



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY**

STANDING COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

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

Members:

**MR B SMYTH (Chair)
MS M PORTER (Deputy Chair)
MS M FITZHARRIS
MS N LAWDER**

TRANSCRIPT OF EVIDENCE

CANBERRA

WEDNESDAY, 4 NOVEMBER 2015

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

By authority of the Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory

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

APPEARANCES

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate	67
Health Directorate	67

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Amended 20 May 2013

The committee met at 9.30 am.

Appearances:

Barr, Mr Andrew, Chief Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Economic Development, Minister for Urban Renewal and Minister for Tourism and Events

Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
Leigh, Ms Kathy, Head of Service and Director-General
Alderson, Dr Karl, Deputy Director-General, Policy and Cabinet
Overton-Clarke, Ms Bronwen, Deputy Director-General, Workforce Capability and Governance and Commissioner for Public Administration
Ogden, Mr Paul, Chief Finance Officer, Strategic Finance
Perkins, Ms Anita, Director, Communications
Young, Mr Michael, Executive Director, Workplace Safety and Industrial Relations
Childs, Ms Judi, Director, Public Sector Management
Hall, Ms Sue, Executive Director, Corporate
Peffer, Mr Dave, Deputy Director-General, Access Canberra
McCabe, Mr Mark, Executive Director, Construction and Workplace Protection and ACT Work Safety Commissioner, Access Canberra
Pitt, Mrs Leesha, Director Licensing, Licensing Branch, Construction, Environment and Workplace Protection, Access Canberra
Kefford, Mr Andrew, Head, Asbestos Response Taskforce
Miners, Mr Stephen, Executive Director, Finance and Budget Division
Cumming, Mr Jon, Chief Digital Officer, Office of the Chief Digital Officer

Health Directorate

Woollard, Mr John, Executive Director, Health Protection Service, Population Health Division

THE CHAIR: I formally declare open the public hearing of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts inquiry into the 2014-15 annual reports. On behalf of the committee, I would like to thank you, Chief Minister, and your accompanying agency and directorate officials for attending today. We all know how much they enjoy it!

The proceedings this morning will commence with an examination of the annex report of the ACT executive, followed by the 2014-15 annual reports of the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate relating to matters that fall within the Chief Minister's portfolio. These will be covered in the following order: government policy and strategy; ACT executive; Commissioner for Public Administration; Access Canberra; Mr Fluffy.

I remind witnesses of the protections and obligations afforded by parliamentary privilege and draw your attention to the privilege statement before you on the table. I ask that you confirm that you have read the statement and understand the implications of privilege. All noted. Fantastic.

I remind witnesses that proceedings are being recorded by Hansard for transcription purposes and are being webstreamed and broadcast. We will take a break at

approximately 11.15 for 15 minutes.

The Chief Minister has indicated that he does not wish to make an opening statement, so we will move straight to questions. Chief Minister, where would one find public interest disclosures covered in the annual report?

Mr Barr: Ms Overton-Clarke will assist.

Ms Overton-Clarke: That is in the state of the service report. It is whole-of-government reporting from this year, so it is the single collation across the whole service.

THE CHAIR: Why have we gone from individual agencies reporting on the public interest disclosures that they have received to whole of government?

Ms Overton-Clarke: As you would remember, Mr Smyth, in developing the directions for this year we tried to work through the areas that would be better done on a whole-of-government basis and those that should be done by individual agencies. The directions are quite clear about areas across the whole of government, which has a focus, if you like—because all notifications of PIDs come to the commissioner, and I am involved in knowing about them across the service, we thought that it was a good area to have a whole-of-government focus.

THE CHAIR: On what page do they appear in your report?

Ms Overton-Clarke: They are on page 18.

THE CHAIR: How would one find that except by knowing now that they are in the public service commissioner's report?

Ms Overton-Clarke: I guess the general perspective is that the state of the service report is the report for the whole public service. While anyone in the ACT community can make a public interest disclosure, unlike the commonwealth legislation, it is not just restricted to public servants; it is about notifications about the ACT government and about the service. So it is appropriate that it is, along with complaints and so forth, the annual report that covers the service.

THE CHAIR: Given that it is not listed in the contents, and given that there does not appear to be an index to your report, how does one find this information easily?

Ms Overton-Clarke: It is in the first few pages of the report; it is right up there with the values. Next year we can certainly look at being a bit clearer on the index. In the index there is the performance analysis and the scrutiny. We can be clearer in the index next year.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary.

MS LAWDER: In relation to this, on page 18, I am wondering why you do not have a little table, as you do in the previous column on complaints, saying, in relation to the public interest disclosures, which directorates or areas they relate to; to make it more

usable?

Ms Overton-Clarke: You mean the breakdown of the 12 PIDs?

MS LAWDER: Yes.

Ms Overton-Clarke: We can certainly do that next year. There is no mystery in it. I can tell you that three came from the Auditor-General's office, two from the Ombudsman's office and seven from different agencies across the ACT government.

MS LAWDER: That is written in here. What I am wondering is which public sector entity they related to rather than where they came from.

Ms Overton-Clarke: I will take that on notice.

MS LAWDER: As per the one in the complaints column, where it says "Calvary", "Chief Minister", "CIT" et cetera.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes. I will take that on notice and get back to the committee.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter, a new question?

MS PORTER: Thank you. My question is seeking information about the introduction of the red tape reduction amendment act in 2014. What has been the effect of this? On page 22 of the report, Chief Minister, I note in particular that it talks about the University of Canberra. I was wondering if you could talk about the benefits of the act in relation to the Canberra University, as it is in my electorate.

Mr Barr: I am just looking at the page reference.

MS PORTER: Page 22.

Mr Barr: Thank you. Yes, we have a process of red tape reduction. We have been actively bringing bills before the Assembly. The University of Canberra has been the subject of both an amendment bill and a series of territory planning variations aimed at ensuring that the regulation of the university is contemporary and enables the university to grow in the future. They have an investment pipeline in the order of around a billion dollars. Some of that is funding that stems from ACT government initiatives in partnership with the university; in other instances it relates to private or other university co-partnership investment with the University of Canberra.

The university sector is clearly an area of considerable growth opportunity for the ACT. One in nine Canberrans either work or study at one of our city's higher education institutions. It is our largest international tradeable service and it continues to generate both income and jobs for our city as well as adding to the social and cultural fabric of Canberra. So the more support that we can provide to the higher education sector the stronger our economy will be in the future.

MS PORTER: Since the introduction of the red tape amendment bill in 2014, I presume there have been other examples where it has become evident that this was

needed in the first place. It was very much needed.

Mr Barr: Certainly the establishment of Access Canberra and a range of regulatory reforms that have occurred through that new agency, together with other areas of regulation review that the government has been undertaking relevant to particular sectors of the economy that we discussed in Monday's hearings, outline the benefit of a more contemporary regulatory environment for this city. Given the unique circumstances of having both municipal and state level regulatory responsibilities, it is an opportunity for us to adopt best practice at both levels of government regulation—municipal and state—and to take advantage of the fact that within a one-government structure we can better coordinate our responses to unnecessary regulatory burdens that are identified through our processes and can more quickly respond to them. We would have to negotiate with different levels of government, as would be the case in larger jurisdictions, and there can be a commonality of purpose within the territory government, whereas in other larger jurisdictions you see that a position adopted by a certain council within a larger state may be completely at odds with the direction of the state government. You see that most often in relation to planning issues, but it is not just planning issues where larger jurisdictions can find conflict in terms of their regulatory arrangements.

Our approach has been to want to look at our regulatory environment from the perspective of the citizen, the business and the community group, and seek to ensure that their approaches to government are seamless and through one avenue. The very practical difference that Access Canberra has made, for example, is that someone seeking to run an event under the previous arrangements would have needed to have gone to a number of different areas of ACT government to seek the relevant permits and approvals but now it is a one-stop shop.

MS PORTER: On page 74 it mentions that there were 10.3 million customer interactions through Access Canberra. Is that correct? How was that huge number calculated?

Ms Leigh: I will ask Mr Peffer to come and talk about the detail of that, Ms Porter, but I would just like to add to the comments that the Chief Minister made. As a service we are very conscious that we can support the government's economic growth agenda by making sure that the way we regulate does not unnecessarily get in the way of businesses—new businesses and the growth of existing businesses.

There are two arms to the regulatory reform agenda. One is to make sure that we are getting input from the private sector about ways that regulation might be unintentionally impeding their business. And we have a regulatory reform panel where we work with the private sector and ask them to bring forward examples for us. That is how we then develop the various red tape reduction bills that come to the Assembly.

We also have a very strong focus on how we implement regulations. Regulations are there with the intention of protecting the community, but often how we implement them can make all the difference to their impact on business and whether they unnecessarily get in the way of business without adding to that protection.

One of the things we have done by creating Access Canberra, and I will ask Mr Peffer to speak in a moment, is make sure that the way we implement regulations is very much focused on the users of those regulations, the people who are impacted by them, rather than thinking about them from a public service point of view—whether I am a health regulator, a building regulator or a liquor regulator—and going at it in that very siloed way so that one business is separately dealing with all of these regulators. What we are doing now is looking at it from the point of view of the businesses being regulated and making sure that we achieve the same outcomes but in a way that provides fewer unnecessary burdens on that business. I will ask Mr Peffer to make some more comments about that particular question.

THE CHAIR: Before he starts, members, Mr Peffer maybe a little distracted today because the timing of annual reports hearings has got in the way of his marriage preparation. If he is a bit vague and he has his mind elsewhere, he does have an excuse. But we expect you to be your normal erudite self, Mr Peffer. Congratulations for Saturday.

MS PORTER: Congratulations, yes. Before he starts, though, I wonder if he could—

THE CHAIR: No wedding stories, Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: No. I wonder if he could, in his discussion, mention an example of what you were talking about, which is mentioned also on page 72, about the review of noise standards for local group centres and town centres. Apparently it is in regard to Friday and Saturday nights. I was interested as to whether it also goes to talking to potential owners of units, whether or not there is that discussion going on with people who are living or potentially going to live in those areas, in relation to the review.

Mr Peffer: Going to the first question, which was about the number of customer transactions: we are seeing very rapid growth year on year in the number of interactions that we have with our customers, with the Canberra community. This year we are expecting to see growth from somewhere in the region of 10 million, which is reported here, to around 14. We are seeing all of that growth in the digital space. It is people looking for information, looking to be aware of what is going on around them, looking to be aware of government activities. Increasingly we are seeing that people prefer to receive their information and interact with government in the online space.

One of the objectives of Access Canberra, and it has been a big drive within the organisation, has been around a range of digital initiatives which help to support people to undertake those activities at a time and place that is convenient to them. We have got a very dedicated team within Access Canberra working on shifting services online, creating and building these services.

I am pleased to report that in past six months we have had a variety of licence renewals taken online. You can also elect to receive your rates and land tax notices online. That was launched a couple of months ago, and we already have 2,140 households signed up to receive those notices entirely digitally. You can now undertake your stamp duty transactions online, which was not possible in the past, and we are seeing some good take-up of that as well.

Outside that, we have been working quite hard on a range of other digital initiatives. The Chief Minister recently launched one around a road ready learner licence knowledge trainer. This permits students from our schools or people looking to get their licence to answer a range of questions through any sort of digital device and, if they are successful, go on and pick up their learner's licence. From the launch, which was a couple of months ago, to a couple of weeks ago we have had 13,169 Canberrans use that, and 8,200 have passed. So it is big numbers in a reasonably short time.

It is exactly those sorts of examples of services we are taking online which are contributing to that very rapid growth in the interactions that we are having with people each year.

The second part of the question was about the review of noise standards. This was a long-term project that was undertaken by the Environment Protection Authority. It was in partnership with the University of New South Wales. Basically it monitored ambient noise in certain regions around town centres and the city on the fringe to determine whether we had the appropriate decibel levels and time frames for permitted noise.

What that study identified was that for an hour either side of what I will call the louder noise period, where there is an elevated decibel level allowed, the ambient noise of traffic, the population moving about and general economic activity was breaching those noise limits anyway. The recommendation was that perhaps we extend the loud noise period for an hour either side—bring the 7 am commencement forward to 6 am and push the 11 pm ceasing to midnight, to reflect the general levels of noise that we have in those areas. That input has been provided to the Environment and Planning Directorate; they are having a look at the future of noise in certain group centres and the city.

MS PORTER: So my husband can go out and blow leaves at 6 o'clock in the morning if he so desires, given his propensity to have to clean everything?

Mr Barr: Or play his favourite tracks until midnight.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson had a supplementary.

MR HANSON: Other than making life a little bit easier for Ian, the point I would like to get to is how to make life easier for business, and specifically what red tape has been reduced for business. I understand the single point of entry and so on, but other than that what has actually been reduced in terms of red tape that makes life easier for business?

Mr Barr: I will make a start and then we can move through. Specific reforms that I am sure you would have noticed—the Assembly debated all of these, so I would hope that you would have been paying attention, Mr Hanson—included extensions to licence periods so that people would not have to apply every year for certain types of licences, reducing costs there; changes to workers compensation filing requirements, to reflect a more contemporary practice; As Mr Peffer has indicated, a range of services are now available 24/7 online; and requirements to attend in person for certain activities that business previously needed to undertake have been removed.

So there is a range of practical changes that have made a difference. In terms of outdoor bars, for example, changes around licensing have occurred there to enable a quicker process. When it comes to event permits and the like, again there have been significant improvements for those wishing to stage events on public unleased land. We abolished the Hawkers Act; that was part of previous reform to streamline the legislative approaches there. There is a range of projects occurring across government, and we discussed some of these on Monday in relation to the Revenue Office reform program, to enable payments and access to ACT government information to be a lot easier for business. Equally, the iConnect platform, which we will no doubt talk about later today, has the potential for significant improvements, particularly in relation to individual digital accounts for particular businesses or individuals.

MR HANSON: So how long has this program been running in terms of—

Mr Barr: Access Canberra was established in December of last year so it would be about 11 months into—

MR HANSON: But some of these initiatives are not directly related to Access Canberra, are they? These are part of your red tape reduction strategy.

Mr Barr: Indeed. I think we are up to our third or fourth bill now through that process.

MR HANSON: What was the period?

Mr Barr: It was 2013.

MR HANSON: So in 2013 we would have got about six or seven reductions in that same period.

Mr Barr: No. I have given you some highlights. If you would like the full list of every piece of legislation that has been—

MR HANSON: Every reduction that it directly affects.

Mr Barr: Absolutely. I am happy to do that. We will do that. We will compile that for you. We are very happy to do that.

MR HANSON: And then we will have a look also at the ones over the same period that have added red tape requirements for business, if you could add those as well—

Mr Barr: Certainly.

MR HANSON: not just in this area, but across government in planning and other areas where red tape and bills have come in that have added constraints to business.

Dr Alderson: Mr Hanson, if I could just add a couple of further examples of specific reforms: in one of the bills passed by the Assembly last year, a range of requirements to provide statutory declarations with applications for permits, licences, government

decisions removed what was no longer a rational or necessary requirement and also facilitates the movement of services online, because the statutory declaration was a barrier to some of those things being able to go online. Probably the biggest single reform is the taxi industry reform where a significant number of regulatory requirements that have been imposed on the taxi industry and hire car industry to date are removed and that work has been done by the regulatory reform team in CMTEDD.

As Mr Peffer mentioned, in addition to the legislation, there are a number of things that are very practical and significant for different parts of the private sector in Canberra. Some of them involve legislation but others involve changes to practices under the existing legislation. A significant body of work, which is continuing but has had good progress, between the Property Council, Law Society, my area and Access Canberra is around the paperwork that is lodged with the Land Titles Office. There were some impediments; we discovered some processes that were sort of overly pedantic, that required people to resubmit information because the template had changed or what have you.

MR HANSON: That would be useful to know. I have got visibility on the legislation, but the other practices that are at the practical end of engagement between business and government would be more useful for me to get visibility on.

Mr Barr: Mr Peffer has some more examples.

Mr Peffer: Mr Hanson, I can talk somewhat to the specifics with some real world examples of the differences that we have seen since the creation of Access Canberra. One of the good examples, I think, is the work that we have been doing with an organisation called Seeing Machines. They are quite a successful partnership organisation, born here in Canberra. They are a technology organisation and they are working very hard to create technology that observes drivers falling asleep in vehicles. The technology is quite remarkable. I have seen it myself and had a couple of examples. It is currently used in over 4,000 mining vehicles. It has been exported. It was developed right here. It is used in 4,000 mining vehicles right around the world. As someone has a fatigue episode, as they refer to it, in those vehicles, it sends an alert to the headquarters here and they are able to pick up the phone, call BHP and say, "On this particular mine site, vehicle 4, this run, has had a fatigue episode." So it is saving lives and it is certainly saving a lot of money for these businesses.

To undertake their research and development program, they have to heavily modify vehicles. So with new vehicles they need to strip out the airbags and that sort of thing to put in their technology which, under our regulations, previously we would not have permitted. But we have been able to undertake some work with that organisation. We have been very flexible. We have sat down with them. We worked through what they were trying to do. We looked at the safety outcomes that the legislation and regulation were prescribing and we were able to come up with a solution that was good for them. It meant they could spend their R&D budget, which I was advised was in the realm of \$9 million to \$10 million. It means that they can trial their vehicles on our roads here in the territory and it means that the jobs that are associated with that business, which they were thinking they would have taken to Asia with that particular aspect of the program, remained right here.

I can share an email that I received from Mr Dean who is the senior vice-president of engineering in the company. He shot through a note that says:

Just a note to say thanks again for working with us to enable the use of our Honda Jazz as a research vehicle. Being able to legally drive it with the customized steering wheel allows us to do leading-edge computer vision work critical to our project w leading car manufacturers.

We did our first day of testing with it this week and all went well.

In fact, we purchased a second Jazz confident that the environment here in ACT is conducive to Seeing Machines' research. We're also launching new work with Boeing.

It goes on, but it was quite complimentary. It is exactly that sort of flexible approach that we are adopting, looking at the outcomes we are trying to achieve, through the regulations and laws that we administer, which has put us in good stead and is assisting business.

I am also happy to talk about an example that came up the other week where Icon Water has introduced new standards around grease traps. Grease traps catch oil and grease going into the waterways that have the potential to clog the waterways. It can be tremendously expensive to fix what is a community asset, and ultimately it is the customers or the Canberra community that pay for that. The challenge for many small cafes or bakeries through Canberra was that they were in well-established group centres. Many of the operators did not own the buildings they were in. They did not own the land out the front or out the back, so they had nowhere to locate these grease traps. So our team has been out there working with Icon Water. This is not our regulation, but we have been working with each individual business. We have been working with Icon Water to look at a range of cost-effective options that could be introduced. Some of them are potentially systems that can be introduced under a sink. Our plumbing team has been looking at a range of options with each of these businesses, which means that for a small cafe that might employ two people and was facing potentially a \$50,000 or \$60,000 cost, maybe that cost is now \$5,000 or \$6,000. So we are getting the same regulatory outcome, we are getting it through a flexible approach and it is delivering good outcomes for business but at the same time protecting the community.

Another thing that I would say is that we have driven a really heavy focus right through the organisation on engagement and education, shifting away from just the traditional enforcement methods of regulating business to recognising that we have got quite a large toolkit available to us. If you make it clear to most people what they need to do to comply with the law, they will. They want to comply. Businesses tell us they want to comply. All the good ones know that regulation creates a bit of a level playing field, and so they are happy to comply. Increasingly, we have been working with our staff to make sure that they are out there trying to engage and educate rather than just enforce, and that is having a really positive effect.

I will share with the committee an email I got at quarter past nine last night, and this is from a building group:

We had a very productive visit from Alan Chipperfield to our site in Chifley this morning.

Alan works for our WorkSafe arm—

He was of great help and assistance and I would like to pass on my congratulation to this team member.

He found we were wanting in a couple of areas and as long as the offending issues were rectified and information emailed to him today we were allowed to fix the problems and be reinspected tomorrow. Great outcome, minimum disruption. Win win for all.

So we are starting to get this sort of feedback from a range of sectors, and it is—

MR HANSON: Maybe I could come in and read you some emails of the feedback I am getting, if we want to get into this sort of debate. What I actually want, rather than a list of emails you have got, is for you to provide me with the specific reductions that have occurred that impact business. If you could table that for me, beyond the legislative changes that we have seen, that would be great. Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have had a number of representations from constituents about the variety of work that Access Canberra is doing. In particular, I wanted to ask about event planning. Could you talk us through a couple of examples, perhaps in a similar vein, around event planning, particularly for community organisations, and the work that Access Canberra has done in that space?

Mr Peffer: Certainly; I would be happy to. We created an events approval team in Access Canberra earlier this year. As the Chief Minister spoke about before, the focus of that team is really to take on the complexity around planning for an event and do a lot of the running around for event planners. So, rather than a planner having to potentially track down and navigate their way through the regulatory maze, we now have a dedicated team that does that work for them.

At the front end of that team they have developed quite a sophisticated but very simple inquiry form. It is a single inquiry form on the website. If you jump on there, it has a range of check boxes so people can essentially tell us what they are intending to do with their event. It has some information around how many people you expect to attend, whether you are selling liquor or food, whether you are having fireworks or intending to shut a road—those sorts of things—and it gives us a very clear picture of the agencies and teams that we need to engage with to secure the approvals to get that event across the line.

That has proved very useful, I think, for all sorts of organisations. A good example of a community organisation is the Weston Creek Community Council, who we recently partnered with to run a community bonfire. There was a great family feel out there. It was something that had not been done for some time. The community organisation came to us and said, “We don’t have the necessary skills to deliver this event ourselves; it is quite complex.” We spent time sitting down and building some capability within that organisation so that, looking forward, that is an event they could potentially run themselves now that they have been through that process with us once.

It is a team that works on very small, simple events through to very complex events. It is perhaps the complex events where the greatest benefits are received by the community or event organisers. A good example of that is the Summernats. We are working quite closely with the Summernats team at the moment to plan for the upcoming 2016 event. That event requires 16 approvals to occur—things such as land approval, designated land approval from the NCA, building approvals, noise and pollution, liquor permits, motor vehicle dealer and repairer licensing, tobacco licensing, fireworks permits, security master and employee licensing, unregistered vehicle permits, food registration, traffic management plans and fire occupancy approvals.

It is a really complex event, and it needs a lot of approvals because it is complex. But that does not mean that the process the organisation has to go through needs to be complex. So that is where we have been targeting our effort. In the past, this organisation would have dealt with 16 different arms of government, both territory and commonwealth, and now they deal with one. We do that running around for them and we do that coordination, and we are still working with the experts. It is a small team. They do not make all the calls for the regulatory approvals. But it provides that seamless experience where, for the user, it is much easier to put on one of these events and they are no longer faced with this challenging burden. It is something that is actually quite simple.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Across the country are there examples of other jurisdictions already on this path to a sort of one-stop shop or is the ACT the vanguard?

Ms Leigh: I think other jurisdictions are also looking at how better to coordinate in this area, but I am pleased to say that we are out in front in terms of actually bringing the teams together in one organisation and getting them reorganised with the focus on the user. We have had a lot of interest from other jurisdictions about how we are going about that. That is one of the things that I feel really proud that we are out in front on.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of working flexibly with organisations and businesses, in the process of that you are identifying perhaps where regulation and legislation can be amended to prevent future blockages. What role do you have in new legislation coming forward and in new challenges coming forward? Was the ride sharing taxi innovation review an example of where you are able to work differently in a new space because you have this approach to Access Canberra?

Ms Leigh: I think the more input, the more direct contact and the more credibility we have throughout our community, the more we will get input that helps us to give the best policy advice to government about what the options and implications are. Having the good relations that we have built through Access Canberra has certainly supported that.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question.

MS LAWDER: I wanted to ask about regional collaboration with New South Wales

and the councils as well. Is there a particular minister responsible or is it you as—

Mr Barr: That would be me, yes.

MS LAWDER: the Chief Minister. Can you give a bit of an update on where you are at? It says in here that you have to renew the ACT-New South Wales MOU and it talks about establishing the Canberra region joint organisation. Can you outline what the Canberra region joint organisation will be doing?

Mr Barr: That is a New South Wales government sponsored entity. They have changed their terminology, I guess, for collaborative efforts amongst councils, so they have been calling them joint organisations. The surrounding councils within New South Wales are currently going through a state government led efficiency review, which you may have seen. It has led to some recommendations for a number of council amalgamations in the area immediately around us. Aside from those New South Wales based decisions, the surrounding councils have come together as the Canberra region joint organisation. They have adopted our city branding and want to be associated with Canberra more than they do other possible branding alliances, I guess.

That has led to a series of meetings, events, activities and collaboration within the region. There was a launch earlier in the year in Queanbeyan at the Q theatre, attended by me, representing the ACT; Minister Barilaro, the New South Wales member for Monaro; Angus Taylor, the federal member for Hume; and Peter Hendy—so three levels of government. A couple of other New South Wales state MPs were able to attend as well, together with the mayors of all of the participating councils.

That organisation has a secretariat to support it. It undertakes collaborative activities with the ACT. That has manifested itself particularly in tourism promotion and branding promotion. So the Canberra region, the CBR region, under the tag line “city; coast; alpine; tablelands”, offers up a more diverse economic base and certainly a more diverse range of tourism experiences.

There has been direct collaboration in relation to support from the ACT government for various regional initiatives that have required letters of support and in some instances co-funding commitments to various federal government stronger regions funding rounds. We have collaborated in relation to international trade missions and opportunities for businesses located on the New South Wales side of the border to be part of Canberra export awards or Canberra export focus.

The Canberra Business Chamber has also extended their net, I guess, to include the regions. The Canberra tourism awards include regional tourism entrants. In fact, we have had our region represented at the national tourism awards by tourism businesses that are physically located just on the other side of the border.

I hosted a dinner with all the mayors here in Canberra only about six or eight weeks ago. There is engagement with officials on various projects, including regional transport being a particular priority. I have had a series of bilateral meetings with individual mayors on issues relevant to their direct relationship with Canberra. One recent successful initiative was a direct bus service from Goulburn into Canberra, with

Greyhound providing it, from memory. We were able to be there to support that particular initiative, which is clearly of benefit to the thousands of people who commute into the ACT to work every day.

In terms of where this goes next, I have meetings this month with the New South Wales Premier and the Prime Minister. Issues of regional engagement, cross-border issues around health and education, transport, international aviation development, amongst others, are high on the government's agenda. We engage with New South Wales on many areas of reform. We have a good relationship with the New South Wales government and look forward to continuing the important work that is occurring through these initiatives.

MS LAWDER: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, a new question.

MR HANSON: Chief Minister, in terms of communication with the community and the coordination of that comm across government, how does that process work? If one of your directorates wants to send out a message—education, capital metro or Health—is that coordinated centrally or do they just do their own thing or how does that process work?

Mr Barr: What format?

MR HANSON: If someone wants to do a survey for example, if capital metro does surveys or education is putting out an information bulletin or whatever it might be, is that coordinated centrally? How is that managed across government?

Mr Barr: I think it would depend on the nature of the communications. Some agencies have their own social media accounts. Emergency Services Agency has its own social media accounts. They have their own programs. There are of course the various legislative thresholds in relation to government communications. Depending on the nature of the campaign, that will trigger particular processes.

MR HANSON: At what point then does your directorate get involved? If it is going to be a point at which it then engages the legislative requirements, is that the point at which you get involved or are there other—

Mr Barr: That would be one example but not the only example.

MR HANSON: What are the other examples? What are the triggers? I am trying to understand how it works, where there is autonomous communication from a directorate or it might be centralised for whatever reason.

Dr Alderson: I can give you a couple of examples and then Ms Perkins may have others but I can think of three areas where CMTEDD would come in as the central agency. One is: we have a committee we stand up if there is a natural disaster or major event such as the recent Acton tunnel incident, where our directorate takes the lead in bringing all the directorates together to make sure there is a clear, coordinated flow of information to the community. Those sorts of major incidents are one example.

A second example is where it is apparent that due to the nature or complexity of an issue with a number of ministers and directorates involved it would be helpful to everybody if we took on a coordinating role and just brought everyone together. The third is where there is a particular area where the Chief Minister has placed emphasis and we are making sure again that across directorates we are giving clear information. A specific example of that recently has been the government's public transport improvement plan announcement. Clearly capital metro have a role, TAMS have a role, Environment and Planning have a role, but to support the provision of information to the community our directorate played a particular role.

Mr Barr: Another example would be the recent work on domestic violence, the responses there that have necessarily had multi-agency involvement where coordination roles have been important too in terms of communication.

Ms Leigh: I would add that at a more general level, just as there is an emphasis in policy and service delivery on making sure that we take a one-service approach, also in communications we have that approach. Ms Perkins needs a network of communications staff across all directorates who maintain contact with each other so that they are informed about the work that is going on to make sure that it is properly coordinated and rightly central—

MR HANSON: I would be interested to see how that works. The comm staff in each of the directorates are CMTEDD staff embedded there? It is an informal arrangement, is it?

Ms Perkins: We have a coordinated communications network that has representatives from every directorate and agency. We meet every week and we speak as required. The staff are embedded within their own directorates and are employed within their own directorates but we operate as a virtual network.

MR HANSON: And is there a consolidated list of what has been spent on what communication campaigns across government or do I need to bury down into each of the directorates to find that? Do you capture all that data?

Ms Perkins: No we do not capture that data, in a financial sense. This year for the first year in the CMTEDD annual reports there was a consolidated reporting of community engagement events so that is all captured in the one document this year but in terms of dollar spends, no we do not have that consolidated.

MR HANSON: I am just trying to get visibility of where that is all happening and what it is, the big bits, I suppose, without having to then go down to each of those campaigns. You do not have that information available to understand what the big campaigns are and what the cost—

Mr Barr: Anything over \$40,000 goes through a process so that there is a record there of campaigns over \$40,000.

MR HANSON: And is that published?

Ms Perkins: Yes.

MR HANSON: That list?

Ms Perkins: Yes.

MR HANSON: Where is that?

Ms Perkins: It is tabled and it is provided to the Speaker twice a year with every campaign that has gone through the independent reviewer process.

MR HANSON: But some of them that might go to \$25,000 or so on, there is no recording that you have of that?

Ms Perkins: No, not centrally.

MR HANSON: And what about surveys that are conducted? Polls, surveys, are they coordinated the same way or is that separate from you?

Ms Perkins: Individually within directorates, although there would be occasions where we might look at whole-of-government surveys as well.

MR HANSON: Is it possible to find out how much money has been spent on surveys of all sorts by government?

Mr Barr: I guess it depends on exactly how one would define a survey. By that, do you mean random telephone surveys or face to face? Obviously, information can be gathered in a self-selecting way where—

MR HANSON: I suppose I am looking at those where there has been a specific campaign to seek views from the community or through a phone poll or through whatever mechanism.

Mr Barr: Then obviously there is, for performance indicators in a number of output classes, a requirement to collect data as well. Is that what you would be referring to too?

MR HANSON: Probably less so, probably more where there is a campaign so that I can understand what information would have been sought. We are aware of the capital metro ones, seeking views on capital metro. But I am less aware of some of the others. I just want to get a sense of what the government is doing in terms of its polling, for want of another word, on policy issues. Has Health put anything out? Has education? Has TAMS? I am referring to ones that are less visible. We only seem to see reporting of the capital metro one. Would it be possible to do that?

Mr Barr: We certainly will look at it, yes.

MR HANSON: I am just interested to see what those campaigns were and how much was expended, what the reach was and so on and, if possible what the questions were and the results. You have got an open government, Chief Minister, have you not? I am

sure it is not secret polling.

Mr Barr: No, of course not. We will indulge your fishing exercise.

THE CHAIR: Going to the ministry, the ACT executive, will there be any changes to the executive between now and next year?

Mr Barr: Between now and next year?

THE CHAIR: Between now and October next year? Let us say between now and next year and then go down to October next year.

Mr Barr: Will there be any changes? It is a matter for the Chief Minister to determine from time to time, is it not?

THE CHAIR: Are you speaking to him about that?

Mr Barr: Am I announcing any changes today? No I am not.

THE CHAIR: Mr Corbell will continue as a minister until after the election?

Mr Barr: Minister Corbell indicated at the time of his announcement that he would not be seeking re-election that he would continue as a minister until the end of this parliamentary term, yes.

THE CHAIR: And there will not be an additional minister between now and October next year?

Mr Barr: That is a matter I will determine and make an announcement on in due course if I determine to make an announcement on it.

THE CHAIR: If you go to the financials at the front of volume 2 can you explain why services received free of charge are categorised as “Own Source Revenue”?

Mr Ogden: Sorry, could I ask you to repeat the question?

THE CHAIR: On page 3 of volume 2 the executive apparently has its “Own Source Revenue” of \$596,000 this year. On page 17 it changes from “Own Source Revenue” to “Resources Received Free of Charge” at \$549,000 and the difference, I understand, is the end-of-lease arrangements on vehicles.

Mr Ogden: Essentially that is just a categorisation issue of the net cost of services versus the categorisation in financial statements.

THE CHAIR: What services were received free of charge to the executive?

Mr Ogden: You have referred to note 5 but I can tell you. This includes legal services provided by JACS, building, maintenance and other services provided by the Office of the Legislative Assembly and corporate and accounting services provided by the Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate.

THE CHAIR: For instance, how do the legal services provided by JACS then show up in the JACS accounts?

Mr Ogden: They would treat that as an expense item as well. From a whole-of-government perspective it gets consolidated out. But at a directorate level we recognise the resources received free of charge where there is an equivalent expense sitting under supplies and services.

THE CHAIR: Would it not be better to show them as part of the expenditure, given that somebody is paying for it somewhere, and appropriate the money more directly into executive rather than into JACS?

Mr Ogden: Correct. It will show up in JACS. We recognise any resources received free of charge as revenue free, but we recognise the expense as well. So it nets itself out.

THE CHAIR: Why is it an expense in the executive line rather than in the JACS line?

Mr Ogden: Because JACS actually provides the service, but we receive the service and actually recognise it as an expense. It is an accounting treatment.

THE CHAIR: Would it be more correct to appropriate the additional money into the executive and less money into JACS and have the executive buy the service rather than receive it free?

Mr Ogden: I would have to refer that to Treasury, sorry.

THE CHAIR: So it is a Treasury decision to treat it in this way?

Mr Ogden: Yes, because the appropriation sits within JACS.

MS PORTER: On page 21, Chief Minister, there is mention of three subcommittees—transport reform, economic growth and urban renewal, and social and inclusion and equality—which provide services to cabinet. Are these new committees or have they always been in existence?

Mr Barr: No, these are new subcommittees of cabinet, focusing on specific strategic priorities for the government. This involves an opportunity for cabinet to receive briefings on matters prior to or during the development of formal cabinet submissions.

MS PORTER: On page 24 it talks about finalising the review of the ACT public service performance framework. Can you comment on this review and subsequent decisions that may have been made since the review?

Ms Leigh: The performance framework is one of the key tools that we have to ensure that we are being efficient as a service and focused on the right priorities. The performance framework brings down to the individual level those whole-of-government priorities, and explains to the individual how they contribute to

achieving them so that they understand properly the overall objectives of the role they play.

We have a well-developed performance framework in the ACT public service. We had a significant enhancement of that performance framework a couple of years ago. It was therefore timely to review that to make sure that we hit the mark, and we have made some more modifications to it. So it is about ensuring that we have a performance framework that achieves the objectives well. Ms Overton-Clarke could add some more comments about that.

Ms Overton-Clarke: In terms of the review we were finding that because it was a very formal process and also relatively large in actual physical size and how people undertook it, a number of agencies asked if we could have a more flexible model. So we have made it a lot more fit for purpose, and made sure it is much more easily accessible online. We have also made sure that a clear embodiment of the values and behaviours is in there. So it is as much about how the job is done as it is about exactly what the job is. As Ms Leigh said, the review was not saying, “This is broken.” It was saying, “Okay, we do have a very good system, but let’s have a look at how it can be a bit more flexible and fit for purpose.”

MS PORTER: Those things have been introduced now?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes, that is right. It is an ever-evolving process. We want to keep refining it. We are continually looking at ways to adjust it, but it is a well-worn process. What we want particularly line areas to do is to make sure that they have these conversations at least twice a year. It always has been a useful mechanism to do that but we are just working with individual agencies to see how it fits best with them.

MS PORTER: Under continuous improvement?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes, that is right.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris, a new question.

MS FITZHARRIS: During the reporting period the directorate has established the Office of the Chief Digital Officer. Could we get an update on progress?

Mr Barr: I will invite the Chief Digital Officer to provide such an update.

Ms Leigh: Before Mr Cumming comes to the table, I might say that this again is a significant addition to our ability as a public service to deliver well to our ministers and to the community on their behalf. This role provides a strategic direction for our ACT services, in looking at the achievements in the private sector, which is a key growth area for our economy, how we use IT in the public sector to deliver services to the community and how we use it internally to be more efficient.

One of the important things is to use IT to become more efficient and effective, but also to step back and say, “What do the opportunities of IT mean about the way we work? Are there things that government no longer needs to do because IT means that they are a viable service to be provided commercially? What new things might now

be viable for a government to do that deliver a public good that previously would have been too expensive for the benefits gained?” We can really step back and look at how we can use IT to review our role as public servants and the role of government. So Mr Cumming has a very broad role in giving us that higher level strategic direction.

Mr Cumming: It has been a very exciting start to my tenure here. In week 2 a meeting was set up with the Chief Minister and the then Minister for Communications, which turned out to be auspicious, and cemented a strong relationship with the Digital Transformation Office and Paul Shetler as well. That meant that I got off to a flying start in terms of having a close relationship with the Digital Transformation Office, which is very important.

We are embarking on an exemplar project with one of their five projects to prove that digital transformation can work in the commonwealth, and they have adopted us to work with that at a territory level. They have indicated that is because we have the advantages of size and agility, and certainly a commitment to embracing digital transformation.

Since then, I have been meeting with many people across the directorates and assessing the ages and stages of various directorates. Many are very advanced. Mr Pepper has outlined some of the Access Canberra work that has been done, and that is very encouraging, and very forward looking. There are other areas, such as education, that have also been an exemplar in terms of moving to the digital age.

So it has been very encouraging for me. The iConnect project, which is more foundational, is also in a very good position from my perspective. Very good decisions have been made over the past year in terms of establishing the project and the way it will work. It has learnt from many of the successes and failures of other parties in this world, because it is quite challenging to get things like identity right. That has been very encouraging for me as well.

My purpose from here is to bring together a strategy. My informal tagline to date is cohesion and disruption in equal measure. You may be aware that a chief digital officer is meant to be disruptive, and I intend to be disruptive in a cohesive way and by asking the challenging questions that make people rethink things like the business processes which can generate red tape. Why do we do things that way? Do we need to do it that way? In a sense, coming from a completely naive position from across the ditch has positioned me well. I have a different frame of reference; therefore I do not have a history of how things are done and why they are done, and I can challenge those things and say, “Why do we?” That is a good, strong position for me as well.

Mr Barr: And he did not mention Rugby at all!

Mr Cumming: There was a reason for that. I know it will not be long before the boot is on the other foot, and I hope that you will model my modesty!

MS FITZHARRIS: In fact when we had Treasury and Shared Services officials with us earlier in the week, they mentioned that you were likely to bring some examples of how things might be happening in New Zealand or in other jurisdictions. Can you give us some examples of what might be possible?

Mr Cumming: The first thing I did was to make a recommendation on the cloud side of things, to adopt the New Zealand cloud considerations, as they are known. This is a set of—depending on how you count them—142 questions to ask your cloud provider. They are a very solid foundation for assessing risk around cloud migrations and making sure it has been done safely. That was adopted by Shared Services, I am pleased to say, and that has already been used as a way of assessing potential providers in the cloud space. There are also lots of examples in New Zealand of how things have been done well, just as there are examples here of how things have been done well. Just bringing together that mix of experiences is good.

Another thing we are working on, for example, with iConnect is vehicle registrations and disposals, which is important. In New Zealand the way that is effected is very effective. Having disposed of a number of cars before I left New Zealand, that process works very well and has good business thought behind it, which I think is the key to it.

MS FITZHARRIS: In terms of the users, the citizens of Canberra, Mr Peffer mentioned earlier that a lot more people want to engage with the government and find information in the online space. Apart from knowing that there are a lot more transactions growing in that space, do you know much about what sorts of things people want to do online, as opposed to in person—school enrolments, for example, or your health experience?

Mr Cumming: The short answer is pretty much everything.

Mr Barr: Everything, yes.

Mr Cumming: It is surprising now, for example, how many homeless people have smart phones. The digital divide in that sense has become a digital bridge. It is a way of connecting with people and giving them access to the services they need when they do not have a physical address. Those traditional ways are changing quite dramatically. So the short answer is everything, and we need to respond in ways that give us business advantage, in terms of reducing our costs to give us headroom to invest more in providing those services. Also, people do a lot of things that get in the way of their life. Mr Peffer talked before about avoiding visits to physical sites, and that is a critical thing in this day and age for citizens, I believe.

MS LAWDER: I have some questions about output 1.2. It is on page 24 of volume 1. Firstly, right at the top of the second column on page 24 about mobility and development of business capability, it refers to the development of a program. Has this mobility already taken place, with what sort of organisations and how many people are we talking about?

Ms Leigh: One of a number of things that we are doing to ensure that our service does have a whole-of-service focus and that our staff have broad skills and are able to make the links between the different areas of government is to encourage mobility. First of all, within the service, we have been particularly focused on mobility at the deputy director-general level and director-general level. If you look in particular at the deputy director-general level, almost every one of our band 3s has either recently taken on their position or has moved to a new position in the past 12 months to two years. That

has been as a result of active encouragement to staff to think about the advantages for them in their career of the broader skills they gain, and for us as a service, the strengthening that it gives to our service when our senior executives understand the whole picture through that direct experience. Of course, there are many ways that we need to ensure that our staff have that broader understanding, but mobility within the service is a really practical way that achieves that.

We have also been looking at mobility with the private sector. I think that is also important as a way of ensuring that our public servants understand the perspectives of people in the private sector and the community sector. We have had two initial secondments. A member of Chief Minister's did a short secondment with ACTCOSS this year, and a member of Economic Development is doing a secondment with an engineering consultancy. We have a policy that the commissioner has put in place to ensure we have a framework around how to do this. We have also treated those secondments, particularly the first one, as a pilot, to make sure we identified what the considerations were that we needed to think about to make sure that the secondments were successful and gained the benefits we wanted without raising any issues of conflict, for example. We have just started this, in less than the past 12 months. I intend that we will continue to grow this, and I think it is a really good way of further strengthening our service. Ms Overton-Clarke might have something further to say on that.

Ms Overton-Clarke: I think you said it all.

MS LAWDER: When you say “development of a secondment and mentoring program”, did someone actually spend six months developing a paper? What exactly are we talking about here?

Ms Overton-Clarke: We have also developed a mentoring program, so I will speak about that briefly. In terms of the secondment, Ms Leigh touched on potential issues that either party might have, such as a conflict of interest. We have developed a memorandum of understanding that both parties sign, both within the ACT public service and with whichever organisation the person is seconding with, be it an NGO or a private firm, so that everyone is clear about what the supervision arrangements are, where professional development support is coming from and how information is treated. You may be privy to particular information about that firm. As Ms Leigh said everyone is very clear up front about what those arrangements are.

We have also done a pilot mobility program with the Institute of Public Administration Australia, which is the professional body for public servants. They trialled with us and the commonwealth this year a very successful mentoring program. Seventeen of our public servants were mentored by people across both the commonwealth government and the ACT government. Off the back of that, we have just entered into a new agreement with IPAA that we will continue that and develop our own mentoring arrangement. That has enabled us to take a whole-of-government approach, and, certainly in the pilot, a cross-government approach between us and the commonwealth government, to look at mentoring for senior and the next level down officers—ASO 6s, SOG Cs.

MS LAWDER: I think my question was: did someone—

Ms Overton-Clarke: Do a paper. Yes, the work was done in our area. The actual document is a memorandum of understanding. I am very happy to provide that to you, if you would like it.

MS LAWDER: Does that cover mobility within the service? You mentioned deputy directors, for example.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Mobility across the service is a bit different. That is actually taken care of through the executive contract process, and we have a number of mechanisms within that to be able to facilitate that mobility.

Ms Leigh: I might add that working with IPAA on the mentoring program is another great example of how, as a smaller service, we can get a big outcome for small resources. Partnering with IPAA gives us the resources of the IPAA organisation, which includes the commonwealth public service. So we gain a significant resource there through being a partner in that organisation.

MS LAWDER: I have a question on another point.

THE CHAIR: Ms Fitzharris has a supplementary first, then back to Ms Lawder.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have a supplementary on the secondment program. Have you considered having private sector or community sector people join so that that understanding is put in place?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes. And that is what it is intended to do. It has just started. This memorandum was circulated I think two months ago, and that is the intention, to be able to facilitate both ways.

Mr Barr: Before we go to a new question, I understand Ms Overton-Clarke has an answer to a question taken on notice that she would be happy to provide information on.

Ms Overton-Clarke: You wanted me to list the 12 agencies that the public interest disclosures were against. It was very evenly spread across the service. There was one for economic development within CMTEDD, one for Justice and Community Safety, one for the Audit Office, one for the Independent Competition and Regulatory Commission, one for the asbestos task force, one for Territory and Municipal Services, one for CMTEDD proper, if you like, one for Education and Training Directorate, one for Community Services Directorate, one for Environment and Planning Directorate, one for Health and one for the Public Trustee. That is the 12.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder has a different question.

MS LAWDER: Further down that column 2 on page 24, a couple of points talk about the RED framework and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander disability employment. I think that has been a theme in a couple of years worth of annual reports. What progress has been made?

Ms Overton-Clarke: We are very pleased to say we have made a lot of progress in this area. Both the Head of Service and I have been very strong to champion this across the whole of government. And we have taken a number of measures. In August this year we started an Indigenous employment program for trainees. We have 12 trainees at entry level who have now started working across ACT government.

We also took quite a different approach to our graduate program. In advertising that for next year, for 2016, we made sure that as well as the general process we had a very thoughtful, targeted process for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disabilities. And that included advertising the fact that we were an employer of choice and we were looking to recruit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with disabilities. That was very clear in the recruitment information.

But then as we got applications in—and we go through a very rigorous assessment process which all directorates belong to—we made sure that we contacted every applicant ahead of time and asked them about the support that they would need to have at the assessment centre. Anyway, through all of that process we have ended up with two Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people coming in out of the 52 next year and 10 people with disabilities. We are really thrilled about that level of engagement.

Between the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander entry level program and the graduate program—and all the training and awareness across the directorates, and also directors-general having performance targets for both of those cohorts—we have really exceeded our target for this year for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and are on the way to be able to do that with disability.

The next phase we want is to build on the entry level Indigenous program and have one for people with disabilities as well. We are currently, with each directorate, working through how exactly that would look, because of course within that cohort there are additional supports available and funding available from the commonwealth and so forth. We feel as though we have done a lot in the last eight months really.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, a new question.

MR HANSON: I have talked about bullying in the service. There are obviously some problems in Health, as outlined in the recent KPMG report. I am interested to hear what actions you have taken with regard to that in terms of monitoring, or are you satisfied that the necessary action has taken place? Secondly then, once you have done that, we might just have a talk about the statistics on page 72 of the ACT public service state of the service report. If you could talk about Health first?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Ms Feely, the head of Health, has been keeping me up to date in terms of what is happening about implementation of the KPMG report, and I know that they are taking that very seriously and have a range of measures to address that. Of course, we also, from CMTEDD, do a number of sessions in the hospital and across Health about bullying and harassment, the performance management, the manager's toolkit that we implemented in March this year. At the very prevention level, we are making sure that right across the service we have a number of strong

tools in place that help to communicate very strongly about the values and behaviours across the service.

MR HANSON: What is the problem in Health? You would have an overview of all parts of the service, and it seems that Health have a series of problems that have been long running across various areas. The KPMG review almost suggested that it was almost condoned, it was an accepted practice. Have you done any inquiry to see what it is that is different about Health, where it works well in terms of low bullying elsewhere in the public service but a problem in Health so that you can then bring some of those lessons across? Has that been looked at?

Ms Overton-Clarke: I think what Health would say is that—and it is not just in health; it is very typical both nationally and internationally in health cultures but also in service delivery areas that of necessity need to have a very structured hierarchy, if you like, whether you are talking Defence cultures or whether you are talking ambulance and fire places, right across Australia and internationally, as I said—in those very stressful service delivery jobs with a hierarchy in place it is very common. I know that, certainly in terms of the hospital, it has various areas that have hierarchy issues. It is not just doctors and nurses; it is doctors and trainees and so forth. So I do not think that Canberra is any different from a number of other jurisdictions.

Certainly the focus group work that Health has done is very important. Of course, set in that culture of being able to talk about it and able to report it is the crucial start of saying that we have got a different culture happening around here.

MR HANSON: The AMA have come out publicly and said that they do not think that the recommendations that I think have all been accepted by Health are actually going to fix the problem. Have you seen those remarks?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MR HANSON: Have you got any commentary on that or are you going to meet with the AMA to explore further or have you taken it to the Director-General of Health?

Ms Overton-Clarke: What I can tell you is that the director-general is certainly taking very proactive steps in this area. They have set up a clinical culture committee and they are working very hard at the executive level to make sure that the new culture is very clearly communicated across the whole directorate. I understand there is some cynicism around that but I think there are any number of measures to show that this is now being taken very, very seriously. There have been any number of first steps from the new director-general that show that the report is being really tackled at its heart.

MR HANSON: If we look then at page 72 there is a snapshot of reports, different forms of reports in comparison with previous years, and it seems that there is a moderate decrease in the total number of reports of bullying and harassment but then there are some statistics that are right down—the actual number of reports that resulted in an investigation.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Can I talk about the general approach we have taken because I

think that actually explains those figures?

MR HANSON: Yes. I have read the commentary and it would appear there is a significant increase in the number of contacts but a decrease in the findings of misconduct.

Ms Overton-Clarke: What we did was do a complete refresh of the RED framework and as part of that we made new RED contact officers. We strengthened the RED executive officer network and, as I said earlier, we have also, since March, brought out the manager's tool kit, which has a very strong emphasis on performance management and values and behaviours. We are really working across the service to make sure that everyone knows that this is a service that really wants to stamp out even single incidents of harassment at the very early stage.

We have done a lot of work recently around LGBTQ, diversity. I talked about the diversity programs but a strong part of that has been about making sure that individual workplaces know it is really important to raise issues when they first come up. We expected to receive this increase in the contacts both for the HR areas and for the RED areas. As you pointed out, the numbers of reports that went on to the misconduct investigation decreased by over half, from 58 to 26, and the number of completed investigations where bullying or harassment was found to have occurred decreased from 14 to 10.

I ask Michael Young to outline also how that flows through into the workers compensation area, but this is exactly what we expected to see and want to see because we want to be able to cut this stuff off when it starts.

Mr Young: I now provide, I guess, some supplementary information on the ACT public sector workers compensation performance in respect of psychological injury arising from alleged bullying and harassment. In 2013-14 there were 24 accepted claims for psychological injury arising from bullying and harassment. In 2014-15 that result reduced to 12. Of those 12 claims nine workers have made a successful return to work and three have had their claims closed, with three remaining off work currently. In terms of that 50 per cent reduction in the number of accepted claims, that is roughly equivalent to the trend that was observed in the reporting in Ms Overton-Clarke's report.

MR HANSON: Do you expect the trend then is going to continue with more reporting and a decrease in events or findings of misconduct or formal reports or do you think that we are about stable now?

Ms Overton-Clarke: That is hard to predict, I guess. We are very pleased to see that drop between last year and this year. Whether that means that is a stable platform I really—

MR HANSON: Too early to tell?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MR HANSON: And do you complete workplace surveys? I know that Health does

but does not release them. Do you have other workplace surveys that occur?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MR HANSON: So you can gauge where the pressure points are across the service?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes. We are just having a look at the moment, because three agencies do very comprehensive ones—Health, CSD and JACS—at the extent to which we join up those and do a whole-of-service one. We have not done a whole-of-service one this year but we are looking at the timing of those three individual ones to decide when will be the best opportunity to do a whole-of-service survey.

THE CHAIR: To follow up on that, if you go across a couple of pages to page 76, I see that 10 incidents of bullying and harassment were found to have occurred. What happened to the two individuals who were found guilty of bullying and harassment?

Ms Overton-Clarke: It is all different, depending on if it is combined with another issue and how severe it is. So it can range from a warning, a counselling session through to dismissal. It absolutely depends on the nature of the incident.

THE CHAIR: Were any officers dismissed for bullying or harassing behaviour?

Ms Overton-Clarke: I will need to get back to you on that. There were 15 who were terminated. I will need to get back to the committee on whether any of them were.

THE CHAIR: Without identifying individuals is it possible to have a breakdown of the reasons for termination, and the list of offences?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Sure, yes.

THE CHAIR: As a new question, on page 125 of volume 1 there is a headcount by classification group and gender. Given the amalgamation of so many groups into CMTEDD, which is now quite a big department, is it possible to get a breakdown of headcount by classification for the previous financial year?

Ms Overton-Clarke: That is in last year's state of the service report.

THE CHAIR: But a lot of this happened midway through this year.

Ms Overton-Clarke: The classification breakdown is in this year's state of the service report, as at 30 June, for CMTEDD.

THE CHAIR: Yes, but is it possible for what is now in CMTEDD to do a reconciliation of the ins and outs and give us the breakdown? For instance, you now have 68 executive officers. How many would have been in the agencies that created CMTEDD?

Ms Overton-Clarke: So you want it through this financial year at different points of the AAO—

THE CHAIR: I would be happy with the count at the start of the financial year of those organisations that would have made up—

Mr Barr: For example, amongst that figure of 60 or whatever, if there were 20 in, say, each of the three, you want to know at the end that—

THE CHAIR: Yes; I want to know what the growth in the totals have been.

Mr Barr: I think we can.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Sue Hall, the head of corporate, is saying that, while we do not have the actual classifications, we have the numbers, if that is helpful, for the different entities.

THE CHAIR: That would be nice to have, but it is not going to answer the question. Let us go to executive officers again. There are now 68. How many were there at 1 July in all the organisations that now form CMTEDD?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes; we can get you that.

Ms Leigh: If I could just add something: we will have a look and try to do that for you. The only issue that occurs to me is how we identify which of those, in those organisations, are the ones we are now talking about.

THE CHAIR: If you are going to have trouble, you would understand that my attempts to do it might not have been as accurate as they could be. But if you could, that would be kind.

Mr Barr: We will look at that and provide some information for you.

Ms Overton-Clarke: And can I just check: it is the senior executive service?

THE CHAIR: No; for all the classifications if you can do it.

Ms Overton-Clarke: For all the classifications, okay.

THE CHAIR: Just for Hansard, with definitions, what is an executive officer?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Sorry?

Mr Barr: How is an executive officer defined?

THE CHAIR: Just for the Hansard, in terms of definition, what is an executive officer?

Ms Overton-Clarke: That is a senior executive officer.

THE CHAIR: Why doesn't it say "senior executive officer" if that is the classification? What is an EO? I am not sure. And a general service officer and

equivalent? What is a general service officer and equivalent?

Ms Overton-Clarke: They are the classifications according to different certified agreements. A general services officer is a technician, who is usually in the electrical trades or different trade area. They are different sorts of officers.

Mr Barr: You would like the dictionary of classifications by the EBAs?

THE CHAIR: I am just curious. Not necessarily. I would just like an explanation now so that we can explore some of this.

Ms Overton-Clarke: What page are you on, Mr Smyth?

THE CHAIR: I am on page 125 of volume 1. The general service officers—there were 75 of them, but only one was female. Is there an explanation for that? It might be that they are technical officers and things like electricians, but it does seem to be an enormous disparity, even for this day and age.

Ms Overton-Clarke: One woman? It does reflect the nature of the work. Craig Simmons is nodding there. Have we got a more garden explanation of what GSOs are?

Mr Barr: If you Google it, it will give you a description. I would invite the committee to look online. There are descriptions available on each of the classifications.

THE CHAIR: Hansard cannot Google so—

Ms Overton-Clarke: Unskilled and skilled tradesmen.

Mr Barr: Rather than people reading out definitions from EBAs, we will take it on notice. Next question.

THE CHAIR: Therefore, if executive officers are senior executive officers, what are senior officers?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Senior officers are grades C, B and A.

THE CHAIR: In the GSO and equivalent area, is there a program to see an increased participation of females?

Ms Hall: We have not got a specific program that is focused on GSOs. As you alluded to earlier, Mr Smyth, we have been coming together and increasing in numbers and workforce range over the past 12 months. We are commencing a review of gender equity across CMTEDD, so these sorts of statistics have been highlighted. In terms of gender, non-traditional occupations have been identified as an area of need. We are planning to work on an action plan, looking at things such as strategies where we can increase the candidate pool. When we look at the advertised vacancies et cetera, it is also equating to the applications that we are getting; that is obviously gendered as well. So that is an area that we have identified—not specifically just for

the GSOs, though they are certainly part of it. There are also rangers; you will see our sports rangers. And there are a few other areas across the directorate in those non-traditional areas that we are going to focus on in the next 12 months.

THE CHAIR: That will apply to technical officers as well as the trainees and apprentices?

Ms Hall: Yes, all of those non-traditional areas.

THE CHAIR: In the three classifications you appear to have 119 staff, of which only five are female.

Ms Hall: Exactly.

THE CHAIR: When will that strategy be available?

Ms Hall: We are just developing it now. They are new classifications to the agency, so they have come in as part of the administrative arrangements. We have got to the stage where we identified them at a recent executive management meeting. It was agreed that that was an area that we would focus on as part of our workforce diversity strategy. We are just starting it now.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter, a new question.

MS PORTER: Chief Minister, right at the bottom of page 29 on the right-hand side—output 1.4, coordinate communication and community engagement—it talks about the time to talk community engagement website, which averaged an increase of 2,200 visits per month to more than 8,600 per month, which is obviously a very pleasing result. Why do you think there has been this increase?

Mr Barr: I think it is public awareness of the site as a location for consultation that is the reason there has been an increase. We have had an approach about particularly engaging with people outside of some of the more traditional 1970s methods of engagement. Most engagements that are done in that more traditional way that people in this place would be used to are heavily skewed to a disproportionate representation of particular demographics that is way out of kilter with their actual representation within the community.

It is incredibly important that community engagement is more reflective of the community at large. That means, in particular, there is a need to find new ways to engage with working age families who, for obvious reasons, will not be attending public meetings during dinner time or putting-the-kids-to-bed time, and younger people who have no interest in hanging out in those sorts of meeting environments but who want to engage with government in different ways.

There is a real emphasis now on hearing the voices of those who have not been heard for far too long in this city. That means the government has to fundamentally change its approach to community engagement. It is not good enough to place an ad in a paper and think that 10 people over 60 turning up to a meeting constitutes community engagement. It does not. That cannot be allowed to stand as community engagement

anymore. The idea that a community council is in any way representative, given that most of the attendees are of one particular gender in some councils and, again, way out of connect with the demographic distribution of people living in particular regions, is another example of where communication and consultation need to be much broader.

There is a place for that form of community engagement, but it is only one form of and cannot be the only form of community engagement. I think it is absolutely vital to broaden that approach. That is exactly what the government is doing through a variety of means, some of which we have touched on earlier today, by way of seeking community views through surveys, through online engagement and through opportunities to attend and engage on more than just one specific occasion, be that a meeting at a certain point in time on only one day. You will see a lot of government consultation now extending over a longer period, involving opportunities for people to drop in at a time that suits them, rather than, “No, it is only between 7.30 and 8.30 on this week night in this venue.” It has got to be better than that.

Undoubtedly we are starting to see the benefits of that changed approach and we are seeing that through the statistics to be reported on here. I think we have just scratched the surface of this. We need to do more and better in this process. You think of almost every debate we have in the Assembly and the charge is that there has not been enough consultation. It is acknowledged that we need to do better, but it is not more of the same. It is not more of the same people being consulted. It is about broadening that engagement, and that is exactly what we are going to do.

MS PORTER: I always encourage my constituents to use the time to talk website. It is very good. I was just wondering whether Ms Perkins has anything to add.

Ms Perkins: It is probably evident that there has been a far greater emphasis over the last year on advertising our community engagement activities broadly on social media as well, which also drives significant traffic to the websites and to the online consultations. That has also been a significant driver of channelling more people to the online consultation activities.

Mr Barr: Mr Gentleman, in the statement of planning intent, had specific consultations with different demographics, and that is fantastic to see. He took the time to go and talk to a number of different subsets of our community to ensure that planning was not the sole province of people of a certain interest and of a certain demographic, because the future of the city is important to everyone. We need to ensure that our communications, our outreach and our engagement encompasses the broader spectrum. Too often it is not the case. There is an area of fundamental change, Ms Porter, and I thank you for raising it today. This is something that has to change in this city, and it will.

MS PORTER: Thank you, Chief Minister. As you rightly point out, there is a cohort of people who will remain uncomfortable or unwilling to engage in that way, for whatever reason, so how do we continue to make sure that they have a chance to engage in the way that Mr Gentleman has obviously done and we do obviously as well?

Mr Barr: I think in some instances it means a change in mindset within government about what consultation means, and in some instances there need to be deliberate efforts to structure consultation to suit particular demographics. There is no point in trying to consult with school aged children at times that they cannot possibly do it. We would do better in terms of consultation with working age parents at times that suit them. I think technology will be our friend here in being able to structure our consultations in ways that allow people to engage at a time that suits them.

One of the other challenges undoubtedly—and this goes to the communications side of the question—is how do people know when a consultation is taking place? The advantage of time to talk is that there is a consolidated range of consultation processes and engagements in one location.

There are a group of Canberrans who diligently watch every development application that goes up on the ACTPLA website. There is a group of Canberrans who would undoubtedly diligently watch everything that is posted on time to talk. But we need to ensure that through direct communication with every household in the city opportunities to engage on significant issues are provided. Direct-to-household engagement is important, and the government intends to utilise new technology to allow that to occur. Recent red tape reduction bills that remove requirements around advertising in daily newspapers to a box-ticking exercise around consultation open up much greater scope for a change in approach and the government will take up that opportunity.

I would also encourage a significantly greater use of social media. More people utilise Facebook in this city than read the *Canberra Times*. More people utilise other forms of social media than listen to radio or, in some instances, even watch television, although radio and television advertising still has a capacity to drive a call to action in relation to engagement. We will look at the different options available to us. There will be more radio and television advertising in relation to government initiatives and consultation opportunities. There will be a lot more online and there will be a lot less of the 1970s approach to community engagement.

MS PORTER: Thank you. I also have constituents, Chief Minister, who regularly phone me and tell me there was no phone number on an advertisement. So there are, as I said, a cohort of people who will remain resistant to—

Mr Barr: Yes, who want to engage. Those forms need to be there, but they are not the only form.

MS PORTER: No.

Mr Barr: I think that is the important point.

THE CHAIR: Just on the issue of the time to talk, what demographic information is collected about those who go to the website?

Ms Perkins: I will probably have to take that on notice—I do not have that detail with me—but we certainly take metrics on a regular basis and break down the people that are going to that website.

THE CHAIR: What are those metrics—age, sex, location?

Ms Perkins: I will have to take that on notice. I do not have that with me now.

THE CHAIR: The Chief Minister has just made the claim that more and more people are being engaged, and clearly the numbers show that, but how do we know it is just not more of the same demographic?

Mr Barr: You start running out of the number of people in certain demographics once your level of engagement reaches a particular level.

THE CHAIR: You are not going to run out of a demographic level at 8,000.

Mr Barr: The single largest demographic in this city is people aged between 20 and 24.

THE CHAIR: True. So how many of those are using time to talk?

Mr Barr: We will get further information on that. Nowhere near enough, in my view.

THE CHAIR: But you made claims that more of them are being engaged, and I am asking how do you support that?

Mr Barr: Yes, more so than before that site existed, undoubtedly. But is it enough? No. I will be the first to say, “No, of course it is not.” That is why we need to do more, and we will.

Sitting suspended from 11.19 to 11.35 am.

THE CHAIR: Members and guests, we will resume the hearing. Members, if, say, between now and about 10 past or quarter past 12 we can finish output class 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, Executive Commissioner for Public Administration, at about 10 past we can go to Access Canberra for about 20 minutes. That will take us to 12.30 and then say from 12.30 till 1.30, if we need that much time, we will do the Mr Fluffy eradication scheme. Ms Fitzharris, you have the call.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. Chief Minister, I just wanted to ask about you and your directorate’s involvements in the first ministers’ discussions. In particular, the annual report notes federation reform, deregulations, counterterrorism measures and the response to violence against women. I know we talked about the tax aspects earlier in the week, but federation reform in particular: where is that up to and where do you see that going?

Mr Barr: Thank you. That is an interesting point as we are yet to have a COAG with the new Prime Minister. The various working groups that the states and territories have taken the lead on in most instances on federation reform emerging from the leaders retreat held in Sydney in the middle of the year with the former Prime Minister have continued their work. The new Prime Minister has, I guess, wanted to see the results of that work. I do not think we have nailed down a date for the next

COAG meeting but before Christmas—

Dr Alderson: It will be 11 December, most likely.

Mr Barr: So 11 December, most likely. That is good. I will put that in my diary. So at that time, if other jurisdictions have adhered to the time frames that were agreed at the July retreat, papers will be brought back on the various streams of federation reform. Our particular engagement has been in education. The principal advantage there is that this is an area in which the commonwealth have very little practical role other than as a funder but, in terms of the various inputs into our education system and the areas of focus for our work in partnership with Queensland, it largely falls in the domain of the states and territories, with some interaction with the higher education sector, particularly around teacher training. We will undoubtedly get papers right up to 24 hours before the COAG meeting, if past practices are anything to go by. I am meeting with the Prime Minister prior to COAG. Assuming it is on 11 December, I will be meeting with the Prime Minister later this month to discuss some specific ACT-commonwealth issues, some of which we started discussions on when he was communications minister. Mr Cumming indicated in that context of digital transformation, for example. We will continue to progress work in those areas.

On the broader COAG agenda, I think it would be fair to say that the new Prime Minister's public comments seem to indicate a change in emphasis in terms of issues that might be paramount in the commonwealth's eyes. Until we have seen the agenda, it is difficult to be certain on how much will change, but the rhetoric is very different and the sorts of issues that are being debated now in the public are very different. I think I even heard the immigration minister on *AM* this morning giving a speech welcoming refugees to this country. It is hard to imagine that such a speech would have been given under the previous Prime Minister, so it would be fair to say that a lot is changing.

MS FITZHARRIS: Specifically on violence against women and children, what specific role is the Chief Minister's Directorate playing in that policy space at the moment? Is there a summit? We were at the Tara Costigan Foundation lunch last week where they announced a domestic violence national summit. Is that one that they have taken it upon themselves to hold?

Dr Alderson: Yes. The commonwealth government has not arranged a national summit, in terms of your question, Ms Fitzharris, about what is happening. Obviously, a big development during this year for the ACT has been the ACT government appointing a coordinator-general for domestic violence, Vicki Parker, and a range of measures, funded in the budget, that we have spoken about previously—law reforms and so forth. In terms of specifically what is happening on the COAG agenda, at the last two COAG meetings first ministers agreed to a \$30 million national campaign. There has been a lot of done work around what is the design of a campaign that would be most effective, because, unfortunately, this is an area where it is possible to raise awareness without actually reducing the incidence of very serious problems. There has been work led by the commonwealth with focus reps and so forth to try to design this campaign, with the sort of design of the campaign yet to come back to first ministers and officials. But one of the most active areas at the moment is designing how that will look and the discussions about how that will work.

There has been some change of emphasis. The new Prime Minister made an announcement about violence against women, which included some funding around Australia, including to the Women's Legal Centre in the ACT, which the ACT government funds as well. There is an initiative about technology—ways in which technology can assist to prevent incidences of domestic violence or set up systems where, if a perpetrator or a person with a DVO against them comes too close to the female whom they have been tracking, the technology alerts her. There is work going on between the commonwealth and states and territories on what are the ideas in that space, again for there to be a further discussion against first ministers. That does not cover a lot of things the ACT is doing, but for the things that are being discussed in that national forum they are the main ones at the moment.

MS FITZHARRIS: Could I go back to the Digital Transformation Office working with the ACT government? Is there more that you can say about that at the moment? You mentioned an idea about a particular project.

Mr Barr: Yes. We will invite Jon back up to talk a little more on it, though it is fair to say that the then communications minister was very enthusiastic about partnerships with the ACT in this area and I would say there was a very productive meeting in that context, and certainly we hope to be able to continue that engagement.

Mr Cumming: The original meeting was sort of to express interest to work together. But the follow-up meeting with Paul Shetler was potentially productive. At an individual level we had a great meeting of the minds, which was encouraging for both of us—that it was actually not going to be a relationship just because we are in the same city but one where we work together quite strongly because we have similar views. That has turned into an exemplar or project that I referred to earlier. We both brought an idea to the table and the idea that we are pursuing now with the 20-week agile process will be hospital waiting room notifications for outpatients. That is the age-old problem that you can often go to an appointment at outpatients and when you get there you find that actually it is not for another hour or two hours, or whatever the waiting time is, because the nature of hospitals is that things happen and times change.

The outcome of this will be simple messaging to patients to say, “Your appointment time is at 2 o'clock. Your consultation time is expected to be 3 o'clock. Please arrive 15 minutes prior.” It is a very simple message and a very simple thing to do, but it makes an enormous difference to the lives of people, particularly people who have children to look after, children in waiting rooms and things like that.

For older people, transport can be a major issue and having these long times in waiting rooms is not good. It is a simple thing, a simple digital process done very quickly, just to break the cycle of the old ways of thinking.

MS FITZHARRIS: Would that be a text message alert or a sort of real-time update in another form?

Mr Cumming: The simplest measure will be a text message alert and that is, if you like, the lowest common denominator, because whatever type of phone you have you can get that. To some degree, part of the process of going through this is figuring out

what the answer is as you go along. That is part of the nature of digital experimentation, learning as you go, and that is a big part of the collaboration.

Of course, they bring a wealth of experience from their work in the UK, which we as part of this process can capture. Also we want to work with the local businesses that are in this area, to help bring the skills transfer in, in terms of how to do this sort of thing. Clearly, as has been said, for the commonwealth there are plenty of opportunities. It is a very exciting project for us both and the fact that it was so fast is really helpful for those of us who are impatient.

Mr Barr: I think the great advantage that the commonwealth see in working with us is municipal and state level. Together with them, you get all three levels of government, and there is only one place you can achieve that, so that is a fantastic thing, a fantastic opportunity for Canberra and one that we intend to take.

MS FITZHARRIS: They are a partner in that they are funding the trial or—

Mr Cumming: Yes, they are bringing skills and funding to the table as well. The details of that are yet to be determined, but they are contributing themselves.

MS FITZHARRIS: When do you see that potentially being available or starting to roll out in some form?

Mr Cumming: The start date for the project proper is 18 November, as I recall, and it is intended to run as a 20-week program, so at the end of that we should have our first trials going out live. In fact, there is a belief that we could probably do it in less time. That is one of the reasons why they want to work particularly with us because they believe that we can do this in a faster time.

THE CHAIR: Ms Lawder, a new question?

MS LAWDER: The state of the service report on page 11 talks about the outlook for 2015-16 and it says there are opportunities for initiatives and then a few dot points. Does that mean you might do some of them or you are doing all of them? Are they opportunities rather than future work?

Ms Overton-Clarke: Sorry; can you just tell me which one it is?

MS LAWDER: On page 11, under “outlook”. Some of the other parts of the annual report talk about future direction—it says, “In 2015-16 the directorate will”—whereas yours are possible future perhaps kind of—

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes, it does not sound very strong, does it? We are doing these things and certainly in terms of the first dot point, which is workforce reform strategies, we have just developed a workforce capability framework and some workforce planning tools for directorates, which went to strategic board just at its last meeting. So, certainly in terms of that one, we have properly started for this financial year, which are the first two dot points. The whole of government leadership and management development: we are discussing about the next stage of the leadership initiatives that we take. We have had very successful change management workshops

this year across all the executive bands.

One of the things that we clearly need to keep working on is cross-government collaboration across all levels of the service, certainly starting with the leadership group around change management and collaboration. That was one of the really important things this year, and we are developing it next year as well. I think we have also talked about RED. We joined Pride in Diversity earlier this year and we had a very successful seminar and workshops just a few weeks ago here at the Assembly. We will be developing Manager's Toolkit further, finalising and implementing the legislative employment framework, and of course starting the work towards the policy parameters around industrial relations and bargaining for the next round.

MS LAWDER: They are not just possibilities; they are actual—

Ms Overton-Clarke: Sorry, yes. We should have phrased that better to say the work we are doing this financial year.

MS LAWDER: Thanks. On the second dot point, the development of a whole of government shared capability framework which will articulate ACT Public Service values and behaviours et cetera, surely we already have these ACT Public Service values and they should underpin the work of all directorates. What work exactly will you be doing?

Ms Overton-Clarke: I might ask Judi Childs to come up and explain it further. But just in introduction, as you say, we have a very clearly articulated code of conduct, which is the values and behaviours, and we also have a very clearly articulated executive capability framework. But what directorates have asked us for is at all levels to put in very concrete terms what expectations are around those capabilities to do the job.

MS LAWDER: While they are very clearly articulated, the departments do not know what it means. Is that what you are saying?

Ms Overton-Clarke: No. What I mean is terms of how you would do a job. Going back to that very early discussion we had around performance management and about half of that framework being about how the job is done, not just what is done, this clearly articulates that. But I might get Ms Childs to talk a bit more clearly about what I mean by that.

Ms Childs: The shared capability framework goes further than the values and behaviours and translates those into business outcome focuses, so to what end are we behaving or doing this sort of stuff. So it takes it from a behavioural process response to align it clearly to business strategy and what is important as outcomes for everyone across the service.

MS LAWDER: So each directorate is not responsible for doing that work themselves?

Ms Childs: No, this is at a higher level. This actually provides the opportunity to articulate in very simple and useful terms the capabilities, so the doing and the

outcomes required of anyone across the service. Would you like me to explain what it looks like in practice?

MS LAWDER: Could you just give me one example?

Ms Childs: Okay. There are five domain levels. One of them is “achieves results with integrity”. Across that capability domain there are three particular aspects and they are described as what you would expect at a team member level, what you would expect from someone in a team leadership or semi-autonomous type of role, what you would expect at a management level or a senior professional expert level and what you would expect at a senior executive level in how the values and behaviours then articulate into generating business outcomes. There are simple statements at each of those four organisation levels to describe to what end we are applying the values and signature behaviours.

MS LAWDER: Okay. I find it a bit strange that people cannot, for example, understand what “achieves results with integrity” might mean in action, especially at a senior executive level, but I will leave it there so we can move on.

Ms Overton-Clarke: I think it is worth saying that what this does is to marry up a whole lot of separate documents that have been out there, and some better articulated than others. You are absolutely right: in terms of the senior executive service, that has always been very clear, but at other levels, whilst you have selection criteria for jobs and position descriptions, there is not the same sort of rigour until now around the resulting outcome. That is what this document does.

Ms Childs: It also provides a mechanism—Ms Leigh spoke earlier about mobility—for being able to describe jobs in more general terms so that you can look at your capability across the service. It is a critical input for workforce planning, and also at an individual level it can provide assistance for people when they are looking at development planning within the performance framework.

MS LAWDER: Thank you.

THE CHAIR: Mr Hanson, a new question.

MR HANSON: Thank you. I want to go to the annual report, volume 1, page 137 and probably 136 as well. The office accommodation project, the one government office building—what is the status of that?

Mr Barr: The government sought a request for tender. We have received a number of proposals, and they are currently being evaluated. One element of the government office accommodation strategy, Winyu House in Gungahlin, has been completed and opened, and staff relocated. We are looking at options contained within the proposals put to government in relation to CBD accommodation. We have made some decisions in relation to current buildings that we would dispose of through the asset recycling initiative—1 Moore Street in the city and Macarthur House on Northbourne Avenue. There are currently processes underway to provide advice to government on—

MR HANSON: Have you got a time line in place for disposing of those assets?

Mr Barr: A time line in terms of when we would need to—

MR HANSON: Vacate, essentially.

Mr Barr: No; that is different. Disposal is different from vacation. Would it would be possible for us, for example—

MR HANSON: To lease out.

Mr Barr: Yes—to sell the asset and provide a two-year, three-year or however long rental period for us whilst presumably a proponent could put together a development application for an alternative use. We have got flexibility in that context. And we will look at a variety of different options in relation to our future accommodation needs. We are examining currently unleased properties that may suit our needs in a number of different town centres.

MR HANSON: When this was originally proposed, the requirements were that everyone was to be within a prescribed distance of this building.

Mr Barr: Not everyone, but one of the areas across—

MR HANSON: Sure. And that was driving a solution that was in the vicinity of here, which included a new building in the Assembly car park that would potentially accommodate—

Mr Barr: Yes, or on a number of other sites.

MR HANSON: I remember that at that time the view that was put forward by the opposition was that there was a lot of vacant accommodation both in the city and in town centres.

Mr Barr: Yes.

MR HANSON: You rejected that.

Mr Barr: No.

MR HANSON: Now you are saying that you are considering that.

Mr Barr: No, I did not. I indicated at the time that we had a hub and spoke approach, and that we were looking at Gungahlin, Dickson, Woden and opportunities within the CBD. The process enabled adaptive reuse of existing buildings.

MR HANSON: No. Clearly the requirements were to get everyone within a certain distance of the Assembly and co-locate everybody, and the idea that they put everybody out in the suburbs was rejected.

Mr Barr: No. You entirely misread the government's policy.

MR HANSON: So the government office building as a new building, a new construct, a building in the Assembly car park that was being considered, is that still live as an option or not?

Mr Barr: Yes, it certainly is, but not to accommodate all ACT government staff. That has never been the proposition. We would not have built Gungahlin if the—

MR HANSON: No, but a significant proportion of government staff were going to move in there. Has that changed? Has that been reduced from the original proposal?

Mr Barr: No. But the opportunities that present themselves through the process that we have undertaken allowed for a number of different solutions or possibilities to be put to government, including campus-style accommodation within the CBD precinct, adaptive reuse. We have certainly looked at Dickson and our opportunities within the Dickson group centre. We have looked at Woden. We have looked at a number of options. We made a decision in relation to the CIT in Tuggeranong, for example. There are a number of different considerations that need to be taken into account.

MR HANSON: Sure.

Mr Barr: But the approach was hub and spoke, and that has been very clear for four years now.

MR HANSON: The consolidation of the bulk of the public service into the one precinct, as I recall, within a prescribed distance of the Assembly, was the intent. Anyway, that might be a bit historical. In terms of a decision, then, I assume that you have got to make a decision globally so that you are not doing it piecemeal: you do not want to do a bit that interferes with the strategic plan.

Mr Barr: That is correct.

MR HANSON: For example, you do not want to move people to Woden and then realise that you actually want to move more people centrally. In terms of a revised strategy, a long-term plan, when would we expect to see that?

Mr Barr: When the government announces it.

MR HANSON: Right.

Mr Barr: We are doing the work now, and I will make announcements in due course.

MR HANSON: Are you able to give the committee some advice about what options more specifically are on the table?

Mr Barr: I have just outlined a range of options that are before the government. Yes, we are looking at a variety of different town centres and a variety of different options, including those that were put to us in the most recent process. We have opened and staffed facilities in Gungahlin, we have made decisions in relation to Tuggeranong, and we will look at other opportunities as they present themselves. Clearly there are a number of things changing in the marketplace and we retain the ability to respond to

those within our overall framework.

MR HANSON: The vacancy rate was about 15 per cent of commercial office space; that was being put forward a couple of years ago. You think that has changed so dramatically since then that—

Mr Barr: No, not in relation to the CBD. The issue is the quality of those facilities. Some of them are not in a state where they could be brought up to a sufficient standard, for a variety of reasons. The floor plates may not be big enough. There are a variety of performance reasons why some of that vacant stock would never be suitable for government accommodation.

As part of our process, we sought expressions of interest, and I provided opportunities for those who were property owners of that stock to put propositions to us; we were quite willing to look at those options and evaluate them. But I guess that if the starting point in all of this is that property owners run their buildings down to the point where they are C and D grade and then the expectation is that because the vacancy rate is high the ACT government will come in and just absorb all of that because property developers are owed a lower vacancy rate and the ACT government and our employees are the ones who have to work in substandard environments in order to have a lower vacancy rate—

MR HANSON: No; the starting point for this is that the government—

Mr Barr: I reject that.

MR HANSON: Your government proposed the new office building in the budget of, I think, 2011, and now, six years later, is still not able to tell us what is going on. I think that is a little disappointing.

Mr Barr: No. The then Chief Minister put forward a proposal. The former Chief Minister subsequent to that Chief Minister announced a change in policy. We then went forward and procured a new office building in Gungahlin that has been completed and occupied. We have a number of other processes that are running at this time. I will make announcements in relation to future government accommodation options in due course. I am not making them in this committee this morning.

MR HANSON: In terms of the total expenditure to date, on page 37 there is an amount there. I recall that when we had committee inquiries—probably estimates of 2011, I am guessing, but maybe 2012—there were consultants who had been engaged and there was a range of works that had been done. I think just one body of work on its own was five million. I remember a figure of nine million. That maybe needs some verifying. That does not seem to reflect the total expenditure to date that is listed against that project.

Mr Barr: I will take the figures that are in the annual report rather than your recollection, which you admit needs verifying.

MR HANSON: I can certainly recall the—

THE CHAIR: Will you take it on notice and verify the numbers? If there were larger expenditures—

Mr Barr: I have every reason to believe that what is in the annual report would reflect expenditure, but I will have that checked for you.

MR HANSON: When you are doing that, please, Chief Minister, can you make sure that that includes all of the various reports that were commissioned, that it is the full cost. It says here “total expenditure”. Would you make sure that it does reflect all of those reports that were commissioned—initially design and so on. We had the consultants in closed hearings in this place; there were costs there in the order of \$5 million at least just in that component. I am not sure where they have gone. That would be appreciated.

THE CHAIR: All right; take it on notice. Chief Minister, on page 30 in the future directions for the communications area section, I note there is a dot point that says “create an ACT Government signage policy and program”. What is driving that, and what will be expected from the policy?

Mr Barr: Public information. What would be expected—

THE CHAIR: There are plenty of signs at the moment. Do we need more signs? Is that what you are talking about?

Mr Barr: Clear communications with the community.

THE CHAIR: What will it involve?

Mr Barr: What will it involve?

THE CHAIR: What changes will we see under the policy?

Mr Barr: We will see appropriate signage to inform the community of ACT government activities, particularly in relation to government capital works projects. I think that would be the most obvious engagement that people have with—

THE CHAIR: How much inappropriate signage is there?

Mr Barr: I do not think it is a question of there being inappropriate signage; there is a question of there being appropriate information on signage for the community.

THE CHAIR: How many of the signs currently out there are inappropriate—

Mr Barr: None.

THE CHAIR: Or have a lack of knowledge on them?

Mr Barr: None would have inappropriate information, but some could have more.

THE CHAIR: What is the process? When is this likely to be available?

Mr Barr: As soon as possible, I hope.

Ms Perkins: Yes. If I might add something, my team is currently working with procurement to finalise the signage guidelines. Its real purpose is to provide more usable information to the community about what works are taking place, so that it is very clear, it is plain English, and it has a consistency of look and feel so people understand that they refer to ACT government projects and have a very clear understanding of what is actually happening on that site.

THE CHAIR: So it is only for project sites?

Ms Perkins: No; it would be available for a range of different treatments. Whether it is a project site or works at a school, it will be applied across all signage that the government is undertaking.

THE CHAIR: So your average street signs, directional signs and suburb signs are not changing? This is about—

Mr Barr: No.

THE CHAIR: This is activity-based signage?

Mr Barr: This is about our activity-based signage, yes—associated with works.

THE CHAIR: How much are we spending on it?

Ms Perkins: I do not have that detail. Again, the money is spent through the projects, not centrally through the Chief Minister directorate. In terms of the development of the guidelines, they are being done in house with existing resources.

THE CHAIR: All right. And then there is the next dot point: “enhance and streamline the directorate’s websites and social media accounts”. Are there problems with the current websites?

Ms Perkins: No—sorry, Chief Minister.

Mr Barr: I was going to say that it is just that in my view there are too many of them, and not all of them are contemporary. Fewer government websites and fewer social media accounts would be a better outcome, and we will be pursuing that, but against a backdrop of wanting to ensure that our communications are effective.

THE CHAIR: How many directorate websites are there currently and how many social media accounts are there currently, Ms Perkins?

Ms Perkins: In terms of ACT government websites, there are more than 120 websites that have been registered throughout government. We are working with our colleagues across the directorates to look at those sites and see how we can streamline it. The ultimate purpose is to make it easier for the user to find the content on the websites.

THE CHAIR: Do you have a view as to how many, ideally, that should be?

Ms Perkins: No, we do not have an idea of that at the moment, but we are working through a process where we audit them, we see what information is on there, and we see how best we can streamline the navigation for people to find the information.

THE CHAIR: How many social media accounts are there currently?

Ms Perkins: It is a similar number. There are more than 100.

THE CHAIR: Again, is there a view on how many there should be?

Ms Perkins: No. Again, we will be looking at it in the context of how best we can streamline it for the user, looking at the subscribers to the social media accounts and seeing where there are commonalities and how we can make it a cleaner and easier process.

THE CHAIR: The last dot point says “conduct emergency communications training exercises for all directorate communications staff”. What is driving that and what is involved?

Ms Perkins: We undertake regular emergency exercises for our communications staff so that we are prepared for any territory emergencies that happen. Most recently, in October, we took part in an exercise that emergency services conducted for preparedness ahead of the bushfire season. We facilitated 60 communications staff from across government to participate in the PICC, the public information coordination centre, to try out all of those roles. It was a really great opportunity for people to see what it is like in a real environment with the emergency services staff.

Similarly, we stood up the PICC, the public information coordination centre, a couple of weeks ago for the Acton tunnel closure. We have staff from across government to get in, work together, and make sure that we have a single point of truth and that we are very well practised there.

We have also conducted an exercise for the summer events that were on earlier this year—the Asian Cup, the cricket. We activated the PICC, and staff from across government came together to have that single point of truth of information.

THE CHAIR: Where is the PICC?

Ms Perkins: The PICC is located at emergency services at Fairbairn, but we also have capability to establish it wherever we need to for the most practical solution. For Acton tunnel, we set it up in Nara across the road so that we were close to the people we needed to be close to, and also close to the site, for forward command media staff that needed to get down on site.

THE CHAIR: You used the term “single point of truth”.

Ms Perkins: Yes.

THE CHAIR: What is the single point of truth?

Ms Perkins: “Single point of truth” is very important across government.

THE CHAIR: Do we not always have the truth? Are you alluding to the fact that there might not be truth?

Ms Perkins: In terms of emergency, we need to make sure that we have one voice from the government, and a single source, when we are providing that information out to the community. We use the emergency services website, Twitter and Facebook feeds in that process. And only at such time—as we move into recovery, it hands over to a lead agency; it then transfers over to the lead directorate to take responsibility for public messaging.

THE CHAIR: I think Ms Lawder had a supplementary on that.

MS LAWDER: Yes. While we are on emergency situations, included in your protocols and guidelines do you have anything about including an Auslan interpreter when a minister or someone is making announcements or comments?

Ms Perkins: Yes, we certainly do, and we have explored that in the emergency exercises. We have reference to that within our plan that we work to, the coordinated communications information plan. We have contacts. We make sure that we have an easy ability to make contact, to put that facility in place.

MS LAWDER: With the recent SMS that went out, do you have people who look at it in relation to people for whom English is a second language and make sure it is quite clear and—

Ms Perkins: I think that is two separate things. The SMS that went out is an SMS that goes out through emergency services. That is not something that is coordinated through the communications staff; that might be best referred to emergency services.

MS LAWDER: That is not the single point of truth? No? Okay.

THE CHAIR: Clearly not. Just to wrap up the section, are there quick questions? Ms Porter, a new question?

MS PORTER: Yes, thank you. On page 19 of the state of the service report, it talks about removing the concept of an office to facilitate executive staff mobility across the service. Could you expand on the purpose of the removal of the term “office” for the committee and say what benefits you foresee coming from this, given our conversation about office accommodation.

Ms Overton-Clarke: “Office” is actually a position, a clear position.

MS PORTER: So it is not an office; it is an office?

Ms Overton-Clarke: No. I referred earlier to the fact that we use executive contracts

to facilitate mobility across the senior executive service. We want to free that up even more by making sure that senior executive service members are appointed to the government as opposed to a particular position. That means that while they would undertake a position, there is greater mobility if they then get moved to another position.

MS PORTER: Right.

Ms Overton-Clarke: It is really about the way within the contract structure to facilitate as much mobility as possible. What we have found as we have worked through it is that actually there is flexibility within our current executive contracts as well, so we are just working through exactly what that full extent of flexibility might look like. But in this context “office” means a position.

MS PORTER: But that is an interesting question in itself, is it not: more and more people, certainly in private industries, are looking at how to enable people to work in different locations.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MS PORTER: In the commonwealth public service, my daughter, for instance, who is in tax, works in different locations across the city quite frequently.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MS PORTER: Because she is allowed mobility in actually performing her job.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes. Physical mobility is also something that we are working through in the policy sense, not just for executives but for other staff as well. There is a project called “Activity-based working”, which started off in the area of my colleague Mr Alderson, that has recently transferred to my area because it fits with how people work across the service. We currently have a number of people who often might work in different locations. Mr Peffer, who was up here earlier, has 10 to 12 different workplaces. He spends a week in each. He does not have an office; he goes and sits amongst his staff and works with them on a very collegial basis. We have a number of initiatives. We are making levels 4 and 5 at Nara an exemplar of activity-based working.

More and more, in terms of being able to attract and retain younger staff in particular—who go into an office environment, see senior executives in offices and think, “Oh, my goodness; this is quite an old-fashioned way of working.”—we are bringing in, exactly as you pointed out, new and different ways of working, including mobility across different workplaces.

MS PORTER: Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR: A quick final question from Ms Fitzharris. Then Ms Lawder will take us to Access.

MS FITZHARRIS: Thank you. I wanted to ask about the gender pay gap, which is

very low in the ACT public service, even compared to the ACT labour force in general.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: How have you done that, for one thing? It is great. And also, how does it compare with other public sector areas? I think the public sector generally has a lower pay gap.

Ms Overton-Clarke: Yes. A lot of it reflects the fact that 67-odd per cent of all of our staff are women across the ACT public service. A lot of that is in the area of teachers and nurses. But also we have a large number of executive women in the ACT government, 42 per cent. And we have women who are able to achieve those higher levels even if they are not executives. Across the whole cohort, we have women returning from maternity leave; we have very flexible working arrangements. It reflects the fact that in the ACT, more than any other jurisdiction, you have a higher proportion of women working, first of all, but also, particularly in ACT government, we make sure that flexible working is a very important part of what we do.

Ms Leigh: I might add a bit to that. I think we are ahead even compared to other public services. That is obviously something that is really good for the efficiency of the service. I think we have achieved that for a number of reasons. One is terms and conditions that are very flexible and inclusive of the range of other personal responsibilities that staff may have, so we do not lose good staff, for that reason. Also, all public services tend to have a culture of clear appointment and promotion on merit. That makes sure that people are less likely to unconsciously be biased on a whole range of bases, and I think that has been borne out in our success. I think also success breeds success. We have a strong cohort of women, and that demonstrates to people, sends a message to women, that they will be taken seriously in terms of a career in the ACT public service. And at the moment, seven out of our 10 directors-general are female. Of course, it is a small group, and that can change all the time, but it does send a good message to other staff. I am very pleased with what we have achieved; I think it is a mix of practical arrangements and the culture and message that sends.

MS FITZHARRIS: Are you seeing that at the graduate recruitment level as well? Particularly compared with the commonwealth, are you seeing more women applying to come into the ACT public service?

Ms Leigh: We get a strong field from women, but I think in some ways the graduate intake has never been the problem. For a long time, workforces have generally had a strong intake of women. It is how you retain women and ensure that they are promoted on the same basis that you would expect, just looking statistically, for men. That is where the challenge has been, but I think that is also where our success has been.

MS FITZHARRIS: Just one final question about the generations. Has that previously been there as “Generation Y”, “Generation X”, “Baby Boomers” and “Pre-Baby Boomers”?

Mr Barr: I think it has. I recall seeing that previously. The question is what follows

after.

MS FITZHARRIS: Yes; what comes next. What is it?

Ms Leigh: After Y? I do not know.

Mr Barr: What are we calling them?

Ms Leigh: Zeros?

MS FITZHARRIS: Zs?

Mr Barr: Millennials? Digitals?

THE CHAIR: While we ponder that, Chief Minister, only those officers with responsibilities in Access Canberra and the Mr Fluffy scheme are now required. Anybody else who would like to vacate—I know it is thrilling to sit here and listen to annual reports—can do so. If you are in output 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, executive, public administration, thank you very much for your attendance today.

Ms Lawder, we will have one question each on Access Canberra, and then we will go to asbestos. Ms Lawder has the call.

MS LAWDER: On page 72 of the annual report volume 1, about halfway down the page, it refers to “work to ensure the health of the Territory’s waterways”. Is there some other territory that we are ensuring the health of?

Mr Barr: No. We made references to the ACT in many other areas. Other than making a pedantic point, what is your point?

MS LAWDER: I am wondering if you would give me a bit of an update on that, regulating compliance with licence conditions. Have there been any breaches? Are you aware of how many?

Mr Peffer: I ask Mrs Pitt to join us at the table, but could you repeat that question please?

MS LAWDER: On the point about working to ensure the health of the Territory’s waterways by regulating compliance with licence conditions, I am interested in the compliance work that you have done. Is it inspection of licences? Is it going out to waterways? Is it a combination? And have there been breaches you have identified? What sort of work has been done on this particular point?

Mrs Pitt: Compliance in relation to waterways primarily relates to preventing pollution and dealing with pollution issues. A lot of the licence conditions are related to sediment control and site management, particularly relating to development activity. So it is important that developers take appropriate steps to manage run-off from sites and, particularly after rain events, it is very important that when they are excavating, for example, they take appropriate measures to pump out the water in a controlled way so that it does not run into creeks and other things. Primarily, the compliance

activity is working with industry to make sure that they are taking appropriate steps to prevent pollution in waterways.

MS LAWDER: But are there compliance officers who look at this? Do they do other work as well or are they specialists in the area?

Mrs Pitt: No, they are not necessarily specialists. We have a combination of specialists and generalists.

MS LAWDER: My other question is probably a bit more relevant to Mr Peffer. I have asked a few times about the fix my street application and when you lodge online and tick the box saying yes, you want to be contacted. But it does not tend to get updated online when it is completed. Someone told me that there were two different databases that did not necessarily talk to each other. Can you explain to me why the fix my street application does not get a final, completed status?

Mr Peffer: That is absolutely right. There are two applications in use. The first is the front of house, if you will, where the application form comes through, that is our CRM, or customer relationship management, tool. That system is not integrated with the TAMS asset management system at this point in time, which means that the activity flows from the CRM and goes to the officers working in TAMS who manage that system and then actually undertake the work. But there is no closure on the feedback loop.

This has been some feedback that we have had quite clearly come through in a number of avenues, and it is something that we have had some good discussions with TAMS on. We had a workshop with them and an IT provider about a month or so ago where we looked at a potential solution, because it is important that we are able to advise people when things are fixed. But at this time we do not have that in place. It is certainly something that we are looking at though.

MS LAWDER: You have discussed it but you have not agreed that you are going to address it in this coming financial year, for example?

Mr Peffer: No decision has been taken on that. Yes, that is right.

MS LAWDER: Is there not a manual process that the TAMS people could go through and update that status so that I am happier or—

Mrs Pitt: Previously I was—

MS LAWDER: I am quite an enthusiastic user of the system.

Mr Peffer: That is good.

Mrs Pitt: The process is manual. There is a team within Access Canberra that receives all the feedback received through fix my street. It is assessed and triaged and logged into the IM system that TAMS owns, and then the officers in Access Canberra work with TAMS line areas to facilitate where they can advise as to the status. Some of the municipal service requests can be dealt with quite quickly, and others require

investigation and programming into the maintenance schedule. There has been—

MS LAWDER: I am aware of all that. It is the actual marking that it is completed on the system that I am interested in. I have heard all about how it happens, and I know a lot of them have been completed, because I have seen them, but it is still marked as something else.

Mr Barr: Sometimes it is the little things, Ms Lawder. Is that what you are saying?

MS LAWDER: I know.

THE CHAIR: It is underway. When is it likely to be rectified, that you have the two databases connected?

Mr Peffer: That is certainly something that we are looking at. We do not have a set time frame for it at this time. These are systems that would require a degree of work, I think, to actually integrate them, to have that feedback loop closed. It is not just a small fix that we could introduce. So it would require a body of work to be done but it is certainly something that we are looking at.

THE CHAIR: We might close there on that. Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: On page 71, it talks about what Access Canberra is responsible for. It has got the public health protection regulation for food permits. Can you explain how that works between Health and Access Canberra? Has the food inspectorate been moved across, or where does that intersect?

Mr Peffer: No. The food inspectorate has not been moved across. We have a memorandum of understanding with the Health Directorate about how those services are provided. We have got within that memorandum a very clear delineation of responsibilities between the Chief Health Officer and his team and Access Canberra and the work that Health does for Access Canberra.

I suppose the best way to think about it is that the good activities associated with the food businesses—registrations and approvals and proactive compliance, where we are just doing routine inspections—are covered by Access Canberra. But under the legislation, if there were to be an enforcement action taken, that then becomes the responsibility of the Chief Health Officer. That is undertaken entirely outside Access Canberra.

MR HANSON: So you are checking compliance in terms of: have you got people qualified? You have got to have people with certain qualifications now in the preparation of food area.

Mr Peffer: That is right.

MR HANSON: And compliance in terms of whether they have got up-to-date registration and whether it is visibly displayed. You are doing all that. What about the proactive inspection of food preparation areas and so on? You referred to the good bits versus the bad bits, the proactive versus the reactive. Who is doing the proactive

check of the physical public health, the environment, the establishment, rather than just the paperwork compliance, so to speak?

Mr Peffer: Access Canberra is responsible for that side of things as well. The staff there are highly qualified. They have got science degrees with environmental health as a part of that. I guess to clarify what I said, the proactive inspection becomes a reactive inspection when we need to react to something that is significant in the business. If it is a matter of cleaning some bench tops, that is all part of the reactive program that is handled within Access Canberra. If it is some sort of rodent infestation, then that is then handballed to the Chief Health Officer and the Health Directorate takes the lead on the response there.

MR HANSON: And since you set up this slightly separate system how many cases have been transferred between Access Canberra and the Chief Health Officer?

Mr Peffer: I ask Mr Woollard to join us and respond to that one.

Mr Woollard: Sorry, could I have the question again?

MR HANSON: Yes. How many cases have Access Canberra referred to you in the past, say, 12 months? I am trying to get a sense of what the balance is between the proactive Access Canberra work and the perhaps reactive work that you are doing.

Mr Woollard: I think it is much more integrated than perhaps you are thinking, in that the Health Protection Service inspectors, if you like, do both the work on behalf of Access Canberra, that is the work we might do around the fit-outs for new businesses—they come along, they want to operate, so we do all the fit-outs, all the registrations, transfers, those sorts of things; we do them on behalf of Access Canberra—and, as Mr Peffer said, when we get to the point that something has gone wrong, and that could be, at one extreme, a food poisoning outbreak, where we need to mobilise to protect public health, that work is done under the auspices of the Chief Health Officer.

I could get the actual split of number of inspections or interactions we have done on behalf of Access Canberra versus the Chief Health Officer. I have not got that at the moment. Part of the problem is that it has not been a full financial year. We started mid-way through the year. In future years we will have a much better idea of data. We do not have the figures here.

MR HANSON: If I were to say there are X number of staff engaged in this process, how many are actually employed by Access Canberra and how many are employed by ACT Health?

Mr Peffer: None of the staff are employed by Access Canberra. They undertake the work under the memorandum of understanding.

MR HANSON: If that is the case, where are the efficiencies then? I am trying to see what the efficiencies are.

Mr Barr: From the perspective of the business, in the example that has been given—

and I have become quite familiar with the contemporary example in the CBD that has recently opened—they go to Access Canberra to seek all of the necessary approvals, and Access Canberra, through its own officers, or through this memorandum of understanding, organises all of that for them rather than them having to go to each different area. Where there might be a dispute or a disagreement between different regulators, where the food safety people may have a particular view but another area of regulatory responsibility takes a different view, there is a process to resolve that now through Access Canberra.

One very contemporary example of this is that a very popular business now operating in the CBD had just this experience and formed really a case study for how we can undertake regulation in a better way. We can talk about that all day now.

MR HANSON: Where does liquor licensing then fit within the—

Mr Peffer: Liquor licensing sits entirely within Access Canberra. To answer the question there, there is a good example, I think it was two weeks ago, with a new bar that is looking to open in the Melbourne Building in the coming weeks. In terms of approving the fit-out, we organised our regulators to go once at the same time, so that if there were disagreements between the regulators about what needed to be done there, between the focus from food and the plumbers, for instance, they could settle that on site. And it meant that we had liquor licensing, food, plumbing, gas fitting, building, fires—we were all there at the same time. And it was hard to coordinate but it made it simple for the business owner, who was there once, did the walk-through with all the regulators and could settle those matters. Rather than individual regulators coming at different times, him needing to then navigate between the responses that he got of what requirements needed to be put in place, it could be settled once with a one-stop-shop approach.

Mr Barr: There is another good example, a Braddon one.

Mr Peffer: Very quickly, I suppose, the short of it was that we had tiers of regulatory requirements around a particular bar that was in Braddon with a spit that they wanted to utilise. When we looked at the range of regulations that would apply to that particular food service area, some of them were conflicting and it left us in a situation where the particular proponent could not get something approved because we had multiple areas within Access Canberra now looking at this issue with different opinions on what needed to be done but without necessarily having the dialogue that we should have been having to settle it within government before dealing with the business. It is those sorts of examples that we are trying to avoid now in ensuring that there is that dialogue.

MS FITZHARRIS: Prior to Access Canberra then, if there was disagreement among the regulators, who fixed it?

Mr Barr: Often, it would come to a minister. It would come up to a minister and you would get representations that regulator X said this, regulator Y said that. And I would sit in meetings at times, thinking, “How the hell did it get to this?” It is exactly what I was trying to solve by establishing the agency. And it is working.

There are some really good practical examples across the city. It has been really well embraced. I thank all of the staff for all that they have done to make this happen, because the response from industry has just been overwhelmingly positive about what we are trying to achieve here. So congratulations to Access Canberra on doing a fantastic job. Let us see more of it.

THE CHAIR: There seems to be some uncertainty out in the community as to where the heads of all the various services have gone. For instance, Mr Jones has gone from gaming and racing to another area. What was the logic behind that and how often will you rotate the heads of those various organisations?

Mr Peffer: When we set out with the challenge of Access Canberra to bring things together, breaking down all the silos, it was pretty clear to us as an executive team that we really had to drive this initiative from the top down right through the organisation. That meant we had to take a degree of responsibility for breaking down the silos that existed and for communication perhaps not being as strong as it should have been. So the decision was taken, in consultation with the Head of Service—but it was my decision—that we should rotate all of our senior executives.

I guess coming off the discussion earlier about mobility within the senior ranks of the public service, there is no-one in Access Canberra who has held their job for more than 12 months. It can be a disruptive process and there is some risk in transferring senior executives. But if you are generally serious about delivering meaningful change and doing it quickly, often the path of least resistance can be to have a new team. We managed to achieve that with an existing team, with existing people, and they are a very committed senior executive team. But the rotations have given us such tremendous benefits in terms of, having started an organisation with one person who was familiar with environmental regulation, now we have got a couple. It is the same with WorkSafe, it is the same with liquor licensing and it is the same around rego. We have built capability within the senior executive ranks. It was also important to have a team that could place the reform objectives of Access Canberra above and certainly on a par with the objectives of their individual teams. That has been, I think, an important driving factor in delivering that change that we have been able to to date.

One of the other benefits that we have observed is empowerment within our senior manager ranks. We have had a lot of senior managers who have really stepped up, who have taken the step into more of a strategic area of thinking because they have a senior executive who is reasonably new, who is learning what is going on in that particular area and who brings a fresh view. So it has been quite useful, I think, for many of those staff members as well.

THE CHAIR: So how many senior executives were moved?

Mr Peffer: As part of the rotations?

THE CHAIR: Yes.

Mr Peffer: Moved, not removed?

THE CHAIR: Moved.

Mr Peffer: Seven.

THE CHAIR: When would you expect the next rotation?

Mr Peffer: That is something that we have not settled internally. I think it is good practice for all of us, particularly where we want to build a one-stop shop and want that transfer of knowledge and visibility of what is going on right across the organisation, to maintain that practice. Perhaps not in the next six months but certainly down the track that will happen again.

THE CHAIR: On a different issue, on page 71, about halfway down, we now have an ACT construction and workplace protection division industry newsletter with 9,000 individuals on it. How is that list compiled and who has access to or use of that list?

Mr Peffer: I might ask Mr McCabe to elaborate on this a bit. What we found as a regulatory agency—and I mentioned it earlier—was that most people want to comply with the law. You just have to make it simple and accessible for them and they will do the right thing. Increasingly we are seeing, be it licensed occupations or licensed venues, or food venues and that sort of thing, that we have got all the details we need to push out information to these businesses to help them comply with what they need to do, and the building sector is no different where we have licensed trades and companies that hold these licences. We have all their details.

Mr McCabe: WorkSafe had a newsletter in the past. It had about 1,900 people on its mailing list. When I moved into my new position I found that the construction services division had about 7,000 licensed occupations and had contact details for those. We added that to our mailing list and that is how we reached 9,000. It has given us much greater reach to the construction industry. An example of the effectiveness of that is that yesterday—or it might have been the day before—we sent out a newsletter item about some working at heights safety seminars, and all the positions on those seminars were filled within 24 hours because of that reach.

THE CHAIR: And the list will only be used by the government?

Mr McCabe: That is right.

THE CHAIR: It will not be available to other organisations?

Mr McCabe: The newsletter, when it goes out, enables people on the mailing list to deregister themselves and, yes, it is only used within government.

THE CHAIR: Ms Porter, Ms Fitzharris with a question on Access, and then Ms Lawder with a question on Mr Fluffy.

MS PORTER: Also on page 71 it talks about the opening of the first Access Canberra service in Gungahlin. What has the response been to that centre? Whilst you are answering that questioning could you talk to me about how we, through Access Canberra, assist vulnerable people in the community to manage things like motor

vehicle infringement notice debts, for instance? How do we develop programs—for example, payment plans—and things to assist vulnerable people in our community when faced with these sorts of challenges?

Mr Barr: Winyu House and the Access Canberra shopfront there clearly set a new benchmark in terms of government service delivery. It is a model that we are very pleased to be able to deliver. We look forward to being able to extend that sort of capability and that style of service delivery more broadly across the city. The earlier discussion in relation to government office accommodation and the like needs to take into account those areas that have direct community engagement. Whilst more and more services are being delivered online, and that has been preferred by consumers, there is still a need for face-to-face interactions for certain transactions and activities. The Gungahlin shopfront and the Access Canberra facility there set a new benchmark for the territory which we are very proud of. I will ask Dave to talk more about how well it has been received, the utilisation and the like.

Mr Peffer: I am pleased to say that since it opened in May this year we have had over 12,720 Canberrans come through our doors, which is great. Pleasingly, of those 12,000 people, 5,228 of them have left feedback about their experience. So we are getting a really good capture of how people are experiencing our services. The overall rating of the service is 96.8 per cent, which is pretty good.

Mr Barr: That is highly positive.

Mr Peffer: The overall rating of the new centre in terms of its layout and ease of use is 97.4 per cent, so we are right up there. It shows that we have hit the mark in terms of building our service delivery around what customers want, what makes it easier and what can move people through quickly.

There has been a very positive reaction as well to the broader service offering that we have out at Gungahlin where we have over 200 services all available in that one-stop shop, including a range of services which previously were only available on the south side out at Fyshwick. So that has been very positive.

We also had a great response after we trialled some different opening hours just to see whether that was what the community wanted. We found that 5 pm to 6 pm is, in fact, our busiest time. People, on their way home from work or picking up their kids from somewhere, are stopping in at our service centre during that hour period. That has been quite positive as well and very well received.

We have had 2,324 people use our touch screens in Gungahlin. So about 20 per cent of the people coming through the door are not taking a ticket and are not lining up. They are accessing the services straight away without sitting in a queue and they are able to self-serve. Certainly we have the supports there for our officers to assist people who might not be capable of using the touch screen themselves. We have officers there standing by to assist them with that. I have some feedback. There is a text box on our feedback machine out the front. I will just read out a couple.

THE CHAIR: Very quickly because we are about to move on.

Mr Peffer: Very quickly. “Great service. All of government should be like this. Best service from any government department I’ve been to. Quick, simple, easy. Never words used with a licence renewal before.” I guess that gives you a sense of how people are experiencing it.

MS PORTER: That is very good.

THE CHAIR: A quick question to close.

MS FITZHARRIS: Mine will be a supplementary. It is going to be a similar question.

THE CHAIR: A supplementary and quick.

MS FITZHARRIS: The trial of 5 pm to 6 pm—will that continue? Those are now the opening hours of Access Canberra at Winyu House?

Mr Peffer: Given the popularity of that out at Gungahlin, I would expect that will continue, yes.

MS FITZHARRIS: And an opening time of nine?

Mr Peffer: We have not taken a decision on the opening time yet. We have not found eight to nine to be particularly busy so we will have a look at that.

MS FITZHARRIS: Great. Do you know much about the 12,720 people who came through the door? Do they live locally or do they live across the city? Are they a particular age or a real mix?

Mr Peffer: There is a bit of a mix. What I can say is that we have noticed an impact on our customer numbers in Belconnen and Dickson, which would suggest that they live in that area. But outside that I must admit I do not have that information.

THE CHAIR: Chief Minister, we might finish there on Access Canberra and thank officials for their attendance here. We will now move to the asbestos task force, and Ms Lawder has the new question.

MS LAWDER: How many staff are employed or engaged in the task force?

Mr Kefford: There are about 50 in the task force. At this point we are seeing, as we have seen on different stages of the program, that the composition is changing. I think that at the stage we are at in the acquisition process and the focus shifting to demolition we are seeing a change within that composition, I would expect the overall numbers within the task force to begin to decline. But, as I say, at the moment, including within that broad number the colleagues from the Government Solicitor’s Office that are seconded and working with us but not formally part of the task force, as well as the Access Canberra staff who are co-located with us, it is around 50.

MS LAWDER: As you move past the demolition phase into a land sale phase will you have people functionally organised to pick particular types of areas like land sales?

Mr Kefford: Yes. I was talking before about the changes as the nature of the work and the task force has changed. Certainly we have now put under the director of acquisition, maintenance and sales a team which will handle the whole of that process from demolition of the houses to the issuing of the leases and the actual sales process.

We are in regular conversations with Mr Dawes and Mr Ponton about the arrangements for the sales. There will be a team within the task force whose job it is solely to work on that, especially in relation to those sales which are under the first right of refusal mechanism. The ones that go to public sales will be dealt with through the LDA and agents that are being engaged to fulfil the function for us.

Particularly because in the first right of refusal process the sale outcomes are so intrinsically linked to the demolition scope, the decision was made relatively early on in the process with Mr Dawes that it made the most sense, recognising the existing relationships we have with the affected owners, that the task force will manage the sale of those properties.

MS LAWDER: When will the land sales part commence and will it be rolling? Will it be scheduled just behind the demolition?

Mr Kefford: Yes, indeed.

MS LAWDER: So when will that begin?

Mr Kefford: We are absolutely managing the demolition and sales process as a single program because clearly there is a significant financial cost for the territory while it continues to hold the blocks, and the sales revenue is an important part of the net cost of the scheme.

Our expectation is that, apart from perhaps a small number of blocks that are not affected by the draft variation 343—which, as you know, remains to come back to the Assembly in due course—the sales program will not commence until early in the new year. We are not in a position—and the government has said this to the owners and publicly—to sell blocks that are subject to 343 until that process is complete, which, when you run the disallowance period, takes us into February next year. There may be a handful of those blocks under the first right of refusal that might be either too small or perhaps already RZ2, so not subject to that, that are able to be sold before then, but realistically most of the sales activity will not commence until at least February next year.

MS LAWDER: When do you think the land sale part will reach maximum capacity and how long do you think it will last? Will it keep going until—

Mr Kefford: My expectation will be that the sales will broadly track the demolition program. In the published schedule that we have at the moment the target is to have 50 demolitions complete this calendar year, 200 next calendar year and 300 in the next two years after that. We are in the process of pushing out work orders now under the new contractual arrangements to begin to deliver on that program. As I say, generally speaking, the sales will occur as soon as the blocks are removed from the

register of affected properties and the leases are issued, so it will broadly track the program.

One of the reasons why the demolition schedule looks like it does is that we have taken into account the potential impact of blocks coming onto the market at different times in different suburbs, and also the interaction that might have with the government's wider land release program. But the structure, broadly, of having a number of work fronts in each of the town centres in part takes account of the fact that we do not want to be putting 30 cleared blocks in one suburb back to the market at the same time and, in effect, swamping the market and potentially denting the revenue that might come from a more orderly sales process.

MS LAWDER: So there will be no pre-emptive sales before demolition, or before they are removed from the affected properties list?

Mr Kefford: In practice we have referred to the first-right arrangements, where the former owners would choose to retain improvements that we would remove in the event the block was being prepared for sale. The example I use—my colleagues will forgive me for using it again because they have heard it before—is if there were an old pool in the backyard. If it were a surrendered block we might remove it because it would improve the value of the block on the open market. The first right of refusal process allows the owner to express the desire that the pool not be removed. The way that happens is before demolition occurs and if they express that view. The way in which that gets locked in is that we will actually sell them the block before the demolition occurs with that as part of the schedule to the agreement. To that extent we are selling them, subject to demolition and a whole range of things. For the surrendered blocks they will be put to a public process as they are deregistered.

MS LAWDER: So for the surrendered blocks there would be no capacity for a developer or someone to come in early?

Mr Kefford: The process is that we will hand blocks to the LDA and the agents to sell as they are deregistered. We are receiving expressions of interest already because obviously people are aware that blocks are coming. The overriding consideration in all of that is there are a number of blocks where owners have expressed a possible interest in first right of refusal. I think, as we have said at this table before, in connection with discussions about consolidation of blocks and so on, the first gate that needs to be gone through is the conversation with the former owners about what the resale price will be and do they wish to exercise their first right of refusal. It is only at that point that the block leaves the first-right stream and moves into the surrendered stream.

MS LAWDER: In the surrendered stream they have no first right of refusal; they have given that up. You have said you are getting a couple of expressions of interest already, but there will be no capacity for someone to get in early?

Mr Kefford: It will go to a public process.

MS LAWDER: Thanks.

THE CHAIR: A new question, Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Do you have an update on the costs, Chief Minister? The original estimates—I am talking about the full costs, net costs—were done some time ago, and as the scheme has moved on and the market has moved do you have a better understanding of what the full cost of demolition might be? I am interested to know whether you can refine the impact on the budget because I think it was between \$300 million and \$400 million.

Mr Barr: Yes, \$400 million was the ballpark figure.

MR HANSON: It was ballpark but has that been refined?

Mr Barr: I am not sure that significantly more new information has emerged. That figure is heavily impacted by the process that Mr Kefford has just outlined.

MR HANSON: What about the practical experience? There was an estimate of what houses might cost, but then the reality of the valuations came in, and the market might have shifted—some of those variables.

Mr Barr: There will be a formal process of updating in terms of budget impact through the midyear statement, and then again in next year's budget. They will be the moments in time that Treasury will put together a formal budgetary impact. Mr Miners may have some more information that he can provide at this point, or Mr Kefford.

Mr Kefford: The estimates that are disclosed in the annual report are for net cash costs of around \$370 million. So the short answer to your question is that that remains what we are working towards. With respect to the two things that are still largely unknown, we have not sold any blocks yet. Obviously, for one-half of this transaction we have no better information than the material that was considered by the committee in the hearings into the special appropriation bill, more or less at this time last year.

While we have demolished 19 houses, as of the two this morning, we are now starting to get better information about the costs. The costs of that have been within the estimates we had at the time. Again we are only a short way in and have not completed those processes yet. So there is nothing significant there.

MR HANSON: Basically you are saying that no red flag has gone up saying that it will be much more or much less than the estimate at this stage?

Mr Kefford: At this point we are confident in the numbers that are there, recognising that, as I say, for at least one-half of the transaction we do not have any real data on which it is appropriate for us to move. Having said that, we have no data on which it is appropriate for us to move either, so we are at that halfway point. The average price, as we have discussed here before, in the acquisitions was higher than what was included in the numbers, but the expectation is that in part that reflects the underlying value in the land, and that may well wash out, as we start to see the sales revenue coming under the scheme next year, as we have described.

Mr Miners: There really are three parts to the way this has been costed. One is obviously the purchase price of the blocks. We updated that at the time of the budget, so there were updated numbers in the budget for that. The second part is the cost of holding and demolishing the blocks. That work has only just started, so we have seen nothing to change the estimates on that basis. There is also the sale of blocks that is still to come, and we will update them as we go along. We would expect to update them formally each time we get to a budget process. So we would update them for the budget review and then again in the budget next year.

MR HANSON: Given that a lot of transactions have now occurred, I assume that we are now entering a period where we are going to sell, and money will come back in. I imagine that we are at a peak, in a sense, of how much money is out of pocket, given that now it is a recovery exercise, to an extent. Is that the case or is there still more to expend than comes in, because of the demolition costs? Has there been a plateau, I suppose, in terms of expenditure?

Mr Miners: I would answer it this way, Mr Hanson. Clearly, the biggest two components of the net cost of the scheme are the value of the buildings that are knocked down and the cost of doing so, and then the cost of the task force in delivering that. To date, across the 950 properties where we have reached agreement with the owners, that is around \$680 million. It was always the case in the estimates that there was going to be a very significant cash cost, given the offer that was made to buy them all last October. As the revenue comes in we would expect to see that trending back towards the net number that we are anticipating.

There are around 40 where we need to conclude the discussions on acquisitions and there are the 30 or so impacted properties that we discussed and that the Assembly debated as part of the bill last week. We have not reached the highest expenditure and it may well be, given the timings, that it will go up further before it starts to come down again, just because of the way the sequencing falls out, but that is where we are up to at this point.

MR HANSON: It does not look like it is going to exceed \$700 million, in terms of expenditure, or thereabouts. Are the financing costs for the other \$300 million that has been borrowed being attributed towards the cost of Mr Fluffy, given that it is an accounting treatment in the budget; it is not actually part of the Mr Fluffy program?

Mr Miners: We costed this in exactly the same way that we cost all policies, in that we do not include the interest and associate it directly with the policy itself. So it is treated separately as part of our reporting of interest. Obviously, where we do not draw down the full amount, those moneys would flow through our normal borrowing program and we would put them elsewhere. We do not just put them under the mattress; they do actually sit in accounts and earn interest as well. So that becomes part of that process. We would manage it in a way to minimise the costs, but they are not attached to this scheme.

MR HANSON: So with that \$300 million that was borrowed, what is happening with it?

Mr Miners: It will be managed in the same way that our cash holdings are managed

at the moment. I do not have the specific details of exactly how that is done. That is done through Treasury—

MR HANSON: I suppose what I am asking is: is that money being used? Is it sitting there in cash holdings, or, because it is at a lower interest rate, is it being used as part of the government's borrowings for other—

Mr Miners: It will be treated in exactly the same way because it is not fungible. We have not irradiated the notes so that we know where they are. It is used as part of our general borrowing and the cash requirements of government.

MR HANSON: It just goes into the bucket?

Mr Miners: It will be used in that way. However, in terms of the loan itself, when we took the loan the idea was to make sure that we were not coming back for more, so that we actually had the loan there that was sufficient to cover that, plus a contingency on the program, and that the funds were available to undertake that work.

THE CHAIR: I will offer my question to Mr Hanson.

MR HANSON: Is there any legal action pending or occurring that you are aware of? There was talk about various individuals or groups suing the ACT or the commonwealth.

Mr Kefford: There are no current matters that are on foot at all. There was press reporting last year of papers being filed in the Supreme Court. We have subsequently bought those houses. They were done—so the story went at the time—to preserve statutory limitation periods and so on, but we have bought those houses. So there are no cases. The territory was not a party to the matter that received coverage in the press a few weeks ago involving Mr Georgiou. We received subpoenas for documents but the territory was not actually named as a party in that action.

MR HANSON: You said 950 is now the number that have signed on to the scheme?

Mr Kefford: Nine hundred and fifty have accepted and the territory has actually taken possession of 759 houses.

MR HANSON: The difference between the full number and the 950: what is going on with those?

Mr Kefford: There are five that are Community Services Directorate properties. There are 16 where the owners have declined to participate in the scheme. The balance are ones that are at various points of the offer and acceptance, and exchange on the deed process.

MR HANSON: How many is that?

Mr Kefford: Thirty-nine. That should add up to 1,022.

MR HANSON: I will check your maths in the *Hansard*.

Mr Kefford: It worked this morning when I did it. I am sorry; there are 12 more that are the agreed private demolitions where there were contracts in place as of last October.

MR HANSON: There was a study commissioned through ANU to look specifically at—

Mr Kefford: The health study, yes.

MR HANSON: When is that due to report?

Mr Kefford: There are four stages in the study. The first has been completed; the second one is about to commence. The first one was released a month or so ago. That was looking at ACT cancer registry data and matching diagnoses of mesothelioma with residents in an affected house at the time of diagnosis. So it was quite a narrow process. With the second stage, there have been focus groups. The ANU is about to run a wider survey across current and former residents. It goes essentially to issues of understanding the risk of asbestos, perceptions of risk and so on. So it is a qualitative study.

The last two stages, which are broadly expected to take the next couple of years, involve a much more significant but also complicated data matching exercise, that is, basically joining up with Medicare data and all of the state cancer registries and repeating that exercise of matching diagnoses of mesothelioma with anyone who has ever lived in an affected house, as well as a parallel process of mesothelioma diagnoses of an equivalent number of people, equivalent demographics, who have never lived in an affected house.

That is at various stages of the multiple ethics approvals that are necessary for the university to get permission to access Medicare data and state cancer registry data. That will provide ultimately the definitive position on those levels of risk, noting that one of the issues that will be very difficult to unravel in all of that, as is always the case, is other sources of exposure to asbestos, be it occupational or environmental. So it cannot give a definitive answer that a particular person acquired mesothelioma or did not because they lived in a house, but it will give a sense of relative risk.

MR HANSON: With that first stage, were there any findings that might be of interest to this committee?

Mr Kefford: First of all, the numbers were low. From memory, there was one individual who was diagnosed with mesothelioma while they were resident in a house. Again it did not go into causation, as I have just described. Part of what the chief health officer said at the time—and this was covered off in the report—was that the ACT's rate of mesothelioma was broadly in line with the national average. It was very small scale and a very narrowly defined process. There was not anything unexpected in what was there. Really, the process now is to wait for that much more complicated data-matching exercise involving the commonwealth and all of the states to get that better picture.

THE CHAIR: A new question from Ms Porter.

MS PORTER: Chief Minister, it has obviously been a very difficult time for the ACT government, this whole area, and of course a very, very difficult time for the owners of these homes. As you said, we have moved on to another phase now. I am wondering at what stage we do some evaluation like we did after the 2003 event which was a serious event in this town. This is obviously a serious event for this government and for everyone in the community. At what stage do we look back on the success of the support programs that have been put in place both for the home owners and also for the community generally in responding to this? At what stage do we look back on the community forums and evaluate the effectiveness of those and the doorknocking exercise that was undertaken as part of the communications at the time? When are we going to be evaluating all of those and when will we get some feedback about those evaluations?

Mr Barr: I guess there are multiple levels of opportunity for assessment, both internally to the task force and the government and then externally through the Auditor-General and perhaps through other procured external assessments of different elements of the program. Some of that can occur reasonably close to processes being completed. With others I think the first priority has to be actual delivery of a program before its evaluation occurs. There are some areas clearly where this experience is entirely unique and there are others where undoubtedly there will be lessons that can be learnt for future community recovery and community engagement and the like. There will be, out of necessity, different responses at different times. So the Assembly will certainly see, through updates, the regular updates that are provided, elements of evaluation.

The task force and my office get asked on a weekly basis questions on different elements of this and how certain things are going, sometimes daily in terms of take-up of certain elements of support or offerings and the like. So it really does vary from almost every day to there being some things where at the conclusion of the program, once every house has been demolished, clearly there is an opportunity for engagement with New South Wales and the commonwealth in relation to some historic elements but then also some contemporary elements.

New South Wales, through their task force, have been in contact with the ACT quite extensively in framing their response in the context of issues in Queanbeyan. But the border is almost meaningless in that sense as you see why things occurred the way they did. Mr Kefford might want to comment a little on that engagement with New South Wales which I think has been important. As discussed earlier, I will be meeting with Premier Baird next week, I think, and this will be one of the items that we discuss.

Mr Kefford: We have been working closely with our colleagues in New South Wales really since before the task force was set up and they have played a very significant role in the technical work that underpins what we are doing. They were part of the consultations that we undertook last August but then they too have worked their way through the process that has broadened into a wider discussion than just the technical liaison with WorkCover in New South Wales and so on.

It has got to the point now, coming to your question about evaluation, where New South Wales has asked if they can appropriate many of our communications materials and approaches. It is not just across the border here, the issues are similar and they are recognising the extent to which we have been down this path and there are things that they can pick up.

We very deliberately along the way sought to formally and informally evaluate what we were doing. For example, around the pilot demolition process we had a formal process of review on not only what happened on site, which is fed into a series of efficiencies and improvements in the subsequent demolitions, but also particularly about how we engaged with the neighbours and the way in which we supported them with information. That continues to be part of our ongoing work in making sure that the information that we are providing is not just accurate—that is the easy bit—but actually hitting the mark. That is something that we monitor and my team monitors regularly in a way that is more sophisticated than just measuring hits, although that becomes part of it.

We have also recently undertaken a formal process of review and evaluation. We sent a survey to home owners asking where they were up to, what other supports they might need, whether the assistance that has been provided through the connections to community groups and so on was helpful. We have had a response from around a quarter that actually decided to participate in that. And that was really recognising the extent to which we provide information.

Everything that we are doing is unprecedented and as we move through each stage we have been seeking to repeat the things that went well in the last stage but also test what we are doing and make sure that we are hitting the mark. As the Chief Minister has said, there have been some very direct and very clear lines of communication. When there have been gaps in what we have been doing we will continue to seek to close those and continue to seek to review and learn from what we are doing as we go through this next stage.

MS FITZHARRIS: I have a supplementary to follow on from that, around the range of engagement communications activities that you have fairly comprehensively set out in the annual report, in particular the co-location of members of the personal support team and key community services at Dickson, Kippax, Woden and Tuggeranong. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Mr Kefford: Sure. Essentially the three tasks that the government gave the task force last year were to manage that emergency phase of testing and deal with the crisis that we were facing last June-July and to come up with the approach that now underpins what we are doing. But the key piece has always been this engagement, education, information flow, and that is something which—while last year we worked very deliberately along with the rest of the program and focused on the 1,022—is now broadening out. As we have gone through that process we have very deliberately adjusted what we have been doing to match those different audiences.

I think the other thing that has come under this is that this stopped being about houses a long time ago. It has always been a story about people. What we have sought to do is set ourselves up in a way that provides different ways for people to talk to us and it

mirrors much of what Mr Pepper and others have been saying this morning about digital space. We have a very significant website that we have had two iterations of in the past 12 months. That has something like 200,000 hits now. When we put the list out last July we got 40,000 hits in a week. There is that base information flow happening really well through there.

We have done a program on social media where we have probably pushed the boundaries in terms of what we have done and what we let people do on our sites, which has come at a cost. Nevertheless it has allowed us to have that engagement with a range of people in that forum who choose to want to talk to us in that way.

The personal support team has been critical to what we have been doing since we were set up, and something like 29,000 sets of case notes have been put into our CRM system. There is this ongoing dialogue with people.

One of the things we found, even with the relatively good access to the building in Moore Street, was that there was a group in the community who found that difficult. So we worked with the key community service providers in Woden, Kippax, Tuggeranong and Dickson to basically establish a presence in their offices, which did two things. First of all, it took it away from the city. Secondly, it also very much facilitated us drawing on their connections to other groups in the community—be it the men's sheds or be it the professional organisers who stepped in to help people pack up their houses or those sorts of things.

I think being able to draw on that community connection and be in an environment where it was not in the office in the city—and there were something like 750 or so separate meetings now with home owners in those premises, and there will continue to be while there continues to be a need—it has scaled back, because, as I say, the program is moving and so our focus in one sense is shifting from the 1,022 to the rest of the community.

Coming back to your question about doorknocks, we will have done around 50 houses before Christmas. We have been out to 380 houses. So there is that connection. And what we are finding when we do that—it is not a surprise to people anymore—is that they have got the information but there is just that one thing that they want to test. That has been a really important piece of engaging with what is now a very big part of what we are here to do. Yes, the 1,022 will remain our focus as we work through the program. But there are 127,000 other people that we now have to have a direct conversation with because we will be having an impact in their community and in their street.

MS FITZHARRIS: You mentioned earlier that the approach to social media might have come at a bit of a cost. What did you mean by that?

Mr Kefford: It would not surprise anyone that when you are exposed on social media platforms, where it is very easy for people to hide behind pseudonyms, they will not necessarily express themselves as helpfully or as politely as they might if it were face to face. We understand the emotion that sits under it. We continue to seek to provide assistance in what we have always recognised is a massively difficult and emotionally challenging set of circumstances. We also continue to delete, and unapologetically

delete, those posts which are out of order in any conversation, never mind in a frame like the one we are in.

Yes, a lot of the people that want to deal with us want to deal with us electronically. At the same time there is a group who have said, “Do you know what, can you please send us paper?” And there is a group within that who like their paper on A3, because they can read it if it is on A3. Essentially, we try to deal with each of the 1,022 in the cohort on their own and in a way that suits them and their needs. Some people want us to come out and sit in the lounge room so that we can see it, because it is desperately important to them that we see it. Others want to talk to us on the phone. Others want to throw rocks on Facebook. We deal with that.

MS FITZHARRIS: I am quite struck by how complex it is and the response that had to happen quickly. This question is more for you, Ms Leigh. It is about the staff and the task force. I am aware of all those things in a very, I guess, superficial way, but how are the staff being looked after in terms of their welfare, given they are on this task force, so many people are affected and emotions are high?

Ms Leigh: I think that is a really important issue that you have raised. As you have said, the work that the task force is doing is incredibly complex, whether you look at it from a policy point of view, from an administrative point of view, from a program management point of view or from a people point of view. It is incredibly complex. I think the staff and the task force have gone well above and beyond and I am really proud of everything that they have achieved. They have really delivered for our community.

Yes, that means that it is quite a stressful role as well, and that is something that Mr Kefford and I discuss frequently. We meet weekly and we are always discussing the impact on staff. We make sure that counselling is available. We try to make sure that staff take breaks, despite the fact that, individually, they feel very committed to delivering and try to minimise the breaks they take because they are so committed. We discuss that to make sure that people do have breaks and that people are moved to give them breaks as well. You are right. It is an important issue, to make sure that we look after our staff and to make sure that we can go on continuing to deliver at a high standard.

MS FITZHARRIS: And my final question—

THE CHAIR: Very quickly.

MS FITZHARRIS: The task force website refers to 497 stamp duty concessions claimed. That means that almost 500 families have bought a new home in a different location. What are some of the stories you can share with us about their experiences?

Mr Kefford: Of the 759 where we have actually settled—and that stamp duty becomes live at the point of settlement—499 to date have actually bought something else. What we are starting to hear sometimes is this: I have had people come back to us and say, “I did not realise how much this issue was having an effect until I got into my new house. Thank you.”

I know you have seen it but others on the committee may not have seen the film project that was put together by Chris Redmond at Woden Community Service with eight or nine family stories. I think the thing in that that struck me was yes, there are the anger and frustration and grief that we have heard but there is also hope, “I never thought this was going to happen, but I am here, and it does feel like home.”

The difficulty at the moment—and I have understood this for a time—is that it was always going to be the case that it would take a while. Having said we need to acquire them all now because they really should not be lived in, and it is going to take us a few years to knock them down, that period in between is really hard. And this is why we are seeking, as we get to this next point around demolition, to do it more quickly than what is out there without compromising safety—and absolutely we will—because that is in the former owners’ interests as much as it is in the financial interests of the territory. I think that needs to continue to be our focus.

Absolutely it will be worker and community safety first but after that it will be providing the opportunity for individuals, for the community. It is that physical as well as that psychological rebuilding that is going to be really important. I think that is the stage we are about to start see happening for real, as we actually start selling and people go back and start the physical rebuilding phase.

MS FITZHARRIS: And it will be important for people still in the scheme to also be aware of those stories of people who are perhaps one step further ahead.

Mr Barr: Yes. One other little anecdote that illustrates the nature of our city and the nature of the broad cross-section of people who have been impacted is that there are people who are overseas working for the Australian government in DFAT, Austrade et cetera who are having to deal with some of these issues from afar. Not naming individuals but at various trade missions in a number of countries, since this has become the case, I have had the opportunity to have conversations with some people. They have volunteered that they are impacted and have wanted to talk about the process.

So it has reached those Canberrans who are on postings overseas, who are trying to manage all of this from thousands of kilometres away. That adds a whole other layer of complexity to some individual circumstances. I am never surprised now by the range, the types of individual circumstances and the areas of everyday life in this city and elsewhere, reflecting the nature of this city, that people want to discuss with you, positively and negatively.

Yes, as Mr Kefford said, social media presents both positives and negatives in terms of how people engage. But, by and large, I think the evidence before the Assembly and before the community is of an outstanding job being done by the task force in what we all acknowledge is a very challenging set of circumstances for a jurisdiction of our size.

THE CHAIR: With that, we will leave it there. Our time has come to an end. I know how much you would all like to stay and continue the conversation but people have other places to be.

Before we go, answers to questions taken on notice at the hearing are due at the secretariat no later than close of business on 17 November. Written supplementary questions from members should be provided to the secretariat within three working days of the proof transcript becoming available. If the community has any supplementary questions following on from this, they will be forwarded with the covering correspondence, and we would like answers to them in two weeks of the date of the covering correspondence.

On behalf of the committee, I thank you, Chief Minister, and the relevant directorate and agency officials for your attendance today. When available, a proof transcript will be forwarded to witnesses to provide an opportunity to check the transcript and suggest any corrections.

With that, I now formally declare the public hearing closed.

The committee adjourned at 1.30 pm.