system and what these people have leadership of each and every day across our schools, because it is just not right.

MR DOSZPOT: I will leave that topic but I have got one more question to ask.

THE CHAIR: Before you go to the next question you want to ask, I reflect on what Professor Shaddock said at the briefing. He did request that we not use the cage terminology anymore. He said it is not helpful naming something and it is not going to take us forward. So I ask members not to use that terminology, as Professor Shaddock has asked us not to, and rightly so.

MRS JONES: On that, while everybody respects that that is Professor Shaddock's point of view—and in fact most of us are very happy to adopt that—it is not appropriate for people to determine what words we do and do not use as MLAs in this forum.

THE CHAIR: No. I am just asking if members could be cognisant of that.

MRS JONES: We are happy to be interested in it.

THE CHAIR: Yes. I am just asking that members be cognisant of that, because I take the minister's point that it is a really good time for us to move forward and have some healing in this area.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, you mentioned that Ms Joseph is on personal leave, and I am sorry to hear about the circumstances causing her to take that. I wish all the best to her husband. Did Ms Joseph complete the inquiries that she undertook with regard to this issue before she went? What was the outcome?

Ms Brighton: That work has been completed, and that has been done in accordance with the relevant enterprise agreement that applies to those officers.

MR DOSZPOT: How many teachers or staff—individuals—were disciplined?

Ms Brighton: Ms Joseph, in the media statements that she made, indicated that a number of officers internally to the directorate would be followed up and action would be taken, and that has been completed.

MR DOSZPOT: What were those numbers?

Ms Brighton: There have been a number of officers, both individuals and groups.

MR DOSZPOT: How many?

Ms Brighton: Mr Doszpot, I am conscious that in starting to—

MR DOSZPOT: We are not identifying staff by asking how many.

Ms Brighton: No, I appreciate that. It is a handful of officers, Mr Doszpot.

MRS JONES: Four? Five?

MR DOSZPOT: Why the secrecy? This is the part—

Ms Brighton: Mr Doszpot, it goes to the identification of officers.

Ms Howson: I am happy to provide that information to you, Mr Doszpot. We are just conscious of the fact that, the more particular or specific we get, we start to move to identifying individuals.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure. I am not trying to encroach on that, but the principal has been, to all intents and purposes, identified. I think she deserves similar treatment to other individuals who have been involved in this.

Ms Howson: There are a number of officers within the directorate who, through the further investigation, were found not to have acted on information. I might ask Ms Brighton to be quite specific about this.

Ms Burch: When you go to “the principal has been identified”, I have been at great pains not to identify.

MR DOSZPOT: Not identified by name but identified by position.

Ms Burch: By suburb, location, school—anything. It has not come from me, because I have been very careful and very robust—

MR DOSZPOT: I am not pointing fingers, minister. I am simply—

Ms Burch: You have to be careful, Mr Doszpot. I think it was more from your efforts that people have identified the person involved.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, nobody has identified anyone individually; not the media—and I have to give complete compliments to them for the way they have handled it, and for the way everyone has been so discreet. My final question is: what was the penalty applied to this unknown number of officers?

Ms Brighton: Mr Doszpot, for the benefit of the committee, I reiterate that when we made the announcement about the actions that had been taken on the principal, we made it absolutely clear at that time that it had been the principal that had made the decision.

The actions that the director-general indicated that she was following up on internally within the directorate were really around the swiftness of the directorate's response after the withdrawal space was constructed, and when the directorate first heard about it. So those officers have all been finalised up. The director-general has made an undertaking to provide that to you. I can put on the record here that there are around eight officers that have been followed up, Mr Doszpot. As part of the enterprise agreement that applies, the response has ranged from anything from informal counselling right through to formal counselling and performance management. I stress that the work is really around our case management practices, our support and our responsiveness when the directorate became aware.

MR DOSZPOT: Did you say “finalise”? Were any staff laid off on account of this?

Ms Brighton: No.

Ms Burch: No-one has been laid off, Mr Doszpot, to use your language.

MR DOSZPOT: The principal has lost his or her position, as I understand it.

Ms Burch: They are maintained at position within the directorate.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay, thank you.

Ms Burch: That is not being laid off, Mr Doszpot, to use your language.

MR DOSZPOT: He or she is not a principal; is that correct?

Ms Burch: That is right.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask a few questions on the priority 2 area—inspirational teaching and leadership. In particular, I know that Ms Ellis talked previously about the work of the Teacher Quality Institute. Could you give me a sense of how that fits into the national work that is underway?

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, are you looking at a particular page?

MS FITZHARRIS: This priority section starts on page 28 of the report. Could you give me a sense, in the national work that is underway around teacher quality, where

the ACT's work sits in that?

Ms Ellis: Certainly. With respect to all the work that is referred to in the directorate's component of the annual report, you will note that ours is an annexed part of the report, where we specifically talk about the national reform, because our work fits across all sectors. There are a couple of key components in terms of the reference to professional learning and professional standards. That is part of a national reform agenda around teacher quality. All teachers across all sectors and all jurisdictions have professional standards that apply to them and have requirements for professional learning.

One of the really important parts—and it goes to earlier questions about special education and needs of teachers—is that the whole teacher quality focus for the ACT teaching profession is about the professionalisation of the teaching workforce. For us in the ACT, that particularly starts with pre-service teachers at university, because part of the national reform agenda is not only around what is happening to teachers when they are in the profession but what happens to prepare quality teacher education graduates.

There is a very important report called the TEMAG report, *Classroom ready teachers*. That is a very important component of our work, in working with the directorate and all the other sectors, because it looks at the quality of graduates from initial teacher education to the quality of the course that they go to.

Nationally, the ACT has been, in all components of teacher quality—this was referred to in our five-year celebration a couple of weeks ago—able to lead the way in looking at what is the importance of teachers being able to be the best they possibly can be. It is about enabling legislation. Our legislation is very powerful. It affects every teacher's ability to remain in the profession, not only around professional conduct but around professional practice.

It goes right across all sectors. As members of the Assembly, you would be very pleased to be aware of the equal treatment and equal requirements we have for Catholic, independent and public schools. It is looking at the career life cycle of a teacher. That is what the national reform is about. It is looking at what goes in to making a good teacher. When do you start being a professional? You start being a professional when you go to university. What do you have to do along the way? What is the partnership with schools when pre-service teachers go out from university courses into school placements?

The ACT, even in terms of the TEMAG report, very importantly, has been able to lead the way. The minister referred earlier to literacy and numeracy tests. You will be pleased also to know that in terms of assessment of pre-service teachers, graduates, both ACU and UC, through the work of TQI collaboratively engaging with them, have a common assessment report. There were four recommendations in the TEMAG report that we were proudly able to say the ACT already had in place. So part of the national reform is professionalisation of the teaching workforce. It is about partnerships, it is about education and it is about what individuals continue to do through their career.

You will be interested to know, Ms Fitzharris, that next Wednesday we are having a ceremony at TQI where we are celebrating the fact that another 10 teachers have come through with certification. That is where there is formal recognition of teachers against the high level standards—highly accomplished and lead level. In the ACT we have 56 trained assessors for certification. No other jurisdiction comes anywhere near that. That has been about working with Catholic, public and independent schools to ensure there is quality understanding within the schools about what is standards-based evidence and what is quality reflection.

The ACT can proudly say, whether it is the work for the directorate in terms of inspirational teaching and leadership, whether it is the work for Catholic education or independent schools, that because of this common expectation that TQI's legislation provides for everyone, there is an opportunity for a professional growth approach and for teachers to ensure that they keep being the best they possibly can be for whatever student they have in their class.

MS FITZHARRIS: How do teachers interact with the specialist areas? We have talked about learning difficulties, we have talked about mental health and we have talked about digital capacity. Through TQI, how do you work with teachers to be able to bring all those sorts of specialties into their everyday practice in the classroom?

Ms Ellis: I suppose we have a fairly broad-brush approach, because we have responsibility around the professional standards. We work in partnership with employers with that, because that links into performance and development frameworks. In terms of expectations of all teachers, we are, through the grunt of the legislation, I suppose, able to have an opportunity to raise the bar on expectations. That sets up for success what every employer needs to do. We have a real focus at the moment around digital literacy for teachers. We have actually—and we are the only jurisdiction that has done this—looked at the online portfolio, the digital portfolio, that pre-service teachers are using at both ACU and UC. We are able to host that, so when they graduate from university they can come into schools and continue with their professional evidence.

That is a really important enabling tool, because we are saying to all teachers that, whatever situation you are in, whatever employer you are with, you have to continue to learn and grow. You have to be able to respond to the particular needs of any students. It is very interesting in terms of the government's report to the expert panel. We will play a key role in working with all employers and both universities so that, again, in that early stage of the profession, when you are in initial teacher education, you have the best quality course you can have so that you are prepared in the best way you can be to go into the real world of teaching. That is setting up the employer with a framework where we stand shoulder to shoulder as partners in expectations for teachers.

MS FITZHARRIS: Particularly at primary school level, how do teachers develop specialties, or are they remaining more as generalists?

Ms Ellis: One of the interesting recommendations of the initial teacher education report is around primary specialisation. That report, *Classroom ready teachers*, has looked at key components. An important one has been: what should specialisation

look like in primary teacher initial teacher education? That is quite a vexed question for people to look at because it can look at specialty areas such as maths and science expertise, but it can look at general specialty areas like becoming an expert in understanding the evidence of the impact of your work on your students.

With respect to primary specialisations, as the initial teacher education accrediting authority we will be talking to employers about that. We are able to have jurisdictional priority so that, if there are particular needs that the ACT is prioritising within initial teacher education, that can help. We can also look at that once you are in service, so that, once you have been getting ready through initial teacher education, once you are in service there can be priorities for professional learning. Again we have the broad-brush approach where we go across all teachers. And specialisation needs can change as time goes on. But it is about professional evidence, it is about professional preparation, it is about professional collaboration and it is about you continuing to grow, no matter what you face in your teaching career.

Ms Burch: Just to build on what TQI does, it is about that expertise within the school setting. Our executive teacher professional practice sits across our schools. They are discipline focused, and that is around continuing that professional learning that comes through from initial teacher training and placements. In addition to standard PD, it is about how they nurture their colleagues within the school structure as well.

MS FITZHARRIS: Does TQI give the opportunity for teachers to have a peer network across the sectors as well? Is that a strength of TQI—having all sectors involved?

Ms Ellis: Absolutely. You will have noticed the exhibition of artwork that we had in the exhibition room in the Assembly over the last week or so. We proudly show artwork from all sectors. I think the minister has talked about it being a safe space in the middle where the focus is on the profession. We run cross-sectoral networks for mentor teachers, we run cross-sectoral networks for beginning teachers, and we are establishing a cross-sectoral network for casual teachers.

We also this year piloted a master class where we were able to provide professional learning to a group of teachers from across sectors and then they visited other schools to look at expert teachers. So we are about the profession; we are about people sharing. We are about supporting all employers, but absolutely there are opportunities even through the professional learning accreditation process. You will be interested to know that at the moment there are 537 professional learning programs accredited. Last year there were 494. So it is upward and onward.

Through the data from that we are able to look at how we ensure professional learning programs are provided to all sectors as much as possible. But it goes deeper than that, because if there is good learning about particular programs in any particular education need, we are able to facilitate people from across sectors talking together about planning professional learning. So it is all about collaboration and opportunities. I think the data shows that it is starting to make a really positive impact.

MS FITZHARRIS: I refer to the “fast facts” table on page 31 of the report. Very often in annual report hearings we have had discussion about the gender balance. But

in terms of the gender balance between female and male teachers, it is mostly the opposite of the other discussions that we have. Are there more men coming in to teaching? There is a little bit of an increase—slightly more of an increase for male teachers.

Ms Ellis: I think there was a two per cent rise.

Ms Burch: We would like to say it is a trend. We are doing our best for it to be a trend.

Ms McAlister: There has been a two per cent increase, which we are delighted to see. But our focus is really on teacher quality. It is in an environment where teachers are recognised, rewarded, paid well and with an emphasis on standards-based performance and best practice rather than gender-specific recruitment. We are pleased to see that the numbers are rising.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are universities also looking to recruit more male students into teaching? Is there a specific—

Ms Burch: If you look at teachers, it is my understanding that there are more males in the senior years than in the primary years. It goes to the professionalisation of teaching. That will make a difference in that regard. Also, with the ACT being an employer of choice, regarding terms and conditions and recognition, that will make a difference. Anne might go to the discussion in TEMAG around whether there is a score to get into initial teacher training, or attitude and aptitude. Ms Ellis might talk about some of that.

Ms Ellis: One of the components of the *Classroom ready* TEMAG report is looking at how you select the right people into initial teacher education. Should people have particular literacy and numeracy skills? What are the non-academic, the social and emotional skills, that people need to have? How do we ensure throughout quality teacher education that the profession is seen as a highly regarded one? Another key component is that there will be a lot of data collected and bodies such as ours are pivotal to that. We are looking at who is enrolling in the initial teacher education. The gender breakdown will be part of that. The age cohort of initial teacher education applicants is also a really important component.

I suppose the gender breakdown is part of the jigsaw but the collective jigsaw is: how can teaching have great community confidence? How can it be seen as a profession of choice? How can it ensure that you have the best possible teachers, male or female? How do you assess throughout the initial teacher education that the right people are spat out at the end?

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, you had a supplementary?

MR DOSZPOT: I certainly have. Ms Ellis, congratulations on the first five years of the TQI and the great contribution that you and TQI are making to the ACT education sector. Well done. You mentioned a number of TQI courses that have been held. I am not sure if this comes under your area, but can you tell us have there been any TQI accredited courses in the area of complex needs and challenging behaviour or similar

to provide training for teachers in managing these students?

Ms Ellis: Yes, Mr Doszpot, a number of programs have been accredited. The actual definition of “complex needs” is very broad. It is not separated into special education; it can include gifted and talented and it can include a lot of things. We certainly work with all employers around accrediting programs for students with complex needs.

MR DOSZPOT: Do you have a rough number?

Ms Ellis: I can get you a number. But it is an interesting question because—

MR DOSZPOT: I understand that.

Ms Ellis: —the definition is quite broad.

MR DOSZPOT: As much as possible then. It is not a trick question; I am simply trying to understand it.

Ms Burch: We might also revisit some information that Jacinta Evans might be able to bring forward around training available across teachers, teaching staff and leadership level, right through from teachers and LSAs.

Ms Evans: As I referred to after the break, a range of online modules have been made available to more than 1,500 teachers and learning support assistants. That is particularly relevant around complex needs in terms of one module that is on behaviour management specifically, but within those modules a number of other topics that would also be supporting students with complex needs, including a module around speech and language. When we are looking at a broader, multi-disciplinary response, we are accepting that for students in our schools a whole range of behaviours are predicated by a range of different issues they might be experiencing.

Certainly within the learning difficulties task force space we had 26 workshop sessions delivered, and that was professional learning for more than 1,000 teachers, learning support assistants and principals across 75 ACT public schools. Seven sessions with parents, carers and families were also delivered.

Ms Burch: That is over the last 12 months or two-year period?

Ms Evans: About 18 months, minister.

MR DOSZPOT: My final supplementary on that is: minister, what sorts of efforts can you or the directorate make in ensuring that teachers coming through universities—getting their Bachelor of Education—are given more access to or more opportunities to gain some more qualifications or information regarding students with complex and—

Ms Burch: The initial teacher training is accredited through TQI, so Anne Ellis may talk about that and also some of the focus of placements as part of that initial teacher training.

Ms Ellis: One of the important things I referred to previously is that we as a jurisdiction can work with our universities—that includes the Australian Catholic University as well as the University of Canberra—to look at priority areas for initial teacher education. One component of what we will be doing with both ACU and UC is an annual report from the universities. We will be looking at data in terms of effectiveness of programs so we are able to prioritise particular areas.

One of the other key bodies of work we are doing for the minister at the moment is the development of an ACT professional experience framework. It talks about the key elements of professional experience that will ensure a really high quality experience for pre-service teachers. During those discussions and as part of the partnership agreements universities will have with schools around professional experience, we can certainly talk about the importance of the need for pre-service teachers to be exposed to and have active engagement in working with students with complex needs.

MR DOSZPOT: Would that also include early intervention opportunities?

Ms Ellis: For pre-service teachers, Mr Doszpot, I suppose the component of their work is that they are working not as qualified teachers; they are working within a framework of support with a range of supports within a school, including a qualified teacher working with them. A really important aspect of our legislation, though, that you will be interested in is we are able to grant a permit to teach once pre-service teachers are ten weeks out of completing their initial teacher education course. They can actually work with any employer as a casual teacher as they are finishing their qualification.

I suppose any answer to these questions is about partnership. It is about understanding needs of employers and it is about understanding jurisdictional priorities. Then it is about us pressing the right levers to support a quality program, quality experience within schools and ongoing reflective practice so that people actually working with the pre-service teachers are being very reflective as well.

Ms Burch: Whilst Ms Ellis has spoken about what we are doing here in the ACT, as I said, around education council with interstate colleagues these are the same common things that are challenging for every minister for education and, indeed, for every institution that teaches our undergraduate teachers. It is about how much you can put into the initial three-year, four-year training and then what are the important elements to have them class ready.

MRS JONES: As to the sensory and withdrawal spaces we have and the ones that are working well: in the report we have been referring to, the good and accurate spaces we want to create include unlocked space, students having a system of consent, a style reflecting the age or developmental status of the person in question, and having monitoring and support while it is being used. How many of those spaces—the good ones, where we are trying to head—have we got and in how many schools?

Ms Garrison: The expert panel's report says to us we really need to have a look at and provide guidelines around withdrawal spaces and also that we need to define what "restrictive practices" are, and they are quite separate.

MRS JONES: Two different things.

Ms Garrison: Two different things.

MRS JONES: Restrictive practice is where it is not appropriate to use one of these withdrawal spaces?

Ms Garrison: “Restrictive practices” may be appropriate, but they need to be very planned and they need to be monitored if they are being used. We are really going to have to do some work across government in this space because it is something that is not just in schools. Withdrawal spaces, however, have been used for many, many years, and the appropriate use of withdrawal spaces is there to support students so they can help manage their own behaviours. They sometimes might find the classroom environment a little distracting and the spaces are there so they can learn to self-soothe or get their own control back.

We know that there is not one size fits all for that either and that there is a range of ways linked to individual students and their needs, and that needs to be negotiated and planned with them. You will see in many schools from time to time lovely cushions at the end of a classroom, or sometimes they will have the teepees that are available now, or even just a soft chair somewhere. Those are withdrawal spaces, and sometimes the withdrawal space may actually be in an area that is in line of sight but where there is no stimulation so that the child can actually gain—

MRS JONES: So is there a list of how many or are they defined or are they monitored? Or is that work to do?

Ms Burch: Most of our primary schools and high schools would be able to accommodate that. But what this piece of work does now is to go back to all of those schools and see where improvements can be made. In the government’s response there was \$3 million to improve those sensory spaces. We will work through all of our schools and work with the school community and ask what it is that they want to be part of with this? It could be internal refurbishment of a space or it could just be some sensory gardening or some softening of a fence line or something on the outside as well.

MRS JONES: There will be a process that you will go through: auditing and deciding where to spend money?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MRS JONES: There are no other non-conforming spaces?

Ms Burch: No. I am very quick on that one, rest assured.

MRS JONES: That is good, and it is good to put it out there.

Ms Burch: Within 24 hours that task was done and dusted.

MRS JONES: Are there particular schools—not to name them at all—but are there

certain areas where you want to put a lot more work into and you have really to focus on, or is it just something where you want to make sure there is a minimum amount across the board?

Ms Howson: It would be nice to give you a straightforward answer to this, Mrs Jones, but the truth of it is it has to be student centred. It is not a prescription for a school or an infrastructure setting for a school; it has to be about the child and the child's needs. So we have not been prescriptive in that regard.

MRS JONES: So you may be developing some kind of matrix: if this, then that, and if that, then that?

Ms Howson: Yes, and we will certainly be inviting schools to come to us with what support they need for the students they are responding to.

MRS JONES: Finally, the \$3 million, is that going to be enough? How was that figure arrived at? Is it just a beginning?

Ms Burch: It is a starting point. I think it is a good chunk, but it is a starting point. As we delve into this, so to speak, we will find out. Also, it is about working with the schools as our general maintenance of capital upgrades programs into the future, into the outyears.

MRS JONES: New schools might look different with this information.

Ms Burch: New schools absolutely do look different. Just as a point of clarification around the other inappropriate structures, the work started within 24 hours, but it was a couple of days before we got through every school completely.

MRS JONES: Of course, physically.

Ms Burch: But it was started straight off.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, you have a supplementary?

MR DOSZPOT: A couple of supplementaries. The money that you are referring to, minister, is it new money?

Ms Burch: It is additional money.

Ms Brighton: The money is a refocusing of funding the government has appropriated to the directorate and it is focusing specifically on those recommendations highlighted by the expert panel.

MR DOSZPOT: Part of the other aspect of Professor Shaddock's review focused on the feedback from teachers in surveys that were taken. Sixty-nine per cent of teachers said they had not received support from the network student engagement teams, from NSET. Can you comment on that?

Ms Burch: Yes, I remember that you asked Professor Shaddock that question in the

briefing and his response was that they probably did not ask for support.

MR DOSZPOT: I am asking you, minister. I think you would know a bit more about how the directorate handled that. That is my question to you and the directorate.

Ms Burch: The question was: have you accessed the NSET team? Close on 70 per cent said no, they had not accessed the team—because they had not accessed the team. Of those who accessed the team, the majority found it useful. I think that is the important one. Not every teacher in every school would have needed to access the NSET team. That is the baseline of it.

MR DOSZPOT: I have not seen the questions, but the inference from that—

Ms Burch: You asked Professor Shaddock then, Mr Doszpot. He was very clear not to generalise that, and perhaps the answer was clear that they had not put the request in to the NSET team.

MR DOSZPOT: It was not that clear.

Ms Burch: It was very clear to those in the room, Mr Doszpot, even to Professor Shaddock.

MR DOSZPOT: Sixty-eight per cent said that they had not received support from the target support team.

Ms Burch: It is a generalisation to think that every teacher has to receive support. It is fair and reasonable that 70 per cent of our teachers have not sought that help—because they have not sought that help.

MR DOSZPOT: Are you comfortable with that?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: What steps can you take to make sure that they are aware of it and that they are asking questions if the support team is there? That is my question.

Ms Howson: Mr Doszpot, if I can respond on behalf of the directorate. I think overall 21 per cent of teachers across the three sectors responded to the survey. Professor Shaddock has indicated that he would have expected those teachers who had something to say about the issue would certainly have dominated those that responded. In terms of the survey itself, the directorate's reading of it is that there are clearly some challenges there for us and we need to be more effective at supporting teachers in classroom settings with the supports that are available now and the additional work that we will be doing in this area following Professor Shaddock's report. We are certainly taking the results very seriously in the context of ensuring that every teacher dealing with a child with complex needs or challenging behaviours feels confident that they can access the supports that they need. That is our focus.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I go to my substantive question, minister. I just wanted to clarify something. Was it 21 per cent of teachers that actually responded to the survey? There were various figures and one was 69 per cent. So is that 69 per cent of 21 per cent? Maths is not my strong suit so I am just clarifying it.

Ms Burch: I think there were 850 or thereabouts. Between 800 and 900 teachers responded to that.

THE CHAIR: How many teachers are in the system?

Ms Burch: I think Ms McAlister said there were 3½ thousand classroom teachers. That is just public education. You must remember that independent, Catholic and public education teachers responded to that.

THE CHAIR: Across the whole—

Ms Burch: There are probably close to 7,000 teachers and 800 of them responded. I am sorry; 5,000 teachers.

THE CHAIR: I was just trying to get the maths in my mind. So it is 69 per cent of all teachers; 69 per cent that actually responded?

Ms Howson: Of those that responded, yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. My substantive question—and you will not be surprised, minister, to know this—is about the artists in schools program. On page 35 it says that four primary schools were selected to participate in 2015. I know this is not a new program; it has been going on for some time. Which schools were they, and were the schools involved on an ongoing basis? Were they schools that were involved before and were continuing on, or were they brand new schools? What happened with the schools that were participating in the previous reporting period?

Ms Burch: Leanne Wright will provide you with some information. But certainly artists in schools has been going now for a number of years. It is my understanding that the schools do change so that more of our schools get an opportunity to have an artist in residence. It could be visual arts; it could be performing arts. We have had puppetry, we have had pottery; we have had a whole range of artists in residence come through our schools.

Ms Wright: I will have to take on notice the four schools. I am sure I will be able to get it before the end of the hearings. The minister is quite right that it is not the same schools accessing the program since its inception. This program is done in collaboration with artsACT. They run a process of selection and matching of artists to the schools. As the minister said, it is across a range of artistic endeavours. There have been graffiti artists, pottery, ceramics and glassware, and a number of experiences for children.

The program generally lasts for a school term. The artist goes in and works in collaboration with the classroom teachers and the students to really foster that engagement with the arts and a love of the creative arts. There are opportunities to

also work with professional artists which students would not otherwise be exposed to. It is a thread of part of what we have in our arts program.

As the minister said earlier, the Australian curriculum in the arts has been implemented in all of our ACT schools across all sectors from 2015. Within the arts there are the five strands: performing arts, visual arts, music, drama and dance. As well as the artists in residence around the creative arts, we have a number of programs that supplement arts education in the other strands of the arts, including a focus on dance with the introduction of the dance component of the Australian curriculum. We provide funding across three other arts organisations—Ausdance, Kulture Break and Musica Viva—to engage with teachers around professional learning and to get into schools and work directly with students as well.

Part of the work we are doing across the arts in education, particularly in the primary sectors, to increase expertise for teachers is to provide that broad range of opportunities to engage students in programs that allow them to interact with experts in those artistic endeavours who come into the school and work directly with students and foster that love of learning in the arts across the board.

THE CHAIR: Perhaps not in hours per week—it may not be as straightforward as that—but how much time would students have to explore the arts in a given week or month, or whatever the time period was in a school?

Ms Burch: Generally it is through the curriculum rather than the artists-in-residence program.

Ms Wright: There is an expectation that the Australian curriculum is delivered right through from kindergarten to year 10 in the arts. As we get into the senior years of high school, there are some opportunities for students to narrow their focus and go into elective streams; whereas in primary school we like to make sure that students get a broad base. What can happen with the arts is that the way the Australian curriculum is structured it means that there is an achievement standard or a band of learning rather than something for every year. In kindergarten, during that three-year period, students will study for semesters. In some instances the music program might run all the way through the year with regular lessons each week or each fortnight, but then there might be a focused dance program conducted for a term.

Schools work with the expertise of their teachers through engaging with a range of external providers to structure those learning activities in a way that makes sense within the whole curriculum delivery in that school and to ensure that students access all of the curriculum during that period of time. Schools spend a bit of time mapping and scoping out how that curriculum will be delivered across the band to ensure that students experience learning from each of those streams of the arts.

THE CHAIR: The ones that you mentioned, yes.

Ms Burch: Can I just add: other artists in residence were Sean Davey at the Charnwood-Dunlop primary school, Marianne Mettes at Duffy Primary School and Ruth Oliphant at Franklin early education school. They are in addition to Amelia Zeraftis, whom I met down at Charles Conder. I went down to Charles Conder school

to visit her. She was doing some great work with years 5 and 6 down there on the day I visited.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. It is a great program.

MR DOSZPOT: A supplementary on that: did you include Kulture Break and Musica Viva in your talk there?

Ms Wright: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: So that is who you were referring to?

Ms Wright: Yes.

Ms Burch: In addition to the artists in residence, we have provided some funding to Kulture Break, Ausdance and Musica Viva to come in and work with the teachers. It is as much about their professional development and capacity building as running some sessions with the students.

MR DOSZPOT: The amount given to Kulture Break—I have a figure here of \$15,000. Was that both for Kulture Break and Musica Viva?

Ms Wright: Each of the three organisations. There is a funding agreement for the next three years commencing this financial year, or last financial year it probably was, of \$15,000 per year.

Ms Burch: Each.

Ms Wright: Each.

MR DOSZPOT: Each, per year. Thank you.

Ms Burch: So \$45,000 across the three.

THE CHAIR: Your substantive question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Page 31 on staffing shows that the number of school leaders and teachers in public schools increased by 36. Last year it was 64, or 0.8 per cent. How are future staffing needs determined?

Ms Burch: It will be connected to our new schools. The new school at Coombs has a principal and a deputy, as I understand it. It is recruiting now. Ms McAlister can work through it. It is connected to schools and student numbers, in short, but I am sure there is a finer method in there.

Ms McAlister: In terms of projections for new schools, I might need my learned colleague. Mr Doszpot, can I just ask about the particular nature of your question. There is an element around succession planning, leadership development, understanding our workforce and so on, and the breakdown of where the school leader group is. Is that the nature of your question?

MR DOSZPOT: It takes all of those into account, plus, I guess, the thinking regarding class sizes. Does all this come into it? I would just like to know what the broad outlook is, how you make the decisions.

Ms Howson: Mr Doszpot, is your question one about our process, our methodology, for projections essentially?

MR DOSZPOT: Both methodology and also future directions, expectations.

Ms Howson: We might ask Mrs Stewart to come up and assist with that.

Mrs Stewart: There is a strong link across all the planning processes within the directorate and, therefore, a strong link between teacher planning and estimates of projections around student numbers and the types of students that we are getting into the system. I think I have spoken to you previously—in fact, in estimates earlier this year—about the process around student projections and the fact that we take into account things like birth rates, where our students are attending schools and a range of factors in terms of those projections.

We do a range of short-term projections, 12 months and five years forward, at quite a detailed level. Then we do further projections up to 30 years out, taking into account land release data and what is happening in terms of where new dwellings are being approved and where new dwellings are being planned for in terms of coming up with our student projections over that period. Those then feed into a range of planning processes across the directorate, including planning for new teachers.

MR DOSZPOT: How many of our schools now—we have spoken about this, and I guess it is an ongoing measurement of how schools are going—are close to capacity and have basically reached capacity? Can you expand on that a bit?

Mrs Stewart: We have no schools at the moment that have reached capacity where we are unable to take additional students. We do have a number of schools, though, that are focused on taking students from within their priority enrolment area and, therefore, directing to their local school students who are perhaps wanting to come from further afield in Canberra. At this stage, as I say, we have no schools that are at capacity, but we have some that are focusing on meeting the needs of students within their local area. In particular, in some of our growing areas, such as Gungahlin, we are finding there is quite strong demand for public schooling.

MR DOSZPOT: What about class numbers? Is there any discussion on that and does that come into your planning? Are you looking at reducing class sizes?

Mrs Stewart: Around our projections, class sizes do not play a role in terms of projections. As I said, we are looking at where land development is occurring, we are looking at birth rates, and we are looking at choice around public schooling versus non-government schooling. They are the elements that go into the calculation of our projections for public school students.

MR DOSZPOT: Thanks very much.

Ms Burch: If we may just go back, we have some information on LSAs.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

Ms Brighton: Ms Porter, as a matter of record for *Hansard*, a question was asked previously about how many LSAs are in the public education system. The answer is: 503 as at 17 June.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, Ms Brighton. Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I want to go back to the digital learning area. I know that earlier in the year, through the new School Education Advisory Committee, you established the digital citizenship group. They are, I think, due to report to you before the end of the year. Have you had any indication of how that work is going—in particular, issues around cyber safety, particularly online bullying?

Ms Burch: I will get Mr Huxley to talk on that. They are certainly on track to report to me by the end of the year, recognising that the end of the year is fast approaching. Certainly looking at being a responsible, digital citizen is about how you learn, how you get the best use out of it. Part of that, though, is how you manage unwarranted behaviour within that space.

Mr Huxley: One of the key reasons behind the group was about looking at the opportunity for digital citizenship in a broader sense—more than just cyber safety, while acknowledging its importance. It was really about how we make sure students are equipped to take advantage of the opportunities that technology presents to be good digital citizens, to be good citizens in the community engaging online appropriately, with communication collaboration and making sure they have those fit-for-purpose high-level skills to be effective in their employment for their prosperity. It was really looking at how we also acknowledge the gap between what is happening in schools and what is happening at home to make sure that we are working hand in hand with parents in the community and setting high expectations for the use of technology by students across every aspect of their life.

The advisory group is on schedule to report to the minister by the end of the year—acknowledging that it is close, minister. It has been a well-rounded group, with engagement through experts including the e-safety commissioner for the commonwealth; industry expertise from Google; and local peak bodies, parents, students, teachers and principals. It has met twice with reference group members, which are more broadly represented across the community, and we will be bringing all those findings back together in a report by the end of the year.

MS FITZHARRIS: How do you currently manage the overflow of evening activity, particularly on social media, with secondary students in particular, and that now manifesting itself in the school itself the following day? What sorts of challenges do the directorate and schools face?

Ms Burch: As in inappropriate behaviours and all of that?

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes.

Ms Burch: Social media has unfortunately dismissed the school gate completely for inappropriate behaviours. It is about, within school, giving students the tools to say, “Bad behaviour is bad behaviour regardless of when and where it happens,” ask how can they exit themselves from that, and ask how they can be responsible—help their mates and peers but also report as appropriate. Again, Mr Huxley can go to some of that.

Mr Huxley: It has been very much a focus of the group to look into that: the issues around social media and its use, and its impact coming into school. The input of the e-safety commissioner has been valuable in that process to inform the conversations. He is very much supportive of the view that we need to engage with parents, with students and with schools in a three-way conversation about appropriate use. It does not matter if it happens on school ICT or more broadly outside of that; it is really about understanding where it is being used, what the appropriate practice is and how we engage parents in that conversation to ensure that they have an understanding about where and how students are accessing social media.

We also have some best practice guidelines available on our website for parents in the learn anywhere area of the directorate’s website. It sets out some basic steps that parents can use in terms of a best practice approach to the use of technology at home, which is also consistent with what we expect in school.

Ms Burch: Underpinning all of this is the core of respectful relationships as well. I might ask Ms Evans to say how that overlays and is part of that social media behaviour discussion.

Ms Evans: We are taking an approach in all our schools around respectful relationships, and that has a very broad, universal base to it. Recently the government announced an injection into schools, around social and emotional learning particularly, for programs that are evidence based, to support students to be better at self-regulating, to be more aware of other people’s emotions and how their behaviours, their language and the way they interact might affect another student, or a teacher, for that matter.

So it is taking a very broad and universal approach. Rather than breaking it down and asking, “Is this cyber bullying or is this bullying in the playground?” it is about asking how we interact more generally in a really respectful way across all our schools. We have a range of different approaches to that. They include the mental health lens, with KidsMatter and MindMatters in the primary and high school setting. That is another way that students can be engaged in having a look by saying: “How do I feel? What is my emotional response to things? How can I deal with that? Who can I speak to if I feel concerned or upset?”

That very broad, universal approach has been the one that we are putting the greatest emphasis on, and that is appropriate across domestic violence issues and even in that broader area of countering violent extremism. It is the same approach: all students need to understand they belong, they are engaged in their schools. And it is about how they interact with other people in a positive way.

MS FITZHARRIS: On any given day, how will schools or teachers understand that maybe something is happening in particular groups in the school? Maybe it is something that was shared on Facebook last night or maybe it was literally some online bullying. What do teachers have on a day-to-day basis to help them with that, first of all, to try and understand what is actually happening?

Mr Gniel: Great relationships with students, other staff and parents are the best way. You will find that generally students will want to tell people about things that are happening, because they are looking for support. That goes from very young children right through to teenagers. It is about having those relationships and the opportunities for those students to call on that when they need it. That could be their pastoral care teacher or the person in a high school they go to the roll with if they have a relationship with that person and can just mention things that might be happening with Facebook and all of those sorts of things. That is often where that will come up. It also comes up through our student engagement teams that sit in schools. We have youth workers in every high school. We have pastoral care officers, as I have talked about, counsellors and those sorts of things.

More individual teachers having relationships with the students, particularly as they are getting older, and also the families, is the key. From my experience it has been that quick little email that has come through or the person that has caught you when you are walking in the school gate to say, “Look, I just need you to be aware there have been some issues overnight or over the weekend,” in particular, that schools need to be aware of.

There is no doubt that that is a challenge for schools, because they are often not there but they feel the brunt of it when it arrives. But they are well placed to respond. As well as those people in schools, we have got others they can call on to provide that level of support. And, as Mark said, it is just working with parents. Obviously parents did not usually grow up in a period of Twitter, Facebook and all these things. So it is about giving them some information about how to best stop some of that from happening; simple things like having their child, if they are doing their homework on a computer, in line of sight. It is just really simple stuff.

MS FITZHARRIS: Simple things, yes. Are there guidelines for teachers, for example, being friends with students on Facebook? Is there a rule there?

Mr Gniel: That is covered in the code of conduct, which Ms McAlister can talk more specifically to.

Ms McAlister: The short answer is yes, there are, and we are very clear about articulating those guidelines.

MS FITZHARRIS: So teachers should not be?

Ms McAlister: We talk about the correct use of IT and appropriate use of IT. We also are very explicit about correct engagement in end-of-year activities, for example.

MS FITZHARRIS: Right.

Ms McAlister: We are very clear about our expectation on teachers as professionals.

MS FITZHARRIS: Does that mean there is nothing specific about, for example, Facebook; about being friends with students online?

Ms McAlister: There is signing a contract around the appropriate use of IT. You would have heard from Mr Huxley earlier today, on the high degree of educational engagement.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes.

Ms McAlister: Using IT as a platform. Teachers are absolutely critical to that engagement. What is critical is that we are very clear about our expectations about how they should engage, and we are.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes. So there might be times where a student posts something at night and a teacher might be online so they may be able to see it and respond outside of school hours?

Ms Brighton: Ms Fitzharris, could I just jump in on that. Mr Huxley talked about the use of technology as part of learning. The code of conduct is all around the appropriateness of the relationship and the connection. Some schools are using closed Facebook groups for part of their learning outcomes. So it is not as express as “The teacher will not be connected to the student on Facebook”; it is all very much anchored into what is the form of that connection and that relationship. And our code of conduct is quite express about that.

Ms Burch: Going back to your earlier question about social media behaviour, I just checked with Meg Brighton, because I would hope that if we become aware of it and it may involve other schools, we would notify those other schools as well.

Mr Gniel: I can confirm, minister, that yes, that is the practice in our schools, too, and that is across sectors. I know that has been the case: if people are aware of that, their colleagues across the sector need to know.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Once that digital citizenship group reports to you, minister, do you have other specialist groups under the education advisory committee that you are looking to explore?

Ms Burch: We will come back in the new year. The report will come back, and then I will provide a response and share that with the Assembly. Then it is: what is the next step? The intention of this was always to look at important cross-sectoral themes. In the first quarter of next year, there will be another council established.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Before we go on, I just wanted to ask something. You may have mentioned this or your officers might have mentioned this earlier in this discussion, but I just wanted to clarify. Particularly when young people get to the high school stage, are they being given some assistance with how to manage their own behaviour

and their own responses to these things so that they can impart some self-discipline around the use of social media so that they do not choose to engage with something that is harmful in the first instance? Is there part of the school time that gives them the opportunity to explore these kinds of things in the classroom?

Ms Burch: Yes. As part of the social and emotional learning and other parts of our curriculum, yes, there are. But they are all champing at the bit to give you an answer, Ms Porter.

Ms McAlister: I think the answer is yes, obviously. But, once again, I think it is embedded in those universal programs that we talk about. And then what might come out of that is explicit talk about social media, and how you do this: Twitter or whatever. Students also have to sign an acceptable use of IT policy. That is an absolutely fabulous opportunity to have that discussion, both at home with families and at the school. You sign that because you are saying, “I’m going to be responsible.” But then we have a range of programs that help students understand what responsible behaviour is in a whole range of settings. That is my bit on it.

Ms Howson: Does that answer your question?

THE CHAIR: That was my question. Ms Wright?

Ms Wright: I might add a little bit in terms of curriculum. One of the general capabilities of the Australian curriculum is personal and social capability. That has two strands of learning right from kindergarten through to year 10. Within that it talks about self-awareness and self-management, and social awareness and social management. That general capability provides a really good framework. As articulated on the ACARA website, that general capability is the capacity to look, at different stages of development, at the sorts of ways that you can engage students effectively in building their own personal and social capability, around both self and social situations. It also crosses into the strand of health and physical education in terms of relationship management and, again, that self-awareness and developing skills to manage yourself in different situations for physical and mental health and wellbeing; that is covered in that part of the curriculum.

MS FITZHARRIS: Could I ask a quick follow-up? What role could you possibly have or do you have around parents engaging constructively in this space outside school hours about school issues? I have observed from my own experience some less than constructive conversations on social media and in our own school discussions about whether it was useful or not to have, for example, a Facebook group to discuss issues because of the way that that might need to be moderated.

Ms Burch: It is often less useful. Mr Huxley can talk about that.

Mr Huxley: In the advisory group the P&C and the peak parent groups are involved in that work. So we are involving them in terms of how we further enhance the conversations that parents are having with young people, especially in the home environment. Part of the framework we have adopted while we have been implementing a number of new technologies in the last 12 months is encouraging schools to have a very clear strategy in engaging parents around, “This is how we’re

expecting to use it at school; here are some tips and helpful hints about how you can have better conversations at home with young people around these issues.” We have found that that is not just one meeting; it is multiple forms of engagement. That is what best practice looks like for those schools. It has been very successful and it has resulted in minimal issues coming back with the implementation of those technologies. So that local school community engagement has been a really critical factor in that regard.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that discussion. It was really interesting. I have another question. On page 42, minister, on the left-hand side of the page, under the heading “Our plans for the next 12 months”, it talks about developing policies covering reduction of red tape, governance responsibilities within schools and school decision-making in a devolved environment. Minister, would you or your officials like to expand on that, please?

Ms Burch: Certainly, as part of our move towards the SRAs and school autonomy, providing that capacity and decision-making frameworks at our local school level are important. No-one knows a school better than the leadership of each and every school, and that is what we have to build on. Ms Brighton can talk more on this.

Ms Brighton: As the minister said, the directorate has done a lot of work in the policy frame this year, not only in terms of the student resource allocation and the better use of government funding invested in schools but also about what our overall policy framework is and, more specifically, what are our review and our accountability looking like for school leaders. Ms Garrisson has been leading a piece of work there that will further strengthen the accountability and the expectations on all school operations.

Ms Garrisson: It is twofold in many ways. Yes, we certainly want our schools in the school improvement space to be looking at their accountability. We are looking next year to have a new school framework around school improvement and accountability. However, we are trying to ensure that the policy platform by which schools are operating and the policies they are using are not over-complicated, that they are actually clear and give quick advice as to what you can and cannot do. That goes back to the advice we have received from the expert panel, that is, we really need to ensure that what we are providing to schools is accessible, is easy to access, is known and gives clear directions.

On top of that we also have to look at the legislative framework within which these policies exist. Trying to make a legislative framework clear and simple for somebody in a school at the front line is really the challenge. That is when we say we are trying to look at reducing the red tape within our policies. That is exactly what we are trying to do, so that the information is very clear for people in schools, for parents and the community. But we also need to be very accountable regarding what we are legislatively required to be doing. That is the work that we will be continuing to do in that space.

Ms Burch: Can I add to that, and then go to Ms Cuzner and Ms Brighton. In the most recent EBA there was significant effort around reducing red tape for teachers. All the non-class functions were being looked at. Also, early in my time as minister I noticed

the difference in accreditation and validation between the government and the non-government sector. Ms Cuzner has been doing some work on streamlining and having the same sort of process. There was an agreement just recently, between the independents and the Catholics about an annual statement of agreement. That again is about reducing their red tape around compliance for their re-registration process. I might ask Ms Cuzner to go to that and then come back to Ms Brighton about the EBA red tape.

Ms Cuzner: The work with the non-government sector was exactly as the minister said: to better align the processes that schools undertake around compliance with legislation. Each school principal is now required to make an annual statement of assurance that they are compliant with legislation that is relevant to schooling in the ACT. That can include ACT legislation as well as commonwealth legislation such as the Australian Education Act.

The assurance statement, to support schools in making that statement, lists a number of the acts that they need to be compliant with, including the BSSS act, the TQI act, the working with vulnerable people act and, of course, our own Education Act and the commonwealth act, the Privacy Act and the Discrimination Act. That part of it is one area of alignment. The other significant area of alignment is that all schools in the ACT now have an identical definition of a critical incident. All schools in the ACT are required to report their critical incidents biannually, each semester. That is another area where we are getting some compliance.

With regard to the question on the policy framework, generally the directorate is looking at making policies more accessible, as Ms Garrisson said, by writing them in a plain English framework, so that teachers and schools can readily identify what it is they are meant to be doing in order to comply with legislation, and also making them more accessible to both parents and schools.

We are going to have a policy portal on our web page. At the moment we do not have an intuitive one, so we will have to be much more intuitive in categorising, and hopefully making it user friendly, so that teachers in schools and parents can access the policy that they are looking for, without doing a massive search and maybe not coming up with anything.

Ms Burch: And on the EBA?

Ms Brighton: As the minister has outlined, administrative red tape was a key feature of our enterprise negotiations over the past 18 months with the Australian Education Union. Coming out of that, we have collectively taken a pretty supportive and problem-solving approach to this work. We want teachers in our schools to focus on their core work as teachers. With the AEU we have set about introducing some guidelines about absolutely what the core role of a teacher is and what tasks are expected of a teacher. What are the tasks requiring teacher involvement, but not necessarily for them to do the whole task, and what are the tasks where you absolutely do not need to be a teacher in order to undertake them?

We have done a piece of work with the union around that. We are implementing that at the moment. Each school has a workload committee. Each of those workload

committees will look at what specific circumstances and work tasks in their environment they need to change to free up teachers to focus on their core role. To complement that the government has invested additional funding into schools to assist with schools implementing those changes in the shape about how the work is done.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, you had a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: With the project agreement for empowering local decision-making, the minister mentioned that this is part of the same process. The agreement supports increased autonomy and enhanced leadership capability in all ACT schools. What obligations does the signing of this agreement have on the education directorate and on individual schools?

Ms Burch: This goes to the independent school funding—empowering local schools.

Ms Lucas: My area looks after the national partnership that you are referring to, Mr Doszpot. The minister signed that agreement on 27 June last year and that agreement goes until December 2017.

MR DOSZPOT: What changes as a result of that? Are there any changes that we have to undertake?

Ms Lucas: In signing up to the national partnership with the commonwealth we undertook to do a series of activities each year. The first of those activities was a workforce capability scan. We have talked with our principals, our school leaders, our board chairs and our business managers to better understand what skills they will need as we transition with a student resource allocation model. That report has now come back and we now have a plan for it around what sort of professional learning we will be doing with our schools to help them become more autonomous within an authorised environment.

MR DOSZPOT: Does that training include training for principals in looking at workforce profiling or planning?

Ms Lucas: That is one of the areas that principals told us they would like further professional learning and training in, yes.

Ms Burch: When this project originally came out the commonwealth was seeking to have a percentage of schools in each state to be determined as independent schools. But given that ACT Education had been on this journey of school empowerment for some time, this was what we negotiated, because it built on what we were already doing. We went out to the schools and said, “What are the additional skills that you need?” In some conversations I have had, the business managers have great skills but they needed to be supported by real-time data on their budgets. This was really getting to the granular level about what the next steps on that journey of school autonomy were.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

Ms Burch: You made me notice something, Ms Porter, regarding the question about

page 42, the ever-changing career paths and how we make sure that students are skilled up. The BSSS representative is here. We made a decision—a policy shift—12 months ago around English being mandatory for year 12. That was to make sure that all of our students have the skills and prerequisites for the ever-changing career paths. Perhaps Mr Stenhouse can talk about how BSSS accredits different courses to make sure students are ready for career changes and how the mandatory English is going.

Mr Stenhouse: The BSSS has a comprehensive curriculum designed to suit the needs of all students. It is designed to suit student interests, abilities and career aspirations. All the courses that we deliver in our curriculum are accredited. There are different types of courses that we offer. We offer what we call tertiary accredited courses. They are accredited by panels that involve teachers, principals and representatives of tertiary institutions. We have accredited courses, which are designed for more of a general education and are not as high level as the tertiary courses. We have vocational courses. They are accredited by panels. On those panels we have representatives of teachers and principals, as well as CIT and industry.

We have H courses. Those are courses that are delivered by tertiary institutions. At the moment the ANU is the only tertiary institution in the ACT that is delivering H courses through the ANU extension program. They have a number of different offerings for gifted and talented students in certain areas. In particular there is a heavy emphasis, in the ANU H courses, on STEM, and on enabling those students to have extension work in those areas.

There is a very wide range of courses. We have M courses, which are modified courses. They are courses which have been modified in terms of content and assessment for students with special needs. We have certainly talked a lot this morning about students with special needs, so they are catered for as well. In fact two of the special schools that have year 11 and 12 students, the Woden School and Black Mountain School, are part of the BSSS system. There is a very wide range of courses and a wide range of curriculum. They are all accredited through panels, written by practising teachers. The office of the board facilitates the writing of all those courses.

By offering these, the intention is that students will be well prepared for whatever pathways they choose to follow when they leave school. The BSSS is not really in charge of looking at the pathways at the individual student level. That lies within the schools.

Ms Burch: BSSS has recently signed an agreement with China, with Shandong—

Mr Stenhouse: We have signed an agreement with a school in China. I am not sure if that is relevant to the question, but we certainly have signed an agreement with a school in China whereby they will deliver our curriculum to a small number of students who have aspirations to come and study in Australia, hopefully in the ACT, in some of our tertiary institutions.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you expect to sign more of those sorts of agreements with

high schools or schools in other countries?

Mr Stenhouse: We currently have, including the school in China, eight schools in other countries. We have four in Papua New Guinea, one in Fiji, two in Indonesia and, as we have just said, one in China. The board has been involved in the delivery of its curriculum overseas since the late 80s, early 90s. Some of those programs are longstanding. Two of the schools in Papua New Guinea are actually new to our system. Kimbe in West New Britain and Our Lady of the Sacred Heart in Kavieng in New Ireland have just recently joined the system. In fact, for the students at Kimbe in West New Britain, this will be the first year with year 12. They will be receiving ACT senior secondary certificates at the end of this year. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart just finished year 11; next year, it is year 12 for them. The year after that, all being well, at the Weifang Hanting No 1 High School in China, those students will be receiving ACT senior secondary certificates.

Ms Burch: It is certainly an interesting element to explore, taking our curriculum there to better prepare them for their tertiary entrance here.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, a substantive question.

MR DOSZPOT: I return to the network student engagement teams. I have a few questions on that. How many network student engagement teams are currently deployed in ETD?

Ms Burch: There is a team in each network, as I understand it.

Ms Garrisson: There are four. They are aligned to our four school networks in our regions.

MR DOSZPOT: How many vacancies are there currently in these NSETs?

Ms Garrisson: I defer that to Ms Evans. Under vacancies, I am sorry, I have not got that answer.

Ms Evans: I think at this stage we have a number of NSET B leaders, which are the deputy-level leaders who are on contract that is coming to an end. There are a number of positions that will be advertised that are currently filled. Towards the end of this school year we will potentially see some turnover.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there any need for continuity in those areas?

Ms Evans: Absolutely, and we are hoping that the current people who are in those positions would like to fill those positions. But of course, like all senior positions, people might be seeking other opportunities.

MR DOSZPOT: Are there currently any vacancies or these are just subject to contract negotiations?

Ms Evans: No, just subject to normal recruitment.

MR DOSZPOT: What selection criteria are used to select NSET members?

Ms Burch: They are multi-disciplinary, so it would depend on the function and the role there. Ms Evans can talk about that. There are school leaders, there are psychologists and there are allied health workers, as I understand it.

Ms Evans: That is right. There is a range. Some of the criteria related to the school leader positions, that is, the usual selection criteria for school leaders, but with a level of specialty. For instance, in our disability education specialty, senior teachers are electing to take these positions. Others are, as the minister said, in allied health such as social work or psychology.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there any additional training provided to them when they take these roles on?

Ms Evans: Yes. There is an ongoing range of training. It is the same training in some cases as is available to all of our teaching staff but then they would be electing other specialty opportunities. Just last week we had a full forum that our NSET members and a range of our other specialty staff attended, which was around the neuropsychology approach to managing children with difficult behaviours. They would be prioritised for that kind of learning so that they can pass that on to other school staff.

MR DOSZPOT: You mentioned a number of areas that you normally recruit from. Are there any specific areas that you have not recruited from that you would like to recruit from?

Ms Evans: Yes. We would like to look at a broader allied health approach into our NSETs. The minister is comfortable with us considering that.

MR DOSZPOT: What interaction do these teams have with other school counsellors or psychologists within the school network?

Ms Evans: Very extensive, actually. The leadership teams that manage both the NSETs and the student wellbeing area, which is the school psychologists and school counsellor area, work very closely together. The two overlap in many ways. I guess the other area of overlap is the school network leaders who manage each of the school networks and who can oversee and interact with both the NSET members and their school counsellor or school psychologist teams.

MR DOSZPOT: Was an NSET or a team member consulted prior to the erection of a withdrawal space in a southern primary school?

Ms Evans: I cannot answer that question. I am sorry, I was not actually employed by the directorate at that time.

MR DOSZPOT: Can anybody else in the directorate answer that?

Ms Brighton: I can attend to that. I take you back. What the investigation found was that the decision about that construction was solely with the principal and there were

no other parties consulted on the construction of it.

MR DOSZPOT: My question was: was an NSET team member asked for any assistance, and you are saying no?

Ms Brighton: Sorry, I heard your question was around the construction of the withdrawal space.

MR DOSZPOT: Was an NSET team or a team member consulted prior to the erection of a withdrawal space in a south side primary school?

Ms Brighton: What the investigation highlighted was that our NSETs work across our system with a variety of children and that in that site—as I am sure you will appreciate, I am trying to be a little cautious to protect the identity of that child—the NSET had previously been providing support to the school.

Ms McAlister: In responding to any workplace matter, it is critically important that the collection of the appropriate information occurs prior to an outcome being determined. I can assure you that in any workplace matter that we respond to, we make sure that that occurs.

Ms Burch: If I can go back too, I think what you are trying to ask is: was the NSET involved in this particular school? Yes it was. But the decision around that structure was done outside any of that discussion. Therein lies the problem.

MR DOSZPOT: That is the question I am asking.

Ms Burch: Therein lies the problem. That is why the findings are very clear and have been accepted by everyone involved, about the appropriate connect into NSET. The other advice that should have been sought was simply not sought. I do not understand why it was not, but it was not. Hence we had what we had.

MR DOSZPOT: Given that there has been some contact with the school by the team, were there no alarm bells or any recommendations made by the NSET as to what was happening at the school?

Ms Burch: The NSET—again, without going into it—with this school and other schools would provide advice, would respond to requests for additional support and information. It is my understanding that various offers were made and were not taken up. I cannot explain why they were not taken up. If they were, I am sure we would not have been where we were in April.

THE CHAIR: One more question, then we must allow Ms Fitzharris to get a question in before close.

MR DOSZPOT: How many risk assessments has the NSET undertaken in the past year?

Ms Burch: Risk assessments?

MR DOSZPOT: About various schools. How many risk assessments have been undertaken?

Ms Burch: I am not quite sure if “risk assessment” is the language or whether it is just how often have the NSET been deployed and provided advice into schools. Is that the question?

MR DOSZPOT: That is roughly the question, yes.

Ms Evans: If that is the question, I probably do have that detail if I go through the—

MR DOSZPOT: You can take it on notice.

Ms Evans: I will take it on notice and have a look. If you want to go to the next question, in the interests of time—

MR DOSZPOT: I have a number of other questions, which I will put on notice. I will make them available to you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask about the status of funding nationally and whether you have been able to get any further advice from the commonwealth on what their plans are for future funding, particularly needs-based funding in schools?

Ms Burch: Unfortunately not. The status is that funding for our schools and, indeed, the Catholics and independents, runs only until 2017 and there is no advice or no new formula about what happens beyond that. That is, of course, a frustration for me, and rightly a frustration for the non-government schools alike.

The education ministers are meeting in the coming weeks. This will be front and centre, as it was in the previous meetings where it was guaranteed that work would be underway by now looking to a new model. It is my understanding that that has not happened. When I met with the independent network and the Catholic schools, they remain frustrated and anxious because they need longer than 18 months to plan for their school year. We as a system can accommodate it probably more readily than any of the independent schools, so it is problematic.

We have had much discussion today around the expert panel. In their report they recognise that without that needs-based funding approach long term, full continuity, full forecasting, schools will struggle. It is a problem. Mr Whybrow may be able to give further advice on that.

Mr Whybrow: Minister, you have done an admirable job. The most recent announcement was the 2015-16 budget paper. It made a commitment about CPI from the end of 2017 onwards—nothing more than that—and saying it was a proposal that would be discussed with jurisdictions.

Ms Burch: On the CPI, depending on how that is calculated, that could be under the three per cent that all schools were expecting. That is quite separate from the

independents and Catholics saying they need more than that to maintain the status quo. It is seriously problematic that 18 months out any school across this country does not have clarity or assurance on their funding.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is the education ministers meeting before COAG? I believe COAG is mid-December.

Ms Burch: I think I am in Brisbane Friday next? Is it before? Someone will tell me. It is just after.

MS FITZHARRIS: Education is just after COAG or COAG is just after education?

Ms Howson: We will take that on notice.

Ms Burch: I know you are asking with interest. I think COAG is around 11 December and I think education is just after that.

MS FITZHARRIS: The national curriculum, is that on the agenda for your meeting? Where is that up to?

Ms Burch: National curriculum, usually ACARA brings an update about completed curricula units. There was a level of frustration from ministers that the commonwealth have not authorised a number of curricula, but that was resolved at the last meeting.

MS FITZHARRIS: You mentioned technology earlier.

Ms Burch: Technology, yes. That had been ready for ACARA close on 12 months or thereabouts, but the federal minister did not endorse it. I think the process around TMAG or other matters and the review of ACARA was used as the stalling point. That was unfortunate, but now we are through that.

The other matter I would imagine would be in ministers' minds is the universal access national partnership. We were assured that there was a rollover and that we would have had a new NP way before now. On 8 December last year we signed the NP to have effect for this year. I made the call that I was not going to let Canberra families have that level of uncertainty so as a cabinet, as a government, we made the decision announced in September, I think it was, that we would guarantee 15 hours within the public preschools for universal access. It is my understanding that on 20 or 21 November a draft NP on the universal access came through. Is that right?

Ms Wright: A final of that has been forwarded to the Chief Minister for consideration, for that national partnership. If the Chief Minister elects to sign that, the ACT will move forward with an implementation plan. That will need to be resolved prior to 31 January next year.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is that for one more year's funding?

Ms Wright: It is for two years' funding.

Ms Burch: But it is still very late in the day for Canberra families.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. I remind members that we resolved that all questions on notice from members will be lodged within four business days. Answers to questions on notice are to be lodged with the committee within 10 business days and answers to questions taken on notice at today's hearing—there were a number, I believe—are to be provided within five business days after the hearing. Thank you, we will adjourn now.

Sitting suspended from 1.02 to 2.04 pm.

THE CHAIR: Welcome back, minister. This afternoon we are going to be hearing about arts engagement and also the Cultural Facilities Corporation. I remind members not to talk over one another; we had a bit of an issue this morning with it. We are just letting everybody know because of Hansard, to make sure that what we are saying is clear.

I presume everybody at this table is familiar with the privileges statement and the implications of that. Would you just indicate that you are comfortable with that? Thank you.

I went through the agreement about questions on notice et cetera earlier, and I would just say that any answers to questions taken on notice at today's hearing should be provided five business days after the hearing, day 1 being the first business day the question was taken. Some of you may be moving around and leaving, so I will just say that now before you go. Do you want to make an opening statement, minister?

Ms Burch: Just a very brief one, thank you, in regard to artsACT and the Cultural Facilities Corporation, just to recognise the activity over this reporting period, which continues to see Canberrans participate in the arts at record levels. We have a strong, active arts community here in the ACT across all disciplines, and participation from beginner level—the weekend warriors, so to speak—up to those recognised nationally and internationally. It continues to do our city proud. We have completed a new arts policy, renewed the arts policy, and also completed an economic study which shows very clearly the contribution of the arts to our community.

Before we go to questions, I want to take an opportunity to thank the executive across EDD and artsACT for the work that they do in supporting arts participation and arts practice here in Canberra. I also thank the Cultural Facilities Corporation, whose CEO is here, for the work they do. Many a fine night has been held at the Canberra theatre. Thank you to all.

THE CHAIR: Indeed; that is perfectly true, minister. Just before I go to my first question and open the hearing up for other members to ask questions, I want to say that we had a discussion at the break about whether members had enough questions for this area for a full hour. I am not restricting members from asking questions, but we did talk to the witnesses who will be coming on afterwards at 3 o'clock and asked them if they would like to come a bit earlier in case we get through questions so that we can move through the program, because there is a very full program. Having said that, we just have that flexibility around the time, minister, if that is all right with you.

Ms Burch: I was just wondering, to allow some sort of seamless connect, whether Harriet could start from the get-go, being up to it. There is usually an artificial divide between artsACT and CFC.

THE CHAIR: Are you asking if we could ask the questions across the whole area?

Ms Burch: I believe so, yes.

THE CHAIR: To be helpful, seamlessly. Are members happy with that? Right; we will proceed that way.

Minister, before I ask you the first question I have here, I want to say that I was interested in what you just said about the study that was done on the value of the contribution of arts to the Canberra community. Could you elaborate on that, please?

Ms Burch: I look at many in the arts community in particular, and I know that the chair of CFC had a strong interest in understanding the economic value that the arts brings and how, rather than seeing it as expenditure or budget, we explore seeing it as an investment. We looked to some work that was done in Victoria and used, I think, KPMG. They applied the same methodology, economic development. Ms Gilding led the charge of applying that same methodology and did that work internally. That was released earlier this year, in July—the economic study. It shows the significant contribution that the arts bring. It is an investment in the arts: it is not expenditure in the arts; it is an investment in the arts. Ms Gilding may be able to talk to that.

Ms Gilding: We based the report on the KPMG methodology that they used for the Victorian report, but we did it in house and then had it quality assured by KPMG. One of the key questions is what is included and what is not. At the back of that report, there is quite an extensive list of the various activities by the ANZSIC code classification as to what is in and what is out.

Generally, when we look at it, there is a hierarchy of creative industries. Right at the centre of that, we have music, literature, performing arts and visual arts, going out to film, photography, museums, galleries and libraries and then right out, in concentric circles, through to architecture, design, advertising, jewellery and crafts, computer systems and what have you.

When we had a look at that, we looked at the output and we looked at the value add. It was a sector-level study in the ACT. We found that Canberrans have the highest per capita level spend on cultural activities—the spend is approximately \$211 million per year—and Canberrans recorded the highest overall national attendance rate at cultural venues and events, at 94 per cent. They had the highest attendance rates at cinemas, at 80 per cent; art galleries, at 53 per cent; and archives; at 8.3. What is really interesting is when we compare this on a national scale. Yes, we have high average incomes, but our spending as a proportion is even higher than the national average, which fundamentally shows that the arts and cultural sectors in the ACT are an important and growing industry.

Beyond their direct input and value add, we also find that there is that indirect value-add. We have quite a significant number of students who are studying arts and

culture here within our sector; who will be coming under our education productivity and driver, and we know that that is a significant sector for the ACT.

Beyond that, it is about the livability of our city. It is very difficult to quantify that contribution that the arts and cultural activities make, but they are big drivers of tourism; they are big attractors of the deep, rich talent pools that we need here in the ACT as a knowledge economy; and they make our city a great place to live, to work, to study and to invest. Overall the study conclusively showed the importance of the arts and cultural sector within the ACT.

THE CHAIR: It will be interesting to see to see what the contribution is on a wellbeing scale—apart from the economic benefit, the wellbeing that it brings to the city that you just alluded to. Thank you very much for that.

My first question is in relation to the Kingston arts precinct. On page 65, minister, it refers to the release of the Kingston arts precinct feasibility study. I was wondering if you could talk about that study and the benefits for anything that has resulted.

Ms Burch: The feasibility study builds on the master plan that has been under development for some time. Kingston has long been identified as an arts precinct, a place of destination for cultural activity. What this feasibility study and the most recent work do is show how we build up the built form on Kingston, because it is an area under development, but bring in a level of art and cultural space. It identified 7,000 square metres, or thereabouts, of area that will be dedicated to arts and culture. The next phase will come in the new year. David Dawes can go to that.

Mr Dawes: In relation to that, building on what the minister has already mentioned about the release of the master plan, the LDA is conducting a two-stage process for the arts precinct. On 2 October we launched the first phase of that process, which was a request for proposal, an RFP. That is open until 10 December, and we will deliberate and look at those submissions. As well, we had an industry briefing on 28 October which was very well attended by people looking for information. In December-January we will start doing the assessment of those expressions of interest. In February we should be able to go back out and notify the successful participants in that short listing and go to the next phase. In that phase, again we give the short-listed candidates the opportunity to define their proposals and come back to us in April 2016. Then the committee will reconvene, assess those proposals and make some recommendations to government to award that particular tender.

One of the things we have tried to do there as well—there are a number of interests there, with the car park in behind the Glassworks and where Megalo now preside—is recognise that it is very important to have an integrated development and make sure that we do not disrupt the activities of the Kingston bus depot markets and other activities that are occurring there. We have asked for those sorts of things to be put into the expressions of interest so that we can assess those.

It will be a mixed-use development. We will have areas for people to live in their units. There will be residential, commercial and retail. And again public car parking will be made available as part of that particular precinct. It is a very exciting phase for the Kingston Foreshore development to have this particular RFP out.

Ms Burch: I might just ask artsACT to share with you some of the conversations from our artistic community.

Mr Stankevicius: The precinct is envisaged as the centre of our Kingston arts hub and a place that builds on the cultural facilities already available in the area—the Fitters Workshop, the Canberra Glassworks and the former transport depot. It will be a place that will almost be our biggest hub and also our most lively and engaging hub. It is something that the residents of the area are quite keen on. The particular kind of market that is along there in Kingston is one that we think will engage very strongly with the arts community.

We have talked to a range of organisations about who might actually move into and use the space. Obviously their requirements are the ones that are built into the request for proposal process that Mr Dawes talked about in terms of the space and the type of space that we are looking at. That includes organisations like the Canberra Contemporary Art Space, PhotoAccess, ArtSound, the Canberra Potters Society and Craft ACT. What we will really provide, I think, is an opportunity for expanding gallery space and exhibition space for these organisations, which are, at the moment, scattered in various facilities around particularly the inner south and the inner north, and give them the opportunity, on a whole of sector basis, to show their wares and demonstrate their talents.

We have all seen that some of the gallery and retail spaces, particularly, are a bit cramped in some of our facilities at the moment. This will really open that up, and it will be located in an area where we know people are going to buy those kinds of things: they are going there because they want amazing pottery, amazing textiles, photographs and whole range of other arts products that are essential to both keeping artists here in Canberra and also keeping those organisations alive. So we are really excited.

MRS JONES: When you have finished, if I might have a supplementary.

THE CHAIR: You have a supplementary? Go ahead.

MRS JONES: With regard to that new area and the development there, do I understand correctly that there is some accommodation there as well? Is that part of the development?

Mr Stankevicius: It is anticipated that there will be artist residences available.

MRS JONES: Is that government-funded housing for artists and how much will they pay? How is the decision made about how much will be spent on that sort of thing?

Mr Stankevicius: We have not actually worked out the precinct management model at this stage, but the organisation that does precinct management for us, both in the open urban space and in the accommodation as well as in the office and gallery spaces, would be the ones who would administer that. We already have residences available for artists on the site which are administered by the arts organisations in the precinct.

MRS JONES: Now?

Mr Stankevicius: Yes, we do.

MRS JONES: How many artists are there now, and how many would you hope to have by the end?

Mr Stankevicius: We do not have a target, and it is not Canberra artists located on the site. It is interstate and international artists who are coming in to do a residency at the Glassworks, for example, and are accommodated for two or three months in the facility on the site there.

MRS JONES: Do they pay a fee for being there or is it free?

Mr Stankevicius: I think they pay a small fee; it would only be a token fee. It is to the organisation that is actually administering the building, so it is part of a licence arrangement. The organisation administers the building and they basically decide who goes in to use that accommodation.

Ms Burch: A number of arts organisations have accommodation to facilitate artists in residence because—

MRS JONES: I am learning every day.

Ms Burch: of the benefit it brings into their stream of practice.

Mr Stankevicius: Exactly.

MRS JONES: Could you take on notice to let us know how many slots there are there and what the token fee is, just to understand it.

Mr Stankevicius: Yes, absolutely. Are you talking about current or future?

MRS JONES: Current, because you do not have a target, apparently. Is that right?

Ms Burch: That is right.

Mr Stankevicius: Yes.

MRS JONES: Is there a plan for how many additional spots will be built there?

Ms Burch: Through this expression of interest process, we have identified a footprint, so to speak; how that is realised is up to the design experts.

MRS JONES: If you put a container village in or something, there might be more places, but if you build units or something like that it might be less.

Mr Stankevicius: Basically in the RFP process it is up to the designers to come back in that RFP process and propose to us how they might be accommodated within the precinct.

Ms Burch: At the minute it is just the residences at the chapel, which is that little building next to the sub-station. I think there are three; at a maximum, it would accommodate three at the moment.

MRS JONES: Are you hoping to get up to a larger number than that?

Mr Stankevicius: Yes, absolutely. Because the Glassworks is internationally renowned as a facility, you have people who are expressing a great deal of interest. Gorman house also has artist residences. When I was there doing a visit in the second week I was in the job, there was a Finnish artist who was doing a three-month placement at Gorman House.

MRS JONES: A very interesting area.

Ms Burch: Megalo's artist's residence is out at East Lake. No?

Mr Stankevicius: Yes, East Lake, in a heritage building.

Ms Burch: In a heritage cottage there.

MRS JONES: You learn something new every day.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpót, do you have a substantive question?

MR DOSZPÓT: Yes, I do. On page 67 you are looking at 2015-16 priorities. Can you just provide some further details on the following areas: firstly, the strategic improvement as identified in the strategic asset management plan? Can you tell us a little bit about when that is going to be undertaken?

Mr Stankevicius: The strategic improvements are on the basis of the SAMP that was done right across the arts portfolio. We receive funding from ACT Treasury to undertake those strategic asset management plans, and we have done them for all but two of the facilities that we have. We just received those facilities in the past three or four months so we have not actually had the opportunity to do those yet, but we are in the process of doing the next two.

That identified a series of works in a range of categories. We received budget funding to start the more urgent of those works and we are ploughing through that now. We are basically plotting out how it is we are going to implement that first year of funding and deliver on those more urgent areas. The critical stuff has already been done: things like better signage in terms of exit accesses and a whole range of other things that are not quite critical but they could become critical if we did not address them. That is what we are doing there.

MR DOSZPÓT: What about the development of a cultural infrastructure plan?

Mr Stankevicius: I was talking about the Kingston hub. The Kingston hub is one of a range of arts hubs. The arts facility strategy developed in 2003 is the framework in which we are delivering the arts hubs. We are having a seminar on 10 December with

the arts sector called “creative places, creative spaces” to basically start the development, or rule a line under the 2003 cultural facility strategy and say, “Where did we get to and how did we get here?” and then start the development of that cultural infrastructure plan.

We are really excited to start the development of this because it is a great time to be doing this kind of work, particularly in this directorate. If you look at where our arts facilities are across the ACT, you will see that we are bordering on a whole range of urban renewal projects right across the territory. So to be located in EDD is a fantastic strategic relationship where we are going to be able to influence, we hope, the way in which those services are provided to those new communities and, hopefully, get a benefit both ways.

MR DOSZPOT: Any comments regarding your support and encouragement of private sector development of artwork for public spaces by others through the implementation of the ACT government public arts guidelines?

Mr Stankevicius: The arts guidelines are, again, ones that were released earlier this year. We are obviously distributing or disseminating those across the ACT government. We will be holding a series of strategic discussions with our development peak bodies and the bigger development agencies in relation to how we can use the private sector, basically, to deliver on some of the public art objectives that we have across the territory.

Interestingly, I am already having a whole series of people and organisations come and talk to me about it at events that I go to. People always want to come and talk to me, particularly developers and property consultants, about how they can integrate public art and a stronger cultural element into their developments.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there a broad framework for what is going to happen, or is this what you are getting information for at the moment?

Mr Stankevicius: No, the public art guidelines are guidelines that we have issued. They basically guide you in how it is that you might integrate public art elements into development work that you are doing.

Ms Burch: It also provides guidance to agencies or embassies that may want to gift a piece of art. At different times of the year embassies and festivals will prompt a desire to donate a piece of art. Up until these guidelines were in place it was not very clear whether it was a TAMS matter or an artsACT matter. This provides guidance about that.

MR DOSZPOT: One final question: the implementation of the 2015 arts policy: what initiatives will you be including in this?

Mr Stankevicius: You will see from the arts policy and on our website that we have a strategic plan which breaks the arts policy down into those principles, the projects that we will deliver under those principles and then the measures by which we will judge whether the implementation has been successful. That A3 document, which is available on our website, goes into that in extensive detail.

MR DOSZPOT: And the time lines you have?

Mr Stankevicius: In terms of some of them, obviously things like the cultural infrastructure plan, we are kicking off straightaway. We have already started a communications network amongst the arts organisations as one of those projects. Our next step will be the funding plan. There are obviously things that are going to take us a much longer period of time because of the sensitivities involved. This policy is the first time that we have had a dedicated principle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art and culture, and we need to do that very sensitively. It is not work that has been done in any great depth yet in the ACT. We cannot just plunge in and assume that we know who all the artists are or that our view about art in the ACT and region is the only view about Indigenous art in the ACT and region. That will require us to do more in-depth consultation or sensitive discussions before we can say what the projects and that principle might be.

MR DOSZPOT: I would presume that local artists, in whichever category, would get preferential treatment, or is it a broad regional plan as well where we will be giving opportunities for external people to get involved in that?

Mr Stankevicius: I think that is something that we would look at on a case-by-case basis. Obviously things like our key arts organisations are locally preferred. There is a strong emphasis, obviously, that you could not be an ACT key arts organisation if you were not in the ACT.

MR DOSZPOT: Sure.

Mr Stankevicius: Whereas in some of the other funding categories there might be some flexibility. If it is going to engage ACT artists, if it is going to develop a strong relationship amongst ACT arts organisations and if it is going to develop the practice here then there might be some consideration there. But, yes, ACT local artists would always be our first preference.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have a couple of follow-up questions. As a relative newcomer, could you explain for me what a key arts organisation is—for those outside?

Mr Stankevicius: The key arts organisations are arts organisations funded for a longer period of time, usually up to five years, and considered critical to the arts and cultural infrastructure of the ACT. The majority of them are also in the facilities that artsACT manages, or has the lease; or we manage the lease and then license out to those organisations in the majority of cases. They are what we would consider to be key pieces of infrastructure in the cultural landscape.

MS FITZHARRIS: And they generally cover off all the various parts of the arts community? So you would find them represented across the arts organisations in each art form and art practice?

Ms Burch: Pretty much. Have we got a list?

Mr Stankevicius: There is a list on our website. I do not have a list with me at the moment. We can provide that to you.

MS FITZHARRIS: I can look it up. Thank you.

Ms Burch: Megalo would be a key arts organisation.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes.

Mr Stankevicius: Megalo, the Glassworks, Ainslie and Gorman House, Belconnen Arts Centre and Tuggeranong Arts Centre.

MS FITZHARRIS: So it could be a collective rather than one particular art form like print?

Mr Stankevicius: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: It could be location-based arts?

Ms Burch: Yes.

Mr Stankevicius: Absolutely. It could be a multi-use or multi-tenanted facility as well as those that are distinct—

Ms Burch: Like Gorman House and Ainslie.

Mr Stankevicius: Exactly.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Just another follow-up question before my substantive: you mentioned earlier that it was a good strategic move for arts to be in economic development because of the connection with urban renewal. With your new role with arts and events, do you see also a real opportunity in having those two combined as well?

Mr Stankevicius: Yes.

Ms Burch: I think so. Oftentimes when events come here or when we support the national institutions with various events we have discussions about how do ACT arts get a ripple-on benefit from that. Sitting within EDD, having that dual hat on, is strong.

MS FITZHARRIS: Terrific; thank you.

Mr Stankevicius: Further, across both sport and VisitCanberra, in terms of the opportunities for us to much better integrate our effort, I think that consequently we get a much higher level of exposure for arts organisations that might have been hiding in their shell a little bit and not wanting to expose themselves on the regional or national stage. This will give us a much stronger opportunity to do that.

MS FITZHARRIS: That is great; thank you. My substantive question was to CFC and I refer to page 12 of the annual report. It is a question about the 706 education and community programs that were provided over the reporting period, which was 26 per cent above target, which sounds great. Are you able to give us a flavour of what those programs are about, particularly the ones through CMAG?

Ms Elvin: I will not list all 706.

MS FITZHARRIS: No.

Ms Elvin: They are provided across the Canberra Museum and Gallery and our three historic sites. I think you said you would like me to focus on the CMAG provided ones?

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes, because it specifically says that the increase was particularly related to the provision of additional programming.

Ms Elvin: You are correct. At CMAG, typical programs would include CMAG on Sunday, which is a wonderful family program that is held on the first Sunday of every month. That has been so popular that we have now introduced a version for very young children called “T is for toddler”. It is really the pre-schoolers who come to that, and we get them familiar with the museum environment. I think CMAG is of a scale that is very comfortable for younger children. They can feel a bit overwhelmed perhaps by the national institutions, but we are of a scale that they feel quite comfortable in.

Other programs include things like floor talks, guided tours, arts activities in our studio at CMAG—school holiday workshops are very popular—even film screenings, performances occasionally, dance performances, poetry readings in the gallery space, writing workshops and so forth. Often we try to link them to the exhibitions on display at that particular time, so there is a thematic link between the exhibition and the program. On occasion we will link them to special festivals and events. That might include things like Canberra Day or the You Are Here Festival. There are further details at pages 101 to 103.

Ms Burch: Can I just say that I was over there with the pre-schoolers. There was a group of pre-schoolers in and there was an exhibition in the gallery. The children were taken in and they were shown the film and then the art. Sitting on various mats on the floor they were constructing what they thought it represented. It was around housing and the look of Canberra over a 50-year period. It was hands-on with children exploring. It was great.

MS FITZHARRIS: I just wanted to shout out to the barista over there in the cafe, which I think does draw significant traffic across the—

Ms Burch: The cafe is well regarded by the parents of all visiting toddlers.

MS FITZHARRIS: Indeed, and a lot of staff from the Assembly. There is always an interesting conversation with the friendly barista.

Ms Elvin: I always feel that you get a dose of philosophy with your coffee.

MS FITZHARRIS: You never know what you are going to get. It is tremendous. We often see toddlers and people engaging over there. It is a great space; so thank you.

MRS JONES: I want to turn to the theatre facilities and what the hopes and plans are for the future. Obviously there is some initial planning as part of city to the lake and the larger theatre that is able to accommodate additional shows. First of all, can you explain to us what the next steps are? What is required? Is it a bucket of money or what is the exact next thing that needs to happen?

Secondly, what are the shows that we are missing out on? Are we looking at a profit margin? I understand that it would be better if we could get some bigger shows and you could actually have such a new facility paying more for itself. Also, are we studying this situation? Is there an economic plan, I guess, for a new facility?

Ms Burch: Ms Elvin can talk to it, but certainly it is a commitment of ours to progress. We have certainly got the parcel of land now clearly identified. The next stages are about how it fits in with city to the lake, the Northbourne redevelopment and the economic base of it as well. Your first question was: is there a need for a bucket of money? There is always a need for a bucket of money on this. But we are missing out on some shows. This is some of the impetus behind it. The theatre celebrated a significant milestone this year as well. We are investing in upkeep and running repairs, but there naturally comes a point where the investment has to shift into a new facility.

Ms Elvin: As the minister says, we had a significant birthday this year, our 50th birthday for the Canberra Theatre Centre. When the centre opened in 1965 it was a state of the art facility for that time. But clearly that is 50 years ago, although we still think it is a very viable and valued facility in terms of Canberra theatre; it is much loved by the community. It has an ongoing purpose, but it is no longer suitable as the prime performing arts venue for the region.

That really relates to two different things. One is the size of the auditorium which, at 1,250 seats, simply is not large enough to amortise the costs of larger commercial productions. You cannot make it work financially if you can only sell 1,250 seats. The other constraint at the moment is that increasingly theatre productions have become much more complex and larger. There are more sophisticated sets and staging. The Canberra theatre can no longer accommodate contemporary productions of that scale.

The sorts of things we are missing out on would be larger musicals and spectacular performances such as *South Pacific* and *War Horse*. In fact, we tried very hard to bring the very successful production of *South Pacific* by Opera Australia here. We simply could not make the sums work with the theatre being the size that it is.

Again, with *War Horse*, we could not really make that work financially. So large-scale musicals, opera and ballet—we did have *Giselle* here as part of our 50th birthday celebrations this year, which was great. Canberrans love a white ballet, but it is one of the smaller scale ballets that the Australian Ballet does. They cannot bring their main stage full ballet productions here any longer because they are just too big to

fit into the venue. That gives you a sense of—

MRS JONES: Yes, I wonder if there has been an analysis done of what size a new facility needs to be to get into the profitable space for those bigger productions. If not, is there a plan to do that kind of calculation? There are large facilities that various groups are lobbying for now for the future for the ACT. I guess that if one of those facilities is able to really make a statement that Canberrans have money to spend on this stuff, or that they are willing to spend money on this stuff, that we have a study that shows it and that a certain size would be profitable after X number of years or what have you, that would probably be a very interesting bit of information for decision-making.

Ms Elvin: Yes, there was a very detailed theatre feasibility study done a few years ago that showed that a theatre of about 1,800 to 2,000 seats is the size that we need to look for. That is going to give you the best chance of—I will not say profitability; I am going to be very careful how I talk about that, because I think there is always going to be a need for ongoing investment in theatre. Certainly at that size, for a commercial promoter coming into the venue, you have got the best chance of making it work financially.

Beyond that size, you are really into a facility where you are losing the intimacy between the audience and the stage, which obviously you do not want. You start to undermine the whole experience then. That is about the size that we are looking at. We know that there is demand for that. We already know that a lot of Canberrans go interstate to access their high-end performing arts experiences, whether that is to Sydney perhaps to the Opera House or to Melbourne perhaps to one of the commercial theatres to see a long-running musical. We are actually losing that money at the moment. As we have heard from Ms Gilding, we do have the highest attendance rates at cultural venues. So we know that there is a real thirst for that type of experience. We feel we could fulfil it with a theatre of about 2,000 seats.

MRS JONES: Very interesting. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much for that. Through you, minister, I echo your words about the productions that come out of the theatre and everything that you do over there in CMAG. I want to ask about the plans that you are talking about. This is a supplementary question. Does the plan you are talking about also account for more intimate spaces? Obviously, there are some productions that are best catered for by more intimate spaces. Now we have the two spaces over here with more intimate space and also the larger venue. Are the plans going to include that?

Ms Burch: The Playhouse will stay.

THE CHAIR: The Playhouse will stay in situ?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Will there be any other smaller intimate spaces, for instance, the one down here that many amateur groups use, the smaller facility?

Ms Elvin: That is The Courtyard Studio that seats about 90. Certainly, we would hope that eventually we would develop a whole suite of different-sized venues within one facility. I would certainly like to see at the same time as we develop a new 2,000 seat theatre that we develop a 300-seat black box studio theatre, because I feel that is probably the missing link at the moment in terms of an intimate, scaled venue that allows you to do a lot more of the sort of experimental-type theatre. The Courtyard Studio is great. It really was only ever meant as a rehearsal studio. We do use it quite intensively for other purposes, but you need to scale up a little from that to get a venue that is a good size for the more experimental-type theatre.

THE CHAIR: We are very fortunate to have the large number of amateur theatre groups that we have in this city. We would not want to lose the opportunity for these groups to continue because of what Ms Gilding was saying before. This network brings great value to us for our young people to continue their growth and development so that eventually they actually become professional in their own right.

Ms Burch: Canberra is well served because we have got a fabulous facility here. We have The Street Theatre. Tuggeranong arts centre has a theatre. A couple of our colleges now have performing centres. Of course, there is the ongoing yet-to-complete piece of work at Belconnen. I thought I would get in before you, Madam Chair.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I was going to say that. Of course, and that will be the next cab off the rank, one would hope.

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: With regard to education, though, I note on page 14 of your report it talks about the Canberra Theatre Centre maintaining strong connections with the education sector by providing a number of educational opportunities for local students. Could you talk about that program?

Ms Elvin: Yes, these range across a whole number of activities. I suppose the top of the tree is our vocational education and training program. This is a pilot program but it has been going for two years now. We train three students a year up to certificate III or IV standard in theatre technical skills. There is a real shortage of those skills in the ACT. One of the reasons we are developing these programs is so that we are training up students who can then come back to us as paid staff. It is great that already some of the students who have been through that program have come back to us and are now working as paid casual staff.

There is the vocational education and training program. We do a lot of work experience programs as well in different parts of the theatre. That might be backstage but it also might be in marketing, for example. We work very closely with the Bell Shakespeare company. For the first time we worked on a schools festival, which a number of people may have seen. Students worked closely with Bell Shakespeare and with us and then had the opportunity to actually present in The Playhouse.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Elvin, can you elaborate on page 18 of your annual report where

you talk about challenges in regards to resourcing pressures of servicing the CFC's major contribution to Civic planning initiatives.

Ms Elvin: Yes. For a small organisation, finding the capacity to contribute to those broader initiatives is always a challenge; a pleasant challenge, I should say. We want to be seen to engage in those; they are very important for our future as an organisation. I have been doing a little bit of restructuring that I am hoping will give me some additional support in that strategic space, which is where I think we need the support at the moment so that we can fully contribute to those initiatives.

We are also working very closely with the Childers Group. I am sure you are familiar with this independent arts advocacy body. We did a very successful arts leadership forum with them, and we are going to be doing further projects, such as on mentoring in the arts. Again, it is great to be involved in those, but they require some resourcing and servicing at a more strategic level. I am hoping the way in which I am doing some minor restructuring is going to give me the support to contribute to those initiatives.

MR DOSZPOT: I should imagine that you would have some concerns regarding the operational continuity in light of the major capital works that have been planned.

Ms Elvin: That is always a challenge, particularly for the Canberra Theatre Centre, because it clearly is a very busy performing arts centre. Finding the dark periods in which we can drop in all the works and the maintenance is always a challenge. We try to use the Christmas-New Year period quite intensively. That tends to be a quiet time for theatre. In the build-up to Christmas we are very busy. There are a lot of dance school end-of-year performances, for example. We do have a little bit of down time, particularly in January. We try to use that period very intensively to fit in as much routine maintenance and capital works as we can so we are not losing theatre business by closing down at other times of the year.

MR DOSZPOT: Your views of the capacity of the theatre to attract better-known productions to the ACT, where are we at on that?

Ms Elvin: I think we have been quite successful this year in getting some larger productions like the circus spectacular *Le Noir—The Dark Side of Cirque* and *Sweet Charity*, the musical. We have coming up in two weeks' time *The Illusionists*, which is a major magical production and great pre-Christmas show. We are attracting those larger scale productions to the extent that we can. As we have just been talking about with Mrs Jones, we also need to be planning for a larger facility in order to fully exploit that market.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask a question about facilities. You might recall that during estimates there was a recommendation out of the estimates report for exploring the possibility of arts facilities in regions of Canberra where there was not a large hub, and they were identified as Woden, Weston Creek and Gungahlin. I know through the schools, for example, how much work you have done to open up school facilities to the community. I recently had the chance to visit Gungahlin College and John Paul College. They have very impressive theatres. How are you able to work with making those facilities available? I think, Gungahlin is a 300-seat capacity and John Paul college is close to that as well.

Ms Burch: Similarly, there is performance space at Canberra College and Calwell high as well. They are quite separate from our artsACT built form, and they offer opportunities for practice across our schools. We definitely believe we are part of the community. We have done an audit, and that information is now on site. If people in the community want to run a short-term production—I know Ms Porter’s interest in amateur theatre—there are lots of opportunities, not just in arts infrastructure but in community infrastructure. I think that is a really useful audit.

I encourage all of you that have an interest in community groups about where they gather to take note of that. Our Indian community seem to have a festival on every day of the year, for example. So it is important for small groups to have somewhere to come and gather. It could be just a one-off or it could be that these facilities could be booked regularly each week or each month by different groups.

MRS JONES: I have a supp to that before my question. Is there still a requirement for communities to get public liability insurance when they are using those facilities or can they come in under the schools or the facilities—

Ms Burch: I am happy to take it on notice. Arts might be able to answer about general access to arts infrastructure, arts facilities.

Mr Stankevicius: I would say, although I would need to confirm it, particularly for those facilities where multi-use tenancies are actually part of their business plan they would have the requisite public liability insurance to cover that off and you would not need to get separate—

MRS JONES: I think it is an expense for new and emerging communities, which is quite big for them sometimes.

Ms Burch: I will come back with some clarification on insurance and the community rate and how they go about accessing—

MRS JONES: Great, that would be really great. My question, which I am sure will raise a couple of eyebrows, is about the Fringe Festival coming up next year. Where is the government at with regard to planning for the Fringe Festival in 2016?

Mr Stankevicius: It is well in hand. What do you mean by “where”?

MRS JONES: You might not have much of a background here, but I have had quite a strong interest in the Fringe Festival before and how it has been managed and so on.

Ms Burch: I notice with interest you are very much a supporter of freedom of speech.

MRS JONES: Yes.

Ms Burch: But not necessarily for burlesque.

MRS JONES: Minister Burch, I am happy to have a conversation about that. My conversations initially about that whole area were about open burlesque in the town

square without any kind of warning or information about what was going on. We are going down to nipple tassels and there were children around and there was not any information that that was about to happen.

Ms Burch: Other than somebody saying, “You’re in a burlesque show” and it’s—

MRS JONES: In an open area in the middle of the town square, and I know a lot of kids were in town. That was the point that I made. How are we going with the upcoming Fringe Festival? What are the parameters around it? Who is organising it? Have you got a program?

Mr Stankevicius: There is no program at the moment. We are looking at the program as we speak and negotiating that with the artistic director who ran it last year. He is also running it this year because that is the extent of the contractual arrangements. We have a location for it. A range of locations were offered. We are also looking around the city as to where it might best sit. Now we have a location; the programming is obviously subject to negotiation between us and the Multicultural Festival as well.

MRS JONES: Are you looking at a similar sort of program to last year, are you trying to change things, shake it up, or are you seeing who comes forward to want to be a part of it?

Mr Stankevicius: There is a range of those things. We always want to refresh it and improve it on the year before; we do not want people saying it was the same as the year before, so obviously we look to refresh it. But, as I said, we take advice and negotiate with artistic directors. That is why we engage them—to manage these processes—otherwise we would be doing it in house.

MRS JONES: Wonderful. The process for people to apply to perform: is that an open process or is it selected from groups that have been involved before? Is there some advertising that goes into that? My understanding from the research I did earlier on in the term is that the idea of the Fringe Festival is to give an opportunity to people who have not necessarily made a name for themselves or have not had the opportunity before and who perhaps would not be on one of the other main stages as associated with the bigger event that is going on.

Mr Stankevicius: Yes. Obviously there is a range of fringe activities. We could all get into a lively discussion about how you define a fringe festival because there is a range of definitions of fringe across the world. Some of them are, literally, as you say, open spaces and anyone can turn up and it is bit more like improv than an organised festival. Others are quite organised but a little bit radical and a little bit risqué and that is the whole point of calling them fringe and not a mainstream festival. Then there are some in between which, as our artistic director will be doing, draw on the acts available from around the world that we know will be available in Australia at the time that we can actually lock in to deliver as well as a range of local acts.

MRS JONES: Brilliant.

Mr Stankevicius: I cannot indicate whether or not burlesque is on that list at the moment yet, minister.

Ms Burch: But I am pleased to hear that Mrs Jones is comfortable with burlesque as long as it is behind a screen.

MRS JONES: Yes. I will not tell you what I get up to in my spare time.

THE CHAIR: Too much information, Mrs Jones. Have we got any other burning questions for this sitting? No. Thank you very much to everyone.

Short suspension.

THE CHAIR: Welcome, Mr Carter. Are you familiar with the privileges statement in front of you? Would you indicate that you understand the implications of that?

Mr Carter: I am and I do.

THE CHAIR: If there are any questions on notice, can we have answers back in five business days please?

Mr Carter: Certainly.

THE CHAIR: Would you like to make a short opening statement?

Mr Carter: I will. First I give my chairman's apologies. He is interstate and unable to be here today and may well have already provided his apologies. I am pleased to inform the committee that the TFA annual report was tabled in the Assembly in accordance with all relevant information and a current report is available for public perusal on our website.

The 2014-15 financial year was successful for a number of reasons. Levy income was \$320,000 above budget despite being \$300,000 lower than the 2013-14 levy amount. The authority expenditure for the year was \$5 million, an increase of almost \$1.1 million on 2013-14, largely due to an increase in the number of applicants, organisations and stakeholders who sought and had funding approved for training, in particular the training rebates that related to the asbestos awareness training program that was regulated during that period.

Total funding provided by the authority under the five operational programs was \$4.5 million. Significant achievements in relation to the entry level training program totalled funding of \$1.45 million which was an increase of \$500,000 on the previous year. This also included \$289,000 on the group training organisation at-risk incentives which helped to reduce group training organisation suspensions from 2020 during the 2013-14 year to five in the 2014-15 year.

Our existing worker and professional development training fund program totalled \$2.6 million. That is an increase of \$600,000 on the previous year. That translated to 17,280 training course completions, which is an increase of 4½ thousand on the previous year. Significant achievements in our access and equity programs were substantial for the 2014-15 year compared to 2013-14 with an increase of almost \$90,000 over the previous financial year.

Funds were expended on the basis of \$28,000 provided for women in non-traditional trade incentives, \$60,000 provided for incentives to employers of Indigenous Australians and \$10,000 provided on an electrical pre-apprenticeship program. We had \$2,000 allocated to injured workers returning to work training.

In summary, our key priorities for the current financial year include a continuation of the existing subsidy programs. However they are more likely to be closely aligned to those program expenditures and outcomes in the 2013-14 year, given the asbestos awareness mandated training during the last financial year, and for training incentives to employers in nominated skill trades programs and a continuation of the GTO at-risk funding supplement for a further 12 months. That is all I wish to say at this point. I am happy to answer any questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. Maybe what you have just said explains the large amount of money that seems to be investment in training; that is on page 11. It talks about entry level training there. It is a much increased level of funding. Is that the two things you just mentioned?

Mr Carter: Correct. That is the at-risk training further incentives provided to group training organisations and the incentives to those trades nominated by industry as in skills shortage need.

THE CHAIR: Will that continue?

Mr Carter: Always, yes.

THE CHAIR: In relation to the at-risk cohort that you mentioned that was reduced significantly from 20 to five, I think you said, could you explain how that dramatic result was achieved?

Mr Carter: In 2012-13 the group training industry and stakeholders asked the board to consider an at-risk payment which is in addition to the incentive payments provided. Certain group training organisations are able to do it. If an apprentice is put as “no job” they are able to have their apprenticeship suspended for that period until an employer can be found. The industry sought from the training fund authority an additional incentive of \$1,000 on top of what was already provided by the authority to countenance the opportunity for those organisations to stand the apprentices down. We are prepared to pay it, providing of course they do not stand them down. If they stand them down they do not get the incentive. That went in the 2013-14 year from 20 to five, which is a good outcome because the risk is they will not stay. They will not be there when they do pick up work again.

THE CHAIR: So they are not lost?

Mr Carter: Correct.

MR DOSZPOT: Page 60 refers to training program expenses. I note there was a variance from the original budget of \$1,566,921 and it notes that it was due to the asbestos awareness training. How was it managed from a fiscal point of view?

Mr Carter: The budget prior to that was established before the program was mandated. Once we had the program mandated and once we got an idea, by about November, of the demand that was coming from the training applications—if members remember correctly, people had to be trained before 30 September, and if they could not be fitted into a program they had to be at least on the list and enrolled into a program towards December—I put to the board in November a request based on what I could see would be a projected outcome between July 2014 and June 2015, and that amounted to approximately a million dollars. We asked for the budget, which we paid for out of consolidated savings, to be brought forward and amended to cover those additional costs.

MR DOSZPOT: What are the consolidated savings?

Mr Carter: The reserve account.

MR DOSZPOT: What is the total left in that now?

Mr Carter: \$3.5 million, \$3.9 million at the most, and that was down from, I think it was, about \$4.4 million at the time.

MR DOSZPOT: On page 62 there is reference to funding of \$442,000 in 2015 and \$241,000 in 2014 to the Electro Group Training. Can you provide some details? That is almost a doubling of the amount in 2015. Why was that?

Mr Carter: It may well have been that the 2014 figure may not have accounted for four quarters of the incentive payments because they are late and not getting there. We pay quarterly in arrears. I think in the 2014 year there was not an accrual account made against the future expenditure.

MR DOSZPOT: Is that a guesstimate or is that—?

Mr Carter: No, that will be what will have happened, but I can confirm that in greater detail. Then, of course, it has landed in the 2015 year, which may mean that there were five quarter payments in that period.

MR DOSZPOT: In the 2015 period?

Mr Carter: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: And what was that expenditure on?

Mr Carter: The Electro Group Training is a group training organisation. They receive the annual apprentice incentive, they receive the at-risk incentive, and they receive a workplace health and safety adviser incentive and an officer for managing their welfare and needs.

MR DOSZPOT: Did they apply for that funding?

Mr Carter: Yes they do, on an annual basis.

MR DOSZPOT: And it has been acquitted?

Mr Carter: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have some questions around the access and equity schemes, particularly relating to women. I note that the annual report says that the tradeswomen in building construction campaign has continued throughout 2010 to 2015. Beyond this year what happens with that campaign?

Mr Carter: It continues each year. We take advice from industry on the basis of the annual training plan which we present to the minister and usually it is asked for that to be continued. That is a program that we have on the website, which provides information for young women. The incentive amount is an additional amount paid to any employer of a female in a non-traditional trade.

MS FITZHARRIS: What is the incentive amount?

Mr Carter: \$4,000 per year.

MS FITZHARRIS: I recall during estimates we had this conversation as well, but it looked like there was some good measurement about that actually increasing the number of women. Can you remind us or update us on what that figure is since then.

Mr Carter: I think I mentioned it before: \$28,000 was expended for women in non-traditional trades this year.

MS FITZHARRIS: So \$28,000 in total?

Mr Carter: Yes, paid in two \$2,000 increments.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have targets?

Mr Carter: We do not have any limit; it's however many want to access the incentive.

Ms Burch: The more women in, the more applications and the more paid out.

MS FITZHARRIS: And it also mentions promotion and marketing through schools and colleges. What specific promotion do you do in the schools and colleges?

Mr Carter: We have the website promotion. We provided CIT with an incentive last year for a sponsorship for a women's master class program. I do not think there were any other applications received on that basis last year.

MS FITZHARRIS: I think there was a house built this year entirely by women tradespeople.

Ms Burch: I think you are referring to the two disability properties in Tuggeranong. That was built 99.9 per cent by women in trades, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Was there a link with the fund at all?

Mr Carter: No.

Ms Burch: No. They are disability houses. They will be used for people with a disability. There are two houses on a shared, large block. I think they remain on Housing ACT's asset list. It was promoted through CIT as well.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, do you have a very quick supplementary? We need to give Mrs Jones a chance to ask a question.

MRS JONES: My question is pretty quick.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a very quick supplementary. Pages 26 to 28 touch on the gender balance within your organisation. Basically it is all male.

Mr Carter: We employ three people and I am one of the three.

MR DOSZPOT: There are three pages that basically have 10 different ways of just saying that you do not employ any females.

Ms Burch: They are all fellows, yes.

MR DOSZPOT: It is a comment.

Mr Carter: Yes, it is a comment.

Ms Burch: Next time I see Glenn I will remind him. It is about construction. We talk about women in non-traditional trades. I would encourage organisations to reflect it broadly and across the various boards and different groups. Industries have different boards. So it is an ongoing mission, Mr Doszpot.

MRS JONES: Almost on the same topic, with the governing board of the association, what considerations are given to selection, minister, of new people when opportunities come up?

Ms Burch: The board is a representative board. The member organisation puts up their preferred member. Some of the terms are coming to an end soon-ish. Again it is an opportunity for member organisations to look across their own membership and see if they can bring women in.

MRS JONES: In broader terms, are the appointments for the governing board 100 per cent from member organisations or are there also some general members?

Mr Carter: The minister makes those appointments but the member organisations put forward their representatives for the board. It is a governing board—

MRS JONES: Are they selected from the list or is there one per organisation?

Mr Carter: No, the act prescribes that there will be two employer associations, two

employee associations, an independent chairperson and me as a non-voting member. That is the board structure under the act. The two employer associations will be the HIA and the MBA, which represent the housing sector and civil construction. The others are the CFMEU and the electrical trades, the CEPU—Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union—covered under the ETU. Those organisations themselves nominate their members. Until two years ago we had two female members on the board for over 10 years.

MRS JONES: It ebbs and flows. My focus was not so much on the gender balance as on how the board is put together. The chair is the appointment that does not represent another—

Ms Burch: He is an independent chair. After this, as the board membership is renewed, we always say, “Can you look to make sure you’ve got diversity.” It is not only about gender diversity; it is about different skills. Those entry-level, innovative minds are also good to have on a board.

MRS JONES: You need the skills and you need the community representation, basically, however that is—

Mr Carter: From the authority’s perspective, it benefits well from all of those organisations because they do place senior people on the board. Both the MBA and the HIA representatives are executive board members of those organisations. The CFMEU representative is the deputy secretary and the ETU is the secretary. So we have senior people, which I think adds to the information that we get from them.

MRS JONES: Also the effect of the conversations you are having.

Mr Carter: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Do you have a burning question, Mr Doszpot?

MR DOSZPOT: No. I have some more questions but I will put them on notice.

THE CHAIR: You will put them on notice. That would be appreciated. Thank you very much, members. Thank you, Mr Carter.

Mr Carter: Thank you.

Short suspension.

THE CHAIR: We welcome the CIT to the table. Welcome to this final annual reports hearing for Education and Training. Could you indicate whether you are familiar with the privilege card and that you understand its implications? Thank you very much. Questions taken on notice at today’s hearing need to be answered within five business days. Minister, do you want to make an opening statement in this area?

Ms Burch: I have a brief statement; thank you, chair. CIT, as you know, is the sole ACT public provider of vocational education and training, or VET, and it provides an extensive range of education programs, including trade and other certificates,

diplomas, advanced diplomas and short courses. In 2014, CIT met its training targets, which included the training and education of close to 20,000 students in vocational programs, 8½ thousand students in commercial programs and over 1,000 international students from 85 countries.

Employment outcomes for students remain high, with 87-plus per cent of CIT graduates employed after training compared to 77 per cent nationally. Learner satisfaction rate is high at 91 per cent, and employer satisfaction sits at 85 per cent. Both are above targets by seven and five per cent respectively.

With a changing VET environment, CIT has developed systems to adjust to the national vocational education and training reform agenda, particularly for the preparation and introduction of VET FEE-HELP for government subsidised programs in diploma and above, and the introduction of the unique student identifier. The implementation of these reforms has been well received.

As the committee may know, the CIT Amendment Act was passed in the Assembly late last year, paving the way for changes in governance as well as the establishment of a new governing board to replace the CIT Advisory Council. I am joined here for the first time by the chair of that new governing board, Mr Craig Sloan. This is indeed a significant change to CIT and it will equip it for succeeding in a competitive environment by allowing a greater focus on business and commercial markets. CIT takes its obligations seriously and there will be significant work ahead for the board. I have not told the chair how much work is ahead of him yet, but I am sure the board is up to the task.

Vocational education and training, and CIT in particular, has an important part to play in Canberra's economy in making sure that this city is serviced well across a whole range of disciplines and areas. Most of us have got to work courtesy of skills and attributes that come from vocational education—our cars, our electricity, our first morning coffee et cetera are all because of VET training. It can be an end in and of itself or it could be just part of ongoing learning for many.

Finally, I want to thank the CIT officials and team for the work that they have done over the past 12 months, and to Craig and the other board members. They have had a very busy few months. I am genuinely looking forward to the excitement and the innovation that will come through CIT via these new arrangements. I am happy to take questions.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much, minister. Minister, on pages 20 and 21 of the CIT annual report it talks about the aim to improve the student experience, including accessibility, and to cater for individual learning styles. Can you explain for the committee what strategies are being put in place to facilitate learning for students with disabilities? How is the challenge of the NDIS going to be dealt with in relation to anything that may impact on the student experience in CIT? Is there any relationship between the NDIS and what people can purchase under those agreements and whether that will have any impact at all? And can you talk generally about working with students with disabilities and what support is provided?

Ms Burch: Broadly, before I go to Ms Cover or Ms Grayson, it is about being a smart,

modern VET provider offering flexible learning environments, both online and also in the built form, making sure that our infrastructure is up to grade and providing first-class opportunities. In regard to support for students with a disability, Ms Cover can go to that, recognising that the NDIS at a personal level will provide and cover support and assistance for those students who need to access training, and the different attributes that they will need to be able to finish. VET in and of itself is competency-based training, so it is around access, as much as anything else.

Ms Cover: As the minister said, there is quite a lot of interest in the community services and health college in training for this growing sector. In particular, we are finding that workers want to be transitioned from different sectors within the NDIS portfolio of services. We are seeing a lot of interest in skills that can be transferred so that service providers can offer a more holistic approach to individual needs. We are seeing a greater demand in our health area for the skills that the minister mentioned. So that is the workforce.

In terms of the students who are coming to us with disabilities, CIT has a very large and well-resourced, dedicated, professional team of people who work with students one on one. They work also with the teachers in classrooms. This year we have introduced—not for disabilities as such—a large foundation skills team of people assisting in helping apprentices with their literacy and numeracy. In terms of specifics to do with student disabilities, a well-resourced team of professionals will work one on one with individuals or refer them on to other services.

In terms of the teaching, we are looking always to use technology where we can to connect and engage better with students, and there are a very broad range of services in that space. I refer also to other aspects to do with the physical infrastructure of classrooms and how they are set up, and the needs of individuals as well.

THE CHAIR: Thank you very much. You had a supplementary, Mr Doszpot?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes I have. We were told this morning that there are roughly 500 LSAs in the education sector. Through Professor Shaddock's review, there is an indication that he is trying to encourage those people to get cert IV qualifications. Now, 500 people would be a lot. I am not suggesting they would all come on at the same time, but are there plans being made to accommodate perhaps a larger number of certificate IV students than you have had in the past; not students, but people who want their upgrades.

Ms Cover: Yes. Each year, as we formulate where the resources go, we take intel from industry and various groups. Right now our teachers, our managers and directors of those centres are working with industry to find out where the emerging skills and qualifications that industry is going to need are. Then we will adjust our profile to meet those needs.

MR DOSZPOT: So how quickly—

Ms Burch: It goes back to the NDIS question—not quite LSAs, but CIT has been doing some work around disability support officer training.

MR DOSZPOT: Yes.

Ms Cover: I might get Ms Grayson to mention it shortly.

Ms Grayson: With the disability support programs, we are working with the industry to identify what the particular needs are and putting in place programs that will address those, throughout the community and science—

MR DOSZPOT: What sort of time frame would you need to get it? Would you need additional staff to address the potential increase in demand?

Ms Grayson: Virtually daily. Depending on the demand, or the intel, as Ms Cover has mentioned, we can plan out a program in a range of different ways. For the student to achieve the certificate IV, say, we can have a range of different models available. It would be a case of identifying where we may need to have more staff come on board or readjust our staff loading so that we can bring staff into a particular mode of delivery that will meet the cohort's needs or the individual needs. The college is very well placed to pre-empt the different types of delivery mode that would be useful to the cohort and then ensure that staffing can be flexible enough to address those needs.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. Another question?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: I would like to congratulate Mr Sloan for his appointment as chair.

Mr Sloan: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: Obviously, we welcome your contribution to CIT. Minister, I understand there are still two positions to be filled on the new CIT board. When will they be filled?

Ms Burch: That is a matter for the chair.

MR DOSZPOT: Do you not appoint the—

Ms Burch: I do, but it is a matter for the chair, in conversation with me, so I will let the chair answer that.

Mr Sloan: We on the board have established nine positions to fill. We were aware there are two extra places available within the board. I think it was clear at the time that once the board settled into the operations of CIT and understood strategically where it wants to go moving forward, if there was a skill shortage sitting around the board that we needed to fill, we have got capacity to do that. At the moment the board is really going through that initial planning. In the early part of 2016 we will be starting our strategic discussions around 2017-20 and setting that path. That will probably be the time in the first six months when it will be quite clear what additional skills we may need around that board table. Then we would make a recommendation for new board members.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. Minister, you have announced an \$11 million investment to build a new campus in Tuggeranong. The media release suggested courses could begin in 2016. Can you provide an update on whether this 2016 target is to be met and by which semester?

Ms Burch: The announcement was mid-semester, the second semester, so June-July of 2016. I have just been reassured by Mr Kay, sitting next to me, that they are on track to do that, but Mr Sloan may want to talk to that.

Mr Sloan: No, but that is right, minister. We are on track for the second semester of next year to commence courses in our new facility at Tuggeranong, covering health, community services, hospitality, ICT and business, in new modern facilities which will be welcomed, I am sure, not only by students but by staff.

MR DOSZPOT: Going to my final question in this segment, I am not sure if I should address it to you, minister, or Mr Sloan, but I will address it to you. In earlier hearings it was suggested or implied that the Woden campus would continue but perhaps in a different format and a different building. It was also suggested that staff would be accommodated and their needs met. Earlier this month it was announced that the Woden campus would close its doors as early as 2017 while several hundred students and 100 staff are taken out to other campuses. How was this communicated to staff and students?

Ms Burch: It has been part of the campus modernisation strategy. I think from very early on it was about Woden not being fit for purpose. That is the language I have used. It is an old building; it is not up to modern standards. That is why the CIT board is right behind the modernisation strategy. Those courses will be deployed to other sites, and that has been well understood.

MR DOSZPOT: When was this communicated to the students?

Ms Cover: We have been communicating with students throughout the whole process. With every staff member, there is question and answer information available to all staff on our information site, and it is also on the website, in terms of which programs are going where and when. There is a comprehensive transition program, obviously taking account of where and what students need to know in terms of the programming, access and support that they are going to need. Parallel to that is around the support and transition arrangements for staff and making sure they are set up in time to meet and greet students and get on with the teaching and learning. Then there are support services that wrap around that. So there are all of those services. There is a very comprehensive transition plan, and I can go through that in detail in terms of exactly what is happening when, if you like, or I can provide that to you.

MR DOSZPOT: If you could provide that to us, that will be fine. Can you give us any indication of what sort of reception this move has created?

Ms Cover: Very positive. As the minister said, staff are keen to get into new, contemporary facilities, particularly when it comes to teaching and learning. They recognise that the new facilities at Tuggeranong, the upgraded facilities at Reid and the upgraded facilities at Bruce will allow students to access more contemporary

learning and teaching resources where we can simulate workplaces in a very modern, contemporary sort of setting, maximising the use of technology. That is the exciting thing about what Tuggeranong will offer for us: access to multiple devices that simulate what we know our students of all ages are dealing with out in the non-CIT world. Staff are very keen to move and take advantage of those new upgraded facilities. We have been working with staff, in teams and individually, throughout the whole process and the feedback I have received is very positive.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

MS FITZHARRIS: In the priorities and challenges section early on in the annual report, at page 20, there is mention of industry relevance. It points to two particular areas: NDIS, and meeting the challenges there, which I think has been discussed, and the renewable wind technologies course. I presume that starts next year. Have enrolments opened for the course?

Ms Grayson: I can take that. In regard to the centre for renewable energy, there has been a small team in the initial stages actually planning out the programs that will be on offer in a staged way starting in 2016. In the first step there has very much been a focus on the technical side of it, from the electro and electronics perspective, from that side of things, establishing and maintaining the types of technical equipment that will be there. We have also been having conversations with our key partners in this to look at a broader range of skills required to establish, install and maintain the wind turbines. At this time we have a number of individual skill sets identified as well as qualifications moving forward. Curriculum development work is taking place at the moment and we are planning to actually have enrolments in the first part of next year.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. I understand it is the first of its type in the country

Ms Burch: It is very exciting to have CIT lead the nation.

MS FITZHARRIS: Previously, I presume, if there were people maintaining the wind turbines that we see at Lake George—the ones that are actually the source of our own sustainable, renewable energy in the ACT—where would they have gone to get this sort of training?

Ms Grayson: Overseas, generally.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you looking at moving into solar as well?

Ms Grayson: Yes, we are certainly looking at that and having discussions with partners in that space. It will be very exciting to bring all of that together within a whole sustainable, renewable training facility that blurs the edges between typical traditional trades and embraces the new technologies moving forward. The majority of people are very excited and keen and moving forward in this space.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you anticipate enrolments coming from around the country as well as locally?

Ms Grayson: Yes.

Ms Cover: We are working very closely with the south-eastern regional network of providers in this space, so we know there is interest and there will be demand from across the country.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are other vocational education providers nipping at your heels a bit?

Ms Cover: We are having quite a few discussions with other providers in the vocational space but we are also talking to the ANU and the University of Canberra to see whether there are pathways that we can provide for students in this space.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I know that you talked about the changes with the governance arrangements for CIT to make it more agile and competitive. Is this the sort of course that you are looking at in particular?

Ms Burch: This is absolutely what I think CIT will increasingly become. Yes, there will be a core of the traditional training one expects from a VET sector. There is also a core of activity that will come from government priorities. But a smart RTO like CIT is about getting ahead: what are the new technologies and what are the new learnings to be front of field, to not only to lead the ACT and region but—

Mr Sloan: Nationally and internationally.

Ms Burch: That is right. The chair has picked it up beautifully: lead internationally.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of the staff that are going to be teaching in this area, are they existing staff? Where have the staff come from?

Ms Grayson: In regard to staffing, we have very much engaged existing staff who are keen and passionate in the area in the first instance, to gain the momentum. But over the past many months we have been speaking with industry, speaking with those who are in this space to see what additional skills we will need. We will certainly need to bring additional and new skill into the space, and there are discussions taking place with those who may be interested in stepping into the training arena with us.

Ms Cover: I might just add to that. CIT already has a very strong track record of development in this space with staff, as Ms Grayson said. The showcase of what we have in terms of our capability already is at the horticulture centre out at the Bruce campus; in terms of that sustainability, it is outstanding.

MRS JONES: To go to the international markets that we have been talking about, page 21 references these growing international markets. Regarding the trade mission that was held recently with the trip overseas to India: why was India selected? What was the process for that? What other international markets are you looking to target?

Ms Burch: The trip to India that I went on was to two states: Kerala and Gujarat, and it built on some work that CIT had been investing in over a number of years to build that relationship and connection. In Kerala it was about exploring predominantly nursing and allied health, but it built on an MOU with a group called NEST. Then, up

in Gujarat, it was to build on the connection through the forensic university there. I will let CIT talk through the detail on that.

Ms Cover: As the minister said, two focus areas: in the south it was Kerala, particularly looking at the extension of our capability in the health area. Aged care is a growing sector there. As their economy emerges into that middle class capability and capacity for people to explore other lifestyles, we know that aged care, child care and nursing are growing areas.

MRS JONES: As in for us to train people to go back?

Ms Cover: Yes. In a partnership arrangement we would look to build those skills in a variety of ways. We obviously already have students from that country undertaking study with us here in Canberra, but we are also looking at how we might best train their staff to deliver training in their countries.

MRS JONES: So for professional development of trainers?

Ms Cover: Yes. The second state was Gujarat, as the minister said. We have already been back over into the Gujarat forensic science university since the minister was there. A direct outcome of signing the MOU was some work we have just undertaken in fingerprint training. It was very well received with classes being absolutely oversubscribed and they want us to come back and do more of that really practical skills training that really adds value to their university qualifications.

MRS JONES: For those of us who are less informed—forensic science: can you expand on what they are doing exactly?

Ms Cover: Sure. The forensic science that we are running at the institute at the moment is a very high profile training program that we do. Predominantly our clients are the police service at the AFP level and New South Wales. In fact, I think just about right across Australia, in all states and territories, we have some presence with our forensic training. We have a partnership with the University of Canberra in this space as well. What we bring to the table are, very specifically, highly technical skills in practical, crime scene investigation, collection of evidence.

Ms Burch: Think *CSI*.

MRS JONES: The word “forensic” is used in lots of different ways in this building. We have forensic mental health, too, and that is a whole other kettle of fish.

Ms Cover: The other growing area we have launched in the past 12 months is a massive online open course—MOOC—in the biometric space. Again, not directly related to crime scene investigation but, nevertheless, related to that broader security space as well.

MRS JONES: Again, for the uneducated, “MOOC” and “biometric”, can you please—

Ms Cover: People might be familiar with MOOCs that other large training

institutions like Harvard and Stanford and the ANU and others have delivered over recent times. It is about building skills and capability of the community without engaging with the formal or more traditional way of engaging with learning. Rather than enrolling in a course, it is a completely online-delivered course.

Ms Burch: It is a subject-by-subject approach.

Mr Sloan: Which you can do anywhere in the world.

Ms Cover: I might get Ms Grayson to talk about the content of that. It is a new and exciting opportunity.

Ms Grayson: It is very exciting.

MRS JONES: And biometrics, is that part of that?

Ms Grayson: Yes. It was through the passion and interest of staff within our forensic science area that this has taken off. In regard to the certificate IV in biometrics, it is one, of course, that is actually looking at facial features, identification of the eyes and different physical features such as that. The plan was to develop this online massive open online course, a MOOC. It is available worldwide and was launched, I think, in mid-September this year. From a MOOC you log on and choose to work through the material and then just leave it at that.

MRS JONES: So there are no tests?

Ms Grayson: There is no test; it is information available.

MRS JONES: Is money made from this?

Ms Grayson: This is the new and exciting part. If these programs are actually designed correctly with stimulating information, they actually draw people into and establish their interest in gaining these skills. Once they have the skills, for the actual credentialing—gaining the qualification—they then need to enrol, and we take them through a skills recognition process, and that is where—

MRS JONES: Which is faster, but it is an additional income stream. Great.

Ms Burch: Some of this is the role of the board and my expectations of the board now, and it is the trip to India. We came back with Kerala's minister offering pretty much a regional hub for CIT to man and train. That comes with a resource implication, so the likes of the chair need to measure that up about how we grow but grow sensibly in an international market.

MRS JONES: The initiation of that trip, was that a while ago? Obviously it has come to fruition just recently, but when were the beginnings of that?

Ms Burch: CIT has had a relationship with those two states for some time. The delegation was to push it to the next level, which is what happened.

MRS JONES: When was the decision taken to go?

Ms Burch: My decision?

MRS JONES: To take the delegation.

Ms Burch: Earlier in the year.

Mr Sloan: Well before the board got there.

MRS JONES: Great. Who was managing the program for the meetings and so on when you were away?

Ms Cover: Jayne Miller, the head of our business development area.

MRS JONES: She managed all the meetings that took place?

Ms Cover: Yes. Jayne has a very good connection with Austrade and the government officials both at the education and training level but also the school level in those two states that we visited. She was able to arrange meetings at all levels. I think the minister's point is a really important one. The minister's presence really took the whole relationship up to another level for us. I think the immediate and growing engagement we have had from both those states since the minister's trip has—

MRS JONES: Perhaps politicians are better respected in some places.

Ms Burch: In many ways it is about those two state governments recognising how serious we are about this. We are not just another Aussie RTO coming in to see what business we can do; this is government to government and also with government backing. Whilst CIT is independent it is significantly resourced through government, and that demonstrated to those two state governments the sincerity of our approach and desire to support them in their training.

MRS JONES: Very good. Leanne, to go back to that point, are we able to see a list of who was met with to understand that better?

Ms Cover: Yes.

MRS JONES: That would be great.

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

MR DOSZPOT: Yes I do. At page 44 under "Litigation", it states that a complaint of unlawful discrimination of relationship status was lodged with the Human Rights Commission. It suggests the complaint was closed due to conciliation being unlikely to be successful. What does that mean?

Ms Cover: I ask the executive director of people and organisational governance, Dr Stenlake to answer this. I understand, while she is making her way to the table, that that would mean that there was an agreement between both parties that it was not able

to be progressed.

Dr Stenlake: Yes, I can confirm that that is correct. The process that the Human Rights Commission works with the parties is really to look at mediation or conciliation to resolve differences. In this particular case they had a submission from the complainant. They got a counter submission from CIT. They talked to the complainant in relation to what they were looking for; they talked to CIT in relation to what we were willing to give on. If there is some kind of movement between those two positions, then working through with an external facilitator, a mediation or a conciliation process, can often produce a beneficial result. In this particular instance, in their view, whilst we were willing to conciliate, the complainant was not so willing. In those cases complainants are given the opportunity if they wish to take their case through ACAT.

MR DOSZPOT: Has it got financial implications for the CIT?

Dr Stenlake: Only in relation to that being something that the complainant was looking for and that was something that we were not willing to do, so no financial implications.

MR DOSZPOT: I understand ASQA is to conduct an audit of one of the faculties at CIT. Can you tell us who instigated this?

Mr Sloan: We have had a number of discussions with the electrical faculty, certainly with the EOS national board and the local electrical advisory board as well, around some concerns that they had with the quality of or, probably, some of the hearsay around some of their courses. As a result of those meetings we instigated our own independent assessment of those courses and brought independent assessors down from Queensland to actually go through our courses just to make sure that if we had issues that we needed to address we knew about them early and decided to get on with that, which is what we did.

Subsequent to that ASQA—correct me if I am wrong here please—did not receive any formal complaint from any party but thought that they would come and undertake an assessment of part of our courses as well, which they are doing this Thursday. We will have 20 days to respond to those findings. So we should be responding this side of Christmas.

MR DOSZPOT: Is this an unusual practice?

Mr Sloan: I do not believe it is unusual at all. In fact I quite welcome it as the new chair. Under these arrangements we have known about or had a bit of tension, particularly in the electrical trades area, and I have quite welcomed the chance to truly have a good look at it. We do not think there will be any issues around the quality of the students we are producing at the end of the day. I think concerns will probably be around some of the processes that we might do to get there, and we might need to sharpen things up. But I welcome that and we will be using this as a bit of a case for all other areas of the institute as well.

MR DOSZPOT: Have there been any other faculties that have been audited in such a

way?

Ms Cover: ASQA undertake a variety of audits. Their website actually has those audits that they undertake and there are many hundreds of audits they undertake across the 4½ thousand RTOs that are registered on an annual basis. We know that we are due for our large audit in 2017. The large audit is a scheduled audit. That is to do with the time frames that they come back to RTOs to look at their regulation. But no there are no other audits being undertaken by ASQA.

MR DOSZPOT: What preparation can you make to be prepared for this audit on Thursday?

Ms Cover: The institute, as Mr Sloan said, has already been undertaking work to have a look at other areas for continuous improvement across all aspects of that particular department. We were well on our way to responding and building some of those resources and responding to those needs that we had identified from our earlier benchmarking exercise.

We have got a large focus at the moment on making sure that all the records will be available on Thursday. You do not get told in advance about how many records but you appreciate that the auditors are only there for the day and that, with such a large volume of students, they will be requiring files to be made available to them. They will want to have a look at assessment items; they will want to have a look at information that is provided to students; and they will want to have a look at information that is provided to employers. There is a fair bit of work that goes into providing all of those resources that will need to be on hand for the auditors for Thursday.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a few other questions but in the interests of time I am happy to submit them in writing to you.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have a quick follow-up question. ASQA's job as the national regulator is to do audits?

Ms Burch: Yes. In and of itself, having ASQA come in to do an audit is not unusual; it is their job.

MS FITZHARRIS: You mentioned in the annual report, page 23, community engagement and support. You mentioned earlier the support to disadvantaged members of the community. In particular, I ask about the partnership with Canberra College Cares and the support provided to new, particularly young, parents. This has been the first year of that full program, is that right?

Ms Burch: At Canberra College Cares? The new premises certainly opened at the beginning of this school year. Certainly it is a great improvement on the premises at Stirling. I will ask Ms Maslen to talk about the offerings at CC Cares.

Ms Maslen: We entered into a partnership agreement with CC Cares at the end of last

year to deliver programs in three areas: child care, hairdressing and beauty, and business administration and business services. That has been incredibly successful, particularly the business administration program, which is very flexible and suits the needs of the students in the CC Cares program.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are the students in the program mostly women or mostly mums?

Ms Maslen: There are a couple of dads in there as well but the majority are women, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: So they can do your CIT courses at Canberra College?

Ms Maslen: That is right. We are delivering in their facility. Technically, they are CIT students but we actually go to their facility and do all of the delivery on site in their facilities.

MS FITZHARRIS: Some of the students could still be possibly doing a normal school day, year 11 or 12, and some could be engaging in CIT programs? There is a real mix of things on offer?

Ms Maslen: Yes. The study that they do at CIT actually counts towards their year 11, year 12 qualification.

MS FITZHARRIS: How many students have you had throughout this year?

Ms Maslen: Around 60 to 70 students that we have had enrolled.

Ms Burch: I think in CC there are over 120, but I can come back with that. The last time I was down at CC Cares, predominantly they were young mums. We were talking about how they were going in finishing year 12 but getting a certificate and those that have been out of school for some time. This was their first qualification through CIT, through business. I think you run hospitality.

MRS JONES: I have got a supp to that. With regard to the business administration skills, is there the capacity there for those young women to actually get qualifications as bookkeepers or accountants?

Ms Maslen: There is if they wish to continue study. We offer up to the certificate III.

MRS JONES: Can they continue that through CC Cares?

Ms Maslen: Not specifically bookkeeping or accounting.

MRS JONES: The hourly rate of pay in that area gets so much higher and can make it profitable for someone to work part time and be able to pay for care at some point in their future and actually make decent money.

Ms Maslen: The certificate III actually provides a pathway into those qualifications.

MRS JONES: Is there the possibility of a childcare pathway to go with that? If some

wanted to continue—

Ms Maslen: There are pathways for all of the qualifications into higher level qualifications at CIT.

MRS JONES: Do you measure or have any hopes about the specific proportion of those young women who go through to a qualification that actually pays well per hour?

Ms Maslen: We do. We are in discussion with CC Cares around the programs that we are going to be offering next year. Accounting and bookkeeping have been part of those conversations.

MRS JONES: I really encourage you in that area, to get their hourly rates up. Otherwise you cannot work your way to a really good future.

Ms Maslen: Yes.

Ms Burch: Some of these young parents may just get their year 12 qualifications. I am speaking now with my Education and Training hat on. When they graduate, what they have is a pathway. Then they can come back into CIT and be supported through your routine programs of support and offerings to get that next level of training.

MRS JONES: Because there is not childcare on every campus of CIT, is there? No?

Ms Maslen: No there is not

MRS JONES: Has there ever been any thought given to maybe less formalised, like babysitting, options during class times or something like that that is not perhaps quite as expensive? I know in some places—

Ms Burch: I am shuddering a bit, with the national quality framework coming through—

MRS JONES: I understand what you are talking about, but when we are talking about actually getting some more women through to a qualification—

Ms Burch: It is around partnerships with occasional care. But it is also, again, on graduation out of CC Cares they are not just graduated and we say, “There’s the big world.” It is about those next connections and pathways and is it connection into, say, Communities@Work or Anglicare child care that is close to CIT or their home or family day care. All of those conversations happen. That is the greatness around CC Cares. It is not just an alternative ed system; it is a wraparound service.

THE CHAIR: We have reached the end of our hearings. Minister, we are going to go to the in-camera discussion with you. You are welcome to indicate if you want to keep any official here but the rest of the officials will need to leave.

Public hearing concluded at 4.01 pm.