



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2013-2014

(Reference: [Appropriation Bill 2013-2014 and Appropriation \(Office of the Legislative Assembly\) Bill 2013-2014](#))

Members:

MR J HANSON (Chair)
DR C BOURKE (Deputy Chair)
MR M GENTLEMAN
MR B SMYTH

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

FRIDAY, 21 JUNE 2013

Secretary to the committee:
Ms N Kosseck (Ph 620 50129)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9 am.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Corrections, Minister for Housing, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs and Minister for Ageing

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate

Byles, Mr Gary, Director-General

Elliott, Mr Gordon, Director, Finance, Directorate Services

Little, Ms Vanessa, Director, Libraries ACT, Parks and City Services Division

Colussi, Mr David, Director, Canberra Connect

Iglesias, Mr Daniel, Director, Parks and Conservation, Parks and City Services Division

Flannery, Ms Fleur, Director, City Services, Parks and City Services Division

Perram, Mr Phillip, Executive Director, Business Enterprise Division

Ware, Mr Chris, Director, ACT NOWaste, Business Enterprise Division

Trushell, Mr Michael, General Manager, Capital Linen Service, Business Enterprise Division

Bailey, Mr Daniel, Director, ACT Property Group, Business Enterprise Division

Horne, Mr Hamish, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Cemeteries, Business Enterprise Division

THE CHAIR: Good morning, minister and officials. Welcome to the estimates committee day 6. The proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and are also being webstreamed. Have you seen the privilege statement? You are aware of that and its rights and obligations? Okay. Minister, would you like to make a statement before we commence?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not want to make a statement as such, but there are a couple of clarifications that we need to make about the budget papers. Mr Byles will take us through the details of those.

THE CHAIR: Sure.

Mr Byles: Good morning, members of the committee. Could I bring to the committee's attention two errors in the budget papers. The first one is a proofreading error. I draw the committee's attention to page 376 of budget paper 4. In output class 2, down at the bottom, the figure that reads 95,176 should in fact read 96,176. That was a proofreading error, for which I apologise. The second error is more technical in nature, and I will ask my CFO to elaborate on the issue.

Mr Elliott: I advise members of the committee that the directorate is highlighting a mis-classification of budgeted revenues in the 2013-14 budget papers. I refer to budget paper 4, pages 391, 401 and 402. The pages that are going to be circulated today disclose both the published and corrected operating statement items.

Mr Byles: We have a handout here, Mr Chair, and minister, with your permission,

that we might hand to members of the committee, in order to clarify.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr Elliott: This mis-classification does not change the total revenue or budget operating result for TAMS. The mis-classification relates to rental receipts received by the TAMS directorate from other ACT government directorates or entities. These revenues should have been classified as “user charges ACT government revenue” but have been incorrectly disclosed as “user charges non-ACT government”.

It should be noted that the mis-classification issue resulted from a mapping error within the data production tool. With reference to future budget processes—and we are also collaborating with the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate—the data production tool will be reviewed to ensure that this mapping error is addressed. Confirmation also received from the Chief Minister and Treasury Directorate is that there is no impact on the whole-of-government statements, as the classification issue was identified through the whole-of-government consolidation process.

MR SMYTH: When did you become aware of the errors?

Mr Elliott: Probably in the last week or so, after the publishing.

MR SMYTH: It might have been useful if this had been circulated before today.

Mr Byles: Point taken, Mr Smyth, but in the spirit of openness, I thought it appropriate obviously to advise the committee at the start of proceedings today.

MR SMYTH: I accept that. The Chief Minister, as Minister for Health, found some errors in transcription in her portfolio, and they were distributed well before the actual hearing date.

Mr Byles: Okay, fair point.

THE CHAIR: I had noticed those anomalies and was concerned by them, as I had been going through them—no, perhaps not! I think Mr Smyth is correct; if there are any mistakes made then the sooner we get them, the better. Thank you for bringing those to the committee’s attention.

We will move to output class 1.1, information services. Looking through the accountability indicators on page 377, I note that there are a few there where it seems that the target and the outcome are exactly the same. Whenever that happens, it makes me wonder whether that is an outcome that has been recorded accurately. The target, for example, for library visits per capita is 5.45. The estimated outcome is 5.45. Items borrowed per capita is 7.95 and the outcome is 7.95. The number of items downloaded is 200,000, and the outcome is 200,000. You get my point.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I then think that, if we are just going to have an outcome that is exactly the same as the target, are we not recording that accurately or why are we

bothering to do this? It just seems that there is no differential between the two that is meaningful for this committee.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly. I will ask Vanessa Little, the head of Libraries ACT, to provide you with a bit more information on how that data is derived. That might give you some insight, Mr Hanson.

Ms Little: This data is derived from planning purposes that we have put in place, and we are on track to meet all of those targets. You will note that item d., percentage of the population who are registered library members, is in fact higher, because we do expect to have 57 per cent. It is currently tracking at about 60 per cent, but with our purge that we do, where we get rid of people who have not used the library from our database, we are expecting that to be 57 per cent. So the rest of them are on track and are targets that we set.

THE CHAIR: I appreciate that they are targets you have set, and that you might be on track, but you have an estimated outcome. I just find it intriguing that in all but one case you are exactly on measure. How do you measure those targets?

Ms Little: Those targets are measured as of 30 June. We take the data from April, I think it is, and we project that out until the end of the financial year. For example, the number of publications added to ACT heritage might be 12,005 by the end of the financial year, but we project out over those last few months and expect to be at around 12,000.

DR BOURKE: They must be prescient, chair.

THE CHAIR: Maybe you are just very accurate with your forecasting and your results.

Ms Little: I hope so.

THE CHAIR: Particularly for librarians; I know that you are meticulous with your attention to detail, so that may be the case.

Ms Little: Absolutely.

THE CHAIR: Given that you are meeting all of those targets within ACT library services, I note that some are going up in terms of the targets for 2013-14.

Ms Little: Yes.

THE CHAIR: You are confident that you will be able to meet all of those?

Ms Little: Yes. One of the interesting things, if you look at the national data, is that the ACT is the only jurisdiction that is growing in terms of its loans and visits in any significant way. In the last financial year, in 2011-12, the national growth in loans and visits was very small. Loans, for example, was 0.04 per cent, but the Libraries ACT loans grew by seven per cent.

THE CHAIR: What do you put that down to?

Ms Little: Good management, of course, Mr Hanson.

THE CHAIR: Good management or good marketing? Are we more literate? Is there any particular—

Ms Little: A lot of the above. The government has put a considerable focus in the last few years on our collections budget, which has assisted us in producing a product that the community really loves to use. We do a lot of community programming, and we do a lot of work with community groups who would not traditionally be library users, so we encourage people to come in. Growth in participation in our programs went from around 44,000 in 2010-11 to 66,000 in 2011-12. We reach out into the community a lot more. So we have got a good product. We have, obviously, very good staff who encourage people to read. Last year was National Year of Reading, so we had a lot of focus on reading, the joy of reading and the importance of reading. So we do a lot of marketing as well.

THE CHAIR: How is the Kingston library going?

Ms Little: Kingston library is going very well. People that live around that area love it. They love its funky nature. It is going very well.

THE CHAIR: They are very funky people in Kingston!

Ms Little: They are.

THE CHAIR: I used to live there. I had to move out because I was not funky enough!

Mr Rattenbury: How disappointing for you!

THE CHAIR: You can imagine. I had to move to Weston Creek, where the people are less funky and actually do not have a library, so I am wondering if you have had any feedback from the Weston Creek community. I know they have their mobile library that visits fortnightly.

Ms Little: They do, yes. Nothing in recent months. Every once in a while, somebody might make contact with us and ask about library services there, but generally I have not had anything in the recent past.

THE CHAIR: I know that it is an ongoing issue within the community. In particular the community council are active on it, and they get a lot of representations. Certainly, when I am out at Woolies or something people will raise it as an issue with me. The service that comes is appreciated but there is still lobbying in that area. How are you going to map where the need is? There are changing demographics, and you obviously have need that changes, I imagine, as the demographic changes. Young people have needs, and older people do. How do you map that and plan for where the resources should be going?

Ms Little: We keep a very good eye on the demographics of the various suburbs. We also keep a really good eye on people who are coming through the door. It is how we manage the Kingston library, for example. Because it is that bookshop kind of activity, we very much model the collection on that community. We keep moving the collection around so that it is quite relevant. We look at those sorts of things. We certainly keep in touch with a lot of community groups so that we can talk to refugee groups and those kinds of things about who is moving into areas. So we are very active.

The way we structure the staff of the library is that our professional staff work in what we call portfolios. Our portfolios are our seniors, multicultural, children under five, those sorts of things, people with disabilities. We work with those communities on working out what their needs are and where they are situated. We have a pretty good handle, and sometimes probably a better handle than others, on who is moving into our areas and what their library needs are.

THE CHAIR: Where do you get that information from—ABS?

Ms Little: Yes, the ABS, from the ACT government statistician, from working with community groups, working with other representative bodies like the Multicultural Council. We gather a lot of data and a lot of it in the early times is anecdotal, of course. You do not see things pop up in ABS data for a while. Often you know it from talking to the community groups about who is moving into the area.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: It is always a pleasure to be able to ask a librarian questions.

Mr Rattenbury: You can do it any day of the week. Just wander in to your local library.

Ms Little: That is right, just wander in.

DR BOURKE: And I do.

Ms Little: Or ring up or come online.

DR BOURKE: Thank you. I understand the ACT digital hub at Gungahlin library is an Australian government-funded program under the NBN. Do you envisage the program will spread to Belconnen library, for example, when the NBN rolls out there or is the program which you might duplicate from TAMS resources in other libraries?

Ms Little: At the moment, we are in discussions with the people from NBN Co and DBCDE. We would very much like to mirror those services in all of our library branches and the e-government project which is managed out of CMTD and ourselves. We are working together in discussions with NBN Co and the federal government around that possibility. It depends really on what happens in September, I think, and how much money there is going to be around for the NBN project. But we very much want to mirror that hub in other places. It has been very successful.

DR BOURKE: What sort of feedback have you had from your users?

Ms Little: They are loving it. Many of the seniors in that area, and not just in Gungahlin, are travelling there. They are thrilled to be getting a one-on-one training session on how to use technologies. Some of them are at the very beginning, they do not know how to use a computer, and others are saying, "Teach me how to use an eBook device."

We have got a project that has just started with immigration, which we love because it is an extension of what we already do. In the past people who were learning English under the AME program would come together, say, in the Gungahlin library and there could be a whole pile of people in there with different languages all learning English together, which is okay, but it is a much better program if they can learn English in a group where everyone is the same-language speaker. Because of the fast broadband and the fabulous video conferencing we have got there, people can come in and, using the technology, link into a program with other speakers of their own language. So people are loving that.

We are in a pilot program with the Department of Human Services as well. They pick the right customers or the right clients of theirs. But instead of somebody having to travel into a DHS office to have an interview around Centrelink or one of the services of DHS, they come into Gungahlin library and, again, video-conference into their interview. It is all set up so that the screen is on the desk, on the table in front of you, so that it is like having a conversation. It has been very successful. We are always looking for more people to come in and use the service but we are very happy with the way it is going.

DR BOURKE: Still on Gungahlin library which is co-located with Gungahlin College, how do you manage the responsibility of costs and staffing of the college, and is it a model that could be used elsewhere?

Ms Little: The way we manage it is that the college has a specific space, you might know, down at one end of the library. That is managed by their teacher-librarians, and their collection is down at that end. Having said that, though, of course the rest of the library is open to the public, and that includes the college students. We manage the public library part of that project.

It would be fair to say it is not without its challenges in terms of policy, in terms of service delivery, in terms of who pays for what. It would be something that I would say we want to look at seriously if you wanted to replicate the model. Certainly the way that public libraries are going in the future in other places is co-located with organisations like community service organisations where we share a very common platform, a very common philosophy, and we are trying to link into those people who use community services in terms of who our target audience is, if you like.

It works perfectly well at Gungahlin and it is going gangbusters. The library there is so popular. If I, personally as a professional, had my way, my next one would be co-located with community service people.

DR BOURKE: The college gets a lot of interstate visitors who are always impressed

with the layout and the co-location with the library. Is this something that is being contemplated in other jurisdictions?

Ms Little: To be honest, it is actually one that has been moved on from in other jurisdictions. It depends on how things work, what your jurisdiction is. The model works very well in small communities. It works very well where there is one school and one public library, the community knows each other and they are too small to have both. I am a South Australian and I ran the public library system in South Australia for a number of years. There are many of these joint-use libraries in country South Australia and they work very well. It is a model that is more difficult to replicate in a bigger city.

DR BOURKE: And you have got a coffee shop in the library too?

Ms Little: Yes, there at Gungahlin we do and, of course, the one at Woden.

DR BOURKE: How has that taken?

Ms Little: Again, it is not the easiest thing in the world. Again, if I had my way, I would not have put the coffee shop exactly where I did in the plan of the library. I think I might have moved it into a slightly more public area. But people love it and the coffee shop people say that they get a real spike in their use when we have our kids programs. I do not think I am allowed to mention giggle & wiggle once more but—

DR BOURKE: You can. Can I hear it again? Is that giggle & wiggle?

Ms Little: Giggle & wiggle, yes, when we have the program for the under-2s and then programs like story time. When we have activities in the library, there is a real spike. It is a real destination, that library.

DR BOURKE: So parents are coming in, taking their kids to the giggle & wiggle or other programs that you run and then having a coffee in the library?

Ms Little: Yes, coffee.

DR BOURKE: Is that a separate small business or is it a business unit or the like?

Ms Little: It is a separate small business that is based in the library, yes. They have a lease with us.

DR BOURKE: And they are content with the arrangements, traffic flow and turnover?

Ms Little: They would always like more customers and we are discussing signage with them at the moment. They believe that they need a bit more signage exterior to the building to let people know that the coffee shop is there. We are talking to them about that.

DR BOURKE: Of course there is a trend at the National Library with refreshments

being provided in the library, of course, with Bookplate.

Ms Little: Yes, there is. Bookplate is a very successful business.

MR GENTLEMAN: Ms Little, you mentioned earlier that the uptake for library users in the ACT is quite high compared to other jurisdictions. We have gone through this morning some of the things that are provided, but why do you think it is that that uptake is greater in the ACT?

Ms Little: Again, the uptake in loans, I would put down quite a bit to the fact that we have a really good collection. You will notice in these accountability indicators that over 50 per cent of our collection is under the age of five years. The average across the country is about 50 per cent; so we are higher. People, when they walk through the door, see quality product. Of course we are a big reading community. You have a very high number of people in the reading cohort. I like to think it is because we market it a lot and we do a lot of activities outside of the library that bring people in.

In terms of our visits, again we have some very nice facilities. People love to come to Gungahlin, they love to come to Kingston. Woden is terribly convenient for people. The visitation is high, I think, for the convenience and the ambience of the buildings and, I like to think, staff response to people. And of course, we do a lot of programming, a lot of community education activities. Come along and learn how to use a computer, come along and hear about health, come and hear about parenting, we are going to teach you how to put your baby to sleep, that kind of stuff. We offer our facilities to a lot of different agencies, both government and non-government agencies, to run programs. Visitation is high from those sorts of things too, I think.

MR GENTLEMAN: What facilities are available at the Heritage Library?

Ms Little: The Heritage Library is of those little gems that sit at the top of the Woden Public Library. The Heritage Library consists of heritage materials that are about the story of Canberra, about the community of Canberra and about the life of people here in the ACT. We do not compete with the National Library. The National Library collects historic and heritage material around Canberra as the nation's capital, and we collect material and resources around Canberra as a community and as a place. So our collections dovetail nicely together.

We have seen a huge increase—now I am putting myself on the spot—of over 70 per cent in the number of inquiries at the Heritage Library this year. I imagine that has got a lot to do with the centenary. We have maps, we have many photographs, documents, reports, all sorts of interesting things in the Heritage Library.

MR GENTLEMAN: And I have noticed you have different opening hours for different libraries. Some, like Tuggeranong, are open seven days a week, but for different hours. How do you allocate those hours and how do you manage the staffing?

Ms Little: First of all, we start with regional bases. Our libraries are open to people in the north and the south and those kinds of things. We also look at usage. When are people making the most demand on our library services? And of course, we balance

that against our budget.

MR SMYTH: Ms Little, do we have to kneel and call you Lady President now?

Ms Little: No. I handed over my presidency about—

MR SMYTH: The baton has gone?

Ms Little: Yes. I handed over my presidency of the library association a month ago.

MR SMYTH: So you have missed appearing before estimates as a president?

Ms Little: Yes, I have probably.

MR SMYTH: That is a shame. Congratulations.

Ms Little: Thank you.

MR SMYTH: Vanessa was president of ALIA, which was a great achievement. I notice that you have got a new website whose first-month birthday is today. How has it been going?

Ms Little: Really well. The website was revised in order to meet the requirements of the new whole-of-government website. Again, we get lots of positive feedback about our website, and we are always interested in more because we like to keep revising it and changing it. We are discussing with the people who have got the e-government funding from NBN how we might do some more interesting things with our website and with video conferencing and video streaming and things. So watch the library website for some interesting things. Subject to copyright, we are talking about online story time.

MR SMYTH: Part of it is so that handheld devices can have automatic formatting?

Ms Little: Correct, yes.

MR SMYTH: Is there any word yet as to whether or not that has been successful?

Ms Little: I have not had any feedback on that.

MR SMYTH: So, no complaints?

Ms Little: But it certainly is available. You now can pull an app down and use the library website on your handheld.

MR SMYTH: When you go onto the new website and you look for the policies there is a section called “Current Library ACT Policies”. I see a number are under review. What is the purpose of reviewing the loans policy in particular?

Ms Little: The loans policy is under review because we have had the new fee structure, and that will be reviewed in October. We also are looking at the number of

items that people can borrow under the loans policy. That one is under review for that reason.

MR SMYTH: And the overdue fines and notices are now—

Ms Little: That is linked.

MR SMYTH: It is coming up to 12 months. How has that worked?

Ms Little: We were unable to get the technology to work, for the new system, till about October; so that review will happen in October.

MR SMYTH: And is there any reason for the hire policy and the display policy to be reviewed?

Ms Little: Yes. We are reviewing that because of the demand that we have had from people wanting to use our facilities. We need to make it standard across all of our libraries. And one of the issues that exercise our minds and that we will need to put into our policy is that we are unable to offer security to people who do exhibitions. That is another reason why we are revising that, because we need to be very clear with people that if you put your paintings, your artwork or your quilts in our library, they are secure in a way because we are in the building but there is no actual security system that you would have in a proper gallery.

MR SMYTH: Does the government have a library strategy; and if so where would you find it on this website?

Ms Little: Not at this moment. We are working on that.

MR SMYTH: So when is that due?

Ms Little: That will be part of the review process.

MR SMYTH: Sorry, which review process?

Mr Rattenbury: The Parks and City Services review that was announced in the budget. Libraries ACT sits within that division of TAMS and is part of the consideration there. I am happy to talk more about the review, the intent of it, but libraries will be encompassed in that review.

MR SMYTH: So the library service will actually be reviewed under this review?

Mr Rattenbury: The purpose of the review is to look at the provision of services, at where the government is getting best value for money out of all of the services that sit in Parks and City Services, and obviously libraries will be part of that.

MR SMYTH: Is there some concern we are not getting value from the library service as is?

Mr Rattenbury: No. I think it is important to be quite clear about the intent of these

reviews. The budgets across TAMS are under pressure. These reviews have been set up in a way to look at service delivery levels. Are we meeting community expectations? Are there areas where we need to change service models? It is a very open-ended and, I think, quite positive process of looking at are we doing the right things; are we keeping up to date with community expectations?

MR SMYTH: Ms Little, when was the last time the service had a strategy?

Ms Little: We were working on a strategy for some time and then that was held aside due to the election. We have not had a strategy for a couple of years now, probably three.

MR SMYTH: You expect a new strategy to be delivered when, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: As I indicated, I think it is the sort of thing that will flow out of the review of Parks and City Services.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe.

MR COE: I was wondering what resources are allocated toward digitisation at the library, especially the Heritage Library?

Ms Little: At the moment there are none. It is a very expensive business. We are in discussions with the National Library, as are all of the members of National and State Libraries Australasia, to see whether, in fact, that could be picked up by the National Library and we would all contribute funds to that.

MR COE: It would just be on a fee-for-service type arrangement?

Ms Little: Yes. They do a lot of the digitisation for us already when the National Library pick up something that they want to digitise. For example, all of our historic newspapers are already digitised by the National Library because they do it as part of the national record. Of course, we are such a small player that we are in conversations with them about whether we could use their storage facilities. It is more about the ongoing storage of that digitisation than it is about the task of doing it.

We are in conversations with them, as are a number of other agencies. The capture of the born-digital is another very big issue, which is websites and those sorts of things. The National Library already have their PANDORA project and they do capture some. A number of the other states and territories are talking to them about extending that program.

MR COE: So when the National Library captures relevant ACT information, perhaps on Trove or whatever, how does that feed back into the ACT library system, or is it simply a matter of redirecting people?

Ms Little: All that happens is it is redirected; that is right.

MR COE: Is there any thinking within the library management that Shared Services IT does not provide a flexible enough service to the library?

Ms Little: That is not the case, no. The digitisation issue is a thorny one. As I said, it has been an expensive one. In my view, the costs associated with getting Shared Services to hold our digitised data versus the cost of actually adding ours on to a national or state library are chalk and cheese. We have chosen to go down the path of collaborating with other libraries.

MR COE: But what about for other library services? Do Shared Services provide everything that you need or everything which is provided in a comparable library service?

Ms Little: Yes, they do. Of course, we always want more. We are libraries, and we push the envelope of IT departments all around the world. They are very good partners of ours. We have spoken to them recently about the bandwidth for our wi-fi, and they are addressing that for us, because we have had some people ask us to improve that. They are very good partners with us, and we work with them very effectively. Do I want more? Always, but there is a limit to what we can afford in this jurisdiction.

MR COE: Finally, here in Civic Square—has the library received any proposal to make Civic Square a wi-fi zone?

Ms Little: No, we have not received any proposal out in the square. We certainly are wi-fi within the library.

MR COE: As far as you could foresee, do you think that would be possible or useful for the library—to actually have Civic Square covered by the wi-fi zone?

Ms Little: It certainly could draw people in. A large number of people who come into Civic Library are students and backpackers. Subject to the weather, of course, it could be a very useful thing for people to be able to sit out and have a coffee and use the wi-fi.

MR COE: That is right. Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Just turning to e-resources, what does your current suite contain?

Ms Little: Far too many to even contemplate. We have, of course, e-books. We have e-talking books. We have a range of databases that cover everything from the social sciences right through to science and other topics. These are databases of journals that we subscribe to to help particularly students but also members of the ACT government and the ACT community to do research.

We have our “my tutor” program, which is targeted at students from five years of age up to about 15 or 16. If you have got a problem with your homework you can go through our website and ask for help from an online tutor. We pay a subscription for that. We encourage young people to use that. We particularly encourage parents, when they do not quite know how to help with homework, to encourage their students

to get onto it.

We have a range of online services as well. We have our music services, which are very popular. You can actually download three songs a week to your mobile device legally through us. We pay a subscription and that enables every Canberran to have three free songs a week, and then the next week another three free songs.

There are art and craft databases that people can use. We provide a very broad range of services online that you can access from your device, whether you are at home, at work or anywhere.

DR BOURKE: Do you see any opportunities for expansion of that service in the future?

Ms Little: Absolutely. The demand that we have for our e-books is quite high. The problem that we have, and it is an international problem, is that our friends in publishing are not quite as keen to deal with libraries as we would like. They are putting quite a number of restrictions on our ability to purchase e-titles. In my capacity as the former president of ALIA, I had a lot of discussions with publishers and others.

The federal government has set up a book industry collaborative council and we are represented there. Hopefully we can get it sorted out. Certainly, in a place like Canberra, people are time poor but they like to read. They are IT savvy and they are getting a little frustrated at the number of e-titles we can make available. That is not because we do not want to; it is because we are precluded in a lot of cases by the publishers.

DR BOURKE: Do the e-titles you have cover all formats?

Ms Little: Fiction and non-fiction?

DR BOURKE: All devices.

Ms Little: Yes, they cover fiction and non-fiction.

DR BOURKE: I am sorry; I mean all devices.

Ms Little: No, and we encourage people to do the tutorial on our website. The Kindle device is purely Amazon connected. You cannot use it for any of our services. Whilst not wanting to recommend one device over another, we do let people know that all the other devices are fine; iPads, iPhones and Kobos are all fine. But the Kindle will only download from Amazon.

DR BOURKE: That must come as a nasty shock to people who purchase a Kindle.

Ms Little: It does, which is why we strongly encourage people to do the tutorial on our website about what you can and cannot do with the various devices.

THE CHAIR: Thankfully, I have a Kobo.

MR SMYTH: Your wisdom is legendary, Chair.

THE CHAIR: Yes, it was not through any research; it was the price. Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Ms Little, my last visit to the library was over at the new Gungahlin library. I noticed an electronic gaming area for, I imagine, younger people. How often do you keep the new applications going? I understand there is a new Xbox due out shortly and a PS4 at the end of the year?

Ms Little: I will make sure that our staff know about that. The library is fairly new and we have not updated any of that just yet. All of our equipment is on a plan for upgrade.

MR GENTLEMAN: How do you manage classifications?

Ms Little: We only have G.

MR SMYTH: Mick was wondering what sort of electronic steering wheels you could get and faster race car games.

Ms Little: It is not electronic, but there was a steering wheel thing there. You might not have noticed that the carpet has Space Invaders in it as a nod to retro.

Mr Rattenbury: Fantastic.

THE CHAIR: The average age of your user might go up.

MR SMYTH: What do you mean Space Invaders is retro? When did that happen?

Ms Little: It was around when I was young.

THE CHAIR: The late 1990s, I think, Mr Smyth.

MR COE: Minister, I have a question about the MyWay shopfronts. Should they be exclusively directed to ACTION or do they come under information services?

Mr Rattenbury: It would be best if we take those with ACTION next week, Mr Coe. The same staff that deal with MyWay deal with the general ACTION service.

MR COE: Okay. I have a follow-on question with regard to Canberra Connect. If the MyWay centres do close, what sort of impact is that going to have on the number of transactions, the queues and the demand in general for Canberra Connect shopfronts, and will they be fully charged with the same services that MyWay shopfronts have?

Mr Colussi: As you know, the MyWay centres are a roads and public transport initiative. As you know, they are closing on 28 June. We expect that most of the custom that is currently done at the MyWay centres will migrate to the new recharge agents, so there are an extra 10 recharge agents coming on. I understand there will be some migration to Canberra Connect shopfronts but I do not anticipate that to be

particularly large. Yes, the full suite of services would be available through the shopfront, if people chose to go to a shopfront to do it. There is a particular RTA program around students and so forth. That would not be available through the shopfront. As is the case now, it is not done through MyWay; it is done through the back office of the RTA.

MR COE: With the centre of gravity moving in Belconnen, with the bus stations as opposed to the old interchange, how do you think that affects the accessibility of the current Canberra Connect shopfront in Belconnen, how long is your lease there, and do you intend to renew it?

Mr Colussi: Yes, there is a new lease being let on those premises at Swanson Plaza. Canberra Connect shopfronts are a destination in their own right, and I do not anticipate that there would be any less custom through that shopfront from an accessibility point of view. I would say that generally the trend in shopfront transaction is plateauing or even declining slightly as people take up online transactions. I do not think the changes around the interchange will necessarily change the flow of custom at the Belconnen shopfront.

MR COE: What about accessibility in terms of parking?

Mr Colussi: At Swanson Plaza?

MR COE: Yes, given the massive amount of development which is taking place around—

Mr Colussi: Parking is not something that I can really comment on.

MR COE: But in terms of the impact that it has on customer feedback, do people say they find it hard to get to Belconnen compared to other Canberra Connect shopfronts?

Mr Colussi: We have never had that feedback. There was a dirt car park at the side of the shopfront at one stage which people were using on an ad hoc basis. People commented on it and said, “Can that be formalised as a car park?” That was nothing that Canberra Connect could control or do anything about. That is the only feedback that I have really had about car parking at Swanson Plaza.

MR COE: What sort of demand is there for Canberra Connect services out in Gungahlin?

Mr Colussi: We anticipate that it will grow over the next few years. There is a program in place, as you would be aware, for the Gungahlin shopfront—part of an EDD project for the development of an office block there. Part of the consideration of that office block is how a shopfront would fit into that scheme. EDD are managing the project around development, build and delivery of that.

MR COE: Have you been given a time frame?

Mr Colussi: I have. December 2014.

DR BOURKE: In the accountability indicators on page 377, i. and j., for service volume and accessibility, under note 5, minister, the breakdown for interactions is a staggering 490,000 shopfront transactions, 682,000 contact centre transactions and 6½ million web transactions. What are your forecasts of how the ratios of these different transactions might change in years to come?

Mr Colussi: With the ratio, I think we will see an increase towards online. We are getting more and more online transactions available. Any time an agency comes to Canberra Connect and says, “We would like to use Canberra Connect as a service channel for delivery of new policy,” or whatever, we always sit down and do an assessment of how we can make that happen online as a sort of digital first approach, bearing in mind that we also make sure that we give people choice about how they go about doing those transactions. I would think that the desire of the community is to go online, so I would expect that ratio to increase towards the online.

DR BOURKE: What would be the effect of that upon your service delivery and systems?

Mr Colussi: We would need to continue to make that investment into online services. The other two channels will tend to remain reasonably static, but ensuring that we have appropriate investment in online smart forms and mobile service delivery is important. There is no doubt about that.

DR BOURKE: I notice you have a 90 per cent satisfaction index of customers. How do you conduct satisfaction surveys?

Mr Colussi: That is a telephone survey of 600 Canberrans. We undertake that annually. We collect those figures to ask them about their satisfaction with Canberra Connect and ease of access to Connect.

DR BOURKE: Do you do that yourselves or do you outsource it?

Mr Colussi: We outsource that.

DR BOURKE: Do they do it randomly or ask customers?

Mr Colussi: Random. They will continue to ring through a listing of telephone numbers until they get 600 people that have transacted with Canberra Connect in the last six months

DR BOURKE: Mobiles or landlines?

Mr Colussi: That is a good question. I think it is landlines. I would have to check that. I will take that on notice.

DR BOURKE: Yes, because that is going to produce a differentiation within the sample size. There will be more younger people only with mobiles and more older people with landlines.

Mr Colussi: Yes, I will check that. I am not 100 per cent sure. I will take it on notice.

DR BOURKE: Yes. Maybe if you have a look at your sample numbers and age groups, if they actually collect it.

Mr Colussi: They do.

DR BOURKE: Then transpose that with the Canberra community and see whether it is still a great sample or not. Or maybe they just keep going until they have got the numbers to fill their allocations. I do not know how they do it.

Mr Colussi: Sorry, I missed that.

DR BOURKE: Maybe they just keep ringing until they get the right numbers to fill in the blocks of the people that they want.

Mr Colussi: They continue to ring until they have 600. I take your point that it might be skewed towards a particular demographic.

DR BOURKE: Possibly. Thank you.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, in the indicators on page 377 it shows that your customer volume through Canberra Connect has risen from 7.3 million to 7.6 million but your average cost has come down from \$1.80—the outcome was \$1.75 and you projected \$1.79 for the next term. How have you been able to manage that cost reduction and do you think that trend will continue?

Mr Rattenbury: I think that cost reduction reflects—and Mr Colussi made the point—the increasing number of online transactions. You can see at note 7 at the bottom of the page the online transactions per unit are substantially less expensive, at just 41c, compared to \$12.78 for a shopfront or \$7.09 for the contact centre. So with the increasing proportion of online transactions, that produces that effect.

MR GENTLEMAN: My last question is: do you still have the same hold message on Canberra Connect?

Mr Rattenbury: When I last rang, I cannot recall.

Mr Colussi: No, we do not. It depends when you last called, I guess. We have a cycling series of messages on the Canberra Connect line now. We have our government initiatives on there, and we cycle that. There are about 30 different messages that are available and we put that through that messaging system on a random basis.

MR SMYTH: How many of the government's transactions are actually now electronic? How many government transactions are there and how many of them can be performed electronically now?

Mr Rattenbury: Do you mean how many different types of bills are there?

MR SMYTH: How many payments, how many licences, how many renewals?

Mr Colussi: That is a big question. I do not have an answer for you on that, because there are a lot of things that would occur across government that Canberra Connect would not have visibility of. In terms of, for example, paying in an ACT government account, there are 72 different types of payments that we enable through our online form. I am sorry; your question was about online, was it not?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Colussi: There are about 300 different other forms and applications that are available online. As to what percentage of the total ACT government service delivery that constitutes, I could not give you an answer on that.

MR SMYTH: Obviously you would prefer to have it all coming through Canberra Connect. I have a recollection that it was something like 1,500 transactions that the government conducts, and less than 100 were online. Is it possible for that to be taken on notice?

Mr Colussi: I am not sure about that. I can tell you there are 1,899 transactions that Canberra Connect performs across its business on behalf of the ACT government. Of those, there are about 300 or so that are enabled online. There would be a whole raft of things that are done through Health, Education or a whole bunch of other directorates that we would not have visibility of, and I am not sure how they would be delivered—probably face to face in a lot of circumstances, I would imagine.

MR SMYTH: Could you possibly take it on notice and see what you can tell the committee?

Mr Rattenbury: I am not sure that we can, Mr Smyth, in the sense that Mr Colussi has made it clear that that would require us to go through all of the agencies and ask all of them what their number of transactions is.

MR SMYTH: Does the government have a strategy to get all of its transactions online, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly it is increasing. Canberra Connect is making itself available and there are constant discussions going on about new services coming into Canberra Connect.

MR SMYTH: If you do not know the scope of what you might be travelling down, how can you plan to do it?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it has been done on a responsive basis so far. I think that what we are seeing is that agencies really appreciate the efficiency and the effectiveness of Canberra Connect; so in some ways the agencies are coming forward and seeking the service.

MR SMYTH: You are not willing to take it on notice and give us an overview or rough overview? I am not asking you to do it definitively but—

Mr Rattenbury: Sure. I am just not sure that we would be able to give you an accurate answer, is the only reason I am hesitating.

MR COE: On credit card payments, what area of the government manages the credit card terminal account? Is it just one terminal account that the ACT government has across the board, or does Canberra Connect have a separate one to the Revenue Office and a separate one to every other function of the ACT government?

Mr Colussi: Sorry, I am not sure what you mean by “terminal account”.

MR COE: Is the provision of credit card services simply done through the territory’s bank or does Canberra Connect negotiate with a bank or with a financial service provider independently?

Mr Colussi: No, there is a whole-of-government banking contract which Canberra Connect uses, being part of whole of government, but we do not own that banking contract. There is one for all of government.

MR COE: You do not have to negotiate how you process any charges, credit cards, and what credit cards you take and all the other associated questions?

Mr Colussi: No, we do not negotiate that. Currently there are fees and charges associated with the Commonwealth Bank, who is our banking provider at the moment. For every transaction that is done at a shopfront or at any of the other ACT government agencies, there is a fee levied to government, which is distributed across the agencies.

MR COE: Is that merchant fee included in the cost per customer interaction?

Mr Colussi: Yes, it is.

MR COE: Only if it is reasonable—I do not want to create too much work—is it possible for you to give the total amount that Canberra Connect pays in credit card merchant fees?

Mr Colussi: Yes.

MR COE: If you can take that on notice, that would be good.

Mr Colussi: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We might move now to the next output class, which is 1.3, waste and recycling. I would like to go to budget paper 4, page 378, and there is an accountability indicator there which is annual tonnes of waste to landfill per head of population. And that target is lower than projected, and I notice that the target has been reduced commensurate with that as well. What is the issue there in terms of not meeting that target and why has the indicator been reduced for 2013-14?

Mr Ware: The indicator was set at the time, based on trending analysis of waste volumes going to landfill, and at the time it was set, waste to landfill was trending

upwards. When we looked at our estimated outcome for this year, we had the very pleasant surprise of our waste to landfill actually plateauing. This is actually a good-news story where the people of Canberra, hopefully, by the time we reach 30 June, will have sent roughly the same amount as has been sent to landfill last year and the year before, when you take out some external, one-off factors that occurred last year. So instead of waste to landfill continuing to rise, we have actually got a good-news story here where waste to landfill will hopefully drop and it will hopefully achieve the 0.8 tonne per head of population figure.

DR BOURKE: So less is more?

Mr Ware: It is what we are aiming for.

MR COE: But is not the real reason for this that there has been an economic slowdown in the commercial sector, as reflected in note 1?

Mr Ware: Partly that. We are anticipating a plateauing. Figures are around the same as the figures over the past number of months. So it is not in effect a slowdown, it is more of a plateauing of waste to landfill, bearing in mind this figure is measuring waste to landfill. It is not measuring the amount of recycling that also occurs. As various government programs start to take effect and continue to affect outcomes, then of course more recycling means less waste to landfill.

MR COE: Would you please take on notice a question to provide the estimates committee with a breakdown of tonnage collected kerbside over the last few years and also tonnage sent to landfill from commercial and industrial waste?

Mr Rattenbury: About four years?

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: That is suitable?

MR COE: Yes.

Mr Ware: All right, four years. The historical information is available on our website, but when we close the books at the end of this year we will be able to provide that information.

MR COE: Thank you.

Mr Rattenbury: Are you happy to wait then, till a closing of the books?

MR COE: I guess it is up to the chair. I am happy for you, if not formally to take it on notice, to send me a letter in July. I am happy with that but it is up to the committee.

Mr Rattenbury: Why do we not send the letter in July, once we have the most up-to-date figures?

THE CHAIR: Yes, if that suits you, Mr Coe?

MR COE: Yes. So do not formally take it on notice, but if you can undertake to do that, that would be good. Thank you, minister.

Mr Ware: Yes, certainly.

THE CHAIR: That sounds good.

Mr Ware: Thank you.

DR BOURKE: In BP3, page 166, there is \$1.6 million allocated for the new domestic recyclables and waste collection service contract for single-unit and multi-unit developments. What does this involve, and how does it relate to the new domestic waste and recyclables collection contract?

Mr Ware: The \$1.6 million allocated in the budget this year is for the purchase, basically, of waste hoppers that are allocated to multi-unit developments for waste and recycling. The present contractor, who has been operating for the past 10 years, owns the present waste and recycling collection hoppers in multi-unit developments, and as a levelling of the playing field during the tender process we made the decision that it would be better for the government to own those bins for future contracts. And that is what this will allow us to do. That money is allocated for the purchase of new waste and recycling hoppers for those units.

DR BOURKE: Minister, with the recent announcement of the go-ahead for the Riverview development, what are the implications for the Belconnen waste facility?

Mr Ware: My understanding is that as that development moves further from south to north, there may be some impacts on the potential future uses for the West Belconnen Resource Management Centre, but the uses that are at that facility at the moment certainly would not impact on housing development at the moment, because we are not disposing of putrescible waste in that facility.

Mr Rattenbury: And certainly from the discussions I have had with the proponents of that area, they see real opportunity for integration and use of the Belconnen landfill site. They have talked about solar farms, community gardens, a range of opportunities in the area. They do not see it as a threat to the development, they see it as something they would look to integrate with as part of the development.

MR COE: The soil quality there would not allow most of those—

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, I said community gardens. I retract that.

DR BOURKE: How are they mitigating soil contamination on the site?

Mr Ware: Sorry, what was the question?

DR BOURKE: How would they be mitigating the soil contamination of the site? Is it—

Mr Ware: Within the area—and Mr Coe certainly has been out there—there are discrete areas that have been used for landfill. The housing development, as I understand it, will not encroach within the actual footprint of the present Resource Management Centre. There will not be houses built on former landfill sites.

Mr Perram: If you can imagine the proximity of West Macgregor, that provides a buffer line around the site. I would imagine, from the discussions we have had, that the Riverview development will progress in a like manner and then, subject to tests related to the West Belconnen Resource Management Centre, that then will go into the finer analysis of what can be done on that site. But certainly there are some very animated discussions in respect of solar farms on the site and the potential for that.

DR BOURKE: So its purpose as a waste management facility would be discontinued and it would be turned over to become a solar farm, or they both could sort of operate side by side, or what?

Mr Perram: I will let Chris talk about the longer term area, but in regard to the collection of asbestos in respect of the burrow pit and filling of that area, that opportunity should be exhausted in about 2016. So that area will not be used, and that should fit in quite nicely with the development of the Riverview estate. That will be closed off. In relation to the potential uses and past uses of the landfill, I will hand over to Chris.

Mr Ware: The facility is presently closed for the acceptance of putrescible waste, as I stated. That is the ACT's emergency landfill site and there is approximately six months of life should we ever need it. The intention is not to use that unless we absolutely need to, as I said, in an emergency. And that is in a very discrete area of the landfill site and would be well away from any houses at the time.

The long-term future uses, as Mr Perram was saying and as the minister was saying, could include solar farms and could include other types of resource recovery. And we have not yet got to that stage of thinking about what that will be. Obviously the approval of the Riverview housing project has been quite recent and obviously we will do our forward planning and policy development based around the future uses in the surrounding areas.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned emergencies there. What sorts of emergencies are you talking about?

Mr Ware: If for whatever reason we could not access the main facility at Mugga Lane, then we may have to go to an alternative facility such as the one we have at west Belconnen.

DR BOURKE: You also talked about the burrow pit. How would that be sealed over to protect future users?

Mr Ware: The EPA will require us to close that in a manner, and I think that we are talking about at least a metre of clay, very highly compacted clay to a metre deep, and then possibly another two to three metres of topsoil over the top of that facility.

DR BOURKE: So even the rabbits will not be able to get down to it?

Mr Ware: That is the intention.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, page 378 shows indicators for the cost of recycling from kerbside and also the cost to landfill, which shows that recycling is much cheaper than the cost to landfill. How is this achieved and what are the benefits for the ACT community and the environment now and for years to come?

Mr Ware: We have a contract with REMONDIS to recycle materials at Hume. That is a contracted rate. It is a very low rate and we are very happy with the rate that we get. Obviously some of the commodities are processed. If you think about what you put into your yellow bin at home and the type of materials in there, some of those are worth money when you sell them as a commodity and sort them into the different waste streams. Certainly, paper and cardboard is worth quite a bit. Steel, aluminium and glass can also be sold into commodities markets if you take out the transportation cost. That is how we keep the cost low on that one.

Landfilling is obviously more expensive when you are talking about the types of heavy machinery that we have and the personnel that are required. The long-term after-care of the facility also has to be taken into account.

MR GENTLEMAN: How do these recycling rates compare to other jurisdictions?

Mr Ware: From what I understand of benchmarking of facilities around the country, and certainly comparing similar facilities, our rates and our contamination rates—contamination rates is what people put in their yellow bin that should not be there—are low compared to other jurisdictions.

MR COE: I am sure we went over this last year, but I would appreciate it if you would refresh the committee's memory of the reason why the d. and e. output indicators are being discontinued?

Mr Ware: D. and e. have been discontinued and replaced with h. and i. D. and e. are a measure of the contractor cost per tonne, whereas h. and i. convert that back to a dollar figure per head of population. I believe that was a request that the estimates committee made last year.

MR COE: Mr Gentlemen just referred to output e. and the two figures. That is simply the contract price, as opposed to an actual performance indicator, isn't it?

Mr Ware: Yes; d. is the price per household. I believe there was much discussion of the committee last year about how many people there are per household.

MR COE: Sure. The contract for the kerbside collection—have there been any thoughts on how that could be changed in a substantive way for the government in terms of flexibility or multiple providers, the provision to pick up waste in town centres et cetera?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly in the contract, in the negotiations that have taken place, there is a level of flexibility in the way the contract has been put together so that if the government wanted to change the frequency of services, for example, that would be possible. There is a range of things built into the contract such that if we need to do different things in the future we can.

This is certainly something that I asked about in the process of negotiation. For example, some people are suggesting we should move to a weekly collection of the yellow bin and a fortnightly collection of the waste to landfill bin. We have not taken a decision on that yet, but that is feedback I am hearing from the community. So it was important to me that that level of flexibility was available in the contract and that is the way it has been written.

MR COE: What about the provision of collecting waste other than at household addresses?

Mr Rattenbury: Commercial?

MR COE: Yes; commercial, community groups or even public areas.

Mr Ware: The contract that we have negotiated was solely for the collection of waste from residential properties. This could be extended, but it would require a change to the present contract. There are numerous companies out there delivering that service on a very cost-effective basis at the moment.

MR COE: Numerous companies in the ACT?

Mr Ware: Yes, in the ACT, who provide commercial collections from commercial premises.

MR COE: But what about in the public space?

Mr Ware: You are talking—

Mr Rattenbury: The recycling bins?

MR COE: Like in City Walk, bus interchanges, bus stations et cetera.

Mr Ware: In terms of the size of the vehicle required for the kerbside collection contracts, we are talking about vehicles that can hold up to 20 tonnes. These are vehicles that are up to 12 metres in length. To drive them in and around the city—certainly through Glebe Park or through the city—you would not want to take them off the formed roads. Therefore, your economies of scale would drop out. It would cost you more to wheel those bins, let's say, from the place holder to the kerbside where they could be picked up, and then they have to be returned. The present model, I understand—and Ms Flannery might like to talk about this a bit more—is that smaller trucks are used that can access the bin quite closely.

MR COE: This committee, or at least the planning committee, in the past has quizzed

the relevant minister about the very high cost of collecting rubbish in public places. Has that been combated at all?

Mr Perram: Consideration has been given to it in respect of the efficiency of the collection of the residential waste compared to having smaller truck availability. For us to convert, for example, a couple of the larger trucks to smaller trucks to provide a greater efficiency under this contract—it is about three times the cost to run a smaller truck than a larger truck. That is purely because of the downtime and staff resources staffing the truck. As far as we can see at this stage, the most efficient use is bin-side collection for small, particular locations within Garema Place, that sort of area, where you have got the recycling opportunities, and the larger trucks to create the greater efficiency in the bulk collection, for want of a better description.

MR COE: They are distinct contracts, though; is that right?

Mr Rattenbury: Distinct contracts, yes.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: During the annual reports hearings we heard that there is a new landfill site going ahead at Mugga, that that has been achieved. Will you be collecting methane from that site, as you have with the old site, and then creating some electricity?

Mr Ware: Certainly, the collection of methane will continue into the new landfill cells once they are constructed and at a stage where we can install the gas collection infrastructure. It is our intention to continue that, as methane is one of the more potent greenhouse gases. Presently we are extracting, on our estimates, up to 75 per cent, and we would like to see that continue.

MR GENTLEMAN: Do you measure that in a tonnage or anything?

Mr Ware: Yes, our contractor provides figures of what they capture. Based on their estimates, which is what I am reporting, they estimate 75 per cent capture based on tonnes of methane generated, the potential generation of the waste, versus what they capture and burn to produce electricity.

MR GENTLEMAN: That is, I imagine, metered. Is there any chance of coming back with a tonnage for us?

Mr Ware: Yes, we can provide that information.

THE CHAIR: Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, what role has the NOWaste area of government had with regard to the assessment of a lease or licence in relation to the Pialligo quarry?

Mr Rattenbury: That is actually conducted through TAMS. Mr Perram will be able to go into some more detail about this, if you like.

Mr Perram: It has nothing to do with NOWaste. Perhaps you can leave it for land management. Fleur Flannery will be able to respond to that.

MR COE: Yes, I understand that. I understand NOWaste has been involved in discussions very late in the piece; is that correct?

Mr Ware: Yes, I have certainly been drawn on to provide some technical advice in that matter.

MR COE: What is the nature of the advice that NOWaste have—

Mr Ware: It was about technical advice relating to how a future contract should be structured or operated in terms of fee structures.

MR COE: It is all a matter of hats, I know, but is that you, in effect, providing advice to the existing areas, or is that NOWaste, as a stakeholder, buying into the broader issue? In effect, is it another hoop to jump through for the proponent?

Mr Rattenbury: We might ask Ms Flannery to come forward and we can take the Pialligo quarry as a question line. We will keep Mr Ware at the table, but I think we will bring Ms Flannery up. She will be able to answer the questions on that. I just think we will get a better line of information if we do it this way.

MR COE: Sure. It is a reasonable segue, I guess, to land management.

Ms Flannery: Could you just repeat the question?

MR COE: Yes. What role is NOWaste playing in negotiations? Is Mr Ware simply providing advice to you or is NOWaste, as a stakeholder, buying in, such that it is another hoop that has to be jumped through by the proponent?

Ms Flannery: In addressing that question, I will answer it first of all about the reasons for involving NOWaste and then the last part of your question as to no hoops or another hoop.

THE CHAIR: Is that a target—no hoops by 2020?

Ms Flannery: We are working on it. City Services is a very diverse area. One of the areas that we manage is the licensing and permits area. We negotiate licences in conjunction with ACTPLA for a whole range of land uses. The Pialligo quarry is one of those. I am not an expert in very big holes in the ground, so I asked my colleague Mr Ware if he could give me some advice. The negotiations in terms of that quarry are quite complex. There is no weighbridge and there is no power. So my reason for involving Mr Ware and asking him to visit the site with me a couple of weeks ago was to see how we would help scope up a licence. I asked Mr Ware what he would do in those circumstances and how we would look at benching. I am in the process of trying to do some quite complex things, which one of the users of that land has also had difficulty around. We have engaged a site surveyor, and that was the advice that Mr Ware provided.

MR COE: How is it possible that this could still be at scoping stage given it has been going for years?

Ms Flannery: It is not at scoping stage at all.

MR COE: You just said Mr Ware provided scoping advice.

Ms Flannery: The government has committed funds to getting a surveyor to look at the whole site and I was asking Mr Ware for some technical advice as to what we would ask the quantity surveyor to do. I wanted to provide very accurate, current information to that consultant and therefore I involved Mr Ware.

MR COE: When will a licence release be available for the perusal of the proponent?

Ms Flannery: Very shortly, actually. We have had one developed for a while. We needed some information first of all on a risk assessment, which the current user of that site provided. It did take a while for that provider to get that information to us. They got it to us, and then there was a bit of back and forth as to the quality of it. That has been provided. We have had geo-technicians provide two reports. We have had an independent person assess the risk assessment. We have now got a quantity surveyor. I might add that TAMS has spent a considerable amount of time trying to negotiate this licence and has spent considerable funds in trying to negotiate it.

MR COE: When might that licence be available?

Ms Flannery: We go back to the proponent quite shortly once the surveyor has finished, and I think he is due to finish either Friday or early next week. That will give the size of the land and everything like that, so I imagine in the next few weeks. There are then a few more steps for the current user to go through in terms of ensuring that the licence is suitable for their requirements. I do not know how long they will take to make that decision.

MR COE: What month is it likely the proponent will see the licence so he can get advice on it?

Ms Flannery: My best estimate on that would be July. The proponent has seen a number of versions of licences which he was not happy with. So we have taken a whole range of steps—this is over a number of years—to ensure that the person that is using the land at the moment is able to conduct a business, a business that has been running there for a long time, and the government also is assured about risk and other matters.

MR COE: Minister, are you concerned about the environmental cost of all this, given that stone is being brought into the ACT from hundreds of kilometres away because this quarry is inoperable, and, in addition to that, I understand that the first round of tenders and prequalifications et cetera for the Majura parkway has come and gone, and the most obvious provider is the stone which is a runaway away. It seems to me that there is not only an economic cost to the territory but also an environmental cost.

Mr Rattenbury: Clearly, it would be optimal to be using a local provider for a whole

range of government contracts, and my preference is that where a local provider can fulfil the various government requirements and be cost competitive, that should be a preference that ACT government has in its procurement. As I am sure you are well aware, there has been a long history to this matter, and it is certainly something I have become aware of since taking up the portfolio. TAMS is working to get this finalised, and Ms Flannery has just described the various steps that are going on. I do not think it is particularly useful to get into a blame discussion about why it is taking this long, but I am certainly pleased that it is getting to a point of resolution.

MR COE: No, I certainly have not attributed blame.

Mr Rattenbury: I am sorry; I was not suggesting you were.

MR COE: But I do think that certainty is the key thing here, as I said. Certainty should be the key issue with any government decision.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. And as you have just heard, I think we are getting pretty close to having that sorted, which is obviously the outcome you want.

MR SMYTH: As a supplementary, I spoke to you about this at the beginning of the year, and you told me that you had signed off a brief and it would be sorted. Here we are three or four months later in a saga that has been a focus of five or six estimates now. How is it possible that it can take such a long time to resolve a licence for a quarry?

Mr Rattenbury: That is a fair question, Mr Smyth. This is perhaps what I was going to with the issue of attribution. It has been a complex matter. TAMS has put considerable effort into trying to come to a fair arrangement—an arrangement that is safe and that is fair for both the current proponent and for the ACT government as the resource owner.

MR COE: Ultimately, is it going to come down to a political decision as to whether the terms of the licence are acceptable to the government?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not think so, no. These things are generally done at arm's length. I am not involved in the detail of that licence. I guess if it reaches an irreconcilable point, it might come to my desk, but really these things are best done by the agencies. I do not seek to interfere at that level unless it really reaches a point of not being able to resolve it.

MR COE: How many years is it going to take before you as minister say, "Enough is enough, this is consuming too many resources in my directorate"?

Mr Rattenbury: I think that is a hypothetical question, given the update Ms Flannery has just given you, which is that we should see it resolved in a timescale of weeks, as opposed to even months.

MR SMYTH: You are now the third TAMS minister to tell me that this is about to be resolved.

Mr Rattenbury: I guess we will have this discussion again in annual reports hearings if it is not resolved. At that point we will—

THE CHAIR: Let us hope we are not discussing this issue next year.

Mr Rattenbury: Indeed.

THE CHAIR: Members, are there any other questions—

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, just before you go on, Mr Hanson, Ms Flannery wants to add some further information.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Flannery: One of the complexities in the whole negotiation has been around what the proponent or the current land user want to do with that site. One of the very first steps that we did was to ensure that we had a business plan to tell the government clearly what that land user wanted to do. The original intent, or the original reason they were allowed to use the land, was to quarry. But they have also come forward with a whole range of other ideas. So it is not as if we have only been negotiating on whether they can take stone out. They have made a range of representations to have other uses of the land. So it has complexities.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We seem to have migrated a bit into land management, but are there any questions on waste and recycling? Seeing that we are a little ahead of schedule, we will have a slightly longer break for morning tea, which is good news. Always a popular decision, I find. We will resume at 10.45 for output 1.4, land management.

Sitting suspended from 10.24 to 10.47 am.

THE CHAIR: We will recommence. Minister, you have a point of clarification.

Mr Rattenbury: On a couple of things. Firstly, would the committee be agreeable to staff members, who have presented already, leaving—the library staff and Canberra Connect? Thank you. Just before the break there were a couple of matters that were asked about and that we took on notice that we might be able to deal with now. The first was the issue of the Canberra Connect surveys. Dr Bourke, I understood your question was: are we getting a representative sample? I can inform you that the company that does the survey does call mobile phones. Does that answer your question or is there further information you wanted?

DR BOURKE: That will do me thanks.

Mr Rattenbury: The other question was—Mr Gentleman, I think you asked it—about the number of tonnes of methane that were being captured.

MR GENTLEMAN: Indeed.

Mr Rattenbury: What I can tell you from last year's annual report is that we captured

29,788 megawatt hours of methane at Mugga Lane and at west Belconnen and that was converted into electricity for approximately 3,000 homes. We do not have a tonnage figure, but does that answer the gist of what you were after?

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you very much. That is fine, yes.

Mr Rattenbury: So we will not be taking either of those questions on notice now.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is agreeable to the committee. Thank you, minister. Continuing with land management, in budget paper 4, page 379, there are a number of output accountability indicators specifically under 1.4 e, f and g. In regard to customer satisfaction with the maintenance of street trees, the target was 80 per cent; the outcome was 70 per cent. In regard to customer satisfaction with children's play equipment being well maintained, the target was 95 per cent; outcome, 90 per cent. In regard to customer satisfaction with the general look and feel of local shopping centres, the target was 89 per cent; outcome, 75 per cent.

Can I have an explanation of why you consider we are not meeting targets for each of those? But then I also note that the targets have been revised down. So it seems that we are lowering our standards.

Mr Rattenbury: I might see if we can get some detailed information and feedback from those surveys.

Ms Flannery: In respect of the accountability indicators, following the Auditor-General's report—one of the indicators was changed, the scoring was changed—the figures reflected a slight downward trend in some areas. However, one of the reasons that the accountability indicators have been revised down—and I think I know why—is that in respect of trees, they are living entities. It is very difficult for the customer to look at a tree and assess its health. They like the look of the tree and if something happens to it, such as it needing to be removed because it is declining or otherwise, that often makes people unhappy. And so it is a hard indicator to measure all the time and have it at a very high level.

In respect of playgrounds and shopping centres, there is funding that has been provided in the 2012-2013 budget and the 2013-14 budget to continue upgrades of these areas.

THE CHAIR: If money is being provided for upgrades, additional money in the budget, why has the indicator been revised down? It does not make sense.

Ms Flannery: One relates to the indicator level. The survey has 10 points in it, zero to 10, and when people responded to level No 5, it was neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. And the Auditor-General did not like that measure being in there. They asked for that indicator to be removed. So we had to change the scores. What we will probably see in the next survey is a slight downward trend because many people answered "neither satisfied nor dissatisfied."

Mr Byles: Mr Hanson, I am not sure whether you were part of the conversation but, as Ms Flannery said, the Auditor-General made it very clear that they would not

accept the “somewhat satisfied or dissatisfied”, despite us putting forward a fairly convincing argument that it was widely used elsewhere. So the targets have subsequently been adjusted for more reality.

THE CHAIR: There is a bit of an interesting situation where you are saying that you are going to be putting more resources into the customer satisfaction with the look and appeal of the local shopping centres but you are expecting that the survey result will decline?

Mr Byles: I guess the issue is: you establish a target. We had this discussion earlier in the committee hearings. However, we would be absolutely delighted if we exceeded that target. But we needed a benchmark to aim for, and we felt that that was a reasonable assessment of a reasonable target.

THE CHAIR: I guess lowering targets is a good way to try to make sure you achieve them, is it not?

Mr Byles: We do not set out to do that, but you have got to pick a point that is reasonable, and we assessed that as a reasonable target. Obviously whatever we achieve in the coming year will set a benchmark for future targets.

DR BOURKE In your satisfaction surveys of suburban shopping centres, are customers able to differentiate between what is territory land, which you control, and land which is under the control of the leaseholder or shop owner?

Ms Flannery: No. Many people in the public are not able to differentiate but TAMS works very strongly with leaseholders to try to ensure that standards are maintained. Unfortunately, there can be some difficulties around that but, in general terms, when areas around shopping centres are leased and they abut government land, there is no differentiation in the street; you would not notice it all. But on the whole, most areas are maintained to a similar standard.

DR BOURKE: I was actually focusing on the state of the actual shops themselves, which obviously are owned privately, and whether people who are talking about shopping centres are actually talking about the shops or the land that surrounds them. I appreciate that you have no control over what the shop owners do with their shops and whether they are freshly painted or whether they have not been painted for 30 years, whether they are attractive or whether they look a shambles.

Mr Rattenbury: I think you certainly hit on something there, and you may recall the infamous pigeon excrement question from Mrs Jones in the Assembly earlier this year and—

DR BOURKE: I had forgotten about it, but now that you—

THE CHAIR: Did you not come up with a new word, from memory?

Mr Rattenbury: I did at the time. I cannot recall it right now.

THE CHAIR: It was a good one.

Mr Rattenbury: It was.

MR GENTLEMAN: Airborne something, I think.

Mr Rattenbury: We ascertained that, yes, it was actually on the part of the private lease and I think that sort of highlights the challenge. TAMS will ask the private leaseholders about these matters. I have had ministerial representations about lighting problems at shopping centres and, again, we have ascertained that it is not a TAMS or an ACTEW asset. It is a private leaseholder asset. We will approach the leaseholders, indicate the problem to them, but there are issues around enforcing that.

DR BOURKE: Do you have any mechanisms to enforce shop holders to do anything?

Mr Rattenbury: Not at that level of detail really. There are the broad lease requirements but I do not believe we have explicit powers to say, “You must change that light globe,” or those sorts of things.

DR BOURKE: In the same way as you do not have powers to get people to clean up their backyards or paint their houses?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Coming to some other land management matters, if I may, and the budget media release “Urban improvements for our growing city”, can you tell me what is involved in the allocation of \$100,000 in the budget for bollards and improvements at Emu Bank?

Ms Flannery: I will have to take that one on notice. If you could ask a further question, I might be able to clarify about the bollards being put in at Emu Bank.

DR BOURKE: While you are finding out about that, probably—

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, just before you go on.

Mr Byles: If I may take a stab at this?

THE CHAIR: Roll the dice.

Mr Byles: I think the bollards may be as a result of the damaged pavement along the wall where trucks were travelling, and the bollards may be planned to be installed to prevent truck access and pavement breakup. But I stand to be corrected on that, and I will follow up.

DR BOURKE: And does that finish off the Emu Bank improvements, with the new bridge and the re-beds et cetera?

My Byles: Again, I will definitely have to take that one on notice in terms of the time. There has been some delay. We had silt problems in the area but, again, I will take that one on notice.

DR BOURKE: We will move to something else then. The “Urban improvements for our growing city” media release mentioned \$450,000 allocated for 30 bubblers across the city. When should this be completed and do you have a breakdown of where they are going for each electorate, in particular in my electorate?

Mr Rattenbury: We do not have that breakdown yet. I am just trying to recall. It is 30? The plan, basically, is for TAMS to use some of the information it has around where there is demand, assessing places. Certainly, we are looking for the most high-demand locations, sports ovals, places around city town centres, these sorts of things where there is the highest level of demand, with a level of community consultation in that as well, talking to various stakeholders that TAMS has. I do not have a breakdown for Ginninderra et cetera yet.

MR COE: Do they have water metres attached them? Can you actually check their usage?

Ms Flannery: Many of the bubblers do not have individual water metres attached to them. We connect into the main system, for a range of practical reasons. But we have undertaken an audit of where the current bubblers are, where bubblers have been turned off, high-use areas where there have been requests. We are certainly well down the track of determining where those bubblers are going to be. And your question about whether they have their own water metre is something that we are also looking at, whether we can put that in, in the future.

DR BOURKE: Still on that same media release, minister, you allocated \$200,000 to replacing barbecues. How many and where?

Ms Flannery: I will have to provide you with a list of exactly where those barbecues are.

DR BOURKE: Fantastic.

Ms Flannery: Many of them are going on a rolling program of upgrades in our high-use areas. We have done a number on Black Mountain Peninsula, Acton Peninsula this year. But we can certainly provide a whole list to you of where those barbecues will be, because we all look forward to using them.

DR BOURKE: Yes, especially around Lake Ginninderra. Also, in the same media release, you have allocated \$120,000 for the design of three park and rides on the north side. Can you tell me where they are please?

Mr Rattenbury: Can we come back to that next week?

DR BOURKE: Okay.

Mr Rattenbury: It is just that it sits in with roads and public transport.

THE CHAIR: We can do that.

DR BOURKE: And you have allocated additional park rangers over the outyears. Are these rangers going to have new roles or more of the same?

Mr Rattenbury: No. I can tell you the roles. We have got the first two rangers that will come on stream this year. The first one is an Indigenous senior ranger, and that is a position that we have had for some time but the funding for that had expired. We have now been able to continue that position. And that will lead to the expansion of current visitor interpretation programs, provide mentoring for cultural heritage interpretation training and engage with traditional owners of the region, and that is a very popular position. We get great public feedback on that current position and the role he is able to play in sharing knowledge and conveying things to people.

The second position will be an environmental offsets ranger, and that is about managing new additions to the territory's reserve system at Kenny, Kinlyside and Throsby, which are directed by diversity offsets associated with the government's land development programs. I think that is quite important, because historically areas have been put down as offsets but then, perhaps, not had the resources dedicated to them to ensure the quality of those offsets remain intact. I am particularly pleased that we were able to do that. The further park rangers, the additional three positions, will come on stream in 2015-16.

DR BOURKE: And you have allocated an extra \$1 million for the urban treescape in this budget but none for the following years. What is your strategy there?

Mr Rattenbury: Obviously there is a big issue for Canberra, with the replacement of our urban treescape, and that \$1 million this year will be spent in two key ways. One will be tree planting to address tree losses and replanting vacant sites. That is going to be around 1,500 trees, and then some of it will be a renewal program that starts to address the replacement of ageing trees across the city. We think that will be around removal and replacement of up to 650 mature trees in the next 12 months. That is the program for this year.

As you might have seen in the paper last Sunday, the government now has a very good analysis of the life of many of the mature trees across the city, and I think that gives us a lot more information and clearly, in coming years, we are going to need to plan to replace them. Those audits indicate that around 64 per cent or 325,000 of our urban trees will need to be replaced over the next 40 years. You can see that the number that we are replacing this year, 650, if we keep going at that rate, we will not keep up. The government is going to need to make greater effort in coming years if we are to maintain the treescape in the city, and I think many of our citizens value it as one of the highest qualities of the city.

DR BOURKE: And, of course, that is about 750,000 trees?

Mr Rattenbury: The entire set is, yes. That is about the number we mean; 700,000, roughly, is the number TAMS is responsible for.

DR BOURKE: Somebody else must look after the others?

Mr Rattenbury: But there is actually a strange breakdown where EDD has

responsibility for some trees as well.

DR BOURKE: Coming back to that article that you mentioned in the *Canberra Times*, I noticed that it talked about discussion and consultation with the community. How do you plan to roll that out?

Mr Rattenbury: In light of the report by the commissioner for the environment a couple of years ago that the Assembly asked for, there has been a real rethink in government about how we go about this process. I think there was a concern in the community that whole streetscapes were going to simply disappear in one go. I think we have seen a change in policy and approach whereby we will now have a much more sophisticated, nuanced approach so that there will be a more gradual replacement. People in the immediate area of a tree are being consulted about that replacement, the timing, the species and in some cases even assistance with the watering of those trees to ensure they establish properly.

DR BOURKE: Who is going to be doing the watering?

Mr Rattenbury: As part of the improved program, part of the costing and the rollout of those new trees is to make sure there is a watering program so that trees become properly established. They do not just get planted and then maybe not make it. There is a much better program now to get a higher survival rate. Certainly, with the improved technology, all the trees can be GPS tracked now. There is a much more sophisticated system of being able to know where the trees are and keep track of what is happening to them.

DR BOURKE: Does it come down to species selection?

Mr Rattenbury: To some extent. It is also about having the right watering regimes and the like to make sure that trees perhaps get the care that they need to get that establishment.

DR BOURKE: Is the arboretum going to be helpful there with its grand experiment of multiple different trees?

Mr Rattenbury: I am not sure.

Ms Flannery: It is almost the reverse, because Canberra has had trees planted for 100 years. So we work very closely with the arboretum to look at some of our very rare species and how well they performed in a pretty hostile environment in many cases. So there is shared learning from both areas. Along with the botanic gardens, we all collaborate and share information about tree species.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, page 166 of budget paper 3 has one-off funding for this year for enhanced biodiversity stewardship. Can you tell us what that involves?

Mr Rattenbury: This is money that has been put in place under the parliamentary agreement, and it is recognition of the fact that Canberra nature park needs additional resources to cope with some of the pressures that are on it. Some of those impacts include over-grazing, and pest plant and animal infestation.

The funds have been dedicated to a range of tasks, including an extra \$0.4 million for pest animal management, including rabbit control. There is additional money towards the Parkcare groups. I believe that is a very powerful investment, because the money that the government puts into Parkcare groups is amplified significantly. There is also additional funding regarding invasive weeds, to build on the work that is already being undertaken.

Finally, and for me one of the quite important things, there is the development of operational plans in individual units of Canberra nature park. This has been in the pipeline for some time, and we are now resourcing this. Each park will have an individual operational plan, which will also mean that the Parkcare groups can be better plugged in to what the strategy is for an area. Again we will be making the best use of the resources both of the rangers and of the Parkcare groups. It will enable us to be more strategic about where we need to invest resources.

MR GENTLEMAN: I understand that there is a program of biodiversity trade-offs that operates within the ACT from ESDD. Are you able to tap into any of that funding for parks across the territory?

Mr Iglesias: Where the ACT's land release program impacts on matters of national significance as far as the EPBC Act is concerned, the commonwealth act, we enter into an arrangement with the commonwealth where we obtain an offset. That can traditionally be a block of land but it can also be a cash commitment that is provided. We do indeed have a plan in place where we can invest that money specifically in the new block of land to be able to ensure that land management is addressed.

MR GENTLEMAN: Is that reviewed?

Mr Iglesias: Yes. Every year we are obliged to report to the commonwealth as to how we spend that money.

MR SMYTH: Just on the issue—and, Daniel, it is nice to see you out of a uniform and in a suit and a tie; I think it is the first time I have ever seen you with a tie on—parks, conservation and lands is involved in the development of the offsets policy. Who has major carriage of it? Is it ESDD, even though you have control of the asset?

Mr Iglesias: ESDD. The policy position is formed by our colleagues in ESDD.

MR SMYTH: Is there actually a policy available now?

Mr Iglesias: I believe that policy is being developed through the cabinet process, but ESDD would be able to confirm for you exactly where that is at.

MR SMYTH: So in the absence of such a policy, what guides decision making about biodiversity offsets and what are the current arrangements to protect them?

Mr Iglesias: We have actually taken the initiative, Mr Smyth, to get our colleagues from other directorates to form, if you like, a steering committee where we discuss the potential offsets that are forthcoming—that are in the pipeline, basically. We get an

idea from our colleagues as to what the likely land release schedule is and what the likely areas are that will need to come up for consideration by the commonwealth for offsets. So we can start to plan and understand exactly what the land management cost might be to any accruing offset sites. We put a lot of work into doing that. Indeed that process has stood us in good stead in feeding into the official policy position that government is in the midst of developing.

That has allowed us to effectively manage—I think we are up to two or three sites now that have come through as biological offsets. The most recent one is associated with the development at EPIC. We have a pretty good, costed mechanism that allows us to allocate money for each of those offsets in the absence of an official policy.

MR SMYTH: You said there are two or three sites. Are there two or three?

Mr Iglesias: I can recall Ngunnawal 2C as an offset, and I can recall the EPIC development as an offset. There may be another one in west Belconnen.

MR SMYTH: Is there a register or somewhere on the website where one can go and find out where the offset sites are?

Mr Iglesias: I do not believe there is. I would have to check that for you, because ESDD might be helping us with that.

MR SMYTH: But if you manage the offset sites, you must surely know where they are. Could you take on notice—

Mr Iglesias: Yes, I will take it on notice. We definitely know where they are.

MR SMYTH: And provide—

Mr Iglesias: As to whether they are on the website, I would have to check.

MR SMYTH: Can you provide the committee with a list of the offset sites and whether or not there is a link to somewhere on the web?

Mr Iglesias: Sure.

MR SMYTH: Is there baseline data on the condition of the sites when they become an offset site? Do you monitor and report on, one would assume, their improvement?

Mr Iglesias: It varies. In some areas we do have good baseline data associated with the fact that some of these sites have been known to us for a while, and we may have had other reasons to understand what was happening ecologically. In other sites we do not, and often what happens is that the commonwealth government, as part of the offset agreement, will specify ongoing monitoring and the need for ongoing baseline strategies. That would be natural and cultural baselines.

MR SMYTH: When you report on the list, can you give us a rundown on their condition?

Mr Iglesias: Sure.

MR SMYTH: And any improvements that have been made since they were made an offset site. This is probably a question more for you, minister. How do you know that the offset is delivering the intended biodiversity outcome—or is it just another block of land locked away that people cannot develop?

Mr Rattenbury: I think this is an area that does require some development, particularly as the commonwealth is putting greater requirements on the ACT. Mr Iglesias spoke about some of the work we have got to do there. It is a matter that I am certainly pursuing with my cabinet colleagues.

MR COE: How do you plan to report on this in the future? Are you actually going to be able to follow the progress of each site in the annual report, in the budget or in a separate mechanism?

Mr Rattenbury: It would be something like that. We need to develop some indicators that perhaps relate to quality of the biodiversity, number of species, those sorts of things, but there is some work to be done on exactly what that monitoring will look like. Overall, it will need to match the commonwealth requirements.

MR SMYTH: How do the offsets get funded, or the protection of the offsets? Is it in ESDD's budget? Is it in yours? How is it allocated?

Mr Iglesias: Typically, any particular offset site will have a number of elements to it. It would have the actual package of land, and then the proponent is required to actually provide a capital up-front cash injection as well. So that is traditionally the model that we have had. What we have identified, and I understand that it is a critical element of our policy, is to also address the ongoing management of these biodiversity offsets. That is a component of the policy that is still being developed. There are some options there as to how that might work, but it is still a matter for cabinet to determine how that might work.

MR COE: Do the funds paid by the proponent go into a trust account, are they hypothecated in some way or do they simply go into consolidated revenue?

Mr Iglesias: No, the cash injections are actually received by TAMS, and the actual dollars are tied to specific—

MR COE: They are tied?

Mr Iglesias: pre-agreed activities, land management activities. Typically, they would be construction of fencing and whatever.

MR COE: I think it is something that could be considered—how you might report it. Certainly, on the financial side of things, being tied to the site, how much is received, where it has been invested and over how long would be a handy demonstration of whether the policy is working.

Mr Rattenbury: It is an area where there are clearly some gaps in how we are

proceeding at the moment.

MR SMYTH: On a slightly different issue, on page 372 of budget paper 4, you have your estimated employment level, which drops two off the outcome level. Where are those two jobs going?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, what was the last part of the question, Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: You have a reduction of two staff. Where are they coming from?

Mr Byles: I will have to take that on notice, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Could we have an ins and outs? As a result of policy announcements, are there new staff coming into the department?

Mr Byles: Yes, there are.

MR SMYTH: How many new staff?

Mr Byles: There are the five additional rangers that have been announced.

Mr Rattenbury: Only two of those are this year.

Mr Byles: Two this year.

MR SMYTH: So you are getting two extras but you are losing two, so there is a differential of four. Could we have an ins and outs on which areas are gaining staff, any areas that are losing staff and which positions are going?

Mr Byles: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Are you taking that on notice?

Mr Byles: We will take that on notice.

MR SMYTH: We are about to have a review of parks and city services, but note 1 of that chart says that the growth from 1,025 to 1,058 is because staff move from being contractors to FTE. Why would you move staff from contractors to FTE before you review the service? Wouldn't you do that as a consequence of a review?

Mr Rattenbury: This was a decision taken some time ago as part of ongoing efforts by parks and city services to deliver their role more efficiently. Those staff are being pulled back in so that we have a consistent approach right across the territory. You may recall previously there were some areas that were managed by government and in others two areas were let out to contractors. We have brought those staff back in so that we are set up in the same way across the city. The plan was to make reforms on that basis. That decision had been taken previously. The review of parks and city services was a decision taken in the budget process, so that has now been laid across the top of it.

MR SMYTH: Does that mean you have no contractors at all?

Mr Rattenbury: We obviously have a level of contractors doing a whole range of things, but no, the basic city services—

Ms Flannery: The service level providers.

Mr Rattenbury: are now all delivered in house.

MR SMYTH: When you say “basic city services”, what is that? Is that the mowing? Is that the street sweeping?

Ms Flannery: It is the service level providers. They deliver key services such as cleaning barbecues and mowing. Currently, city services delivers its municipal services using a regional-based approach. What we are looking at doing is having a city-wide approach. As opposed to one area being managed holistically by one contractor or by government, such as the inner north, those services will be provided by both government and contractors based on that activity—cleaning barbecues, checking playgrounds.

MR SMYTH: If I understand you right, you have just stopped contractors providing such services, to bring it all back in house. Now you are going to review it to see what you can put back out?

Mr Rattenbury: No. What we are trying to describe is the fact that we had two parallel systems going. One, as Fleur described, was by region. We had two regions out that have now come back in to government, with a view that, as Ms Flannery has just described, we would then let out particular streams of service rather than an area-based service. That was the decision that had been taken. Is that clear?

MR SMYTH: That is okay, yes. So why would you then bring the contractors on as full-time staff if you may then have to let certain streams out to the market?

Ms Flannery: I think the misunderstanding is around the word “contractors”. The way TAMS delivers services in terms of municipal services is that we have used a regional-based approach where one company looked after a region. Government also employs contractors—people who are put on government contracts or labour hire contracts. With some of the services that were previously done by the regional large contractor, there will be short-term government contracts for anything from six months to 12 months while we resolve the whole package in terms of how we will deliver those services in the future. The timing is really appropriate for that because it links very neatly into the parks and city services review, so we will have maximum flexibility in being able to do that.

MR SMYTH: As a consequence of the review, will people lose their jobs when their streams are contracted out?

Ms Flannery: There have not been any decisions made in terms of people losing jobs or gaining jobs. At the moment, based on my information yesterday, there will be more people than have previously had government contracts, but those contracts will

be anything from six months to 12 months.

MR SMYTH: We might move on to the review. What is the purpose of the review and what objectives do you hope to get out of it?

Mr Rattenbury: As I outlined earlier, and we spoke about it a bit earlier in the hearing, the intent is to look at service level across the city that parks and city services is meant to provide, to look at whether we are providing the right level of services, whether there are new services that are needed, whether some existing services might be changed. The objective is to make sure the government is getting best value for money and delivering on community expectations. It is designed to be a step back, to look at what we are doing, review whether it is appropriate and what we need to be doing into the future. It is quite open in that sense. It is part of the budget process of ensuring that government is spending its money as wisely as possible.

MR SMYTH: Are there terms of reference?

Mr Rattenbury: They have not been completed yet.

MR SMYTH: When will they be completed?

Mr Rattenbury: Soon.

MR SMYTH: A day, a week, a month?

Mr Rattenbury: A couple of weeks, I imagine.

MR SMYTH: Could they be provided to the committee as soon as they are finalised, please?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. I would just be clear, Mr Smyth. We also have some work to do around consulting with staff and the unions, so I will have to think about the timing on that, so that it is provided to the committee at the right point in that cycle.

MR SMYTH: We are here to inquire into budget initiatives.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I realise that.

MR SMYTH: It is a budget initiative. It is very hard to inquire fully if we are not able to work out what is actually happening.

Mr Rattenbury: I will check the timetable and follow up with the secretariat and make sure that the timetable is suitable.

MR SMYTH: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Thanks, minister. Mr Coe?

MR COE: I was wondering whether you could give an update on where things are at with the policy for charity bin management.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I can. This has been an area of some considerable constituent traffic, particularly at Ngunnawal. I believe it has been one of the sites where people have been particularly—

MR COE: Kippax is another one.

Mr Rattenbury: Kippax is another one, and Cooleman Court. As you know, TAMS conducted a six-month pilot project to explore how to more effectively manage illegal dumping around charity bins. That concluded on 8 February. That pilot was a joint undertaking with four charities and the budget. It allowed TAMS to work closely with the charities and discuss territory-wide policies that could reduce illegal dumping, because it is something that has been distressing the community significantly. Basically it was done in some trial areas, taking different approaches, plus a control area. The results of the pilot showed there were benefits in relocating the charity bins from neighbourhood centres and concentrating them at regional centres, as that facilitates more effective clearance programs by the charities, and it also improves the ability and cost of rangers to manage compliance issues.

Also there was a noticeable improvement where they were concentrated at the regional shopping centre because you have areas that are well lit, there are more people moving through and there is the capacity for CCTV. There is a higher level of passive surveillance; therefore there is less dumping than you might get at some of the smaller shopping centres where you can go and not see anybody for an hour in the middle of the night in Canberra quite comfortably.

We found that no incidents of illegal dumping were reported to city rangers within the pilot areas. During the trial the rangers conducted 53 three-hour surveillance operations at the Mawson and Weston sites. The finding was that the new approach is working quite well and city rangers have continued to monitor the charity bins across Canberra in relation to compliance.

I am just checking my notes here. We have had some ongoing complaints about Ngunnawal particularly. The bins are sited at two separate locations in that shopping centre car park and, following negotiations with the charity responsible for the bins, they were centralised in one location during May. That is about where it is up to.

MR COE: Is that Ngunnawal south, or close to the Platypus centre or the other shops up north? Do you know?

Ms Flannery: There are two locations of the bins. I am not super-familiar with the Platypus.

MR COE: I think the Platypus centre is another shopping centre at the northern end of Ngunnawal. I guess it is the southern shops.

Mr Rattenbury: Just on Kippax, Mr Coe, we have also had complaints there. Similarly at Kippax, the bins are sited at two locations across the shopping centre car park. Lone Fathers Association have agreed to remove the two charity bins that are located outside the ALDI store immediately to address the issue of littering.

MR COE: Yes, that is one that I have noticed to be particularly problematic.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, so they are being removed.

MR COE: Do the bins have to be located adjacent to car parks? Can they be further away from someone who could park and easily unload the boot, so that, in effect, you have to carry yourself what you intend to donate?

Mr Rattenbury: I am just struck by the irony. The usual demand is to get more car parks closer to the available facility. But it is an interesting suggestion and one that we will—

THE CHAIR: No, can I put a clarification. The question asked was whether the bins could be further away from the car parks; is that right?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I believe that was the question.

THE CHAIR: Not with regard to whether there would be any less car parks or anything like that.

Mr Rattenbury: No, but normally the request is to have car parks closer to facilities, not further from.

MR COE: For instance, with the Kippax scenario, it could be perhaps closer to the library. If it is closer to the library, there is a better chance of having greater passive surveillance and it is less likely someone is going to be able to park next to it and unload the boot rather than pay the tip fee.

Mr Rattenbury: It is an interesting suggestion. I think the work that has been done so far has worked quite well. A number of charities have noted that there has been an increase in revenue and a reduction in cost in servicing the bins than there was previously. So in that sense the pilot has worked quite well. Certainly, for example, the Lone Fathers Association has reported a 30 per cent increase in revenue since the pilot commenced. At this point it has been going quite well and I think this consolidation approach has been considered quite effective. The point you have raised is one that we will certainly have a further look at and perhaps talk to the charities about.

THE CHAIR: We will continue on with land management. There appear to be some more questions. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what is happening with the government's kangaroo management plan this season?

Mr Rattenbury: As you may have seen in the press, Dr Bourke, the government took a decision to proceed with a kangaroo cull this season. The way the process works is that the Environment and Sustainable Development Directorate have their ecologists conduct a survey. They provide advice to TAMS as to whether they believe there should be a cull and the number of individuals that might be culled, based on their

advice and particular areas where that might take place.

TAMS then look at that from an operational perspective, because there are various operational considerations around availability of contractors, public safety and these sorts of things. TAMS finalised a view that we should target 1,455 animals across seven units of Canberra nature park this year. That was due to commence earlier this month.

As you will have seen in the press, two groups went to the administrative tribunal and sought to have that delayed. They were given a temporary stay from the Friday to the Wednesday for further matters to be sorted in the court. The tribunal has now decided to hear the matter. That is due to take place on 8 and 9 July. The government has agreed to not undertake any culling during that period because, as is the case in these sorts of court matters, if the government did undertake culling that would be obviously detrimental to the possible outcome of the hearing. It is on hold at the moment; that is where it is at. That is a long answer to your question, but—

DR BOURKE: Assuming that you are successful at the ACAT, how does this delay affect your plans?

Mr Rattenbury: It is hard to predict what the tribunal will find, but I think the government has a very strong foundation of evidence. Clearly, from my own perspective and having to be a decision maker on this, I looked very closely at the evidence and the science and I am reasonably confident that the government will be able to make a case to support the issuing of the licences. It is the decision by the Conservator of Flora and Fauna to issue the licences that is being challenged at the tribunal. That said, the delay will clearly have an impact on the government's ability to meet its target.

DR BOURKE: How much do you think this legal challenge will cost the government?

Mr Rattenbury: In terms of legal fees?

DR BOURKE: And any other costs.

Mr Iglesias: I can probably answer that. Dr Bourke, to this point, TAMS has invested a total of \$120K or thereabouts in relation to staffing costs associated with the project manager and planning for a conservation cull. In addition to that, there are some in-kind costs that are inevitably incurred in relation to a number of other staff that become involved in the planning and the development. When you tally those in-kind costs, it is possibly another \$70K as well in relation to how much we have invested to date. In bringing us to this point, you could summarise in total about \$190K and that is operational costs and in-kind costs as well.

DR BOURKE: And legal fees?

Mr Iglesias: It is probably a bit premature to understand what the legal fees might be.

DR BOURKE: I know that you have said publicly that this is not personal, minister.

MR SMYTH: Yes. Is there a conflict of interest?

Mr Rattenbury: Should I show my scars to the committee?

MR SMYTH: Please.

DR BOURKE: You do not have any history with other animals—dogs, cats, horses?

Mr Rattenbury: I have had a few magpie swoopings over the years, but no. On a serious note, clearly not. This is a very difficult decision. I do not think anybody in the ACT government likes the fact that we have to undertake the conservation cull. It is very much based on a clear scientific foundation that is being built up through both the kangaroo management plan and ongoing scientific work that says that, given the ecological imbalances we have in Canberra nature park, and looking at the whole environment, there is a role for government to play as a responsible land manager to try and ensure that we have a better balance in the Canberra nature park.

DR BOURKE: So what is the government doing to manage pests and other threats to the environment?

Mr Rattenbury: There is a whole range of programs. I will perhaps ask Mr Iglesias to go through some of the detail of that.

Mr Iglesias: When we talk about Canberra nature park and, to a lesser extent, some of our more pristine national park areas, we have got lots of threatening processes that we have to deal with. Some of those include rabbits, but they also include foxes and pigs. We are right in the middle of a pig control program in Namadgi national park. Of course, we have got a suite of environmental weeds that impact on some of the Canberra nature park areas.

It is notable to understand that within the Canberra urban envelope we have some of the most significant nature reserves that exist in Australia. We have got elements and pockets of nature reserves that effectively exist nowhere else. Some of our natural temperate grasslands are the biggest representation that we have left in Australia. Those particular natural elements are susceptible to all sorts of threatening processes, including weeds and pest animals. Our job as a good land manager is to understand those processes and to address each in turn. That is what we do. We set aside a budget for weeds and a budget for pests, especially in those high priority areas, to deal with that.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned a couple of animal species there. What about brumbies, deer and wild dogs?

Mr Iglesias: They are on the list as well. In fact, this year we have undertaken an investment to try and understand what is happening with deer. For the first time we are getting reports of deer, even in the urban area, around Mount Ainslie, believe it or not. Traditionally, we have known them to be in small numbers in Namadgi and Tidbinbilla, but we have reason to believe that deer might be moving into the urban area. We need to understand what is happening there. The first step of undertaking

effective control is understanding what the situation is.

DR BOURKE: What species of deer are we talking about?

Mr Iglesias: We have recorded in the ACT fallow deer, sambar and also red deer—so three species.

THE CHAIR: Mr Rattenbury is going after Bambi as well, is he?

DR BOURKE: I think dogs and cats can sleep safe.

MR SMYTH: There used to be significant deer numbers in the Bullen Range, on the other side of the river from Kambah. Are they still there post the fires?

Mr Iglesias: Yes. That is a notorious population, Mr Smyth. In fact, lots of our visitors to Tidbinbilla report seeing deer as they are driving towards there. That area is a hotspot. Potentially, further south in Namadgi they have been seen as well.

DR BOURKE: I think you had an extensive piece in the *Canberra Times* with your dog trapper.

Mr Iglesias: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Did you get any concerned constituents or Canberrans ringing up about that article? Was there any negative feedback?

Mr Rattenbury: No, I do not recall receiving a single email, letter or phone call about that.

DR BOURKE: Good.

MR GENTLEMAN: While we are on the dog trapping, I recall some very anxious farmers on the edge of Namadgi national park a few years past with wild dogs coming onto their farms. Has that been further addressed?

Mr Iglesias: Absolutely. We have a yearly program that relates to managing wild dogs. In relation to Namadgi national park, we identify, if you like, a buffer zone which circumnavigates the boundary of Namadgi national park. Our management response is to say, “We’ll manage dogs in this buffer zone and ensure you eradicate dogs so that we can minimise the impact on neighbouring rural enterprise.” That has been working really well.

In relation to wild dog control, you are more successful if you retain a particular expertise over time. The person we have at the moment has been with us a long time. You would be amazed at his knowledge of the landscape. He almost understands to an individual the nature of the wild dogs that are in the landscape. Often that level of expertise is what makes a difference between a good control program and an ordinary one. We have had very few reports—in fact, I do not think we have had one—of incidents in the rural community. I stand corrected if we have, but I certainly have not heard of them in this last season, which is really good news.

MR GENTLEMAN: I have another question in regard to the new indicator for visitor satisfaction at the arboretum.

Mr Rattenbury: Just before you do, Mr Gentleman—

MR GENTLEMAN: Can you explain how you are going to survey that visitor satisfaction? It is on page 379 of BP4.

Mr Rattenbury: The arboretum actually sits with the responsibility of the Chief Minister, so can we defer questions on the arboretum. TAMS will support the Chief Minister for that, but I am not responsible.

MR GENTLEMAN: Sure. With regard to Domestic Animal Services, we have had an approach during—

THE CHAIR: Does that come under regulatory or land management? I just want to clarify that.

Mr Rattenbury: It is actually Regulatory Services.

MR GENTLEMAN: All right. I will wait.

Mr Rattenbury: We have got the appropriate staff at the table. We can do it now, if you like.

THE CHAIR: I just want to clarify that we have moved from land management. Have you got any more on land management?

MR SMYTH: I have got one last one on land management.

THE CHAIR: If we have got the same staff, I am happy, Mr Gentleman. I think I know what you are going to ask.

MR GENTLEMAN: I was going to ask what the relationship is between Domestic Animal Services, TAMS and RSPCA. We had an approach during the community day of estimates from RSPCA indicating that they would like to perhaps cohabit with Domestic Animal Services. I just wanted to know what conversations you have been having with them.

Mr Rattenbury: There have been quite extensive consultations, and I certainly read the transcript of Mr Linke's appearance. I think he actually described the situation quite well. There is an intention between government and the RSPCA to consolidate onto a single site. The discussions have been going on quite extensively about what the nature of that consolidation should be, what the various services should be, who should conduct them and what role a community organisation can play, including groups such as Animal Rescue Foundation who currently do a lot of voluntary work at DAS. They walk the dogs and entertain them and that sort of thing. There is quite a bit of discussion going on about what roles the various groups will continue to play. There is obviously a real opportunity in bringing the organisations together in terms of

providing a single animal welfare response and, I guess, an animal management response for strays and the like within the ACT.

MR GENTLEMAN: The indicator on page 379 shows the number of dogs processed by DAS is going to be down in the new target, so the old target was not reached. Does that mean there is less need or we are not covering the need?

Mr Rattenbury: I think this is one of those situations where it is a good news story. A lower number means fewer lost dogs, fewer dangerous dogs and those sorts of things. So in that sense, if the number is lower, that is a good outcome.

MR GENTLEMAN: Good.

Mr Rattenbury: It is not that we are not providing. Domestic Animal Services will go whenever they need to to secure a dog or take a dog that has been dropped off and house it in the pound until a decision is made about that individual's future.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: No comment on Johan the whippet?

MR COE: He came from the pound.

THE CHAIR: He came from the pound. One of our visitors to the committee has housed a dog that is—

Mr Rattenbury: An excellent choice, Mr Coe.

MR COE: That is right; six months ago.

Mr Rattenbury: There are some tremendous dogs out there, actually. It is a hard place to go because you see these dogs and they just do not want to be there. We just installed new plastic covers to shelter the dogs from the winter cold. When I went out to have a look at them there were dogs that had just arrived that day and they looked pretty disoriented. It is a tough environment, but the staff do a good job of looking after them.

MR COE: And do you follow the performance of the website? I imagine that would be one of the primary—

Mr Rattenbury: With the photos?

MR COE: Yes, it is one of the primary outlets as part of the re-homing process. Is that performance noted?

Ms Flannery: In terms of—

MR COE: Web traffic and the like?

Ms Flannery: I have not got the actual statistics, but certainly we update the website

very regularly. There can always be improvements to websites. The DAS website is one of those websites that we are looking to improve, along with all of the websites within TAMS.

MR SMYTH: This area looks after the management of parks and children's play equipment. Are there any plans to upgrade the park in Chisholm at the corner of Deamer and Heagney crescents that the government has now resolved to take off the land release program? I understand the process of gazettal as a park is underway?

Mr Rattenbury: Do you know?

Ms Flannery: I do not believe in TAMS there is any current move to upgrade that program in 2013-14.

MR SMYTH: So that will be in the future then?

Ms Flannery: There is a priority program that we go through in terms of upgrading parks and things.

MR SMYTH: No, it will be in the future then, won't it?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Maybe. We will see.

DR BOURKE: I want to ask something on bulky waste. Can I do that? Can I go back to waste for a minute?

THE CHAIR: Yes, I am happy for you to go back to waste.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Assuming that the officials are still here.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, we should be able to handle bulky waste.

THE CHAIR: See how we go.

DR BOURKE: In the budget you have continued the bulky waste collection service for another year but only for one year. Could you tell us about that please?

Mr Rattenbury: This has proved to be a very successful service. Basically it offers the collection of up to two cubic metres of waste once a year at no cost to eligible concession cardholders. There was funding allocated that would have expired at the end of this financial year, and the government has taken the decision to continue it for another 12 months. It is still in trial phase, and we continue to evaluate the effectiveness of that.

What I can say, though, is that the feedback on the service has been very positive from those people who have had the service. It is operated through Tiny's Shed and

they go out and make the collections on behalf of the government as a contract arrangement. People are very overwhelmingly positive about the service and what we are starting to see is some repeat customers. Even though it is a once a year entitlement, some people are now starting to ring up for a second time once that year has passed.

DR BOURKE: You talked about an evaluation, because it is a trial still for a further 12 months. What are the evaluation tools that you are using?

Mr Perram: The responses we are getting back are primarily related to the level of service and the waste that is going through that area. Generally what we are finding in the response area that we have done so far is that it is people that do not have trailers or families that do not have ready access to be able to remove that level of waste. We have a report that we could make available for the committee as a preliminary assessment of the bulky waste.

DR BOURKE: And who is eligible for the service?

Mr Rattenbury: It is concession cardholders in the ACT.

DR BOURKE: And there has been a reduction in the eligibility for the gold card?

Mr Rattenbury: There has, yes, of course, and that will then make the service available to a range of new people. I think the number of extra people is in the thousands. I cannot recall off the top of my head. I have seen the figures but, with the reduction from 75 to 70, new people will be eligible.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, budget paper 4, page 379, has an indicator there for the removal of sharps on public, unleased land. I would imagine that is your portfolio.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it is.

MR GENTLEMAN: And that is achieving the time lines there?

Mr Rattenbury: Sorry, I have just lost the place for that one.

MR GENTLEMAN: It is indicator e.

Mr Rattenbury: I am with you now. Sorry, go on.

MR GENTLEMAN: That indicator for four hours remains the same? That is not going to change?

Mr Rattenbury: No, there is no intention to change that. This is why these areas are a priority, in the sense that both the level of community concern and the consequence of a sharps incident are so high that this is one of the areas that TAMS particularly prioritises.

MR GENTLEMAN: And what is the level of reports or requests?

Ms Flannery: They vary. We usually get one or two every day but we also have people that regularly go around and collect sharps out of public toilets and things like that.

THE CHAIR: The ACT has a community needle and syringe program, if you are aware of this, in a different portfolio?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Is there any tracking of the number of sharps that are essentially littered and the proliferation of those programs?

Ms Flannery: I will take that one on notice.

THE CHAIR: Yes, if you could take it on notice, because obviously there are some arguments for NSP but it would be interesting to know that there are some consequences there that are negative for the community as well. If there is a correlation, maybe it needs some data to track back over a few years. Some of it might be a bit anecdotal, I am not sure, but if you could do some research into that, that would be good.

Ms Flannery: TAMS tracks where there are high levels of needles being dropped and every day sends rangers out to those areas to pick up from those areas and also around a whole lot of other public-use areas.

THE CHAIR: If you can take that one on notice.

DR BOURKE: Just as a supp on that, does anybody do any work either nationally or internationally on used syringes to see what the rate of contamination of blood-borne viruses is? You have got to have a sample on the needle and possibly within the syringe.

Mr Rattenbury: Not that I am aware of.

Ms Flannery: ACT Health may get that information. We work with ACT Health in providing information to them as well.

DR BOURKE: I was just asking off the top of my head. I was not expecting you to go and do a research project on it.

Mr Rattenbury: Not off the top of my head, no.

THE CHAIR: We will move on then to enterprise services, output class 2. I go to budget paper 4, page 380. There is an accountability indicator d., "Use of Renewable Energy", under "Property". The target for use of renewable energy is now five per cent, and note 3 says:

The original target published in the 2012-13 budget was 37.5 per cent. This target was amended during 2012-13 by notifiable instrument ...

Could you explain the detail surrounding that please?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I can. This was actually a notifiable instrument issued by Mr Corbell in, I believe, September last year and he could perhaps explain to you the detail somewhat better. But in essence the government took a decision to stop investing money in renewable energy purchase and take some of that money and put it into an energy efficiency program across government to cut government use of energy overall. It is a refocusing of effort and a way to free up the resources in order to enable government to make those investments in energy efficiency upgrades for its own agencies.

THE CHAIR: Have you got some more to add?

Mr Perram: An example of that is that ACT Property Group has been successful, through ESDD, in obtaining \$1.7 million for leadlight replacement in a number of buildings that the ACT property portfolio has, for energy efficiency. That will come out of the ESDD rolling loan that they have and be repaid out of the savings. It is that style of program that has been established, with the difference between the percentages.

THE CHAIR: And you are comfortable with that decision? I suppose it was taken a bit before your time but—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We might follow up on that further with Mr Corbell, unless anyone has a supplementary to that? Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: I refer to budget paper 4, page 380. Minister, can you tell me about the Capital Linen Service's revised targets reflecting a new accommodation sector contract?

Mr Rattenbury: Just bear with us. We will get the best staff forward on this one.

Mr Trushell: Sorry, would you be able to repeat the question?

DR BOURKE: The question was: can you tell me about the Capital Linen Service's revised targets reflecting a new accommodation sector contract? That refers to note 1.

Mr Trushell: Thank you. Essentially, we have made a concerted effort over the last two years to change our approach around marketing of our services in the private sector, particularly in the combination area. Part of that approach, for example, is to be monitoring the construction of new accommodation facilities around Canberra and approaching those builders in terms of marketing our services earlier. That seems to have borne fruit.

I guess in the past we have tended to wait for private sector customers to approach us. I think what has happened in recent times, to an extent, is that the private sector mainstream laundries have tended to reduce their focus in the Canberra market also. We are finding also that a lot more of the hotels in Canberra are approaching us as a

result of decommissioning on-premise laundries as they come to the end of their useful life but also as a result of their dissatisfaction with their existing service providers from Sydney or Victoria.

It has been a combination of a changed marketing approach but also an attractiveness, I think, essentially through word of mouth and development of our reputation, some work we have been doing through the Australian Hotels Association to raise our profile through that organisation and also, I think, generally a recognition by the market of the quality of the service that Capital Linen provides.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned that there is a trend for hotels in particular to be outsourcing their linen services rather than doing it in house. Do you think that trend is going to continue or is it just sort of a phase?

Mr Trushell: I think all these trends tend to be a phase, but obviously they are a phase of a decade or so. Often there are long lead times with these decisions. There is another large national hotel group who have got a number of hotels in Canberra, who I prefer not to name for commercial-in-confidence reasons, but who have a fairly large volume. They have got an on-premise laundry. They have started to talk to us around options of decommissioning that OPL when it gets to its useful life. It is not just a trend within Canberra. It seems to be a trend nationally from what I can tell. What is happening is that a few of those are certainly coming and talking to us. In some cases some of that has resulted in new business.

For example, the Realm Hotel is a relatively new hotel. They have got a relatively new on-premise laundry. They would be unlikely to decommission their OPL, but others where their laundry comes towards the end of its useful life, they tend to look at this option. If anyone is aware of the sort of pressures that hotels in Canberra are under in terms of their bottom line, they are starting to get a better understanding of their cost.

Often in respect of on-premise laundries they do not have a good feel for the cost of operating them because it is an in-house service. I think that they are starting to do a lot more work around that and starting to realise that it is more expensive than it perhaps looks on the surface. When hotels run their own laundries they tend not to buy enough linen. So they start to run out.

There are also significant OHS issues. I think that with the more rigorous OHS regime these days, it is much harder for hotels to manage that. I think that is another reason why they tend to look to outsource that to organisations who are essentially set up to manage that OHS risk.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned private industries sending their laundry out to, I think you said, Sydney?

Mr Trushell: Correct, yes.

DR BOURKE: Surely that cannot be economical for them.

Mr Trushell: It is hard to tell. Essentially, it is not a growth industry. If you look

Australia wide, the industry is only growing at about two per cent per year revenue wise, which would not even keep pace with the increase in wages. It is not a growth industry. There has been a fair bit of, I guess, rationalisation. We are now the only laundry within this region. The closest laundries of any significant size outside Capital Linen are based in Sydney. Spotless exited the Canberra market, after being here for a long time, about 18 months ago and are now servicing Canberra from Sydney.

Whether it is stupid or not, I think it is difficult to do. I think that reflects in the amount of business that is coming our way as a result of not only difficulties in servicing the market, but I get a sense of a focus, perhaps, towards the health side and a focus away from the accommodation sector.

It seems at the moment that we are performing a fairly important role within the accommodation market to provide that choice and that guaranteed backup where customers are simply not getting the service from Sydney. Even more recently, a supplier came up from Victoria. They have been aggressively marketing their services in the ACT and appearing to attempt to buy business. But even in this case, some of their customers are starting to talk to us around—in fact, we provided a quote to one of them as well. So it is a very dynamic market.

DR BOURKE: Sure. Apart from hotels and healthcare facilities, where else would your services be of interest?

Mr Trushell: I beg your pardon?

DR BOURKE: Where else would you be able to market your services in the private industry?

Mr Trushell: Essentially the business is roughly half accommodation, half health and also table linen. Table linen is a shrinking market because it trends way from traditional table linen. There is the health sector and aged care is also another one. It is fairly small, but it is something that we are active in. For the same sort of reasons as the hotels that are running on-premise laundries, we are starting to get more approaches and doing more work in that area than we have in the past.

Certainly, health is the mainstay, particularly, obviously, the public health system in the ACT. That is an ongoing growth area because of the expansion within the ACT health system and also because of demographic trends generally in Australia, which will see the health sector continue to grow.

It is nevertheless a competitive area, because hospitals have to manage their costs and they have options. For example, the Kimberly-Clarks and the providers of disposable health products, particularly in the theatre area, tend to be a fairly significant competitor.

DR BOURKE: You have talked mostly about large enterprises such as hospitals and large hotels. Are you attractive to small to medium enterprises?

Mr Trushell: We are attractive to them. They are not attractive to us. Generally, we are geared up to provide a bulk service. A small customer can be as expensive, or

more expensive, to service as a big customer. Really it is around economies of scale and getting the volume. We tried to direct those towards alternatives—some of the laundromats and other providers around the place. It is simply not economical.

We certainly do that with the smaller health providers, because we see that as an important community service. But generally with the smaller hotels and B&Bs we tend to direct them towards other areas, although we have some longstanding customers that we continue to maintain relationships with. We certainly do not get rid of an existing customer. But once again, there have been a lot more approaches from smaller places simply because I think the performance of the private sector laundries has tailed off. Similarly, they are focusing their attentions in other areas.

MR GENTLEMAN: Mr Trushell, I bring you to budget paper 3, page 192. There is a quite large expenditure there for replacement of the HVAC system. Can you just explain what that is?

Mr Perram: That is a funding for the ACT Property Group. Capital Linen Service is a tenant of the building.

MR GENTLEMAN: I see.

Mr Perram: Having had a look at that wording, it does intimate that it is the Capital Linen Service that has those fundings.

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes.

Mr Perram: But that is the heating, ventilation and air conditioning of that area. It is approaching 40 years old. We are unable to get parts for that as part of ACT Property Group. It is timely for that to be replaced for the health and wellbeing of the staff and in particular the linen products going into the health arena.

MR GENTLEMAN: Understood. Another question on Capital Linen. Previously Capital Linen used to do a lot of employment of newcomers to Canberra, people with English as a second language, and provide some training for those employees as well. Does that continue?

Mr Trushell: Yes, it is. In fact, at the moment across TAMS we are doing some work on workplace literacy in an attempt, I guess, to improve our service delivery to our staff around that. That is raising some interesting early observations around the way that we have signage and documentation—the various aids that we use to train and develop our staff.

But, yes, it is an inevitable fact that much of the migration into Canberra reflects the general immigration trends across Australia. The nature of the employment that we provide means that we are certainly, although small, an important provider of employment not only for people from those sorts of diverse backgrounds but also for people with disabilities who also are an important part of our workforce.

MR GENTLEMAN: Good on you, thanks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: No, I will defer to Mr Coe.

MR COE: Thank you, Mr Smyth. Would you please explain the policy for how government facilities are leased out to community groups?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I will ask Mr Bailey to come forward.

Mr Perram: Are we finished with Capital Linen Service?

Mr Rattenbury: I think we are finished with Capital Linen.

THE CHAIR: Any more for Capital Linen—no? You are free to go. Thank you.

Mr Bailey: We have an applications register that people can nominate to be on for ACT government properties, new tenancies or groups wanting to access those properties. They are received and then ranked in accordance of when they are received. These applicants will usually specify which particular area they are after. Some may say that they want north, inner north, south or something like that. But as they are ranked, and if a property comes up, we will then look at that register in order of priority—people waiting on that list—and then see if that property may suit their needs. If so, it will go to them in order of priority received.

MR COE: Is priority given to existing tenants?

Mr Bailey: There are exceptions where you can get an accelerated priority and things like that if there is a reason. For instance, if we are displacing a tenant from another government building and there is a property that comes up, they would take priority over everybody else on the applications register.

We do not actually normally have as a preference—if it made sense that it was the room next door or if it was part of their tenancy, it could be looked at as an extension. But we do not do that because we have a number of community hubs and we have a wait list, which is quite extensive, of people wanting to access community properties. We go through the register, we look at that and, yes, we work it that way there.

MR COE: I understand that a number of community organisations have been displaced from the Downer facility. Is that correct?

Mr Bailey: That is correct, yes.

MR COE: How many?

Mr Bailey: I am not sure of the exact number at Downer. We have been able to relocate all of them now except for, I think, one community group. We have shown them a property which was not suitable; so we are looking for another one now. But there are a number of commercial tenancies which we have not been able to re-house. We have worked with another directorate, CSD, to house the majority of the community tenants because, yes, they have to be out within the next couple of months.

MR COE: I have recently been contacted by the Jewish community about an issue that they are going through at the moment with regard to the Giralang site.

Mr Bailey: Yes.

MR COE: I think they first registered their interest some years ago, and then apparently they were dropped off the list a couple of years ago. What is the process for dropping people off the list, and how do you check the integrity of the list and the applications?

Mr Bailey: The list is there, and you are not dropped off unless you are made contact with. Every two years, or approximately every two years, we like to go out to everybody on the list, saying, "Do you still require this accommodation?" Because it is such a large list, we want to make sure that people are there. For that particular example that you are talking about, there were two letters that were sent out. One was returned, with "Return to sender", and then it was sent to the private address of someone on the committee. We did not hear back from them, so they were removed from the register at that point in time.

MR COE: So all it takes is a lack of response to one letter? After you had originally gone through the application process and not been issued with a property, it would seem to me that it would be a big call to drop someone off the list, given that just a year or two earlier they were interested in property. Does anybody ever come back to you and say, "Yes, take us off the list; we do not need properties"?

Mr Bailey: Yes, quite often. Quite often people will find accommodation and say, "Thank you; we have actually got something else now." We have a small portfolio; we could not service everybody who would like a community tenancy. They are at a concessional rent, and they are attractive, but they also are old and they are leased out on an as-is status. Quite often we get people saying, "Take us off." When we do that check every couple of years, a lot of people will say, "No, take me off now; I have found something else." That is very common.

MR COE: When an organisation has a particular attachment to a suburb or to an area, is that attributed any preference or any additional weighting points? Or are they treated as per every other organisation?

Mr Bailey: It is looked at in preference. If there is someone, for instance, who is sitting in 17th position but they want a spot in a particular suburb—you can be quite specific. Some people say, "I really only need it in X suburb, and we will wait for something like that to come up." The instance that you are talking about, though, is complicated by the fact that we had actually begun negotiations with a displaced tenant from Downer. In accordance with the policy, they take priority. We did not even get the chance to go to the register and say, "Let's go looking down it now." We actually had to find a place, because we had exhausted all options with CSD. We were not aware of their interest, obviously, because they had fallen off, but we could not even go to that list; we had to find something for this displaced community tenancy.

MR COE: I have got no idea who that organisation is, so I have got no opinion on

whether they are entitled to it or not. The broader question I have is: is the Giralang site really the only site available for that community group?

Mr Bailey: Yes. We had no vacancy in our community portfolio for any of these tenants. That is why we had to work with CSD to house a number of them. We simply do not have the stock. We had some minor vacancy in some office accommodation where some public servants moved out, but that is it, and that is not in the location that they would need. And in terms of that question, we do not go into “That community does this; that one does that.” The policy is quite simple. In fact, it is just based on when they applied. We do not go into the merits of what each community organisation does in terms of evaluating that either.

THE CHAIR: Mr Bailey, you said it is quite a long list. How many is it?

Mr Bailey: The community tenancies now have 77 on that list.

THE CHAIR: Could you provide that list to the committee, please?

Mr Bailey: I can do that, yes.

MR COE: Surely they have to be assessed as being eligible in the first instance?

Mr Bailey: Yes, they do have to demonstrate that they are eligible. Community tenancy is at a lower rate, so they have to demonstrate that they do meet the criteria. There is a form that they must fill out and submit to the tenancy and domestic property group to actually get onto the register.

MR COE: When the Jewish community were dropped off the list a couple of years ago, how many other organisations would have been dropped off the list at the same time because of lack of confirmation?

Mr Bailey: I am not sure; I was not here then. I can find that out, if you like, in terms of what the list was before and after.

THE CHAIR: You are taking that on notice?

Mr Bailey: I can if you like, yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR COE: Thank you. The Giralang facility—is that only one lease or is it possible that that could be two or three leases?

Mr Bailey: I am not familiar with the actual size of the property. We know it is from the medical centre that has relocated to Watson, so it is a unique opportunity that has come up that probably nobody would have foreseen happening, but I am not sure. I think it has to be leased out in entirety in terms of the one for that particular building. I do not think it could even be subleased—because of the building, I have been informed, but I have not been out there to know for sure.

MR COE: Has a lease been entered into for the Giralang site yet?

Mr Bailey: We have agreed terms with the community tenants. We have got a formal MOU to sign, but we have agreed terms. We had shown them this property, and they expressed their interest before we were made aware of the other interest. But as I said, it would not have mattered, because we would not have gone to that list in this case because of the priority of the displaced tenants that had to move out of Downer so that it can be knocked over.

MR COE: You said that between TAMS and CSD a number of tenants were rehoused or replaced?

Mr Bailey: Yes.

MR COE: Whereabouts are some of these locations on the north side?

Mr Bailey: I am not too familiar. I could not give you specific examples of where they have got them. I think they were able to house some at Flynn, in some of their community hubs that they have got. I would have to check whether that includes some of the other ones at Cook and things like that, but they had some community hubs as well. And they did work with our tenancies team to house the ones that we simply could not find accommodation for.

MR COE: You advised that you do not make assessments on how worthy an organisation is after they are approved.

Mr Bailey: Yes.

MR COE: Does that mean that there is absolutely no discretion whatsoever in the list? There is absolutely no way that an organisation can get priority treatment, whether it be by ministerial acclamation or otherwise?

Mr Bailey: There is. It is within the policy that they can get accelerated priority by writing to the minister to do that.

MR COE: What is the formal process for that? Is there a time frame?

Mr Bailey: We would put a recommendation up to the minister to decide, whether or not we believed that they could get accelerated priority. They would still go onto the list; that is correct. But in saying that, we do have the other part of the policy, which does take priority over that—displaced tenants out of government accommodation that have been forced to move, from government decisions. And that is what is happening in this instance here. We have had to move these tenants out of Downer, and this community group could not be located anywhere else.

MR COE: I know that the Jewish community purchased, at market rate, the old Giralang preschool.

Mr Bailey: Yes.

MR COE: They bought that in the knowledge that next door was a community facility, and hopefully at some point they would be able to either purchase or take occupancy of that. It is particularly convenient given their strict religious and cultural requirements: they can only walk on the Sabbath if they strictly adhere to particular Jewish law. They feel tremendously let down, from what I gather, that they were dropped off the list a couple of years ago, seemingly without their knowledge, and are in this predicament now. So in effect are you saying that the ship has sailed?

Mr Bailey: No, I am not saying that. They were contacted, and we held a meeting this week with them. They did agree that that was the address that the member from their group is at, the address that that letter went to. We have not had any contact made since that time in the past. We have not actually changed that list. In the last three years, there has been no contact from the group to express any interest or desire to stay on it—not that they have to do that; they do not get taken off, but—

Mr Perram: The opportunity for them, as Daniel has said, is a brief to the minister, for the minister to consider a change in priority on the list. Otherwise there is no method within the policy to be able to change the decision that has been made and the offer that has been made to the other party at this time.

MR COE: Minister, have you received representations? I know I have contacted you about this. Have you considered this issue in detail yet?

Mr Rattenbury: I have not. I am advised that a response to your letter, Mr Coe, is just coming to my office. I have not seen it yet, though.

MR COE: I cannot make a claim on behalf of the community, the Jewish community, but if they have contacted your office, is that something that you are going to consider—whether they should get priority placement?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not believe they have contacted my office. I will check that.

MR COE: I believe they have.

Mr Rattenbury: I will certainly have a look at the matter. I think we are in a situation where Mr Bailey has made it quite clear that, because of the displacement in Downer, the group that has been offered Giralang has been given that priority status. I think that is an appropriate policy where government is displacing somebody. Our first duty is to try and rehome those displaced tenants, and certainly I know it has been very challenging with the Downer site.

MR COE: I guess the issue would be that, had the particular requirements of the Jewish community been known, and had they still been on the list for Giralang, that would have been at the forefront of the thinking when the Giralang medical centre, perhaps unexpectedly, as Mr Bailey said, became available.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Mr Bailey is quite clear in his response: because of the policy and the privatisation, and trying to rehouse existing tenants, they did not even go to the list, so even if the community had still been on the list they would not have been got to. That said, I know Property Group works hard to try and make best use of the

spaces that are available and, to use a technical term, jiggle people around to maximise the number of groups we can get into a given space and do those sorts of things. So there is a level of care, I suppose, that goes into the management of that list. I have certainly been briefed on that when some other matters have come up.

In terms of your earlier question, I have just had a note. I believe that I received an email last night from the rabbi in relation to this community.

MR COE: Yes, and I think they have—

Mr Rattenbury: Having been at the sleep-out all night, I have not checked my email yet.

MR COE: I think there have been two, three or four in the last week on this issue.

Mr Rattenbury: I will check that when I go upstairs.

THE CHAIR: Maybe as a way forward, when you look at this issue you could respond to the committee and also respond to Mr Coe separately, as he has raised this issue with the committee—just to keep us abreast of what decisions are going to be made now that the facts are on the table. Thank you, Mr Coe, for bringing this to the attention of the committee.

MR COE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Do we have any more issues within enterprise services?

MR GENTLEMAN: Just one, if I could—sorry.

DR BOURKE: You go first.

MR GENTLEMAN: I want to follow up on a question I asked during annual report hearings. You were negotiating with the Retired Transport Employees Club in White Street, Campbell on their lease, and I wanted to see whether that had been completed.

Mr Bailey: I do not think that was our property. I think that is another directorate.

MR GENTLEMAN: Is it?

Mr Bailey: Yes. I can confirm that and get back to you.

THE CHAIR: Take that on notice.

Mr Bailey: I can find out the status, yes.

MR SMYTH: I have a couple of questions about the financials. On page 391 in your operating statement there is a three per cent decrease in your employee expenses and in the following year there is another decrease. If staff is going up, how are you magically decreasing your employee expenses? There are some ins and outs for the outcome for this year and a reconciliation of which of those ins and outs then go into

the 2013-14 year might be useful.

Mr Byles: Can we take that on notice please, Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: Sure. Do we know why the expenses then go down in 2014-15?

Mr Byles: Could we add that to the response as well?

MR SMYTH: All right. They then go down in 2015-16. Thank you; that would be interesting. Over the page, on your balance sheet, I am always very wary when the same number appears in five columns. If you look down at your non-current provisions under non-current liabilities, it is magically the same for four years. How is that possible?

Mr Byles: On what page?

MR SMYTH: On 392, non-current liabilities, other non-current provisions, on 30 June 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016 and 2017, they are exactly the same. I wish I had that degree of certainty.

Mr Byles: Again, we might add that to the list as well.

Mr SMYTH: Okay. And the line below that, “Other,” again, for the three outyears it is exactly \$1,128,000. Why would that be?

Mr Byles: We will explain the preciseness of it, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: I would be grateful. If you go over to your cash flow statement, under “payments”, dividends to government are exactly the same for the three outyears. For repayment of borrowings, there is nothing mentioned, and then repayment of finance leases is static. Your total for financing payments is exactly the same for three years. So you are not paying back any borrowings and you are not repaying any leases?

Mr Byles: I am having a discussion here with the CFO. I might, in terms of clarity, respond by way of an answer to a question on notice.

MR SMYTH: Okay, thanks for that.

THE CHAIR: Does anyone have anything further on enterprise services before we move to the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority?

MR COE: I have another question. It is not so much about enterprise services but nor is it in any other output class. It is with regard to the objectives of the agency and one is—

Mr Byles: Do you mean TAMS generally?

MR COE: Yes, that is right. The third dot point on page 372 is “supporting the Capital Metro Agency in the development of a light rail network”. How is TAMS doing that?

Mr Byles: Primarily as a host agency, Mr Coe, in terms of providing that back-of-house administrative support for the project team in the early stages of the set-up.

MR COE: I am having a little confusion about the governance of this issue because for a while I thought EDD were doing it; then ESDD seemed to dabble in it a fair bit and almost take ownership of it; and now you are advising that TAMS is the host agency for the back-of-house stuff. How does it work?

Mr Rattenbury: TAMS is really only providing the space and the logistical support. Ours is an entirely—

MR COE: The physical space for the staff?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, the TAMS role is an entirely functional one, and infrastructure—IT, desks, office space. Minister Corbell is the lead minister for the light rail project.

MR COE: Does he chair the subcommittee of cabinet or is that the Chief Minister?

Mr Rattenbury: No, the Chief Minister chairs the subcommittee of cabinet.

MR COE: How often does that subcommittee meet?

Mr Rattenbury: There is not a specific time frame. Earlier in the year it met quite frequently, to get some initial governance work underway. More recently the cabinet has been focused on the budget, so there has not been a discussion for a while. I anticipate we will have one again soon.

MR COE: Of the \$18 million or so that has been allocated over the next four years, how much of that money is going to TAMS for TAMS staff?

Mr Rattenbury: The service level agreement for that has not been determined at this point. It is still work in progress. But I do not anticipate it will be a large amount of that money.

MR COE: Are questions with regard to how progress is going on recruitment efforts et cetera best put to Minister Corbell?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, he has the lead responsibility for matters such as recruitment for a project director, for example.

MR COE: Again, I am not going into specifics because I know that is for another day, but what role does ACTION play with the capital metro agency, from a governance point of view?

Mr Rattenbury: The broad answer to your question is that a whole lot of agencies are involved in the project. With respect to the way the project board has been set up, a number of directors-general from across the government sit on that project board to ensure a whole-of-government focus on the project. Mr Byles, as the Director-General

of TAMS, is on that, so he would bring that perspective from ACTION to the table. It is fair to say it is very much in the preliminary days and, with respect to that sort of detail work regarding where ACTION might play a specific role, we have not yet reached that point.

MR COE: Of course, that brings in JACS as well, with transport regulation.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

MR COE: Is each director-general on that board?

Mr Rattenbury: No, not all of them. Health is not there, for example. The directors-general are Ms Howson from Community Services, EDD, so Mr Dawes, ESDD, TAMS and Treasury—CMTD.

MR COE: What is the name of that board?

Mr Rattenbury: It is the project board.

Mr COE: The project board for capital metro?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, I think that is—

MR COE: Mr Byles, how often does the board meet?

Mr Byles: I will have to confirm that, Mr Coe, but they have met once in my absence, I know. I think my replacement attended that board meeting. With respect to the specifics, I will have to take that on notice to make sure I give you the correct answer.

MR SMYTH: Just to follow up on that, Mr Corbell said on the radio this morning that economic cost-benefit analysis and engineering studies have been done. Have the board received those?

Mr Rattenbury: I think it would be best if you asked Mr Corbell that. He made the statement. I did not hear the radio interview this morning and neither did Mr Byles, so it is probably best if you direct those questions to Mr Corbell.

MR SMYTH: Sure. Have you seen, minister, the engineering studies and the cost-benefit analysis for capital metro?

Mr Rattenbury: I have seen a range of papers. I do not know the specific answer to your question, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: Well, you are the only one who knows.

Mr Rattenbury: I am sorry?

MR SMYTH: Have you seen a cost-benefit analysis for capital metro?

Mr Rattenbury: I would have to go back and review my papers. I have not looked at

them for a little while.

THE CHAIR: If you can take that on notice and get back to us on whether you have seen a cost-benefit analysis or not, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: I will take it on notice.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR COE: It was a matter before the election, I would think, but has TAMS put together a cost-benefit analysis or engineering study, or commissioned one?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not believe so.

Mr Byles: Not that I recall, Mr Coe. Again, I will verify that, but I do not recall seeing a cost-benefit analysis.

Mr Rattenbury: It would be fair to say that ESDD has led the work thus far, possibly with EDD.

MR COE: Yes, with EDD. Originally the steering group, or the working group, was within EDD, I believe.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Those things are before my time, so I am not able to help you with that. It is a bit of a black box to me.

MR COE: Yes, me too.

THE CHAIR: Is everyone happy then that we can move to the public cemeteries?

Mr Perram: Mr Chairman, if I could just give some clarification? We have just found out that the property that Mr Gentleman referred to in White Street is in fact the ACT Property Group. If you are comfortable and the committee is comfortable with that, we will cover that with a response on a question on notice.

THE CHAIR: Yes, that is fine with me. We will move to the Public Cemeteries Authority. Dr Bourke, do you have any questions?

DR BOURKE: Yes, chair. Minister, on page 441 under “priorities” it states:

continuing to develop and refine the range of services and options available for interment in the ACT, in accordance with contemporary community needs;

What do you mean by that, and what progress are you making?

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Horne?

Mr Horne: We get feedback from the community on occasion. Also, our staff attend seminars and conferences around Australia to try and garner what the trends are in interment options. We distil that down, if you like, and discuss that at board and try to

work out what people are going to be wanting in the future. For example, in the last couple of years the notion of natural burial has become more topical, and we are seeking to put that into the options that we offer presently. We are just about to commission a new memorial garden for Woden Cemetery for the interment of ashes in response to continuing demand from the community for such things.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman, do you have any questions?

MR GENTLEMAN: I do, yes. Minister, how is the establishment of the new southern cemetery progressing? That is on page 441 of budget paper 4.

Mr Horne: At present we have a completed master plan of the project. We have not gone past that at this stage because we are still working on trying to develop what options we have and what models we might apply, if you like, to fund and operate the facility in the future.

MR GENTLEMAN: Have you done any consultation with residents around the area at all?

Mr Horne: We have done considerable consultation. That started back in 2009. As part of the development of the master plan we did considerable further consultation.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth, anything on cemeteries? Mr Coe?

MR SMYTH: That is fine by me. I can go back to the Tuggeranong Community Council and tell them the work proceeds.

MR COE: Minister, have you been approached about the ongoing issues at St John's in Reid with regard to the exclusive rights certificate issue?

Mr Horne: This is the one that was on the front page of the paper?

MR COE: Yes, I think it has been reported once or twice this year and in previous years as well. Have you been approached about this, to your knowledge, and has the government considered formally closing the St John's cemetery?

Mr Horne: St John's cemetery is actually a private cemetery. It is owned by the Anglican Church. As far as I am aware, the government actually does not have the ability to open or close cemeteries. It is not in the act per se. The issues that have arisen over there at the moment are simply management issues for that community. The government does not really have a role to play in that. I am sorry; the act actually says that, provided you have a cemetery, you may be buried there in the ACT.

Mr Perram: One of the nuances of the legislation is that the minister can approve a burial in a non-cemetery; can clearly approve a burial within the cemeteries that we have operated by the authority. But if it is a cemetery outside of that control it is those parties that own and operate that cemetery that have the power in respect of that cemetery.

MR COE: I understand that there may be a legal provision for the cemetery to be closed by government, but it may well be at the request of the church. So if you could get back to me on the legality of that. It may well end up being something for the Attorney-General as opposed to the cemeteries authority. On this issue of policy, if you are able to—

Mr Rattenbury: We will make the first inquiries on that and see where it sits and give you that advice back.

MR COE: Yes, if you are able to do that directly with my office? I am not sure the estimates committee necessarily needs to—

THE CHAIR: I am certainly comfortable, unless members object, that that go directly to Mr Coe.

Mr Rattenbury: We will deal directly with Mr Coe; that is fine.

MR COE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Any further issues with regard to cemeteries?

MR GENTLEMAN: Just one more question, if I could, chair?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MR GENTLEMAN: On page 441 of BP4 there is a note on the extension of the mausoleum at Woden Cemetery. How is that progressing?

Mr Horne: At the moment we are finalising a model to proceed with that project. The board has not yet taken a final decision on whether or not that will go ahead.

THE CHAIR: There are no further questions. Thank you, members, thank you, minister, and thank you, officials. I will just make the point about questions on notice. I think you are aware that questions on notice are to be lodged within three business days of the receipt of the uncorrected proof of the transcript. Answers to questions on notice are to be lodged with the committee support office within five business days. Answers to questions taken on notice are to be provided within five business days of the hearing. So as soon as you have received a question, if there are any questions on notice, five days, and five days for the questions that you have been asked today. Thank you very much for attending, minister. We will see you again in another guise on another day next week, I believe.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Members of the committee, we will reconvene at 2 pm for children and young people.

Sitting suspended from 12.37 to 2.00 pm.

Appearances:

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

Community Services Directorate

Howson, Ms Natalie, Director General

Collis, Dr Mark, Executive Director, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Paull, Ms Jillian, Senior Director, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Power, Ms Leanne, Director, Policy Data and Research, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Wyles, Mr Paul, Director Early Intervention and Prevention Services, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Pappas, Ms Helen, Director Care and Protection Services, Office for Children, Youth and Family Support

Hubbard, Mr Ian, Chief Financial Officer, Community Services Directorate

Corben, Mr Greg, Acting Director, Youth Services

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon and welcome, Minister for Disability, Children and Young People and officials from the Community Services Directorate, to the estimates hearings. I will go through some housekeeping matters before we start. These proceedings are being recorded and web streamed. Are you all aware of the privileges card? You have got a copy before you. You have read it? Can I have an indication from the gallery that you are all across it? All good? Great. That being the case, we will move on. Would you like to make a statement, minister?

Ms Burch: If I can make a brief statement, I thank you for the opportunity to provide the statement. At the outset I welcome all the officials here and thank them for the work that they do, not only in supporting estimates but through the year as well.

The Office for Children, Youth and Family Support in the Community Services Directorate have continued work on refreshing the service culture and quality agenda in the office, and that is progressing well. And this has seen considerable resources and effort put into improved systems and services following on from various reviews of services of youth justice and care and protection, and there have been very positive improvements and outcomes for children and young people.

There is a lot of work happening across the portfolio, from the individual work programs delivered through the office to the work of the pre-natal teams in care and protection. The work underway on the blueprint has a focus on early intervention, and we are seeing innovation through programs such as the exciting diversionary work of the after-hours bail service. We should note that the program recently won a public service award for outstanding recognition for a new program. I congratulate all the crew there.

It is important to acknowledge the work the office has achieved in partnership with

the community sector and certainly with members of the community, including the foster and kinship carers. It is tough but important work, and I would like to thank everybody for their contribution.

This year the government have funded early intervention programs, specialised intervention programs and much-needed visibility funding to support the systems for our caseworkers to do their functions. We continue to show our commitment in supporting young people, with the announcement of additional funds to employ additional youth workers engaged through the community sector to provide flexible services for young people, ensuring that the services are delivered at the right place, at the right time and to the right target groups. Expansion will allow the program to assist the more vulnerable young people to engage and reconnect with support services.

There is also funding to augment existing funding of youth transition services provided through the community sector, and funding has been provided to Diversity ACT to support gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex members of the Canberra community. Agencies such as Diversity ought to be able, as through this funding, to support young people to access supports and advice.

We will expand the successful parents as teachers program as a key investment to prevention and early intervention responses for children and families. The program operates out of our three child and family centres and provides parents with extensive curriculum delivered in their homes by experienced professionals.

In the specialised service delivery area, I am pleased that the government has funded therapeutic assistance for children and young people recovering from trauma, abuse and neglect. The trauma recovery centre will be manned by specialists who work with children and families to build resilience and skills to help those most vulnerable young people and children recover.

Investment in activities that support the blueprint for youth justice is, as I have mentioned, providing positive results. In recognition of this work achieved at Bimberi, the Bendora transition unit at Bimberi has been funded in this budget for a further two years. The unit helps people in custody at Bimberi to become community ready when they exit, assisting them with daily living skills.

Throughout this period, the office has continued to deliver a range of quality services to children and young people in their family, and the office considers over 14,000 children-concern reports a year, works with young people in out-of-home care, detention and on community justice orders and provides a range of tailored programs through the ACT in partnership with the community. And I will leave it there. I am happy to go to questions.

THE CHAIR: Thanks, minister. Across the directorate, I just want to get across what savings are being made, where they are being made. I note that the directorate, I think, in terms of FTE reduces by 38. Is that right? Certainly FTE is going down. Can you give me an explanation of what the savings are in dollars and where they are being found?

Ms Burch: All agencies have savings targets, but I think that is a narrative that needs to be also aligned with re-profiling or re-aligning services. If you look at the FTEs and the budget of 2013 and the budget of this year, the loss is certainly far less than if you look at the estimated outcomes. A number of values in the—

THE CHAIR: Why is that different?

Ms Burch: One, this year we had significant additional resources to respond to a number of reviews that had brought people online. Certainly that was through Disability as well and just generally throughout CSD but Ms Howson might be able to go to some more detail.

THE CHAIR: Yes, particularly as Disability is going up, as I understand it. Probably additional people are going in there. But other areas are going down. Where are staff going?

Ms Howson: In terms of the budgeted FTE, the overall reduction is eight FTE across the two financial years, and we will be able to manage that reduction through natural attrition. When we look at our standard turnover rate, that will be quite reasonably managed within that profile.

Going back to the question, the 38 that you mention is actually reflective of a number of positions that were brought on in the current financial year to address a range of time-limited projects, things that are associated with the work that we are doing around getting ready for the national disability insurance scheme and the task force that we have set up to do that work and a range of projects that are associated with the work that we have done flowing out of the Public Advocate's review and the Auditor-General's review of the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support.

THE CHAIR: So that 38 is in addition to the eight or is the eight a part of it? It is inclusive?

Ms Howson: No, that is inclusive. That is inclusive of the eight. Those positions, as I said, are associated with projects that are time limited. When those projects finish—a lot of those staff have actually been drawn out of other permanent positions within the organisation—the staff will go back to their roles, and the people that are temporarily filling their positions will finish up in those roles that they have been backfilling. That is the way we will manage that process, essentially. Notwithstanding that, the overall savings agenda is giving us the opportunity to look at how we are redistributing our resourcing across the whole of CSD and, as the budget papers indicate, the focus for us is very much on re-profiling.

In this particular area, in these output classes that we are examining this afternoon, you will be able to see that, in terms of the programs that have been wound back or are reducing, there has been almost an equitable injection in this budget into those same output classes. It has given us the opportunity to actually reframe our service response and our service offer in these areas. And we can go into that in some detail throughout the course of this afternoon, if you wish.

THE CHAIR: We will probably go through that as we go through in more detail.

MR SMYTH: Just as a supplementary, could you provide the committee with a reconciliation of what areas are losing staff and what areas are gaining them, across the department?

Ms Howson: In terms of this particular output class?

MR SMYTH: In terms of the whole of the department.

Ms Burch: For example—and I think it is one of the ones that are in the public domain—youth connections has ceased as a program. It had been in place for over a decade, I think 15-plus years. That program was about supporting kids that are disengaging from education. Since that program has come into place, we have had the youth commitment, we have had significant investment in early intervention, the gateway services, counsellors at school, a whole range of other programs, plus a firm belief that if someone is disconnecting from school you do not actually re-engage them by removing them from school. You had better work with them within the school. So there is a handful, a dozen, eight—

Ms Howson: There are 15 overall in the directorate.

Ms Burch: Fifteen in that, but they will be then brought back into those other re-profiled programs.

THE CHAIR: I understand that the directorate will have an explanation for each of those, but if you can provide us with the details of where FTEs have been brought on and where FTEs have gone, it gives us, as a committee, an idea of what the changes are within the directorate.

Ms Burch: Where we can.

THE CHAIR: If you can provide that on notice, that would be very useful.

Ms Burch: We will provide what we can, what is already in play, yes.

MR SMYTH: Which can you not supply?

THE CHAIR: What is not in play? What is the difference?

Ms Burch: That is what we have just said. We are losing some staff out of here that were brought online. They will now go. We can give you that. The decisions around youth connections have been made, but there are other savings programs that will be worked through.

THE CHAIR: And those other savings programs will be the eight FTE or are these ones that are beyond that eight?

Ms Howson: The FTE is an end-of-year result for the directorate and, as you will see from this year's performance, the number of staff that we bring on for various programs that are funded out of administrative allocations will ebb and flow. That is

part of the discretion that I have in terms of the way in which I respond to the priorities of the government. In terms of the reconciliation, we have already—and it is in the public domain—announced a number of areas where there have been changes. The minister has mentioned youth connections. Within the Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, in these output classes we do have clarity about where we are changing the profile of those programs, and we can provide the information about FTE.

In terms of the broader directorate impact, we are still working our way through that. We have been given savings targets, but we are not in the position at this stage to be able to provide—

THE CHAIR: When do you expect to identify when that work will be done?

Ms Howson: We are commencing it immediately now that we know what our targets—

THE CHAIR: When will it be done? I am just trying to think whether it will be done by the end of this committee, before—

Ms Burch: No, not all of it.

Ms Howson: No, our intention would be to work through our business planning process over the course of the next four to six weeks and be ready at the time of the appropriation being passed through the Assembly.

THE CHAIR: So you could provide that information?

Ms Burch: I am happy to provide you with what we can.

THE CHAIR: Yes, provide us with what you can. What is the quantum of those additional savings that are beyond family and community services you have got to find in dollar terms?

Ms Howson: I ask Mr Hubbard to come to the table. Overall, our savings target is around \$8 million across the forward estimates, and the new initiatives coming in through this budget are of a quantum of a similar nature. For the directorate, our overall funding levels stayed at about \$230 million across the forward estimates each year. Is that all the information that you needed or do you—

THE CHAIR: I do not know whether Mr Hubbard is going to add something to that or—

Mr Hubbard: No. Our savings target going forward is clearly outlined in the approp table on page 336. That is what we are going to adjust to over the next four years. The saving target for this year is just over \$3 million, \$3.2 million. That is what we will be trying to make a saving there, out of approximately \$230 million. It is in the order of close to a little over one per cent.

THE CHAIR: Do you have any other savings that are flowing through from savings

targets which were required in previous budgets or is that the total, that is not on top of other savings targets that you are already meeting?

Ms Howson: We have worked to budget in the previous financial year and the current financial year.

Mr Hubbard: We have factored those savings in. As they were allocated in the forwards in previous years, we have factored those in, and already, through our business planning in those previous years, we have factored those savings in.

MR SMYTH: Just on the staffing, though, will you provide a reconciliation of the decrease from 962 to 924?

Mr Hubbard: There is a problem with providing that. As you can see, there is movement throughout the year above the budgeted FTE as we do different projects and move things around. The number actually changes fortnightly with the pays. To give a point in time really will not illuminate too much how it works, where we are. We try to get to the budgeted number each year, except for, as it says in the estimated outcome here, short-term projects that we are accommodating through funding from other sources.

It might come in from the commonwealth or we might use some funding that we thought was for consultants. We might have budgeted for consultants and, instead of using consultants, said, "A better option would be to use someone internally." And we take them offline for 12 months and fund it internally. It is still reflected in the FTE of the estimated outcome. As you can see there, the actual variation ends up being probably eight per cent, whereas when you look at the movement between the budgets, that is closer to about one per cent of the 900 FTEs. So any point-in-time shot of FTEs does not really give you a good view as to how we move throughout the year. That is the issue with a point in time.

MR SMYTH: I will just refer you to your own note:

The decrease in the 2013-14 Budget from the estimated outcome primarily reflects the impact of savings initiatives.

Mr Hubbard: Yes, that is eight overall. The decrease of eight overall will work through the 900 FTE that we have across the organisation.

MR SMYTH: So the eight is from 932 to 924?

Mr Hubbard: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Could you please provide a reconciliation that takes the 932 to 962 and then the 962 to 924.

Mr Hubbard: We can probably do that.

Ms Howson: Mr Smyth—

MR SMYTH: I assume you have got a list of staff engaged for strategic projects and additional staff associated with the provision of services.

Mr Hubbard: Yes; we can probably do that. But that is our best guess of where we are going to end up at the end of the year.

Ms Howson: Mr Smyth, it would probably help me if I understood what was the intent of what you are looking for. FTE is a measure of full-time equivalent, as you know. We can certainly indicate where we reduced eight staff in the organisation, if that is what you are looking for overall. But as Mr Hubbard has explained, in terms of the course of the year, numbers of people actually involved in doing work will fluctuate.

MR SMYTH: But at this point of time, today, you would be pretty close to having 962 staff in the department.

Ms Howson: That is right, yes.

MR SMYTH: That is now going to travel to 924. I want to know how you get there.

Ms Howson: As I explained earlier, a lot of those people are associated with time-limited projects. A lot of those FTEs—

MR SMYTH: Then you will know what they are.

Ms Howson: Yes. A lot of the FTE is associated with time-limited projects, and when those projects come to a close—that is where we will draw that impact from.

MR SMYTH: You will know when those projects are ending and when you lose those staff, therefore.

Ms Howson: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Members, are there any questions for the directorate as a whole before we go to 2.1?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes. Minister, in your opening you talked about refreshing the service following on from a series of reviews.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR GENTLEMAN: Can you highlight some of those reviews for us, and give us the outcomes for those.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR GENTLEMAN: Some of us are new to the estimates committee this year.

Ms Burch: Of the two major reviews that have gone through the office, there has been one through the Public Advocate and the Auditor-General. We have spoken to

this committee—I appreciate probably not to you, Mr Gentleman—around this refreshing the culture project, but there certainly has been a very broad, deep change within the office in response to those two reviews.

Some of that includes the development of the integrated management system. We have certainly made some structural realignment. We brought on new staff, such as Jillian Paull, to come in and oversight some of that quality. We have responded with a comprehensive kinship care package. We are also now about to embark on a strategic five-year plan for out of home care. We have reviewed our kinship care and current processes. This is significant—almost a root and branch review about how we go about our functions, what our accountabilities are, and, putting you through an integrated management system, how we support our case workers to do their job at a much higher and better supported level. Mark Collis might have some other comment to make on that.

Mr Collis: The integrated management system is the architecture for quality assurance and quality compliance of all policies and procedures in the organisation. We commenced it largely as a response to the Human Rights Commission inquiry into youth justice, to undertake such a program at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. I am pleased to say that we are within weeks of that being finalised. When the members visited Bimberi, we were celebrating the proximity of that event.

The same architecture is being used to review and develop policies and procedures across the child protection system. The reality is that, as complex as Bimberi Youth Justice Centre is, it is probably true that the complexity of our care and protection system is more complex. It is having resources allocated to it, and we are achieving action there.

Just to highlight it, the integrated management system is intended to ensure that there is a direct line of sight and a clear line of sight between legislative requirements, policy and actual practice in the field. It is a very practical document, but it gives us confidence around compliance with all aspects of performance. In regard to the Bimberi IMS, we now have been through the first couple of iterations of auditing this process at different times, and we are very pleased with the results.

MR GENTLEMAN: Thank you, minister.

THE CHAIR: We might go to output 2.1?

MR SMYTH: I have something on general questions while Mr Hubbard is there.

THE CHAIR: You have got a general question?

MR SMYTH: Yes. In the operating statement on page 340 of budget paper 4, resources received free of charge is remarkably consistent for five years. Why is it exactly \$460,000 for the next five years?

Mr Hubbard: What we are trying to do there is just do a budget estimate of what resources received free of charge is. That is typically resources we receive from other territory entities. The typical reason is that we just go off what we expect was our last

year, because that is the best guess we have. We like to put a number in, and we just go from what we believe will be the estimated outcome. Then we just project it out. The alternative is really to have nothing there, but we usually have something in resources received free of charge. That is the reason why we project it out as opposed to having zero.

MR SMYTH: Can you give us an example of what you received free of charge this year?

Mr Hubbard: Typically what we would have there is services provided by Justice and Community Services. That would be the bulk.

MR SMYTH: Which is what?

Mr Hubbard: Legal services, legal advice.

MR SMYTH: So you are not billed by GSO?

Mr Hubbard: Not in a cash sense. There is no cash transaction, but they do keep an amount. This is true of all directorates. They provide services and they do provide accounting around it. Yes; it is a non-cash figure, that one.

DR BOURKE: Do you receive advice from GSO and JACS or just from GSO?

Mr Hubbard: That is GSO, predominantly.

MR SMYTH: Just coming down to your expenses, employee expenses are slated to only go up one per cent this year. Are the EBA negotiations underway in the directorate?

Mr Hubbard: Yes, they are.

MR SMYTH: What is the offer?

Mr Hubbard: I am sure you would have to ask HR. I think the offer out at the moment is two per cent.

MR SMYTH: So we are offering two per cent but the expenses are only going up one per cent. How does that work?

Mr Hubbard: There is a combination of things that actually go into that number, of course. It is the increase in staffing, the expectation of where staffing is going to go. And before an EBA is actually determined, we grow it by one per cent. In the absence of a determination, we grow those costs by one per cent.

MR SMYTH: Will you have to seek supplementation if it is settled at two per cent or more?

Mr Hubbard: We might try and seek supplementation, but in the current environment I would be surprised if we got it.

MR SMYTH: If it is a two per cent increase, where will the other one per cent come from? Will you end or cease programs or find other savings?

Ms Howson: That is probably a question that we would need to explore on notice, and one that we would want to refer back to Chief Minister's before we were able to respond.

MR SMYTH: It is in your budget. If the offer is two per cent and you have only got a one per cent increase built in, you are shy one per cent.

Ms Howson: I think it is reasonable that the central agencies give us some direction on how we might treat that. Mr Hubbard has just outlined—

Mr Hubbard: As I said to you before, Mr Smyth, it does not just incorporate the wage negotiations. It has also got some reduction in staff and other—

MR SMYTH: But eight staff at an average of \$100,000 is \$800,000.

Mr Hubbard: That is right.

MR SMYTH: That is not going to cover one per cent.

Mr Hubbard: That is not too bad, though, is it?

MR SMYTH: It is not going to cover one per cent. In the outyears, though, your employee expenses go down even further. They go from \$79 to \$76 to \$74 million in the two final years. Are you expecting, therefore, greater decreases in staff in the outyears?

Mr Hubbard: Reflecting the savings that we will need to find in the proportion of expenses that go towards salaries and wages and employee expenses generally, my expectation is that we will need to re-profile the way that we deliver services. How that is actually going to pan out is yet to be determined, but that is our best projection going forward at the moment. That will change, depending on what we actually do, but what we do is allocate savings on a proportional basis as to the expenses listed there.

Ms Burch: This reflects, to me, the overall approach to this budget and the fact that all agencies are re-aligning and re-profiling their work. We have not made any shyness of returning the overall budget to surplus. Every agency is doing its work, and we are doing that smart by looking at how do we most effectively deliver a contemporary set of programs to our community?

MR SMYTH: But a difference of \$5 million—at \$100,000 average staff, that is 50 staff. Are you saying there is another 50 staff that are being cut in the next couple of years?

Ms Burch: I am not saying that, Mr Smyth, at all.

MR SMYTH: Well, could you please explain how your budget dips from employee expenses of \$79 million to \$74 million over two years without staff cuts? I am sure every organisation in the world would love to know how you can have more staff with less.

Ms Burch: I am quite happy to give the information as we can.

MR SMYTH: All right. The next line, Mr Hubbard—even though your employee expenses go up one per cent, your superannuation expenses go up three per cent. Why is that?

Mr Hubbard: I will get you a reconciliation on that one.

MR SMYTH: Last year in your budget papers your employee expenses went up two per cent and your superannuation expenses went up 12 per cent. You will take that one on notice?

Mr Hubbard: Yes, definitely. I think there was an increase in super, in the allocation to super that year.

MR SMYTH: Three or four lines down, on borrowing costs, what do you actually borrow? What do you pay borrowing costs on?

Mr Hubbard: That is a loan that we have currently got. I think that is the loan we have got from ESD, but I will have to check that one as well.

MR SMYTH: Why do you have a loan from ESD?

Mr Hubbard: We are doing some green infrastructure on some of our community hubs.

MR SMYTH: Okay, that is to put in—

Mr Hubbard: Yes.

MR SMYTH: So it is just a single one. That is why your interest expenses are flat in the three outyears?

Mr Hubbard: Yes. I can get you details on that, if you like.

MR SMYTH: All right. Up on the top of page 341, the lines under the current assets, except for the capital works in progress line, look remarkably the same for five years. How can our cash and cash equivalents, our receivables, our assets and our other current assets all be the same for five years in a row?

Mr Hubbard: Again, we project the budgets out based on our current knowledge of what we are going to have in the bank et cetera. We typically project those out as estimates because we do not know exactly what our cash position is going to be.

MR SMYTH: Is that the same explanation, then, for interest bearing liabilities, your

other provisions, your other liabilities in non-currents—

Mr Hubbard: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Your interest bearing liabilities and your other—

Mr Hubbard: Correct. Where you get the movement is really in property, plant and equipment, because we have a reasonable idea of how valuations might move.

MR SMYTH: Over the page, on your statement of changes in equity, why is there a negative capital distribution to government?

Mr Hubbard: I will have to take that one on notice.

MR SMYTH: Is it normally shown like that?

Mr Hubbard: Yes.

MR SMYTH: I will be intrigued at the explanation of that one. That is probably enough on the financials. If you could get those answers, that would be kind. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: There is quite a bit to take on notice there.

Ms Burch: You forward them; I am sorry; it is probably procedural at the end—

THE CHAIR: Yes, within five days to the committee office. You need to have recorded exactly what it is you require there and, if you need points of clarification, you can liaise with the committee office. They will be able to provide you with what that was.

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: That is great. I just want to confirm, before I move on, that the remuneration case for the community sector is now with Mr Barr, is it?

Ms Burch: The Treasurer and Minister for Community Services, Andrew Barr; yes.

THE CHAIR: The Treasurer and Minister for Community Services, yes. You got rid of that one.

Ms Burch: Andrew acquired it.

THE CHAIR: He acquired it. You were fighting over it. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, the parents as teachers program, which is on page 162 of budget paper 3 and page 330 of budget paper 4. There is new funding for this program. Could you tell us more about how it is accessed and what are the outcomes for the families that this program supports?

Ms Burch: This is a great program. It is a program that is offered through the child and family centres. It expands on a program that has already been in place. It is a very good and successful program. It works with families at risk, usually with children under the age of three. This is where a skilled health professional will go into the family.

I think in my opening statement I used the word “curriculum”, but it is about positive parenting skills, because often these families at risk have very limited knowledge and understanding. Their own personal experience has not been within a positive parental environment, so that is what we are doing through this. I think there is about an additional 80 families that will be supported. I might ask Paul Wyles to go to some of the detail.

Mr Wyles: The minister is correct. There will be an additional 80 families serviced through this initiative. It will give us three additional workers, one in each centre. This program ideally begins working with women prior to birth. It is a home visiting program where the worker can continue visiting the mother and child up to three years of age.

We had an evaluation done through the University of Canberra. It was really positive in indicating that women who had received this service previously felt much more confident about their parenting, much more able to access services and to seek help. So it is very positive; it is an international best practice program. We are really pleased to be expanding that through the centres.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned a study through the University of Canberra. Could you tell us more about that study, how it was conducted and what parameters were used?

Mr Wyles: It was a follow-up study. We have had parents as teachers at the centres for some years now. The University of Canberra academics followed up a group of women. They basically surveyed them about how their parenting had improved over the period of time of receiving service. As I said, I think the really impressive outcome was that they felt more confident as parents but also more able to ask for help.

Ms Burch: I think the value of this is the home visits—reducing that sense of isolation and giving them the confidence and empowerment to then connect to other services as well.

Mr Wyles: The other thing I might just add is that we are hoping to target this program even more going forward with this resource. We have been talking to care and protection about posting their prenatal care and protection workers in the centres. That will give us opportunity to train those workers and for them to work with women who have been identified as at risk through pregnancy and post-pregnancy. So it becomes even more targeted for that group of at risk mothers.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned that the women’s confidence as parents increased as a result of the program. How was that assessed?

Mr Wyles: It was really self-reporting through the survey. As the University of Canberra academics spoke to the women, it was more narrative feedback. But self-reports is how it was assessed. The other thing I remember from the evaluation is that mothers' sense of isolation was reduced. That was the other significant self-report.

DR BOURKE: Was there any third-party assessment of the mothers'—I presume it is about mothers—capabilities as parents? Is there a tool to do that?

Mr Wyles: I do not think through this evaluation. I think what we would say anecdotally is that through this process we saw a number of those women coming and accessing more services through the child and family centres. Certainly, there was some anecdotal evidence that they were accessing those services.

DR BOURKE: Where is this program delivered, in the home or—

Mr Wyles: Yes, it is a home visiting program.

DR BOURKE: It is a home visiting program. But you mentioned the child and family centres.

Mr Wyles: Yes. The workers are based at the child and family centres and go out to women's homes. Through the program and the education they may be linked into additional parenting programs at the child and family centres or other community programs.

DR BOURKE: What is the qualification of the workers involved in this program?

Mr Wyles: They are all qualified staff, so they would typically be social work, psychology or education specialists.

DR BOURKE: Or some combination of all three.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, how important are the partnerships that early intervention and prevention have with community services and organisations to deliver these programs?

Ms Burch: It is a critical part of the jigsaw. Government alone cannot deliver all the early interventions programs and nor can the community sector. It is a very strong partnership across early intervention. A good lot of those partnerships happen through the child and family centres as well. It is early intervention not only for those young mums and kids up to the age of three, but it is across the board through youth engagement. It is across gender groups, ethnic groups, age groups. There is a whole range of partnerships that happen between the community and government.

Just while we are talking about the child and family centres, let me go to some of the partnerships that happen down our neck of the woods—if I can focus on the good electorate of Brindabella, Mr Gentleman. Down at the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre we have got government partnerships—so across government, with Education and Training, Health and ACT Therapy. We have also got Gugan Gulwan down there and Marymead. The Belconnen community services are running a program—worry

busters, bungee and circus. Gugan goes down there for a women's group and infant massage. Communities@Work goes there. Breastfeeding Australia goes there. Relationships Australia goes down there for some counselling programs. Koori preschool goes there.

Medicare Local also make sure that they have a connection to those vulnerable families into the local Medicare Local. The Multicultural Youth Service, the Smith Family, Karralika and Diabetes Australia are there. Tuggeranong college also has that as a point of student work experience for those students that are interested in those social and community wellbeing programs. There is the women's information and referral service. Griffith University also has a place there, although I am not quite sure what program Griffith University does. These are just some of the community partnerships. Underneath them will be a range of programs because some of those partners would deliver more than one program through their centre.

DR BOURKE: Minister, I appreciate your interest in Mr Gentleman's electorate—

Ms Burch: You would like to know in your—

DR BOURKE: But I want to know what is happening in Ginninderra.

Ms Burch: glorious area of Belconnen. In the west Belconnen child and family centre, again, we have many other government agencies making sure that there is a point of contact there as well. There is Marymead Belconnen. UnitingCare Kippax has a strong presence there. There is the Salvation Army, the VIEW Club, Belconnen mental health, Companion House and Lesley's Place. The Kinship Care Support Team has a strong presence there. The West Belconnen Health Co-op also has a connection with the CFC there, together with Barnardos. Again, Gugan Gulwan goes up there because there was a targeted effort towards our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through the west Belconnen area.

There is the Breastfeeding Association, Relationships Australia, the Smith Family, the University of Canberra and the you can read program. The Libraries ACT and Housing also have a presence there, in addition to Diabetes Australia, the ACT Aboriginal Legal Service and some of those other programs that are represented in other services as well. Quite happy to go through the Molonglo area if you would like, gentlemen.

THE CHAIR: Go on then.

Ms Burch: Okay. At the Gungahlin centre, again, all government agencies are there, as are UnitingCare Kippax, Marymead and Belconnen Community Service. The Salvation Army attends to co-facilitate Ngunnawal paint and play and they have partnered with various homework clubs as well—supporting the community through there. The VIEW Club participates through provision of gifts and handmade goods for the clients and different groups at the CFC. There is the YWCA. Inanna provides outreach there, as does Companion House. I have been to two events up there for the Kinship Care Support Team. There is Barnardos. ACT Playgroups co-facilitate playing together and more giggles. Perhaps that is what we need to bring to the Assembly sometimes, chair.

THE CHAIR: I do not know what it is. I keep hearing Dr Bourke talking about it.

Ms Burch: More giggles? It is a supportive parent program and it is a play-based—

DR BOURKE: It is a different program.

THE CHAIR: Is that a different program?

DR BOURKE: We were hearing about giggles in the library this morning, I think—

THE CHAIR: So giggles in the library and more giggles?

DR BOURKE: Yes.

Ms Burch: Mr Wyles, do you know exactly what the more giggles program is?

Mr Wyles: It is really about encouraging parents to engage with their children around play.

Ms Burch: It is around play. Again, it is about that positive parenting and attachment in those very early years. There is the Australian National University co-facilitation in the cool kids and PALS program. Again, we have the learn, giggle and grow program and the University of Canberra through the you can read program again. Karinya House has topical talks and certainly referrals. Gungahlin Regional Community Services has a bus service that provides transport for families.

There is the Kara Potter playgroup. I am really pleased to see that. I came across Kara Potter at an autism ACT awards night a number of years ago now. She won an award for the work she was doing. She has a family. A number of her sons have got autism. She was looking for, and created for herself, an after-school care program. I remember introducing her to the then manager Dianne up at Gungahlin. That program has just grown and grown. I think every afternoon now there is an after-school care program. Kara Potter continues to be an extraordinary woman doing work for her own family and those of other children in our community. There is Nutrition Australia, Kids at Play, Northside Community Services and Cancer Council. There you go.

Mr Wyles: I might just add, Minister Burch, that this list does not include the partnerships that each of the centres have with businesses in their local area. The best example of that is the parenting expos that run at each of the centres annually. There are a number of businesses like Lend Lease, Bunnings and Barlings who provide a number of things free for those events.

Ms Burch: Lend Lease were involved in the early establishment of Gungahlin and certainly working through those new suburbs.

Mr Wyles: That is correct.

Ms Burch: As part of their community development, they established Patton playgroups and things there for those new families moving in.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, minister. The library program is actually giggles and wiggles.

Ms Burch: Giggles and wiggles.

DR BOURKE: And you have got more giggles.

Ms Burch: Right.

Mr Wyles: The giggles and wiggles is the younger children, I think.

Ms Burch: We could all do with more giggles and wiggles, Mr Wyles.

DR BOURKE: Probably. The early intervention services rely upon sustained home visiting, as mentioned in budget paper 3, page 162. How do clients welcome that service? I am referring to sustained home visiting for the early intervention—sorry, for the parents as teachers program.

Ms Burch: Yes. My understand—Mr Wyles can go to it—is that the families are identified or referred into the program. But then it is very much a partnership approach because you are going into the homes. You are working with them in their home. It is a very personal relationship with these workers. My understanding is that they stay for as long of the journey of the three years as they can. Certainly, there is a very strong relationship. It is critical that that trust and understanding is there because they are coming into the home and there are lots of confidences exchanged.

Mr Wyles: So referrals through the child and family centres are voluntary. Typically families will either self-refer or they might come through another referral point. An obvious one is the maternal and child health nurses that work out at the three centres. Parents might present, for example, to have a child immunised through the child and health nurse program. The nurse may identify that they could do with some additional assistance and then would make a referral internally to one of the programs in the child family centres. They would be followed up actively, largely through home visiting if that was the most appropriate mechanism.

Clearly, there is a period of engagement with families and setting goals about what they want to achieve through that contact. That happens on a case-by-case basis. But generally people are very enthusiastic about getting some assistance in their parenting.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Wall, do you have any questions in this area?

MR WALL: I am waiting for the next output, Mr Chair.

THE CHAIR: I would not expect that we are going to get there until close to 3.30.

MR WALL: That is all right. It is a good learning experience.

THE CHAIR: Indeed. I think Mr Smyth is next.

MR SMYTH: I will defer to you.

THE CHAIR: Minister, can you give me an update on Parentline? I know that has been progressing and that they have lost the contract. But there was some consideration about some residual effort, whether they were going to maintain their position within the—

Ms Burch: They were at the Weston hub and I will ask Jillian Paull to give you an update. Jillian has been working very closely with Parentline as we close the contract and finalise those outstanding matters.

Ms Paull: Can I have the question again, please?

THE CHAIR: Yes, I was after an update on Parentline, what the situation is there. Obviously they lost the contract. We are aware of that, but what is the status of that organisation now? Are they going to be offered additional work by the government? Are they remaining in the Weston hub? What is happening?

Ms Paull: You are right. We have worked with Parentline considerably in the last 12 months. They still operate within the Weston hub. They still operate as a very popular parent telephone counselling service on a volunteer basis. They have a large number of volunteers.

We have met with them recently to see what support we could offer them to expand their business and have pointed them in the direction of the usual grant programs that are available through the community. They have been very clear with us about wanting to remain as a service provider in the community. We have relayed that information to the new Gateway Services to make sure that as appropriate referrals are made to Parentline for that kind of lower key parent counselling.

THE CHAIR: You are confident with their maintaining that body of work, that there is not duplication now as you move the contract across to gateway?

Ms Paull: Yes. So the gateway—

Ms Burch: It was a different contract.

Ms Paull: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Yes, I understand that. But there was concern that there would then be a lack of service. I am just making sure that there is not a duplication, I suppose.

Ms Paull: The service that Parentline was offering that is now offered by the consortium between Barnardos, Woden Community Service, Belconnen Community Service and the YWCA is an information engagement and referral service. Parentline are still offering a lower key, more informal chat on the phone service. A parent might ring up for a bit of a chat about whatever it is that they wanted to talk about.

The service that was being offered by Parentline that is now being offered by the consortium is very much a referral and information service. It is really about gathering information about the needs of particular families or individuals and then either working with them on a short-term basis and referring them on to an agency as they ask, or referring them on immediately. It is very much about engaging with the client.

Often young people—we are seeing lots of telephone requests coming through from parents who are struggling with teenage children at the moment who are really looking for some solutions to bring their adolescent children back into the family fold and to stop engaging in risky behaviour. Those conversations might be a one-off, the parent might ring back a couple of times or they might actually be looking for a specific referral very quickly.

THE CHAIR: Between Parentline and the consortium is there effective coordination to make sure that there is cross-referral? Where the situation warrants a call or a referral to the consortium, Parentline does that and vice versa?

Ms Paull: Absolutely, yes.

THE CHAIR: Are there separate phone numbers for Parentline and Gateway Services?

Ms Burch: There is.

Ms Paull: Yes, there is. Parentline had the phone number and their services running separately from the consortium. The gateway, as we call it now, has a 1800 number, a website and email address.

THE CHAIR: Any other questions on Parentline? We will move to other elements. Thank you very much, Ms Paull. Dr Bourke?

DR BOURKE: I am done with early intervention.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: You mentioned in your opening statement the blueprint and that work. How is that involved in this particular area of early intervention?

Ms Burch: The planks within the blueprint are around early intervention and diversion and making sure that we have got the systems and the programs in place to respond to that, with good communication across all the service providers, including justice. The gateway service is part of that early intervention. I also mentioned the after-hours bail service in my opening statement. It is a very strong diversion program. I was really pleased to see that pick up an ACT public service award. This is a program that is less than two years old, and it is already making a significant difference in diverting. It is about diverting young kids from spending time in detention. Do you want to talk any more, Dr Collis?

Dr Collis: The blueprint that youth justice has is one of the key drivers for prevention and early intervention. We know that, over the 10-year horizon of reforming youth

justice, it is essential that we move to invest more in early intervention and prevention, because we know that of the young people who find their way into the services engaged in youth justice, such as detention or supervision, the overwhelming majority, if not all, have had traumatic experiences moving through and have had poor early experiences with family and significant others. So early intervention prevention is a fundamental driver, and you will see that it is one of the strategic actions that will occur in the blueprint.

One of the things to be clear about in the use of the terminology of early intervention in relation to the blueprint in particular is that we talk about early intervention in two senses. One is early intervention in the life course of a child, which is the very important work that happens at the child and family centres. Paul has just talked about some really important programs where we know—for those who attended the recent international conference on youth justice here in Canberra, Professor Ray Corrado from Canada, in his seminal research, indicated this—that there is a significant predictor of future serious offending behaviour in this early trauma for children. The work we are doing there is very much related to the long-term horizon. Of course, as you would expect, that horizon is 10 years. If we are working with families prenatally, the young children are 10 to 11 years away from criminal responsibility in the ACT.

So the impacts we hope to have in that regard will be longer. We hope we see those impacts in different service systems—in health service systems, in education service systems. We hope that as that child is born tomorrow and moves into school and high school, we will see the benefits. We hope that, from the youth justice point of view, we can de-invest a bit in that time frame.

The other issue around the other definition of early intervention in the blueprint is around early intervention in the course of a problem. That is the sense in which the minister was talking about the after-hour bail support service. If we can intervene early with young people, even if it is in Garema Place at 2 o'clock in the morning—I am not sure whether there are too many people awake at 2 o'clock in the morning around the—

MR GENTLEMAN: There were a few this morning, weren't there?

THE CHAIR: Yes. I think Ms Burch was awake in Civic Square.

Ms Burch: I certainly was.

Dr Collis: If we can intervene and prevent problems at late notice, divert the problem, that is an early intervention system as well. Indeed, that is where the really significant connection with the child, youth and family services system comes into it, because it is that early intervention with those community services through the gateway. Now that in this budget we have invested \$1.2 million in youth engagement, that will go very much to delivering on the early intervention in the course of a problem side of early intervention.

MR GENTLEMAN: Dr Collis, I wonder if you could give us a bit of a demonstration on how that would occur—that event at 2 am in the middle of Civic?

Dr Collis: Sure. An example of that would be potentially, hypothetically, where a police officer phones the watch-house and says that there are young people known to them who are congregating unhelpfully together late at night. The watch-house approaches our after-hour bail support service, and our after-hour bail support service would say that those young people may be close to breaching their bail conditions or their good behaviour orders, or it may be that we have an ongoing relationship with those young people and we may go and make contact with those young people and assist them to get home. Or if there is another reason why they have been out there—for instance, they have had an argument in their home—we may assist in finding accommodation for the night and work very closely with the care and protection—

MR SMYTH: Who is the “we”?

Ms Burch: The after-hours bail service.

Dr Collis: Good point. I am so close to the business that I use the royal “we”. The after-hour bail support service would go and intervene and find a combination for those services. The after-hour bail support service also has connections to the after-hours care and protection system, so if there are any issues around that, we know those and we work that through. In a later output indicator, we may talk about the work—I think very significant work—that the care and protection system is doing around voluntary care arrangements with teenagers and the work we are looking at in our adolescent team as well.

Ms Burch: To explore this, and whilst it perhaps seems a bit peculiar to consider it as an early intervention, I should say that we have also funded in this the Bendora unit. Whilst these are for kids that are at the pointy end, and I might ask Mr Corben to come forward, this is around supporting these kids to transition strongly back into community. Whilst it is very early days, and Dr Collis and I have to temper our enthusiasm for the results, it is certainly showing that work is paying off significantly positive results for the kids not reoffending. But I will go to Mr Corben to talk to that.

Mr Corben: The Bendora program, as the minister has mentioned, has been operating now for a bit over 12 months or more. The early indicators for us around that are really encouraging. The trend seems to reflect the fact that for 14 young people that have been through the Bendora transition program so far, up until January this year, three of those young people have reoffended, which means in effect that 11 have not. They are really good indicators for us to start with, with that type of program.

Some of the members have experienced a visit to Bimberi along with the barbecue that we had. The young people in that program have access to a lot more personal items and facilities, but also take on a role around reflecting much more responsibility for their actions and being a bit more of an adult and a bit more mature in the way that they interact with staff and other young people. In fact, they actually become role models for other young people. Younger detainees in the centre would want to get to a unit like that, where they have more possessions and more access to higher risk programs. Obviously, the risk that they present is lower, so they can access those higher risk programs.

The young people in Bendora regularly participate in community-based activities, so

they would be getting used to being away from a secure environment, where they do not have to rely on a fence or ask to help them to control themselves but they can do that of their own free will. We think that is a really good exercise for young people—to get used to relying on their own abilities to continue to behave in a socially acceptable way.

Things like helping out with Rotary with their barbecue at EPIC and participating in a dawn service for Anzac Day were a really moving experience for a couple of young people who have done that. They had never really known much about Anzac Day; they were able to talk to us after that about what it meant to them, and certainly they were going to continue to have some interest in that. And it is not all work. They get to go out and participate in some regular sporting or touch football competitions in the community, not just with young people from Bimberi but with folks from all across the ACT. They are quite pro-social things that we would like young people to get involved in so that when they do leave the centre they have already had an experience around those types of programs and activities, as opposed to maybe ones that they would have chosen before. That is the Bendora program.

For comparison with that group, though, we had to not just say, “That particular group have done really well.” We needed to actually get some rough figures to look at a comparison to that. The comparison indicated to us that some young people who had not got to participate in the Bendora program did not do quite as well once they were released as those who had. We want to make sure that we bolster the supports around that particular group who did not do well, but also continue to develop and enhance the Bendora-type transition program.

THE CHAIR: Why had those other children not participated in the Bendora program?

Mr Corben: As part of the risk management and program base called the centre, to progress from a really highly supervised environment in the admission and induction unit through other accommodation units in the centre and then into Bendora, young people have to clearly display a couple of traits. They are around not being violent to themselves or other people, including to staff, and not damaging property. They would need to participate in a range of programs and to be cooperative with staff, and to reflect that not just today but on an ongoing basis. For example—

THE CHAIR: I will stop you there. The point I am trying to get at is that with the results that you are citing, the success of the Bendora program, you can only get in the Bendora program if you have already exhibited those positive traits, and you are excluded if there are negative traits. That indicates that in comparing people who have done Bendora and saying, “Look, they’ve got these recidivism rates” or “They’re doing better than the others,” it may be a lot less to do with Bendora than with who the individuals are in the first place.

Mr Corben: Yes.

THE CHAIR: I am not saying that Bendora is not a good program.

Ms Burch: Dr Collis can go to some of that.

Dr Collis: This is an issue, which is why we initially talked about tentative data around this. However, in terms of a research design, it is not unusual. You will notice that we did not call it a control group; we called it a comparison group. It is not an unusual feature of human services research design to develop a comparison group. That comparison group actually were young people who had been offenders at the same time, with the same severity of offence and the same gender profile.

I appreciate that we might be self-selecting success in this regard, but there are two issues about that. Bendora actually acts in two ways: one is what happens in Bendora and the other is the impact Bendora has on the total functioning of the centre. Across the centre is provided a naturally occurring change in autonomy in young people's lives, and that changes the inbuilt contingencies about how young people might behave at any particular point in time.

I would also say that any young person who is in Bendora—in Bimberi generally but in Bendora in particular—is a serious, and usually repeat, offender. Even in Bendora, we are talking about the most difficult of the difficult young people and young offenders. So even though we know the outcome generally about these, with these young people successful outcomes are not easy to obtain in terms of offending rates after detention.

So to take a sample of 14 and be surprised that we are actually, in that 14-month period, looking at a reoffending rate of three out of 14 is pretty exciting generally. And we can talk about two of the early graduates of the program who are now successfully employed and engaged in education. They had very serious violent offences, but they have not been violent since and have not offended since. They struggled in and out of Bendora before finally graduating from Bendora centre.

Whilst appreciating the difficulty of sheeting home cause and effect within this complex area, I think we can say at this point in time that the evidence is stacking up in terms of the success of Bendora. How precisely it is successful is something that over the next two-year period we are engaging in a much more in-depth evaluation of. We not only want to find out the answer to the question of whether we are successful or not—I think we will find that out pretty simply—but we want to find out what it is about this program that is successful. We then need to generalise it to people who are not achieving access to it.

DR BOURKE: Minister, when budget paper 3, page 163, refers to a fourth unit at Bimberi, this is the Bendora unit that we are talking about?

Ms Burch: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Does anyone have any specific questions on Bendora?

DR BOURKE: Yes, I do.

THE CHAIR: On Bendora?

DR BOURKE: Yes. Minister, could you just reiterate the impact of this. On the targets set out in output class 4.1 in budget paper 4, pages 333 and 334, could you reiterate the impact that you expect this unit to have upon those targets?

Ms Burch: Where are you looking, Dr Bourke?

DR BOURKE: I am looking at output class 4.1, BP4, 333 and 334.

THE CHAIR: While you are looking for that, minister, I just note that we have drifted into this area from output class 2.1. Once we have finished with Bendora, if there are any further questions for output class 2.1, we will revert to that before continuing.

Ms Burch: Sorry, I cannot find the indicators, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: That is all right.

Ms Burch: We are expecting a positive effect from this. The two-year funding is really just to work through establishing and consolidating those programs and to work through the evaluation. As Dr Collis said, we need to answer that primary question about success or not, and then look at what are the pins of success that we can come back and apply.

All young folk in Bimberi have opportunity to access education and therapeutic programs that are delivered there and are delivered through community groups that come in. Some have a stronger response to those offerings than others. That is something that we need to also understand and always be reflective about—what are the services that need to come in? Our family liaison position in that has a strong connection right through from those in detention out to the family connections.

I would also say, not to answer your question but to bring the cycle back, that when young folk are exited out of Bimberi the referral into those other gateway-style services for that ongoing support is really quite critical.

Getting back to your indicator, we might refer that to Dr Collis.

Dr Collis: This is the indicator 4.1e, youth justice case plans completed? Is that the one?

DR BOURKE: Any of those indicators under output 4.1, youth services.

Dr Collis: The impact of the Bendora unit is, first of all, indicator 4.1a. I think that is probably the most significant. There are two sources of customer for Bimberi Youth Justice Centre, Dr Bourke. There are young people from fresh offences who come into the centre and there are people who are already deep in the justice system and come back and visit us on a number of occasions. Usually those young people who come back and visit us on a number of occasions take a disproportionate number of custody days annually.

We would be expecting, particularly with the young people we are talking about who have been sentenced and are usually in Bimberi for quite a period of time, that if they do not come back and visit us we will be getting an indicator out of the number of custody days. That would be the indicator that would be most relevant. I can say that we have been monitoring the tracking, and this is the other thing about the evaluation of Bendora. Since Bendora has opened—plus other factors like the after-hour bail support service and a number of things—from a very high peak of custody days, a relatively high peak of custody days, the last two years have seen a persistent and consistent drop-off in custody days in Bimberi.

That is just one measure. All the measures are stacking up to say that we seem to be getting traction in diverting and early intervention and keeping people back out of Bimberi. That would be the indicator that I would think was most relevant to Bendora.

THE CHAIR: We will break till 3.30. When we resume, we will finalise any matters arising from 2.1 and then continue with youth services.

Sitting suspended from 3.13 to 3.33 pm.

THE CHAIR: Members, we will resume. We are going to finalise any issues that are arising in 2.1 and then continue with youth services.

Ms Burch: Chair, Mr Hubbard has a clarification.

Mr Hubbard: Could I make a clarification on the borrowing costs, to save us taking your question on notice?

THE CHAIR: Sure.

Mr Hubbard: We do have a loan around our community facilities, the green infrastructure, but it is principal only. So we are not having borrowing costs on that. That borrowing cost there reflects finance leases with our fleet.

MR SMYTH: So the fleet is stable, which is why the number is stable?

Mr Hubbard: Yes.

THE CHAIR: That gives you the answer you are after, Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: I will think about it.

THE CHAIR: You will think about it? All right. At this stage we do not need any further clarification of that issue—

MR SMYTH: It sounds like a reasonable answer.

THE CHAIR: unless Mr Smyth comes back.

Mr Hubbard: You can see the actual total capital cost on the next page over.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth is prone to coming back with some obscure question about a line item on various pages.

MR SMYTH: I am not sure where these get asked, but on capital works—

Ms Burch: Mr Hubbard, we might need you back.

MR SMYTH: Yes, before he runs away. The upgrade of early childhood facilities was due to finish by June 2013. When will it be finished now?

Mr Hubbard: Which page are you on at the moment?

MR SMYTH: I am actually on budget paper 4 from last year, page 359, but this year it is—

Mr Hubbard: It might be 338.

Ms Burch: Which line?

Mr Hubbard: This is on page 338 in this year's budget papers, changes to approp. Which one are you on?

MR SMYTH: Let us start with—

Mr Hubbard: Upgrade to early childhood?

MR SMYTH: Upgrade of early childhood facilities. It was due to all be finished by June 2013 but you have moved \$1.7 million of it across into 2013-14.

Ms Burch: 338?

THE CHAIR: 338, Holt early childhood.

Ms Burch: Yes, all of that early childhood now sits with ETD, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: So why is the funding in your budget?

Mr Hubbard: I can answer that one, minister. As you can see, there is revised funding profiling. The reason why they are revised is that they are projects that are getting pretty close to physical completion but they are not financially complete. So we need to roll the funding into 2013-14. As I think you will appreciate, quite a few of them went over to Education. I do not know the exact number but a few are co-located in community facilities where we have kept the upgrade funding ourselves and, because we have title, they are on our balance sheet et cetera. We have come to an agreement with Education around who maintains the title plus who maintains the project, upgrade money and R&M money going forward.

THE CHAIR: So the preschool is going under ETD, is it?

Mr Hubbard: Holt preschool is just the completion of that project. I am not sure

whether that was one of the ones that was going to transfer. As I said, Mr Hanson, we are keeping some of those, and I am not sure whether the preschool is actually a preschool. I think it might be a community facility.

Ms Burch: It is an old preschool, and it is used almost as a holding centre as others were decanting over time.

THE CHAIR: Holder is going to be a childcare centre, isn't it?

Ms Burch: Yes.

Mr Hubbard: Yes, and I think that is something that we have just about finished.

MR SMYTH: Hang on, can we deal with Holt before we move to Holder?

Mr Hubbard: It might be worth doing these when it comes up under community facilities, because then we will have David Collett at the table. Minister Barr is the appropriate minister for these—

THE CHAIR: Child care?

Mr Hubbard: To go into the detail.

Ms Burch: For community facilities.

MR SMYTH: So you are flick passing this to David Collett? Are you happy with that decision?

Mr Hubbard: 100 per cent. As you know, he is fantastic at this.

MR SMYTH: Is this because you do not have a scarf and he does?

Mr Hubbard: I must admit, he dresses way better than me. I will have that on record.

THE CHAIR: But you are still responsible for child care, aren't you?

Ms Burch: It has moved to ETD. Flynn, for example, is staying within the Community Services Directorate. Even though there is a childcare centre, it is part of a larger campus with other functions. So the decision across directorates has been, "You will be responsible for this," even though there is a childcare centre on that campus. I think some of these—

THE CHAIR: But Holder is stand-alone.

Ms Burch: But some of these are being held within CSD because they were so close, so you get to a point and then you hand over. That is my understanding. That is how I have interpreted what the officials have done.

MR SMYTH: But you want us to ask Mr Collett?

THE CHAIR: Who is the responsible minister? You are the responsible minister?

Ms Howson: What Mr Hubbard has indicated is that, in relation to the actual facility, with something like an early childhood centre, you are right; it is a stand-alone childhood centre. It is a financial end-of-close project; it is substantially complete, so it is sensible for it to stay on our books until we finalise all the financial transactions that are associated with that build.

THE CHAIR: Then whose books does it go to?

Ms Burch: My understanding is that it will be transferred over to ETD. Flynn, for example, whilst—

THE CHAIR: Hang on; it is a stand-alone childcare centre that your directorate is going to manage but you are going to hand it over to ETD?

Mr Hubbard: No, we are just finishing the—

Ms Howson: We are just completing the build of the project, and it then will be—

Ms Burch: Early childhood care now sits in ETD.

THE CHAIR: So childcare centres are in ETD?

Ms Burch: Yes.

Mr Hubbard: The reason why they are here, Mr Hanson, is because we were spending a whole bunch of capital money on them to upgrade them to national standards. The project is almost complete, so it is more effective for us to do the financial completion and then transfer the capital item plus the title to ETD. But we have already transferred a significant number of them.

THE CHAIR: The policy settings for child care for private providers and so on—

Ms Burch: ETD.

THE CHAIR: That is all going to be ETD?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: What was the effective date for that transfer of responsibility?

Ms Howson: In terms of the machinery of government changeover, I think that was May this year.

THE CHAIR: We are back to youth services, then. Mr Wall, would you like to ask a question?

MR WALL: I might backtrack a little bit to the discussion we were having about the blueprint for youth justice. I am after a little bit more of an update on where the

implementation of that blueprint is up to, the reasoning behind the \$304,000 in funding that has been reprofiled from 2012-13 to 2013-14 and why that delay has occurred?

Ms Burch: Can you refer me to the page number?

MR WALL: Yes, it is budget paper 4, page 320, according to my notes. Page 320 makes reference to the blueprint for youth justice, and on page 336 it has the reprofiling.

Ms Burch: I will ask Dr Collis to talk about where we are with the blueprint and the reprofiling.

Dr Collis: The blueprint is in the first year of its implementation. In a moment I will hand over to Ms Power to explain in more detail where we are against all of the outcomes from what we said we would deliver in the first year. I will deal primarily with the process around implementation of the blueprint. I will talk about the reprofiling of the money for that \$300,000, and then I will hand over to Ms Power to give substantial detail around the performance indicators and actions against the blueprint.

A blueprint implementation group was formed to oversight the implementation of the blueprint. That implementation group has met four times. This group is comprised of community sector leaders in the area and across-government executives. They will oversight the implementation of the blueprint. There were identified within the action plan a number of actions to be achieved in the first year and also in the first three years, bearing in mind that it is a 10-year plan. So the notion is as well to revisit the blueprint as we move along to ensure that we are on track and that nothing needs to be adjusted around it. But the first three years of actions have largely been laid out and we are working towards achieving that.

In addition to the blueprint implementation group, as people might be aware, there is an expert advisory panel, a youth justice advisory panel, which we consult with. Their role in consultation with us is around the formation of an evaluation plan so that we can better help the implementation group track the progress of the blueprint as we move through.

I will now address the revised funding profile for the blueprint. With respect to one of the key aspects of youth justice, you might have heard me talk before about the integrated management system at Bimberi. A key element of effective practice and freeing practitioners up to do their work in this area is to have timely IT systems that sit behind their practice. Whilst we have all the policies and procedures now worked out, what had been envisaged was that we would deliver on an information system, an electronic portal, that would allow our workers to interact seamlessly with the information systems that sit under that.

This process has taken longer than we first envisaged and has taken a number of iterations. We now have a solution but the solution will not be delivered until the next financial year. So that explains the reprofiling of the \$304,000. I will hand over to Ms Power to talk more specifically about the actions against the blueprint.

Ms Power: As Dr Collis indicated, the blueprint implementation group has been working over the last 12 months since the release of the blueprint in August last year, across all of the 45-odd actions that are sitting underneath the blueprint. That is quite a large group of government and community-based representatives who come together every quarter or so, although they do meet more regularly if they need to. They have been working across all of those actions and have identified that we are actually working on 37 actions across the blueprint, but we are prioritising, across the first three-year plan, 16 of those actions that we were focusing on for the first 12 months.

I can go through some of those. The blueprint implementation group is expecting to be able to have a report by the end of August. That will be the first report of all of the things that have been happening underneath the blueprint. I will go through some of the things that were focused on in the first 12 months. As Dr Collis said, one of the key elements of the blueprint was to focus on early intervention, prevention and diversion. In that early intervention space, as Dr Collis talked about before, it is about early intervention both in the life of an event and in the sense of being able to work with young people who are in the system.

Some of the things that we have been working on in the first 12 months include the after-hours bail service that the minister talked about before. We have embedded single case management through youth justice, community youth justice and at Bimberi, and that is working very well. That is about coordinating appropriate services across the young person's need and being able to identify how that works both for the young persons in Bimberi and when they transition from Bimberi.

We have been working with Education around services to assist young people to transition from education—being able to be provided in more accessible ways. That fits under the youth commitment that the minister talked about before. There is also the Murrumbidgee education centre at Bimberi, with the youth transition workers working in that space.

We have been working on some formal partnerships with the community sector, particularly in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers. We have a new programs and service coordination group working with the directorate to identify the gaps in service delivery. That is a really important piece of work that the blueprint implementation group is particularly interested in, given the continued over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people within the youth justice system.

There are other things like the family engagement officer position at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. That position is designed to assist families, and particularly young people, to promote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in the day-to-day programs and functions at the centre. Across some of the other parts of government the Justice and Community Safety Directorate is working very significantly with ACT Policing around a trial or pilot of restorative justice for young people as well. So there are a number of things both within the directorate and in other directorates that the blueprint implementation group is looking at.

DR BOURKE: Minister, Ms Power just mentioned the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in youth justice. Could you give us some more detail about what your directorate is doing in that area, please?

Ms Burch: You are right, and it is, in many ways, a matter of concern for any community about the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders that are in the system, with figures like 19 times more likely to be under youth justice if you are an Indigenous young fellow than a non-Indigenous young fellow. So we have put a suite of work together. Ms Power commented about the work with youth justice around a trial that will refer every Indigenous young fellow to a restorative conference to try and divert them away from a further custodial episode or further engagement in the justice system. We have also put considerable effort into Narrabundah House, the Indigenous support unit there, and have been very focused on the change in that so that it very clearly looks at those that are brushing against youth justice, to support them there.

Dr Collis: The over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in the justice system is a tragedy right across Australia. The ACT, surprisingly, has as significant an over-representation as any other jurisdiction that reliably measures this. I must state that some jurisdictions do not at this point reliably measure this data. The over-representation in terms of being in detention is about 37 per cent in the last year; in detention, 37 per cent of young people identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander who were detained at Bimberi.

If we were to take today, however, there were 17 young people there, three of whom are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. So you can see the numbers fluctuate a lot. In fact there has been some discussion with those people about how useful it is to talk about percentages rather than about individual numbers of people in this area when we get to our jurisdictional size.

At the heart of how we want to address this through the blueprint is our partnerships with people. In May last year, in partnership with at that time myself, Brendan Church and Gugan Gulwan, we ran a forum at Yarramundi Reach to get all of the service providers who were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific to that forum to actually find out where we were up to. We included in that forum young detainees. I put on record that that was an exceptionally useful process. Some really important messages came from young Aboriginal detainees, who gave information to the community about their life and experiences, and also their ideas about ways forward.

One of the key outcomes of that forum was that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander service providers wanted very strongly to be at the centre of decision making about programs and services in youth justice. Ms Power talked about—it has got a long name but I can remember this—the youth justice Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs and services coordination group, which is a large name for a large group as well, but in fact a majority of this group are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Greg Corben, in his role as senior manager of Bimberi, is on there, as is the senior manager in community youth justice. Our role has been to provide information about programs and services, take advice on who and how we should deliver those services

to within Bimberi and within the youth justice system more broadly. Some of the outcomes of that would be the Dhunial program, which is a program from Relationships Australia which is run by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander counsellors. It is modelled on the program, Dr Bourke, that you would know about—the yarning program at the AMC. It is adapted for the purposes of younger people. It has been very successful.

This is an intransigent problem that we are not going to solve from the detention end of the spectrum, however. It is a problem that is going to need to be solved in community and in other ways. But we need to make sure that, in detention, we have a culturally safe place for our young people so that we can recover them. So we have programs around that cultural safety and cultural competence. I am pleased to say that we are getting very clear feedback. We got feedback through the youth justice blueprint that the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community who were involved in that feedback are very positive about the relationships that they have at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. In fact, the critical element to that was around whether we were seen as too soft an option for some of their young people, and we have engaged in that discussion in the youth justice centre.

On the surface of it, we might find that an unusual statement to make, but, after having processed what that means with this coordination group, and digging deeper around that comment, there are some really interesting things. What we might hear is too soft is actually about needing to up the accountability issues around detention more for their young people. We need to take that seriously, because they are telling us how they believe young people are going to change their behaviour and that maybe we need to be focusing on accountability a bit more. So we will be looking at that, and the yarning program was one of those things to help that process.

I could go on and tell you, line by line, about what we are doing within youth justice to deliver on this. We talked about Narrabundah House. We have recast that as a youth justice provision. That will be opening in August and it will be focusing on severe repeat offenders who are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young men. We will be providing intensive support around those young men over the medium term to ensure that we get them reintegrated into profitable work, social activity and/or employment in that time, and have the process of making sure that we have a warm handover to the community for these young people. So Narrabundah House is a real opportunity for us as well.

One other strategy that we adopted here early on was the co-design of the position of the family engagement officer at Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. Again, we went to the community and said, “We have this Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison position; how do we make that position effective?” We were not getting a field of candidates applying for it. When we finished that design, there were a number of interesting outcomes of that. For a start, the change in name is interesting—family engagement officer. When we asked our young people what they wanted, and we talked to the Aboriginal community, we realised that kinship is a powerful and strong social construct amongst Aboriginal people, and it was a construct that is really lacking in all our young people in Bimberi as a rule.

We decided that we wanted this to be an identified position. We wanted a strong and

credible Aboriginal person to come in and work around this, but not just with our Aboriginal young people; we wanted them to bring the strength of kinship and the construct of kinship for all our young people. We wanted, therefore, to influence the way all our young people viewed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture and respected that culture. So this is an identified position. It works universally with all our young people, and that is what the community told us they wanted. It has been highly effective.

Certainly the people who have won that position are highly skilful, highly thought of and our indications are that it has been very effective. I could move on to other areas but they are the—

THE CHAIR: We might leave it there, Dr Collis. It has been a very thorough explanation. If you do wish to continue that conversation, because we do have to move on, then maybe—

DR BOURKE: I particularly appreciated the discussion, Dr Collis; thank you.

THE CHAIR: I am sure Dr Bourke separately has a particular interest in this, but we do need to move on to other issues. Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: If you go to page 333 of budget paper 4, it talks about the turnaround program. I remember you giving us some highlights of that in annual report hearings. Could you just give an update on how that program is operated?

Ms Burch: The turnaround program?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes.

Ms Burch: That is about supporting young folk that need intensive support. It is a partnership program that makes sure that we have got all the community and government agencies wrapping a service around there. Is that you, Greg?

Mr Corben: Yes. Turnaround currently has 29 clients. As the minister and you have mentioned, those clients are referred to turnaround because of the complexity of their cases. The experienced and qualified staff there are providing ongoing support to those young people.

MR GENTLEMAN: What sort of individual assistance do they need from those support officers?

Ms Burch: The referral process, I think, is a key point of this. The young person will be identified either through a government agency or a community agency and then they are assessed. They are put to a panel. They are put to a co-group panel in terms of: is this the right young person to come into the service and do we have the programs to respond to that? There is no point bringing a young person in if we do not have the details of the program to respond to that.

Dr Collis: Having just recently, as recently as two weeks ago, been the director for youth services, I might be able to elaborate on that a bit. Turnaround is interesting for

a number of reasons. The complexity of the young people is really determined by the complexity of the service response required. It is a case coordination service. It is, in fact, based upon the body of literature that talks about wraparound services. It has two panels. The minister is quite right. The referral panel, the referral assessment panel, is a panel of cross-government and community sector supports. What they are assessing is whether to accept that referral on the basis of: is there a need to coordinate a complex service response for this young person?

The young person might have really great needs in one area, but if it can be addressed in one area and the service provision can go to that area, the panel will refer to that area. But if it needs ongoing coordination of service responses—for example, it might need a service response from a community sector provider, such as Marymead, and Health and Housing and youth justice—it is far too difficult for some young people to develop the resources to actually coordinate that service. That is turnaround and how it operates, I guess.

Ms Burch: Young kids could have mental health problems, drug and alcohol problems and disconnection from family and employment, with underlying homelessness and things. It is very much the pointy-end, complex case, but it is essential that we have the services to be able to respond.

MR GENTLEMAN: Have you had feedback from the community on how it is operating?

Ms Burch: They are very much part and parcel of the program and the feedback is quite responsive. The young person being referred in is also part of that partnership as well. They come in understanding what the program is.

THE CHAIR: Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, I just wanted to talk about Bimberi briefly and the staffing component. What is the ideal operational number of staff for Bimberi to operate on a day-to-day basis or full-time equivalent?

Ms Burch: There is a mix of things. There is the core staff that you have to have to operate the function of it and then there is the number of young residents in there. I think it was raised in the human rights review about whether there is a clear number, a ratio, of youth workers to residents. It is our belief that you look at the young people as individuals rather than just as numbers equating to a youth worker. I think Mr Corben is probably best to explain how he manages the centre.

Mr Corben: The minister is right. If we start to apply specific ratios to young people then it does not enable us to actually manage the risk. At any time a new admission to the centre or young people that are at the centre can react differently and present as a risk to the safety of themselves or to other young people.

There are some minimum numbers that we would want to have on the night shift, obviously, when the day shift staff and administrative support and people like me would no longer be on site. There are some minimum staff numbers we need around that. On a day-to-day basis, we have other staff who are there to provide services

around facilities and health services. There are teachers from the department of education who provide services to the Murrumbidgee education and training centre. There are a number of managers who are on site to provide support and supervision to staff as well.

Ms Burch: There would be an expectation of a general number but, depending on the complexity and each young person that is there, that determines what sort of response you need.

MR WALL: So there would be a core component which you need to operate the centre.

Mr Corben: Yes.

MR WALL: And then, if there is high need—

Ms Burch: High numbers, high need, you would bring the additional resources—

MR WALL: you would increase the staffing level. Over the past 12 months have there ever been instances where the core number of staff required to operate the facility has not been available?

Mr Corben: Yes.

MR WALL: How often would that occur?

Mr Corben: Three times.

MR WALL: Three times? What was the reason for that to occur?

Mr Corben: There would be occasions when staff would be on leave. As you would understand, with an establishment the size that we have, people are entitled to leave. We plan that as best we can so that people have regular breaks. Because of the nature of the work they need to get away from the workplace to recharge their batteries. So at any one time we would need to have a number of staff on leave just to maintain that.

The other thing that impacts on our ability to maintain operations at the centre is around unplanned leave. People get sick or something happens in their family or there are emergencies or we might have young people that need to be looked after in a hospital, for instance. They all put a drain on our operational capacity. At times, we would have to facilitate the safe running of the centre and give staff their breaks so that they can have their lunch and continue to finish their 12-hour shift. Then we would need to secure the kids in their room for about an hour, or two at the maximum, to facilitate those lunch breaks. It is usually about an hour, though.

MR WALL: So the detainees are confined to their cells during the periods when there is not enough staffing allocation?

Ms Burch: Their units.

Mr Corben: In their own rooms, yes, with their own possessions and access to television and amenities et cetera. They can have a sleep, which is generally what young people do during that time of the day. I have not had any complaints from young people about having that opportunity to have a bit of time away from the staff or to have a bit of a rest either. We certainly do not want to have young people in their rooms for any longer than they need to be. The idea of the program for the centre is to have young people out, as much as we can, and engaged in programs and activities.

Ms Burch: We have had a deliberate over-recruitment process to get those numbers so we have the ability to draw on the workforce we need when there is that unplanned leave.

THE CHAIR: Members, I note that we are winding into the time that is allocated for output class 4.2, care and protection services.

Ms Burch: Just to finish that off: Narelle Hargreaves is the Official Visitor. She is in there once a fortnight?

Mr Corben: Yes.

Ms Burch: Or thereabouts. Certainly, nothing has come to me. There was some concern a number of years ago about the level of staffing and lockdowns, but that is a completely different environment that is out there now.

MR GENTLEMAN: Just quickly, chair, a supplementary on the back of that.

THE CHAIR: Yes.

MR GENTLEMAN: You explained the unplanned leave responses. For the planned leave, holiday leave for the staff, is there a response shift that covers that?

Ms Burch: That is why our active over-recruitment allows us to have that larger casual pool so we can respond to that.

Dr Collis: Just to add a bit of clarity to this: in this last year up to May this year, there has been a total of five hours of lockdown for the Bimberi Youth Justice Centre. I would like to indicate that this compares to 2010 and 2011 where there were 44 hours of lockdown in that year. This is, obviously, quite a difficult and highly secure environment to manage and these decisions are not made lightly. I am really pleased that the staffing element has allowed us to safely do that. We have also doubled the number of outside of Bimberi visits that the detainees have. Sometimes the dilemma will be that a young person is, for instance, going to a funeral in the community. We need to have people with them. Other things happen as well. There are a lot of complexities that line up here. But at this point in time we have had five hours of lockdown. We obviously want to minimise—

MR WALL: I will just squeeze in one more supplementary on this staffing profile topic. It was just a question around the number of staff that would be on stress leave or workers compensation cases at the moment. You may need to take that on notice. I understand if you do.

Ms Burch: We will take that on notice.

MR WALL: The numbers that are off, how many are on graduated transition back into the workplace? And what are the time frames of each of those cases and the reasons behind them?

Ms Burch: Can you answer that now?

Dr Collis: I would prefer not to because there is some potentially identifying information in there. A number of these cases go back 15 or 20 years, or some of them do at least—not 20 years, but certainly 15. I can provide that information, but I would prefer to do so in a considered way.

Ms Burch: Yes, we will take that on notice.

Dr Collis: We will take that on notice. Can I just clarify: the number of people on workers compensation or return to work?

MR WALL: Yes, that are employed at the Bimberi centre.

Ms Burch: Would you like it since Bimberi has been commissioned, because that could take out some of those very early—

MR WALL: There are going to be some staff, I believe, that have transitioned from the previous Quamby detention centre that may have been in and out of the system a couple of times as well. So if you could include those in the statistics.

Dr Collis: We will include all the people that are on the Bimberi payroll.

Ms Burch: Yes.

Dr Collis: You want to know the number who are on return to work and the number of workers compensation cases?

MR WALL: Yes. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Members, we will move to the next output class. If we get through that before 5 pm, I am happy to come back to this area. That will be dictated by the members of the committee. We move to output class 4.2, care and protection services. I have a question to start with which hopefully will be cleared up quickly. On page 334 there are a number of accountability indicators. Indicator d. is ceasing and e. seems to be replacing it. I am not sure if that is correct. It relates to the total number of children and young people receiving care and protection services. It seems to be replaced by the number of children and young people receiving care and protection services during the year.

Ms Howson: There is a nuance to it.

THE CHAIR: Okay, the nuance is that when you actually look at the number it is

more than doubling.

Ms Howson: They are measuring different things, Mr Hanson.

THE CHAIR: It is more than a nuance; it is a different measurement, is it?

Ms Howson: So d. is a point-in-time measure and e. is a measure of actual children and young people that have received a care and protection service and continued to in any one year—

THE CHAIR: That makes sense.

Ms Howson: which is why it is much larger.

THE CHAIR: I was just trying to work that out. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, in respect to the children and young people's system upgrade—budget paper 3, page 214—is this funding in response to the Auditor-General's report into care and protection services and—

Ms Burch: Are you asking what it is?

DR BOURKE: And what is it going to do?

Ms Burch: Yes, it is. The Auditor-General found that the CHYPS system was really not serving the workforce as it ought and providing us with easy access to the information that we needed. The system is probably close to 15 years old and it has been modified over time. I think the Auditor-General found some problems with it and every worker that uses it would also have some comment about its usability. The funding in here is to do some immediate workaround to fix some problems, make it easier to use and have various reports more readily accessible. There is also some money in here for feasibility around a replacement system as well.

DR BOURKE: In budget paper 4, page 334, it is suggested that the number of child protection reports continues to increase, projected to reach 15,000 in the coming financial year. What are the reasons behind this increase?

Ms Burch: Look, there is a trend. It is a trend nationally as well as locally here. You could say that we have a well-informed, well-aware community here, very strong mandatory reporting elements within legislation and professional obligations. So perhaps that leads to it. But also in a small jurisdiction there is a high level of community being informed and educated around the risks of kids being neglected, being abused and possibly at risk, and they are reporting them. Ms Howson or Dr Collis may have another comment on that.

Ms Howson: Dr Bourke, this is also an issue where the reporter declares what is a concern, not the receiver. In that regard we count every call we get in relation to the concern of a child. It then does go, I think, to the thresholds of concern that the community hold. It is a national phenomenon. I think it is one that is confounding all jurisdictions. It is something that we do need to look more closely at.

Our sense is that there are probably concerns that could be channelled in other directions and away from the statutory system. We do need to do some more investigation of that and the mechanisms through which that might occur. One of the steps that we have recently taken is to have care and protection staff working with the Children, Youth and Family Support gateway service so that they can be available as calls come in to provide advice on the nature of the concern that has been expressed and how that could be best managed. I am sure through that experience we will get better insights too into what is driving some of these numbers.

DR BOURKE: Minister, at the start you talked about the reports that have been focusing on this area, care and protection services. What does the latest quarterly report on the implementation of the Public Advocate's report show? How is the implementation progressing?

Ms Burch: I think I made mention of a milestone review panel. Part of our response to the Public Advocate's report was to set up—okay, we have responded to a number of recommendations, but how do we keep that on track and progress and target the change that we clearly needed to put in place and desired to put into place.

We established a milestone task force panel, which included the Public Advocate, a member of the CSD audit committee and the official visitor, but also the chair of the Children and Young People Services Council, Ms Narelle Hargreaves. They have been looking very closely at the CSD's response. I think every report has shown very positive progress. I think I have spoken on this earlier at annual reports hearings. Part of this partnership with the milestone review panel is that some of the work has changed from the original recommendation. In conversation with the Public Advocate and the official visitor, there has been some tweaking. They have been very satisfied.

I understand, if my memory serves me correctly, that the Public Advocate just last week also indicated that she was very pleased and acknowledged the effort, the work and the progress that have gone into this. Perhaps Ms Howson can talk about the milestone review panel.

Ms Howson: I think the minister has given a good summary. I can go into more detail if you wish, Dr Bourke. I think we are very proud of the work that we have been able to do. It has been a systemic change on a number of levels. Of the 19 projects that were borne out of the recommendations from that review, nine are closed. So we have been able to actually address a number of things that go to the heart of good decision making, appropriate supervision for our care and protection workers, opportunities to do further training and development.

We are putting an awful lot of work into developing our policies and procedures through the development of an information management system. We have initiated an out-of-home care strategy. That is something that we are doing in consultation with that sector and foster carers and kinship carers.

Our kinship care team has been established and is having a very positive impact on the relationships that we have with kinship carers. We have established a complaints unit. That unit is being very effective at managing issues that arise from parents,

grandparents, foster carers at the closest source to the problem arising. There are many aspects to it that are very positive. In terms of progress, I think we are very pleased that nine of the 19 projects are at closure. That is, I think, a very good indication of our commitment to improving the system overall.

DR BOURKE: Ms Howson, you mentioned your pride at the outcomes of this. What of those things that you mentioned is the one that you are most proud of?

Ms Howson: That is a very good question. I think the fact that we are actually taking a systemic approach here, that it is not piecemeal. It is not any one particular thing, because all of them have a very material impact. I must say that I am really pleased with the improvement in the relationships with foster carers and kinship carers. I think we rely so heavily on the goodwill and the voluntary engagement of those families that take children in desperate need into their homes. It is a difficult thing to do. The fact that over the last 12 months we have put the work we have into improving our relationships and support for those groups I think is something that I am very, very pleased about.

DR BOURKE: Thank you very much.

MR SMYTH: Just to follow up on that, what services are there now available for particularly kinship carers and why did—

Ms Burch: Support services?

MR SMYTH: it have to change? Yes, support services.

Ms Howson: I will refer that to Helen to answer.

Ms Pappas: In relation to the sorts of services that are available to kinship carers, we have established a kinship care team, as you know. The role of those workers is to go in and support, mentor and train kinship carers in their relationships with the children that they have in their care but also the extended family members. It is a complicated area and carers do need lots of support.

The types of services that are going into kinship care now include therapeutic support, particularly around managing complex behaviours of children. The Australian Childhood Foundation goes in and provides very hands-on in-the-home support to help carers manage kids when they are reacting to situations and dealing with their complexities.

There is also Relationships Australia. Relationships Australia provides counselling to carers. Separately to what is happening in the family home, carers have other experiences, obviously, and they need an avenue in which to have some private discussions in that counselling relationship. Relationships Australia provides that.

The child and family centres also work with the kinship care team to provide training opportunities and morning teas to help create a community of care for kinship carers and the children in their care. There are monthly morning teas out at the centres. The kinship care team are also developing a handbook. It is a case of providing as much

information as we can to kinship carers to make sure that they are prepared for when they step up and they take kids in care—what information do they need that helps them care for those kids? What support do they need? What other things do we need to do to support them to sustain those placements?

MR SMYTH: We heard previously suggestions that perhaps it might be a start-up kit or a handover kit particularly in kinship care where suddenly a grandparent is responsible for a child. Has that been followed up on?

Ms Burch: There is an existing kinship and foster care handbook. But I think you are referring to the lessons we have learnt through these reviews. I will call it a refresh, if you like. It is about whether it is really the right information at the right time in the right format for them.

Ms Pappas: The handbook that the kinship care team use is very much around that individual family. It is about what are the individual needs of those children and how can we support them. It provides information around training. It provides information around services that they can access and helps identify what it is that that individual family need.

MR SMYTH: Accountability indicator k. relates to the average cost per out-of-home care day. Is this line for kinship carers and foster parents?

Ms Pappas: Yes, that relates to kids in out-of-home care.

MR SMYTH: Why has it only gone up a dollar?

Mr Hubbard: I can tell you how it is constructed.

MR SMYTH: That would be kind.

Mr Hubbard: I can tell you why it has gone up a dollar.

MR SMYTH: CPI is really at two and a quarter for the year. WPI is higher than that. Electricity went up several per cent.

Ms Burch: But if you understand how it was constructed, your answer might come, Mr Smyth.

Mr Hubbard: That is going from 154 to 155?

MR SMYTH: Yes.

Mr Hubbard: That number is actually constructed by the budget available for out-of-home care in a year being divided by the number of young people. So it is the number of days, which is i. divided into the budget, which is \$34,875,000.

MR SMYTH: So it is basically, “Here’s the budget. Divide it by the number of days, and that will give you what you get”?

Mr Hubbard: Correct.

MR SMYTH: Rather than: what have costs gone up by and attribute that to the housing of these kids?

Mr Hubbard: We have a budget for our home care.

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR SMYTH: Whether the budget is appropriate or not?

Mr Hubbard: No, the budget—the contracts are increased per annum.

MR SMYTH: Yes, but it is going up much slower than CPI, WPI or any other measure.

Mr Hubbard: If you look at indicator i. we would have to do the percentage increases across there and compare it with the percentage increases in the budget.

Ms Burch: And, also, there is the investment of—

MR SMYTH: I understand the logic. I am just saying that you have said a number and divided it by the number of days rather than saying what the actual costs have gone up by and how we compensate the carers.

Ms Burch: No.

MR SMYTH: That is what he said. He said, “If I had a budget, I would divide it by the number of days. I got the number.”

Mr Hubbard: As with all of our funding coming in, there is an indexation component with that budget. And that budget itself is predominantly indexed by the WPI community rate. So it is indexed per year, reflecting actual costs.

MR SMYTH: Can you give me the breakdown against the index over the last couple of years?

Mr Hubbard: Yes, definitely.

Ms Burch: But I would like—

THE CHAIR: That has been taken on notice, has it?

Mr Hubbard: Yes.

Ms Burch: But I think the \$20 million-plus investment in out-of-home care is worth noting and, whilst this may be a crude arithmetic of a figure divided by another figure, it does not really cover the entire cost about what is the support dollar going into these individual kids, their families and their carers as well.

MR SMYTH: If you go back to the 329, even the output class, the total budget has gone up by less than \$200,000 a year for the entire care and protection service. So that is not CPI. It is certainly not WPI. What savings are you making out of care and protection to cover the fact that you are not even covering your WPI costs?

Ms Burch: If you go to numbers, the numbers stabilise. You are keeping up as well in that growth budget.

MR SMYTH: If the numbers stabilise?

Ms Burch: Yes, and if you look at indicator h., it does indicate that they are stabilised.

MR SMYTH: Indicator h. is just what you have worked out.

Ms Howson: That indicator is also based on the previous trend, the backward trend analysis, and what we might expect going forward. I guess, to some extent, we are backing ourselves here too that the investment we are putting in will actually reduce the number of children that are going into out-of-home care, even though the proportion of the population is increasing. By setting a target of 580, our expectation is that the investment we are putting into early intervention and prevention will actually prevent us having to remove children from their families and place them in an out-of-home care context.

MR SMYTH: How many foster carers are there currently registered in the ACT?

Ms Howson: Currently registered? I am not sure. But I can tell you how many children are placed with foster carers.

MR SMYTH: How many children are placed with foster carers?

Ms Howson: The number of children as of 9 June, in a foster care placement, is 210, and that is from 131 households.

MR GENTLEMAN: Minister, I want to ask you about adoptions. That is indicator “1. Number of adoptions” on page 335 of budget paper 4. It is a very low number. I can see that it has reduced, and there is a note there. What do you do as a directorate to, I guess, try to grow the number of adoptions in the ACT, or is it depending on requests?

Ms Burch: I might go to Ms Pappas on adoption.

Ms Pappas: That indicator relates to inter-country, local and step-family adoptions. We are seeing a decrease in the number of inter-country adoptions that are occurring in the ACT. But we are seeing an increase in the numbers of kids in foster care, for example, who have been made available for adoption and for permanent placement. Kids who generally are in care for about two years and are stable tend to then transition on to permanent orders until they are 18 and onwards. And we are seeing an increase in and an interest from foster carers and kinship carers who are wanting to take that next step and formalise that arrangement into an adoption.

MR GENTLEMAN: What would the timeline take if there was an interested

kinship—

Ms Burch: In adoption?

MR GENTLEMAN: Yes.

Ms Burch: It remains a very long timeline, and it gets more complicated if you are looking at overseas adoption. And I know we have had various overseas adoptions in train where there have then been international decisions or federal decisions made that have determined that you cannot adopt from that country. That extended, I think it was, to Ethiopia a number of years ago, and that had an impact on some families here. But that is a federal decision because of the concerns around practices at that end.

DR BOURKE: Which practices?

Ms Burch: Just assurance that the children were actually legitimately orphaned and ready for adoption, yes.

DR BOURKE: And you mentioned it takes a very long time. Why is that?

Ms Pappas: It varies for inter-country adoption. And we are really at the mercy of the country that is releasing their children. Once a child has been allocated to a family, we can do the assessment fairly quickly. A child has to be made available by the country. The applicant needs to then lodge all of their paperwork. There needs to be an assessment, and then there are court processes that occur. That can take five, six, seven years, depending on the situation. There are so many variables, depending on whether the family are ready to make that decision, take that next step, how quickly they go through the assessment process, how complex is that assessment process. So it varies. It is a very individualised process.

In terms of kids in out-of-home care who might be available for adoption, we like to see kids that are stable and settled for about two years before we take that route. And that is about making sure that that is the right arrangement for that child, that we have got the support and the consent of the biological parents. We understand what role those biological parents are going to play in the life of that child as they grow up in that arrangement. So it is two years at the point of placement. Then there is an assessment process. And when all of those things are in place, the orders can be made.

Ms Burch: But whilst the adoption numbers are low, as Ms Pappas said, if you have biological parents, some of these will not be willing to allow their children to be adopted. You will move into enduring parental responsibility arrangements that also provide very secure, long-term, independent arrangements within that fostered or kin household.

MR GENTLEMAN: What support do you provide for the people that actually want to adopt?

Ms Burch: We have a unit within CDS, the adoption support unit.

Ms Pappas: The adoption and permanent care unit. They work with caseworkers

when children are identified as perhaps being appropriate for adoption. They facilitate discussions and placement conversations around making sure that we have covered all of the factors that we need to. The adoption and permanent care unit then go along and do a fairly comprehensive assessment of that arrangement. They support the family through obtaining the orders and then they also offer post-order support.

Until the age of 18 and onwards, when those kids have been adopted, they can always come back and the adoption and permanent care unit can provide access to information, supported access to information. They can provide counselling, they can help reconnect children with their biological families if that is what is needed. So it is really an investment in the long term for those kids that travel that pathway.

MR SMYTH: Just on the adoptions, adoption numbers are trending down. Does that reflect the number of applications that are being received? Are they down as well?

Ms Pappas: No, it is not about applications; it is about availability of children and the length of the process. Sometimes you might have predicted that an order might be made in a certain year, but actually there have been some delays there that are out of your control.

MR SMYTH: How many applications for adoption did you receive, say, this year, last year and the year before?

Ms Pappas: I could not tell you that, but I am happy to come back to you.

MR SMYTH: Will you take that on notice? Usually what percentage of applications actually end up in an adoption?

Ms Pappas: I could not tell you. I would have to come back, yes.

MR SMYTH: That is okay. And normally, how long does it take between the application and the final adoption?

Ms Pappas: As I said, it is a fairly individualised response, and it can take as long as it needs to take, depending on where that family is up to.

Ms Burch: And some of those are external factors.

Ms Pappas: Yes, that is right.

Ms Burch: In the originating country, yes, which we have got no control over.

MR SMYTH: And where are most of our overseas adoptions coming from?

Ms Pappas: The orders that have been made this financial year are from Ethiopia, the Philippines, Korea, Taiwan, China. But they are very low numbers. We are only talking one or two children.

DR BOURKE: On page 335, accountability target j., relating to the number of out-of-home care days for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people

has increased. Could you just talk me through that? I think we have gone around this area but not down to this one.

Ms Pappas: That relates to the number of days that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are in care. What we are seeing in relation to kids that are coming into care is that they are coming into care and are staying for longer. That would be why we are seeing an increase there in terms of the 2013-14 year. For example, of the 210 kids that we talked about being in foster care, 50 of them are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids. In terms of kinship care, of the 250 kids in kinship care, 68 of them are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander kids.

As I said, those kids are coming into care. They are settling into care and we are not able to successfully restore them home, and they tend to stay in care for longer periods.

DR BOURKE: If I understand what you are saying, this does not, in fact, reflect an increased number of children; it reflects an increased amount of time they are in care?

Ms Pappas: That is right. You will always get a trend up in terms of kids coming into care because, as I said, the ones that are in care and are stable are staying until they are 18, and the ones that are getting home are getting home fairly quickly once we have taken orders.

Ms Burch: There is that point of trying to restore and if you cannot restore, then making the decision about a stable placement is actually far better than the continued attempts to restore into a family. All the evidence will say a stable placement is the better outcome.

Ms Pappas: The importance of those kids making roots and connecting—issues of attachment and issues of stabilisation—is really fundamental for kids if they are going to have better outcomes as young adults in education, in health, all sorts of indicators like that. Whilst we put as much effort as we can into getting those kids back home into their natural support systems, where that is not achieved they are remaining in care. And as I said, kinship care is a growing area. Kids are being contained within their family units, possibly not with their biological parents.

Ms Burch: I think kinship is running at getting close to 60—60-40.

Ms Pappas: Yes. It certainly is the biggest. Kinship carers, family members, are the increasing population that are stepping up and looking after their own family.

Dr Collis: May I add to this. One of the significant achievements of care and protection this year was the cultural care plan, which was one of the criticisms, I believe, around the original PA report. We moved that to a percentage in the high 90s or mid-90s—

Ms Pappas: It was 98 per cent.

Dr Collis: High 90s then. So it is 98 per cent of young people in care having a cultural care plan as part of their case plan. We are very proud of that, and we hope to take

that success across other areas of our case management system in the office.

Ms Burch: It is important with Aboriginal young folk, particularly when they are placed in a non-Indigenous family but within any family, to make sure that that cultural framework is there for the carers.

THE CHAIR: Mr Gentleman.

MR GENTLEMAN: That is all I have, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Smyth?

MR SMYTH: I am not sure if it is relevant to this area or if it is across the department. On page 336 of budget paper 4, there is a budget policy adjustment, “Children and young people system upgrade”, worth \$150,000. What is that?

Ms Burch: Is that the CHYPS money?

Ms Howson: Yes. That is the system we were speaking about earlier, Mr Smyth.

MR SMYTH: That is me done.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Can we go back to youth?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

DR BOURKE: The youth justice plans, budget paper 4, page 334—could you talk me through those a bit more, please?

Ms Burch: The youth justice plans?

Dr Collis: The case plans?

DR BOURKE: Yes, the youth justice case plans.

Ms Howson: While Dr Collis is getting organised, Dr Bourke, I can say that this is an important indicator for us in the context of the effect of our diversionary program in general. We chose this measure as a new indicator because we believe that it will give us a good indication of our proactivity in terms of supporting young people in the youth justice system. Do you want to talk about that in detail?

Dr Collis: This particular indicator, which is a new indicator this year, as you have observed, Dr Bourke, is actually an indicator which is described in ROGS, the record of government services. We have adopted this as an indicator because one of the key drivers or key strategies we have in the youth justice blueprint is to ensure that the single case management model, which is a model of case management which goes from detention into the community—prior to our adopting this model, if a young person went into detention they received a different case manager and if they went

from detention to community they received a different case manager—has the case manager follow the young person. We see this as really essential to achieve on through-care opportunities for young people. It is, however, a new system. There are all sorts of ways we can monitor this. One way we want to monitor it is to ensure that we have an effective case plan in a timely way. We are using the national indicator for that. We are going to measure in other ways as well, but that is the relevance of that particular case plan.

We are also adopting a new case planning template based upon a program called strengths, needs and responsivity, which identifies the drivers of offending—things like school achievement, peer relations, family relations and so forth. We are adopting a new template that will help us drive our case planning to accurately focus on those specific needs for each individual. I mentioned the success in cultural care planning in care and protection. In doing that template, we have actually gone to school on the work in care and protection, to find out how we can embed cultural care planning within this new template that we are adopting now. This measure is specifically about those case plans so we can monitor it on a year-by-year basis.

DR BOURKE: Another question?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Talking still about youth justice—on Bimberi access, whilst I know it is not in your directorate, do you have any news on the upgrading of the sealing of the road?

Ms Burch: To Bimberi? Is it sealed? You travel it every day, Mr Corben.

Mr Corben: Yes, I do. There were some meetings that we went to early last year about the plans to extend the road. I am not sure of the name of the road; I think it is Morisset Road.

Ms Burch: It comes off Flemington.

Mr Corben: It comes off Flemington; that is correct. There is a plan for that road to be upgraded to four lanes past the front of Bimberi and join further up Northbourne Avenue. We are still waiting to hear further developments around that. We have not heard any more concrete plans around when that is actually about to start. There have been times when the potholes have been repaired et cetera, but—

Dr Collis: Can I just add to that? The upgrade of the four-lane highway across the front of Bimberi from what is actually Flemington Road through to the roundabout at the start of the Federal Highway is all part of a plan which will include the suburb of Kenny being developed and infill around that.

There are downsides to that, including, of course, traffic flow. You will notice that what has happened is that there has been some development on the site of the Bimberi footprint in order to ensure that there is another fence line put around which actually defines our footprint. That has been put there in preparation for the work around the highway, particularly around security of vehicles in the car park. There is a penchant

for people to throw things over fences and whatever around car parks. We have prepared our footprint as best we can around that. We put input into the planning and design around the suburb of Kenny.

There are advantages, though. One of the advantages of that road going through specifically will be that there will be a more sustainable bus route that will not terminate at Bimberi. I was riding my pushbike down Northbourne the other day and saw a sign that said “Bimberi Youth Justice Centre”. I thought that you might be a brave individual to wave that bus down in a sense. In terms of an inclusive service and a more sustainable service, we will get better public transport access to the centre than we do now.

DR BOURKE: Can I move onto another topic?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Going back to youth services, the trauma recovery centre—I do not think we have really talked about that and what sort of services it might provide.

Ms Burch: Collectively through today there was a thread of getting in really early intervention to these traumatised children. I am really pleased with the trauma centre getting up. What we are doing there is—there is property that we are retrofitting, upgrading it to become a centre. It will take in young ones who have been highly traumatised. There will be a psychiatrist, a psychologist, social workers and other health professionals who will work one-on-one on quite intensive support for these young folk. There is probably more to be said on that.

Ms Howson: That is the outline of the program.

Ms Burch: It is a very good program, and I am pleased to see it. The response I have picked up is that those around the out of home care sector and those who are used to seeing the after-effects with a highly traumatised child see this as a great addition to services.

DR BOURKE: You certainly talked about that earlier with young and very young people.

Ms Burch: Yes.

DR BOURKE: And you see that disengagement through into outcomes in the justice system.

Ms Burch: Absolutely. You can link trauma to a whole range of other disconnects from society and poor outcomes for individuals.

Dr Collis: Indeed. To draw the line of sight is very handy here, because whilst this is about care and protection, this is about young people in care and protection who have experienced trauma. The centre is designed to recover those young people from the negative impacts of that. If you go to the blueprint on youth justice and the early intervention and prevention, you will see that this is also a key strategy against that.

I would like to make the observation that the blueprint and these plans are working in a coordinated and aligned way to deliver. I would again be hoping that, if I am around and chairing the blueprint implementation group in five or six years time, we may be saying that we are getting some downward pressure on young people in the youth justice system because we have been able to invest in recovering young people at this age. I just want to draw those lines.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

Ms Burch: It is a very hard area; it is a jigsaw. One line of programming will not be the answer for all individuals and families. That is why the investment has been over last year's budget and in these targeted programs.

THE CHAIR: It would appear that we are done. Members, minister and officials, all questions on notice will have to be lodged with the committee support office within three business days of receipt of the uncorrected proof transcript, with day one being the first business day after the transcript has been received. Answers to questions on notice are to be lodged with the committee support office within five business days of receipt of the question, with day one being the first business day after the question is received. Similarly, answers to questions taken on notice are to be provided within five business days of the hearing at which questions were taken, with day one being the first business day after the question was taken.

Minister and officials, thank you very much for attending today. Continue with the good work that you do for the community.

The committee adjourned at 4.54 pm.