



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT
AND TERRITORY AND MUNICIPAL SERVICES**

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

Members:

MS M FITZHARRIS (Chair)
MR A COE (Deputy Chair)
DR C BOURKE
MR A WALL

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2015

Secretary to the committee:
Mr H Finlay (Ph: 620 50129)

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.34 am.

Appearances:

Rattenbury, Mr Shane, Minister for Territory and Municipal Services, Minister for Justice, Minister for Sport and Recreation and Minister assisting the Chief Minister on Transport Reform

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Dawes, Mr David, Director-General, Economic Development
Priest, Ms Jenny, Director, Sport and Recreation Services, Arts, Business, Events, Sport and Tourism Division

Territory and Municipal Services Directorate
Byles, Mr Gary, Director-General
Childs, Mr Daniel, Acting General Manager, Capital Linen Service, Corporate and Business Enterprises
Horne, Mr Hamish, Chief Executive Officer, Canberra Cemeteries, Corporate and Business Enterprises
Perram, Mr Phillip, Executive Director, Parks and Territory Services
Trushell, Mr Michael, Director, ACT NOWaste, Parks and Territory Services
Flanery, Ms Fleur, Director, City Services, Parks and Territory Services
Little, Ms Vanessa, Director, Libraries ACT, Parks and Territory Services
Alegria, Mr Stephen, Executive Manager, National Arboretum Canberra, Parks and Territory Services
Iglesias, Mr Daniel, Director, Parks and Conservation, Parks and Territory Services

ACT Public Cemeteries Authority
Bartos, Mr Stephen, Deputy Chair

THE CHAIR: Good morning everyone, and welcome to this public hearing of the Standing Committee on Planning, Environment and Territory and Municipal Services inquiry into annual and financial reports for 2014-15. On behalf of the committee I would like to welcome you, Minister Rattenbury, and your officials here today. Thank you for joining us to talk about the annual report. Today the committee will be examining output 8.4, the sport and rec section of the CMTEDD annual report, and the annual report of Territory and Municipal Services, except for ACTION buses, which we will address at a later hearing.

Officials and minister, can I draw your attention to the pink privilege statement. Could you please confirm for us that you understand the privilege implications of the statement?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Can I also remind witnesses that the proceedings are being recorded by Hansard and webstreamed and broadcast live. We will start with output 1.4, land management, and then return to output 8.4, sport and rec, and then go back again to TAMS outputs 1.1, 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6. Before we get underway, minister,

would you like to make an opening statement?

Mr Rattenbury: No, I am happy to go straight to questions.

THE CHAIR: Could I start with playgrounds. I am reminded that in last year's report from this committee we recommended that throughout the year 2014-15 TAMS should talk about facilitating community involvement in the maintenance and upgrade of playgrounds. Could you give us an update on how that is going?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, certainly. TAMS have continued to consider how to best manage playgrounds and how to engage the community in that discussion. I have been having those conversations with them. That includes having a really clear mapping now of all the playgrounds and examining the frequency of provision of playgrounds. It would be fair to say that Canberra is very well served in terms of quantity. I think the primary community concern is about the age of some of the facilities.

I can assure the committee that the playgrounds are safe. As you know, they have a regular inspection regime. So from a day-to-day point of view the playgrounds are fit for purpose. I think that people do probably find them a bit aged. They would like to see a bit of a refresh of some of them. We have been having a look at that, including the provision of natural play spaces. That is an emerging area that I think people are keen to see. In some ways it is less structured, so that children have more room for creativity. We have also been looking at those.

I have seen a number of examples around the city where schools have taken on projects themselves. That is something I am keen to explore with the community as well, around how they might react to those and whether they are in addition to or instead of some other capabilities. We have also been working with a group in Cook who went out and raised some money themselves. So we have formed a partnership there. The community took a great initiative there and TAMS has worked with them to assist that effort.

THE CHAIR: Did the group in Cook, for example, take the initiative themselves and come to you or did it happen another way?

Mr Rattenbury: They essentially took the initiative themselves. They wanted to have an upgrade. They were advised that the park was not on an upgrade list, but they wanted that anyway. So they went out and raised some money and TAMS has partnered with them. The money they raised was, if I recall correctly, enough to buy the equipment and we provided the soft fall, installation works and the like. So that has been a very positive partnership there.

DR BOURKE: How much money did they raise for Pat Rubly park, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: In the order of \$8,000 or \$9,000. And it was Pat Rubly park that I was referring to, as you rightly noted, Dr Bourke.

Ms Flanery: It was in the range of about \$8,000 to \$9,000. I will check the actual amount. We can take that on notice.

DR BOURKE: How did they raise that money?

Ms Flanery: Fundraising efforts. They had events in the park and raised the funds that way.

DR BOURKE: Cake stalls and barbecues.

THE CHAIR: More broadly around playgrounds and play spaces, there are a number of skate parks around the city. Also fitness equipment is being rolled out across different parts of the city. Can you give us an update on how that is going?

Mr Rattenbury: Fitness?

THE CHAIR: The outdoor fitness equipment.

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly, the fitness equipment has been going very well. We have had three new fitness stations installed this year. There was good community engagement in those. We had a number of possible sites across the city. As we went out and canvassed people as to a preference for those sites—for example, in Tuggeranong we had two possible sites—we got some good feedback. Also, in terms of the type of equipment people were interested in, we provided a list of what was possible and people gave us feedback on what was more popular. So they have been good collaborations where the level of input has been quite positive and the feedback on those that we have had has been good. TAMS has prepared a series of videos that are available on the TAMS website which demonstrate to people how to use the equipment, so that people have the maximum chance to use it. There has been a great partnership with a personal trainer. Fleur, you might help me.

Ms Flanery: Lee.

Mr Rattenbury: Lee Campbell, and also the editor of HerCanberra.

Ms Flanery: Amanda Whitley.

Mr Rattenbury: Again, bringing other people in has helped us to go beyond just government communication and to tap in to other networks and try to make it easier for people to get out there and be active through the provision of those sorts of facilities.

THE CHAIR: Do you have any other observations about how people are using them? I know early in the morning boot camps are using them. You often see kids fumbling about on them in the afternoon when adults are not on them. Are you finding they are being used all the time? Do you get feedback once they are installed as to how—

Ms Flanery: We have not done any formal surveys but we have some really positive feedback from the usage. When I go around and have a look at them there always seem to be people on them. They are designed as adult facilities. That is something that we are looking at. Kids do use them but they are not actually designed for children because they have moveable parts and things like that.

THE CHAIR: When you said that was one of the things you are looking at, what did you mean?

Ms Flanery: In terms of location of them. With the current placement of fitness sites, they are not located immediately adjacent to a playground. There is separation. There can be separation through a fence or by an area of ground to allow adults to use them and children to play in playgrounds.

Mr Rattenbury: You asked about the skate parks. The government allocated \$300,000 in the last budget to undertake a range of minor upgrade works across the 19 skate parks. We have a great supply of them in Canberra. We have improved our engagement with people who use the skate parks. We had a meeting probably about 12 months ago where we had a few complaints and we organised an informal group. Those who use the skate parks are not the most formal crowd, but we opened up some lines of communication. I think that has resulted in fewer complaints coming to me in the last year or so, as people have had a conduit into TAMS, to be able to ring up and identify issues. That has improved things out there as well.

THE CHAIR: Does TAMS manage the BMX park on the corner of Gundaroo Drive and Mirrabai?

Mr Rattenbury: That is probably a sport and rec issue, so we can come back to that shortly, if you like.

THE CHAIR: Finally on the outdoor gym equipment, has the location for the one at Yerrabi pond been finalised?

Ms Flanery: I will have to take that on notice. I know that in the plans I saw it was close to finalisation. I do not know if it has actually been completely finalised. I think they were doing the final checks on it.

DR BOURKE: Minister, I have had some requests from a constituent for some park benches in the Kippax oval area. How would they proceed further in getting something done?

Mr Rattenbury: They can just contact TAMS.

DR BOURKE: Fix my street?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. It is not really a fix my street thing but, Dr Bourke, if you want to pass the details on to me we will have a look at it. Sometimes we have some spare ones that we can just install. Apparently, there are a few in sheds in places where we can get them out and use them if there is a specific request, or we can put them on the program. It depends on a range of factors like usage. We do try and prioritise a little bit. Certainly, in terms of park benches, through the aged-friendly suburbs program, the feedback we have had is that older people particularly sometimes need park benches as a sort of resting point halfway to the shops. For example, in Weston, where we have undertaken one of the audits, we have got the Mirinjani village. There has been consideration that, if we put a park bench halfway where people can sit and

have a rest, it might enable them to walk to the shops. So there has been a bit of a focus on park benches in recent times with those sorts of things.

DR BOURKE: You mentioned how much they are used. How would you know?

Mr Rattenbury: You have got to have a sense of areas that are high usage, where there is much pedestrian traffic—those kinds of things. It is a bit of art and science rolled into one.

MR COE: I never thought we would see the day where you did not refer people to fix my street.

Mr Rattenbury: Fix my street tends to be a maintenance issue as opposed to a new initiatives issue but, yes, fair point.

Mr Perram: Minister, just for clarification, the BMX track at the corner there is within our purview as opposed to sport and rec, just so you do not get disappointed.

THE CHAIR: Right. Has some proportion of that been removed for either Icon Water infrastructure or ActewAGL?

Ms Flanery: I am not quite across that detail. I can take that one on notice.

THE CHAIR: That would be great. Is that there to stay, as far as you know, the BMX track?

Ms Flanery: I have not heard otherwise.

THE CHAIR: Great. Thanks. Mr Coe.

MR COE: Minister, could you please let us know what changed with regard to the conditions for the use of the Pialligo quarry, which has now been opened up?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. I will ask Ms Flanery. That is a matter of some considerable detail.

Ms Flanery: I would like to think of this as a success story, because it is a fully authorised quarry. It has a licence and it is a fully authorised functioning business.

MR COE: The quarry was made off limits some years ago and now the same quarry is allowed to be used. So what has changed? What is now safer? What is now compliant? What has been the benefit of it being shut down for years?

Mr Rattenbury: The TAMS staff have worked with the proprietor over what has turned out to be a bit of a protracted period—I think everybody would have liked it to happen faster—but we are now in a situation where, by working closely together, we have been able to get that operating again and, as Ms Flanery said, a full licence. In terms of the absolute minutiae, I am happy to take that on notice.

MR COE: What are the revised safety conditions, for instance?

Ms Flanery: In respect of what changed, the quarry had existed for a long time, first of all under a commonwealth authorisation. Then, it had no actual authorisation to be there. But, following a landslip, WorkSafe came in to investigate. We had Geotech reports. There was a whole lot of detail about what was needed to restore the quarry in terms of making it safe for the operator there and also safe for the people that might pass by that area. Various safety concerns were addressed. It did take a long time. That is unfortunate. It was one of those things that were retrospective so it was a little bit hard to try to pull all the pieces together. A whole lot of safety concerns were addressed, reports done and areas mapped. There was no actual mapping of the site, so it had actually encroached onto public land. We had to be sure of whose land tenure it was.

MR COE: From a safety point of view, what has actually changed—from when it was shut down several years ago versus today now that it is operational?

Ms Flanery: In terms of the operation?

MR COE: From the safety point of view.

Ms Flanery: The way the site is to be filled and the area that it is to be filled in, because there is quite a large area of encroachment; and also the nature of the business. Initially, a quarry is obviously for digging out something, but now there is permission to allow the site to be filled and restored.

MR COE: Sure, but originally the key reasons for being shut down were safety issues. What changes have taken place there on the back of the safety concerns?

Ms Flanery: There are areas that the proprietor is not able to work in. There are ways that he can quarry or can access the land that is quite directed. We had Geotech reports saying, “Do not go in this area but you can work in this area. You fill using different benching techniques.” So it was really to try to regulate the way the land was used.

MR COE: How long was that shut down for?

Ms Flanery: The quarrying activity was stopped and I can take that on notice. But the person was able to use that land to store stone and other things. In terms of shutdown, quarrying was stopped, but he was still able to use that site.

MR COE: It seems to me to be a real tragedy that for the entire construction of Majura Parkway it was deemed not appropriate for stone to be retrieved from Pialligo quarry and, because the quarry was shut down by the government, the stone was brought in from Picton, travelling hundreds of kilometres. Yet now the very stone that could have been used for Majura Parkway is being excavated.

Mr Perram: It was my understanding that that stone was not appropriate for the Majura Parkway construction.

Ms Flanery: The construction of the parkway had a tender for that stone and I do not

know whether the proprietor—

MR COE: He was not able to bid for it, even though he was two kilometres away?

Ms Flanery: There is not that much stone left in the quarry.

MR COE: The civil contractors on Majura Parkway have all said that it would have saved literally hundreds of thousands of kilometres of transportation had they been able to use the quarry, which is now open once again and could have been open the entire time. I hope there are lessons learnt by the government here about the impact on this small business but also on the environmental costs of shipping in all that stone that could have been got from Pialligo.

Mr Rattenbury: Thank you for that opinion, but clearly WorkSafe made a decision at an earlier time that the quarry was unsafe. I am sure this matter will be disputed by the various parties, but—

MR COE: Are you saying it was shut down because of WorkSafe?

Mr Rattenbury: That is what I am advised.

MR COE: Are you saying that the quarry was shut down for years because of WorkSafe?

Mr Rattenbury: I am advised that WorkSafe took the initial decisions, yes.

MR COE: And when did WorkSafe give approval for it to be used again?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not know. I am happy to take that on notice.

MR COE: Please do.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: I might turn to mowing, especially the high quality of mowing of urban land in my electorate of Belconnen. Minister, I want to hear what sort of steps you are taking to maintain and even improve the quality of mowing in my electorate. Is it 12 square kilometres?

Mr Rattenbury: Which bit?

DR BOURKE: Belconnen.

Mr Rattenbury: It would be more than that, I should imagine.

Ms Flanery: Dr Bourke, I do not have the actual area of mowing in Belconnen.

DR BOURKE: You can take that on notice.

Mr Rattenbury: But what I can say is that, as members will know, the government

has allocated additional capacity for mowing this year. An amount of \$1.4 million has been allocated, in addition to the underlying program of around \$6.7 million. We started the mowing program earlier this year as well. I think that was a lesson learned from previous years: if we do not get in early enough in spring and the grass gets away from us, it can be much harder to keep up with.

I can also let the committee know that the amount of feedback we have had this year from the public about mowing has been reduced a lot. People do seem to be much happier with the mowing program this year. There are still areas where people ring up and raise concerns, but I think the rate of complaint has dropped significantly this year.

DR BOURKE: What sort of steps do you take to ensure quality control of mowing?

Ms Flanery: We have appointed a mowing coordinator across Canberra. That person is responsible for both the ACT government mowing and the arterial road mowing, which is contracted out. In terms of quality control, that person will contact supervisors and see where they are up to, if they are on schedule or not. They allocate resources according to needs. If Gungahlin receives less rain or more rain, or is behind their program, they will move mowers around. So we have much better utilisation of fleet. We try to coordinate with the weed spraying program to stop weeds spreading into areas, so as to reduce mowing.

DR BOURKE: I am glad you mentioned weeds because there is always a risk with mowing programs that you can increase the spread of invasive weeds. What steps do you take to prevent that happening?

Ms Flanery: We have quite an extensive hygiene program. We wash mowers down before they move into areas. We work very closely with the parks and conservation service to ensure we do not spread weeds into their areas. Any mowers that are mowing an area that has known weeds in it will make sure the machines are completely washed down before they start mowing in the other area.

DR BOURKE: And that is a requirement for the contractors as well?

Ms Flanery: The contractors only mow arterial roads. We do make sure that they follow hygiene procedures and things, particularly if there is any fireweed or anything like that spreading. The mowing supervisor and all the supervisors make sure that is one of their checks.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Wall.

MR WALL: I have a couple of supplementaries there. Who is undertaking the additional mowing, minister? You mentioned that there is an additional funding injection? Is that being undertaken by TAMS-operated mowers or is it being contracted out?

Ms Flanery: Mr Wall, I cannot answer that question directly. We have \$1.4 million allocated and we only contract out arterial road mowing, so effectively 85 per cent of mowing is done by ACT government staff. The additional funds are predominantly used to do an additional cut in the city and one across the arterial road, so it is spread.

MR WALL: And how was the additional cost for the arterial roads worked out? Was that put out to tender again or was it done with the existing—

Ms Flanery: Last year we changed our contracting arrangements. So there was a tender process.

MR WALL: Yes. I know we gave it to Melbourne City Council. It is now done by a subsidiary of the Melbourne City Council, Citywide.

Ms Flanery: It is done by Citywide.

MR WALL: Yes, which is a subsidiary of the Melbourne City Council; is that correct?

Ms Flanery: That is correct. It was a tender process.

MR WALL: I just wanted to clarify and have it on the record again that we do not even mow our own lawns here, which I think is a travesty.

Mr Rattenbury: No, Mr Wall, let us be clear: Ms Flanery just indicated that government mowers do all of the areas in the suburbs. It is the arterial roads that go to contractors. So let us just clarify that bit of the record as well.

MR WALL: That is fine. And how was the additional work component given to Citywide costed? Did they submit an additional quote for that? Was it another competitive tender round? How has that been costed?

Ms Flanery: Within the contract, we asked for an additional mow. We already have an hourly rate and we have an area rate. The arterial road mowing, though, was already contracted out, prior to the additional money coming in. So we changed our whole mowing program over a year ahead of the additional money. The majority of that \$1.4 million, though, is spent, because we do 85 per cent of the mowing with ACT government staff.

MR WALL: And has there been any variation to the contract for arterial road mowing since it was signed last year?

Ms Flanery: Yes. There are always variations to contracts. If there is construction going on on an area, someone might need to use a little site or some area, so contract variation is part and parcel of normal business.

MR WALL: How many variations have there been to the arterial roads contract?

Ms Flanery: I would have to take that on notice.

MR WALL: If you could take that on notice and provide, please, just a schedule of the changes and a dollar value for those, that would be appreciated. Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Why is local business not given more consideration to do the work that is contracted out interstate?

Ms Flanery: Local business is given consideration. Within the procurement there is an additional percentage or criterion given to local businesses. The local businesses that applied for this contract were given that percentage value. What we need to think about is that although Citywide is a subsidiary of Melbourne council it does employ local staff. So the jobs are staying within Canberra.

MR DOSZPOT: What percentage of the work covers the arterial roads, dollar-wise, compared to what is done by local contractors?

Ms Flanery: I would have to take that on notice.

MR DOSZPOT: I would appreciate that.

THE CHAIR: On page 37 of the annual report there is a box around “keeping the balance”. It talks about the sustainable management of our conservation reserves and rural lands. I want to ask in particular about Mulligans Flat and Gorooyarroo. What progress is being made there on the predators that might still exist within Mulligans Flat? After that could I ask about the expansion of the fence as well?

Mr Iglesias: Mulligans-Gorooyarroo is a standout example of what can be done when the community and government work together. We have there some of the most endangered ecological communities in Australia still in public hands. What that sanctuary has done, right in the middle of the urban area, is improve the prospects of the management of these endangered communities. Together with the woodlands and wetlands trust, which has been able in the last year to secure almost \$1½ million in funding, we have been able to plan for the extension of that sanctuary.

Currently it covers about 485 hectares. Once it is fully extended it will triple in size. It will take in a large portion of the current Gorooyarroo nature reserve, which is also woodland habitat, and it will enable us to look at that entire woodland habitat from a landscape perspective. This is quite rare in Australian conservation. It will give the ACT a jewel in the crown in relation to conservation, very close to the city. It is all because of this model that we have been able to negotiate which has leveraged in a way which government may not have been able to do on its own.

In relation to pest control, one of the key aspects in an urban area is foxes and rabbits. By constructing the fence we exclude those pests from getting in. But the problem is dealing with the animals that are already there. We have been able to reduce the presence of rabbits almost to zero within the Mulligans Flat area. If we can eradicate them—and I am a little bit of a pessimist, but if we can manage to do it—it will be the first time it has ever been done in Australia in a woodland environment.

In relation to the extension area, we are currently working on a strategy with our scientific partners at the ANU, as to whether we might be better off putting the fence up and leaving the foxes in, and hoping that they will do the job on the rabbits for us and get it to a point where there are very few animals left for us to then have to

intensively manage. It is a tricky situation but it is really important if we are going to be successful in reintroducing animals.

THE CHAIR: The partnership with the ANU; can you tell us a little bit more about how that is working?

Mr Iglesias: Yes. We have been incredibly fortunate to team up with Professor Adrian Manning, from the Fenner school in the ANU. He is an Australian leader in conservation biology. The work he is doing in giving a scientific base and rationale in that area is invaluable to us. We have a situation where the land manager has this close partnership with a community group, so that we can act in accordance with best scientific practice. The work he is doing on reintroducing eastern bettong from Tasmania to the mainland for the first time was instrumental. If we did not have that relationship with the ANU we could not do that.

We are currently working on a site in the lower Cotter catchment which might be a candidate to be used to introduce bettongs as well. That would be an environment without a fence. Again that is ground-breaking scientific research that would look to give the land manager some data about what sort of management techniques we need to deliver on the ground to support a reintroduction of an endangered species.

THE CHAIR: I recently had a chance to do the twilight tour in particular. To think that the bettongs have not been on the mainland for a hundred years and you can step literally out of people's back doors and onto it is quite extraordinary, which makes me think there are lots of opportunities to showcase this research and this natural environment across Australia and internationally. Do you have plans in mind for that and supporting the trust in how they go about advocating for that?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly. Just to give some context, we started with 25 to 30 bettongs in Mulligans Flat and the population at the last count was over 200. So the program has been very successful. In terms of starting to promote it, the twilight walks are part of that, and we see the trust as being important partners in that. There is a very close relationship between the rangers and the trust. Certainly the trust is talking about funding a visitors centre, probably in the area around Throsby, as that area opens up and as the new fence goes up. They are looking for funding for that, and we are supporting them in that process.

THE CHAIR: The suburb that I grew up in in New Zealand, in Wellington, now has Zealandia on its doorstep. Are there other models that you can see overseas or is ours unique in terms of the environment we have?

Mr Iglesias: The woodlands and wetlands trust has actually partnered with Zealandia. They have visited the site and we learn from each other. In fact there is talk of developing a sanctuaries group in Australasia that could serve to help each other. In relation to other sanctuaries, we are unique in that we are not out in the middle of a remote area. We are in the middle of an urban area. There are very few parallels in Australia. The New Zealand one you describe is probably the closest. There are other sanctuaries in New South Wales but they are very different in the nature of the landscape.

THE CHAIR: Forde is, I know, a cat containment suburb. Is Throsby going to be as well? Has that been determined?

Mr Rattenbury: It certainly will be. We might even have already made the declaration.

Mr Iglesias: I think we might have, yes.

Mr Rattenbury: Basically the process now is that any new suburb that comes on stream is declared cat containment before people move in, so that residents have that expectation when they arrive.

THE CHAIR: Are there any other risks with the urban environment being so close that you need to manage?

Mr Iglesias: There are always risks with an urban environment, and especially with such important ecological communities. What we are finding is that a physical barrier like a fence is a substitute for having to have a very large buffer area, because you can focus the effectiveness of the barrier in a shorter space. So there will always be user impacts, but we feel that with education and with some smart engineering we can deal with those.

MR COE: With regard to grasslands around the ACT, especially the ones that are in effect locked up as reserves and managed appropriately, are there ever any reassessments done about whether the value of that land is being retained and whether being locked up as a grassland or a reserve is worth while, especially as other areas are established as reserves or as grasslands?

Mr Iglesias: We work very closely with our ecologists in the Environment and Planning Directorate. They are responsible for reporting on a yearly basis to the Conservator of Flora and Fauna on the environment in the ACT, and that includes our grassland areas. Within TAMS we are currently developing a protocol that will allow our rangers to get out and do some quick monitoring that will inform us in almost real time as to how the environment is functioning.

With these grassland areas, I would not use the term “locked up”. They are public areas. There is public access; people are able to use them. In fact we support many activities over the course of the year. There are lots of events and lots of recreational uses that focus our activities in these areas. Some of the key endangered species that were the reason we preserved these areas in the first place are still there. That is the case for the striped legless lizard, the golden sun moth and the earless dragon.

MR COE: Ones that springs to mind are Mulangarri grasslands in Gungahlin, which is in effect the site where the town centre was originally planned to be, the Gungaharra grasslands and also the Crace grasslands. The Crace grasslands has the model aircraft strip on it.

Mr Iglesias: That is right.

MR COE: When you have something like that with a model aircraft strip there, how

do you make the call as to that block of land being all right for a construction such as that, whereas 50 metres to the side of that it is protected as a reserve? Do you ever make reassessments about, in effect, the collective benefit of other uses versus the current uses?

Mr Iglesias: That is the feature of our protected areas. Where we believe that there are activities that can coexist, we will support that. With that particular example that you are referring to in Crace, the actual runway and the actual facilities associated with the model aircraft area are in quite a disturbed area. It is adjacent to Crace and the planes fly over Crace, but the actual airstrip and the disturbance are in quite a disturbed area. There are all sorts of other things—for example, hot air ballooning, walking, running, rallying, rogaining and orienteering. There are any number of activities that occur in some of these areas that people are not really aware are occurring.

Mr Rattenbury: That goes to the management a little bit, in the sense that the areas that are particularly sensitive will be particularly looked after and permits will not be given for activities in those kinds of areas. So it is a graduation, I suppose, of the management in that way.

MR COE: What I am getting to is: are these things negotiable? For instance, if there is a rapid transit corridor going through there or going adjacent to it at some point or elsewhere in Canberra, is there scope at some point to say, “Actually, the trade-off for losing that reserve or that grassland is a new sustainable living area which might use up half the space”? Does that conversation happen or is it simply regarded as forever being off-limits and therefore no discussion can even be engaged in?

Mr Rattenbury: Should we open up our nature reserves to construction: is that the question?

MR COE: I am saying: is there ever an acceptable use for construction on any of these grasslands if there is a trade-off such as it being on a rapid transit corridor or something similar?

Mr Rattenbury: People will put those proposals forward at times. An earlier government took a decision that putting the GDE through the Bruce Ridge nature reserve was an acceptable proposal in their view. I think those sorts of matters would be hotly contested. My starting view would be that we should seek to set those areas aside and keep them set aside. That is why they have been set aside in the first place. As this city grows, one of the key impacts on native vegetation is the expansion of the urban area. That is why my personal view is that we need to work hard to stop the city sprawling and to try and find greater ways to come up with more compact living. Your question is an interesting one. Should we theoretically sacrifice some area of nature reserve to create a more sustainable community? That would be a debate that people would have and people would take different views on.

MR COE: And if it would in fact make a more compact city; if, for instance, it is quasi-infill, albeit greenfield.

Mr Rattenbury: That goes to questions of offsets, essentially. That is the question

you are asking. Or that is the way that question would be—

MR COE: Yes, in effect that is where it leads.

Mr Rattenbury: That is where it would be considered. I think offsets are a tricky issue. It is kind of like saying: can you be pardoned for your sin?

MR COE: It is utilitarian, isn't it, really?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Offsets have a place, but in some ways an offset is still a net loss of habitat, ultimately. It might mean one other area gets better managed but it is still a net loss of habitat. And these are the challenges that we face, as the population grows rapidly.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. I think, Mr Iglesias, you have only another 10 minutes with us. Dr Bourke.

Mr Iglesias: Yes, around that time.

DR BOURKE: I was going to talk about the arboretum.

Mr Perram: Perhaps if there are any questions on national parks we could deal with that area before Daniel has to go?

MR WALL: Is the bushfire operational plan in your area?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, that is definitely Mr Iglesias.

MR WALL: On page 101 of the annual report you have got a survey of the amount of preparation work that was completed. I think there was a 22 per cent shortfall from the target. Could you give the committee a bit of an outline of what work was completed, what was not, and what that actually means heading into the bushfire season?

Mr Iglesias: I could certainly take it on notice and give you a site-by-site summary of what was done and what was not.

MR WALL: Okay.

Mr Iglesias: In summary, I can just add that all the work we undertake in delivering the bushfire operations plan is heavily dependent on what the weather will allow us to do. If we get a very wet year, our capacity to deliver hazard reduction burns and do a lot of the repair work to some of the management trails can be impacted. Alternatively, if we get a very dry year, it can also impact on the number of hazard reduction burns we deliver. It really is a matter of finding that sweet spot. Park agencies across the country are struggling to deliver the works that they see are necessary within the climatic conditions that can be thrown up to us year on year.

We know from the Bureau of Meteorology that we are more likely to have stochastic events with weather—very large storms, very dry periods—and that the likelihood of

that will be more regular. That means we are very focused and that, when we see a window, we respond. You would have noticed smoke on the horizon during September and even October. It is now becoming harder and harder for us to do some burning. We will have to defer it until a little later. I can give you a summary of what we were able to complete and what has been deferred.

MR WALL: Okay. The big question is: as far as fire trail maintenance is concerned, are all the trails accessible currently?

Mr Iglesias: Yes. We have one of the best fire trail systems of any jurisdiction anywhere in Australia. Last year we completed the Mount Franklin upgrade in the Namadgi spine. That gives us unprecedented heavy vehicle access to some of the most inaccessible parts of the territory. We also have a lot of management trails in and around the urban area and those areas are afforded the highest priority to maintain.

Mr Rattenbury: Just on that, Mr Wall, last year the bushfire operational plan identified 42 activities of maintenance. Forty of them were completed, which was 274 kilometres out of 287 kilometres. The remaining two projects were carried forward into this year's bushfire operational plan. That is an important point. As Mr Iglesias just described, when a job cannot be finished it will carry over to the next year. It does not just get forgotten and drop off the list.

MR WALL: To be fair, I understand that this is a snapshot of what was completed on 30 June and the preparation season continued until now.

Mr Iglesias: Yes.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, it does. As I say, I can assure you that things do not just get forgotten. They roll over—

MR WALL: They roll over until you can next get out there, yes.

Mr Rattenbury: until they are done, basically, yes.

MR WALL: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: I was just curious as to what capacity the National Arboretum has to host more events and draw more visitors in to view its natural beauty and what developments have been undertaken in that regard.

Mr Rattenbury: The arboretum has a lot more scope to host events. I think it is a matter of people having the ideas and starting to work with the arboretum to fulfil them. In terms of specifics, you may have seen on Monday that we announced the funding for a second garden on the events terrace. We are seeing that the events terrace in particular has really started to take shape. That will have a lot more scope. Each of those gardens is being designed with space for large marquees in them. They will provide opportunities for weddings, celebrations, corporate events and the like. That will create new opportunities. The events terrace, of course, is a spectacular spot.

We are also working with a sports company who want to organise a fun run in the arboretum, for example—a trail running event. As the arboretum is becoming better known and more facilities are being put in place, people are identifying more opportunities for events. We are certainly open to that.

DR BOURKE: Along the theme of gardens, you have recently opened an Indigenous garden, I believe?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. The garden we announced on Monday is actually known as “Mununja the butterfly”. There has been very close collaboration between members of traditional Ngunnawal groups, who essentially led the design process, and the donors who supported that and who wanted to ensure that we had a strong recognition within the arboretum of some of the traditional stories from this region. The story of “Mununja the butterfly” includes a range of traditional stories from this area and the plants that will go into it reflect some of the native plantings of this area as well.

DR BOURKE: Which family owned the “Mununja the butterfly” story?

Mr Rattenbury: I will step very delicately here. I would not say anybody owned the story, but it is the Bell family—Tyrone Bell and some of his relatives—who have been involved in the preparation and design of that garden.

THE CHAIR: Could I just ask a supplementary in terms of visitation to the arboretum?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, of course.

THE CHAIR: How has that tracked over the last year?

Mr Alegria: The visitation continues to be really strong. We had around a million visitors come through as of our two-year anniversary in February. We had a very strong period in autumn and the winter school holidays, and 500,000 a year seems to be the trend that we are experiencing at the moment.

THE CHAIR: Do you expect that to grow?

Mr Alegria: The track record is only short. It is a 2½-year track record and we are doing a lot of work to try and continue that growth and that quality as well. We hope that our efforts will be successful.

Mr Rattenbury: My sense is that it will. It goes to the comment I was making earlier. Most of the forests are in place. People who are driving past will see the trees are starting to grow. It is changing all the time. The new trail that was opened two weeks ago provides a walking trail from the village centre all the way to the top of Dairy Farmers Hill without having to go on the road, and equally up to “wide brown land” via the step garden. Those new attractions will offer new opportunities. The installation of a horse yard means that equestrians can now enter the arboretum and essentially park their horses, go and have a coffee and visit the visitors centre. I guess the extra bits that now fill in between the trees are improving the visitor experience all

the time.

Madam Chair, while we are on this, there is a correction to the annual report that we need to make relating to the arboretum. This seems an opportune moment for Mr Byles to provide that.

Mr Byles: If I could draw the committee's attention to page 42 of volume 1 of the annual report that talks about the arboretum? This is one of two errors we have discovered in our annual report and it is appropriate that I bring it to the committee's attention now. If you look at paragraph 3 on page 42, it talks about a figure of 557 new trees planted to replace trees that had died. That figure is actually 919; 919 trees were replanted. I will make the other correction when we pick up the main part of the TAMS area.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. But there are still over 44,000 trees that have been planted on the site?

Mr Byles: Yes. The gross numbers remain the same. It is just the change in the trees that were replanted.

THE CHAIR: In terms of the percentage of trees that have died out of 44,000, does that meet your expectations in terms of what you would expect to lose?

Mr Alegria: Yes, it does. The audit that finished in early 2015 found 1,200 standing dead trees. That percentage is very low and well in line with, I guess, nursery-type standards.

Mr Perram: I think it needs to be taken in the context that we are dealing with rare and endangered and unusual trees and in that regard it is surprisingly low.

THE CHAIR: That is a good point. Thank you.

MR COE: A supplementary on this issue, if I may? With regard to the arboretum, what is the government's view about the potential of Floriade being re-located to the arboretum? Is that a definite no, or is it something that you are actually considering?

Mr Rattenbury: There is not a definitive government position on that. The government's current position is that Floriade will remain in the city area. I know people have talked about it. Some people think it is a great idea. Others think it would not work. There is not a resolved position. I think it is a discussion that people are having and ideas are being turned over, but it is certainly not an imminent move, no.

MR COE: Would it be consistent with, for want of a better term, the mission of the arboretum?

Mr Rattenbury: Not strictly, in the sense if you think of the arboretum as a museum of trees as the literal interpretation of the word. There are certainly significant site constraints, as you would be aware. The parking is limited at the arboretum. The access is currently limited. There are a range of practical matters. Given the level of visitation of Floriade of 400,000-plus people over three weeks, there are logistical

constraints as well.

MR WALL: Just one further follow-on: with the number of trees that have been lost, is that spread across all the species that have been planted out there or have there been some that feature more prominently than others?

Mr Alegria: Certainly some forests have suffered more than others. Phillip mentioned that the experimental nature of the arboretum dictates that we are often trying things for the first time. Certain forests have lost more numbers, relatively speaking, than others. Many forests have been very successful, to the point where there are only a handful of losses; whereas others like the Wollemi pines have had significant losses because that is such a difficult tree to grow. The success story is that what remains are doing very well, and we learn from all of these things.

MR WALL: Are those trees, as they die, being replaced?

Mr Alegria: It depends. If they are perhaps a death from some minor cause that is not going to be recurring, we replant. If there is a systemic issue—for example, if the site is not suitable—we look at whether it is actually wise to relocate that forest or do some other action rather than simply keep on trying the same technique.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. We will now move on to sport and recreation. I ask the new witnesses to indicate that they have read the pink privileges statement and understand the implications? Thank you. Could I start by asking a question around access to enclosed ovals? Can you give us an indication of the policy settings around access to enclosed ovals?

Ms Priest: In the hierarchy of sportsground provision, enclosed ovals have a higher order use than do the general urban open space sportsgrounds. They are generally reserved for match play and more specialised levels of playing—not for training, as such, or limited training, and certainly not for regular ongoing general public access.

THE CHAIR: Is there scope to allow access for special events that might be more community-based events rather than elite sport events?

Ms Priest: I think nothing is ever out of the realm of consideration, but the priority will be to ensure that the service of the facility is always preserved and maintained and fit for purpose for that for which it is set and that is that higher level, higher order match play. I think we would have a few sporting groups running around a bit annoyed if we compromised that. Things can be open for discussion, but I think that has to remain a priority in terms of how those proposals would be considered.

In relation to Gungahlin enclosed oval in particular, we have recently enabled the separate hire of the pavilion. When there is not sporting use of that facility booked as a principal and primary use there is the ability for the community to seek to book the pavilion and use that.

THE CHAIR: For meetings and gatherings?

Ms Priest: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR COE: I might defer to Mr Doszpot.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: My questions are to the minister and they relate to pages 56 and 57 of the annual report volume 1. What was the arrangement between ACTSport and the directorate on the move to the new facilities at the UC sports hub?

Mr Rattenbury: When the UC sports hub opened, ACTSport essentially took the tenancy. There was a move, you will recall, from Sports House in Hackett which had operated as a sports incubator in a sense where smaller sporting groups came and took a space. It helped them build up their skills. They were in with other small sports. Quite a few of those sports moved out of Sports House over time.

The thinking with the UC sports hub was the same, that there was provision of a range of environments there for small sports—some as small as just a desk; others through to an office. With the winding up of ACTSport, Sport and Recreation Services is now working with the University of Canberra to ensure continuity of that facility so that those small sports can continue to enjoy that opportunity to have a space as such.

MR DOSZPOT: Was there consultation between ACTSport and the ACT government on their move from their previous premises to the sports hub?

Mr Rattenbury: That was before my time; so I will ask the officials to comment on that.

Ms Priest: Yes, there was consultation. There was quite a degree of consultation with ACTSport and with ACT Property Group who were also involved in the transition of ACTSport from Sports House in Hackett and also in relation to the consultation that the University of Canberra was doing directly with ACTSport in regard to moving to the new facilities.

MR DOSZPOT: Who were the representatives of the various organisations that attended these meetings?

Ms Priest: At the time the former CEO of ACTSport, Mark Cartwright, was involved in discussions. I understand Jim Roberts was also involved in discussions with regard to the transition and the move over. We were certainly involved in Sport and Recreation Services. We were engaged in discussions as well. David Lamont, acting on behalf of the University of Canberra at the time and project manager for the sporting commons, was involved in that process.

MR DOSZPOT: What were the arrangements regarding ACTSport's move in financial terms?

Ms Priest: The ACT government contributed to the sporting commons, \$5 million towards the development of a community element to that, and the notion of that was

that ACTSport would be the tenant on behalf of community sport.

MR DOSZPOT: And were you aware of the arrangements that were negotiated between the University of Canberra and ACTSport?

Ms Priest: Yes.

MR DOSZPOT: And were you satisfied that those arrangements would lead to a sustainable change of lease for ACTSport?

Ms Priest: The discussion on the transition of ACTSport moving from Hackett into the sporting commons was a change of paradigm that is not dissimilar to conversations and business models that are also evolving in the ACT government. I make particular reference to things like the new government office building and different ways of working. The old, traditional ways of office working are changing and evolving. In particular in terms of ACTSport and the facilities available to small sports and how that would work, that was not based necessarily on the former model of them having a concise, discrete, larger and older room. With money inefficiencies always under the spotlight, there are changes in models and looking at how to better use and make efficient use of space.

MR DOSZPOT: The previous arrangements, as I understand, facilitated ACTSport getting funding from the tenants that they had at their previous area. That was part of their ability to generate funds as well as getting government support. Were there discussions regarding the concerns of ACTSport on the maintenance of that revenue stream in this move?

Ms Priest: The revenue discussions were part of the negotiations but they were discussed as part of the negotiations and they were finally settled. They were settled between the parties including ACTSport and UC with the ACT government's knowledge of what the final agreements were.

MR DOSZPOT: Was the ACT government, did you say, aware of the final figures?

Ms Priest: Yes, aware of the final arrangements in terms of the accommodation type that was being made available to ACTSport. ACTSport was obviously working through the detail of how they would utilise and make the space that they would be provided available to their tenants. That was a business matter for ACTSport to work through.

MR DOSZPOT: And were you made aware or were you aware of the commitments that were made by the University of Canberra to ACTSport?

Ms Priest: I think there would be probably quite a number of commitments and discussions made. Do you have something in particular?

MR DOSZPOT: The feeling is that the negotiations that ACTSport originally had were apparently not met in the end and there were discussions, as I understand, where the ACT—the directorate and the government—was informed that they could not continue on if those commitments were not kept. If those commitments were not kept

they would have serious financial implications.

Ms Priest: There was certainly a change in the way that the tenancy availability and the tenancy structure were being set up but that was a known and well-discussed aspect of the transition from Hackett to UC. There was also, as part of the discussions with ACTSport and over quite some time leading up to their final decision to wind up the organisation, the fact that they would be looking at revising and revisiting their business and financial model, and quite a significant amount of time was provided for that.

Sport and Recreation Services also provided assistance to ACTSport in surveying the sector so that they could get across and, I guess, recalibrate their offerings relative to the shift in the market and their member base. A range of considerations and matters was being worked through at the time, including a change of tenancy arrangements and also ACTSport having a look at its business and financial models and its membership base needs to recalibrate its operations.

MR DOSZPOT: Was their ability to operate at a financially viable level discussed in detail?

Ms Priest: That was a matter that ACTSport were interrogating and looking at as part of the time frame, as I said, leading up to the final decision and they were well aware that that was something that needed to be attended to. From my recollection of things, their understanding of the matter was that they needed to and were willing to address it.

MR DOSZPOT: Was there any special funding made to ACTSport to facilitate this move?

Ms Priest: Outside their operational funding—ACTSport has been the recipient of \$81,200 in operational funding—other than the \$5 million grant provided by the government, I am not aware of any additional funding that was provided.

MR DOSZPOT: Did ACTSport ask for any further commitment from the government on maintaining their sustainability?

Ms Priest: ACTSport had asked for, and been given agreement and actually provided with, advance funding of their operational funding to help them get through, and to work through, their revised business model and business plan.

MR DOSZPOT: How does the advancement of future funding help them sustain their viability?

Ms Priest: Part of the exercise that ACTSport were going through was to come back with a revised business plan and business model and, dependent on what came out of that, it would have been something to consider in terms of the future moving forward.

THE CHAIR: Mr Doszpot, one more supplementary, please, if you would not mind.

MR DOSZPOT: Who was responsible for ensuring the tenancy of the sports hub?

Ms Priest: Who is now?

MR DOSZPOT: Who is responsible for the ongoing tenancy at the sports hub?

Ms Priest: ACT Property Group is the government's property manager currently managing that in collaboration with sport and recreation as the policy area responsible for community sport.

MR DOSZPOT: So there was a—

THE CHAIR: Sorry. We can come back to these questions. I will share it around committee members. Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: On page 56 of the annual report there is elaboration on the role of the interim advisory group established in response to the wind-down of the Aboriginal Corporation for Sport and Recreation Activities. What has been happening there and what are the outcomes?

Mr Dawes: I might start off. With the liquidation of ACSRA that was carried out by RSM Bird Cameron, one of the things that we did to move very quickly was to establish a working group that was co-chaired by the chairman of the elected body, Rod Little, and me. We had other representatives from the Indigenous community on that particular committee as well to work through the issues.

I think the important thing here was obviously the significance of Boomanulla, in particular, to provide some comfort and discussion with the Indigenous community to ensure that it was not going to fall outside the government's control or at least where we might become the temporary custodians of it until we transition back to a more normal way of doing it.

Some of the delays have been because RSM Bird Cameron, who were appointed the liquidator, took a little longer than what we would have liked. There were a couple of meetings at Boomanulla which the committee, in particular Rod and I, attended to field questions as well. It was very much that we were there as observers and spectators because obviously it was in the hands of RSM Bird Cameron, who were doing that wind-up and liquidation of the actual group.

Since then there has been some good collaboration with the elected body. I will let Jenny provide a little more detail of some of the ongoing discussion that not only we have had but also that the commonwealth Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet have had.

Mr Rattenbury: On that, the other thing I can assure you is that it is clearly government policy that it is not the government's intent to manage Boomanulla Oval in the long run. We intend to be led by an Indigenous organisation of some regard. We are in the process of preparing an expression of interest process to invite and see who comes forward and wants to take on that leadership role. Given the cultural significance of the site, that is the management model we want going forward.

MR WALL: When is that expression of interest process expected to start?

Mr Rattenbury: Given the various delays that Mr Dawes just spoke to, I am anticipating that being just in the new year. We had hoped to do it this year but we are starting to drop into that end of year season and I am reluctant to drop it out just before Christmas. We probably will leave it to early in the new year when everyone comes back from summer break.

Mr Dawes: I think Ms Priest has something to add there.

Ms Priest: What would you like me to add?

Mr Dawes: Just provide an update on some of the grant funding.

Ms Priest: With the Aboriginal Corporation for Sport and Recreation activities falling into financial difficulty, sport and rec had been working with them to assist them with their formally provided Indigenous sport and recreation program funding, the ISARP funding that existed prior to the new Indigenous advancement strategy. Despite best efforts, unfortunately they were unable to continue. We were then working with the liquidator and certain amounts of that funding was made available, with agreement from the commonwealth, to help with the special administration initially before ACSRA went into liquidation before a final call was made that they could not proceed.

We also have been successful in an application for funding under the IAS and we applied for funding in the knowledge that ACSRA were in trouble. We did not want the territory to lose out on sport and recreational dollars specifically and we were successful in our application for some funding under the Indigenous advancement strategy. We have been provided with funding of around \$264,000. We have just recently signed off with the commonwealth on that agreement.

In regard to the funding, we released a small grants program in early October, which is open to Indigenous people to apply for, for support for sport and recreational registration and activities. We have also released just recently, on 8 November, a partnered programs expression of interest process, which again is seeking to activate and provide additional sport and recreational activities for Indigenous people in the territory and the immediate region.

There is some residual funding out of that \$264,000 also available to do some further research into the sport and recreational needs of the Indigenous community, and this will segue in with the Boomanulla situation, which will then help to inform a new proponent under expressions of interest et cetera, or new proponents selected out of that process, as to what it is that they will particularly target, because that is what the community are saying their needs are.

Leading up to that, we surveyed the community earlier this year, the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community, and started to ask those questions. I think it is very important to note that we have done this—and I think David mentioned it already—in very close collaboration with the elected body. It has been quite a partnership. There is also funding set aside that will assist, once a new entity is resolved, a new management entity, in trying to implement those new arrangements.

DR BOURKE: Mr Dawes, you mentioned working through issues. Could you just elaborate on what those issues were?

Mr Dawes: Obviously the condition of the facility. We have had to look at a work health and safety report. The Property Group is currently working through that to make sure that when we make the grounds available it is fit for purpose. There were a number of safety issues that we needed to address. There are some other things such as some tenancies that are in the process of being resolved on the site, but overall there has been very good collaboration to achieve all the necessary things that need to be done.

DR BOURKE: You have mentioned some meetings at the oval at Boomanulla. Were they community meetings?

Mr Dawes: They were community meetings, but mainly they were conducted by RSM Bird Cameron, because they were the administrator-liquidator of ACSRA. It was a matter of informing the community about that process.

DR BOURKE: Not so much—

Mr Dawes: It was not led by either the elected body or us; it was very much that we went out in attendance there to also engage with the community. I think it was there to reassure the community that we were just going to be temporary custodians and ensure that the oval was handed back. The lease of the oval—Ms Priest will correct me if I am wrong here—was in ACSRA's name, so it was very important to ensure that the lease was handed back to government temporarily until we go through expressions of interest and have a new entity in place to take over the lease of the oval. I think that was a critical issue for our committee.

Ms Priest: It is probably important to add that the primary intention is to return the facility back to Indigenous management and to do that in a way that is long-term sustainable. We are working very closely with the elected body and other key representatives from the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community through the EOI process to make sure that is the case. We do not want to find ourselves back in a similar situation any time soon. We want the facility back in Indigenous management, and we certainly want that to be sustainable in the long term.

DR BOURKE: Did the interim advisory group conduct any community consultation, and what was the nature of their consultation?

Mr Dawes: We certainly conducted a survey. We also had very regular communiques out to the group. The important thing in all of this is communication. We tried to ensure that we kept the community informed and updated. We used to send out a communique after each of our meetings to let them know.

Ms Priest: We still do.

DR BOURKE: The expression of interest proposal is looking for an existing Indigenous organisation to take over the management of Boomanulla—or are you

looking at maybe a new organisation to form and take over the management?

Mr Rattenbury: We have not specified that at this stage. It will be an open expression of interest. I am aware of some existing organisations that have indicated their interest, but it will be an open process.

DR BOURKE: As part of that expression of interest, I presume that it is to be maintained as a sports and recreational facility, and oval?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. Again, I think that part of having as open an expression of interest as possible is that people may come forward with a range of ideas. I would not want to preclude anything at this point, but certainly maintaining the oval as a sporting facility is central to that.

DR BOURKE: Some years ago there were ideas touted, I think by the previous corporation, for development, accommodation and a range of other things. Is that within the lease purpose clause?

Mr Rattenbury: I was aware of some quite significant development proposals for the site. We never even got to the point of—

DR BOURKE: They were more ideas really, weren't they?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes; perhaps ideas is a better way of putting it. Obviously the lease purpose clause will guide any future decisions, but at this stage we are open to ideas. As Ms Priest said, it is about focusing on sustainability. I do not imagine we will be going for a massive development on the site or anything like that, no.

DR BOURKE: Would that be constrained by the existing lease purpose clause or is there any thought to change that?

Ms Priest: I think that there is no existing lease purpose clause. The fact of the matter is that the lease has actually been surrendered. For all intents and purposes, at the moment it is returned to a state of unleased territory land. There is a zoning overlay that sits across the oval; any proposal would need to be within the confines of that zoning. Until such time as we receive the proposal and are able to consider the merits of it—obviously the focus will be for the ultimate benefit of the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community—we are not quite sure. But when the EOI goes out we would like to see proposals come forward that seek to address the sustainability issue in addition to the wellbeing and, reflecting on the commonwealth funding opportunities, IAS objectives so that we can get the best outcome for that facility now and in the long term.

DR BOURKE: What is the zone at Boomanulla?

Ms Priest: Restricted access recreation is what I understand the zoning is for that facility.

DR BOURKE: So those former ideas to do some significant residential development there would have required some different planning changes?

Mr Dawes: A territory plan variation.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

Ms Priest: I think that is the right zone, but I might double-check that. I am pretty sure it is restricted access recreation. It certainly lends itself to what the previous lease was, and to all intents and purposes you would expect that would be the zoning, but I will double-check.

DR BOURKE: If it is not right, you can come back to us.

Ms Priest: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Thanks. Mr Wall?

MR WALL: I want to follow on from Mr Doszpot's line of questioning.

Mr Rattenbury: Sure.

MR WALL: I am not entirely sure of the arrangement that we have with the UC sports hub. Ms Priest, I think you said that the ACT government is responsible for managing the tenancies there.

Ms Priest: Yes.

MR WALL: And the government funded also—

Mr Rattenbury: That is now, as a result of ACTSport winding up. We have taken that duty on in the absence of ACTSport. Prior to that, it was ACTSport's remit.

MR WALL: Can you just outline, minister or one of the officials, what the formal arrangement is between the government and the University of Canberra with the hub?

Ms Priest: The arrangement with ACTSport was a sublease, and a deed of transfer is currently in train. It is currently being resolved and finalised for the transfer of that sublease. For all intents and purposes, with the ACT Property Group, and for the benefit of the current tenants, the process has been seamless. We are working closely with the University of Canberra to finalise that transfer, the deed of transfer, for the sublease.

MR WALL: So the building is the property of the ACT government or UC?

Ms Priest: The building is the property of UC.

MR WALL: Okay.

Ms Priest: But as part of the \$5 million investment, there was a 29-year or 30-year sublease to ACTSport provided. That was part of the commitment.

MR WALL: And Property Group is in the process of acquiring that sublease?

Ms Priest: Absolutely, yes.

MR WALL: Okay.

MR DOSZPOT: I have a supplementary on that. Does that mean that the ACT government is paying rental on that sublease?

Ms Priest: No; it was a peppercorn arrangement in lieu of the investment of government. That was part of the arrangement that was set out.

MR DOSZPOT: So it was a peppercorn rental. What is going to happen to the space now—

Ms Priest: The existing tenants are continuing on. Sport and Recreation Services has—

MR DOSZPOT: Have you got full tenancy there, Ms Priest?

Ms Priest: Sorry, Mr Doszpot; I was just going to get to that. Sport and Recreation Services have recently surveyed the sector. We are currently analysing the results of that survey. That has only been in the last month or so. Part of the questioning around that was seeking expressions of interest from any parties who might be interested in the ACT sports sector in filling those tenancies, because there is now, as a result of ACTSport vacating their premises, some vacant elements to that. That has not yet been resolved, but we are working with the Property Group, and in response to feedback from the survey, to resolve that.

MR WALL: Facilitating the move for ACTSport from premises they occupied in Hackett to the UC sports hub was basically moving from one government facility into ultimately what is another. What formal part did UC play in that? I am just curious as to what role. You mentioned that there were representatives in the meetings that did occur, that there were representatives from your directorate, minister, and from ACTSport themselves, and you said that—was it David Lamont there from the university?

Ms Priest: Yes.

MR WALL: What role is he playing?

Ms Priest: David Lamont was the project manager for the UC sporting commons; he was also representing the University of Canberra at the time, largely in negotiations for the tenancy arrangements that were being established.

MR WALL: So he was under the employ of the University of Canberra for those negotiations?

Ms Priest: Yes, he was.

MR WALL: All right. I just lost where I was going to go so—

MR COE: Can I follow up? What role did UC have if it was, in effect, on a lease to the ACT government?

Ms Priest: Sorry?

MR COE: What was UC's active role in this?

Ms Priest: UC are the owner of the building, the sporting commons, so the sublease provided to the tenants of the UC sporting commons was from UC.

MR COE: Yes, but if the ACT government, in effect, had the lease to the building—

Ms Priest: No. The ACT government, in exchange for the \$5 million investment, as part of that, purchased a 30-year entitlement for ACTSport at a peppercorn rent, obviously paying for outgoings.

MR WALL: What was the process to determine ACTSport as the most suitable tenant given that you govern as a whole and purchased the right to space in that building through the capital contribution?

Ms Priest: I think it was at the very beginning of discussions around UC sporting commons and there was, for some time leading up to that, a conversation about ACTSport moving on from Hackett. That was built into discussions from the very beginning. I do not think it came in as an afterthought; it was front and centre in—

MR WALL: Okay. As part of that arrangement, ACTSport was still able to operate similar facilities to Hackett to sublease space to other emerging sports?

Ms Priest: Yes, it had the opportunity to do that. I think, as I mentioned earlier, though, with changing business and administrative operation models, it was a paradigm shift from what Hackett was to what was being provided at UC.

THE CHAIR: Thank you.

MR DOSZPOT: A supplementary?

THE CHAIR: Your turn for a question, Mr Doszpot.

MR DOSZPOT: Can I have a supplementary on Mr Wall's?

THE CHAIR: Sure.

MR DOSZPOT: Just on that point about the tenancy of Sports House, were tenants of Sports House offered new agreements in order for them to stay at Sports House?

Ms Priest: That was a matter for the Property Group; they were actually managing that side of the process. My recollection was, and I think the Property Group would need to verify this—

Mr Rattenbury: We need to probably take that on notice. I have not got the required information.

Ms Priest: There was certainly the ability, post ACTSport's negotiations with its existing tenants, to transit them to the new sporting commons. There was the ability, I guess, as Property Group wanted to ensure that no tenants were left without accommodation, for them to have separate conversations with Property Group about that.

MR DOSZPOT: But ACTSport were looking to their forward planning in terms of what income they can generate. They were looking at those tenants moving with them. As I understand, those tenants were offered preferential terms to stay at their existing place. Did the ACT government want to wind ACTSport up?

Ms Priest: No, the ACT government did not, and I would say, in relation to ACTSport having its tenants move with it, that if the tenants that did move with them saw the value proposition of what ACTSport offer as part of Sports House—access to a range of shared facilities, mentoring and a whole range of things—that offering was a key attraction to have its tenants move with it.

MR DOSZPOT: But they did not have the same room at that new place. There were no walls; it was all open plan. People were at desks, as I understand.

Ms Priest: The accommodation was different. The accommodation was different to Hackett.

MR DOSZPOT: Was that fully explained to ACTSport before they moved in?

Ms Priest: Through the design process and through the discussions—I would have to go back. There were minutes, I am sure, taken of all these meetings. There were discussions about how the new facilities would be. As I said, it is not out of step with other moves being taken by other businesses, enterprises and organisations, including ACT government, to a different, more efficient use of space way of working.

MR DOSZPOT: I understand you have to go to a break. Can I just ask a brief question on who is currently managing the hall of fame event and display?

Ms Priest: Sport and Recreation Services are managing the delivery of the hall of fame event this year. We have an Earlybird Events organiser engaged with us in doing that.

MR DOSZPOT: What is the annual cost for the management of this?

Ms Priest: The annual cost for the management of it?

DR BOURKE: It is 11 o'clock, chair.

THE CHAIR: We will wrap up the sport and recreation questions at 11 o'clock, so there is one more minute.

MR DOSZPOT: Sorry.

MR WALL: It is Remembrance Day. Can we observe one minute's silence, chair?

THE CHAIR: I am looking at this clock, and it is different. I would be happy to do that now.

Thank you. We will take a break now and come back at 11.15. We will wrap up sport and rec and move on to TAMS output class 1.1, 1.3, 1.5 and 1.6.

Sitting suspended from 11.01 to 11.16 am.

THE CHAIR: We will get underway again. I welcome the officials that have not been with us before. Could I ask you all to read the pink privilege statement and indicate that you understand the implications? Thank you. We will move through the agenda for the remaining hour and 15 minutes, starting with the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority. Could I start by asking this: with Canberra's increasing multiculturalism, what has that meant for the Public Cemeteries Authority in terms of the variety of people from different cultural backgrounds and how they access your services?

Mr Horne: We are constantly looking at what the specific needs are of the various denominations. As part of our planning, we always ensure that we have sufficient space, dedicated or general, to meet the needs of the current community. Different denominations are able to directly approach the authority and, by ministerial approval, we can set aside a specific piece of land if that is required.

THE CHAIR: Have you had to do that in many instances?

Mr Horne: Only one in the last decade.

THE CHAIR: Which cultural group was that one?

Mr Horne: That was the Baha'i community.

Mr Bartos: The board is very conscious of this. The minister has recently appointed to the board some people from cultural backgrounds that have not previously been on the board. In terms of the different faiths and religious backgrounds in Canberra, some of the recent major initiatives of the authority have been driven by that. For example, the mausoleum is particularly used by the Catholic community, and, of the Catholic community, those of Italian heritage. Having an expansion of the mausoleum has been very much welcomed by them. The board is always conscious of the need to serve the entire breadth of community needs. And it is very diverse in terms of the interment, memorialisation or other options that they prefer.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Are there any cemeteries questions?

MR COE: Yes. With regard to the mausoleum, what was the final cost of the construction?

Mr Horne: Just under \$2.5 million.

MR COE: Can you talk us through the procurement process? I imagine it is something that is unique. I imagine there are not too many people in the business of constructing them. How did you go about actually finalising the sourcing of the contractors?

Mr Horne: The process was managed by the Shared Services Procurement people. It was done by select tender. We approached a number of companies who have a track record in designing and building mausolea.

MR COE: What are the attributes or, in effect, the features of the mausoleum?

Mr Horne: It is essentially crypts in the wall, if you like, at a number of levels, four levels high. It is obviously a building that is designed to last for a long time. It is essentially made from concrete, steel, granite and marble. So it is produced to a very high quality finish, and to that end it attracts a premium price.

MR COE: Are people permanently interred there or is it only for several years before being buried elsewhere?

Mr Horne: No, all interments in the ACT are in perpetuity.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Mr Bartos, I understand that Woden is approaching capacity. What are your contingency plans around that?

Mr Bartos: We are aware of that and have considered that. We are going through a process to expand the boundary of the Woden cemetery. To the north-east side of the Woden cemetery there is a large space of land that is available. At the moment it is not used for any other purposes. We are going through the processes at the moment to have that made available for the Woden cemetery. That will expand the capacity of the cemetery and allow it to continue providing interment spaces in Woden.

DR BOURKE: How much expansion will that provide?

Mr Horne: It will provide enough, in terms of time, for 10 to 15 years of interments.

DR BOURKE: Do you have a longer view beyond then?

Mr Rattenbury: The longer term view is the southern memorial park slated for Tuggeranong.

MR WALL: I have a quick follow-up on the southern memorial park. When is that expected to be up and running?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not have a definitive time frame at this point. Works have been undertaken to prepare, in the sense that there has been a lot of planting of trees and the

like. It has started to take shape, so that when the site is activated that long-term planning has gone into it.

MR WALL: So at the moment it is about preparing the site for when and if the need arises or—

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. It is a “when”, not an “if”, if I heard you correctly. It is a “when”. The “when” is not determined at this point, though.

MR WALL: Is any further expansion of the Woden cemetery site forecast or is this expansion taking that site to its absolute limit?

Mr Rattenbury: There are two issues with the Woden expansion. One is that there are people who want to be buried in Woden. So there is the issue of Woden almost being full. It is also about having an ongoing provision for that community at the same time. So if we open southern memorial park sooner, Woden will then have a longer life. There is a bit of that balancing to go on as well. Does that make sense?

MR WALL: Obviously if you have multiple facilities, there are multiple options. But in the absence of that southern memorial park, the options are obviously fewer.

Mr Rattenbury: Mr Horne could provide more detail but certainly cremation is becoming more and more popular. That means the space that is available has greater capacity in that sense, if you like.

MR WALL: What is the supposed reason why cremation is becoming a vastly more popular method? Is it cost?

Mr Rattenbury: I will defer to the experts on that one.

Mr Horne: It is a range of issues. Cost is part of that. There is a cultural shift. It is also about, in many respects, the availability of crematoria. For instance, on the east coast of Australia, where we have the highest level of cremation, it occurs in the metropolitan areas. The further you get away from the cities, the lower the incidence of crematoria becomes, and the lower the cremation rate.

Mr Bartos: As we understand it, as a board, the primary driver is simply preferences of the bereaved for having their loved ones cremated. The other cultural driver is increasing multiculturalism and growth in the population of people for whom cremation is the preferred cultural option. For example, for the Hindu population, that is the option. We have had an increase in the number of people of Hindu faith in the ACT, so that is a driver. But it is not the primary driver. The primary driver is simply the preferences of families.

DR BOURKE: I have a supplementary. You have already mentioned proximity to crematoria being important regarding people’s choice. Do you have a sense of what the distance is that matters—50 kilometres, 100 kilometres, 10 kilometres?

Mr Bartos: I am sorry; I cannot give you that definitively.

DR BOURKE: It is relevant to the ACT.

Mr Horne: We have not seen any evidence around that.

THE CHAIR: The annual report in a couple of places mentions technology enhancements. Online memorialisation services: what are they?

Mr Horne: It is essentially a virtual memorial, a bit like a person's Facebook page after they are gone.

THE CHAIR: Okay. So it complements—

Mr Horne: Generally speaking, yes. There are a number of specific companies that have sprung up that provide this as a specific service. You can sign up to a memorial site, you lease space on it, if you like, and then give that option to your customers.

THE CHAIR: You talk about offering new services, technology-enabled services, over the course of the next year as well. What sorts of things do you have in mind?

Mr Horne: We are working on that as an option. We are working on how we will implement that. We are also looking at some enhancements to our website. We will have far greater ability for people to look at spatial mapping on our webpage and at our kiosks.

THE CHAIR: It also mentions that there are electronic maps of the cemeteries, including a grave search function that is expected to be available late this year.

Mr Horne: We have the functionality right now. It is just not 100 per cent yet. Until we have it working at 100 per cent, we will not make it available.

THE CHAIR: Are there any other gravesites around the ACT apart from the two major cemeteries? Are there early European—

Mr Horne: There is Hall cemetery.

THE CHAIR: Is that the only other one?

Mr Horne: Norwood Park, of course, has memorial spaces for ashes interment.

THE CHAIR: Hall cemetery would be able to be searched through this function as well?

Mr Horne: Indeed.

Mr Bartos: There is also—but it is not under our authority—a graveyard at St John's church that has been closed for new burials since 1938, but it will accept an occasional burial from people who still own family plots there.

THE CHAIR: But that will not be searchable through your function?

Mr Bartos: No.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: I notice on page 18 of your report that two employees in the ACT Public Cemeteries Authority underwent Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural awareness training in the year 2014-15. What kinds of issues or considerations have been taken for Indigenous people in cemeteries in the ACT?

Mr Horne: We have a portion at Gungahlin cemetery that is specifically set aside for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

DR BOURKE: And how popular has that been?

Mr Horne: It has been there now for about 14 years, and I think we have had about 20 burials. I would characterise it as probably not highly used.

DR BOURKE: And have you explored with the community why that might be the case?

Mr Horne: In general, people go back to their origin, to their place of birth, I think is the way I would characterise that.

DR BOURKE: I am talking more about the issue of whether people want to be buried in an Indigenous-specific area or not and whether that has been explored by the authority.

Mr Horne: No, we have not.

THE CHAIR: Many thanks to the cemeteries authority.

Mr Horne: Thank you very much.

Mr Rattenbury: We have one other correction. Perhaps this is a good moment to do that.

THE CHAIR: Of the annual report?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Great.

Mr Byles: I mentioned before the break two errors have been detected in the annual report. This is the second one, unfortunately. I apologise for the errors in the report.

I refer you to volume 1, page 69 of the annual report, which talks about, on the left-hand side there, the second paragraph down, cultural awareness training, which Dr Bourke has just spoken about, at the Yurauna centre and the number of employees that had undertaken cultural awareness training. The figure of 220 that is mentioned is incorrect. That figure should read 129—129 to replace 220. In the following line it

says:

Of the 110 executives and managers, 94 have attended,

The figure is actually 86. Those numbers are lower than reported, unfortunately. However, since the report of course we have increased those numbers and will continue to have a focus on cultural awareness training throughout the directorate.

THE CHAIR: We now move on to output 1.1, information services, libraries. There might be a range of questions as we move through the afternoon. Mr Coe, would you like to start?

MR COE: Sure.

THE CHAIR: Welcome, Ms Little. I ask you to read the pink privilege statement and indicate for us that you understand the implications.

Ms Little: Yes, thank you.

THE CHAIR: Welcome to the committee.

MR COE: I was wondering whether you could please give an overview of the shared digital preservation system that is part of National and State Libraries Australasia, which is mentioned in the report.

Ms Little: That is a pilot project where we are looking at a proof of concept, and it is sharing a digital preservation system with other states and territories. As you can appreciate, a lot of the material that is now being published, our historical record, is only being published in digital format. Much of the work of community groups, research people and others including government is now being published on websites and not being published in hardcopy format. It is quite a concern for libraries about how we would gather that information into the future.

We are looking at this pilot or this investigation to see whether we could share infrastructure to do that so that when people publish something online they might, for example, go through a single portal that would then capture that document and would be held on that system that we would all contribute to and then be able to be used in the future. It is still in its early stages of investigation.

MR COE: How do you tackle the risk of file types and images becoming outdated? There are already many early image file types which are pretty much inaccessible now.

Ms Little: That is true. The great thing for the ACT is that we participate in a group called National and State Libraries of Australasia, which includes the national libraries of New Zealand and Australia. We all have the same problem. We have just conducted an audit of what formats we all have. Worryingly or not, we actually have some formats in our heritage collection that others do not have but we know that CSIRO does have some. We are creating a national list of all of these formats and then working out who has the readable equipment.

This is a problem internationally, and National and State Libraries of Australasia have partnered with a couple of the national libraries in other countries to try and get an EU bid up for an international register of formats. So far we did not get there but my understanding of EU projects is that you have to try a few times. We have done that now.

MR COE: And lobby.

Ms Little: And lobby, yes. Of course we have had to hand that over to our German and English counterparts.

MR COE: Especially with regard to digitisation of audio and video collections, does the library either have or has it had an active strategy for digitising cassettes, whether they be audio or video?

Ms Little: Not at the present time. That is part of these discussions that we are having nationally. That kind of equipment—holding the equipment and actually doing the digitisation—is expensive and will only grow in its need for storage. That is part of our investigation with the national libraries.

MR COE: Short of some regional or global-type arrangement has the library got any risk mitigation strategies in terms of buying cassette players that still can be purchased? Occasionally you see them in the shops. It is a bit bizarre but you still see them. Does the library actually make sure that you have still got machines that are in full working order?

Ms Little: We do but I cannot say that is for every format that we have in our collection, because this audit process has identified a couple of things that we have in formats that are really obscure. We are going to have to try and partner with other libraries around Australia to try and work out how we are going to be able to read that stuff in order to be able to digitise it.

It is an ongoing problem and we are certainly working on it. But as I said, we discovered over dinner the other night that CSIRO has the equipment to be able to read something that we thought we were not going to be able to read. The more we can network with our colleagues in the galleries, libraries, museum sectors, as well as other libraries, we will be able to fix it. But it is a huge issue and everything changes all of the time.

THE CHAIR: I ask you a supplementary. In the report from last year's annual report hearings the committee recommended that during these public hearings libraries report on progress on formulating a digitisation policy for the Heritage Library.

Ms Little: Yes. As part of this pilot we will then decide which way we will go. There are a number of states and territories who are indicating or have started to go their own way but there are a number of us that think that we will still try and do something collaboratively.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Your report states on page 24 that over 550 people from 39 countries have participated in the Libraries ACT English conversation program. What do you feel has contributed to the success of that program and what lessons are there for the ACT government's broad efforts towards social inclusion?

Ms Little: The successes of that program are many and various. The people who come to that program are really seeking that opportunity to be able to converse with people. The strength of the program is that it is not structured. This is the English as a second language course. It is much more about the conversational style of interacting with people. It is Australian colloquialisms, it is situational. It might be that today they are going to talk about how to catch an ACTION bus. The conversation is around something very practical and it is much more relaxed and colloquial.

The volunteers who run it are extremely passionate. They are the backbone of the program and really are key to the success of it. The fact that we do offer it in the library is because the library is seen as a safe place and a place of learning. People like to come and be part of the library as well. It is a quiet little gem that goes along in the libraries and grows as we get more volunteers.

We are certainly starting to look at what the issues around some of the Syrian people potentially coming here might mean for us and whether we need to expand the program for them. But it is just one of those really great things that we do.

DR BOURKE: How many volunteers are involved in the program?

Ms Little: I would have to take that on notice.

DR BOURKE: And the other part of my question is: is there anything that the ACT government can learn from this particular program in our efforts to improve social inclusion in the territory?

Ms Little: Probably the most important thing, which is again a key success factor and could be learned, is the role of the library. We are a place where people come when they are brand new to Canberra. Whether that is as a job move or whether that is as a refugee or a migrant, we are one of the first places they seek out. And we are places they trust, and they like to come and be part of the community. We are a very good venue for a lot of social inclusion activity and, to our great delight, a lot of our colleagues from other parts of the directorates are now using us as a launching pad for their programs or for their connection with other people.

The value of the volunteers I think is also a big lesson and if you can harness the volunteers in a way that gives them meaning, as well as the community, that is another big lesson for future social inclusion.

DR BOURKE: You have mentioned the success of a library as a focus, as a meeting place. But of course, you are very successful in your digital offerings as well. Is there a tension there?

Ms Little: No there is not, I do not think. People use our resources in the way that suits them in their situation. If they want to take some books on holiday they will

often use our reading resources because then you only have to take one device with you and not pack lots of books in your bag.

DR BOURKE: But not a Kindle?

Ms Little: But not a Kindle, correct. You cannot use our resources with a Kindle. Otherwise people who want to browse a beautiful gardening book or whatever will still come in and borrow the book. We find that people will almost channel-shop, depending on the situation that they are in at the time.

One of the interesting statistics we have this year is that we have had a 134 per cent increase in the use of our e-music resources, which is great because it means that we are getting the message out to people that they can download three free songs a week and keep them and do that legally through us.

DR BOURKE: That is through your free Freegal licence.

Ms Little: That is right. I have trained you well! We have had increases in all of our other e-resources. This Saturday we launch a new service which is called 'BorrowBox' which is an Australian publisher, which is fantastic news. They are now putting out e-books and e-audio books, not entirely Australian authors, but we are finally going to be able to pick up Australian authors in that e-environment. So we are having a big celebration of that this Saturday with Stig, who is apparently a really popular children's reader on e-books. Apparently kids go mad.

DR BOURKE: Just going back to e-music, do you have any known data on what sort of music people were downloading?

Ms Little: No I do not. It would be interesting to know, but that service is the entire Sony playlist. Anything that Sony brings out you can download through our lovely website with your borrower's card and your PIN and keep it.

DR BOURKE: The downloading process is entirely outsourced from your information—

Ms Little: Yes. The technical way it works is that you go through our website. Your borrower's card and PIN are authenticated by our system and then you go off to the Freegal system, download what you want and come back to your device.

DR BOURKE: I was just curious—because we have had folding of the Canberra Recorded Music Society recently, which catered primarily to classical and jazz music—whether that might have brought an up-swing in people wanting to use your facilities.

Ms Little: It may well have. I would not know how I could find that out, apart from talking to people who were involved in that group. But it could well be part of that 134 per cent increase.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Minister, what is the current status of plans for a library service at Lanyon?

Mr Rattenbury: There are no plans at this time.

MR WALL: Has a feasibility study been completed for that project?

Ms Little: The feasibility study was part of a community facility feasibility study being done by the Community Services Directorate, so it is not actually TAMS managing that process. My understanding—unless it has changed from the last time I spoke to community services—is that that feasibility study has not been funded.

MR WALL: Page 93 of volume 1 has the survey of services that are related to this output class and it has got library visits per capita. Does that capture the library visits for both the physical library premises as well as the online space?

Ms Little: Yes, it does.

MR WALL: What was the breakdown of visits between the digital and the physical?

Ms Little: I will have to take that on notice.

THE CHAIR: Could I ask about the digital hub at the Gungahlin library? I know that the annual report says that the funding from the commonwealth ceased in March of this year, I think it was.

Ms Little: Yes. That is right.

THE CHAIR: What does that mean for the digital hub at Gungahlin library then?

Ms Little: What it has meant is that the equipment has stayed with us. That was part of the agreement with the commonwealth. Some of that equipment has been moved to other branches so that we can do some of those other programs in other branches. Some of it has stayed there; in particular, the internet streaming capability is still at Gungahlin so the community can, with assistance from a technician, go and use that. Some of the equipment has been moved to Civic library, where we have just launched a makerspace. We had a fantastic open day recently with hundreds and hundreds of teenage boys, which was fantastic because that is a group we do not generally get through the door easily. There is now a regular program of using that makerspace where you can go and use 3D printers and all those sorts of things.

Some of that equipment has been dispersed to other branches and some of it has stayed in Gungahlin. The program has been expanded out into all of the branches, so if you want a one-on-one session now—we often get senior citizens come in and go, “My granddaughter gave me this iPad thing; what do I do with it?”—we will sit down and show people how to get onto it and that sort of thing. We do group sessions as well. They now are across all of the libraries.

THE CHAIR: Given that example of an older person saying that, if someone came to me and said that, I could say, “Pop into your local library”?

Ms Little: Yes—pop into the library or telephone us and book in for a session. It would be either a small group session or a one on one.

THE CHAIR: Right, and the technicians that you said—

Ms Little: They are private technicians that we can give you the name of, but we do not hold that technical expertise in the library all of the time.

THE CHAIR: And who pays for that service?

Ms Little: The person who wants to arrange it.

THE CHAIR: So currently, apart from the equipment that is available, are there any programs that are accessible through the digital hub?

Ms Little: Through the internet streaming or just generally?

THE CHAIR: Just generally in the digital hub, but specifically the streaming or any other—

Ms Little: We still use the digital hub space for activities and the internet streaming—there are no programs related to that; it is very much if you want to come and do a talk and webstream it out to people or have a meeting.

THE CHAIR: I understand that previously, for example, Centrelink staff might have been available at the other end. Is that still available?

Ms Little: That is still available. The project with Centrelink has finished and probably will not be repeated.

THE CHAIR: Do you know why?

Ms Little: It was very, very hungry on library staff time. Centrelink were not particularly open to those discussions, so very vulnerable people were coming in and needing a lot of assistance to be able to videoconference. This is a national issue; we are piloting another project for another part of the commonwealth to actually quantify what the time taken is.

The other program that you might have been also referring to was the one about the people learning to speak English, with the English language funded program. That went extremely well. People were able to videoconference into a program of learning English from people with their own home language and that was very successful.

THE CHAIR: You mentioned the makerspace and the hundreds of teenage boys. What were they doing at the makerspace?

Ms Little: They were coming in and playing with all of the equipment. I am not that technical, but we had a whole lot of different pieces of equipment that the kids could come in and experiment with. There are things called Makey Makey that are all the

rage at the moment. They are like a pen but they do 3D, not just flat writing. We had a big—

THE CHAIR: So you can do this at Civic library?

Ms Little: Yes. We have the 3D printers which are very, very popular. On that day—she is not there all the time—we had a woman who does embroidery and other sort of fabric craft but she weaves electronics through it so that it all lights up. We were teaching kids how to do that. We also had a thing on the floor that was like piano keys. You could link that up to a piece of equipment and play music by playing it with your hands. We had the open days and then we have some of the equipment just there for people to come and use.

THE CHAIR: Great. So people can use that space any time or they need to book it in?

Ms Little: Yes.

THE CHAIR: The teenage boys were not doing the embroidery, were they?

Ms Little: No. But it was really great to see lots of dads and lads turn up and get really excited about all this technology.

THE CHAIR: Do you have plans to do that in other libraries or is it solely probably going to stay at Civic?

Ms Little: At the moment only Civic. We do take the other programs out. We do take the 3D printers out and do programs in the other libraries. That seems to be something people are really interested in.

THE CHAIR: Great. As there are no other questions, we will move on to waste and recycling. Welcome officials. Would you able to just read the pink privilege statement for me and indicate you understand the implications?

Mr Byles: Yes.

THE CHAIR: Thank you. Mr Coe.

MR COE: I was wondering what the findings were of the KPMG report or study into the issues with landfill filling up.

Mr Byles: That report has been provided to me and I have asked for some further information. That is still in the process of being finalised, Mr Coe. There is no doubt that on the surface it appears that we could have done better on contract management—without going into it in detail, because, as I said, it is still in progress. However, I will wait until the finalisation of the report before I make any further comment.

MR COE: Sure. When was the report first given to you, albeit in its pre-final condition?

Mr Byles: I will have to take that on notice. I cannot remember the exact date.

MR COE: Sure, but are we talking like the last month or two or are we talking January, February?

Mr Byles: We are talking more than a month ago, from memory, as I recall. But again I will take that on notice, because I do not want to misinform the committee.

MR COE: Sure, but, in the absence of having a report that is finalised, how has it guided the decisions that you have had to make and take over the last year?

Mr Byles: In terms of?

MR COE: In terms of managing the facility.

Mr Byles: There have been noticeable improvements. I might ask either Mr Perram or Mr Trushell to comment on that. We have learnt lessons from that—there is no doubt about that—about our planning. But again it is something that I want to be more fully informed on before I advise the committee.

MR COE: I guess I am specifically saying: if the report is still not finalised in a way that is accessible to the directorate at large, how has it informed your decision making?

Mr Byles: Mr Coe, may I get some advice here? Can you repeat that question again, Mr Coe?

MR COE: In the absence of a finalised report or a report which is accessible, how has it informed decision making over the last six months, nine months or a year since the issue was known?

Mr Byles: It is only prudent to take advice. You would not commission a report unless you looked at the recommendations. If they could be and were sensible to be implemented, you would do that, resource constraints aside. This has been an issue that revolves around planning, contract management, timely review, looking forward to make sure that appropriate planning is in place and all those issues. As I said, there is no doubt that we could have done better and I have spoken to the various officers in the area to make sure that we do improve our performance in that area.

MR COE: And you requested or commissioned that report, did you not?

Mr Byles: Yes.

MR COE: When was that done?

Mr Byles: Again, without having that detail in front of me, Mr Coe, I will just take that on notice.

MR COE: Sure. If there is this outstanding report into contract management and

management of assets, has this area of TAMS engaged in any significant contracts over the last six or nine months, during the period in which the report has not been published?

Mr Byles: I would say, to answer your question on a broad nature, yes, we have engaged in significant contracts. Most of the contracts we engage in are significant. But we did not wait for the outcome of the report and the recommendations. We knew that there were some lessons to be learnt. You do not wait for a report to tell you that. You take the appropriate action prior to any report if you know there is an obvious error. If you are referring to any specific contracts that you have got concern with, I am just—

MR COE: No. If you have got a report which is all about how you could better manage contracts, surely there is a real need to get those recommendations in effect as quickly as possible.

Mr Byles: Sure. Again, I might call on, with the minister's approval, Mr Perram or Mr Trushell. We did look at the area of contract management. Again, the staff were doing the best they could, given the resources and the training provided. That is a particular of focus we needed to look at and we have done that. I might ask Mr Perram if he has got anything to add to that.

Mr Perram: Just in relation to that, there is a report that particularly addressed the contract management of NOWaste that is on our website and that has informed the contracting process. There is a further report but—

MR COE: That is not the KPMG one, though, is it?

Mr Perram: The KPMG one, as I understand it, is on the website. There is a second report that has been commissioned. I think we need to be clear which report you are talking about in respect of the matter. So I think that is probably best as a question on notice, so that we give you absolute clarity on the response.

MR COE: Sure. If you can give the status of both those reports and, if you can, just the rough scope of them, that would be excellent.

Mr Byles: Sorry, Mr Coe. I apologise for the confusion. There is the KPMG report and there is another report also that has been probably supplementary to that.

MR COE: That was KPMG as well, though, wasn't it?

Mr Byles: No. There is KPMG and there is a PWC report as well. They do cross over, because there are some similarities in terms of improving the way we do business. If I can just clarify that by way of a question on notice—

MR COE: Sure, and that PWC report was commissioned by you as well?

Mr Byles: Yes, I think, from memory. They are nodding. Yes, I generally commission many of these reports. That is the one that is still work in progress, I might add. That is still being developed.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: Minister, what strategies will TAMS use to further increase the proportion of waste that the ACT recycles?

Mr Rattenbury: There are two broad answers to that. The first is ongoing education campaigns—and we are just in the process of preparing a new campaign that will launch in six or eight weeks time—to remind people of the things that can go in recycling. We will, of course, have the ongoing school visits through the facility at Hume. We find that children are very good ambassadors because they nag their parents. There is that broad package of education materials and that takes a number of forms.

The second is that in last year's budget \$2.8 million was allocated to TAMS for the partnership with the Environment and Planning Directorate to look at the future strategy for dealing with waste in the ACT. The remit that goes with that is for TAMS very much to go back to basics and figure out all of the waste streams that are coming in and how we are going to deal with those in the future, with the objective of lifting our recycling rate from the current figures in the 73 per cent range to closer and closer to 100 per cent. The bigger picture answer is that we are taking that thorough look at our set of waste streams and which ones we can improve, which ones we are recycling and can we do any of those better, and of the things we are not currently recycling how can we get more reuse of those.

DR BOURKE: How does Canberra compare to other Australian cities of similar size in recycling? Do you have any information about that?

Mr Perram: The comparisons between states rather than cities are the numbers that are around. We are, with the 27 waste streams we currently look at, first or second in Australia on that line. As the minister said, we are looking at a major review in respect of where that is at so that we may well be creating a new paradigm in respect of waste management which we will share with our sister states.

DR BOURKE: With these ambitious ideas, minister, where will you be looking for models on how to achieve that—elsewhere in the world or do you—

Mr Rattenbury: We are doing a couple of things. One is that we have created two stakeholder groups here in the territory. One we are in the process of creating. One is an industry stakeholder group and the other is a community stakeholder group. We are working with our local communities because they have that great on-the-ground knowledge and then they will also bring to the table knowledge from other jurisdictions as will our own staff in their research processes.

We are looking to set up the next generation of waste treatment in the ACT. We are at a point where our materials recovery facility is reaching the end of its usable life. We have waste streams that we do not currently deal with as effectively as we should. This is very much what I would call a stock-take point where we are saying, “What is the next generation of waste management going to look like in the ACT?”

DR BOURKE: You talked about education. That seems to be your primary tool for encouraging additional recycling. What evidence do you have that education in this area is going to be particularly effective, apart from anecdotal?

Mr Rattenbury: I did not mean to give the impression it is the primary means in the sense that the technology and all those sort of things are the critical infrastructure that we have to have. The education goes to making sure people do the right thing in the context of the infrastructure that we have created. Examples are that at the moment I think most people do not realise you can recycle aluminium foil. And so we have—

DR BOURKE: Really?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes you can.

DR BOURKE: No, really that they do not know that?

Mr Rattenbury: I am glad you do. You are an exemplary citizen in that regard.

DR BOURKE: Thank you.

Mr Rattenbury: It is those kinds of things people just do not know. You may have noticed the take off your lids campaign. Historically we have said to people, “You don’t need to take the lids off things like milk containers and other bottles,” but what we have found is that the machinery does not sort the bottles as well if the lids are on. That is a place we have had to re-educate the community. That was a tough change. We got some hard feedback from that. All these people are saying, “But I have always done it this way. Why have you suddenly changed your mind?” But that is evolving.

DR BOURKE: Did you do any qualitative analysis before and after the campaign to determine whether the campaign had actually been effective and people had taken the lids off?

Mr Rattenbury: I do not think we have anything specific.

Mr Trushell: No but we have done, as part of developing the broad strategies for the next three years, some initial baseline surveying. We surveyed 1,000 residents with some specific questions around the extent to which we are getting through at the moment. We use that as a baseline and then continue to survey the community to get a sense of whether our messages are penetrating.

DR BOURKE: I am more interested in not whether they have actually received the message or hear the message but whether they actually do, whether you achieve behaviour change and what is your evidence for that.

Mr Trushell: It is the same. Those questions go to awareness and behaviours. A lot of our campaigning is around trying to explain what that message needs to be.

The other campaign is also the awareness of the facilities there. There are a lot of people out there who want to do the right thing but do not necessarily have access to the information about what services are available. A lot of our education is focusing

around providing that level of awareness for those who want to do the right thing but are just unsure how to do that.

DR BOURKE: I am just interested, even if everybody did know that they could put their aluminium foil in the recycling as both you and I do, minister, whether they are actually going to do it. That is the proof of the pudding of the effectiveness of your education campaign, not that they know that they can do but they actually do it because that is what we want them to do.

Mr Trushell: Some of the ways we can tell this is through the material that is going through the system. We see the levels of, for example, aluminium et cetera, those sorts of materials that we are targeting. We see that. It is not a perfect science because some of that material does not just come out of the household collection. Some of it comes out of the commercial sector. The territory does not control where that waste goes to. You cannot always make a direct correlation between the data that emerges and our education campaigns but it provides an indication.

THE CHAIR: I ask a supplementary. Recently this committee had a group of students come in and present their one bright idea to be sustainable in the future. One of them, who had won through to the finals, had the idea of reducing use in the first place. The example was bags of chips—not buy a bag of chips that has got 20 small bags of chips and put them in a Tupperware container. What ability does the government have through NOWaste in particular to talk about reducing use in the first place?

Mr Rattenbury: No formal ability as such. The reduce messaging is always part of a broader waste education campaign. For example, our sponsorship of something like the garage sale trail is about that. It is about encouraging people to reuse goods, purchase a second-hand good rather than just going out and purchasing something from the get-go. But things like the chip example, which is a perfectly good example, are covered by all these national packaging covenants and the like, and they very much sit in the market. We are not in the space where we need to be in those matters.

THE CHAIR: Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Last summer residents of Tuggeranong were subjected to the horrendous smell coming from the tip whilst the works to construct a new cell were undertaken. Are you able to offer some assurance or guarantee that they are not going to be subjected to the same odour this year?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes. We have no intent of undertaking those works this year. That was a one-off last year. It actually relates to the reports Mr Coe was asking about.

MR WALL: Yes it does.

Mr Rattenbury: It arose from that particular mistake. We do not expect that to be an issue again in the future. It was very unfortunate and we apologised to the residents who were affected by that.

MR WALL: It was pretty horrendous once it got inside the house.

Mr Rattenbury: Unfortunately we had no choice. We had to rectify the situation at the tip but clearly it had a detrimental impact on people who live downwind.

MR WALL: And upwind and all around.

Mr Rattenbury: Or upwind, yes.

MR WALL: It was non-discriminate in the months that that carried on. I have a couple of questions about the west Belconnen facility. What is the status of any works or upgrades that are being undertaken out there at the moment?

Mr Trushell: Sorry, could you repeat the question?

MR WALL: The status of any works or upgrades that are being undertaken at the moment?

Mr Trushell: The work that has been undertaken is in regard to the Mr Fluffy program where we have worked with the EPA around developing a specific area to manage the bulk of the Mr Fluffy material. That work is being completed, and as of Monday we have material going into that new area.

MR WALL: What upgrades or works have been done to facilitate the acceptance of the Fluffy waste?

Mr Trushell: We had to develop a clay-lined landfill site. We then had to install a methane collection system, a leachate collection system which is for the contaminated water that is created within the area, not dissimilar to the emergency end of it. We have had works around roads to ensure all-weather access, to upgrade to allow for the volume of material coming in and also some specific infrastructure to allow the safe unloading of the trucks as they come in.

MR WALL: So all those works are now complete?

Mr Trushell: Those works are now complete and provide us with a certain capacity for a period. If we require additional capacity then we would negotiate with the task force around expanding that area.

MR WALL: What is the current capacity of the specialist cell?

Mr Trushell: We are talking about an area that will take at least a couple of hundred houses. What we found with the initial lot of houses—we did the asbestos pit—was that the estimates of volume that the houses were taking up was very conservative. We were actually using a lot less space than we anticipated. As we put houses in these areas we will do some measurements of volume and get a better idea, but we are talking at least a couple of hundred and more as we layer up.

MR WALL: A couple of hundred is only a small fraction of what is going to ultimately be close to a thousand homes?

Mr Trushell: Correct. We have volume out there for many thousands of houses. It is about preparing the areas as we go. We do not want to create more than we need as we go along. We have got plenty of capacity out there, we have got a buffer, and we will continue to expand that area as we require. But essentially what we want to do is get a good sense of the volume that has been taken up so that we can better plan over the next couple of years the areas that we have to expand.

MR WALL: How long has it taken to get this area up and running?

Mr Trushell: It has only taken a couple of months. Most of the work was around the planning for this, particularly ensuring that the area satisfied the requirements of the Environment Protection Authority. We required a variation to our environmental authorisation in order to undertake this activity. It is a fairly novel activity. There was a lot of work around ensuring that the risks associated would have been adequately managed.

MR WALL: What is the plan B? If for some reason the demolition schedule is working effectively and the houses are coming down quickly and you run out of space what happens?

Mr Trushell: There are a whole range of options, including temporary stockpiling, taking it to Mugga. But I think the point is that we can build new areas very quickly. We are working very closely with the task force, with capital works and also with the demolishers around the volume of material coming in. I have got an officer who is in constant contact with all those stakeholders and we are developing a schedule and we are doing our planning and construction around those figures.

MR WALL: When will construction commence to expand or create a new space for the Fluffy demolition waste?

Mr Trushell: As advised, we get more material into this area and we will measure and we will get a sense of the volume that the houses are consuming. We will essentially get a metric that allows us to then compare that metric with the estimation of houses coming in over the next couple of years and we will construct new areas.

MR WALL: So you basically wait until this one is almost full before—

Mr Trushell: No, not at all. Part of the arrangement is that the task force are funding this and we get approval from them before we start building new areas. We have an initial program with them but as I say we would rather get more accurate measures so that we can go back and say, “Next year what do we need?” and construct it the year after. We will ensure we maintain considerable space. As I say, we have got something like 1.2 million cubic metres of space out there. Space is not an issue; it is just that we do not want to be constructing areas that we are not going to be using.

Mr Perram: I think the constraining factor here is the number of demolishers within the city, as opposed to the space for landfill. We work very closely and meet on a regular basis with the task force about the flow of houses in. As Michael said, 200 houses in the space, we can lay out that immediately. That is 400 houses we can jump up to straight away. So it is not as if space is at a premium.

MR WALL: You are building a mound essentially, rather than filling holes?

Mr Perram: That is exactly right yes.

MR WALL: And what is the extent to which you can build that mound?

Mr Perram: Thousands of houses can fit there.

THE CHAIR: I have some questions about green waste. I know it is a constant issue, the green waste recycling. I understand green waste bins are viewed as a less than efficient way of recovering and disposing of green waste across the city.

Mr Rattenbury: I have asked TAMS about this because it is popular in the community and people have them in Queanbeyan and they have them at their coast house and these sorts of things. I have asked TAMS about this on more than one occasion. The advice we have is that at the moment 90 per cent of our green waste makes its way to the recycling facilities. People take it in their trailers or they have trash packs. We have a situation where the waste is getting to where it needs to be.

The policy question is: if we had a system that is, on the broad, working why would we change it? There would be, of course, a cost to adding a green bin. It is a question: why would we add that cost onto ultimately the rates bill by changing this system? That said, as I have spoken about earlier, we are doing that assessment of where to next with waste. I have asked TAMS to reconsider that and re-examine the issue in light of thinking about the whole waste stream.

THE CHAIR: I understand free garden waste can be taken to Belconnen and also Mugga Lane, but Canberra Sand and Gravel do it at Mitchell and used to do it for a very small amount. Someone would look at your trailer and say, "That will be a dollar or two dollars," but it has gone up.

Mr Rattenbury: It is a dollar, last time I went anyway.

THE CHAIR: But it has gone up now to a minimum of \$12.50, I understand.

Mr Rattenbury: Last time I went—the others can help me—you had to buy a \$10 ticket.

MR COE: It is like a business card that they punch.

THE CHAIR: Yes, like a coffee card.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes, like a coffee card or something. It was still a dollar a time, but you did have to buy the ticket upfront. If that has gone maybe from \$10 to \$12.50 that might be what you are thinking of.

Mr Perram: Through you, minister, I was there two weekends ago and it cost me a dollar. I am not aware of the change.

THE CHAIR: I have had some feedback from someone that it cost them \$12.50 to go.

Mr Rattenbury: We are happy to follow that up if you want to make that follow-up later.

THE CHAIR: It was just yesterday.

Mr Rattenbury: It seems surprising to all of us on this side of the table.

MR COE: And if you turn up there, for instance, in a truck or you have roots of trees and things they will say, “No you’ve got to go to Mitchell and put them in the landfill.”

Mr Rattenbury: That is probably the case because there is a maximum size of what can go into the green waste. It is supposed to compost. Anything too large will not compost.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: What is the current situation with bulky waste?

Mr Rattenbury: The government continues to operate a bulky waste scheme whereby people who hold a seniors card and concession card are entitled to a free pick-up, and that scheme is operating. We get pretty good feedback on that; it is going along quite well. For people who do not, listed on the TAMS website are a range of providers who can come and take these things away for you for a payment.

DR BOURKE: Of course there is always Gumtree.

Mr Rattenbury: There is, and plenty of people have their own trailers or a mate with a ute or whatever. That is not the case for everybody, so that is where some of these commercial providers can come into the equation. The idea of having a hard waste pick-up is one that people in the community canvass. Again, it is one of those weigh-ups where we could put that in place but there would be a cost. At the moment most people manage to dispose of it themselves. It is a question of should we put a cost on every member of the community or should those people who want something removed just pay a commercial provider to come along and do it when they need it? They are the policy questions that exist in this space.

DR BOURKE: What about concerns regarding over-consumption and the generation of unnecessary waste? Do you have any views on that, minister?

Mr Rattenbury: That is the reason I am in the job I am in, Dr Bourke. I think as a species we over-consume, but that is not necessarily something that I can change. I can do my best. We live in a very consumerist society. We could probably all do with a lot fewer possessions in our life, but other people will disagree with me on that. That is probably one for the pub some time.

MR COE: With regard to the green shed, which of course is a way of reusing and instant recycling, in the event that the sheds are full and they are not taking the particular item that somebody wants to deposit, the only option, at present, is to

dispose of it. Is that so? Is there a fallback position in the event the green shed says, “No, we’ve got too many bookcases. Even though it’s a perfectly good bookcase, we just don’t have room for it”?

Mr Trushell: That is a matter for the green shed. They have got the two facilities. I must admit I use the Mitchell one frequently and I am often very surprised at the range of stuff they will take. They have certainly never knocked me back. I think they have got a pretty good—

MR COE: This is on the back of somebody who contacted me and they were disappointed because, as I say, it was a perfectly good bookcase. Instead they went around the roundabout and put it straight into landfill. I think it was a bookcase, but I may be wrong.

Mr Trushell: I guess the general point I would make is that the volumes of material we are talking about in terms of the overall recycling rate are pretty small, which is not to discount their importance. There are other options that we discussed about advertising it on Gumtree and things like that, and people can ring the green sheds.

THE CHAIR: The Salvos at Mitchell are around the corner from the green shed.

Mr Trushell: If people are concerned they can ring up and if you find out—

MR COE: Yes, but when people actually turn up—it is a different situation once you have already gone to the hassle of taking it out there.

Mr Trushell: I could take that on notice and get back to you.

MR COE: Yes. I am not by any means saying it is prevalent. I am just curious: is there a fallback in the event that they are full?

Mr Rattenbury: It is a good question. I have not heard of that circumstance and I talk to the owners of the green shed semi-regularly.

MR COE: They do a great job.

Mr Rattenbury: I have not heard them say anything like, “We don’t have enough space” or “We’re having to send a lot of stuff away.” We will check that.

THE CHAIR: Dr Bourke.

DR BOURKE: My question is in regard to regulatory services. Minister, do you see a potential to increase enforcement of animal welfare regulations in the ACT in view of the recent stories we have been hearing about things that people have been doing to animals?

Mr Rattenbury: I have had some specific policy and regulatory concerns raised with me by the RSPCA, particularly in light of a number of cases that took place late last year and earlier this year, where I think some, quite frankly, shortcomings in the law have been exposed. I have had TAMS work with the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare

Advisory Committee to look at changes to the legislation. I expect to have legislation in the Assembly in the first quarter of next year—we are working to that sort of time line—to make some adjustments to the law in some areas that have proved problematic.

DR BOURKE: You talked about this is at estimates, as I recall.

Mr Rattenbury: Probably we did. It has taken a bit of time but we have gone through a consultative process. RSPCA and AWAC have both been at the table. The drafting is going on.

DR BOURKE: I think there was a recommendation about the number of pets in homes and whether that was something that could be regulated.

Mr Rattenbury: I do not recall that. There are limits on the number of pets that you can have in a household. There are, of course, the powers for both the Domestic Animal Services rangers and the RSPCA inspectors where, if animals are living in conditions that are detrimental to them and there are animal welfare concerns, animals can be removed.

DR BOURKE: Is that pets per home or pets per owner?

Ms Flanery: It is pets per owner. The number of cats and dogs is regulated per owner.

DR BOURKE: So if you have multiple owners in a home you can have more than you might normally expect?

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

DR BOURKE: Is that something worth looking at?

Ms Flanery: We have provisions under the Domestic Animals Act in terms of nuisance and animal welfare. With respect to your question about the number of animals per se, it is something that we are looking at and we are just getting some advice on if we already have those powers and we need clarification on certain aspects or not.

DR BOURKE: What about complaints about noise nuisance from animals, minister? Can you just remind the committee what the processes are there?

Mr Rattenbury: Sure. This is one area that I get quite a few letters on—

DR BOURKE: Me too.

Mr Rattenbury: as the minister. On the advice of Ms Porter, who recommended to me a particular model from Queensland which she thought was very effective, I have asked TAMS to have a look at that. I think that we could improve it here. It is difficult. There are always at least three sides to most of these stories in the sense that we sometimes receive complaints which are unfounded. The system is designed to try and give justice to both sides of a complaint.

When someone makes a complaint about a dog barking they are required to maintain a bark diary for two weeks. This is designed to provide evidence for the rangers. The rangers will go out and seek to corroborate the complaint. I have had one today, for example, that I just signed this morning before coming to this committee. Somebody made a complaint and the advice I have received from the rangers is that nobody else in the street would corroborate a dog barking complaint. Nobody else supported the allegation. These are very tricky areas. Mr Wall will recall the one we had on the south side last year. There are always complexities to these stories. It is a tricky area of regulation.

MR WALL: That was a little more severe than a dog barking.

Mr Rattenbury: Sure. I mean animal cases generally.

MR WALL: Yes.

DR BOURKE: It is not just dogs, though, is it?

Mr Rattenbury: Roosters is another problem area. As more people are seeking to have poultry in their backyards, roosters have become an emerging issue. They are probably the two main areas where concerns are raised.

Ms Flanery: Bees.

Mr Rattenbury: Bees is another one. That is why we brought in a new code for bee management in the suburbs. Again, people are increasingly having hives. We have put limits on the number of hives you can have in a yard and also about where they can be so that they are not next to the footpath. They have got to be further back from the boundary line and the like so that people do not inadvertently walk into the path of the bees.

MR WALL: Are there any restrictions on the ownership of roosters or other livestock?

Ms Flanery: No, there are no restrictions on the ownership of roosters.

MR WALL: Sheep, pigs, goats?

Ms Flanery: It depends on whether there are health concerns. We have issues with people having agricultural animals in Canberra. Sometimes they might get a poddy lamb and feed it and then that lamb turns into a sheep and it baas a bit. There are no restrictions, but generally it gets taken back to the farm. We had one a year or so ago where someone had a calf and that turned into quite a large cow, as they do, and that was then returned to a farm. We generally try to negotiate with people.

MR WALL: The annual report speaks of some upgrades at the Capital Linen Service through the reporting period. What changes have been made out at the linen service?

Mr Rattenbury: While the officials are getting settled, I might point out that the linen

service has been going well in the sense that revenue increased by seven per cent.

MR WALL: Has it made a profit?

THE CHAIR: Mr Childs, if I could just get you to indicate that you have read and understand the implications of the privilege statement? Thank you.

Mr Rattenbury: The question was: has it made a profit?

Mr Childs: Our financial performance solely is not generally reported in the annual report. It is consolidated with a number of entities.

MR WALL: Is the linen service profitable?

Mr Byles: The answer is it is self-supporting. It is a business that stands on its own and survives on its own merit, Mr Wall.

MR WALL: Did government make any investment or capital contribution to it this year?

Mr Childs: Capital Linen are self-funded. All our expenses and capital purchases are generated through our sales revenue. The contribution from government was nothing.

MR WALL: Was zero?

Mr Childs: Yes.

MR WALL: Has there been a return of profit back to the directorate?

Mr Childs: Anything that we can do we put back into the business. All our plant and equipment and linen purchases are all funded through our sales revenue.

Mr Byles: The answer is not so much a return to the directorate but what I call a fee for corporate support.

MR WALL: What is the fee for corporate support? What does that cover?

Mr Byles: I will take that on notice, if I can. I will also reply to the question, on notice, as to what it covers.

MR COE: So in effect all staff, all wages—their salaries—are covered by the revenue?

Mr Childs: That is right.

Mr Rattenbury: There are some elements of community service that the service fulfils internally—for example, a free managed linen service for Ronald McDonald House.

MR WALL: It is a responsible corporate citizen, one would think.

Mr Rattenbury: Yes.

THE CHAIR: As there are no further questions, minister and officials, thank you very much for your time this morning. I just remind members that if they have additional questions, they have three days to submit them—and any answers to questions on notice, if we could please have them by 26 November?

Mr Rattenbury: Certainly.

The committee adjourned at 12.29 pm.