



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2015-2016

(Reference: [Appropriation Bill 2015-2016 and Appropriation \(Office of the Legislative Assembly\) Bill 2015-2016](#))

Members:

**MR B SMYTH (Chair)
MS M FITZHARRIS (Deputy Chair)
DR C BOURKE
MS N LAWDER**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

MONDAY, 22 JUNE 2015

**Secretary to the committee:
Mrs N Kosseck (Ph 620 50435)**

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 9.34 am.

Appearances:

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

Education and Training Directorate

Joseph, Ms Diane, Director-General
Gniel, Mr Stephen, Deputy Director-General
Brighton, Ms Meg, Deputy Director-General, Organisational Integrity
Garrison, Ms Joanne, Deputy Director-General, Education Strategy
Whybrow, Mr Mark, Chief Finance Officer
Cuzner, Ms Jane, Director, Governance and Assurance
Stewart, Mrs Tracy, Director, Planning and Performance
McAlister, Ms Coralie, Director, People and Performance
Wynants, Mr John, Director, Infrastructure and Capital Works
Wright, Ms Leanne, Director, Learning and Teaching
Miller, Mr David, Director, Training and Tertiary Education
Stenhouse, Mr John, Director, Office of Board of Senior Secondary Studies
Huxley, Mr Mark, Chief Information Officer

ACT Teacher Quality Institute

Ellis, Ms Anne, Chief Executive Officer

Canberra Institute of Technology

Cover, Ms Leanne, Acting Chief Executive
Grayson, Ms Carolyn, Deputy Chief Executive
Kay, Mr Shane, Chief Operating Officer, Corporate Services
Stenlake, Dr Nicole, Executive Director, People and Organisational Governance
Maslen, Ms Sue, General Manager, Student and Academic Services
Ryan, Mr Paul, General Manager, CIT Solutions

ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority

Carter, Mr Glenn, Chief Executive Officer

THE CHAIR: Good morning all, and welcome to the seventh day of public hearings of the Select Committee on Estimates 2015-2016. Today's proceedings will focus on the Education and Training portfolio.

Please be aware that the proceedings today are being recorded and transcribed and will be published. They are also being broadcast and webstreamed even as we speak. Could answers to questions on notice be provided as quickly as possible, certainly within five working days from the commitment.

When witnesses come to the table could they please look at the pink privilege statement that is on the table, and read and understand the privilege implications. For the record could those at the table now confirm they have read the statement and understand the implications?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Fantastic. Today we are looking at education, so this morning we will start with output class 1, which is public school education, or government school education more appropriately. Minister, would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms Burch: I will make a few opening remarks. The government has set a number of clear priorities for the coming years, with education investment featuring as a key element. This government will remain committed to ongoing education reforms and we will continue to invest in our students, our teachers and our schools.

To support quality learning in Canberra schools, this government has increased investment to education across the territory to \$1.1 billion, the largest investment ever. This budget sees continued investment that will modernise our schools to ensure our students learn in the best environments with new technology. Our growing city needs new schools, so we have invested in areas of growth.

Enrolments have grown again this year across all of our public schools. I think we are at the highest number in our schools over the last five years, at 60.5 per cent. Recurrent funding for the public education sector is \$617 million, an increase of \$50 million over last year. This budget includes capital funding of over \$59 million to improve the infrastructure as well as ICT in our schools. The ACT government continues to support non-government schools, with over \$60 million allocated for the sector.

This budget allocates over \$5 million to construct a specialist learning centre in the Caroline Chisholm School. This centre will deliver science, technology, engineering and mathematics programs. Our public school teachers can also benefit through professional development opportunities at the new centre. The government is investing also in the modernisation of Belconnen High School, with over \$17 million worth of capital provided over the coming three years.

As our city grows, the government needs to invest in schools for the future. In this budget we are providing capital funding of over \$28 million for a new P-6 school in north Gungahlin to be opened for the 2019 school year, plus feasibility studies for a year 7 to 10 school in north Gungahlin and a P-10 school in Molonglo.

When we look at ICT, this government is investing a further \$24 million in capital and \$13 million plus associated funding to ensure our digital systems in schools are modern and reliable. Digital learning and platforms like the highly successful digital backpack rely on wireless access to high speed networks.

Also in this budget you will see an initiative to counter domestic violence. The directorate has committed \$615,000 to this initiative.

Over this year I want to continue to deliver the best education system in Australia, building on the work undertaken to date. I want to see further improvements in our students' outcomes through quality teachers and a quality curriculum. I want the ACT

education sector to continue to work in conjunction with other government agencies to reduce the achievement gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. I also want to see continued improvement in our education capital and have our highly educated and skilled people contribute to the economy and our community. I will continue to be the minister for all schools.

It was somewhat disturbing to read—just as an aside, chair—the reports in the paper that your federal colleagues are considering abandoning commonwealth funding to public education, and indeed charging parents for the basic right of public education. I think that is appalling. This government has made the largest commitment ever, of \$1.1 billion, to achieve the good things that our education systems need. I welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the committee.

Before I go to questions, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Diane Joseph and her team across the Education and Training Directorate for all the work that they do, and all the teachers and staff across all of our schools that make sure that we offer the best education in this country.

THE CHAIR: Thank you for that, minister. Why don't we start with some of the comments you made. You talked about work being done for schools in the future in north Gungahlin and Molonglo. Is there overcrowding in the schools in north Canberra at the moment?

Ms Burch: Certainly, it is a growth area. That is reflected in the enrolments that we see through schools. I know there has been some commentary, for example, regarding Franklin Early Childhood School and where they will go for year 3. There is capacity at both Harrison and Palmerston for those enrolments. As I understand it, they can all be accommodated across those schools should parents choose one of those or, indeed, they could go elsewhere. It is a growth area and that is why you will see the investment in this budget. Mrs Stewart could go into more detail.

THE CHAIR: Before we go to Mrs Stewart, the money is not actually in this budget. It is in the outyears. Work on north Gungahlin and Molonglo, at \$1.7 million, it is estimated will commence in 2018-19. If this is a priority for the government, why is it three years before this work commences?

Ms Burch: We will see one school operating from the beginning of 2019. That will be a new P-6 school in the north Gungahlin area. The feasibility studies work for the other, for the 7 to 10, in the north Gungahlin area is about planning. Mrs Stewart could go into the detail about the time lines, projections and population demands.

THE CHAIR: You said it is about planning. According to this, there is no funding for planning until the 2018-19 financial year. Why are we waiting for three years?

Ms Burch: We are getting on and building a school and we are planning, as our normal processes, procedures and protocols—

THE CHAIR: When does the—

Ms Burch: I am answering your question, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: But when does the planning start, minister?

Ms Burch: The planning is already starting, Mr Smyth. This budget complements the other work that we do internally each and every year.

THE CHAIR: What is the \$1.7 million in 2018-19 for?

Ms Burch: Mrs Stewart, do you want to make a comment, and then Mr Whybrow?

Mrs Stewart: There are probably two aspects to the planning. One is our ongoing demographic planning that we do on a regular basis to assess need and demand for public schools. We have a process that we go through that is an annual process but which we review on a regular basis to make sure that our schools have sufficient capacity to cope with enrolment demand. As the minister stated we are seeing quite strong demand for places in public education in Gungahlin and, in fact, throughout the ACT. So we are reviewing that on a regular basis.

We do have sufficient capacity in Gungahlin at the moment to cater for enrolments and for growing enrolments. But we do see that those enrolments will continue to grow into the future. Therefore we have proposed new school facilities in the Gungahlin area to cope with those enrolments in the outyears. Certainly, our planning at the moment shows that we have sufficient capacity to cope with enrolments until the new school in north Gungahlin comes online.

THE CHAIR: What does the \$1.7 million in 2018-19 deliver?

Mr Whybrow: The \$1.7 million identified in that budget initiative relates to operational costs for the new school in north Gungahlin, in the suburb of Taylor. That enables you to have principals and business managers in the operation of the school. With respect to the funding and planning for that school, I refer you to page 17 of the budget papers. There is feasibility study funding identified in the budget papers. I refer you to page 17 and take you to “Transfer—Schools for the Future”. It is about the fourth line down—“Coombs Primary to North Gungahlin and Molonglo Schools”. There is \$1 million provided in the 2015-16 budget. That is for the feasibility studies works for the new schools in north Gungahlin, a high school and the new P-6 school in Molonglo. So there is planning funding in the 2015-16 budget and there is also money for construction in the 2016-17 budget.

THE CHAIR: Are enrolments on the south side facing the same pressure as north side schools?

Mrs Stewart: Mr Smyth, it is variable across the board. It depends on the school sector, whether it is primary, high school or college, and it also depends on exactly which schools we are talking about. We are seeing growing enrolments and demand for places at our public schools across the board. Particularly, for example, on the south side we are seeing quite strong demand in the college sector. We are also seeing increasing enrolments in high schools; that is right across the ACT, including on the south side. Certainly some primary schools on the south side are also experiencing quite strong demand for places.

THE CHAIR: Are there any plans, where the enrolments are not growing, to close or merge any schools?

Mrs Stewart: Certainly I am not aware of any plans myself.

THE CHAIR: Minister, is there any work being done to look at school numbers and are there any plans between now and 2020 to close particularly primary schools on the south side?

Ms Burch: As Mrs Stewart said, we are always looking at our numbers but there is nothing in front of me about closing the schools, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: Is there any work being done in the directorate that would lead to a school closure on the south side?

Ms Burch: There is nothing in front of me at the moment, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: Will you guarantee that there will be no school—

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

THE CHAIR: I have not asked this question, so you would not know what I was going to ask, minister. Will you guarantee that there will be no school closures between now and 2020?

Ms Burch: There is nothing in front of me at the moment. I think the changes to the Education Act deemed at least a two-year consultative process. There is nothing in front of me this year. There is nothing in front of me next year. So I think it is highly unlikely that there will be any school closures. Indeed, if you look at our numbers the demand is to grow schools, Mr Smyth. So there will not be any school closures.

THE CHAIR: Will you guarantee that there will be no school closures between now and 2020?

Ms Burch: Mr Smyth, I have answered your question. There will be no school closures.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Ms Fitzharris with a supplementary and then a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: Good morning. My supplementary was on the schools in Gungahlin and particularly about the two schools announced in the budget in Gungahlin which, in my experience, have been very warmly welcomed by the Gungahlin community. I know, having met with a number of families from Franklin school as well, that now they have a range of information they are feeling a bit more comfortable about the future of their children in their relatively small early childhood school in Franklin. In respect of the north Gungahlin school, you mentioned, Mr Whybrow, that it is going to be in Taylor. Is that confirmed?

Mr Whybrow: That is my understanding, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. Do you have any—

Ms Burch: There was some original thinking that it was Moncrieff but it has gone across.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have any sense yet of how many streams might be in the school?

Mr Whybrow: I think the budget papers identify approximately 540 students in the P-6 school.

Mrs Stewart: Which would be a three-stream school.

MS FITZHARRIS: A three-stream school; great. Do you know yet whether you will offer all years in the first year of opening in 2019 or would it be phased in over time? Would it be preschool, kindy, year 1 or is that still to be determined?

Ms Joseph: In planning for new schools, the first part is obviously the feasibility study—as Mr Whybrow has already mentioned, the recurrent funding up-front for the principal, the business manager and the core funding aspects of the school. Usually we are able to appoint the leadership team six months prior. We then open enrolments, as we have already done for the new Coombs Primary School, which is expected to open for the 2016 school year. In calling for enrolments, it all depends on starting the building process but also seeing how the community develops. Usually in the growth suburbs we expect more students in the lower primary years. However, it is basically based on the demand of the community and looking at the enrolments as they come in.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have had some advice through my office around a feasibility study, but I ask you to put something on the record for us. Some people interpret that very literally—ie, is it feasible for a high school in north Gungahlin? The explanation I have had is that it is not necessarily about whether it is feasible; it is about where it might be located, how many streams it might have. Can you talk us through that so we can get that on the record?

Ms Joseph: The initiative that we see in the budget is for the design and construction of a new preschool to year 6 in the suburb of Taylor, as has already been mentioned, and to undertake preliminary design and feasibility study work—so what is the shape of the school, how does the school respond to the curriculum needs of the Australian curriculum, the ACT curriculum and the local community? This is done to determine the future education requirements in north Gungahlin years 7 to 10. It is looking at the whole of the education provision as we do the planning for the preschool to year 6.

The north Gungahlin P-6 school project includes looking at what the construction of a new school facility looks like that is suitable for students between preschool and year 6, what the learning environments look like for students, incorporating both indoor and outdoor learning areas, and looking at the preschool and learning support units for students with specialised requirements.

The new school will provide a quality learning environment to meet the educational needs of students in the suburbs of Moncrieff, Jacka and Taylor. Specifically this school includes a school suitable for over 80 preschoolers and approximately 450 primary schoolers from K to 6.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have a sense yet if the high school might be in Taylor as well or perhaps co-located with the primary? Do you just not know yet?

Mr Whybrow: I think that is the information about a feasibility study. It is about the timing of when the school would be required to be up and running and also its location. Mr Wynants is probably best placed to talk through that further.

Mr Wynants: The feasibility for the secondary school component will look at the best place to actually accommodate those students. It could well be on the Taylor site. The site is large enough to accommodate a full K-10 school. It is also looking at other schools in that area such as Gold Creek and Amaroo to see whether they have the capacity to accommodate the students coming out of north Gungahlin. So it will look at both through the feasibility phase.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. A substantive?

THE CHAIR: A substantive question to Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Minister, I wanted to ask—

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary question.

THE CHAIR: Sorry, Dr Bourke had one first and then Mr Doszpot on north Gungahlin schools.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. We have heard about the early childhood schools—Franklin Primary School and, in particular, one in my electorate, Southern Cross Primary School. What has been the ACT experience of this model? How are we managing those transitions from grade 2 to grade 3, which seem to create some level of anxiety for parents?

Ms Burch: At the outset, I think they have been very successful. I was visiting Lyons early educational school just last week. That seems to be very, very successful. They have built up over time very strong transitions, very active partnerships with their feeder schools in the area. Ms Joseph or Ms Wright could speak about how that is working through.

Ms Joseph: Dr Bourke, being still a relatively new model with our early childhood schools, I affirm the minister's comments: very, very successful. However, the transition process from year 2 to year 3 is really, really important. I know that in the Narrabundah area, for instance, parents were feeling that perhaps they would not be able to get into their local schools.

We have smoothed that process out by really involving the parents and giving as much information as possible, with our primary school principals working with our

early childhood school principals to make sure that parents understand that they have a priority enrolment into their local school through our priority enrolment process and that if you had been to an early childhood school, you still had priority enrolment into your local school.

We have been getting information out to parents. I know that if you go into the Narrabundah Early Childhood School, on the wall in the foyer there is the pathways for education right through to college. It is very successful, but it is about the information. Similarly, with our new early childhood school in Franklin, it is about getting the information to parents that there are spots in your local school, you do have priority placement into your local school and there will be spaces in the school guaranteed in your local enrolment area.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot has a supplementary, then a new question from Ms Fitzharris.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Mr Chair. My supplementary is related partly to Mr Smyth's question, and also to Dr Bourke's. On the south side, most of the schools I have visited are at or near capacity. You have mentioned some of the concerns in the Narrabundah area. Can you share some of that information that you gave to those parents as to how the situation is on the south side at the moment?

Ms Joseph: In planning our school infrastructure to address current and future need, we undertake really strong modelling, as Mrs Stewart has already alluded to. We undertake student enrolment projection modelling, using information from land release sales data, birth data, occupation and dwelling forecasts, school census and schools capacity data. This planning is used to help cast potential enrolment for up to 30 years. The directorate also works closely across government to plan for new schooling and facilities across the territory.

Looking at enrolment pressures, we look at our policies and particularly our priority enrolment to make sure that students within their priority enrolment area can still be accommodated in their local school. That is the guarantee. In the local enrolment area, you have priority enrolment into your local school. We then need to manage pressures with enrolment.

We can manage pressures with enrolment at any school through reducing out-of-area enrolments, for instance, and by looking at the spaces available in the school. We can potentially bring in extra buildings, as we have at Duffy Primary School, where we built extra buildings to accommodate pressures—those sorts of things. There is a priority enrolment area and people are guaranteed a place in their priority enrolment school.

MR DOSZPOT: Red Hill, Yarralumla and Telopea are all at capacity, so where do children go who wanted to go there?

Mrs Stewart: Mr Doszpot, we still have certainly available places at those schools. Certainly they have got strong enrolment demand, but still places are available, as Ms Joseph said, for students in the local area. Some of those schools are accepting students from the broader ACT community. So we ask that they prioritise their

enrolments to make sure that there are places available for their local students. That is one of the approaches that we use in managing enrolments. I am confident that those schools can manage enrolments from their local area within their capacities.

MR DOSZPOT: What are the projections that you are looking at for those areas at the moment—

Mrs Stewart: We are seeing actually quite stable enrolment in those particular areas—consistent with ACT population growth but not enrolment that is over and above population growth across the ACT.

MR DOSZPOT: Given the answers that Mr Smyth was given about your future plans, are there any primary schools on the south side of Canberra that are deemed not to have much student demand and thus require a merger or a closure?

Mrs Stewart: Was that the question that was asked earlier about school closures?

MR DOSZPOT: Yes, correct. It is an extension of that question.

Ms Burch: As we said then, there is nothing in front of us; different schools have different pressures. You mentioned Telopea. It is a very popular school. It is a local area high school. As Ms Joseph said—

MR DOSZPOT: And primary school.

Ms Burch: The primary school runs the dual curriculum with the French government as well. Where there are pressures, they are deemed to restrict the number of students to the priority areas. That is just how we manage the movement—families' choice across all of our schools.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder has a supplementary, then a supplementary from Ms Fitzharris and then a new question from Fitzharris.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. In respect of the high schools in the Lanyon Valley area, I am aware that somewhere between 60 and 100 students leave the valley to go to public high schools elsewhere. Is that a capacity issue or are there other underlying issues as to why parents are moving to educate their children outside the Lanyon Valley?

Ms Burch: If I look at Lanyon high, I know that a number of people in the Lanyon Valley will go to a non-government school or they will go to schools perhaps in the Woden area. Melrose, as does Alfred Deakin, has a strong out of area enrolment. As I often say, this gets down to choices parents make. It may be convenient for parents. They might be working in the Woden area and it suits their family's movements.

MS LAWDER: So it is not a capacity issue?

Ms Burch: No.

THE CHAIR: A final supplementary on this question and then a new question from Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. We are sort of ranging a little bit. Could I just clarify: Mr Doszpot stated that Red Hill, Telopea and Yarralumla were at capacity. Is that correct?

Ms Joseph: No. As I said, we are confident that those schools can manage the enrolment demand from their local area within their existing capacity.

MS FITZHARRIS: I hear that quite a bit, that schools are at capacity, and it seems to go untested sometimes. Can you just explain for us what that means? In the Gungahlin discussion around schools that are at capacity, it has been said to me on a number of occasions and, having seen some of the figures, I can say, “My understanding is that that is not correct.” Can you just explain that for us?

Ms Joseph: We have no schools at capacity to take students from their local area. As I said before, where a school is experiencing enrolment pressure, the first thing we do is make sure that we can offer places to the local community—so students, families, within the priority enrolment area. You may not be able to get into school if you do not live in the local area if a school has enrolment pressure.

MS FITZHARRIS: What happens with families who may have older children that are in the school but they either no longer live in the area or never lived in the area? Do they have right of enrolment for younger children?

Ms Joseph: Yes, they do.

MS FITZHARRIS: Okay.

MR DOSZPOT: A supplementary—

MS FITZHARRIS: Can we move on to—

THE CHAIR: A quick supplementary—it has been quite broad ranging—and then we will go to the new question.

MR DOSZPOT: Further to Ms Fitzharris’s question, a media article last year suggested one of the directorate’s methods to deal with overcrowding included making programs more flexible and repurposing spaces. Can you explain what this means?

Ms Burch: That was, I think, just looking at the school asset and how can it be remodelled or repurposed to accommodate more student demands.

MR DOSZPOT: What is the current enrolment of Belconnen High School?

THE CHAIR: We are stretching here. We will go to a new question. You can ask that if you are interested when it is your question.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

MS FITZHARRIS: I wanted to ask about the parental engagement program. I believe it is in conjunction with ARACY.

Ms Burch: Yes, we have commissioned ARACY to undertake that work. Ms Wright has been the point person in ETD on this. It is working really successfully and across independent and Catholic schools. It is around, as I said, looking at whole school, whole sector support. It is very successful.

MS FITZHARRIS: I would be interested in where it has got to and what is planned for 2015-16 as well.

Ms Burch: We released some definition and some fact sheets earlier this year. There is a survey that is about to be undertaken across our schools and then we will develop some resources, some tools, so to speak, to test that. But Ms Wright can go into the detail on that.

Ms Wright: As the minister said, we commenced work with the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth back in 2014. They commenced under contract with the directorate to deliver a project that runs through until December 2015. As the minister mentioned, the first phase of the project, which was completed in February this year, looked at a research approach to defining parental engagement in the ACT. This is national leading work. There has not been a definition of parental engagement and what it is and what it looks like.

That piece of work saw a research evidence-based publication developed and that was, as I said, launched in February this year. It really undertook to define parental engagement, as opposed to parental involvement, in schools. Parental engagement is the strong link to students learning in the school—so how do parents engage with the learning programs, their aspirations for their child, and engage with the school to make sure that it is a cohesive approach? The definition itself looks at two aspects, which is the very important parents as first teachers, the family-led learning, and then the school-parent partnerships and school-family partnerships later on.

As the minister said, that was accompanied by explanatory fact sheets for parents around that definition and what it meant and also one for teachers and school communities. Those publications were distributed to all ACT schools, government and non-government. As the minister said, it is a cross-sectoral project.

The steering group and working party comprise representatives from the Association of Independent Schools as well as the Catholic Education Office and, importantly, all of the parent groups that represent those sectors of schooling—so APFACTS in the independent sector, the Catholic parent organisation, as well as the association of P&Cs council in the ACT.

Phase 2 of the project really is nearing completion now. In fact, I received final drafts of the resources that will go online on the web. They will be provided through to the minister's office within the next week for final review. These are a set of information

sheets and fact sheets for parents and schools around what are the various aspects of parental engagement and strategies that we want to see embedded right across schooling in the ACT.

Those fact sheets are around how do parents communicate and engage with schools, what parents can expect from schools in regard to all aspects of understanding the curriculum and teaching and learning, how to better engage with schools and what type of activities there is an evidence base for that work. So those resources will be released, I would suggest, early next term by the minister at her discretion.

Phase 3 of the project is also underway at this time, and that is the development of a survey instrument that will measure for the first time levels of parental engagement in ACT schools. ARACY are working through an evidence base to determine a set of sample questions that will gather that information. It will be trialled cross-sectorally during term 3 of this year with four schools—two government schools, one Catholic school and one independent school. The purpose of that trial is to really look at how effective the tool, as it develops, is in measuring parental engagement.

From the government school perspective, that tool will then be embedded within our school satisfaction survey. Across other sectors we are looking for them to embed it in their practices around getting feedback from parents as well. For the first time, we will have some baseline data that we will be able to obtain from all schools in the ACT. From there, it allows us to work forward with a monitoring phase on how well we are going with implementing the strategies that have been identified as best practice and how that will then impact on working really effectively with parents and the community and our schools.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thanks. Do the commonwealth have any particular role, or are they looking at this as well?

Ms Burch: We put in this investment and project nearly two years ago now. In last year's federal budget there was a reference to parental engagement, but I have not seen any progress on it whatsoever.

Ms Wright: I can probably provide a little more information. Nationally, parental engagement has been identified by the Australian government—

Ms Burch: The feds followed our suit, can I say.

Ms Wright: as a priority and they did indicate a funding commitment for four years of \$4 million—\$1 million a year over four years—to work with ARACY as well. The federal work will, we envisage, extend upon the work that has happened in the ACT. The minister has presented at Education Council a paper around the work that has been undertaken in the ACT, as well as sharing with the Australian government and all other education ministers the work that was launched in February this year around our definition.

In working with ARACY nationally, ARACY has made contact with all jurisdictions, who have all signalled strong willingness to engage with them on the national work. The work of the ACT is recognised as leading the way. At ACARA only last week—

that is, the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority, who look after the Australian curriculum—as part of the Australian curriculum review, there was reference to ACARA doing some work nationally around parental engagement.

ACARA have commenced engagement with the ACT to look at our work. They have done some preliminary scoping with parent sample groups around the types of issues that parents have around curriculum and parental engagement. A lot of the work will cross over into the work that we will have identified through these strategies this year. They have also expressed an interest in sharing in the ACT work in leading this focus on parental engagement nationally.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. What advantages does it give you by being ahead of the pack nationally?

Ms Wright: I think for our schools this renewed focus and providing some clarity in this space means that, along with the other ways that the ACT leads the nation, we will actually be up and running in our schools with resources on the ground that support best practice in parental engagement moving forward.

MS FITZHARRIS: Another aspect of the ACT is that we have one of the highest female workforce participation rates. Obviously mums and dads need to be engaged, but does that bring particular challenges or opportunities in the ACT that might be different in other jurisdictions?

Ms Wright: I think the work in the ACT has been really important. It has come through from all of the sectors in working with ARACY that it is important that every parent, no matter their circumstances and family circumstances with regard to workforce, can see themselves in both the definition and the strategies, so that the strategies do not rely on parents being inside the school gate before and after school.

We must have a focus on parental engagement so that every parent can see there are opportunities. The focus of parental engagement is actually recognising the important role that parents make. The research and evidence base says that effective parental engagement can add six to 12 months to the outcomes for students—progressing outcomes for students—if we get it right. This is the focus of that work. Obviously our work with ARACY has been around the evidence base in the ACT. It is very much tailored to the forums and feedback they received from parents across the board in seeking out that input into the research phase that was undertaken last year.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is it going through primary and high school and college?

Ms Wright: The initial aspects of the project are focused on primary schools, but we have just engaged ARACY for some supplementary and very targeted strategies for secondary schools which will also be completed by December this year. The first tranche of strategies will focus largely on primary schools, but some of those are very translatable into schooling right across the board. There will also be some supplementary information targeted because, as students progress through schooling, there are changes in the way that parents engage and relate. We will do some specific work around those strategies and, again, they will be completed by the end of this year under our contract with ARACY.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Last week we had the Head of Service in talking about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in the ACT public service. She said that she had written to each directorate setting targets for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment in each directorate. I was wondering if you could tell me what the directorate target for education is.

Ms McAlister: The June target for education is 72, and we have met that target.

DR BOURKE: What percentage of that is your total workforce?

Ms McAlister: I would have to calculate the percentage, but of course we are aiming for two per cent of our workforce; we have a very targeted and sustained suite of activity to get that cumulative growth and continue to attract and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees.

DR BOURKE: Can you tell us a bit more about that suite of activities?

Ms McAlister: Yes. It is really four-pronged. We have an employment action plan which has 35 initiatives looking at attracting, retaining and developing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees. We are in the second year of the implementation of that action plan. This year we are really focusing on building mentors and also trialling our first community yarn at Theodore Primary School, this coming Wednesday, when we go into the community and actively talk about what it is to work in education.

The second area is a cultural integrity framework for change. This is really ensuring buy-in from our senior executive cohort about commitment to reaching our targets and sustaining them over the long term.

The third activity is cultural integrity training. We had a strategic cultural integrity day with Grant Sarra in May, attended by all corporate executives, who were invited to bring a senior manager with them. The day concluded with a panel discussion from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local leaders. And then we are fully engaged with the whole-of-government employment pathways programs as well.

DR BOURKE: How well have you managed to penetrate your executive leadership team with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees?

Ms McAlister: I would say very well. Our director-general has made a clear mandate that this is the target that she is committed to, and we have a clear vision and plan to implement. The day with Grant Sarra was very successful; we continue to work on what came up from that day and also feed into our current reconciliation action plan the learnings from that day.

Ms Joseph: Dr Bourke, the Education and Training Directorate has a very strong

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network, and officers from that network play a leadership role in the whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff network as well. I meet regularly with people from the Education and Training Directorate staff network and also with the whole-of-government people and the staff network to make sure that we are hearing from our current Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees how we can make the Education and Training Directorate a place of choice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local people.

DR BOURKE: One of the recommendations from the standing committee on health, community and social services inquiry into Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employment was that not just base grade and low entry positions be targeted but also executive and senior positions within directorates. What progress have you made there?

Ms McAlister: Agreed. About 50 per cent of our current employees are either teachers or school leaders. It is critical that this is about developing our staff and providing pathways for our staff. We are developing partnerships with the Ngunnawal centre at the University of Canberra to create pathways for pre-service students to have excellent experiences within our schools. We have a strong focus on not just increasing numbers in casual employment but developing pathways for permanent staff as well.

DR BOURKE: One of the major recommendations of the standing committee's report was that a project management approach be applied to this issue, which seemed lacking in evidence over the previous years. How has ETD gone about applying itself to this problem?

Ms McAlister: I think the short answer is that we do have a team that is addressing these issues and we are seeing real success because we have put resources into a targeted approach to increasing employment numbers.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: I have a supplementary. You said that you had 72 individuals who had identified this way. Two per cent of 5,000 staff is about 100. How will you get the extra 30 positions?

Ms McAlister: Through basically implementing our action plan. The action plan has 35 initiatives for us to implement, which we are implementing in a sustained way. It is not only about getting staff; it is about developing the staff that we have. We are very focused on that goal.

THE CHAIR: And the time frame to get to the target level?

Ms McAlister: The Head of Service has given us growth targets over time. Every six months we have cumulative targets that we will meet and that we are very focused on. I can give you that data if you wish.

THE CHAIR: If you would like to table it, that would be great. Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. Minister, what role does your directorate have in dialogue with Mocca on their removal from their current site?

Ms Burch: The land arrangements for Mocca are a matter for LDA.

MS LAWDER: But what discussions have you had with Mocca—or your directorate?

Ms Burch: I think I have responded to an email or to a letter. That is what I have done. I am not quite sure as to the level of extent. Certainly ETD has conversations with Telopea school. Have you spoken to them, Mrs Stewart?

Mrs Stewart: The question was about Mocca and the conversations that we have had with Mocca. ETD has been working with Mocca since last year in terms of looking at some potential options for the future of the centre, including moving to a new site. We have been talking to them this year about the opportunity of moving to a site on Montgomery oval. Those are the types of conversations that we have had with the organisation.

MS LAWDER: Does the directorate receive any revenue from Mocca?

Mrs Stewart: The Education and Training Directorate does not receive any revenue from Mocca.

MS LAWDER: Will there be any financial benefit to the directorate through the release of the current Mocca site to the LDA?

Ms Burch: The Mocca site in the middle of town?

MS LAWDER: The current site.

Mrs Stewart: No. I think the answer to the question is that there will not be any financial benefit to the Education and Training Directorate through the release of the current site.

MS LAWDER: Has the government given any guarantees to Mocca and its clients that services on the current site will continue without disruption until a new childcare facility is constructed?

Mrs Stewart: That process is being managed through directorates other than the Education and Training Directorate. We are responsible for education facilities. My understanding is that responsibility for that childcare site is through the ACT Property Group and also, in terms of potential new sites, through the Land Development Agency.

MS LAWDER: Given that Mocca have said, as we have seen in the press, that they are not in a financial position to be able to build or run a new childcare facility on another site, will the government provide assurances to current Mocca clients that services will remain affordable to them?

Mrs Stewart: Again, that process is being managed through the Land Development Agency. They are working with Mocca around future options for their childcare services.

MS LAWDER: For the parents of the children has your directorate had any discussions?

Ms Burch: Is the question around affordability or is the question around contact with the parents of Mocca?

MS LAWDER: Around affordability, that with the childcare services the parents are currently having a similar rate will be made available to them in the future.

Mrs Stewart: Again, that process is being managed by the Land Development Agency. They are responsible for having a look into options for the future of the centre.

Ms Burch: Also—sorry, Mrs Stewart—the fee setting by individual services is a matter for individual services.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, you have a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: I have. Minister, what role did ETD have with Telopea Park School in discussions about this whole situation?

Mrs Stewart: Mr Doszpot, the option for the potential release of Montgomery oval for a new childcare centre was discussed with the principal of Telopea school in February this year, and the principal and members of the directorate discussed it with the school the community, also in February of this year.

MR DOSZPOT: According to the school community there was no discussion held with them before a decision was made.

Mrs Stewart: A decision was made on what, sorry?

MR DOSZPOT: On the transfer of the land from Telopea park to Health, to LDA?

Mrs Stewart: On the actual transfer of land, the actual transfer was agreed a short time before the conversations with the school community were held, but the school community was advised of arrangements, including the fact that the school would be in receipt of new sporting facilities to improve outcomes there for the students. Those conversations were held with the school community in February, including, as I have said, arrangements for new sporting facilities at Telopea Park School.

MR DOSZPOT: The school community did not agree to the land, nor were they consulted about that. Why not?

Mrs Stewart: They were advised of the broader plan, including the new sports facilities.

MR DOSZPOT: They were advised but they were not consulted.

Mrs Stewart: No, they were not consulted on whether they would receive new facilities or what the options were for relocation of the childcare centre, but they were certainly informed as soon as it was practical to inform the community, very shortly after.

MR DOSZPOT: Why were they not consulted?

Ms Burch: Ms Brighton?

Ms Brighton: In the matter of the Montgomery oval tennis courts, the LDA requested that ETD release the land to achieve a broader government objective. I understand those same questions were asked of the Chief Minister on Friday and they were answered at that hearing.

MR DOSZPOT: The questions that were asked of the Chief Minister were somewhat different, relating to LDA. I am asking: why were not the parents at Telopea Park School consulted about the proposed transfer of land?

Ms Brighton: The land is territory land that is currently used by the school for the tennis courts, but ultimately the land is owned by the territory for territory purposes. In order to achieve that broader territory outcome and the Manuka Oval broader precinct development, that land was released. The benefit for the school community is that they get a significant investment in sporting and recreational facilities at the school that they would not have otherwise had.

MR DOSZPOT: In 2009 the then minister for education specified that that land would only be used for educational purposes. Why the change?

Ms Brighton: I understand the Chief Minister answered that same question on Friday.

MR DOSZPOT: I am asking you.

Ms Brighton: I think the Chief Minister's answer stands as a matter of record. I do not really want to quote him, but I think it was something along the lines that if circumstances change the government can change its position.

MR DOSZPOT: I am asking the minister then. Minister, in 2009 the then minister for education transferred the land to the education directorate. Why did you not fight for the retention of that land for education purposes?

Ms Burch: As this matter has played out and as Ms Brighton has said, the Chief Minister has responded to this, and it is very much on the public record, around the discussions and the decisions that were made on that land. One could argue that if an early education facility is built on the tennis courts there, it is indeed in keeping with the principles of an education facility.

MR DOSZPOT: Telopea Park School are one of the schools that are close to

capacity. If they were to expand the number of students at the school, they would need more land, so it does not make sense to give away land that they currently have.

Ms Burch: At the moment it is actually tennis courts that are used by a limited number of students who have to leave the school precinct and cross the road to have access to them. And there are a number out of area. As we have seen with the discussion around school capacity, there are standard ways and means of managing school enrolments and limiting them to the area where the school is, the priority enrolment area.

Mrs Stewart: Based on the projections around enrolment demand for Telopea and the issues that the minister has raised we see no need in the current projections to require additional buildings on the Telopea Park site.

MR DOSZPOT: Currently?

Mrs Stewart: They are the current projections going into the future. So we have no plans into the future at this point in time to place any additional buildings on the Telopea site.

MR DOSZPOT: At Telopea Park School there is less land per student than at any other school in Canberra. It is well below the Australian guidelines. When the school may need land to expand capacity later what are your options?

Mrs Stewart: I think the figures that you are quoting have been provided by the school's P&C, and they are not consistent with that data that the directorate has available. I think the P&C did concede that they were fairly rough estimates that they put together based on using some online mapping estimates. Certainly Telopea in terms of land per student does not have the least amount of land per student of ACT public schools, and we would say that they certainly have sufficient land per student to manage their educational program, particularly when you take into account the design of the school building and the location of buildings on the land. They have been quite well located to make optimal use of the land space that is available.

From a directorate perspective we felt the addition of new sporting facilities would actually enhance the current use of the land, that students would be able to access new sports courts to use not only during the day for curriculum activities but also during student breaks, which they are unable to do at the moment with the existing tennis courts. So our view was that the proposal would actually enhance the provision of facilities for students at the school.

MR DOSZPOT: If LDA find an alternative site for Mocca, would you, minister, seek to reclaim the land that was given to LDA?

Ms Burch: The decision around the ultimate parcel of land for Mocca is a decision for LDA.

MR DOSZPOT: You would not envisage making any effort to get the land back?

Ms Burch: Meg Brighton.

Ms Brighton: I understand the Chief Minister on Friday in response to similar questions from the committee indicated that should another site be made available or found for Mocca he would certainly consider returning that to the directorate, I believe were his words.

MR DOSZPOT: I am aware of the Chief Minister's comment. I was simply asking whether the education minister had a similar desire for that land to be returned.

THE CHAIR: We will finish this question and then we will wrap up there.

Ms Burch: The answer has been made.

THE CHAIR: Mrs Stewart, do you have a list of the amount of space per student per school that you could table for the committee's interest?

Mrs Stewart: That the education directorate has compiled? Yes, I could.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. A new question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: There was an FOI lodged on 8 April on the construction of a cage-like structure at an ACT primary school. That FOI has been delayed three times and the last extension date given was 19 June. There has still been no response received about that FOI. Can you expand on why so many delays and still no—

Ms Burch: I would say it is part of an active investigation.

MR DOSZPOT: I do not think it forms part of the investigation. The FOI is simply to get information that may be relevant to correspondence during a search period, and Ms Joseph is aware of the content of that FOI.

Ms Joseph: I cannot answer specifically with regard to that FOI process. However, in any FOI process delays may be experienced due to the number of documents that need to be found, due to investigations that may be underway, due to a number of different factors. I would need support to answer the time frame that we guarantee an FOI will be delivered within. When we cannot meet that timeline due to those sorts of complexities we make sure the applicant is informed about the new time line. Sometimes it could even be defining the scope of the FOI, which then defines the number of documents.

In this particular case it would be, I believe, to do with the number of documents that need to be sourced, going through that whole process, and seeking advice on the impact on any investigation that is currently underway.

MR DOSZPOT: Is the FOI being answered by your directorate?

Ms Joseph: Yes, it is.

MR DOSZPOT: Are you aware of the request for this FOI?

Ms Joseph: Yes, I am.

MR DOSZPOT: And you are aware that it was lodged on 8 April, and three different dates have been given since 8 April?

Ms Joseph: There are a number of FOI requests. You can also get more than one FOI request regarding one specific issue. I understand there has been more than one FOI request in relation to this structure.

MR DOSZPOT: What has caused the various delays to the investigation into the construction of a cage-like structure at an ACT primary school, first made public on Easter Thursday 2015? The question is for you, minister.

Ms Burch: The investigation is proceeding. As I informed you in the briefing just last week, it is active, it is proceeding and it is getting done with the same level of urgency with which it was initiated.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, why is the matter apparently so complex when it was agreed at the start it was a case of who knew what and when?

Ms Burch: I think I went through that too at the briefing with you just last week. This is an investigation that is active. It is urgent. I am on record as saying it is urgent. And I am also on record as saying, yes, I have a level of personal frustration that it has taken this long, but if it needs to take this long to get it done properly and respectfully, that is what it is, unfortunately.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, will you publish the results of the review?

Ms Burch: Again, I think you asked this question in the private briefing to you last week.

MR DOSZPOT: This is an estimates hearing. I am entitled to ask it.

Ms Burch: I think Ms Joseph responded to one of these questions when asked by media last week, that this is predominantly a HR review. Matters are covered under the EBA, and there will be some findings that will not be able to be made public, but what we can make public we will.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, who planned the cage-like structure?

Ms Burch: I am just not answering that.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, who authorised it?

Ms Burch: It is all part of the investigation, and your insistence and persistence in this, knowing full well that it is part of an active investigation, either shows your complete disregard for the people involved or just sheer mischief making.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, who built it?

Ms Burch: Chair?

THE CHAIR: The member is entitled to ask questions. The minister is entitled to answer as she sees fit.

MS FITZHARRIS: He is not a member. He is a guest, and he is aware that this is subject to an investigation.

THE CHAIR: And I will—

MS FITZHARRIS: It is inappropriate.

THE CHAIR: I will stop him when I think it is inappropriate.

Ms Burch: I actually think it is inappropriate because it is part of an active investigation.

THE CHAIR: You can think that, but at this stage it is well inside the framework of the estimates.

Ms Burch: That is my answer to any of these questions.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, these questions do not relate to individuals. They refer to the department. I am asking: who built it, who financed it, who within the directorate knew about it?

Ms Burch: It is an inappropriate question. It is part of an active investigation.

MS LAWDER: Supplementary question.

DR BOURKE: Is not “who” an individual?

THE CHAIR: Yes, “who” is going a step too far. Ms Lawder has a supplementary, then we will finish with Mr Doszpot.

MS LAWDER: Minister, what communication strategy have you adopted with parents at the school involved?

Ms Joseph: The communication strategy really is based on the privacy and welfare of individuals concerned, primarily the student and the family, but also staff members concerned. There is an HR investigation currently underway, and we need to have regard for the rigour of that process as well. In informing parents, we used the primary objective of making sure of the welfare of the student family and the staff involved. That still remains how we are processing information.

It is not up to the directorate to identify any individual or school associated with any issue or matter that is under investigation. In working with the particular school community, we have made sure that the school board has been informed every step of the way. We have made sure that the P&C, specifically the P&C president but also the broader P&C executive, have been informed all along the way. We have also made

sure that the specific student and the family have been informed all along the way. The minister herself has even spoken directly to the family. We have also made sure that the other members of the class grouping—the student we have been talking about is within a specific class—and every parent from that class have been informed and kept up to date all along the way.

In regard to calls that the school community needed further information, last week we put up a hotline so that if there is any member of the community concerned, have questions that they need responses to, we have a hotline and an email address that have been readily available to the whole of the ACT community. We are able through that process to have confidential conversations depending on what the question is. Additionally at every school across the territory all of our public school principals have communicated to their school communities how they could directly ask questions if they have any concerns in relation to any withdrawal spaces within schools. Parents can readily ask questions if they need to ask questions. On that hotline, which was opened last week, we have had a few inquiries. I think it is fewer than five inquiries since it went up.

In addition to that we have an expert panel that has been put together at the request of the minister to look more broadly at how do schools manage complex and challenging behaviours with students, how do schools respond and use withdrawal spaces, what does the decision-making process look like, how can we make sure in all of our ACT schools, not just our public schools but our Catholic schools and our independent schools, what is best practice and how can we make sure that the way we respond supports the whole of the school community, the individual students and families concerned but the broader school community at the same time.

THE CHAIR: A quick one, Ms Lawder, then Dr Bourke has a supplementary, then Mr Doszpot to conclude.

MS LAWDER: Minister, last week you recanted Mr Robertson's testimony to the estimates committee, saying it was incorrect. What is your evidence to suggest that what he said was incorrect? He talked about people being on leave who were required for the investigation?

Ms Burch: I think there was a correction during various witness statements. David Nicol, the Under Treasurer, as I understand, provided a correction to the statements made earlier in the day.

Ms McAlister: I can add a couple of comments to that. The school holidays did not impact time lines with this investigation.

MS LAWDER: Why would Mr Robertson have been under that impression?

Ms McAlister: I cannot comment on why Mr Robertson was under that impression but I do note that the correction was made at the end of that day that school holidays have not impacted on this HR investigation moving forward.

MS LAWDER: Is there now a date by which the inquiry is due?

Ms McAlister: There is a small amount of information still to be collected and we are doing everything we can to resolve the matter as quickly as possible.

Ms Burch: And I think the advice last week was “all things being equal”—three weeks but that is all things being equal. Again, please do not take any reluctance to say that this matter is not concerning for me as saying that I do not want to get it resolved and concluded as quickly as possible, but when you have independent investigations—yes, I was optimistic clearly but it needs to be done the right way and that is what we need to do—it is of concern to me, it is of concern to the directorate, that we get to the end of this, get it concluded, but certainly make sure it is done independently and rigorously.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke with a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you perhaps reiterate for the committee the pain and trauma to this child and this family which a breach of privacy which Mr Doszpot seems hell-bent on forcing might occasion?

Ms Burch: It is, and one thing that I have said at every opportunity is that I will protect the individual identity of this child, the family and the school at all costs. And you are right: by Mr Doszpot’s questions he wants the school named. If you name the school, by default you will name the family, and I will simply not have that. This is a child with challenging behaviours that needs to be supported, not used as a political football.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot to conclude.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, chair. The minister’s comments are beneath contempt. If there was any attempt to seek the identity of this individual it would have been—

DR BOURKE: Then why did you keep saying “who”—

THE CHAIR: Let us stick to the issue.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, could you please tender the terms of reference to this committee?

Ms Burch: Again, at a briefing and for the purpose—because it was a private in-confidence briefing that I provided by the directorate to Mr Doszpot; he asked that question then—the response was that the terms of reference could not be provided because they form an active part of the independent investigation. Without paraphrasing Ms Joseph, I am sure that was the intent and the response to Mr Doszpot last week.

THE CHAIR: But issuing the terms of reference does not affect the way the inquiry is conducted or its outcomes. The terms of reference are usually made available at the start of any inquiry so that people can judge at the end whether the terms of reference have been met. Can the committee have a copy of the terms of reference, please?

Ms McAlister: Mr Smyth, we have a high reporting culture in the directorate and we

build that culture by assuring participants of their welfare and their privacy. The terms of reference in HR investigations are not a matter for the public domain. We must maintain the welfare and the privacy of participants in this matter.

THE CHAIR: Are the individuals named in the terms of reference?

Ms McAlister: The terms of reference are quite specific in this matter.

THE CHAIR: It might have been helpful to have that at the commencement. Is a redacted version of the terms of reference able to be provided to the committee?

Ms McAlister: The assurance of privacy is a critical element of participation in matters such as this. Individuals are very unlikely to be involved in processes such as this if they are aware that their information will be in the public domain. So, no, we will not be releasing the terms of reference of this investigation or other HR investigations.

MR DOSZPOT: Could you explain to the committee why it took nine days to get the terms of reference issued?

Ms McAlister: I have no comment to make, positive or negative, about time lines associated with this matter, but I can assure the committee that we acted immediately upon becoming aware of this matter and—

MR DOSZPOT: It was 2 April and you took until 10 April.

Ms McAlister: The action—

Ms Burch: Your inference, Mr Doszpot, is that the directorate is being tardy on something that is of the highest concern to them and on which we need a conclusion as a matter of urgency, and I find that offensive.

MR DOSZPOT: I am simply seeking an explanation of why it took nine days to do so.

Ms Burch: Again, Ms Joseph could perhaps give you her advice, as she did in the private in-confidence briefing to you last week, for the benefit of the broader committee.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

Ms McAlister: The tabling of the terms of reference for any HR matter is not the beginning of a conversation; it is the conclusion of a number of conversations. As soon as we became aware of this matter those conversations started immediately and have continued.

MR DOSZPOT: Has the Shaddock inquiry been given terms of reference?

Ms Burch: It is not a Shaddock inquiry. It is an expert panel that is being chaired by Professor Tony Shaddock and it has Sue Packer and Alasdair Roy as its members.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you for the explanation. Has it been given terms of reference?

Ms Joseph: The terms of reference for the expert panel have been published and made available by the expert panel.

Ms Burch: It is on ETD's website and time to talk, with opportunities to put a submission in, Mr Doszpot, should you have such an interest.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there a date by which Professor Shaddock must report?

Ms Burch: He is very clear—and my expectation is that it is an October report. The call for submissions is open now, through to the end of July. There are opportunities for written submissions, private phone conversations and face-to-face meetings if individuals or families are seeking that, and that can be arranged through the expert panel.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Minister, there have been a number of controversies in this directorate over the last couple of years, and even the *Canberra Times* has come to the conclusion that, in a normally non-controversial directorate, you have managed to cause quite a number of controversies. There are also a number of groups that have called for your resignation or a vote of no confidence in you. How will you restore those groups' confidence?

DR BOURKE: What has that got to do with the budget, chair?

THE CHAIR: It has plenty to do with the budget and how you deliver it, Dr Bourke.

Ms Burch: I actually read with a slight chuckle that the portfolios I have had are non-controversial—care and protection, youth justice, disability. I would have thought—

THE CHAIR: I think the particular reference was to education.

Ms Burch: No, it was broader than that. If anyone, and you included, thinks that disability, care and protection and youth justice are non-controversial, more fool you, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: How will you go about restoring people's confidence in your management particularly of the education portfolio?

Ms Burch: When I move out and about in schools, the school community does have confidence in me. There is \$1.1 billion in this budget. There is a good lot of strong initiatives.

THE CHAIR: How much is in the budget?

Ms Burch: \$1.1 billion in investment. If you want to look at controversy, go to what

the feds are trying to do—charging families for public education, and walking away from funding public education in the ACT. How do you think that will rate, on a scale of 1 to 10, in controversy, Mr Smyth? I think it is appalling.

THE CHAIR: Where is the EBA with the teachers at?

Ms Burch: The AEU, the Chief Minister and I met last week. We are working through some matters for another offer to go out as soon as we can work through the details.

THE CHAIR: Will that include back pay?

Ms Burch: Back pay has been on the table. Mr Smyth, let us be clear. There was an offer back in October-November last year. Back pay was conditional on getting that agreement in principle. It was not agreed, so by default, as everyone knew, including Glenn Fowler and the AEU, back pay was off the table. When I met with the AEU I raised with him that back pay was off the table. I said that if he sought it to be brought back on and activated, I would do that. He chose not to, but in good faith to teachers, in the second offer I approached the Chief Minister and sought agreement to put back pay on the table. So it has always been, from the second offer, on the table.

THE CHAIR: When is the EBA likely to be resolved?

Ms Burch: We are working through a third offer.

Ms McAlister: Mr Smyth, there only remains a very small number of claims to be resolved and we have made excellent progress. The government's salary offer meets the AEU claim in full and will see our most experienced teachers paid over \$100,000 by the end of the agreement. We have been working very well to create a sustainable workload reduction package for our teachers which has several elements in it. We have a very small number of claims left to be resolved. So we believe we will be in a position to make another offer very soon and we believe good progress has been made.

THE CHAIR: What are the outstanding issues?

Ms McAlister: A very small element of work is still required in the workload reduction package. There are four elements to that package. The first that we have in play is a reduction of three days that teachers used to do in their stand-down, which has been delivered back to teachers. The second is a strong focus on the core role of teachers, including finding time for our teachers to engage in high quality professional learning during work time. The third is about the reduction in red tape. So what is it we want our teachers to be really focusing on? What elements do teachers not need to spend their time doing and what can be done by someone else? The fourth element is about resourcing to enable all of that to occur in a sustainable way. That is both school-based resourcing and central office resourcing. So we are finalising that now.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, and then a new question from Ms Fitzharris.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary to Mr Smyth's question regarding the minister causing a lot of issues in certain areas of her portfolio. Another group that

has called for Minister Burch to resign was the Telopea Park P&C, who said “Minister Burch should resign for failing to stand up for Telopea Park School and stopping this land transfer the way then education minister Barr did in 2008”. Minister, as late as 18 June, last Thursday or Friday, Telopea Park P&C put out another request to you publicly, that “Telopea Park P&C is seeking an undertaking from the government not to destroy the tennis courts or remove the land at least until the planning and development of the Canberra Services Club is actually known”. I quote from this press release:

Our understanding is that this statutory process of seeking a variation of the territory plan could take some time and the outcome of this process is not yet started or known. Meanwhile Minister Burch has told us that the Education and Training Directorate plans to have the bulldozers raze the tennis courts in December this year.

That was said by the president, Mr Haesler. They completely rejected the government’s plan to bulldoze their tennis courts.

DR BOURKE: The question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: The question, minister, is: why are you so intent on destroying their courts by December even if there is no outcome at that point?

Ms Burch: For your interest, these comments came from a meeting I had with the chair of the P&C and a member of the board. I am not sure if Jacinda was the board chair but certainly she was a member of the board. We were talking about time lines for investing \$800,000 in new facilities in Telopea school. The best time to do that is through the school holidays so that they would be ready for the next term. If you work backwards—this was the conversation—you would need to get that work done over the school holidays.

Mr Wynants: We are currently in the consultation phase with the school. The school is facilitating information to go into a landscape master plan. That is work that will happen between April-May and August. The decision to go ahead with a particular master plan option and preferred first stage works will be made by the school executive and the school board. That process is currently being guided by a design group.

MR DOSZPOT: Did you say the decision will actually be made by the P&C?

Mr Wynants: No, I said by the school board and the school executive. The school executive is the principal and deputy principals, and the school board. They are the decision-making body. We will continue working on a master plan with the school. We will then go into design for the actual work and then we will go into construction. The time line we have at this stage is to start construction of the new facilities in November, which will then be available for the school at the start of the 2016 year.

MR DOSZPOT: Taking your comment, and I will put the question to you: are the school board and the executive in a position to reject the current plan or are you only talking about the issues regarding landscaping? The community has made it clear they do not want to lose their tennis court or the land. Are they in a position to reject the

things that you have just talked about?

Mr Wynants: It is not a matter for the school to accept or reject. We are dealing with the actual landscape master plan itself for the site. So it is the residual Montgomery Oval, which is the Rugby field, as well as the existing school site. We are actually master planning that, which is on a 10-year horizon, looking at what can actually be developed on that school site. The school board will make a decision as to the preferred option. There will be three or four options put to the school executive and the school board.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I want to ask about preschool, but in particular the universal access agreement with the commonwealth, which I believe was recommitted to but only for two years. Could you talk us through what the status of that funding is and what you foresee happening after the next two years?

Ms Burch: The universal access funding has been committed again, I think through to 2017 or thereabouts. Leanne Wright has probably got the details on that. In the main, that funding goes to provide universal access through our public government preschools, but as part of the national partnership it also provides that that funding is offset through the rental support and scholarship support open to the long day care and non-government long day care preschool providers. Leanne Wright has probably got the detail on that.

Ms Wright: Thank you, minister. In May Prime Minister Abbott did announce an extension of funding under universal access. The extension will represent the fourth agreement that will be on offer to states and territories to support universal access in preschool. The first of those agreements dated back to 2009.

The arrangements around the ongoing offer are not yet formalised with the Australian government. We are at a stage now where officials have met, there has been a proposed time line put forward and some bilateral discussions have been undertaken with states and territories around what form the agreement will take and the types of elements that may adjust from the agreement that was in place for the 2015 school year.

Originally, through universal access, the ACT increased access for preschool from 12 to 15 hours under the national partnership. There are requirements under the partnership to have a qualified teacher deliver the program. There is a focus on vulnerable and disadvantaged students. Really the focus of the program is providing the best start for children in preschools, excellent transition into kindergarten and early identification of students with any additional needs as far as their learning is concerned.

The existing agreement signed in 2015 supports all sectors of the ACT long day care and government and non-government services through the free programs in ACT government preschools—as the minister said, facilities, rental subsidies, capital upgrades to childcare centres, grants through the preschool matters program, scholarships to gain or upgrade early childhood teacher qualifications and capital

grants to non-government schools to establish and upgrade preschool infrastructure.

Those negotiations are underway. According to the time line the commonwealth has put out, we are hoping that there will be an offer to first ministers by August this year, with any adjustments to arrangements under both the 2015 agreement and the current implementation plan that the ACT had approved for this year in April this year.

Ms Burch: I think there are still some concerns with the 2015. There was a general assumption that the agreement we are currently in was an absolute rollover of the earlier years. There was a fundamental shift in that. One of them was our targets. As a result of that target, I think we are at considerable risk and we need to be very clear how we go about our negotiations with the commonwealth. I will be pushing that. It used to be 20 per cent. Ms Wright, perhaps you can go to that.

Ms Wright: Thank you, minister. Under the first arrangement, there were targets set for improvement. It was a staged rollout of extending preschool access under universal access. The fundamental tenet is that every child receives 600 hours. In the case of government preschools, that is delivered as 15 hours a week or 30 hours a fortnight over the school year.

With the setting of targets, the measures that the Australian government use are based on the early childhood education and care collection, which happens in August each year over a two-week period. Fundamental issues have been identified across all jurisdictions with that data source, with some issues around the quality of the data, how it is reported and, in particular for the long day care sector, that states and territories do not have open access and full line of sight to that data that is collected. There are certainly concerns about the quality of the dataset.

In the 2015 agreement the Australian government put in place that 40 per cent of funding would be withheld from states and territories that did not meet any one of the six targets that are part of the national partnership. It was a take it or leave it offer to states and territories. The ACT entered into the agreement knowing that there was a degree of risk that some of those targets were potentially unattainable because of the dataset being used and that there was some risk particularly around line of sight for teacher qualifications.

There is indication through the current bilateral negotiations that the Australian government acknowledges that there are issues that may actually be restricting effort in jurisdictions because the targets and the dataset are unreliable and potentially unattainable. So there is strong indication that through the upcoming negotiation process there will be opportunities for states and territories to put very clearly what their concerns are in relation to those targets and to work with the Australian government around the percentages that have been in place for this year's one.

The teacher qualification one is interesting because our government preschools are in scope for the national quality framework. Under the national quality framework, for teachers in a preschool setting in a long day care centre, under the national quality framework, depending on the size of the centre, those organisations are only required to have access to a teacher. So there is actually a mismatch with the requirements of the national partnership and the national quality framework, because the national

partnership calls for the 15 hours of preschool to be delivered by the teacher.

This is an example of one of the issues that the ACT has put forward: two national initiatives overseen by the commonwealth government do not currently align in terms of their requirements. Our concerns are around making sure, as we move forward, that those types of issues are addressed, to minimise the risk for the territory in engaging and signing on with the national partnership and to ensure the flow of funding into the territory.

It should be made very clear that the funding from the commonwealth is a contribution towards preschool service in the ACT. It does not fully supplement an increase in delivery from 12 to 15 hours and in actual fact is part of the funding pool of an overall commitment. Mr Whybrow will be able to confirm it—

Mr Whybrow: That is correct.

Ms Wright: but about \$26 million in the government preschool sector is invested. So the approximately 6.8, 7.1 million in this year's agreement, contribution to the ACT is a contribution that goes into the overall ACT government funding that goes across those other areas as well in terms of the rental subsidies and other offsets to the non-government sector, and scholarships.

Mr Whybrow: Ms Wright is correct. The number is \$25.8 million.

MS FITZHARRIS: Per year?

Mr Whybrow: Per year. Details of the—

MS FITZHARRIS: From the ACT contribution?

Mr Whybrow: It is the cost of preschool education.

MS FITZHARRIS: That is just in terms of your—

Mr Whybrow: Delivering preschool service in total. As to the details of the universal access funding amount, every year following the commonwealth budget we incorporate in our own budget papers commonwealth estimates of their national partnerships.

I refer you to page 239 of budget paper 3. Halfway down that page it provides the detail of the amounts that are included in this budget. As Ms Wright was saying, the estimated number for 2015-16, based on the commonwealth's budget papers, is \$6.8 million. You will notice in those lines that there is a part-year effect in 2017-18, as the nature of this service has only been extended to the end of the 2017 year.

MS FITZHARRIS: And the commonwealth makes no contribution to capital or upgrades?

Mr Whybrow: The extent of the universal access partnership is provided by that line, so there are no further contributions. I should note in relation to the ACT government

contribution that in the 2013-14 budget initiative the budget provided approximately \$1.3 million per year to the non-government sector for capital investments in preschools.

MS FITZHARRIS: So the impact of not continuing with this national partnership funding would be significant?

Ms Burch: It would be—\$6 million. And if they maintain their narrow focus on meeting targets at a penalty of 40 per cent, that is a \$2 million impact. It was most unfortunate that the negotiations were in December of last year for this year. Already preschool enrolments were made; families were making their decisions. Our preschool enrolment is open now, but until we have the NP signed off we will not finalise those enrolments, because we do not know the total amount of money that will come in.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you able to tell us what the targets are, or provide them on notice?

Ms Wright: Broadly, the targets are all set at 95 per cent. They talk about 95 per cent of the four-year-old—it is the year before formal schooling. Part of the issue is that this is non-compulsory schooling. The targets are in relation to enrolment in a program delivered by a qualified teacher for 600 hours per year at 95 per cent. There are also sub-targets related to vulnerable and disadvantaged families. Those are of the proportion that are identified as vulnerable and disadvantaged. They are also at 95 per cent. Ninety-five per cent in a population for a jurisdiction the size of the ACT means that you have got a variable of a very small number of children that can impact on those targets.

My understanding is that we met our targets in 2014 and we received our full amount of funding. But we were down to counting three, four or five students to get over the line for last year's funding. For this year's funding, we have some preliminary advice that with the jurisdictions that did not meet their targets last year there was some tolerance accepted by the Australian government. We currently have not received formal advice on our targets for 2015. We do have one target, however, that is sitting at 91.3 per cent. We are anticipating and hopeful that, when we receive advice, that tolerance will be applied to the ACT's circumstance, but until we receive formal notification we cannot say definitively that we will receive any funding for this school year.

Ms Burch: And the acceptance or not of that tolerance, as Ms Wright put, will inform the expectation about how they will apply the next two years of funding for this.

MS FITZHARRIS: That is a fairly subjective way to go about planning for education funding.

Ms Burch: It is, when, as Ms Wright has said, the datasets have not been built for this. There is a mismatch just within the teacher qualifications and having a preschool session under the guidance of a qualified teacher.

MS FITZHARRIS: Can you explain to me, for long day care, how it affects children who would otherwise be in preschool but instead have a preschool qualified educator

in a childcare centre? What are the differences with those kids? First of all, how does that universal access money apply to them, if it does? And secondly, it is about data collection there.

Ms Wright: The data collection is a collection across all sectors of schooling, including government preschools and preschool programs delivered in long day care centres. The issue arises not in relation to the program or necessarily the quality of program. We would argue that the national quality framework ensures that the curriculum is delivered in those settings and monitored through our registration processes for those services and quality. The early years learning framework is used in all types of services and the program is delivered. Through the data collection, the services that are not government preschools identify that they are delivering a preschool program, and it is then the follow-on roll-up effect of having a number of requirements.

It must be delivered for 600 hours. That means that delivery in the long day care centre, for example, would not necessarily constitute 30 hours a fortnight as it does in government preschools. It can be spread across 50 or 52 weeks a year. So there are variables in it. Also, because the requirements under the national quality framework are not that a teacher needs to be on site at all times in all settings, that is where the mismatch occurs. In our government preschools every preschool program is delivered by a four-year early childhood qualified teacher.

MS FITZHARRIS: I think that we have a unique preschool arrangement in the ACT, unlike any other, by having all the preschools attached to primary schools.

Ms Wright: Primary schools, and under the oversight of principals. When the national partnership came in, the ACT was much better placed than many jurisdictions. I should stress that our difficulty with the targets is held across all jurisdictions. In actual fact, it is looking as though only two of the jurisdictions actually met all their targets and have received all their funding under this year's if every jurisdiction is held to the 95 per cent across the board.

There is widespread concern that in some jurisdictions departments are not disbursing all the funding because they are fairly well assured that they are not going to receive all of the funding. This is the disincentive that the Australian government is now addressing. We look forward to them addressing it through this negotiation process.

Ms Burch: So watch this space.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke has a supplementary on this question and then a new question from Dr Bourke. Members, just remember by lunchtime we need to have done output class 1.1 and 1.2, and 1.3 ideally, so please continue.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. I just heard that mention of a capital investment program in non-government preschools. Could Mr Whybrow elaborate on that for us? What was delivered, what were the criteria and who got what?

Ms Burch: That is part of our about \$1.2 million each year that is capital investment into non-government preschools. I know St Jude's at Holder is a beneficiary of that. I

was at St Anthony's at Wanniasa just last week and they showed me plans that will also get a significant contribution through these funds.

Mr Whybrow: The process that we undertake is through the BGA association. Non-government schools themselves are participants in an evaluation process to go through the administration of this grant. They put in their application and it is administered by the ACT BGA organisation, which also administers commonwealth grants funding. There is an assessment of need focused around expansion of student numbers in preschool settings but also around upgrades of existing preschool settings in non-government schools.

We are currently at the third round; they are just about to be announced. We expect fairly shortly there will be another four schools that will receive significant amounts of capital upgrade in the order of \$1.7 million. There was a small rollover of previous funds from the last application, but I can assure you that that funding pool of \$1.3 million per annum is being acquitted and managed in total. The funding is provided to schools to do that building over time and the funding is allocated on construction and milestone points.

DR BOURKE: Minister, how well was that funding received by the non-government school community?

Ms Burch: It was very well received by non-government. They would like to see more of it, no doubt, and that is certainly part of the conversation that I have had. They are making a good response to their own local community needs and are satisfying needs around the local community. It is quite exciting. I think that in Wanniasa at St Anthony's they are looking at starting at the end of this year and will have that building up in the middle of next year or thereabouts.

Mr Whybrow: I do not have that detail at the moment.

Ms Burch: Anyway, they are moving very quickly with it.

DR BOURKE: A substantive question, if I may, chair. Minister, with more people living in Civic and the new accommodation development we are seeing, especially around Braddon, what projections do you have for the growth of the school population and perhaps the need to expand Ainslie primary, Campbell high or Dickson College, and what is going to need to be done?

Ms Burch: Certainly the inner north is having a population growth, but what keeps Tracy Stewart interested in her day job is looking at population demands and school planning.

DR BOURKE: You can afford to have another job.

Mrs Stewart: I just wondered about that. Thank you, Dr Bourke, for the question. We keep a very close eye on our projections across the board. They take account of urban developments as well in those projections. In fact, we go 30 years out in looking at developments and proposed developments, both greenfield and infill.

At this stage we are fairly relaxed with our capacity and projected capacity moving forward in the inner city area. We still have quite a degree of capacity in the schools around that area, including Ainslie Primary School and Campbell High School. That is also the case for Dickson College, a little bit further out. We will continue to monitor that going forward, but certainly at this stage we are quite confident that those schools have the capacity to cope with the developments that are coming along, certainly in the next five-year period and even further out from that.

DR BOURKE: Whilst we are looking at that capacity development consideration, in my electorate around Belconnen you have got the new suburb of Lawson. Which schools will those children who will be living in Lawson be going to?

Mrs Stewart: I also note that the development is progressing quite quickly in that area; there are homes going up. Students in Lawson have priority to the schools in Kaleen—so over to Maribyrnong Primary School and Kaleen High school and then through to University of Canberra Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra.

DR BOURKE: Not Giralang or the north Kaleen school?

Mrs Stewart: Certainly families can choose those schools. Giralang Primary School has capacity. Maribyrnong is the closest primary school to Lawson in terms of where the access is at the moment. Certainly we would be seeking to accommodate families if they wanted to choose a school other than their local designated primary school.

DR BOURKE: In the town centre we are seeing some residential apartment blocks going up. Where will the children from there be able to go to school?

Mrs Stewart: I would have to check my priority enrolment areas in terms of Belconnen. We are monitoring those developments. Again, the college is the University of Canberra Senior Secondary College at Lake Ginninderra. I would have to check the high school. I think it is Canberra High School, but I could check that, and the primary school is in that area as well.

DR BOURKE: So the alternatives to primary schools there would be Macquarie—

Mrs Stewart: Aranda.

DR BOURKE: or Kaleen.

Mrs Stewart: There is Macquarie, Aranda, Florey—all around that area.

DR BOURKE: Right.

Mrs Stewart: I would check, though. We would have a school designated as the local school for enrolments for any families living in the Belconnen town centre. I am just not exactly sure off the top of my head what the locally designated primary school is. I am aware, because I have certainly reviewed the data myself, that we are monitoring those projections for the development and making sure that the local schools can cope with those.

DR BOURKE: When you are analysing those sorts of projections, what weighting do you put upon accommodation in apartments as opposed to greenfield developments in terms of numbers of children? Are you thinking in the future there are going to be more children living in those areas, or are you thinking that that is not going to be the population demographic that is going to want to live in those places?

Mrs Stewart: The projections model is quite complex. We actually receive data through our colleagues in other directorates as to the types of dwellings that they see being built, whether it is, again, an infill type of development or greenfields. We have different assumptions about the number of children living in the areas based on different types of dwellings. Our model takes into account, and we review it fairly regularly, the type of dwelling and assumptions around the number of children that we would expect in that type of dwelling.

DR BOURKE: Have you seen any changes in those assumptions over time?

Mrs Stewart: We monitor those through the Australian government's population census. They actually give quite detailed estimates of family structures, the number of children and the age of occupants based on the type of dwelling. We feed that information into our model every time we get new data from the population census.

DR BOURKE: Presumably this is a modelling activity that is undertaken by your interstate colleagues as well. Are you seeing any changes interstate that might be harbingers of things to happen here in the ACT?

Mrs Stewart: We work very closely, in particular, with the New South Wales education department and their demographers in that area. We exchange quite a lot of information in terms of the general assumptions that go into our models and also in terms of specific information about growth in student numbers in New South Wales and the ACT. We work very closely, in particular, with New South Wales.

DR BOURKE: That is particularly relevant because there are a lot of kids who come from New South Wales to schools in the ACT, in particular ACT public schools. Do you have any idea of those numbers?

Mrs Stewart: This year we have approximately 5,500 students in ACT schools, both public and non-government schools, from outside the ACT, from New South Wales. I have just checked the number and it is 1,898 students—the number of New South Wales students coming into public schools in the ACT.

DR BOURKE: So how many are in private schools?

Mrs Stewart: It is just a little under 3,500.

DR BOURKE: That is quite significant, isn't it? I see in the paper some moves to establish a primary school at Murrumbateman. Minister, have you had discussions with the New South Wales minister about this? What sorts of discussions have you had with the New South Wales minister, Mr Piccoli, regarding a school at Murrumbateman?

Ms Burch: About Murrumbateman in particular? I have not had a discussion with Mr Piccoli. My office has been approached by the community out there. It is a matter for New South Wales to respond, and I will leave it for New South Wales to respond. Five thousand-plus students coming across the border into our schools, regardless of whether they are government or non-government, is a lot, but a lot of them come from Queanbeyan and Jerrabomberra into our schools.

Mr Whybrow: Maybe I can add some more detail and context around our budget. The first point I would like to make is that, regarding the funding for our public schools, the ACT receives the appropriate amount of money it requires to meet the needs of all students. There is no distinction between providing a service to a student who is in an ACT school who is from either the ACT or New South Wales.

The other part of the context is that, of those 5,000 students, 1,900 or approximately four per cent of our public school enrolment are from New South Wales. The largest component in percentage terms is in the independent schools area. There are almost 2,990 students, or almost 14 per cent of their total. It is probably important to recognise that the commonwealth is the largest contributor of government funding to the non-government sector.

In that case, the nature of the ACT in receiving funding is that it is an intergovernmental funding decision, which is the responsibility of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate. We are aware in Education, because we provide numbers of students in New South Wales to our colleagues in Treasury, that the ACT is compensated under the Commonwealth Grants Commission. It is recognised as a disadvantage, but it is a very complex issue for the Commonwealth Grants Commission.

I make the comment that all states and territories have a range of issues that are considered as advantages or disadvantages. My understanding from simply reading the press is that no state or territory is particularly happy about the split between themselves and other jurisdictions, but the nature of further information on that is best placed to our colleagues in Treasury.

DR BOURKE: Are there any kids who go from the ACT to New South Wales?

Mrs Stewart: There are a small number. I do not have the actual numbers with me, but yes, we do have some students who go from the ACT into schools in New South Wales, and in particular into Queanbeyan.

Ms Burch: But not in the numbers of 5,000.

Mrs Stewart: No; it is very small. You cannot quite count them on two hands, but they are small numbers.

DR BOURKE: Possibly because of family relations and where their parents might work.

Mrs Stewart: That is correct. I am not sure—do not quote me—but I think Karabar High School offers a special education program, a distance education program. So

some students may be enrolled in that particular program, students who live in the ACT.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a very quick supplementary, and then we will have a break.

Mrs Stewart: Mr Smyth, could I just add to the question, if you do not mind, on where students in the Belconnen town centre go to school? As I stated, Canberra high is their local high school. Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra is their local college and Florey and Macquarie primary schools are their local designated primary schools.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Thanks for the description of the quite detailed model about projections.

Two questions were put to me recently at a Gungahlin Community Council meeting. One was around the discussion of a town centre piece of land that was previously zoned for commercial and has now been rezoned for residential. The development application is currently in and would see 600 units built on the site. I guess that once that DA is approved there is a potential for 600 more people living in the town centre. Will your projections be able to pick up on that additional number of people?

There were a number of recent migrants at the meeting and one of the comments made—and I had assumed you probably had a formula, that those one-bedroom apartments were unlikely to have children—that they are often more likely to live in an apartment because they may have moved from a country where that is more common than living in a single dwelling. Is there enough detail in your model to perhaps look at where there are significant new migrant populations, like in Gungahlin, where they may have families living in apartment buildings that may not have been seen in such great numbers as other families?

Mrs Stewart: Yes, the model does take account of changes in those types of arrangements over time. As I said, we get quite detailed information that comes out of the Australian government's population census. We can break it down into quite a lot of detail. We can look at dwelling type, as well as family structures and the types of families living in those dwellings. We can actually analyse all that data and then apply it in a local context.

The model takes account of those sorts of things. It certainly does not say, "We don't get any children for one-bedroom apartments." We can actually model the proportion of children in general that will come out of those different dwelling structure types. We get that updated fairly regularly, and we get very regular updates of dwelling proposals and dwelling commencements coming through our colleagues in other directorates.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: We will suspend there and resume with output classes 1.1, 1.2 and 1.3, which are government schools primary, government schools high and government schools secondary colleges.

Sitting suspended from 11.32 to 11.52 am.

THE CHAIR: We will recommence. I will ask questions of Ms Joseph until the minister arrives. On the issue of radicalisation, young Muslim students and how they integrate into the community, what is the department doing to assist with that process as well as educating non-Muslim students about Muslim faith?

Ms Joseph: In developing students' social and emotional wellbeing we actually use our engage in schools framework to really look at the elements to develop social and emotional wellbeing per se. I think you could put any heading into it. Is it de-radicalisation, domestic violence, responding to the ice epidemic? The way we go about it in schools is really about relationships, it is about connection with others, it is about the specialist supports we put into place, it is about the curriculum and it is about partnerships across the community and across agencies.

On the national level there was some discussion at the education council last meeting—all education ministers—around what was the role of education ministers, what was the role of other ministers in other portfolios. The response from the education council was really to have a bit of a look at what is happening across the country in the first instance.

As far as the ACT is concerned we are not doing anything specifically at this point in time in the de-radicalisation space. What we are really focusing on is the social and emotional learning program in a school and we really look at, in that case then depending on what school sector it is, the developmentally appropriate programs that we need in place for specific school communities depending on how the school community is made up. There might be specific programs within a school to meet the needs of a specific community.

THE CHAIR: So there have been no incidents in any of our government schools with the issue of faith, particularly Muslim faith?

Ms Joseph: Again that is a fairly broad statement in that anything to do with a difference of an individual in a school, how that can then play out, is anything from low level bullying, exclusion et cetera to maybe violent interactions between students—cause and effect sometimes in young people managing differences between people. I have not got examples of any de-radicalisation or any issues within our schools that we have had to respond to specifically under the de-radicalisation banner.

THE CHAIR: The minister has now joined us. Ms Lawder is not here. We will go to Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, looking at budget paper F, page 13, senior secondary education, the percentage of year 12 students who receive a tertiary entrance statement, TEA, previously was below 50 per cent. Can you expand on why it is so relatively low? I think that the targets are set quite low as well.

Ms Burch: You are looking at page 13, item?

MR DOSZPOT: Item e.

Ms Burch: Who received a tertiary entrance statement? That is our target and I am sure that Ms Joseph can talk to that or perhaps BSSS representatives can talk to that.

Ms Joseph: I will pass over to Mr Stenhouse.

Mr Stenhouse: The fact is that in senior secondary education there are multiple pathways available now for students. Some students are pursuing a pathway which may result in further study at tertiary institutions. Other students are pursuing pathways that will lead them into further training at CIT, for example. There are a relatively large number of students, about 10 per cent of the senior secondary population, who are pursuing Australian school-based apprenticeships and there are many others who are pursuing vocational courses which may lead to further may lead into the workplace. I think what you are seeing is really a reflection of the diverse student population that we have in our public schools. I think the fact that there are a variety of pathways available to those students is to their benefit.

MR DOSZPOT: And in that same category, the percentage of year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who received a TES is 11 per cent and a target of only 20 per cent. Can you expand on that a little as well?

Mr Stenhouse: I can expand partially on that but I think part of the answer may also lie elsewhere. There was a large increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in public education last year, which I think is a very good thing. But the numbers of students, the numbers not the percentage, who achieved a tertiary entrance certificate did not increase. I think it is a case of whether you are looking at the glass half full or the glass half empty. It is certainly half full in terms of us having more Aboriginal students either enrolling or perhaps even identifying. Remember, we only know about these numbers if the students choose to identify.

I think to get the answers to what actually happens to those students once they are in our public colleges you would need to ask the colleges themselves and perhaps the student support section or perhaps planning and performance might be able to shed some light on that.

Mrs Stewart: Perhaps I could talk a little about what is happening in our schools in terms of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and the numbers that are coming through schools. As Mr Stenhouse mentioned we are seeing quite higher numbers of students who are actually going right through to year 12. We did have a very significant increase last year. In 2013 we had 55 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who went through to year 12. In 2014 that increased by 51 per cent to 83 students. We are seeing the students stay at school longer.

We also have a survey that monitors what students do after they finish school. We are keeping an eye on where those students go and what pathway students are taking after school. This year for the first time we are actually going back two years after students leave school to find out where their pathway is going and whether they are still on the same pathway. For example, we have a number of students who, in one case, might

say that they are interested in enrolling in university but they defer for a year. And now we are going back and saying, “You said you were going to defer. Are you actually now undertaking university studies or have you now enrolled at CIT or, whatever option you indicated, have you actually followed through with that?” That data will be available as well for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in order to track their progress after they leave school.

MR DOSZPOT: Taking over Mr Stenhouse’s comment about whether you see the glass is half empty or half full, how would you see it? Do you see it as half empty or half full? Do you have any projected remedies or some of the ways that things can be perhaps improved a little?

Mrs Stewart: I am not sure that half full or half empty is a term that sits well with a statistician, so I might defer on that one.

Ms Joseph: I think that the numbers are concerning so far as closing the gap with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander achievement is concerned. We can always do better. We really need to do better in that area. Our approach in the directorate is to really look at every student as an individual. We can count the number of Aboriginal students, and the increased identification as an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander is the first step. Then it is about the support services and the aspirational programs that we put around those students. We try to work at the individual level but also to inspire students to aspire to the best that they are doing.

Ms Garrison, Deputy Director-General, Education Strategy can outline a number of different programs and the numbers of students that we have really supported to go into tertiary studies and make sure that not only are they inspiring themselves but also inspiring and mentoring other young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students.

Ms Garrison: As we say, we have got to have high expectations for all of our students and in particular we have high expectations for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. And we know that relationship is a really important thing for everyone and we really build on that in looking at individual plans and pathways for our students. But we also do encourage our students. We have a students’ aspirations program, and that is helping to provide continuity at transition points for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. We have staff in central office and in schools who help, monitor and plan to make sure that we do not lose any student along the way and that they are actually aspiring and have programs in place that will help them to achieve that. We also have a secondary scholarship program—

Ms Joseph: Sorry, if I could just interrupt there, we had 170 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in the aspirations program as of March 2015. As Ms Garrison has said, this program is really designed to increase progression to tertiary studies for those students.

Ms Garrison: Then to support that program we have a senior secondary scholarships program. This was introduced in 2009 and it was particularly for students interested in pursuing a career in teaching. And then we expanded that in 2014 to those young people who maybe wanted to pursue a career in health. To date since then 37 senior secondary students have been awarded these scholarships—34 for teaching and to

date only three for health. But this supports them to know that we encourage them to continue with their studies and this little financial support helps.

We then have another tertiary scholarships program in which we provide four tertiary scholarships worth \$20,000 each year—three for students studying teaching and one for a student studying in the approved health course. The applicants for those scholarships must be enrolled in the University of Canberra, the Australian National University or the Australian Catholic University Signadou campus. So it is about supporting local students with their studies.

We then have what we call the Moora awards. These are for students in years 4 to 10. Obviously the scholarship program is for students who are in the senior years of studying but the Moora awards are really provided to students for excellent attendance at school, strong commitment to their learning, greatly improved engagement in their learning, great academic progress and active involvement in their community and/or extracurricular activities. In 2014, 63 students received a Moora award with a bursary going towards a range of things which can help them access school camps, voluntary work placements, book packs—a whole range of things that can support them with their learning. But really the most important part of that is that it is actually recognising and acknowledging that they are really engaged with their learning. That is a really important thing.

We also have a range of other flexible learning options that we employ to make sure that we are encouraging students to complete year 12 and/or its equivalent and plan with and support the family and the students themselves so that they do not slip out.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Joseph, you mentioned 170 students. They were only the ones in the public education system; would that be right?

Ms Joseph: That is correct. That is my understanding.

MR DOSZPOT: Are there any figures available on the equivalent number of students in the non-government sector?

Ms Burch: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders—probably the census would give us a number on that. Mrs Stewart, do you have those?

THE CHAIR: Then Dr Bourke has a supplementary on this issue.

Mrs Stewart: Yes, I do have the number of students—not for the aspirations program, which is a program that we offer in our public schools. But I can certainly tell you the number of students who are enrolled in non-government schools—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In total there were 419 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students enrolled in non-government schools as at February this year. That compared with 1,663 students in our public schools.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there any interaction between the government and non-government sector in this regard?

Ms Joseph: Our interaction across sectors is primarily through the ACT Curriculum

Taskforce really focusing on “what is something that all schools do to support all students?” not specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education but really through looking at the Australian curriculum, how we are implementing that curriculum and how, through that curriculum, we are promoting the participation particularly of vulnerable groups of students. So that curriculum task force has been in place for over five years now. It is very, very strong and representative of the sectors to make sure that it is about all schools and about all students in the ACT.

MR DOSZPOT: Thanks very much.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary from Dr Bourke and then we have Ms Lawder.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Minister, I wondered how the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Group was faring. What is the relationship with the directorate and what is the advice that you are receiving from that group?

Ms Joseph: The education consultative group was funded by the Australian government. I believe that there has been a decision communicated that there is no further Australian government funding for the Aboriginal education consultative groups across the country. The way we do it in the ACT is that we are continuing to support the Aboriginal education consultative group because their input into how we run education in the ACT is very important. Our teaching and learning areas in particular interact with the education consultative group on a regular basis.

From the senior executive situation, I meet monthly with a representative from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body. The chair of the education consultative group joins in that meeting so that we are making sure I am getting holistic advice around Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education from those two groups in particular.

In meeting with that group on a regular basis now we are really focused on the whole-of-government Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander agreement and really looking at the areas of that agreement—the strategies, actions and evidence—that the directorate is helping to achieve in respect of the elected body commitments. That is where we are taking a real focus with education, incorporating the educational consultative committee as well into how can we do things better through the Education and Training Directorate to close the gap.

DR BOURKE: Despite that commonwealth cut, you are continuing to support the group?

Ms Joseph: We will continue to support some secretariat support to the education consultative group.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris also had a supplementary, then we will go to Ms Lawder for a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of teacher quality, I guess it is important full stop but particularly important for groups of vulnerable and disadvantaged students across the

board. Could you elaborate a bit more on the teacher quality aspects?

Ms Joseph: We really reference now the Australian professional standards for teachers and the Australian professional standard for principals as the framework for, I suppose, judging teacher quality. The first point there is to make sure, first of all, that the training of our teachers and then the registration of our teachers are consistent and that we have quality teachers that are employed.

There is a lot of work going on through our ACT Teacher Quality Institute to make sure that our pre-service teacher education programs are the best that they can be and that the graduates coming through those programs into our ACT schools meet the Australian professional standards for teaching and are able to respond within the teaching environment. I will pass on to my colleague.

Ms Burch: Before I go to Anne to talk about the work TQI does, it is important that the professional standards are met and that teachers self-reflect their own professional requirement needs. That is supported through quality PD at a school level or it could be at a system level or through different programs that are offered through TQI. I think that there is a budget bid in here too for TQI that goes to increase their capacity for tracking that training and accreditation.

Ms Ellis: Before I give some information, it is probably important for the members of the committee to be aware that I attend both the government and the non-government sector hearings as the CEO of the territory authority. We are part of the education portfolio and we are a territory authority of the government. It is really important to say that our functions cover not only the regulation of the teaching profession, which goes to all components—whatever particular student cohort we are talking about—but also the encouragement and promotion of the improvements to the professional practice of individual teachers and the teaching profession as a whole.

As Ms Joseph alluded to a moment ago, we are at a really important part of our work at the moment where the functions of the institute in accrediting teacher education programs are of particular concern across the nation. We are in the process of working with the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University Canberra campus to look at all the points of leverage where you get a quality teacher. How do you get a pre-service teacher, the right sort of person, applying to go to a university to train to be a teacher? What are the components of quality teacher education? What is the pivotal partnership that happens within quality teacher education between universities and schools?

Really importantly, the Teacher Quality Institute Act was, I think, a great example of bipartisan support in the ACT. To actually say “teacher quality”—those words, as soon as they are said, my ears prick up because that is our whole role and our passion. We are about teacher quality, whether students that are attending schools that are Catholic systemic schools, independent schools or public schools. We are about teacher quality because our role and the legislation are really clear. It is about the increased professionalisation of teaching. The professionalisation of teaching and saying that it is really important to the community cuts across all the work of the directorate and it cuts across the work of the Catholic Education Office and the independent schools. So we work in a close partnership with everyone, including my

colleagues here from the directorate's administrative central office but also with all school principals. This covers professional learning, the accreditation of programs and teacher attendance at programs.

There are some figures that I thought you might be interested to know in terms of cross-sectoral engagement. In this last financial year with Catholic, public and independent schools, with TQI events, whether they are workshops, professional learning, training, presentations or networks, we have had 554 teachers attend. In respect of school leader targeted professional learning that we have provided or facilitated, we have had 566; with the initial teacher education we have had 695 people attend workshops and networks; with certification, 157; and we have currently got 257 teachers involved in a digital portfolio pilot.

All of this work shows that in terms of a partnership opportunity—during the morning people have talked about the ACT leading the way. The budget bid that we put forward to the government and that was endorsed was about the ACT leading the way for teachers to be able to record and reflect on their professional learning. In all of this it was not about adding additional tasks to teachers. It was about saying to teachers, “You are a professional. Being a professional, there are certain qualifications you need to have and there are certain standards you need to maintain in terms of your practice and conduct.”

There are also requirements for ongoing professional learning and development and a profession helps look after the profession. So we had to do a considerable amount of work, and I suppose that it cuts across and supports all of the things that are being talked about today.

Ms Burch: I think this budget just enhances TQI's ability and teacher's ability to really maintain those professional standards and their ongoing requirements for registration.

Ms Ellis: In a way, minister, that is integrated into their work.

Ms Burch: That is right.

THE CHAIR: A very short supplementary from Mr Doszpot and then a new question.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Ellis, I have had some very good feedback from teachers from both sectors about the work that you do. One of the areas of concern that has been raised by teachers has been in the relief teacher category or near-end-of-career teachers who want to maintain their professional standards but obviously it is costing them money if they are not allied to a school. Have you had any feedback on that at all?

Ms Burch: Before Ms Ellis responds, it is something that I think has been raised in the Assembly. As a profession with professional standards, a minimum requirement of 20 hours in a year or 100 hours over the five years is linked to the professional standards. Some people have said that it is difficult but as the schools move to have their own on-site quality professional development, these communities of learning, casual teachers will be able to access, I believe, that on site within the school

community while they are there doing their casual day. Mark may be able to talk to that.

Ms Ellis: Mr Doszpot, I suppose one of the really great opportunities we had when we were implementing the professional learning framework was that we were the last jurisdiction to come on board. Over a number of years the ACT has fought about: should there be teacher registration, should there be a body who then works with schools about enhancing teacher quality? As I said previously, with great bipartisan support the ACT Assembly implemented powerful and significant legislation to do that. In terms of professional learning for casual teachers, to be a member of the profession you need to maintain a certain component of ongoing learning.

Every other profession does it. We have the same requirements across the country. As the minister said, as people become more attuned to being conscious of the need to include casual teachers in professional learning opportunities, then I think the change management will succeed. We run weekly drop-in sessions which are attended largely by relief teachers. I think it would please you to know that we have so many, many people saying to us, once they understand what they need to do, “I am a convert. I actually understand this is about the importance of me and my contribution to my students.”

I think the success rate is really high and it is really important. Every ACT student, whether they are taught by a teacher one day or 20 days in a year, has the right to have a teacher who continues to learn. That is what we are implementing and we are implementing it in a way that is about promoting the importance of what teachers do.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. The question was not a criticism; it was simply trying to understand whether you have heard the same—

Ms Ellis: Sure, and just in terms of other figures for you, we communicate with teachers all the time. We have many, many opportunities for teachers to come and understand what needs to happen and, as I said, they go away happy. In fact, they get it; it is okay.

THE CHAIR: We will move on to a new question from Ms Lawder and then Dr Bourke.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. Minister, I was interested to see a budget item for Caroline Chisholm School centre for innovation and learning of \$6.5 million to run science, technology, engineering and maths programs for students across Tuggeranong. Could you explain a bit about why Caroline Chisholm School was selected for this centre and what the benefits will be?

Ms Burch: Caroline Chisholm will be a good centre. The school itself has been very keen to promote STEM subjects across the school—not only to promote it across its school but to be a central point to benefit the broader Tuggeranong network. We have invested in upgrades at other schools and we just thought it was right and timely at a central location such as Caroline Chisholm, with the champions within the school community to push this through now. Mr Wynants can talk more to it.

Mr Wynants: I met with the school board on Monday last week and gave them a presentation on the journey from where we started to where we are now with the funding allocated. They are very excited by the prospect of the centre being located at their school. We have looked at a number of locations on that site, four particular locations around the site, and identified, from a concept point of view, a preferred site. We will continue working with the school community. As the minister said, the idea is that this centre supports students right across the whole Tuggeranong network and also supports teachers for professional learning right across the ACT public education system.

Ms Burch: I went down there to visit the school and talked to Wendy Wurfel, the principal there. She is very excited about it. It delivers a 2012 election commitment; this has been in the thinking pipeline for some time. Being a local resident, as you are, and member for Brindabella as well, I think this will be a very welcome addition to the school community down there.

MS LAWDER: What is the start date of the project?

Mr Wynants: We will be moving to do design work shortly. We will engage a design consultant towards the end of this calendar year. The program planning has the construction work commencing in mid-2016 or towards the end of 2016 and construction finishing towards the end of 2017. The centre itself will be ready for the start of the 2018 school year.

Ms Burch: For the next 12 months, we will be pretty much working through the design. There are a couple of locations the school community is looking to on its campus, but it is also making sure we get that model of delivery right and the connections across the Tuggeranong schools network.

MS LAWDER: My understanding from the 2012 election commitment was that it was \$8.7 million with a completion date in 2015-16. With the reduction in cost between the election commitment and the 6.5 announced in the budget, what elements will not be included now?

Mr Wynants: We have used architects and quantity surveyors to look at what could be designed. Being mindful that we should be economic, we have been able to look at a design concept which is able to be delivered for the 5.9 million that has been allocated. So we did not need to push all the way through to 8.6; 5.9 delivers the centre.

MS LAWDER: The budget commitment had the estimated completion date as the 2015-16 year. What was the reason for the delay?

Mr Wynants: We have now got funding, so that allows us to get into design and construction. With the funding allocated in this year's budget, we have got a time line, which is 2018, to open.

MS LAWDER: Finally, you did explain about being economic, but prices generally increase over time. With your budgeted amount of \$8.7 million and what you have now put in the budget, are you quite confident that you will be able to deliver all the

elements that were originally anticipated?

Mr Wynants: Yes.

Ms Burch: Caroline Chisholm School will get a quality centre for STEM. We will deliver the modernisation at Belconnen for under the original estimated price as well. And we will deliver what it is. It is when you get to the absolute detailed planning that you sharpen your pencils, so to speak, and get the true costs. That is what we have done here.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to provide to the committee the presentation you gave to the board last week?

Mr Wynants: I can do that, yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Just as a supplementary to that, why STEM and not STEAM?

Ms Burch: It is tradition to refer to STEM. You could possibly ask Mr Pyne why he uses STEM and not STEAM. I know he has a lot of steam, but he does use STEM.

THE CHAIR: But it is a question to you. Why not STEAM?

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

THE CHAIR: Why do you discount STEAM and preference STEM?

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

THE CHAIR: I do not think you have.

Ms Burch: I have.

THE CHAIR: Which part of STEAM don't you like?

Ms Burch: There is traditional reference to STEM. It is used by me. It is used by the federal minister. I look forward to your questioning your federal colleague about why he is full of steam, not only why he does not use STEAM.

And in reference to this morning's announcement, if we reference back to budget paper 3, page 238, should your federal colleague go through and not fund public schools, there will be a loss of \$82.4 million in the year 2015 and a total of \$364 million over four years. That is what I would say would be a severe problem for public education here. That is we are talking about. We run the best public education system in this country, and your federal colleagues are preparing to rip out over \$80 million a year from us.

THE CHAIR: You do understand what the acronym STEAM stands for?

Ms Burch: It is arts; it includes arts.

THE CHAIR: What is it about the arts that could not be included in such facility?

Ms Burch: Caroline Chisholm has great arts; it has performing arts. I have an invite to go to its theatre dinner just to demonstrate how well founded arts practice is at that school.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, you have a supplementary and then a new question.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you tell us what the expected construction time frame is for Belconnen High School which you mentioned earlier?

Mr Wynants: It will be in two stages. There will be a new administration area which we will construct. We will do the design work between now and February, we will commence construction of that in February, and it will be finished around July. The modernisation of the student learning areas, which is the larger part of the project, we will commence in May and we will complete by late 2017. Again, that will be ready for the school to have a sort of site away from all the tradespeople in 2018.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary on that.

THE CHAIR: All right. A supplementary to the supplementary, then the substantive question from Dr Bourke.

MR DOSZPOT: The original commitment to Belconnen high was a \$28 million upgrade in the 2012 election. Why has the allocation been cut?

Ms Burch: The allocation has not been cut. We have got smart; we have got final details of building and we are able to deliver it for this amount of money. The commitment was to completely gut and refurb the school; we will do that. The commitment was for a new building; we will do that. The commitment was to get rid of the unused building at the back and enhance the grounds; we will do that. I would have thought it was a good outcome that we deliver on our commitment for less money. And the school is happy with it, Mr Doszpot. You may not be but the school is.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Burch, I am entitled to ask questions; that is what estimates are for. I am asking: has the project been reduced or re-scoped?

Ms Burch: I have just answered that. The answer is no. It will meet the election commitment. It will provide a significant refurb. Perhaps Mr Wynants can go into the detail about what that funding will deliver for Belconnen High School.

Mr Wynants: Going to works already completed, as the minister has mentioned, there was a disused building at the back of the school which has now been removed. We have been doing work as part of stage 1 to relocate and modernise the arts and music areas.

As I mentioned, the first stage of the Belconnen project will be a new administration block, which will adjoin the main building. Then we will undertake a refurbishment right through, so basically a gut and refurb of the main building—both levels. There is an entryway into the courtyard from the front of the school; we will enclose that area so it will create additional space. And it will also allow us to improve the energy efficiency of the building. The building which is at the back of the school—it is called the back building—will also undergo refurbishment. All existing buildings will have been refurbished.

DR BOURKE: Minister, this directorate seems to have established a pattern of delivering projects on time and under budget. I recall \$10 million being saved on the construction of Franklin school and \$10 million being saved on the construction of the Bonner school. Here you are saving millions at Belconnen High School. And I think we had some evidence last week that you were going to be saving millions on the construction of Coombs school. Could you tell us a little more about that?

Ms Burch: Absolutely. It is testament to the staff and the rigour they apply to make sure we get quality products at a very good price for the community. Mr Wynants.

Mr Wynants: In terms of the Coombs project, we have already achieved \$1.9 million worth of savings on that project. It really comes down to the different delivery method we are using. We have engaged the builder in the final design component; that has been able to achieve some of those savings. We have also achieved \$1.94 million worth of savings which have been able to be put into the maintenance contract that the builder will undertake. There is incentive for the builder to build to a high quality at the beginning because they will continue doing the maintenance for a period of five years with an option to go for another three years.

Ms Burch: This is a new way of building—

Mr Wynants: It is a design, construct, maintain, delivery model. Previous models have been a project management type one, which we used at Gungahlin College, or a full sort of design and lump sum contract, which we used at Bonner and Franklin. This one, we expect, will achieve savings. We expect more savings out of this project.

THE CHAIR: A substantive question, then Ms Fitzharris in the last 10 minutes that remain to us.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Returning to output class 1e on page 13 of the budget statement, minister, the percentage of year 12 students who receive a tertiary entrance statement, that target is set at 50 per cent. I would like you to explore a little with us why that is set at 50 per cent and how this balance between wanting a tertiary entrance statement or vocational qualification is being set at a policy level.

Ms Burch: How has it gone about? I will get Tracy Stewart back to respond to that.

Mrs Stewart: Thank you, Dr Bourke. I can talk a little about the target setting for the indicators that we have in our budget statement. Many of the indicators we have had in place for quite some time because they are key indicators for the directorate in terms of monitoring the progress and delivery of services and outcomes for students.

In this case we have had this particular indicator in the budget papers for many years. I cannot quote how many, but it was before my time, so that is a long time. Certainly that target has been retained for a long time.

A lot of our targets are quite aspirational targets in terms of stretching ourselves to achieve high quality outcomes for students. We have set those targets and then we have maintained them over time in terms of being targets that we want to strive to meet. We think they are reasonable and good targets for us to achieve as a directorate in order to enhance our outcomes for our students.

DR BOURKE: My question was more around the policy setting behind deciding that you want a target of 50 per cent of tertiary scores and 50 per cent presumably of vocational outcomes. What is driving that, given the long-term view that we want more kids to stay in school longer regardless of whether they are doing a tertiary program or a vocational program? Should we be continuing to have a 50 per cent target for tertiary entrants, or should we be revisiting that and moving it in either direction?

Ms Joseph: Dr Bourke, I think it is acknowledging the value of a variety of pathways. With students who complete year 12, not all of them apply for the tertiary education statement. Our first policy lever is to make sure we have year 12 completion, acknowledging the variety and breadth of pathways. Mr Stenhouse talked about the different pathways through to year 12. It is then about looking at what are the pathways beyond year 12 so that we are increasing the qualification levels of our community.

Another one of our measures is the qualification levels of 24-year-olds in our community. Your question was about whether 50 per cent is adding to the qualification levels ultimately of our young people. I do not know the answer to that at this point in time. We have started to do a longitudinal study of where our exit students end up—what their qualification levels are, what their employment levels are. Irrespective of whether a student has finished year 12 or not, we are monitoring and tracking every one of our students who leaves the system to find out where they end up basically by the time they are 24 years of age. That sort of data will inform whether the tertiary education statement is the measure.

Is it about the percentages within particular subjects that we need to look at? Is it about the apparent retention, which is another one of the measures in our budget? Apparent retention is always over 100 per cent. Do we need to drill that down further and look at what the real retention is and map the individual students? I think it comes back to mapping the individual students, looking at the evidence of when kids leave education, why they leave and what their pathways are after they leave.

Of specific concern nationally, when we look at national statistics, is making sure students end up in a real pathway. That really is considered to be, if it is employment, employment with training, and full-time employment rather than casualised employment, particularly for our young women. I think the response is that 50 per cent has been our target for a long time. It is about getting a statement, not about the quality of the education. There are pathways into tertiary other than just through a tertiary statement. That is what we need to look at. We need to look at all of our data

but particularly individual data, then where a student longitudinally actually ends up and whether we are looking after the interests of everyone who exits the schooling system.

Mrs Stewart: Anecdotally, we are hearing that greater proportions of students are taking up alternative pathways into university rather than straight from school with a TES. We have talked about the new survey, the longitudinal survey, a couple of times, but it really is an important element to help us look at students coming in through those alternative pathways, to start measuring that and looking at that as an option.

Also, in terms of when we look at our indicators and our targets against indicators, we use a range of data in assessing the appropriateness of our targets, including national data and where we sit nationally. We know that in terms of our outcomes for students when they leave school we lead the nation in that respect. In terms of the education levels of our community, we are a long way in front of other states and territories.

We also need to take that into account in terms of what we are achieving for our students, the right sorts of measures, the right sorts of targets and what other options students are taking up. The alternative pathway into university is still fairly new, but we will have the data coming through on that shortly that will tell us a bit about how well that has been taken up, other than the anecdotal information we have.

DR BOURKE: A more useful target might be the percentage of students who start a tertiary program within five years of leaving year 12.

Mrs Stewart: That could be something we could have a look at down the track once we see the data start to come through.

DR BOURKE: Speaking of that pathway tracking that you talked about before, and you just alluded to it then, what is that information showing for Indigenous students?

Mrs Stewart: We have not yet got any data out of that, which is why, when you talk about five years time, yes, ideally it would be something we would like to get to, but it is very new. We have only just collected the data in the last few weeks, and we have not yet actually collated that data and analysed it. That will be coming out in the next few months and we will be able to get a better understanding then of how things are tracking. It is very new.

Ms Burch: In the traditional datasets, in *Where are they now?*, that shows a high participation rate in employment or further studies of our general students that have just left year 12; is that right?

Mrs Stewart: We do not actually break it down in the publication but it is something we would be looking to do in future, to get a better understanding around that data.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is the theory of education able to be delivered best through the construction of new schools and what sorts of things are you finding? You mentioned Caroline Chisholm, and possibly the thinking behind the new Coombs school—where

there are new spaces and new facilities. Also, what will the north Gungahlin one look like, particularly because Gungahlin is so well served by the NBN? Are there opportunities there around what our digital future looks like? Will there be coding in these primary schools when they open in 2019? Could you elaborate on that?

Ms Joseph: We are very fortunate in the ACT, going right back to Hedley Beare's time as the first commissioner and chief executive of the Department of Education in those days, that in the design of schools across the ACT we see open spaces that encourage teacher and student collaboration. We see schools built with community facilities. We see really good specialist facilities—arts and design technology, sporting facilities. So we have a history in the ACT of what a good school building looks like.

What we have been able to do recently is connect that more with what is the educational rationale for a school. The first part of that is delivering the Australian curriculum through our ACT “every chance to learn”. It then comes down to, as I mentioned before, our engaging schools framework—what the relationships are that we establish across the school and how we have student wellbeing built into the design of buildings.

We are engaged at the moment in a post-occupancy evaluation project, working across government with our colleagues in Treasury and procurement, utilising specialist education consultants, and using some of our principals and teachers for feedback, particularly around our new buildings such as at Namadgi and Harrison schools. We are really saying that we did the design, it was based on our educational rationale, it was based on the history of what we consider are good design elements in the ACT. The project we are doing at the moment is to say, “Okay, that's how we designed it. Is that how it's actually playing out?” We are really evaluating the design and seeing whether it is actually supporting increased student outcomes and delivery of education. We are in the middle of that project at the moment.

With respect to the opportunity to influence the design, we will use that project, the evaluation occupancy project, to inform future designs. There is also the opportunity for school communities, people within our system and community members to come together in the design phase of schools to talk about specific schools, and what the new schools in particular should look like. At a new school like Coombs, in that design phase we learn from previous designs and take that on board. As well, when we appoint the new principal and we start appointing the school board, we will be able to influence a certain amount of it but particularly how education is delivered.

We also go through that design phase even when we are altering buildings or refurbishing buildings. We say, “How can we use the space best, particularly utilising the research we know about what good teaching and learning looks like these days?”

MS FITZHARRIS: Is there possibly an opportunity there for families in the north Gungahlin area to be involved in some of the design conversations early on?

Ms Joseph: The issue with that is: who are the families of the new schools? We utilise surrounding schools and that expertise. As we identify the school communities, insofar as we are already taking online enrolments, the principal, business manager

and leadership team will be appointed in the next few months. Really, we cannot influence actually where the walls go and where the buildings are placed, but we certainly can talk about the movement of students around the building, what collaboration looks like, and where specialist resources might be set up within a big collaborative learning environment. Certainly, that is part of the excitement of developing a new school.

Ms Burch: You mentioned the digital environment, which is so important, and the schools network has probably got the fastest wi-fi speed. We could either come back to it after lunch or provide a quick opportunity now to talk about ICT, given that I was a few minutes late at the start.

THE CHAIR: I think members are of the opinion that we come back after lunch, so we will have to wait until then to hear from Mr Huxley. We will suspend the hearing until 2 pm.

Sitting suspended from 12.48 to 2 pm.

THE CHAIR: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome back to the afternoon session of the 2015-16 estimates committee. Mr Huxley is going to give us an incredibly succinct expose of how wi-fi is operating in schools.

Mr Huxley: The \$37.8 million over the next four years allocated to ICT in schools is continuing the investment through the sustaining smart schools program by the ACT government. In the last 12 months that has enabled us to deliver over 2½ thousand wireless access points into our high schools and secondary schools. This infrastructure is critical learning infrastructure for our schools. At the same time we have been able to deliver new cloud services for our schools through Google apps for education and Microsoft 365. These have been really well received by our schools, with over 11,000 students currently enrolled for the Google service since the start of the 2015 school year.

The 2015-16 investment will allow us to continue to extend those capabilities into our primary schools, with \$2 million allocated next year for the enhancement of wireless access in our primary schools. This continues to see the ACT school system lead in terms of its connectivity, ICT and bandwidth, with students at our schools, in our secondary schools and colleges, connected to the fastest education broadband network in Australia. Looking globally, it is pretty much on a par with Singapore and South Korea as one of the best connected school jurisdictions in the world. I think it is something the territory should be very proud of and it is a fantastic asset for our schools.

THE CHAIR: As the CIO of a directorate in the ACT public service, do you get much opportunity to travel overseas and should your boss be looking favourably upon such opportunities?

Mr Huxley: I do not know if I am best positioned to take that one, Mr Smyth.

Ms Joseph: Mark Huxley is recognised Australia wide for his skills in information technologies and education. I am sure he would have opportunities in the future to

possibly share his expertise not just locally and nationally but internationally.

THE CHAIR: Is that potentially an annual reports question as to where he has been and what passport stamps he has picked up?

Ms Joseph: Potentially.

THE CHAIR: Potentially, there you go!

Ms Burch: On a serious note, as we move into the role of digital learning and increasingly have schools use apps such as Google apps, it is really important that we have that speed. You may aspire to use those apps, to go through cloud and to have all of that collaborative learning online, but if you have no speed and no wireless, the design is all for naught. So this investment is significant and it continues to put us ahead.

THE CHAIR: Members, are there any further questions for Mr Huxley? Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Firstly, given that many college students in particular may have more than one wi-fi connectable device with them on any given day, plus the demands in schools, are our colleges now fully capable of supporting the load that all of these devices bring to the systems?

Mr Huxley: Thank you for the question, Dr Bourke. ACT secondary schools and the high schools and colleges were scoped to support up to at least two devices per student. We did a pilot with schools during 2013-14 which was looking at the usage across our secondary schools. It came back to us that we actually needed to look at two devices per student to be connected at any point in time. So the actual speed that we are seeing through to our individual students on a wireless device, whether it is one or two devices, is actually three times faster than the average Australian household gets and more than 10 times faster than any jurisdiction counterpart. So bandwidth for our students at the moment is not an issue. They have all the connectivity they need to engage in things like Google apps for education, Microsoft Office 365 and other internet-based learning opportunities.

DR BOURKE: We have just talked about the modernisation for primary schools. How is that going to be rolled out in my schools in Belconnen?

Mr Huxley: We are going to use the same approach that we did in the last 12 months to deploy 2½ thousand wireless access points through all of our high schools and colleges. The team that has been implementing that for us is actually going to extend that project and over the next two years it will look at all of the primary schools. We have been able to scope those primary schools over the last 12 months. We have had teams going out to our primary schools and looking at their current wireless connectivity and looking at those schools who are planning to, within their school planning, make the most of those technologies over the next 12 to 24 months.

We are going to look at areas of geographic need—actually grouping schools together to make sure we get good efficiency and value for money when we are rolling it out so that we get the best response from the market when we do. Also we will be looking

at those schools that will make the most of those technologies when they become available and uplifting those who are the ones that do not have the best available wireless at the moment.

Ms Burch: Suffice it to say we take opportunities such as the Belconnen modernisation and improve the connectivity through that as well.

DR BOURKE: Minister, could you tell us what steps you are taking to ensure that students become producers as well as users of ICT?

Ms Burch: It is about making sure that we have a good curriculum, whether it is through STEM or coding opportunities at school, to make sure that we have digitally aware students that live and breathe this. The adage of being digital natives is not lost on many teenagers and primary school students. They inherently take it up as another tool of learning through ICT.

DR BOURKE: Perhaps we could hear a little more about what is being taught in the way of coding.

Ms Burch: It is worth noting that the new arrangements for the ministerial advisory council will also have a focus on digital citizenship as its first focus area. That will report to me by the end of the year.

Ms Wright: With regard to the digital technologies curriculum, the technologies curriculum in general incorporates the two strands of digital and design. The Australian curriculum documents relating to digital technologies have been available on the ACARA website since last year. Our schools are starting to familiarise themselves with that curriculum. Within that curriculum there are strands related to coding elements. They come into the curriculum in the upper primary level and follow right through to secondary and into upper secondary, in terms of progression of learning around those aspects of design and programming.

In primary school it is really more of a visual type of programming language that students will encounter. In the early secondary they start to look at more purposeful programming language for specific purposes and then look at an object-oriented programming language in the upper secondary.

That digital technologies curriculum has been supported through some professional learning, in conjunction with ACARA, in the ACT. Some 75 of our teachers participated in that in March this year, to support the commencement of implementation of that learning area, with the most up-to-date curriculum that has been developed nationally, with expertise, as all aspects of Australian curriculum have. So we are well placed in the ACT to be implementing up-to-the-minute curriculum that addresses that progress in terms of digital technologies for our students into the future.

DR BOURKE: Would you be able to tell us more about that coding that is being taught in primary schools? I am particularly interested in hearing about what is being taught at such young ages.

Ms Wright: The implementation of that, as I said, commences next year in the specifics of the actual curriculum, but there are a number of programs that operate in schools now around robotics. Those are ones which engage students in simple coding activities that can be translated into devices working and following commands wirelessly. We have a number of schools engaged in those types of activities.

With regard to the Australian curriculum, this is about ensuring there is opportunity and access right across our schools. As I said our teachers are commencing familiarisation with that. That approach to digital technologies, as with all aspects of implementing the Australian curriculum, is the same across the government and non-government sectors. The Australian curriculum task force, which Ms Joseph mentioned before, and the cross-sectoral Australian curriculum implementation committee are where we look at the supports for teachers as well, in terms of delivering that curriculum into the classroom, along with the supports that are made available through the programming and types of software that need to be accessible through the digital backpack to support that.

Mr Huxley: In support of Ms Wright's statements, Google apps for education actually had a global summit, which was only the third of its kind run in Australia, in the ACT earlier this year. That was open to independent, Catholic and public school teachers. We actually ran week 5 events for teachers focusing on Google apps for education and implementation of ICT into the curriculum. That has been very well attended, with over 200 people attending from across our schools during week 5. That will be an ongoing program. So we are definitely focused on teacher capability and making the most of these technologies.

Ms Burch: Just on the technology curriculum, even though ACARA has developed a technology curriculum as part of the Australian curriculum and states are able to use that, which is what we are doing, it is disappointing that at a federal level the federal government has not seen fit to endorse that through the education ministers council. It is on ACARA's website. Jurisdictions are able to use it. Even at the last council meeting, where STEM was raised by Mr Pyne, the opportunity was there to support and endorse the technology, but the opportunity was not taken by the federal government, which was unfortunate. But we will progress because we are a very smart, forward-thinking jurisdiction here.

THE CHAIR: Members, we should move on to output class 1.4. I will give my question to Mr Doszpot and then we will have a new question from Ms Fitzharris.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, about six weeks ago I asked your department, your office, to organise a briefing on the healthcare access at school program. Eventually, about a week and a half ago, we had a briefing. I should say that we had a briefing only from the Health Directorate. You, your office and ETD did not show up for the briefing. Was there any particular reason for that?

Ms Burch: The HAAS program is managed through the Health Directorate, Mr Doszpot. It is my understanding that you wanted to talk about the review of the HAAS program that was announced by the minister responsible, Minister Corbell. That is my understanding—that that was the briefing. That would have been done through Health.

MR DOSZPOT: The very first question I asked the officers who came to see us they could not answer. It was: which schools are taking part in the HAAS program? As I understand, this is a joint activity between education and Health. I would have thought you would have had a bit of interest in being involved in it.

Ms Burch: Mr Doszpot, I do have an interest, and I find the proposition that you put and the tone of your questioning to be offensive and—

MR DOSZPOT: Your non-appearance was quite offensive as well.

Ms Burch: There are two specialist schools that are participating in the HAAS pilot, Black Mountain and the Woden School, and there are six mainstream schools participating: Aranda primary, Caroline Chisholm, Duffy primary, Namadgi, Kaleen High and Evatt Primary School. And I think there might be another additional school.

Ms Garrisson: This is always a moving feast. We have had somebody from Caroline Chisholm High who no longer needs healthcare assistance, so who has graduated, fortunately for that young person. We do still have seven mainstream schools participating, as the minister said: Aranda, Amaroo, Duffy, Namadgi, Kaleen, Evatt and Lanyon High School. So we now have seven, and that equates to seven students involved in our mainstream settings.

MR DOSZPOT: The minister also mentioned two of the special needs schools being involved as well.

Ms Garrisson: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: So they are still taking part in the project?

Ms Garrisson: Mr Doszpot, the two specialist schools are still participating in the HAAS program, but Black Mountain School did have a nurse reinstated at the beginning of this term to support that school whilst it is in the pilot, and there is a review being undertaken as we speak by Health.

MR DOSZPOT: So two of the schools have had nurses reinstated—two of the special needs schools?

Ms Garrisson: There are four specialist schools that have nurses currently employed by Health. Cranleigh and Malkara are the primary settings, and they were not involved at all in the pilot of this program. At Woden School, a nurse visits that school daily, as was part of the assessment of the need of a student at that school. Black Mountain was the only school where the nurse was not there for the beginning of this year but has been reinstated since the beginning of term 2.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay. As I understand, this HAAS program originally started towards the middle of last year or towards the end of last year.

Ms Garrisson: Mr Doszpot, we began talking about this program in 2012. However, it was not called HAAS at that time. It was trialled in a number of mainstream schools

last year. Due to the success of that and students being able to access their education more easily in those settings, it was then implemented in further schools this year after assessment of the student by health workers and then looking at their needs and how best that healthcare plan could be implemented in a school. It was then introduced for the beginning of this year at both Black Mountain and—not really at Woden, because it was a different circumstance there.

MR DOSZPOT: I guess the concern that I am talking about here is the concern that was raised by both nurses and teachers on their respective work involved in schools. I am talking about teachers who were traumatised by having to deliver certain assistance to students which was not part of their duty statement.

Ms Garrisson: Mr Doszpot, we have not had any reports of staff in those settings being traumatised. We have no records of that. However—

MR DOSZPOT: Is that right?

Ms Garrisson: However, the review that is currently being undertaken will be, I suppose, getting further feedback to Health around how people are feeling about that in the schools. The duty statement for learning assistance officer does actually state that they may be able to be a position to provide healthcare assistance if required. There is a statement in the current duty statement that specifies that. This is something that is not new to the introduction of the HAAS model in many of our schools.

Our learning support assistants have been involved for many years in providing health care that is dictated by a healthcare plan from either a doctor or other healthcare professionals. It is not a new program; our learning support assistants have been involved for many years. However, under HAAS it is much more targeted support that is provided, and training for those specific people to provide that health care for individual children is provided.

MR DOSZPOT: I am surprised that you are saying that you are not aware of any teachers being traumatised. I thought there was a fair bit of information through the Education Union as well, representing teachers who had concerns about what their roles were.

Ms Garrisson: Mr Doszpot, when I say we have not been told of any individual staff member that has identified as being traumatised, that is correct. However, the review that we are currently undertaking is due to some feedback that has been received by the Education Union about the concerns that some staff have provided them with. It is really important that we get the findings of this review and look at how best we can support students to access education when they have healthcare needs. But who is the appropriate person to provide that health care is something where we have to rely on the Health people to give us that information.

MR DOSZPOT: That is part of the reason for our concern. The feedback we are getting is that it is between education and the Health Directorate, and there does not seem to be a clear direction as to who is doing what, as was indicated by the briefing that we had. And secondly—

Ms Burch: If I can go back to that, Mr Doszpot—and I am looking at an email from your office—you requested a briefing from Minister Burch and/or Minister Corbell. Our response back to your staff member made it very clear that Mr Corbell’s office would be providing the briefing to you.

MR DOSZPOT: I think we have a slight misunderstanding on that, because—

Ms Burch: I can table the email if you like.

MR DOSZPOT: When I indicated to your office that it was only Health that turned up, I was told the presumption was—

Ms Burch: It is very clear, and I will table it for the purpose of—

THE CHAIR: Table the email; we will have a look at the email. Dr Bourke had a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: Just a follow-up.

DR BOURKE: Minister, are you aware who performs these health tasks for students when they are at home?

Ms Burch: There would be a range. Depending on what the task is, it could be family members or there could be other support structures that are in place to support that young person at home and across the community.

This is the benefit of the HAAS model. It is about recognising that, whilst with some of these jobs you do not need a registered nurse to actually perform, you can be a trained support person, whether you are a disability support worker or whether the LSAs are given training in particular activities and procedures. This is the benefit of HAAS—not to have a resource such as a registered nurse locked up in one school, but asking how we can support the students in that school and more broadly across the whole education system. The principles of HAAS are right. There has been a level of concern around how it has been implemented. In response to those concerns, ACT Health reinstated nurses into Black Mountain School. They are going for a review. As I understand, they are surveying teachers and nurses. Both the nurses union and the AEU, as I understand it, have comments in that review process.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Fitzharris, then a new question for Dr Bourke.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. I am probably going to ask you to go—

MR DOSZPOT: I still have some questions on HAAS.

THE CHAIR: You can take that up, if you want, in your question. You have had 12 or 15 minutes on this.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Can you take me back to basics a bit around the sort of support that is offered through specialist schools, specific classes or units in mainstream schools? Are they provided across all the specialist units and classes across all schools, or is there a particular criterion that means that students with a disability might find themselves in one particular school in a local network? I am starting at real basics.

Ms Garrison: In our specialist schools you will appreciate that there are many students who have some high and complex healthcare needs. We want all of our students to be able to access education and get the best outcomes they possibly can. So in our specialist schools, those students who are involved in what we call the HAAS program have their parents, maybe at the invitation of the school, who have been to health care—a nurse—

MS FITZHARRIS: Sorry, I am not talking at all about health care. I am just talking very generally about—

Ms Burch: Just who goes—

Ms Garrison: In our specialist schools, our four specialist schools, we have students who have moderate, mild or severe needs. Then in our mainstream schools, there will be students whose parents choose to have them involved in those schools who may then have a need to be supported during the day, whether it is because they need medication, they need diabetic injection, they are anaphylactic or they have allergies to a whole range of things. They are the sorts of students who can be in our mainstream schools. In our specialist schools it is more those who have a disability diagnosis that meets some criteria.

Ms Burch: Increasingly we have seen families turning to what is referred to as mainstreaming their child with a disability. There is a SCAN process—Ms Garrison might be able to talk about the SCAN process—that determines that extra support that that child needs to be supported within different school settings.

Ms Joseph: If I could just add some information here, for this year, from our census statistics in our specialist schools, we have got 374 students, including our mainstream schools, which have just under 3,000 students. So most of our students with disabilities are in mainstream schools.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of the total cost for this output class, it is \$73 million, nearly \$74 million, over that. That is both for the specialist schools and for support for children in mainstream schools?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: How does that work with the NDIS, then?

Ms Joseph: When students come in, if they are enrolled under disability, they have to meet some criteria around our SCAN model, our student-centred appraisal of need model. The SCAN model considers the disability of the student and what adjustments

need to be made within the curriculum. It is from that assessment that parents, healthcare professionals and teachers work out the best setting and therefore the best support that is required for that student.

That would be the stage of the process where parents would make decisions in respect of the disability and what the best setting is for that student. The resourcing associated with the disability is done through an assessment process, the SCAN process, and those resources then go through to the school to adjust the program to meet the needs of that student.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question.

DR BOURKE: Probably coming at a similar issue from a different angle, can you tell me about the funding provided for transport for students with a disability? I understand that it has been continued for one year to align with the ACT's NDIS. I hear that the National Disability Insurance Agency is going to draw on existing schemes. How is it going to progress into the future?

Ms Burch: We have got extension funding in there until we transition into the NDIS. Mr Whybrow can go into the detail of that.

Mr Whybrow: It is exactly that. The ACT is a pilot site for the NDIS. I guess the unique thing about the ACT is that it is the entire ACT that is part of that pilot site. Student transport is a national issue around an entitlement under the NDIS. We are currently in the state of play where, if I take up Ms Fitzharris's earlier statement around how they interact between students with disabilities, there are a number of activities which the ACT has historically provided, one of them being special needs transport, the other being personal needs of students with a disability in schools.

The personal needs for students with a disability in schools are subject to the NDIS and currently are in the pilot. Both the special needs transport and the support for students with a disability are considered an in-kind contribution by the ACT government. The ACT government is still providing those services. As we work through those details of the NDIS we will continue to provide those services. The trial is anticipated to end at 30 June 2016. That is uncovering a number of issues around implementation and we will work through with the NDIS and providers about continuing the best needs and mechanisms to provide that service going forward. Whether they continue in kind for a number of years, whether they transition to external providers are the issues currently being explored.

DR BOURKE: Are you aware of a difference in the eligibility for student transport between our current schemes and the NDIS?

Mr Whybrow: The NDIS in its implementation is looking through this. There are differences between different states and territories. There is an overarching position that is still being refined. There are potential differences between those but we are currently providing the services to all students who are meeting the requirements of the ACT scheme.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

Mr Whybrow: Sorry, the minister reminded me of something there, which is probably one of the largest differences. Currently special needs transport—and there are approximately 500 students—is provided only to government schools. We see that as a significant difference. There is no difference between personal care in schools or transport to schools. It does not matter what setting you are going to be at, it will be provided to you based on the need, not the setting. That is a significant difference about the new NDIS.

DR BOURKE: That means that you would then be providing transport to private schools as well, according to the NDIS criteria?

Mr Whybrow: If I talk about the NDIS transition, that is an issue that has come out at the moment. Currently there is not a provision of special needs transport to non-government schools. Under the requirements set—and this is the question you asked—and under the criteria there is not a distinction between the setting under which the child appears and what would form part of their package, whether that is provided by the existing service or is part of their package through a different provider. Some of those issues are currently being considered.

Ms Joseph: Can I mention that there are some issues that we do not actually know the answers to yet in this space, particularly who is going to be eligible in the future and what level of funding that may be as part of their package and how then individual families will choose to use the funding that comes to them in their package. It really is into the future and we do not have any definite answers around transport yet from the NDIA.

DR BOURKE: How is that individual funding model going to accord with the economies of scale that you can currently deliver through a territory-managed scheme?

Ms Joseph: I think that is exactly what we will be and are currently talking about and negotiating around—a model that would allow us to look at economies of scale, efficiencies and effectiveness of that for our families.

DR BOURKE: Going back to non-government schools, do you have any idea of the number of kids in non-government schools who might be eligible for transport?

Ms Garrison: We do not have that data, and that is all part of, through the NDIA, people identifying to access a package from the NDIA and then individual families, whether they go to government schools or non-government schools, determining within their package what they want to use that for. Collecting the data around students beyond the students we are transporting at the moment is one of the difficulties in assessing what happens next with the NDIA doing that work.

Ms Burch: If you look to the number of students with a disability, in our last census we had in Catholic schools 452 and in independent schools 380, on my read of the June census, in total—students recognised with a disability in mainstream schools. Again the question about their eligibility under the NDIS and for transport is unknown.

Mr Whybrow: I should point out that in the NDIS the current guidelines are making one of the hurdles to get access to those services easier. There is a current assumption that you have a capacity to provide the transport. You have to have an element to show that it is not unreasonable to provide the transport yourself. That is part of that detail that needs to be looked through. It is not simply that you have a disability, you get transported.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a supplementary, then Mr Doszpot.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is the current provider ACTION?

Mr Whybrow: There are a number of providers. There are three main providers. ACTION is one of the main ones. Keir's transport is another and we also are using taxis as well, depending on individual needs and circumstances.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, a new question.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, the total cost of disability education in public schools was \$70.2 million in 2014-15. In 2015-16 it is \$73.9 million. Can you elaborate on what increased services have been brought into this?

Mr Whybrow: Sorry, what was the reference?

Ms Burch: Explain the increase in funding for disability.

Mr Whybrow: Students with disability?

MR DOSZPOT: In 2014-15 and 2015-16.

THE CHAIR: Page 9, budget paper F.

Mr Whybrow: What you can see from that is that there is a recurrent initiative, if I refer you to page 81, support for students with a disability. The budget provides an initiative of \$3 million additional funding over the next two years. There is also the element of, if I look at 1.4, a six per cent increase in total. We have had this year, of course, our commitment to the national education reform agreement. So there is a minimum increase of three per cent in our funding that is provided by government.

If you compare an estimated outcome and a budget we will always have our elements of rollovers of commonwealth funding between those years. There is a students with disability funding line on page 17, I believe, of rolling funds between one year and the next. They are the main components about changes.

I guess the important point around students with a disability—I refer you back to page 12, I think—is that every student with a disability has an individual learning plan. Their needs are based around their individual learning plans, and they are assessed in the ACT through that student-centred appraisal of need. It is not an averaging arrangement of you getting a dollar amount dependent on being a student with a disability; it goes through a complex assessment, including families, medical experts and educators, to determine what your needs are and what assessment needs to change

in your local setting, because there are different settings. We have our special schools, we have our learning support units in our mainstream schools, and we also have students in individual classrooms.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: Mr Wall, a new question.

MR WALL: Thank you, chair. To follow on from where Mr Doszpot was a little bit earlier talking about nurses in specialist schools, who determines the threshold, the level, of medical treatment that can be administered by, say, a teacher or an LSA and what threshold of treatment needs to be done by specialist medical staff—that is, a nurse?

Ms Garrison: Each student is assessed by health professionals—nurses or doctors—to ascertain what assistance and care they need to be able to access education. Therefore, we in education rely on their assessment of each student’s needs to look at what the relevant and the right mix for that will be.

MR WALL: Is that the same sort of process that is gone through for a student in a mainstream school?

Ms Garrison: Yes, it is exactly the same process.

MR WALL: I note the policy that ACT Education and Training has on administering medications. It is obviously a broad policy and it covers all schools. Would it be common to expect a teacher or an LSA in a mainstream school to be administering, say, insulin or the like for a student, or is that something that would normally require the parents’ intervention or a specialist?

Ms Garrison: No, in a mainstream setting it is often the learning support assistants who would provide that support to a student who requires it.

MR WALL: Going in a slightly different direction, when it comes to a student with a disability in a non-government school, what support does the ACT government provide to that school?

Ms Garrison: Each student in a non-government school is also provided access to the SCAN process—the student-centred appraisal of need—which then identifies what resources or additional resources that student would need.

MR WALL: With the SCAN assessment, who has the final choice or determination as to what is the most suitable school setting for a student?

Ms Garrison: The parent.

MR WALL: So you can have a parent of a child that has exceptionally high needs coming to you and saying, “I’d like them to go to the primary school at the end of my suburb”?

Ms Garrison: That does happen, and certainly we work with parents. They are very sensitive issues when a parent makes a decision that may not be, for a whole range of reasons, perceived to be from our perspective the best setting.

MR WALL: I understand.

Ms Garrison: However, if that is the parents' choice, we have to make sure that, under the disability standards, we make reasonable adjustments for all students who wish to attend a school.

MR WALL: In making those assessments and determining the school that a child is going to go to, what consideration is given to the support that school has available to cater for the needs of that child? Also, when we start talking about typically behavioural-based disabilities such as autism, what consideration is given to the other students that will be in that year group and the impact that that might have on the students collectively?

Ms Garrison: In all situations you look at the individual needs of that student in the class. In many of our settings they then look at the mix of the students that may be in that group together. Through a student-centred appraisal of need, the school also potentially gains additional resources so they can then look at how best to provide for the needs of students. There is not one magic fix for any particular student in this situation. We have to look at the individual and their needs, and work with the school, the family, to put in place the best possible environment for that particular student but for all students.

Ms Joseph: Schools would have access to additional expertise depending on the need. Schools get different buckets of funding beyond the student-centred appraisal of need, which is around an individual student, other resources that principals could use within their school resource allocation, their budget, to look at the needs of the school so far as what extra expertise may be needed at a particular school. It is looking at diversity—from counsellors to behaviour support professionals to learning support assistants to teachers themselves.

Every school also has a disability education coordinator, a person who is responsible for making sure that the program across the school—and not just for the students with disabilities—supports access for all students and supports the learning of all students. That disability education coordinator also supports the learning of all staff members—not just teachers but all staff members.

Depending on the particular school—primary, high school or secondary—the way a principal might plan their resources around a particular program for a particular student or a group of students would vary. A principal would take into account the experience of the staff, the number of students, the individual learning plans of specific students and the progress of different students. There are a variety of mechanisms.

Beyond the school settings—the schools have their own individual resources and they can recruit people and call in specialists or consultants as necessary—we have a directorate model; our network student engagement teams. We have our 86 schools

split up into four networks—20-odd schools in each network. Each of those networks is led by a senior network leader, a very experienced principal, usually, and an experienced executive. That school network leader works with their deputy principal, who is in charge of the network student engagement team. Each network student engagement team has school counsellors, psychologists, disability specialists, pastoral care workers and behaviour support professionals. Those resources are available to all schools to get extra support, particularly for a new situation.

MR WALL: You have spoken a lot about the physical, or the manpower, regarding resourcing. What options are then made available to the school to make capital improvements for access?

Ms Joseph: As Ms Garrison said, to meet the disability education standards and disability standards, we have to be able to make reasonable adjustments. Again, going back to the individual and the individual needs: what adjustments need to be made, are the resources available already within the school budget or do we need to add extra from the directorate's central resources? It could range anywhere from ramps to disabled parking to toilet facilities to specialist lifts.

MR WALL: When those sorts of improvements at a school need to be made, who has a say or a stake in what those changes might be? Is it done purely on the SCAN assessment and education or do parents, teachers and principals also have some input?

Ms Joseph: The individual learning plan comes from the consultation, the discussion, with all those players—the student, the parents, the health professionals and the educators. Then it is about reasonable adjustment, what we can do reasonably. They all have a say in what it should look like. Ultimately, we need to meet disability standards—so design standards, building standards and building codes—at the same time. It is a mixture of all of those.

Ms Burch: Ms Fitzharris was asking around specialist and mainstream schools. I think you are talking about what is the capital and what is the other support that goes around that. I think the decision to put a child in a specialist school is also supported by partner schools nearby. I was at Macgregor school just recently. They have now established a partnership program where students from Cranleigh School come over and spend most of Friday in Macgregor school. So in many ways students from both Macgregor and Cranleigh are getting the best of both worlds. They are getting the support they need through their specialist school but they are also integrated into a mainstream school for one day a week.

Talking to the children from both Cranleigh and Macgregor, it is halfway through the first year but it is very successful. That builds on the everyone everyday program that is getting pushed through our government schools as well, which is about having the next generation not see that we are a diverse community and that people with a disability, kids with a disability, want to play, want to have mates and want to learn just the same as all of us.

MR WALL: A final question, Ms Joseph. You mentioned that the changes need to be reasonable and talked about largely capital and physical changes. Who determines what is in the realms of possibility and reasonableness against those that are not going

to be viable to be made?

Ms Joseph: Ultimately, decisions are made and then you can have appeal processes. Ultimately, it is at the school level, with the support of the directorate quite often. Resources do come into it. I think it is also written into the act, the definition of “reasonable adjustment”.

Ms Burch: For example, if you have a child at a primary school and you know they are going to be enrolled there for their primary years. If they need access to a lift, for example, it is fair and reasonable that that is put in. But schools can self-determine very minor, small modifications themselves. Not everything has to come through the directorate.

Ms Joseph: In the example of needing a lift, it might be a timetabling response that, yes, a lift would be fantastic, but the timetable of a school could be put together to make sure that student does not need to access perhaps the second level. A reasonable adjustment would be in that case that the timetable might be able to be manipulated rather than the expense of a lift, for instance.

THE CHAIR: Following up on that, in terms of seclusion, what facilities are offered at the various schools and who determines what is built and what is not built?

Ms Joseph: Our schools are built to make sure that we have programs that are accessible and open to all of our students.

THE CHAIR: Not going to the issue of the cage, there must be other—

Ms Burch: Please do not refer to it as that. It is very disturbing for the family.

THE CHAIR: All right, the structure.

Ms Burch: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Not going to that, is it a beanbag in the library, is it a beanbag at the back of the classroom? Are there special rooms? Have we built any other facilities in our various schools?

Ms Joseph: Teachers deal with the needs of kids in different ways, whether or not they are students with disabilities. Sometimes small groups of kids or individuals need a space that is quite separate. The priority for any teacher is to make sure, particularly around the more difficult students, if they are in a challenging circumstance, that they are always supervised and are in line of sight and that there is assistance and support for that individual student at all times.

That could vary, as you say, from a beanbag in a corner. It could be an outdoor area or it could be another room with another teacher or learning support assistant. Our schools, particularly our primary schools with our open learning collaborative environments—and Harrison school is a school that has been built where there are different spaces that can be used to give students some time out. But time out has to be supervised. Teachers need to be absolutely sure exactly what the students are doing

and that they are safe and that all the other students are safe. The duty of care of a teacher actually drives the decision on what a space for a student could be like if there was a need for that student to be separated from a student or a group of students for a certain period.

THE CHAIR: Is there a list of facilities that have been constructed in government schools that the committee could have?

Ms Joseph: No, there is not. The response for an individual teacher depends on the kids at the time. Enrolments change, and teacher expertise and class groupings change all the time. There is not a list of facilities as such; it is a list of 86 schools that would have responses suitable to the individual students. Any response a school would come up with would involve the educators, the parents and our support workers, our experts, depending on what we are trying to address. It can be anything from a group of kids that are not getting on after lunch one day to a situation where there is a group of kids for a number of years who have not got on, or it could be a new kid coming into a school that we did not have last week that we have got this week.

Depending on the recurrence, the interaction, the response of the school—the measures that have been able to be put in place, including things like detention, suspension, alternative programs, changing classrooms and all of that—escalates and we try to put more expertise in to make sure that we are not only meeting the needs of the individual child and the expectations of the family but also meeting the obligation to the whole of the school community.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary for Ms Fitzharris and then I have a new question on government education.

MS FITZHARRIS: From what you are saying, I guess there is no one size fits all to any of these situations. You have a lot of policies, procedures and highly qualified, trained people in place to assess quite individual needs which could be very diverse, both for a child and for their family. How useful is it to try and categorise it in such simple terms?

Ms Joseph: Our response goes back to individual students, whether we are talking about a disability, a learning difficulty, a complex behavioural need or, indeed, an achievement need. Sometimes our gifted and talented students need totally different environments than some of our other students. We always come back to: what are the needs of the individual child? Whilst we talk in our budget papers here about individual learning plans for students with a disability, there are a number of our students from a variety of backgrounds, a variety of achievements, a variety of experiences that have an individual learning plan.

Our response as educators in schools, as individual teachers, is knowing where your students are at and what they need. For our teachers in our schools, our expert professionals in our network student engagement teams, our psychologists, our disability support workers, our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers, it is about how do we put all that expertise together to make sure we know where our kids are at, where do we want them to get to and what are the things we need to put into place. It is mapping the start, the journey and the end point, and it absolutely goes

back to the individual all the time.

THE CHAIR: Members, we have until 3.30 to look at output class 1.4, disability education and output class 2.1, non-government education. I have a non-government education question. On page 10 of budget paper F, table 9 of the grants paid to non-government schools, what percentage of the budget of the non-government schools does that funding there represent?

Mr Whybrow: What percentage of the budget?

THE CHAIR: What percentage of the total budget of non-government schools? It used to hover around 18 per cent. Is it still at 18 per cent?

Mr Whybrow: I think I understand the question. It is still the comparison to the average cost of a student in a government school and a percentage calculation of that. Yes, we have redone that calculation, as we have year for year. It is currently 17.8 per cent. So it is still around that 18 per cent component. In respect of the table that you have just talked to, the split between government funding—commonwealth versus ACT funding—that relativity has remained fairly stable over the years at around ACT 25 per cent, commonwealth 75 per cent of the total government funding that is provided.

THE CHAIR: Minister, is there any consideration of upping that percentage?

Ms Burch: This is linked to the NERA arrangements, which are locked down to 2017 or thereabouts. I would say the more frightening question would be: is the federal government really seriously contemplating means testing families in public schools? Indeed, are they seriously considering abrogating their responsibility and not funding public schools at all because they only see a relationship with independent schools? As I said this morning, this would see \$364 million ripped out of public education over the next four years.

THE CHAIR: Can I go back to the question you did not answer: is the government considering increasing the percentage they pay to non-government schools?

Ms Burch: We have signed up to NERA, which set out the funding arrangements over the next four years.

Mr Whybrow: Sorry, minister; the agreement we signed up for set out funding arrangements over the next six years.

Ms Burch: Six years, that is right.

Mr Whybrow: The commonwealth have recently—

Ms Burch: Reneged on their—

Mr Whybrow: identified support only to the end of 2018. Can I break up table 9 for you, Mr Smyth? If you look at the estimated outcome of ACT funding in 2014-15 of \$60.1 million but then look at the 2015-16 budget, you will see it is \$60.4 million.

There is only an increase there of \$300,000 the way it is presented.

If I break that down for you, currently there are three components in the funding provided by the ACT government. One is the commitment under NERA that the minister has spoken about. In relation to that—that is the needs-based funding arrangement—the ACT was one of the very first jurisdictions to roll out the ACT school resource standard in 2014. I can see some colleagues at the back of the room who are from the non-government sector who we worked with in putting that out. That went, I believe, very well.

Of that amount of money, there is \$56 million in 2013-14 and \$59 million is the amount in 2015-16. That actually represents a 5.3 per cent increase. That is not driven in this year by enrolments. You heard earlier about enrolment adjustments in government schools. In non-government schools from the current enrolment of 28,440 in 2015, there was an increase of 141 students—approximately 0.5 of one per cent. That has not significantly been the cause of the increase in funding.

What it relates to is the school resource standard. The ACT standard is consistent with the commonwealth. Within that, the vast majority of Catholic systemic schools are currently identified as below the school resource standard. That is the reason that is driving the increased proportion.

But coming back to your question, we have signed an agreement where we have determined our share of the funding under the national education reform agreement. The direction I have got from the minister is that that is our line. We are not looking at changing our funding arrangement. The payments are currently being made in accordance with that needs-based assessment. Hopefully that explains it.

Ms Burch: I would hope that the commonwealth reconsiders its outyears in respect of the non-government sector. NERA had a minimum indexed growth of three per cent. I think the most recent budget papers—I could stand to be corrected—was under three per cent growth of indexation from commonwealth into the independent schools in the outyears.

Mr Whybrow: That is correct. From 2018, going on the advice—again, I must say, we use the commonwealth budget papers and we roll their advice through based on what their grants are—it identified an indexation level of either CPI or a WPI. Using the current budget papers from the commonwealth, that would indicate, given their rates for CPI and WPI, 2.5 per cent. Again, there is the out clause in those statements of saying that it is subject to negotiation.

Ms Burch: The only one not increasing or not honouring a commitment to the non-government school is the federal government Liberal Party.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke has a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: Minister, can you tell us how the non-government school sector in the ACT has been affected by these federal government abandonments of the Gonski recommendations?

Ms Burch: Thank you. They will be worse off. There are significant millions of dollars in the outyears that will not find their way should the commonwealth not fund outyears five and six. That is one aspect. The other aspect is the less than three per cent minimum growth. As Mr Whybrow has indicated, particularly in the Catholic systemic schools, the majority of schools are currently under the student resource.

We had a federal funding formula worked through under NERA, under the Gonski review—that needs-based funding. What we have seen from this commonwealth government is actually pulling that apart. It will rip money out of the Catholic and the independent schools. I do not think that is a good outcome for Canberra families, regardless of what school they go to. Mr Whybrow may have some detail.

Mr Whybrow: I have some initial estimates when we worked with the associated systems. The reduction per annum is estimated to hit hardest the Catholic systemic schools. Essentially they do not get the last two adjustments in 2018 and 2019—the one-sixth component to bring them up to the standards. That appears to be their most significant concern. You do not have an equitable funding system going forward. The understanding from 2017 is that where your per capita rate is will be indexed; so it will not truly have reference to a needs component from there.

The estimated loss per annum to the Catholic systemic systems from that outcome versus the continuation of the NERA is in the order of \$4 million per annum. The estimated loss in the independent schools is not as significant because the vast majority of those schools are currently considered above the SRS, like the vast majority of ACT public schools. It is estimated to be in the order of \$1 million per year. I also make reference to the estimated differential for public schools. It is estimated to be in the order of \$2 million per year.

DR BOURKE: What has been the response from those sectors to this uncertainty about the future, minister?

Ms Burch: “They are not happy” would be a slight way of saying it. Certainly in the discussions I have had with the secretariat bodies for both the Catholics and the independents, they want those arrangements honoured. Everyone would like to see more on the table, absolutely, but as a minimum they would like to see those arrangements honoured, and particularly no less than three per cent in the outyears for them to grow.

They will face significant challenges. Whilst some independent schools are above the student resource allocation, the internal business structures of these schools know what costs they need and know what growth they need in their funding to maintain their current offerings for the schools which students and families are choosing. They have got strong enrolments. This will have nothing else but a negative impact on them.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary from Ms Fitzharris, then a new question from Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: With the SRS, is there an annual amount of that schools resourcing standard?

Mr Whybrow: In respect of the school resources standard, there is an annual amount for a base core need but then there is an individual loading. There are loadings for indigeneity, disability, English as a learning dialect.

MS FITZHARRIS: What is the base level need amount?

Mr Whybrow: The base level? I guess the interesting component with this, particularly when you are talking about non-government schools, is that there is also a capacity-to-contribute component. In broad terms—I will not quote the numbers exactly right—it is around 9,500 in a primary school. Then you are talking about 12,500 in a secondary setting. They are adjusted for individual loadings depending on the low SES and those ones that I have just mentioned.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of those final two years that the commonwealth has not committed to fund, do you have a sense of whether it will impact the primary or the secondary sector in any larger or smaller extent?

Mr Whybrow: Across the Catholic systemic schools, all Catholic systemic schools are currently identified as being below the SRS; so all of those schools were. The ACT public system is considered as a system rather than as individual schools. As a system, we are considered as being above the SRS. The logic was that you transition over a six-year period. If you are below the SRS, you get one-sixth of that component each year for six years.

I guess that is the significant issue for that number of schools that are identified below the SRS. If you take a 2017 per capita amount and you index it forward you will never be on a par with others because you have missed that last two-sixths or one-third.

MS FITZHARRIS: So you are always behind.

Mr Whybrow: Yes.

Ms Burch: Always behind, yes. With the release of the options in the green paper, where they are clearly looking for a funding model, I would say that we had a funding model. It was well prosecuted; it was well resolved across sectors. It actually unified sectors because everybody knew and understood the basic allocation per student and saw the projected growth. We do not know now what the model for school funding is, whether it is to public schools or to non-government schools. The current arrangements—NERA signed up to 2017-18. The feds have only funded to 2017-18—

Mr Whybrow: The end of the calendar year 2017 is my understanding.

Ms Burch: Yes, 2017. Schools plan years in advance. Already, schools are facing a life of uncertainty because in 2015 and 2016 they well and truly should have bedded down what their school finances are going to be, what their projections are going to be. That will impact on their school community absolutely. So we are getting already into a realm of uncertainty.

MS FITZHARRIS: Is it fair to say that the commonwealth has walked away from

needs-based funding? Do they contest the schools resourcing standard amount at the moment?

Mr Whybrow: I do not think it is possible to say they have walked away from needs-based funding. Part of the uncertainty and the unknown is that while we are taking a 2017 level and indexing it up, my understanding is that they are not changing the elements of still seeking amounts of students with disabilities and those loadings. The issue is: how will that work going forward and how do you have that equitable SRS base core component. That is a difficult one.

Ms Burch: I may not be so kind as Mr Whybrow. The notions that have been put through the media through that green paper today say that actually they are walking away from obligations to needs-based funding and they are picking and choosing.

THE CHAIR: A new question, and then Dr Bourke.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Already this morning, minister, you and your officials have mentioned a number of programs that non-government schools have access to—the parental engagement program, capital funding for preschools, equitable access to the Teacher Quality Institute. Are there other programs that are available to all students, to all teachers, across the ACT, irrespective of the sector?

Mr Whybrow: Maybe I could also point out something in relation to page 10. Mr Smyth pointed me to table 9. Table 9 identifies the grants that are being paid, but table 7, which is part of the directorate, is an element of total costs of services being provided. So in relation to those services, when you look at that table and you see it is total costs in the order of about \$3.5 million per year, yes, there is an element of registration, but that by no means is \$3.5 million per year. You have a number of services. We have Anne Ellis, the CEO of the Teacher Quality Institute, and she clearly articulated earlier that her services are for all systems. We had John Stenhouse up here before on behalf of the BSSS. Those services are around providing those year 12 certificates, and the work they do is also across all our systems.

So there are a number of activities around sharing between the work that we do as a directorate and recognising that we have a leadership role across all systems. I look back to when we were having the notion of bushfire arrangements. We developed plans and we shared those across the entire system. We do work very well in a small jurisdiction across education in total rather than having lines of system divides.

Ms Joseph: Recent programs where we have collaborated and shared resources include gifted and talented education where we have developed a number of resources, and we share them with our colleagues across all sectors. The minister established the learning difficulties task force. The response from the learning difficulties task force, primarily about facts sheets, training and support resources, is available across all sectors. I mentioned the Australian curriculum implementation previously. I meet regularly with Moira Najdecki who is the Catholic Education Office chief executive, and Andrew Wrigley, who looks after the Association of Independent Schools.

May I also say that Anne Ellis, as Chief Executive Officer of the TQI, regularly brings together school leadership teams, deputy principals and principals, for professional

learning. And there are a number of other professional learning events that, just by the nature of our geography, we would invite teachers from across all sectors to attend that may be run and funded by the Education and Training Directorate.

Ms Burch: Ms Wright has some other examples of access to resources. In a jurisdiction of our size, it is around quality teaching that benefits all our students regardless of what school they are in. We have certainly had a mind to that stronger collaboration.

Ms Wright: Ms Joseph talked about the gifted and talented initiative and the resources developed in that space. There is also the parental engagement initiative that I spoke of earlier. All the resources generated under that are cross-sectorally available and have been funded entirely through the directorate. There is the support for the Australian Curriculum Implementation Committee and secretariat and ongoing work in that space—coordination, through the Australian Curriculum Implementation Committee, of professional learning sessions available to all sectors of schools. And in the most recent budget, there is the initiative around the online teaching resources that will support the Australian curriculum—I think some \$700,000 over the next four years for the online teaching resources. The directorate will manage the procurement and platform for that, and the non-government sector will have full access to those resources to support implementation of the curriculum moving forward on the same per capita basis as government schools.

Those initiatives and the online teaching resources are an excellent example of our ongoing collaboration, sharing of professional learning and ensuring consistency within the ACT around areas that we know are fundamentally an evidence base for quality education.

Ms Burch: I think the TQI from the get-go had a cross-sectoral development in mind. There are no barriers within TQI.

Ms Ellis: The important point here is that we are independent from the directorate. We are part of the portfolio, not part of the directorate. So our position, in terms of working with the sectors, is that we work equally with all sectors. The only thing I would like to add to the points I raised previously is that with the focus now on improving university education for pre-service teachers, the new cohort who will become teachers of the future, we are working very closely with all sectors around the importance of professional experience. That is going to be really significant over the next couple of years as we unpack what it really means to grow a new teacher and how Catholic schools, independent schools and public schools will all contribute differently but significantly to that.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, a new question.

DR BOURKE: Thank you. Minister, could you tell us about the prevalence of home education in the ACT?

Ms Burch: A small but impassioned group of families have home education. Ms Cuzner can give you some details on that.

Ms Cuzner: We have 231 children who are being home educated in the ACT at the moment, as at the beginning of June. The home educating parents are required to provide a high quality education that develops their child across the spectrum—spiritual, emotional, physical, social and intellectual. The home education program provides parents with the flexibility they need, and it is targeted at the individual needs of their own child. They have chosen a different way of educating their children around the child's individual needs.

Ms Joseph: The Education and Training Directorate regulates home education, so there are specific criteria and standards that parents who have chosen home education must meet. One of those is implementing the Australian curriculum, and there are support services provided by the directorate to those families in implementing the Australian curriculum.

DR BOURKE: Is the number growing or is it stable?

Ms Cuzner: The number is growing. It is less than one per cent of the total population for school-aged children, but it is growing each year, we have noticed.

Ms Burch: The numbers are small, though, and will always remain small.

DR BOURKE: Are there any causes for concern in this area?

Ms Burch: Nothing has come to my attention. Whilst they make the choice for home schooling, it is a well-thought-through decision by families, and they have strong frameworks which they must abide by to maintain their home schooling status.

Ms Cuzner: An authorised person registers the family to provide the home education and so visits the family in the home or else visits them in another place that they decide, really looking at the program provided by the parents to ensure that it meets all those needs that I mentioned before.

Ms Joseph: If I can correct what I just said, the parents do not have to deliver the Australian curriculum; they have to deliver an appropriate curriculum guided by the Australian curriculum.

Ms Burch: If they go right through to BSSS, they have to meet those end benchmark assessments.

DR BOURKE: Is that one of the balances that the scheme seeks to strike between achieving some curriculum outcomes and at the same time enabling parental choice?

Ms Joseph: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Are there any other balances involved there?

Ms Cuzner: Parents choose home education for a variety of reasons. It could be that there is a philosophy that they have, their own philosophy, about education that maybe does not meet the same philosophy that the Australian curriculum has. Or it may be the way the schools are operated in the ACT. They are still required to take

care of and address all those needs of their child—physical needs, social needs, emotional needs. If they can prove to the person who is checking them out for registration that they are, and they are meeting their child’s individual needs, they are successful in being registered.

Ms Burch: What we see is that they may be home schooled for the earlier years and then come into mainstream or a non-government school in the latter years.

Ms Cuzner: Some families choose to have part home education and part school education. There is a partnership between the school and the family to work out how that best works—what areas in the curriculum will the school provide and what areas in the curriculum will the parents provide. There is often then a transition back, as the minister said, usually coming into years 11 and 12, when the children transition back into full-time school education.

DR BOURKE: Is any of this driven by cultural differences in child-rearing practices?

Ms Cuzner: There are lots of reasons people choose it. Cultural reasons could be one of them. It could be for health reasons. It could be because the child has a really special interest or talent that the family want their children to focus on and maybe spend more time on than would be available during the normal school day.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a supplementary.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. I note your point that it is only very small numbers, but I am interested to know whether nationally or internationally the numbers are increasing or decreasing.

Ms Cuzner: I am sorry, I do not have that information.

Ms Burch: If we can find it, we will provide it.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Lawder, and then Mr Doszpot.

MS LAWDER: I will defer my question to Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Ms Lawder. Minister, how often in the past 24 months have you or the ETD met formally with the now defunct non-government schools education council?

Ms Burch: There have been regular meetings. We can provide you with that information.

Ms Cuzner: Yes, it is about six times a year, but I cannot say whether we had every meeting.

MR DOSZPOT: What was the nature of those meetings, when you met? What did you discuss?

Ms Joseph: I have attended about four out of the six GSEC meetings over the last 12

months. Issues range from looking at a specific research article around education to getting views from members around the table. I give a directorate report to every meeting, whether I attend or not—basically a summary of achievements. It is usually about an hour and a half meeting, the GSEC meetings. When I have attended NGSEC meetings in the past—and I have not attended one for the last 12 months—it is very similar. I present a directorate report and the agenda varies based on the agenda items that members would want to put up.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what requests have you formally or informally made of the non-government schools education council on matters relating to aspects of non-government education in the ACT?

Ms Burch: The last few times I have met with them, there was strong discussion around the Australian curriculum, needs-based funding and also undergraduate teacher training, with a view to ensuring that we have the best trained teachers. But the group is also able to self-initiate advice to me, and they have not done that, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: What other opportunities are there for formal engagement between the ETD and representatives of the non-government schools sector in the ACT, now that this council has gone?

Ms Burch: Ms Joseph would have regular meetings, and I think she alluded to regular meetings, with Australian independent schools ACT and the Catholic Education Office. I regularly meet with them. Probably three or four times a year at a minimum I would meet with the independent schools and the Catholic education system. I meet with the AEU; I meet with the Independent Education Union. I meet with parent bodies. So with respect to everyone who is pretty much representative of an entity that was in GSEC and NGSEC, I meet with them outside those forums.

MR DOSZPOT: Will there be opportunities in the future for the sort of involvement that the actual non-government schools education council had with you? If so, can you describe what other opportunities there will be?

Ms Burch: An announcement has been made that the next advisory council will have a focus on digital citizenship. Craig Curry will chair that. We are finalising a very highly regarded expert that will join that, in that field of digital citizenship. There will be a very small committee and there will be a reference group or advisory group wrapped around that. That will involve teachers, principals, parents, business and experts in the field. That is the structure I am looking at for this upcoming ministerial advisory group.

In the discussions, and I think it is part of my tabling statement, there are also broader opportunities for this group or for me to lead and initiate more public forums on particular topics. I think that, at TEMAG, undergraduate teacher training is something that needs a very strong discussion. I know TQI is leading the nation in many ways in undergraduate teacher training, mentorship and what their practice placements look like—making sure that we get it right there.

MR DOSZPOT: Did you say Mr Curry is the chair of the new committee?

Ms Burch: No. I said in the recent announcement that I have asked Craig Curry to head and to lead this next council as we go through digital citizenship. They will be time locked. It will start and end in this calendar year.

MR DOSZPOT: You did say Craig Curry was chairing—

Ms Burch: For this advisory committee, for the purpose of digital citizenship, with an expert in the field.

MR DOSZPOT: You also made mention that he would be co-chairing it, in an interview on radio recently.

Ms Burch: What I meant by that was that I want Craig Curry, who has expertise in working on these committees, to be joined by someone highly regarded in the field, the expert field that we are looking at, and this one that we are looking at is digital citizenship.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, I will let Dr Bourke have a supplementary and then I will come back to you.

DR BOURKE: Minister, I want to ask about non-government school involvement in the safe schools task force. Is that still continuing?

Ms Joseph: We do not have a safe schools task force any longer. The new iteration of that over the last two years has been a focus on safe schools through an annual roundtable. We have an expert from one of the universities who heads up that roundtable. That has representatives from non-government schools and government schools, as well as students. That group looks at what is currently happening in our schools, where we could do better, and how to align policies and procedures across all sectors to make sure all students and school communities benefit from what we would regard as best practice in the area.

The national safe schools framework is the framework that all schools use to inform their policy and procedures. Obviously, with the government schools, we do a lot of that coordination at the directorate level to support our schools. The national safe schools framework does inform what happens in the non-government school space as well. So it gives a guiding coalition, if you like, similar to the new advisory group, which is about how we collaborate and share what is happening and make sure every school in the ACT can benefit from the knowledge, experience and expertise we have here in the ACT.

THE CHAIR: We will go back to Mr Doszpot. I suspect that was a new question rather than a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Mr Chair. Minister, the people I have spoken to both from the government and from the non-government education councils felt that the two bodies were operating very well. They really appreciated the opportunity to meet with the education directorate and your decision has not exactly been a universally acclaimed decision. What was your reason for wanting to dismantle both of these

bodies which seemed to be doing a very good job?

Ms Burch: Whilst you will speak to and select to reference the people who are not happy about the decision, a number of people I have spoken to were happy about the decision. They were very grateful to have the opportunity over the last decade to be part of GSEC and NGSEC, but they absolutely understood and agreed to what the model will grow to be. That was said through the 12 months of this conversation. It was also said at a small function I held in the exhibition room to thank both GSEC and NGSEC members for their time and contribution over the past decade or so.

MR DOSZPOT: Is there any particular reason that you felt this had to be done? That is the missing part of the jigsaw puzzle.

Ms Burch: I do not think it is a missing part of the jigsaw puzzle. What I said in the tabling statement was that these structures, to me, are artificially divided. You have government schools and non-government schools. We have been talking for most of the afternoon about cross-sectoral work, parents choosing to move in and out of government and non-government schools, in primary years and secondary, from home schooling and the like. Parents, families and teachers come together for student outcomes.

We also want a quick response on what are the key points that affect all students, all teachers and all families. Digital citizenship is one. Undergraduate teacher training is another. I refer also to school validation and school approvals, healthy foods and parental engagement. There are a number of things that we can bring together—representatives of schools, families and experts, depending on what the subject matter is. And we will get on with it. I think it is very much a way forward. If we are very serious about having responsive, cross-sectoral advice, I think this is the way to go.

You obviously disagree, Mr Doszpot, but it is as it is. I have thanked, and I will continue to thank, the members that have been part of GSEC and NGSEC. I look forward to the new advisory council structures and the various community contributions that will come on the different topics.

THE CHAIR: A final question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I have no doubt that you could have asked any of those questions that you mentioned regarding digital education and all the other areas you have touched upon. The previous council could have done that work. Can you now guarantee that all of the parts of both the government and the non-government sector that were represented will have some say under your new body that you are instituting?

Ms Burch: For example, when we look at digital citizenship, as I have said, we will have a small, tight group, an expert panel leading committee, and around that will be a reference group or advisory group. We have not determined the language that will exist there, but depending on what it is different groups will be able to submit advice. As I have said to you, the teachers union, from all sides, the parent groups, from all sides, and the key secretariats of the sectors, from all sides, do not have to talk to me through these groups. More often than not, in fact 99 per cent of the time, they did not

talk to me through these groups. They had a direct relationship, as they ought to have, with me and with Diane Joseph as director-general.

THE CHAIR: We will leave it there. At 3.45 we will resume with vocational education, CIT, CIT Solutions and the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority.

Sitting suspended from 3.31 to 3.47 pm.

THE CHAIR: Members, we will resume this afternoon's session of day 7 of estimates 2015. We are going to look now at output class 3 and output class 3.1, planning and coordination of vocational education and training services, Canberra Institute of Technology and their statement of intent, CIT Solutions, followed by the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority. With that we will change the whole nature of the afternoon by going to the far end of the table first and start with Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, how many ACT public schools and colleges currently offer vocational programs?

Ms Burch: I think all our colleges have RTOs; that is my understanding. Ms Wright, is that correct?

Ms Wright: Yes, that is correct. I can add some further detail. Currently our nine public colleges are registered training organisations. Within scope there are 34 qualifications across those nine colleges. Each college delivers between six and 17 different qualifications.

MR DOSZPOT: How many overall students would be enrolled in vocational courses?

Ms Wright: In terms of enrolment for this year I have information on certificates and statements of attainment that were awarded through the colleges last year which may provide the committee with information about that: 784 students were awarded 955 different vocational certificates indicating that a number of students completed more than one qualification and 4,975 students were awarded statements of attainment for partial completion of vocational qualifications.

MR DOSZPOT: And are there limitations on the course choice or student enrolments?

Ms Wright: As I said across the different colleges they have made decisions as a registered training organisation around the scope of qualifications that they will deliver within their college. Some of that is guided by the facilities they have on site and some have specialist facilities. I suppose, to differentiate vocational education and training that leads to a recognised qualification as opposed to vocational learning which is more around activity that centres particularly in high schools around aspects of work experience or tasters around different types of opportunities that students are offered there, the range of what our colleges offer is determined largely around the staff that can deliver those qualifications, have the relevant industry standard and

experience and can meet the requirements of ASQA around having those qualifications on the scope.

MR DOSZPOT: My next question is: how does the funding for these courses come about to ensure that you have the right teachers and so forth?

Ms Wright: Vocational education in our colleges and in our high schools is part of the curriculum. Therefore it is funded as any other part of the curriculum is. Those students are funded for their full teaching and learning program. There is additional funding that is provided to all three sectors under the national workforce development allocations that come through the directorate and then are reallocated across all sectors. And those funds are allocated in terms of the overall enrolment in each of the sectors and in terms of how additional funding goes in there. Those students in Australian school-based apprenticeships in colleges, through that funding model, attract additional resources as well.

MR DOSZPOT: And is there any other impost on the schools that are offering vocational courses? Is there any additional expenditure that they require or is all that covered by standard budgeting for the school?

Ms Wright: In the arrangements about being a registered training organisation, which all of our nine colleges are, there are some fees associated with the requirements of registration as a registered training organisation.

MR DOSZPOT: Has any assessment been done on the merit of offering vocational courses as part of the secondary school curriculum?

Ms Wright: Any assessment?

MR DOSZPOT: Any assessment of what sort of feedback you get about the courses offered and the value of those courses?

Ms Joseph: We do student, parent and staff surveys each year not specifically related to vocational education and training but there would be the opportunity to bring that up. I know at the national level there are national student surveys around vocational education and training and student experience with different providers.

Mr Gniel: I will add to that.

MR DOSZPOT: Certainly.

Mr Gniel: The requirements for the BSSS and the year 12 certificate do incorporate vocational education and training outcomes as part of the points towards receiving that year 12 certificate. That is already embedded within the curriculum, particularly in those senior years.

MR DOSZPOT: And are there any evaluation indicators that you use?

Mr Gniel: In terms of?

MR DOSZPOT: Outcomes?

Mr Gniel: The BSSS certainly reports on those. Ms Wright has already been through that list with you about the numbers. Those numbers come through from the BSSS who embed them within point structures for each of the senior school students in receipt of their year 12 certificates. So the year 12 certificate includes their outcomes in the subject areas as well as attainments in each of the VET courses they may have taken.

Ms Joseph: And our strategic indicators 3.4 and 3.5 on page 6 of the budget papers talk about this. Strategic indicator 3.4 is percentage of apprentices satisfied with their training under Australian apprenticeships, and strategic indicator 3.5 is proportion of graduates with improved employment status after training. They are some of the measures we use to evaluate performance.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: I refer to table 10 on page 11 of the budget paper:

The vocational education and training system in the ACT responds to the demands and requirements of students, industry and the community.

Could you explain how those students, industry and the community interact on future needs and requests?

Ms Joseph: The Education and Training Directorate supports the minister in policy advice around vocational education and training. We have recently, in the last 12 months, released different discussion papers on vocational education and training in the ACT including our skilled capital initiative as part of the, I think it is, \$21 million that we put towards our skilled capital initiatives. The money goes towards supporting training. Money also is passed on to CIT to support training in the ACT. In engaging with students, industry and the community the directorate does a lot of work particularly with industry in engaging.

We have a regular, quarterly RTO forum each term, each quarter, where we bring all the RTO stakeholders together to talk about what is happening in national reform directions and what is happening with the ACT. In addition we meet with different sectors of industry to make sure that our policies are responding to industry needs. I know there is analysis of where we put investment and to what skills and training specifically. We work with industry and we look at data at a national level and a local level on forecasting industry needs entitlement. We actually have a model that helps us do that to prioritise which areas of training we should invest in at the ACT level.

I will pass over to the director of training and tertiary education, David Miller, who can elaborate a bit further.

Mr Miller: Obviously when you are delivering VET qualifications the core component is about making sure that that qualification is going to satisfy industry needs. It is typically about providing workforce-related skills and, I guess, improving in many ways somebody's capacity to be able to work. A lot of the qualifications are

industry specific.

One of the main programs that we administer is the Australian apprenticeships program. If you are undertaking an Australian apprenticeships qualification there is a training contract involved that actually involves your employer as well as the apprentice and then there is an RTO involved that delivers the training. Obviously what that is trying to show or demonstrate is the importance of the employer also being satisfied with the training outcomes that have been delivered by the training organisation. The employer actually has a role in endorsing the training outcome. They actually have to sign off the student as well to show that they are competent in that area and able to demonstrate their skills in the workplace. That is one of the more direct, I guess, demonstrations of industry engagement.

As Diane has already referred to, in a lot of the design of our initiatives we undertake extensive industry consultation to make sure that we are targeting training in areas of skills need. A big focus for us, again as Diane referred to, was the skilled capital program which commenced taking enrolments earlier this year. One of the main aims of that is increasing productivity in the ACT and delivering training in areas that are most likely to lead to improved employment outcomes. We have developed a model that helps define the skills needs within the ACT and we use that to inform the VET qualifications that we are allocating funding towards. It has also helped us inform, I guess, the apportionment of funding to support training in those qualifications based on the priority level of need as well as identifying the number of qualifications that we are prepared to fund through that program to try and address those areas of need.

As well, the model is both qualitative and quantitative and certainly in its initial stages it was subject to extensive industry consultation. We ran a number of consultation sessions through the Canberra Business Council at the time and we engaged with all different areas of industry to say, "This is what our model is telling us about areas of skills need. Does that align with what you are experiencing and your views?" It was a really beneficial process to demonstrate that it was indeed pointing us in the right direction. When we made an omission from one of the lists of qualifications that we were going to fund we certainly had that industry area point out that we were missing a few qualifications off the list. It was very helpful in that regard as well to make sure that we had not made any administrative oversights in identifying the skills needs for the ACT.

MS LAWDER: The strategic indicator that Ms Joseph referred to earlier had a target of about 66 per cent for the current year and an estimated completion for the year that we are currently in of 68 per cent or 69 per cent, somewhere around there. What is the three per cent or so difference for the people who are not as prepared for employment or—

Mr Miller: It is important to acknowledge that not everybody who is undertaking a VET qualification is necessarily undertaking training to improve their employment outcome. In that circumstance I think that is referring to apprentices. That certainly is the target but it is not always going to necessarily meet their need. A lot of people do not complete their qualification. A lot of people who commence an apprenticeship, as a good example, decide that it is not for them. It was not what they thought it was going to be or, like anybody else in a workplace, they decide that they are not

enjoying the workplace and then decide to withdraw from the qualification.

MS LAWDER: It does say a proportion of graduates, I think in this table, rather than those who do not complete.

Ms Joseph: But even of those who complete, some may not be doing the training to have improved employment outcomes. It might be about doing—

MS LAWDER: I thought Mr Miller said some people did not complete their apprenticeships.

Ms Joseph: Some do not complete, yes.

MS LAWDER: That would not be captured in that figure, would it?

Ms Joseph: But these ones who have completed may not be looking to even be promoted in their current job. It might be about doing their current job better.

Ms Burch: I might ask Ms Cover to say what that looks like from CIT's experience.

Ms Cover: Thanks, minister. Just to build on what Mr Miller and Ms Joseph said about the industry skills needs list, that information that the department collates and collects from those conversations with students and industry we then use to try to match up our course offerings with those to try and align where we think those qualifications will best provide job opportunities directly to students. But as Education and Training have just advised, there are very diverse reasons why students are studying. We know from our national survey data that students who study at CIT are very happy with the course meeting their aspirations. They do not all sign up to get a better job; there are some other aspirations. In our survey statistics, we know that we do better than the national average, and we have done so for quite a long time in that space where students are very pleased. I guess the courses are meeting the objectives that they want from the course.

Mrs Stewart: Do you mind if I add a bit to that and tell you a bit about the scope of the survey. In terms of improved employment status after training, it means that they were not employed before training and were employed after training, they actually received a promotion following training or they received a direct benefit from their employer as a result of training. That is measured fairly soon after they have finished training. As Ms Cover has already covered, there are a range of reasons why people do training. It is not necessarily to get a promotion or to get some kind of direct benefit; it may be to enhance their skills and perhaps for some point down the track. That is why there is still a group of people who have not actually received that immediate and direct benefit from their training. It is something that will flow through.

Ms Cover: Could I just add some stats? I did not have them at hand when I mentioned that earlier. In terms of the national survey, in relation to the numbers of students who fully or partly achieved the main reason for doing the training, the CIT statistics are 87.0 per cent where the Australian average is 82.7 per cent. So we do very well on that.

MS LAWDER: On the table—table 10 or 11; the figures seem to be the same—what

factor or index was applied from the 2014-15 estimated outcome total cost to get a 2015-16 budget of 36,773?

Mr Whybrow: Essentially there is an indexation rate that is provided to vocational education and training. That is not the nearer adjustment at three per cent; it is the standard for the ACT government, 2.25 per cent.

MS LAWDER: 2.25?

Mr Whybrow: The other adjustments—I have pointed to the past. If you have a look at page 17, there are adjustments of base funding amounts. Specifically, about three-quarters of the way down the page, looking at revised funding profiles—these are commonwealth programs—for the productivity placement programs, there is around \$2.9 million of reduction in the estimated outcome for 2014-15 and an increase in 2015-16. You will see that productivity placement program in a number of places. As Mr Miller has indicated, that is a commonwealth NP that is now being replaced by the skilled capital initiative that he has been talking about. That came to an end and has been replaced by skilled capital, but the funding was quarantined by the commonwealth and rolled into the new initiative. They are the major reasons for the variance between the years.

MS LAWDER: And is that the same—the ACT index of 2.25 for the government payment for outputs of 35,059?

Mr Whybrow: That is correct. The government payment for outputs is the funding provided by government. The total costs include other things such as depreciation. There will always be a difference between the funding through the appropriation bill, which is the government payment for outputs, and the total costs of doing business, which will include depreciation, movement and employee entitlements—those sorts of things.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke has a supplementary.

DR BOURKE: Thank you. I am looking through this section on page 11. It says you also administer some territory and commonwealth funds for a variety of skill development programs and adult community education programs. Perhaps you can tell us what these funds are that you administer and what is covered by the term “adult community education program”?

Mr Miller: Thank you for the question. That refers to a whole range of programs, including the Australian apprenticeships program that I was referring to earlier and the skilled capital program that I was referring to earlier. Both of those are supported by both commonwealth and territory funds. They both contribute to the mix in supporting those programs that are clearly about skills development.

The adult community education program is a specific program to support other forms of training or introduction to training. It is literally called the adult and community education program. That is a funding round that we administer on an annual basis. There is currently about \$190,000 available annually through the ACE program. For 2015 I think there are 14 projects that have been allocated funding, going to 10

different organisations to provide a range of different services, often for people who are not accessing training through more formal pathways such as the Australian apprenticeships program, the skilled capital program or CIT.

DR BOURKE: Can you give us some more examples of those ACE programs?

Mr Miller: Sure. Most of the information about the ACE program is on our website now, but I happen to have here a list of the programs that are being provided for 2015. As an example, the Alcohol Tobacco and Other Drug Association ACT is delivering a pathways to VET course for alcohol, tobacco and other drug sector service users. The outcomes they are intending to achieve are about developing skills in first aid, with the focus on preventing alcohol, tobacco and other drug harm for current clients of drug treatment services.

The Canberra Blind Society has received a grant through this program to provide some braille literacy skills for people who are blind or who have low vision. CIT has received some funding through this program for a program called tradies in transition to work health and safety careers, which is about increasing skills particularly in work health and safety, and improving foundation skills for tradespeople aged 40 to 70 who might have relatively low levels of language literacy and digital skills.

MARS Services, Migrant and Refugee Settlement Services of the ACT, are running an English for living program. This is about functional literacy, helping migrants and refugees with little or no English proficiency to achieve greater independence in their day-to-day to life.

Those are the sorts of examples where it is not necessarily supporting direct VET qualifications but it is about other pathways or other avenues for training that are going to support people with particular needs. That is a really great benefit and a gap that the ACE program fills in that regard.

DR BOURKE: One of the original themes within TAFE when it was first established was the recreation and education space. Is there anything left in that now or is that completely self-funded?

Ms Cover: I might ask our general manager of CIT Solutions to talk a bit about that program, how it is structured and funded and the important role that those programs play across the ACT community. For many people, those recreational courses are just for interest, but for others they perform confidence-building exposure to some formalised sort of structure around training that can lead to other accredited programs at CIT. I will ask Paul to explain.

Mr Ryan: You are right in that many of those programs are now self-funded. CIT Solutions runs a variety of what we now call short courses, as opposed to ACE, because previously ACE was seen to be often government funded. The short programs are now a mix of professional courses and recreational hobby courses. Some 7,000 Canberrans a year do those courses with CIT Solutions, ranging from a few hours to a night course that might run one night a week for six or eight weeks, in a vast variety of subject areas. People use some of them as pathways into formal education: they might come and do an introductory course with us and then pathway into an

accredited certificate program at CIT. The courses offered through CIT Solutions are completely self-funded, and run on that basis; they are not government-funded programs.

DR BOURKE: Thank you. That takes me to my substantive question, if I might, chair. Minister, what changes have there been in commonwealth funding for vocational education and training in recent years, and what sort of pressure is that putting on our systems?

Ms Burch: There has been some change. Indeed, after this morning's announcement on public education, I do not know what they are going to do with the VET sector. It is a significant area that needs to be worked through across states and the commonwealth. Perhaps Mr Miller can talk to some of those changes.

Mr Miller: Thanks, minister. The commonwealth funding to support vocational education and training is evident in a lot of different ways. For example, they provide direct incentives to employers. They provide trade support loans to apprentices, which is a recent change; where there had been money that was deliberately allocated to support apprentices, that has been turned into loans programs instead. That is a kind of shift, I suppose; it now has the potential for an ongoing impost on an apprentice. Apprentices can now take a loan up to \$20,000 over the four years of the apprenticeship, whereas in the past there were different programs where they were able to access support funding that did not have to be repaid. That is a good example of something where there has been a bit of a shift in some of the commonwealth funding.

Other things that the commonwealth support include the Australian apprenticeship support network. For one more week, that includes the Australian apprenticeship centres. Now they are moving to a new network model, which is a slight shift in some of those arrangements. Again, I think, depending on how you look at it, there was a slight change in the budget allocation to provide that service, hopefully an improvement to that service, but that is one of those things where, again, there was a change to the program. It came with a slightly different contribution funding model. That might potentially have an impact.

More directly from my point of view, we received funding under the national partnership on skills reform. That goes through until 2017. We are obviously keenly interested to make sure that in all of the discussions that are going on with the commonwealth at the moment there is no intention to change the current commitments that are agreed under that commitment. We are due to receive up to \$28 million over the full five years of that program; and because that is contingent on us meeting a range of targets, both training targets and structural reform targets, most of that money comes in at the back end of the agreement. We would be very concerned that any further changes that the commonwealth was seeking to make would potentially change or have them pulling back from the commitment under that current agreement. Thankfully, at this stage we have not received any indication that that is the case. I think Sue—

Mr Whybrow: Just to reference it for the committee, budget paper 3, page 239, identifies the current status, as I indicated before, of existing estimates from the

commonwealth. Halfway down page 239, you have the national skills and workforce development SPP, which is providing in the order of \$24 million annually. To give you an indication, approximately 70 per cent of that money goes to CIT and 30 per cent comes through the directorate. David has just mentioned the building Australia future workforce skills reform, which has that \$28 million over five years; it identifies in the budget papers there the funding until the end of 2016-17.

Ms Cover: Dr Bourke, could I just add from a CIT perspective that CIT is using some of that commonwealth funding that Mr Miller spoke about around building foundation skills for learners. I will ask Ms Maslen to talk about that program.

Ms Maslen: CIT is a leader in the provision of foundation skills, and it is making a big difference to CIT students in our completion and success rates. We were one of the early adopters of the new foundation skills training package qualification, and we have been fortunate to have the support of the ACT government in providing funding to be able to continue to do that. It has made a marked difference for our students. This year we have been trialling foundation skills for trades trials with our apprenticeship programs. We are trialling a couple of different models about how we can use foundation skills—language, literacy and numeracy support—to help support the achievement of outcomes for our apprenticeships students.

DR BOURKE: That is \$30 million at risk a year. Is that correct, minister?

Ms Burch: Yes. I have been advised yes.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. I just wanted to ask some general questions about RTOs. How many RTOs are there in Canberra?

Ms Burch: There are a number based in Canberra, but we have an open border policy. A number of RTOs delivering services here will be based in New South Wales, for example. Mr Miller would have the number of those.

Mr Miller: We do not have the total number. There may well be a number of providers that only deliver fee-for-service training if they do not engage with the ACT government. They do not have a funding agreement with us to receive funds and we might not necessarily be aware of their presence. In terms of the RTOs that currently access or are able to access government funding, there are just over 150 of those. That means they have a current ACT funding agreement. That allows them to access the particular programs that we subsidise.

I should note that we have just been through a reassessment process for people holding an ACT funding agreement. Their current funding agreement actually runs out at the end of June. We have done a lot of work in recent years inspecting our funding agreement that we have in place with RTOs to make sure that we are able to appropriately hold them to account for their performance and delivery given they are accessing government dollars.

I think we notified providers last week of the final outcome. From 1 July we expect that there will be significantly fewer providers accessing funding or able to access funding in the ACT. We only had 130 providers apply for an ACT funding agreement in place from 1 July. At this stage, 101 of those applicants have been notified that they have been successful.

It is worth noting that, whilst we had historically a much larger number of training providers able to access funding, we very rarely had more than 100 or so providers accessing training. It is a little bit hard to explain, but if you imagine there are a lot of providers that work in a lot of different jurisdictions. They often apply for funding agreements across the country for a whole range of reasons. One is just in case they might be looking to provide or expand their service delivery in other jurisdictions.

The other thing that we have learnt recently is that there have been people applying for a funding agreement simply to bolster their credibility when applying for other funding agreements. The capacity for an RTO to say, “I’ve got funding agreements in five different jurisdictions” might not necessarily be representative of the fact that they deliver training in all of those jurisdictions.

MS FITZHARRIS: For the ones that may operate in the ACT but are not based here, are they regulated, effectively, by the national regulator?

Mr Miller: Yes. They are regulated as an RTO. They are regulated by the national regulator—that is, the Australian Skills Quality Authority. If they are accessing government funding, in addition to meeting the standards that are set by ASQA they also meet the standards and compliance requirements that we require for people to access government funding.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do we know whether there are many ACT-based RTOs that have a significant presence in other jurisdictions?

Mr Miller: There are some—

MS FITZHARRIS: That is, do we have an export market, effectively, with our RTOs?

Mr Miller: I think the short answer is I do not know, but I think from anecdotal evidence it is probably not. I think it is becoming increasingly more difficult for that to be the case because some other jurisdictions, in their move to the entitlements models, have actually restricted interstate providers coming into their marketplace. It is certainly not something that we have entertained. Because we are such a small environment we welcome any quality training providers into the ACT, but in other jurisdictions, if you are not based in their jurisdiction, it is very difficult for you to access funding.

MS FITZHARRIS: Protectionism in the larger states.

Mr Miller: A little bit.

Ms Burch: About 80 per cent of VET students would be with the Canberra Institute of Technology and 20 per cent would be across those other RTOs. We have a number of students coming in from New South Wales that would come into either our private RTOs or the public providers such as CIT.

MS FITZHARRIS: Right.

Mr Miller: It has been interesting to note that, even though we have typically had a fairly large proportion of RTOs who are not based in the ACT able to deliver training, most of the funding amounts that go out that we provide to support training have gone to those based in the ACT. There are a lot of participants from interstate, but they are not accessing a lot of the funding.

MS FITZHARRIS: I guess a slightly broader related question would be the economic impact of vocational training in the ACT, and to some extent in CIT there has been a bit of work done on the higher education sector. I do not know if this is getting into the next output class.

Ms Burch: It is significant. At times there is a right and proper focus on our tertiary institutions, our universities, here. CIT and VET training has been a little bit in the shadow of that as far as the tertiary impact goes, but it has a very significant economic positive impact. I am not quite sure if either David Miller or Shane can quantify it, but it is not insignificant in any way, shape or form.

Mr Kay: We did an exercise similar to what was done with the two universities a few months ago. The estimate we came up with is around \$850 million of economic activity generated by CIT, so it is not insignificant.

Ms Burch: You can talk a bit more on that, Shane. It is a good news story.

THE CHAIR: Or you can tell us less if you have finished with your answer!

Ms Burch: That is significant. There is an investment directly into CIT for thousands of students, and international students, plus it connects into business. We very much have a close connection to industry and serve to meet their needs directly.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of the export side, the international student side, do you have a measure within that, the \$850 million, of what the international student market is worth in CIT?

Mr Kay: I am just trying to recall. I do not know it off the top of my head, but we have about 1,000 international students. Between them there is probably \$8 million-odd worth of fees directly to CIT for that training. Then there is the additional add-on to the economy, which I think is around \$30,000 per individual that they would spend, as independently assessed in the past. So it is quite a lot.

Mr Ryan: There has been data produced on the spend of international students, and it is estimated to be about \$30,000 per student. There are about 1,000 students. We attract students from approximately 80 countries. There is also the multicultural diversity that that brings to both the CIT training environment and Canberra more

broadly. The numbers Mr Kay gave are pretty correct—about \$8 million of direct fees but then significant economic input into the economy.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of job creation through vocational training, the committee has had other evidence around the job-creating nature of the infrastructure projects in particular. I guess through CIT there is a lot of job creation, particularly in that sector. Can you quantify in any way the job creation benefits that are coming through CIT as part of the \$850 million economic benefit?

Ms Burch: If you look at some of the big numbers of schools and what we are producing, just in the trades—electros and plumbing—CIT is the major provider. If you look at aged care and child care, again I would say the majority of all our skilled trades people across our community are ex-students of CIT.

Ms Cover: I refer you to budget paper 3, page 36. There is a graph there that shows the various statistics. You will see on the left-hand side there that, employed after training, CIT graduates are up around 85-plus per cent compared to other TAFEs across Australia.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great.

Ms Burch: I think the partnership with CIT Solutions is really useful and worth exploring, particularly when we have large purchasers such as DFAT that go into a very unique level of discipline and training. Perhaps Mr Ryan can talk about that as well.

Mr Ryan: The minister is correct. We have several large contracts with large employers—the Department of Defence and the Department of Foreign Affairs. We are working on a current project with the Department of Social Services, where we are standing up their My Aged Care screening and assessment workforce. Approximately 1,000 people need to be ready for the new commonwealth My Aged Care by 1 July. Most of the clients we work with are Canberra based, but increasingly we are working nationally and internationally, and that is directly on training workforces to be more economically ready to do their jobs.

Ms Burch: When you look at emerging markets—every community needs plumbers and electricians and aged-care workers—and new industries such as renewable energy, that is where, as a TAFE provider, and particularly as a public provider, there is a very strong role for CIT. Ms Cover might be able to go to some detail of what they are up to.

Ms Cover: Thanks, minister. The CIT has great support from the ACT government in this space in terms of solar sustainability, construction and contract management, project management, conservation and land management, workplace health and safety, and risk management. We are currently working with a number of partners to establish the CIT campus at Bruce as a real renewable centre of excellence, bringing together the contractors that have been successful in the ACT wind farm projects. All of that campus is really set up to be very efficient. The students use the monitoring systems that are in operation at that campus on a daily basis. It is real training, if you like, in terms of the stats that are coming through and the energy savings on that

campus.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. Thanks.

THE CHAIR: If we can go to page 15 of budget paper F, the accountability indicators. In both c and d, where you have overachieved, you have left the target at the lower number. Where you have underachieved, you have still left the higher target. What is the logic behind that? For instance, the total number of students undertaking vocational qualifications—you wanted 30,100, you only got 28,500, but you have left the target of 30,000.

Ms Burch: Mrs Stewart can respond to that.

Mrs Stewart: Thank you, Mr Smyth, for the question. I mentioned this morning in the hearings that we have been going through a process. We go through a process regularly of reviewing our measures and our targets. These measures are relatively new measures and, as such, the targets are also new. We set the targets to be fairly aspirational. We want to see long-term achievement against those targets over time. This is the second year now I think that we have measured outcomes against those targets. We are looking for that long-term achievement against the targets.

THE CHAIR: That is okay for the ones where you have underachieved, but where you have overachieved, why would you not up the target—where it says that for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander students you have done exceedingly well?

Mrs Stewart: That is a good example that you raise, Mr Smyth. There is quite a lot of variability in those actual measures. I think we have mentioned this at hearings previously. Because of the small size of the population we get quite a lot of variability in outcomes. We actually need to measure these targets over time to make sure that it is not just a one-off up or a one-off down in achievement, and to make sure that what we are achieving is a long-term outcome. Those numbers tend to move up and down a little bit because of the small size of the population.

THE CHAIR: All right. But in a sample space of 30,000, for instance, that is not a small sample. What is the variation there, and why is it down?

Mrs Stewart: I am sorry, why is the estimated outcome down?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mrs Stewart: We have seen a drop in some of our participation in vocational education and training over the last 12 to 18 months—probably a little bit longer; 18 months—and we have found it occurred after a change in policy at the Australian government level. There was a change that came in on 1 July—

Mr Miller: 2012. There was a reduction in employer incentives that were provided to employers to take on apprentices. That has impacted on, I guess, what you see as the targets as well as the outcome in a couple of ways. It means that in the lead-up to the conclusion of that financial year, so towards June 2012, you actually saw a really sharp rise in the number of people being signed up into apprenticeships or traineeships

because the incentives were about to cease. Since that time you have seen a steady decline as the incentives have been taken away.

When you are looking at comparisons that go back to that period—and I think some of these targets were actually set based on some of the 2012 results—you see this decline that has occurred since then with the withdrawal of the incentives. So the performance as a result does not fare well by comparison.

Obviously the number of people in training also relates to general consumer confidence and employer confidence. That impacts on their decisions as to whether or not they are willing to take on apprentices or trainees. There are lots of things that we obviously try and do to encourage people to take on apprentices, but equally there are things that are happening at the national level and that are to do with the broader state of finances. The construction industry is another good example. If there is a downturn in the construction industry then you will see a decline in apprenticeship commencements as well. Those sorts of things that are not necessarily within our control also have a direct impact on our capacity to try and meet those aspirational targets.

Mrs Stewart: Mr Smyth, I will say it was not just the fact that we noticed this change when the incentives ceased on 1 July 2012; it was also that this was replicated right across the nation. We have seen nationally, in all states and territories, a similar sort of response.

THE CHAIR: Thanks for that. On a slightly different tack, Ms Cover, you are the acting CEO. What is the timetable for the appointment of a new CEO for CIT?

Ms Cover: You would be aware, Mr Smyth, that the ACT government is in the process of appointing a board, which is scheduled to operate from 1 July. In that amendment that was put before the government in November last year there is provision for a transitional arrangement for the chief executive, and that comes into play on 1 July.

THE CHAIR: So how quickly after 1 July will there be a new CEO? Or will that happen on 1 July?

Ms Burch: No, it will not happen on 1 July. That is a conversation I will have with the board once they are in place.

THE CHAIR: So appoint the board and then task the board with appointing a CEO?

Ms Burch: Yes.

THE CHAIR: So when would you expect a CEO to be appointed?

Ms Burch: I will have a conversation with the board when they are in place, Mr Smyth, and we will work through the timing with that.

THE CHAIR: So when did Mr Marron effectively resign?

Ms Burch: On 15 May. He completed his contract, but he has been out of the position since the latter part of last year.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: Minister, I want to ask about the announcement around the CIT Tuggeranong campus, which you—

Ms Burch: Yes, and a grand announcement it was too.

MS FITZHARRIS: I know. Could you tell us about that announcement, when more details will be known and what we can expect to see in the next financial year?

Ms Burch: This is an exciting announcement for Tuggeranong. I am very pleased that we will see a CIT campus in Tuggeranong taking students from the middle of next year. I will go to Dr Stenlake to talk to the detail. We are finalising the lease arrangements. There was some earlier consideration about a build, but we are going to repurpose an existing building now, and we cannot release the details because we are in the final part of that. Certainly conversations have started with Woden campus and across the broader CIT about what courses could be on offer there. I will go to Dr Stenlake about the details.

Dr Stenlake: What we are hoping to do in Tuggeranong is to realise the vision that CIT has of what sort of RTO we will be in 2020, but we think we can do that in Tuggeranong in 2016. What we look to do there is to build on the diversity of our offerings, to offer full qualifications from certificate II to advanced diploma, with pathways to degree, to a diverse range of clients from Tuggeranong and also more widely.

We are looking to achieve two outcomes with the expansion of CIT in Tuggeranong. Firstly, we are looking to offer CIT services to the people that are living in that locality. We are also looking to attract activity into the Tuggeranong area to support businesses that are located in that area so that they can be more sustainable.

With that view in mind we are looking to engage around five distinct client groups. The first group that we are looking at is what you might see as our traditional customer base for CIT, which are those looking for a career change or a career start, and they will be able to access those qualifications at Tuggeranong. I will give a few examples of what might be of interest to that group. The delivery of our year 10 equivalent program will be available down there, and other full qualifications such as population health, biometrics and accounting. So from a range of industry areas we are looking to deliver in the Tuggeranong space.

Probably more focused on increasing the activity in the Tuggeranong area, we are hoping to attract professionals and existing workers to upskill, either as individuals accessing CIT services or as groups. This might be full qualifications or skill sets. Some examples of those that are looking to upskill might be to offer qualifications such as project management or workplace health and safety. I think that was talked about earlier, about transitioning tradies to work in the workplace health and safety space. In addition those that are already working in a particular industry—ones that

we are targeting are child care, management and ICT—will be able to achieve qualification through a blend of delivery and recognition.

CIT Tuggeranong will have a focus on business and innovation, aligned with the general government direction. We are looking to work with the CBR Innovation Network to deliver programs, be they new programs that we will develop for that purpose or existing qualifications to support other entrepreneurs and start-ups.

We are also looking to add some broader value to the Tuggeranong community by the delivery of short programs that are offered through CIT Solutions, with a particular focus on the recreational evening programs. Again we are looking at engaging the broader sector of the population in the Tuggeranong area. Finally, we are looking to work with local schools and colleges to provide pathways for students.

MS FITZHARRIS: So it will be really embedded in the local community?

Ms Burch: Absolutely, and part of that ongoing discussion with the colleges will be the interconnect with the trades training centres. Whilst there is a resource in the local community with trades training centres, we will not replicate that at the site in Tuggeranong. We will be looking at where those partnerships can be explored and put into place.

Dr Stenlake: With almost 1,000 staff at CIT, we have some really great capability within our people that we can leverage off to offer a whole range of services through that area.

Ms Burch: And a positive response from the Woden staff about moving.

Dr Stenlake: Yes. We have already started consultation with the staff that are based at Woden. That started with a number of forums that we ran last week or the week before. Now we are down to individual conversations at department level with those that are based at Woden. Those processes will be continuing. At the moment they are fairly broad, but ultimately they will go into the detail of where people are going and what facilities will be available for themselves. As you can probably appreciate, the main focus of our staff is what opportunities there will be for their students.

MS FITZHARRIS: With it potentially having students from the middle of next year, will that be at capacity or will that just be the first enrolment?

Dr Stenlake: We hope to start with instant volume. We have 12 months lead time. That will help us in developing some new educational products that would be suited to the market there. It also gives us an opportunity to build relationships with both government agencies and businesses that are based in that area and establish what their skill needs are with a view to delivering that from the middle of 2016. So we are absolutely committed to this project. It has been a while coming, and we are looking at it being a very successful enterprise which we can then use as a model as we progress our vision for campus modernisation more broadly.

MS FITZHARRIS: How many students do you anticipate being able to access the Tuggeranong campus in any given year?

Ms Burch: At any one time it is 300—

Dr Stenlake: 330.

Ms Burch: That is at any one time. Again, having CIT Solutions as part of the mix, even in terms of sweating the asset, I think it will really be worked through. When I have spoken with different businesses, they are really interested in that night-time generation of activity as well.

Dr Stenlake: That is right.

THE CHAIR: So 330 students; how many teachers?

Dr Stenlake: That will depend. What we are looking to do in terms of the staff profile at CIT Tuggeranong is have a multidisciplinary team. As I said earlier, we are looking to build on the diversity of what we offer broadly across CIT. We will probably have a core staff of approximately six people in the teaching space, with some support services through the learning commons type approach, which replicates to some degree what is happening there now. Also we would have a hot desking situation. So depending on what we are delivering and when we are delivering it, staff from all across CIT will have the opportunity to deliver at CIT Tuggeranong.

We are looking for a very upmarket, contemporary fit-out. We are looking for state-of-the-art technology in terms of our computer set-up, the wi-fi network, the internet and so on. There will be a fair degree of tech-savvy staff that are positioned out there as well.

THE CHAIR: And floor space?

Dr Stenlake: Floor space? I can give you that data. The new floor space—hopefully, I will not be revealing too many secrets—is 1,665 metres squared.

Ms Burch: The current is about 300.

THE CHAIR: When we were talking about building a new building, was it not to be about 2,000 square metres? Is that a reduction?

Mr Kay: It was going to be around 2,000. The usable space, though, was around 1,600, once you take out all the plant rooms and that sort of stuff. That is equivalent to what we have now. It is very much the same.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, a supplementary.

MR DOSZPOT: How many staff will be left at Woden?

Dr Stenlake: Two key messages: we are really committed to maintaining a presence at Woden, and there will be a staged transition from Woden campus that will take place during 2016. We are looking to construct that with minimal disruption to students. Some of that timing will depend on when we can find suitable alternative

accommodation for the program areas. Whilst we might aim for some time during 2016, it will depend on a number of factors. Ultimately, we are looking to have that presence at Woden located in the town centre, so that there is improved accessibility for students. At this point there has been nowhere that has been identified as suitable. But that is the ultimate vision.

I am very mindful, in my role as executive director of people, that we manage this process very carefully. We appreciate how important it is to individuals as to where they work and how they work. We have an extensive consultation process with existing staff, and we will be making sure that whether it is a group that is remaining at the existing Woden campus, a group that is transitioning to a new presence in Woden, in the town centre, or whether it is transitioning to other parts of CIT, the needs of those staff will be looked after.

MR DOSZPOT: You have not answered the question in terms of how many staff will be left.

Dr Stenlake: As I say, it is probably too hard to say at this point because it depends on a number of factors.

MR DOSZPOT: How many have you got there now?

Dr Stenlake: We have about 120 staff currently located there.

MR DOSZPOT: Will you have 20 staff left or 40 staff? Can you give me some approximation?

Dr Stenlake: Probably we would have—

Ms Burch: It depends on what is left there. As we move through and confirm what moves to Tuggeranong, what moves to Reid and what moves elsewhere, we will be able to come back and give you that information.

MR DOSZPOT: Is Woden CIT transferring to the LDA after that?

Ms Burch: There is no firm decision. It is part of our modernisation strategy. It is about investing in one asset and realising it in another asset. We need investments in Reid; we need investments in Bruce. Certainly, with Woden campus, it should come as no surprise to anybody to say it is an older, ageing campus and it is really not fit for purpose for a modern teaching and learning environment. We need to get out of that, so to speak, and put that investment in other locations.

Dr Stenlake: My preference would be that we can make that transition so that there is not a small presence that remains there and that we are able to identify suitable premises in the town centre. We are not able to progress that at this point but that is what we are aiming towards.

Ms Burch: I will ask Mr Kay to talk a little bit about what that may look like, recognising that we are seeking to build up a Gungahlin model, in some ways, in Woden and have that community presence within the town centre. At the moment CIT

is out. Mr Kay, did you want to make some comments?

MR DOSZPOT: Can I just come back to Woden for a moment?

THE CHAIR: Very quickly, because this is a long string of supps and we have to move down the line if we are going to get this done by quarter past five. We need to wrap up, if we could.

MR DOSZPOT: In terms of a town centre location, has that been found yet? Has that been identified?

Dr Stenlake: No, and that is why I cannot answer your question with a number.

Mr Kay: The campus modernisation strategy is about a long-term vision for CIT's assets. It is about producing fit-for-purpose, contemporary, modern facilities for our students and our clients. We all know that the majority of our campuses, especially Woden, are very old and dated. They cost a considerable amount of money to maintain. Our focus in modernising our assets is on getting rid of the old ones that are costing us a lot of money to maintain and building new ones that are fit for purpose and really suitable for our students moving forward.

They will also be a lot cheaper to run, which releases recurrent money that we can put back into teaching or resources for teaching rather than wasting it on facilities. The strategy is all about moving off so many large campuses to more non-estate-based campuses—more building-type arrangements rather than spread-out campuses which cost a lot of money to maintain.

Part of that is about getting facilities out into the town centres on really good public transport routes so that they are very accessible for people in all of the town centres to get to. Tuggeranong is a perfect example of that. What we have in Gungahlin is a perfect example of that. We want to move into Woden town centre because where we are now is not optimal for our students because it is not just a matter of taking one bus but a couple of buses. It is hard to get to. We want to improve that.

In the future we might be looking at putting those smaller campuses in north Gungahlin, Belconnen—all the different town centres around town. That is what we are looking at as a strategy. The strategy is long. It is probably out for another 15 or 16 years at this stage. I do not think I will be around to see the end of it but it is certainly a very exciting journey to start on. It is a really exciting concept, and it is really refocusing on what is best for our students and our clients while at the same time saving money to put back into what we are really there for. We are not there to run massive estates of campuses. I think we spend over \$20 million a year trying to maintain them and run them. That is not a good use of taxpayers' money.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, do you have a supplementary?

MS LAWDER: No. In the interests of time, I will forgo that.

THE CHAIR: A new question from Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, there is \$1.7 million in the budget update flyer for Belconnen, which is for Bruce upgrades. Could you tell us the what, where and when of that please?

Ms Burch: Ms Cover or Mr Kay can give you the detail about that.

Ms Cover: We are still working through, as Dr Stenlake said, the transition of Woden to Tuggeranong, Bruce and Reid campuses. But we have had some early discussions about the possibilities of the refurbishment of the Bruce and Reid campus in terms of those programs. Currently we are considering the Bruce campus refurbishment for health sciences and children's education and care departments. We are in the early stages of those consultations but that would make synergies with the Bruce precinct which already has a very large and successful presence around the sport, fitness and recreation, health and wellbeing campus that is at Bruce. But it also creates opportunities for pathways and collaboration with the University of Canberra's activities in those areas as well.

DR BOURKE: Apart from a refurbishment of the health sciences, primarily what is it going to be?

Ms Cover: And children's education.

Dr Stenlake: Noting that we are looking to provide training in child care at the CIT Tuggeranong for those who are currently working in the industry, there will be an opportunity for people who are living south of the lake to access that program, which has large numbers.

DR BOURKE: Are you able to give me any more details and specifics about that refurbishment?

Ms Burch: At Bruce?

DR BOURKE: Yes.

Ms Cover: Not at this stage in terms of exactly which departments will go into which spaces. But obviously we will be making sure that it is as seamless as we can for students in terms of what is offered and when and, as I said, trying to get like departments and synergies to work for us and for the students wherever possible. With that very large presence of health, sport, fitness, recreation, wellness and wellbeing at Bruce, that is, I guess, where we are looking to bring that group across to Bruce.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: I want to refer to the statement of intent for 2015-16 on page 32, about halfway down. Firstly let me congratulate you on your irony in offering a certificate II in spoke and written English. But my actual question relates to the certificate II in Auslan, where in 2014 you have a budget target of nominal hours of 1,000 and then zero in 2015. Can you tell me what your target in 2016 will be for the certificate II in Auslan?

Ms Burch: I will ask Ms Grayson to provide detail on that.

Ms Grayson: In regard to the certificate II in Auslan, until very recently it was understood that the program would not be available to new students as its accreditation was going to expire. We have heard just recently from our national regulator that the accreditation has been extended for another 12 months. The full suite of Auslan certificate programs—certs II, III, IV and diploma, although I am not sure about the diploma—have been extended for 12 months. That extension is one aspect of it.

We have been in discussions with professional associations—the Deaf Society as well as Disability ACT—to review what the needs and demands are. Particularly we will be looking at how we may be able to meet the needs of people seeking training in Auslan. We need to remember that the statistics at this point in time actually show that we have a large proportion of people completing the programs through CIT Solutions—that is Auslan I and Auslan II—and there have been approximately 50, I believe, who have been enrolled in that program this year, whereas in our certificate III in Auslan that we started this year, where there were 19 enrolments, 17 commenced and at this point in time we have 12 who are currently active in the program. We need to take into account a whole range of aspects as well as being involved in the consultations that are taking place to actually plan for what will be on offer next year.

MS LAWDER: At this point you have not set a target for 2016?

Ms Grayson: That is correct.

Ms Cover: To clarify that profile that is in the statement of intent, we do that on an annual basis in conjunction with industry and the Education and Training Directorate.

MS LAWDER: At what time of the year would you normally set those targets for the following year?

Ms Cover: We start to discuss with industry and departments around October. We have an open day in August, which gives us some indication of interest in some of those programs. Each of the colleges has an advisory committee that meets throughout the year and we get input that way. Education and Training provides us their intelligence from their conversations as well from a number of sources. We try to do that in the last quarter of the year so that we can prepare with enough lead-in time the resources in terms of teaching and physical resources that we are going to need to deliver those programs.

MS LAWDER: Do you advertise the certificate II, for example, on your website prior to the open day?

Ms Grayson: The advertisement? We have a full promotional campaign for all of our programs. Once we are clear on what we will be able to offer and in what form, where it is going to be based, with other partners, whatever the program will be, that will be available not only at open day—we would be planning for an open day—but also will be going automatically onto our website. What is convenient about the website is that

we are able to keep that current rather than just print-based material.

Ms Burch: There was quite an extensive question on notice—perhaps we could provide that to the committee—that goes to how we advertised and promoted it.

MS LAWDER: On page 34 of the statement of intent it has the certificate III in Auslan, which has 1,000 nominal hours in 2014 but 10,000 nominal hours in 2015. What is the tenfold increase from?

Ms Grayson: The suite of programs that we have offered in the past have included the certificate II level that develop skills in people that are required to move to the certificate III, although you do not actually have to have the full certificate to complete the certificate III. There has been a plan over the last couple of years to actually offer the certificate II so that there would be sufficient people to take up the certificate III. For 2015 the plan was—and this is where indications had been—to have the certificate III on offer; hence the nominal hours were placed to the certificate III.

MS LAWDER: How many people did you have in 2014 in the certificate III in Auslan?

Ms Grayson: There were no enrolments—I believe this is correct—in the certificate III. There were enrolments in the certificate II.

MS LAWDER: Even though you had a target of 1,000 hours in 2014?

Ms Grayson: Sorry, there may not have been any new enrolments in the certificate III. We always have a small number of hours where there is a pipeline effect. Those hours may have been put there to actually accommodate those who would not have completed the cert II.

MS LAWDER: Were there any that took that up?

Ms Grayson: I would have to check that information.

MS LAWDER: One thousand to 10,000 is a big increase, especially when you compare it to the certificate II numbers. Will you be running the certificate III in 2016?

Ms Grayson: Determining what programs we actually run in 2016, whether it is the certificate II, certificate III, whether we do it with a partner, is taking place in discussions at the moment. That will need to be confirmed before open day and the promotion of it.

MS LAWDER: But definitely for the open day the promotion will be there for certificate II and certificate III?

Ms Grayson: If the decision to actually run those programs has been made, yes.

MS LAWDER: And that is presumably made in October, which is after the open

day?

Ms Cover: The final decision is what gets put into the statement of intent in terms of the academic year. That is the way that the timing runs for it. But those conversations and negotiations are happening at the moment and they will determine the exact date and when we will know what is going to be advertised for open day. Indeed, after open day if we get new courses in various programs we advertise those through other forms of media, be it the web or radio or television as well.

MS LAWDER: I think someone mentioned that 50 or 60 people did the course from CIT Solutions.

Ms Burch: There are five short courses in Auslan I that have been delivered so far this year to 60 students. That compares to 19 back in 2013; that is my understanding. The discussion around Auslan has been: what is the offering, what is the level? Is it introductory, such as CIT Solutions? That seems to be the most popular course, through to cert II and cert III, and then what is on offer or how can we support Auslan practitioners should they want to go on and be an interpreter, which is separate and additional work again, because you need to go through and attain your interpreting diploma or more on top of anything that is offered through CIT. What we are trying to do is match what is the community demand and what is the level of highest community demand, and respond to that. Additionally—

MS LAWDER: If you are not offering certificate II then it seems quite logical that more people will do the Auslan I and II course at CIT Solutions, which is not equivalent at all.

Ms Grayson: The numbers of people who are attracted to the CIT Solutions programs are much larger than those who have actually enrolled within the accredited programs.

MS LAWDER: It is like a taster, if you like?

Ms Grayson: They are basic skills that people want to learn to develop their skills development. Once they have those skills, they can actually bring those to any accredited program and demonstrate that and have them recognised as prior learning. A large proportion of people take that up rather than actually maintain and sustain training in accredited programs. Anecdotally, in relation to the number of people that withdraw from accredited training, generally you can see the decline through the semester. As we get to assessment time there tends to be a drop-off there as well.

MS LAWDER: I have done that course. I appreciate your—

Ms Grayson: There are other preferences.

MS LAWDER: In your earlier comments you referred to the certificate II, certificate III and the diploma. Is there a diploma in Auslan offered at CIT?

Ms Grayson: Not at this stage.

MS LAWDER: Has there ever been a diploma offered?

Ms Grayson: There has been some years ago a diploma in Auslan but there is also the current diploma of interpreting. Those diploma qualifications change from time to time depending on what is happening at the national level, what the national accreditation agencies are looking at in the professional space and moving through for articulation to the higher degree programs as well. The movement at the diploma level depends on quite a range of things.

Ms Burch: There are other providers in town. If community members have an interest in Auslan, CIT is not the only provider that they can access.

Ms Grayson: Thank you, minister. The Deaf Society of New South Wales is an RTO for the delivery of programs of certificates II, III, IV and, I believe, the diploma. We are in current conversations with the society to see how we perhaps could partner in that space with them. There are discussions between our director of this space and the Deaf Society at this point in time to see how we may be able to have students who are interested engage with the Deaf Society. Without having to leave the ACT they can actually attend workshops or something here within the ACT but with a large proportion of the training being online, as has been offered by a number of providers.

MS LAWDER: Are you able to tell me whom you have been dealing with at the Deaf Society of New South Wales?

Ms Grayson: I would need to confirm that with our college director who has made contact since May this year.

MS LAWDER: Can you take that on notice?

Ms Grayson: Yes.

THE CHAIR: We will have a final question from Mr Doszpot on CIT and then move onto the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, what is the current situation with delivery of various elements of the electrotechnology course at CIT?

Ms Burch: Ms Grayson might be able to talk to that.

Ms Grayson: In regard to electrotechnology in particular, we have always had a close working relationship with industry and with the regulator. That has been strengthened over recent months. We have all our staff trained to the appropriate standards both for our national regulator and for the industry regulator requirements. We have regular meetings with our industry employers engaged in advisory group meetings and reference group meetings. There is a significant amount of activity working closely with employers and industry and having our staff involved.

MR DOSZPOT: To clarify, do you believe the electrotechnology course at CIT delivers the full complement of training that is required under our current laws?

Ms Grayson: Yes, I do.

MR DOSZPOT: Are all CIT trainers delivering this course fully and appropriately qualified to do so?

Ms Burch: Yes.

Ms Grayson: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Both in terms of being a certified trainer and in terms of being a licensed electrician?

Ms Burch: CIT electrical trades teaching staff are skilled and qualified in meeting the requirements of the training package, ACT industry regulation and the ACT public service CIT teaching staff enterprise agreement.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you. Who is currently delivering or overseeing the RPL process related to the electrotechnology courses?

Ms Grayson: Staff within the department and the head of department for that area.

Ms Burch: Are you finished Mr Doszpot?

MR DOSZPOT: No, I am not.

Ms Burch: I wanted to make a final comment about Adrian Marron before we finish on CIT.

THE CHAIR: We will give you that opportunity. Mr Doszpot, a few more questions; then we will wrap up.

MR DOSZPOT: Have all issues relating the gaps in training and lack of relevant teaching and resources been addressed in electrotechnology?

Ms Burch: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Burch, are you answering?

Ms Burch: I think we had an extensive session on this in annual reports. There was also extensive response to various submissions provided to the relevant committee. An overarching statement would be the concern regarding the lack of sufficient training of apprentices by CIT. It is simply unfounded.

MR DOSZPOT: I will move on to the next point: has CIT changed how it delivers training to roof tilers, given industry complaints about the quality of training in this area and given that the matter has received attention in a recent Legislative Assembly committee inquiry?

Ms Burch: Roof tilers?

Ms Cover: I am not aware of any complaints in relation to that area, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: I will get you some clarification on that. Has the appointment of head of electrotechnology been completed?

Ms Grayson: Yes, it has.

MR DOSZPOT: Can we know who it is?

Ms Grayson: The staff member who was successful—the person who was successful to take up the position—is Josephine Whitfield.

MR DOSZPOT: How was the position advertised?

Ms Grayson: Through the normal requirements. We met all of the government requirements—full merit selection.

MR DOSZPOT: External advertising as well?

Ms Grayson: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Can we have a copy of the selection criteria?

Ms Grayson: The position description is the selection criteria—which is available.

Ms Burch: That would be publicly available.

Ms Grayson: Yes, that is correct.

MR DOSZPOT: Was a selection panel appointed?

Ms Grayson: We followed due process in regard to the selection; so yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Who appointed the panel and can you tell us who was on the panel?

Ms Grayson: I would need to check whether we can actually divulge the information.

Ms Burch: We will take some advice, Mr Doszpot, but you seem to have a question about the merit or otherwise of this appointment. As Ms Grayson has said, it followed all the staff enterprise agreement—

MR DOSZPOT: Ms Burch, I am simply asking for information.

Ms Burch: It was publicly available and it was appointed on merit.

MR DOSZPOT: I am simply asking questions; there is no reference or inference. How many candidates were interviewed for the position?

Ms Burch: We will take that on notice and get back to you what we can.

MR DOSZPOT: Okay. How many cases of bullying, workplace harassment or

similar have been logged in the last 18 months?

MS FITZHARRIS: Chair, is this really all—

THE CHAIR: He has only been going for three minutes. It is okay. We will finish at a quarter past.

Ms Burch: Mr Doszpot, you continue to come into these various committee structures with a focus on bullying and harassment. But to satisfy you, CIT has appropriate policies in place to address workplace issues. All CIT staff are required to complete training annually in bullying prevention—

MR DOSZPOT: Excuse me, minister, can I just—

Ms Burch: Let me finish, Mr Doszpot. As a result of complaints raised with the Commissioner for Public Administration in 2012, CIT was required to take no further action. There are currently no investigations in progress relating to inappropriate workplace behaviour of CIT employees. Since January of 2013, five staff complaints or issues have resulted in one preliminary assessment and investigation procedures within the enterprise agreement. As a result of these processes, I think three staff have been counselled in relation to inappropriate behaviour.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, my question was, and I am happy for you to take this on notice: how many claims of bullying or workplace harassment or similar have been lodged in the last 18 months? I am happy to have you take that on notice.

Ms Burch: Are you ever going to let CIT rest on this, Mr Doszpot? A question for you.

MR DOSZPOT: When we stop getting the public coming to us, we will.

Ms Burch: You have had public come to you. You have had an independent review of this, and it—

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, you are not here to question us. This is—

Ms Burch: No; with all due respect, I have the team of CIT sitting here. They do fabulous work. At every opportunity you raise the spectre that it is a dysfunctional organisation with an inherent attitude of bullying and harassment. That is simply not the case.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, our task—

Ms Burch: Simply not the case.

MR DOSZPOT: Minister, I am not here to be lectured by you.

THE CHAIR: Minister, come to order, please. The member is entitled to ask questions. On history, the questions have been—

Ms Burch: He is not a member of this committee—

THE CHAIR: The questions—

Ms Burch: He is a guest of this committee, and I have responded.

THE CHAIR: Excuse me, minister. I run the committee, not you.

Ms Burch: And I answer as I see fit.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, as a member of the Assembly, is entitled to be here. He is entitled to ask the questions which, based on past history, have been well-founded.

Ms Burch: No; with due respect, chair, the public service commission review on this—

THE CHAIR: I am not here to argue with you. I am not here to argue with you.

Ms Burch: No; you are trying to put on record that CIT was found to have a culture of bullying and harassment. That is simply not the case and I will not let it stand.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. It is now quarter past and we need to finish this area. We will move on to the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority.

Ms Burch: Before we move on, I would like to make a statement, with the grace and patience of the next group of witnesses, in regard to Adrian Marron. He retired on 15 May. He has been out of the position since about November of last year. I want to put on record—you can smirk and be smug about this—but I have no hesitation—

THE CHAIR: Excuse me; come to order!

Ms Burch: I have no hesitation—

THE CHAIR: No, sorry, minister; come to order. You will withdraw that statement.

Ms Burch: What statement—that you were smirking just then?

THE CHAIR: You will withdraw the statement.

Ms Burch: Well, if you were not smirking I will withdraw it, but I want to take—

THE CHAIR: No, no; sorry. It is without qualification. You know the rules. You will withdraw.

DR BOURKE: No, chair; there is no point of order here.

THE CHAIR: Exactly, but—

DR BOURKE: Chair, there is no point of order.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, I do not need your assistance. You will withdraw without qualification.

DR BOURKE: Yes, you do, chair, because you clearly do not understand the standing orders.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke, you will come to order. Minister, you will withdraw that qualification.

Ms Burch: Now you are calling a committee member to come to order.

THE CHAIR: I am entitled to call a committee member to come to order.

Ms Burch: I do not know if that is appropriate.

THE CHAIR: You will withdraw without qualification.

Ms Burch: Look, I will take some advice on that—

THE CHAIR: No, no; you will withdraw without qualification.

Ms Burch: because I think there is a question about whether I am required to or not in these proceedings.

THE CHAIR: Well, I am the chair of the committee and I run the committee as I see fit.

Ms Burch: So it is your rules?

THE CHAIR: No, not at all. It is the standing—

Ms Burch: It is the Brendan Smyth rules of the world, is it?

THE CHAIR: All right; you can withdraw that as well.

Ms Burch: Well, I do not know.

THE CHAIR: Various members—

Ms Burch: You just said that you will conduct this—

THE CHAIR: Various members in the last—

Ms Burch: in the way you see fit.

THE CHAIR: Please be quiet, minister! Various members in the last seven or eight days have been asked to withdraw comments. They have withdrawn without qualification.

Ms Burch: Well, I am not really aware of it.

THE CHAIR: I expect you to withdraw without qualification now.

Ms Burch: I will take some advice, Mr Smyth.

THE CHAIR: No, you will not take advice. You will withdraw without qualification.

Ms Burch: Well, I am entitled to take some advice, I think, Mr Smyth. I am entitled to take some advice.

THE CHAIR: No; the standing orders say you will withdraw.

DR BOURKE: The standing orders say no such things.

THE CHAIR: Yes, it does, Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: It does not.

Ms Burch: Well, I will take some advice because I do know the standing orders. There seems to be—

THE CHAIR: All right. You go and get your advice and you may find yourself in contempt of the committee.

Ms Burch: Well, I will take some advice. That is all I am suggesting, chair.

THE CHAIR: No, no; this is not how it works, minister. If the chair of the committee makes—

Ms Burch: I am not entitled to take advice?

THE CHAIR: a request, then you have to comply with the request.

Ms Burch: I put it to you—I am not entitled?—that you are denying me my right to take advice.

THE CHAIR: No; I have ruled that you should withdraw and I am asking you to withdraw.

Ms Burch: Under what standing order should I need to withdraw?

THE CHAIR: Other members—it is the same standing orders as apply in the house that apply in this place.

Ms Burch: Is it?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Ms Burch: Oh, well, I will take some advice on that. But I actually want to get to the statement I wanted to make on Mr Marron.

THE CHAIR: If you want to get to a statement, you will withdraw.

Ms Burch: I will withdraw.

THE CHAIR: Right, thank you.

Ms Burch: But I will also take some advice and if I find—

THE CHAIR: Go for your life.

Ms Burch: your position to be incorrect I will come back and advise you, Ms Smyth.

THE CHAIR: You can do whatever you want, minister, outside of this place.

Ms Burch: No; I might come back and do it within this place. But I want to get back to making a statement on Mr Marron, who retired on 15 May. I want to put it on record that I have the utmost admiration for his leadership of and guidance in CIT. In his tenure here he showed strong leadership and set the organisation up for the change that it is about to embark on with an independent chair. I want it on record to all the staff here that I have utmost admiration for Mr Marron and the team at CIT.

Every time there is rumour and this reference that it has a culture of bullying, I will not stand by and let that wrong be perpetuated by members of this committee under the guise of questioning on the budget. Thank you to the CIT executive and to Mr Marron for his leadership. I wish him well in his struggles with his health. As I have said, I think it is very unfortunate that the so-called aspirant of a minister—

THE CHAIR: Sorry, sorry—

Ms Burch: for education continues—

THE CHAIR: excuse me—

Ms Burch: to downgrade CIT.

THE CHAIR: Excuse me, you asked for leave to thank Mr Marron. You should stop at that.

Ms Burch: I have just stopped.

THE CHAIR: If the education department staff are leaving at this stage, thank you for your attendance here today. For those that have taken questions on notice, if they could be provided within five working days that would be appreciated. A transcript will be available shortly. I ask people to view that transcript. If you have any corrections or suggestions, the committee would be interested in seeing them. With that, we call the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority.

Ms Grayson: Excuse me, Mr Smyth, I do have the name of the person: Andrew Wiltshire. Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: Mr Chair, before we start the questioning, can I take advice from you? I am here to ask the minister questions. I am not here to be lectured by the minister.

THE CHAIR: I will run the committee, Mr Doszpot. It is fine. The committee now welcomes the ACT Building and Construction Industry Training Fund Authority. Mr Carter, you were not here at the start; so I will go through the rigmarole. Please be aware that proceedings today are being broadcast and transcribed by Hansard and will be published. The proceedings are also being broadcast as well as webstreamed. Just for the record, could you please confirm for the committee that you have read the privilege statement on the desk in front of you and that you understand the implications?

Mr Carter: I have. Good afternoon everybody.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I understand that Mr Service is not with us. He gave me his apology on the weekend. Would you like to make an opening statement on behalf of the authority?

Ms Carter: Thank you, chair. I will. The authority is the statutory body responsible for providing funding for training of eligible workers in the ACT building and construction industry. The authority is responsible for the administration of the fund and collection of a training levy of 0.2 per cent calculated from the cost of the work. The levy is collected from building and construction work in the ACT where that total cost exceeds \$10,000 and meets the criteria within schedule 1 of our act.

The authority works closely with industry stakeholders, industry bodies, businesses and the ACT government and its agencies and directorates to promote the role of the authority to ensure compliance with the act which in turn provides funding for upskilling eligible workers and incentives for entry level training. The aim of this is to increase the number of apprentices entering the industry and to provide assistance to employers of apprentices where skill shortages have been identified by industry.

The authority also provides a number of funding initiatives that support the employment and training of both entry level workers and existing workers of identified groups, those being people with special needs within the industry. This includes Indigenous Australians, people requiring numeracy and literacy support, women in non-traditional trades, people who have a disability or people returning to the building and construction industry after significant injury.

This financial year the authority expects to fund approximately \$4.3 million across the five training programs within the training plan. The authority has provided approximately \$1 million to eligible workers who have completed the regulated asbestos awareness program in this financial year alone, with some 12,000 workers funded since 1 July 2014. This was met within existing reserves and funds of the authority's accounts, which will probably show a reduction of about \$1.4 million on what would have been posted in our 2013-14 financial records.

New entrant level training and support initiatives will show an increase of

approximately \$500,000 over the previous year. The funding is in excess of \$300,000 to employers of apprentices in particular in our skill shortage nominated trades. During 2014 there were seven trades identified for skills shortage. 2015 identifies up to 10 trades. I mention the two years because we operate the training plan on a calendar year but we report on a financial year. So we will be funding approximately 17 trades at different stages during a financial year.

Access and equity programs are forecast to see expenditure for 2015 at approximately \$100,000. That is a significant increase on the \$18,000 that was recorded in our 2013-14 financial year. The authority's key priorities continue to be support of group training apprenticeships and apprenticeship training, skills shortage apprenticeships, access and equity support, existing worker and upskilling training, including all training that supports increases in workplace health and safety compliance, skills and safety. Do you wish to add anything, minister?

Ms Burch: No, I think you have done a grand job, Glenn.

THE CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Carter. I will let the deputy chair go first and I will give my question to Mr Doszpot.

MS FITZHARRIS: I want to ask about your specific programs for women in building and construction. Could you outline some of the initiatives that you have underway there? I note your website says that a recent trend is that emerging technologies are leading to a higher demand for people with the right skills and qualifications to specialise in new technologies. Do you see that area, in particular, as providing more opportunity for women?

Mr Carter: The new technology area is shifting and changing a range of skills development across all trades. We have had—it is before my time—support for women in non-traditional trades and a focus on trying to make the industry more, I guess, appealing to females. Again, individual organisations will have their own emphasis on how they may go about that. The major program we provide is a \$4,000 per year incentive to employers that will employ females in non-traditional trades for training where that training is done under an apprenticeship in an ACT training contract. That is primarily the specifics around that.

We fund and support a range of initiatives that help promote—I know CIT were previously in here before and they ran a women's skills development program. There have been a number of programs over different years where trade taster programs have been offered for females in specific trade training programs. Anything like that where we are approached for funding support, we will.

This year we have offered direct funding to the Master Builders Association who are working in conjunction with CCCares to offer support for females in their specific learning programs, but not just for the females; for partners of females that may find themselves in need of further support and opportunity that might give them an opportunity to gain full-time employment in the sector.

MS FITZHARRIS: Do you have any data on the number of women currently working in the building and construction sector and whether that has increased?

Mr Carter: I do not, but we take our data off the Education and Training Directorate in terms of whom and how we fund. Primarily, from memory, there are probably more in the electrical area.

MS FITZHARRIS: Will you take that on notice?

Ms Burch: We can provide some information to the committee, but in response to your question about what are we doing to support women in trades and are there opportunities in the new emerging industries, I think there are. Getting on the front foot in these industries that have not developed any inherent culture, positive or negative—renewable energy or other high skill industries—is a good chance to ask, “How do you encourage women to get involved from the start?” There are more female electricians than there are probably plumbers than there are probably brickies and concrete pourers as well. It is about looking at how we can facilitate that.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, you can have my question.

MR DOSZPOT: Thank you, Mr Chair. Good afternoon, Mr Carter. Good to see you again.

Mr Carter: Yes, you too, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: My question is related to what has been asked of you. I am going through your KPIs. For many years the number of audits completed has been 18 and then in 2004 it went up to 25. We never get to see what actually happened. When you say you are going to have 25 audits, do you achieve your target of 25 audits?

Mr Carter: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: Because we only get to see the projections.

Mr Carter: No, we achieve those audits. In most instances we overachieve.

MR DOSZPOT: That is related to the number of projects you have underway?

Mr Carter: That is in relation to those large RTOs that have made claim through the authority for funding, for advanced funding, over a calendar year. We have a rotational policy whereby we do not undertake the audits themselves. We engage somebody to go out and meet with those organisations to check essentially compliance with the eligibility criteria—some aspects of quality of the delivery. In other words, if the training provider said they were going to provide eight hours of training, we would like to see that that eight hours of training has been delivered and it was not done in four. We are funding the outcome to the individual. We want to make sure that the individual gets what they thought they were going to get and that our money is well spent in that capacity.

This year there have been significantly more increases based on the fact that there are

more people in training. I have another audit program where we engage the Construction Industry Training Council to audit new RTOs to the ACT that are nationally registered training organisations but that may be new to our area. They are quite legitimately eligible to train, but we want to make sure that their quality and commitment, in particular, to resources and infrastructure meet our requirements to ensure that we achieve the highest possible outcomes for training for the ACT workforce.

Ms Burch: Is there any particular area of increase in those numbers?

Mr Carter: There was a significant increase in the numbers. We went back and had people look carefully to ensure eligibility around the asbestos awareness programs. That was an additional audit that was done last year that would not necessarily be done and continued. The area for high risk training is the key one that we seek to have commitment on from those organisations, that they are intending to operate from a premises within the ACT and not what has been previously reported in other states—not here—where it may be done in a premises other than a training facility.

MR DOSZPOT: Does the CIT fall under these audits as well?

Mr Carter: Yes, where they offer fee-for-service training that sits outside ACT government-funded training, yes. I might add that they have probably the best resource for high risk training here in the ACT, currently.

MR DOSZPOT: Was any audit conducted of the electrotechnology area?

Mr Carter: No. We do not fund training in the electrotechnology trade training area, but we do fund electrical and electrical data communications training for upskilling existing electricians in the area of solar—primarily coaxial cable licensing for the NBN rollout type of work. I do not believe CIT are a trainer in that area. In fact, there are very few ACT locally based trainers in that. A lot of them come down from Sydney to deliver that training.

MR DOSZPOT: Your available funds have also been static at \$2.850 million year on year.

Mr Carter: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: How does that happen, that it is exactly the same amount each year?

Mr Carter: Based on, I guess, the size of the industry and the number of people that are expected to train, it will not be \$2.8 million this year. It is more likely to be about \$4.2 million, but that would have been prepared prior to the regulation of the asbestos awareness program that commenced last year. It is purely historical data. That shifts a little, though. We have seen, and are continuing to trend to see, more people in training, which I think is a fantastic outcome. That said, industry are now choosing shorter, sharper and a lot more refresher-type training, which I think is also a good outcome for the industry. No longer is it considered acceptable enough to be trained once and that is the only training you do in 20 years. A lot of the training programs are shorter in duration but higher in number and hopefully less costly too.

THE CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Doszpot. We will move on to Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Thank you, chair. Perhaps, Mr Carter, you could tell me more about your activities working with the government to implement the *Getting home safely* report.

Mr Carter: Did you want specific—

DR BOURKE: You could start with a broad overview and then we will go to the specifics.

Mr Carter: Certainly the authority supports the training outcomes and the training initiatives that are built within and came within the recommendations of the *Getting home safely* report. We have funded significant industry-led initiatives in that area. Again, the process of industry consultation informs the authority as to what initiatives industries seek with that training being delivered and how that training might be. Over the years, there has been significant training on culture change, having providers come into large organisations and provide training in that area. I think in the 2013-14 financial year there was probably about \$150,000 delivered purely in culture change training. This year in research and development we funded the Housing Industry Association to develop an onsite supervision program. That is in current development. We are not of the view that there is any program like that, which I see as being a strong positive. That is yet to be completed; that program is still under development.

DR BOURKE: Tell us a bit more about that onsite supervision program. What does that specifically mean?

Mr Carter: To keep it brief, it is for smaller organisations that get caught where they may have one person who runs the business but who has to leave people on site and go away and do something else on another site. The people they are leaving may well be capable of being left unsupervised; however, they are not necessarily skilled in what to do if something goes wrong. I see it happen a lot with small businesses that start to grow. They might have been a two or three-person operation for four or five years. Now, all of a sudden, they are eight, because they have got two or three jobs, but they may well only have one person. T

he HIA were very keen to develop something for their members that gave those members strategies and assistance to be able to deal with that what-if scenario if there is a need for somebody to make a decision. That is the essence of that program. It does not fit the “Do this; become competent” stage. It is a grey area that the HIA and their members thought would benefit their members in terms of being able to meet some of those recommendations—I think it was recommendation 18 or 17; I cannot remember—from the *Getting home safely* report.

Ms Burch: Part of *Getting home safely* was around that training for high risk industries as well. Can you go into any more detail on that?

Mr Carter: The industry regulated that high risk licences changed. The workplace health and safety act of 2011 shifted and changed the responsibility for a lot of that

and ownership of how those risks would be managed. The person controlling the business unit has more programs on offer than they would have had to support those areas of risk management and greater confidence in a range of programs, and there are many within our training plan, to ensure that those workers are not left at risk.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, to close, unless Mr Doszpot gets the last couple of seconds.

MS LAWDER: Thank you. I can see on your website that you have three staff.

Mr Carter: Yes.

MS LAWDER: They may all have been quite long-serving employees?

Mr Carter: No; very short serving. I have been there 18 months, my compliance manager has been there two years and our industry liaison officer has been there 11 months. The previous staff were there for 10 to 12 years, I believe—in that order.

MS LAWDER: The compliance manager—is he the person that actually undertakes the audits?

Mr Carter: No.

MS LAWDER: Who undertakes the audits?

Mr Carter: The audits of the training program compliance in terms of eligibility are undertaken by the Construction Industry Training Council on our behalf.

MS LAWDER: With the three staff, does that fit within your funding, does it manage the work you have adequately, or is it a combination of the two?

Mr Carter: It fits within our funding and it certainly fits within the operational management of our work. We are currently spending a small amount of money on the redevelopment of our website for the facility for fully online digital application processing and applications. Currently, I think it says, “Print form and fax to”. 2006 was the last time it was done. We are undergoing a current refreshment program of that. We hope to have that alive by July this year. That will enable people to use a handheld device, PC or notebook. The data will be sent in and they will instantly receive a receipt to say they have acknowledged their application.

We think using that will assist. Last year was a very busy year for us. We had 21,000 completed training outcomes. Most normal years are around 10. That is unique, because of the asbestos awareness program, but with the help of a content management system upgrade. And I am pleased to say that we are gaining assistance with the employment of an assistant worker for several hours a week from the Koomarri group.

MS LAWDER: The CMS that you mentioned—is that something the TFA have

purchased and managed themselves or do you use someone else's?

Mr Carter: The board approved the expenditure for that, and it is being built around a modification of our website. I have a meeting tomorrow to do the first test run on that. That is being constructed for us.

MS LAWDER: It is an off-the-shelf thing that has been customised to suit?

Mr Carter: Yes. The provider that is building that built similar models for the Australian of the Year website, for instance, where you get 20,000 to 30,000 applications a year and those have to come in on electronic format, be managed and be responded to. Our staffing levels are adequate for the forward work that we see.

MS LAWDER: I think you mentioned 21,000 training placements.

Mr Carter: Yes—applications. Applications for training occurs, and it can be for any—

MS LAWDER: So that is 21,000 forms you have received?

Mr Carter: Not always. Sometimes that paperwork is undertaken by the large group training organisations that will have made application to us for, for example, 25 places for scaffolding or that type of thing. They will have been pre-approved to train to those. That assists industry without having to fill out the necessary paperwork. Key for us was that we were getting apprentices taking photographs of the form they filled in and texting it to us. Things had to change.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

Ms Burch: With the training, you made mention of lots of 25 going through training. Is there a sense that you are doing training in job lots or small, individual lots?

Mr Carter: It is a really interesting question. Everybody is different. A typical small group—I say “small”, but they are not so small—is a medium-sized electrical services company based at Mitchell. I will leave their name out. They may employ 18 people. They have an annual training bill of approximately \$18,000 to \$20,000 just on the requirements for tickets and things they must have. Our funding would probably return them between \$10,000 and \$12,000 a year. That enables them to be able to grow their business to that level and also be able to invest, if you like, in the training commitment.

There are a number of training providers. What is key to small business these days is that they want the training when they identify they have got the time to do it. For next week, they will get onto a website and they will find who can do it for them next Thursday. If you cannot do it next Thursday, they will go to someone else who can. It is many different things for many different reasons. At the authority, we try to assist everybody without favour. Last year has been quite a challenging year meeting particularly the numbers required under the three-month window under regulation for asbestos awareness.

I should give credit, too, to the previous administration. The board had carefully established that that rebate cost was factored to assume that that would happen. Fortunately, the fund had some small amount of reserve to accommodate that.

THE CHAIR: Our time is up. Minister, thank you to you and your officials for your attendance here today. Mr Carter, I think you have taken at least one question on notice. If we could have an answer within, say, five working days, that would be appreciated. When it is available, a proof copy of the day's transcript will be available to you for suggestions and, if necessary, corrections. We will return in the morning for parking, roads and the environment.

The committee adjourned at 5.45 pm.