

THURSDAY, 10 AUGUST 2023

ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE—TREATY, ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARTNERSHIPS; COMMUNITIES; ARTS

Estimate Committee Members

Ms CP McMillan—Chair
Mr MC Berkman
Mr SA Bennett
Ms CL Lui
Dr MA Robinson
Mr RJ Skelton

Members in Attendance

Mr J-PH Langbroek
Dr A MacMahon
Mr SSJ Andrew
Dr CAC Rowan
Ms FS Simpson
Mr TL Mander
Ms AJ Camm

In Attendance

Hon. LM Enoch, Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts

Mr F Gibson, Chief of Staff

Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts

Ms C O'Connor, Director-General

Mr R Willmet, Deputy Director-General, Culture and Economic Participation

Ms K Parton, Deputy Director-General, Strategic Policy, Legislation and Program Reforms

Ms B Drew, Deputy Director-General, Communities


Queensland Art Gallery/Gallery of Modern Art

Mr C Saines, Director

Arts Queensland

Ms K Herring, Deputy Director-General

The committee met at 9.00 am.

 **CHAIR:** Good morning, everyone. I declare this hearing of estimates for the Community Support and Services Committee open. I would like to respectfully acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we meet today and pay our respects to elders past, present and emerging. I acknowledge

the minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, the member for Algeester, as a First Nations woman. I acknowledge Cynthia Lui, the member for Cook, as the first Torres Strait Islander person to be elected to any parliament in the country. I also acknowledge any other First Nations peoples who are here in the room today. We are very fortunate to live in a country with two of the oldest continuing cultures in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, whose lands, winds and waters we are so lucky to share.

I thank the honourable minister for the opportunity that this committee had to lead the consultation on the Path to Treaty Bill during 2023. I note and recognise that the decisions that have been made in institutions like this have contributed to the colonisation of our First Nations peoples over 235 years. I trust that the decisions that are made in this institution going forward will better benefit First Nations peoples for the many years that follow.

I acknowledge the members of the committee here today: Mr Stephen Bennett MP, member for Burnett and deputy chair; Mr Michael Berkman MP, member for Maiwar; Ms Cynthia Lui MP, member for Cook; Dr Mark Robinson MP, member for Oodgeroo; and Mr Robert Skelton MP, member for Nicklin. I am Corrine McMillan, the member for Mansfield and chair of the committee. The committee has granted leave for a number of non-committee members to attend to ask questions today. I note we have been joined by a number of our esteemed colleagues: Dr Christian Rowan, the member for Moggill; and Mr John-Paul Langbroek, the member for Surfers Paradise. I welcome members visiting today to the work of our committee.

Today the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2023 and the budget estimates for the committee's areas of responsibility. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee. The committee has authorised its hearing to be broadcast live, televised and photographed. Copies of the committee's conditions for broadcasters of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

While mobile phone use is not permitted in the public gallery, an exception has been made for staff who are assisting witnesses here today. I do ask all present, however, to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode and to refrain from taking photos or filming any of the proceedings. I also remind everyone that food is not permitted in this chamber.

This year the House has determined the program for the committee's estimates hearing. The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, communities and the arts from 9.00 am until 11.45 am; housing from 1.00 pm until 3.45 pm; and child safety, seniors and disability services from 4.00 pm until 6.45 pm.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts until 11.45 am. As was determined by the House on 16 June, the committee will only examine areas within the minister's portfolio as follows: treaty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships from 9.00 am to 10.30 am; and communities and the arts from 10.45 am to 11.45 am. I remind all honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the time specified in that area, as was agreed by the House. The committee will suspend proceedings for a break from 10.30 am to 10.45 am.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in the Legislative Assembly apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend, as chair of this committee, to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

I wish to reiterate to all those participating in today's hearing of the sentiment of Mr Speaker's ruling of 30 July 2018 when he recognised the importance of maintaining the dignity of the estimates process in terms of questioning, general behaviour and adherence to the standing orders. Standing order 185 in relation to disorderly members further determines the conduct of parliamentarians during estimate hearings. I will exercise this standing order as required to ensure that our behaviour today reflects the behaviour that each of our communities expects of parliamentarians.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch, the director-general, officials and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or director-general. The minister and the director-general do not need to do this, but for the rest of our public servants in the room that would be appreciated.

I now declared the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnership, communities and the arts open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish you are welcome to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes before the examination of your portfolio area.

Ms ENOCH: I respectfully acknowledge the Turrbal and Yagara peoples, the traditional owners of the land on which we are meeting today and, of course, pay my respects to all of our elders past and present. With that in mind, today as we gather to consider the budget estimates for the portfolio of treaty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, I respectfully am calling on members of this committee to make known where they stand on the Voice to Parliament. As members of the committee with oversight of First Nations policy, the people of Queensland have a right to know your position on this national reform opportunity.

Treaty legislation passed through the parliament with the full support of the opposition, but it only took two months for the Leader of the Opposition to capitulate to the far right of the LNP party machine and begin walking back his support. With Peter Dutton and other members of the federal LNP actively campaigning against the Voice to Parliament, it is important for their members of this committee to make clear where they stand on this important issue. I say to the committee members: you have an opportunity today to tell the people of Queensland whether you support the full constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people via a voice or whether you will turn your back on the modest offer from First Nations people to walk with them in support of a Voice to Parliament.

We know that many Queenslanders are doing it tough right now, facing national cost-of-living pressures. This budget is focused on tackling these pressures and providing Queenslanders with the support they need to make ends meet. This year the budget for the Department of Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Communities and the Arts is helping to ease these cost-of-living pressures while also investing in truth-telling and healing, supporting communities, empowering the lives of young Queenslanders and continuing to grow our vibrant arts sector.

Generations of First Nations people have called for self-determination, truth-telling and agreement making, and our government is responding to that call. This year the Palaszczuk government passed historic legislation with bipartisan support to take Queensland forward on a Path to Treaty. The Path to Treaty Act has established the legislative framework to set up the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry and the First Nations Treaty Institute funded through a first of its kind \$300 million treaty fund to ensure funding certainty into the future. The Palaszczuk government is committed to reframing the relationship with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders through this process.

In addition, our government proudly supports First Nations businesses in Queensland. In fact, since mid-2017, the Queensland government has directly procured more than \$2 billion in goods and services from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses, and in the last financial year there have been over 100 First Nations businesses who have supplied to the Queensland government for the first time. We are committed to working collaboratively with government buyers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. That is why in this year's budget we announced an investment of \$1.4 million over four years to support engagement on First Nations economic development.

We are also continuing to provide assistance to ease cost-of-living pressures for families. We are providing a \$4.3 million boost to food relief services, including doubling our investment in emergency relief services and providing additional funding for Foodbank Queensland, OzHarvest and SecondBite who do incredible work in our communities.

This year's state budget also delivers \$2.7 million over two years to expand the state's popular School Breakfast Program which will mean more Queensland children will be learning on a full stomach. We are also continuing to boost funding for neighbourhood centres from last year's state budget, including a record \$51.8 million over four years to boost operational funding for 128 state funded centres, as well as \$39 million over three years for new builds and redevelopments of neighbourhood centres.

This year is my sixth budget as Minister for the Arts. In addition to supporting Queenslanders with cost-of-living relief, this budget also delivers further investment in Queensland's arts and cultural sector, which is a job-creating industry in this state. Our ambitious 10-year roadmap for the arts Creative Together and the second action plan Grow 2022-2026 are shaping our state's creative future. Underpinned by \$50 million over four years, we are delivering even more opportunities for Queensland artists.

New investment announced in this year's state budget will help cement Queensland as a cultural destination, securing a pipeline of blockbuster exhibitions and events, with investment of \$9 million over three years from 2024-25 for delivery of the World Science Festival Brisbane and Queensland, and an ongoing annual investment of \$2.2 million from 2025-26 for QAGoMA to attract exclusive economy-boosting exhibitions.

My department is making a real difference in the lives of Queenslanders. We are strengthening community connections, providing cost-of-living relief, progressing truth-telling and healing, and showcasing Queensland arts and cultures on the world stage as we prepare for Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. I look forward to outlining more of our work today.

CHAIR: The committee will commence with the examination of estimates for the treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships portfolio areas. I call the deputy chair of the committee, Mr Stephen Bennett, the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I hand over to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Chair, thank you for having me here today as a guest of the committee. I want to acknowledge the minister, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet, senior public servants and the commissioners who are here. It is a great privilege to be here. My first question is to the minister. The reference is question on notice 12 prehearing which is about staff. A whistleblower has contacted us to advise us that you have had meetings with staff and non-Indigenous staff were asked to leave. Can you confirm this?

Ms ENOCH: Yes. For the member's cultural awareness training today, can I make it clear that that is part of a cultural practice that happens. Many members of my department could be relatives of mine. There are some conversations that need to be had to ensure relationships with First Nations peoples in the department. It is something that I have done since I have been a minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Sorry, could you explain again? What is the purpose of excluding non-Indigenous staff?

Ms ENOCH: As an Aboriginal woman—I am happy to provide a cultural awareness training session for the member, but I would suggest that this might be something that he might like to look into as the opposition spokesperson for this portfolio—it is always a standard cultural practice to understand your relationship with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, whether you have a relationship as in a familial relationship or other. That is normal practice. It is something that I have done as a minister pretty much since the beginning where I have had conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people exclusively to talk through those particular relationships.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, can you tell us how many times this has occurred since you have been the minister?

Ms ENOCH: Since I have been a minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: No—this minister.

Ms ENOCH: Maybe half a dozen times. It is a normal cultural practice to understand your relationship with other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I do this when I go to community. I will do this as an Aboriginal person in whatever role that I play.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, how many regional offices are there in your department and are you intending to do this in every regional office?

Ms ENOCH: I was in Townsville recently where the large majority of the members that I met with were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and we were able to ascertain that relationship pretty quickly. In fact, there are people in that team who I have worked with in the past before I came into politics and who I have known for decades. That is pretty much normal practice. I did not have to do anything different in Townsville. I did not have to do anything different in Mackay.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, the member has outlined her protocols to address any potential conflicts of interests with First Nations peoples that she works with. I am having trouble ascertaining the connection of your questions to the budget estimates process and the expenditure of the minister's portfolio area. Would you like to move on to expenditure as it relates to the portfolio area please?

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Chair. I have more questions about this. I think this does go to the purpose of working out what is happening within the department. I have more questions along these lines. Estimates is not purely—we have had clear directions about whether questions are only to do with budgetary matters. Given that it is a significant issue, I think it is something that I do want to persist with. I want to ask the minister—

Ms ENOCH: Chair, so the member believes that an Aboriginal minister meeting with Aboriginal people is a significant issue?

Mr LANGBROEK: Well—

CHAIR: No. Thank you, Minister. Member for Surfers Paradise and Minister, I will direct proceedings today. Member for Surfers Paradise, I have asked you to return to questioning associated with the expenditure of the portfolio area. I am having trouble drawing a connection between the line of questioning and its relevance to the expenditure of the portfolio area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and treaty.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Chair. I have a question now, if I may.

CHAIR: Yes, absolutely.

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is: Minister, how is excluding non-Indigenous public servants and non-Indigenous staff in line with cultural practice?

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, the question is repetitious. I have redirected you to questioning that relates to the expenditure of the portfolio area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and treaty.

Dr ROBINSON: Point of order, Chair: the shadow minister is asking the minister questions along the line of staffing and operations. I believe they are pertinent to the budget.

CHAIR: Thank you, Dr Robinson. I will make a ruling that the questioning is related to the cultural heritage of staff, not the number or the cost of staff that would be directly related to the portfolio area. Member for Surfers Paradise, could we move on to a question that is relevant to the estimates process?

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I please get some clarification as to whether these cultural practices are widely known across the Public Service and part of the government's policies? I have never been made aware of these things apart from in the way we are now being lectured about.

Ms ENOCH: If the member is unaware of how Aboriginal people ascertain their cultural relationships to each other, I would suggest that the member needs to urgently undertake some cultural awareness training.

Mr LANGBROEK: I would like to follow up.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, we will move to government questions if we cannot determine a question that relates directly to the budget estimates process.

Mr LANGBROEK: The estimates process, which includes departmental operations. I will move on to a question which is about the fact that this cultural awareness is so widespread. Minister, were you aware that some Indigenous staff apologised to their non-Indigenous co-workers about their being asked to leave such meetings?

Ms ENOCH: It is fair to say it is accurate that there has not been a First Nations person who has been in this role as minister before. As a First Nations person, I am going to carry out my usual cultural practices wherever I might go. I did that when I was the housing minister; I am doing that as the minister responsible for this portfolio. It may be a bit unusual for departments to fully appreciate those cultural practices are being upheld, but I am not going to bend those cultural practices at the detriment of my own cultural safety. I must understand my relationship to many of the staff that I have in this agency, particularly when I am meeting with a big group. That is normal practice in my mind as an Aboriginal person. I know that might be an unusual thing for the member to understand and it might not be practice that happens in other places because there is not an Aboriginal minister responsible, but I am going to carry out normal cultural practices, as you would expect.

CHAIR: As the chair of the committee I am going to rule now that we move on from this issue to a question that relates to the budget estimates process. If we cannot do that I will move to government questions.

Mr LANGBROEK: My question now is to the director-general. As a senior public servant, do you support segregated meetings along race lines?

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, that question contains inferences, imputations and opinions. I have asked that we move on to the expenditure of the portfolio area for which the minister is responsible. This will be your final warning, member for Surfers Paradise, or we will move on to another member.

Mr BENNETT: Chair, point of order: I refer to page 10 of the SDS, which directly relates to how staffing and the effectiveness of these departments is relevant.

CHAIR: I appreciate it does relate to page 10 of the SDS. Having said that, the question relates to cultural interactions rather than the cost or expenditure of staff. Should the member for Surfers Paradise wish to reference page 10 of the SDS then he will have to move away from cultural relations and asking culturally race-based questions to a question that relates directly to the cost and expenditure of the portfolio areas of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships and treaty—not about how relationships are managed between races or cultures.

Mr LANGBROEK: I have a question now and the reference is prehearing question on notice 12. My question is to the director-general and it is about staffing. Did you provide any advice to the minister or chief of staff about the appropriateness of such a meeting or meetings?

CHAIR: Director-General, I will allow you to answer that question as you see fit.

Ms O'Connor: Member, can I just check, so there is no confusion, because the minister and I address all staff. We make it our business to attend all-staff meetings. A recent opportunity was during NAIDOC Week, where the minister attended the all-staff meeting and spoke to over 400 staff that day made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff. Can I just say, member, from time to time I will speak to different cohorts of staff as well. I will speak to young staff, for example, and I think that is important. There is an Institute of Public Administration breakfast for CEOs and young staff. I will speak to women at things like International Women's Day. I might speak to specialist staff or frontline staff. I want to make it clear that the minister addresses all staff.

From time to time she may indicate that she wishes to speak to First Nations staff. Personally, I do not have a problem with that. I think it is really important that they hear from her at this unique time in history, where Indigenous staff are tackling interests such as their role in community, their role in family and their role in the department. It is very clear to me at this time that staff in the department need to be enabled to participate in the civic life of Queensland. They also have a special role as public servants. They are the kinds of things I know from feedback that the minister talks to them about. She also makes it very clear in terms of her relationships with them and making sure that no conflicts of interest arise. I am not going to speak to those familial and cultural connections. I know that the minister and other members are aware.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is with the same reference to the director-general. Director-General, are you aware of any employee within the department with the work direction to work from home due to previous charges making him a risk to female staff?

Ms O'Connor: Member, you would be aware that I would not be able to talk about individual cases. I can say that if there are issues that arise correct referrals are made, whether they be to our ethical standards branch or to the CCC. From time to time staff may be suspended. They may be asked to work outside the office. I cannot comment on an individual situation. In terms of a direction, I would be giving directions—I have not given that direction—or my delegate would be giving that direction.

Mr BENNETT: I move that we table this document, please. I am referring to a speech from the minister in 2016. I have 10 copies.

CHAIR: I do believe that we need to give the minister and director-general a copy, so I will just take a second.

Mr LANGBROEK: There are 10 copies there. I have highlighted the part to which I would like to refer in my question.

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Surfers Paradise, is your question directed to the director-general or the minister?

Mr LANGBROEK: It is to the minister. Minister, we have discussed issues of conflicts of interest already this morning. In relation to the highlighted part there, my question is: now that you are the minister, would you advise the committee how you manage conflicts of interest?

Ms ENOCH: Obviously, in 2016 when this speech was written and presented in parliament, the advice from the Integrity Commissioner was to remove myself from any decisions that were being made with regards to Quandamooka people. As the member would know, at that point there had never been a traditional owner who was also a cabinet minister so a great deal of understanding of the intersection of those two responsibilities was still being undertaken by the whole of parliament.

Let me tell you, Member, this place and this parliament was never designed for traditional owners to be part of it. It was never designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to take up places here, so there was a great deal of work that needed to be done to understand all of that. At that time, I accepted the Integrity Commissioner's advice and followed that advice. I stand by those comments that the member has highlighted when referring to comments from the member for Oodgeroo, who had been blatantly turning families against each other on Minjerrabah.

Dr ROBINSON: Chair, point of order: I find those comments offensive—

CHAIR: No. Member for Oodgeroo, please wait to be called. Member for Oodgeroo, you have a point of order.

Dr ROBINSON: I find those comments extremely offensive. The minister knows better and I ask her to withdraw.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Oodgeroo. Minister, the member for Oodgeroo has found those comments to be offensive. Do you withdraw?

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw. As I was saying to the member for Surfers Paradise, I stand by those words that the member has highlighted. Since that advice from the Integrity Commissioner, I know that the Office of the Integrity Commissioner has done a great deal of work around cultural awareness—something that I would suggest the member for Surfers Paradise, given his line of questioning, might need to also do—that is, take some cultural awareness training. I have continued to ensure that any conflicts of interest are addressed through advice from the Integrity Commissioner. I have met with the Integrity Commissioner numerous times since taking on this portfolio alone to ensure that that is accurate.

Part of the reason of meeting post a broader meeting—and I just want to refute some of the suggestions from the member for Surfers Paradise that there are segregated meetings happening. I have to undertake cultural practice to understand my relationship in case there is any conflict of interest so that I can address them with the Integrity Commissioner. I have been fully transparent with the Integrity Commissioner and of course I have been given advice that now understands how a traditional owner can also be a cabinet minister.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for non-government questions has expired. I turn now to the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Can I take this opportunity to congratulate the minister for her appointment to the Minister for Treaty, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. It is certainly a new path that Queensland is taking and Australia is taking towards reconciliation. Understanding differences between different cultures is really important, especially for First Nations people in this space. I also put on the record my full support for Voice to Parliament. Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Can the minister update the committee on the progress of Queensland's Path to Treaty and is she aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for her up-front support of Voice to Parliament. The member for Surfers Paradise's line of questioning that I have received already from him—suggesting that an Aboriginal minister should not meet with Aboriginal staff in the department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships—is quite astonishing to be honest and a clear indication of where the member sits with regards to Voice to Parliament.

Mr LANGBROEK: Point of order, Chair: I will not be verballed. I find that offensive and I ask that the minister withdraw.

CHAIR: Minister, the member has found the comments offensive. Do you withdraw?

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw. The passing of Queensland's Path to Treaty Act 2023 demonstrates the government's commitment to reframing the relationship with First Nations peoples and reconciling its past. In response to recommendation 21 of the *Treaty Advancement Committee report*, the Queensland

government is actively preparing and building its capacity to be treaty ready. I am pleased to advise that the commitment is progressing through the Ministerial Consultative Committee and the Government Treaty Readiness Committee, with both committees providing oversight of the Path to Treaty implementation.

The Ministerial Consultative Committee, established in October 2022, consists of key ministers to promote broad support of Path to Treaty while considering opportunities and addressing barriers to progress. The Government Treaty Readiness Committee consists of senior nominated representatives across all government departments. Established in October 2021, the committee has met regularly, building an understanding of truth-telling and healing, treaty readiness and treaty. Co-chaired by my department and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet, the Government Treaty Readiness Committee supports the coordination of whole-of-government treaty readiness actions.

In 2022-23, a key responsibility of the Government Treaty Readiness Committee was to co-design the Queensland government treaty readiness action plan towards truth-telling and healing. Informed by a series of workshops held across government agencies, the action plan was endorsed by cabinet earlier this year and identified 28 actions to support departments in preparing for the truth-telling and healing process over the next three years. These actions are organised across five treaty readiness domains: knowledge and understanding; workforce capability; engagement and partnerships; policy and programs; and structural matters.

Within my portfolio through Queensland State Archives, we have begun the work preparing for truth-telling and healing. As the custodian of nearly 200 years of Queensland government records, the archives has an important role to play in supporting the Path to Treaty. In June 2021, after releasing a statement of intent, the State Archives developed the First Nations First Program to begin the journey to welcome, include and involve Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the gathering, managing and keeping of Queensland's state records. Importantly, in the last year, over 16,000 archival items relating to First Nations peoples were digitised. This work will support First Nations peoples to tell their stories during the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. I am absolutely confident we are taking the necessary actions for government to build its capacity to actively contribute to truth-telling and healing and to prepare for treaty making.

CHAIR: Minister, I will ask the next question but I just wanted to share with you that throughout my career I have worked tirelessly to address the impact of colonisation on First Nations children and their families. I acknowledge the humility in the Uluru Statement from the Heart and the sentiments of forgiveness and patience of our First Nations peoples and I will support a Voice in October this year.

Ms ENOCH: Hear, hear.

CHAIR: Minister, referring to page 5 of the SDS, can you update the committee on the progress and intended benefits the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will have?

Ms ENOCH: Chair, I thank you for the question and for your openness about your support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly as we head into the referendum. I know that the member was a huge advocate for the treaty legislation, so I acknowledge the chair and all the work the chair and the committee have been doing with regards to that legislation and many other bodies of work relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. I am sure there have been many meetings where the chair and members of the committee have met exclusively with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people on matters that impact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—something that I imagine the member for Surfers Paradise might like to be involved in at some point.

As we take these next steps towards treaty in this state, there is an understanding that the path will not always be comfortable or easy. There will be times when we will need to navigate uncharted waters. There will be moments of clarity and breakthrough and other times of complex change, indicated by the member for Surfers Paradise's line of questioning, not understanding perhaps how cultural relationships occur and the responsibilities that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have towards each other in terms of understanding how we relate to each other.

The Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry will be a formal, three-year-minimum truth-telling process established under the Path to Treaty Act 2023. The Interim Truth and Treaty Body has provided the government with advice on the terms of reference for the inquiry, informed by extensive community consultation and engagement with experts over the last six months. Five inquiry members will be recruited to lead this important process, the majority being Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as required by the legislation. Inquiry members will be suitable for appointment if they have experience and standing in the Aboriginal community or the Torres Strait Islander community, again referring back to the relationships that may occur in those communities and understanding that fully. It will be important

for the inquiry to have maximum independence. As such, following finalisation of the terms of reference and the appointment of members, the inquiry members and chairperson will determine a schedule of priority and process for conducting truth-telling hearings and sessions.

The inquiry, while having a formal and legislative basis, is intended to work in a way that is non-adversarial, culturally safe and appropriate, as well as trauma informed and trauma responsive. Queenslanders can choose how best to share their history, stories and experiences. The benefits of the inquiry will include developing a shared truth in relation to the often confronting nature of this state's past and the impact of harmful and discriminatory government policies. It will allow Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples the opportunity to be heard in a safe space regarding their experiences and the ongoing impacts colonisation has had upon them.

Inquiry testimony will be collected for the benefit of those providing it and for truth-telling, not for the benefit of government. With free, prior and informed consent, the stories and testimony provided to the inquiry will be carefully and safely stored, coded and managed. In our commitment to truth-telling and healing, we are prioritising considerations of data sovereignty and respecting the rights and autonomy of Indigenous peoples, and ensuring their ownership and control over the data collected throughout this process. A written report on the inquiry's findings will be provided to the Queensland government and information collected will assist in the treaty-making process and will be a powerful resource for the future.

Mr SKELTON: I want to put on record how much of a privilege it has been to be a part of the Path to Treaty process, and I am really looking forward to having a Voice to Parliament for our First Nations people in the upcoming referendum. My question is regarding page 5 of the SDS. How is the government considering a trauma informed approach to the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question and for his up-front support for a Voice to Parliament. I appreciate that. I also want to acknowledge the member's contribution to the legislation with regard to treaty that was passed in May, as I have done for the whole committee. I know that every single member did a lot of work in that space, talking directly and in many instances exclusively to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people about that legislation, and obviously understanding their direct relationship to that work and those matters that impact them. I thank the member for this question in particular.

An important aspect of work the Queensland government is undertaking as part of the Path to Treaty is ensuring trauma informed processes are in place for the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. As per the Treaty Advancement Committee's recommendation, it is essential that the inquiry do no harm by adopting a trauma informed approach. The inquiry members will be best placed to consider in detail what this means when they undertake their work.

Under the Path to Treaty Act 2023, the inquiry members are required to conduct truth-telling hearings and sessions in a way which recognises the trauma that may be experienced by participants and to prepare relevant guidelines for providing support and preventing further trauma. We are working with the Interim Truth and Treaty Body to ensure the inquiry is designed in a way to deliver a range of trauma supports. In addition, we are benefiting from the learnings from the Victorian Yoorrook Justice Commission. Several key issues have been considered from the Victorian experience, including the importance of having culturally capable inquiry staff. I know that members of the committee have been working very hard to be culturally capable. I would suggest and advise that visiting members might like to ensure they are culturally capable when they ask questions about Aboriginal people meeting with Aboriginal people in the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. Those culturally capable inquiry staff are making sure that we are providing effective social and emotional wellbeing supports for participants to deliver a trauma informed approach.

A specific action of the Queensland government's treaty readiness planning is to co-design trauma informed guidelines to support the work of the inquiry. We will also use the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Healing Strategy 2020-2040 to help inform the work of the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. To navigate this process with care and sensitivity, it is crucial to consider appropriate cautionary messaging. We must acknowledge that staff participating or assisting in preparing for the inquiry, including many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who are in the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, may experience emotional responses due to the content in historical records, something that as an Aboriginal person I recognise and have been recognising in my conversations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who work in the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships. This recognition will also be reflected in our whole-of-government communication and engagement strategy as we approach the process with empathy and respect.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Certainly that issue came through very clearly for us as we moved throughout the state.

Ms LUI: Minister, I refer to page 5 of SDS. How will the Treaty Institute progress the Path to Treaty?

Ms ENOCH: This is an important question and something that I know the committee members, when establishing and providing the consultation around the treaty legislation, looked at as well. I think it is an important piece of that legislation and we are working very hard in this space. The First Nations Treaty Institute is to be established under the Path to Treaty Act 2023 and will be an ongoing, independent statutory body led by a governing First Nations Treaty Institute Council. The initial primary role of the Treaty Institute will be to develop a treaty-making framework for agreement with the Queensland government and to support First Nations people to get ready to negotiate treaties on equal footing. The treaty-making framework will cover who can negotiate treaties, what a treaty can cover, how a treaty will be negotiated and implemented and how commitments will be monitored. This will include dispute resolution strategies to facilitate negotiations.

The Treaty Institute will work closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples around the state to understand what they need to become ready to negotiate a treaty on equal footing with the Queensland government. While the Treaty Institute will not be a party to the treaty negotiations, it will work closely with the Queensland government on behalf of First Nations peoples to make treaties a reality. The Treaty Institute Council will consist of 10 members to be appointed by the Governor in Council. All members will be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. For the benefit of the member for Surfers Paradise, I will say that one more time: all members will be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Interim Truth and Treaty Body has provided the government with the advice on the recruitment process for the Treaty Institute Council. A robust recruitment process will recommend Treaty Institute Council members for appointment for an inaugural two-year period. This recruitment process will occur in the second half of this year and it is expected that the Treaty Institute will be operational from 2024.

As an organisation established by and for First Nations peoples, the Treaty Institute will have independence from the Queensland government. As such, following appointment of the Treaty Institute Council, the council will be responsible for confirming its structure. This includes recruitment and appointment of a chief executive officer, an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person appointed to run the day-to-day operations of the Treaty Institute including employing its staff.

The Path to Treaty Act provides the institute with the appropriate powers to operate effectively while ensuring public trust, accountability and integrity in all Treaty Institute processes underpinned by a respect for First Nations lore, customs and cultures. Again, I repeat for the member for Surfers Paradise: it is underpinned by the respect for First Nations lore, First Nations customs, First Nations cultures, practices that I also carry out as a First Nations person.

CHAIR: Minister, as you know, the committee had the wonderful benefit of learning from other jurisdictions. With reference to page 5 of the SDS, can the minister please advise how Queensland is learning from the treaty experiences of other jurisdictions?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this question. Of course it is important to learn from other jurisdictions not just in Australia but across the world. It is important; there are a lot of lessons we can learn quickly. There are, of course, areas where we can sharpen our ability to get to things in a more expedient way and ensure that we do no harm in that process. I do thank the member for the question. Of course, in all areas of government reform it is always important to consider the experiences of other jurisdictions and this is no different.

Understanding the approaches taken by other jurisdictions as they consider treaty and truth-telling has been crucial to the development and progression of Queensland's Path to Treaty. For example, the recent changes to the Queensland Public Sector Act 2022 and the Queensland government's treaty readiness preparations have drawn on approaches employed in New Zealand. In developing Queensland public sector reforms, we have considered how New Zealand strengthened its role in supporting the Crown's relationship with Maori by updating its framework for Public Service employment and leadership. In working towards treaty readiness we have also drawn on the New Zealand government's approach to building public sector capability through the Office for Maori Crown Relations' capability framework.

The benefits of the treaty process in New Zealand can be seen in its economic growth statistics. In 2020 it was reported that the Maori economy has grown from \$16 billion to \$70 billion in 20 years with a projected growth of five per cent per annum. That is expected to reach \$100 billion in assets by 2030. As well as learning from New Zealand as we prepare for the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry, we are also benefitting from the learnings from the Victorian Yoorrook Justice Commission. Several key issues have been considered from the Victorian experience including the importance—

CHAIR: Sorry, Minister, I will stop you there. The time for questions from the government has expired. I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: Chair, I table documents titled 'Student performance', which I believe the secretariat has checked. There are 10 copies for your benefit.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Burnett. I thank you for tabling the document. As this is my area of expertise, can I forewarn the members of the opposition to be cautious around the asking of questions to ensure they relate to this portfolio area and not education.

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Ms ENOCH: Chair, we have not received what has been tabled yet.

CHAIR: Sorry, Minister, that was my error. Minister, you have received the document now?

Ms O'Connor: Are there multiple pages?

Mr BENNETT: Yes, there are.

Ms O'Connor: I think I have one copy.

CHAIR: Can we have another copy for the director-general, please? My apologies, Minister and Director-General. Is the question to the director-general or the minister, member for Surfers Paradise?

Mr LANGBROEK: It is to the minister. I just want to give them time to have a look at the document. It is about school annual reports for three communities. The reference is the Family Responsibilities Commission annual report page 46, but it is about three areas: Aurukun, Doomadgee and Kowanyama. I want to let the minister and the DG see the statistics. The question is not specifically about education; it is to the minister about what meetings you have had with the education minister to discuss what is being done to improve these figures of attendance given that—and I will use the first example—for Aurukun in 2017 attendance was 56 per cent and in 2022 it was 34 per cent.

Ms ENOCH: Sorry, can the member ask that question again, because you started by talking about the Family Responsibilities Commission—

Mr LANGBROEK: That is the reference. The Family Responsibilities Commission report at pages 46 and 52 references two of these three communities. Then the question is about the fact that attendance has declined from 56 per cent to 34 per cent specifically in Aurukun over the last five years and asks what meetings you may have had with the education minister to discuss what is being done to improve these figures.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for his question and for his interest in this very important point. As a former high school teacher, as an educator, this is something that is of great interest and importance to me. Keeping in mind, of course, that the change of portfolios occurred just three months ago, I have had conversations regularly with the education minister more broadly about education. However, the education minister is a member of the ministerial consultative committee with regards to treaty and our Path to Treaty. Beyond that, there have been regular meetings with the education minister about a number of issues regarding education.

This is something that I know that the Family Responsibilities Commission continues to work solidly on, and I know that the member for Burnett has recently visited Aurukun with the chair last month. I hope that it provided the member with some understanding and an appreciation of the work that local commissioners do in that local area. Obviously education for all children remains one of the key areas of focus not just for the Family Responsibilities Commission but for the whole of government, particularly myself as a former educator, in ensuring that we continue to see outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question references page 52 of the annual report of the Family Responsibilities Commission to do with Doomadgee. That was the second lot of figures that I gave you where attendance has gone from 58 per cent to 36 per cent over five years. The question is: what progress has been made on a protocol for sorry business as this also affects school attendance, which is the reference in that annual report?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. It is refreshing to hear the member talk about sorry business. It is something that culturally is a very significant part of our practices. As an Aboriginal person meeting with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff who work in the department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships, we have recently experienced quite sad sorry business in that we have lost Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in our teams. Even in meetings with staff, sorry business is a practice that has been discussed. This is another reflection of why Aboriginal people—if there is an Aboriginal minister, as there is currently—might meet and talk with each other about things, adhering to cultural practices.

Obviously, we have seen some impacts on outcomes with regard to attendance rates. Obviously the pandemic had quite an impact on education outcomes during the reporting period that the member has put forward. It has had an impact on some of those key policies that are required as part of that report from the FRC. It does require consultation on the ground to be able to do those works, and COVID has been a contributor to that.

CHAIR: I welcome Dr Amy MacMahon, the member for South Brisbane, to our committee as a visitor.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, with regard to the Treaty Future Fund, what degree of autonomy will the Treaty Institute have over annual funding from the Treaty Future Fund?

Ms ENOCH: The \$300 million Treaty Future Fund is a first-of-its-kind fund that will be drawn down upon to support the work of the Treaty Institute. The funding will be allocated to the Treaty Institute. They will have the autonomy to utilise that funding. Like any autonomous body, they will need to provide annual reports and will have the usual transparency that you would expect. They will have to prepare a plan to report back, of course. They will be a statutory entity just like any other.

CHAIR: I also welcome Mr Stephen Andrew, the member for Mirani, to our committee as a visiting member.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, do you anticipate that \$10 million a year from the future fund will be sufficient to fund a meaningful treaty process, or will there be scope for this amount to increase?

Ms ENOCH: I do want to thank the member and her political party for their support of treaty in this state. I know that the member for South Brisbane and the member for Maiwar have been great advocates. I understand from public comments that they also support Voice to Parliament. I do want to acknowledge that, given that I have asked the committee to make clear their position on this.

Certainly Treasury is the body that allocates the funding. There is, of course, a commitment for \$10 million to be drawn down. The report back from the institute will make clear to Treasury the kinds of expectations that will be required to go forward. Right now we are in the midst of two major parts of work that have come out of the legislation: standing up the Treaty Institute and conducting the Truth-telling and Healing Inquiry. My department has responsibility for ensuring that those two things are stood up and that we have the resources—human and otherwise—to do that work. I am not going to speculate on my opinions one way or the other, but I am cognisant that Treasury releases that funding and it has committed \$10 million a year from the \$300 million fund.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, does the responsibility for that fund sit with your department or with Treasury, if we are asking questions in the future?

Ms ENOCH: Treasury are responsible for the \$300 million fund. They hold that and the money that is drawn down is allocated from Treasury—similar to other funds that are set up in that nature.

Mr ANDREW: Good morning, Minister and staff. My question is of a serious nature and concerns the repatriation of Australian South Sea islander remains. I asked questions on this last week. Recently the president of QUASSIC, Clacy Fatnowna, spoke with DFAT in Canberra concerning this because it is a multi-island situation among Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and other island groups. From what I can gather, DFAT will be working with the state. Has anything been set up or will anything be set up to recognise this and to be able to bring our people's remains home?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I know that he is personally very passionate about this. We do share some ancestral connections—several generations back for me. This question would normally belong in the next section of this hearing but I am happy, if the chair is willing to allow me, to answer it in this section.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I will give you the opportunity to answer it as you see fit. The member may wish to ask that question to the Minister for Multicultural Affairs.

Ms ENOCH: It is in the next section because the museum has a really strong role to play in this. The Queensland Museum Network, as the member knows, cares for ancestral skeletal remains and secret sacred objects belonging to a number of people. We know that that work needs to be ongoing and that the federal government has a role to play in terms of its relationship to the various nations that it might be having those conversations with.

I assure the member that I am happy to have further conversations with him and ensure there is a briefing for the member from the Queensland Museum Network with regard to this matter going forward. The Queensland Museum Network is playing its role in ensuring these matters are attended to. It is not necessarily the role of Queensland; there is a federal and international relationship that has to be respected. I am happy to organise that for the member.

Mr ANDREW: Thank you very much.

CHAIR: I think we will leave it there. The question does really belong in the next section, but, due to the sensitivity of that question, I think it was appropriate that the minister gave some response. Certainly there is the opportunity for the member to follow up with the minister at a later date.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 5 of the SDS, can you please provide further information about the projected increase in procurement from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses and how this contributes to economic development?

Ms ENOCH: The Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy was introduced 2017. It is a key initiative to support the economic empowerment of First Nations businesses in Queensland. I am very pleased to report that between 2017-18 and the third quarter of 2022-23 there has been more than \$2 billion in direct spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses.

During the first three-quarters of the 2022-23 financial year alone, 525 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses secured \$319 million by providing goods and services to government. That included 107 businesses that supplied to the Queensland government for the very first time, which is a great achievement. We know that every dollar spent with First Nations businesses has a multiplier effect in communities. First Nations businesses are far more likely to employ Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queenslanders and opportunities for economic participation are a key factor in being able to close the gap in economic and social outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Queensland First Nations business Bridgeman provides a strong example of the cascading benefit and impact of the Queensland government spend with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses as the lead contractor for the \$2.7 million Roma State College construction project for agriculture and animal husbandry infrastructure, which is a great outcome. Over the 20-week project, 90 per cent of suppliers and subcontractors used were local, while a third of the scope of the project was completed by local Indigenous suppliers and subcontractors. Additionally, eight members of the workforce were Indigenous employees. One of the local small to medium enterprises subcontracted were also supported by Bridgeman to develop their suite of safety processes, procedures and compliance documentation to enable them to meet the needs of the project and, as a result of Bridgeman's support, that business now has the required products and processes to enable them to work on or tender for future large projects, which is a great outcome. They have been able to build that capacity through this particular procurement opportunity.

Bridgeman also designed and built a yarnning circle and Indigenous garden for all staff and students to enjoy as a legacy of the project, so that ability to be able to leave that cultural footprint in that particular construction leaves a legacy that connects that community in such a wonderful way. The results absolutely speak to the efforts of Bridgeman on the ground and their desire to give back to community and assist other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses through their own success. We are committed to working collaboratively with government buyers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses to continue to increase and diversify the supplier market to government as part of our goal to reframe relationships with First Nations Queenslanders.

The Palaszczuk government is further boosting its support to Queensland First Nations small businesses with training and employment pathways through three key initiatives in 2023-24 being led by the Department of Youth Justice, Employment, Small Business and Training. The support will see a total of \$1.86 million allocated in the first round of the Indigenous Workforce and Skills Development Grant to support 10 Indigenous designed and led projects, \$800,000 approved for the First Nations Training Strategy Mentoring Program, and a first of its kind Queensland Indigenous Business Network that will be established and led by First Nations people to help Indigenous owned small businesses grow and thrive. Investment in these initiatives will see Queensland Indigenous owned small businesses grow and thrive while also boosting workforce and skills development and empowering

culturally-led mentoring for businesses. The Palaszczuk government is a proud supporter of First Nations businesses in Queensland and I look forward to further strengthening the Queensland government's engagement with First Nations businesses.

CHAIR: I want to take a moment to acknowledge the young people who are visiting us in the gallery today. You should be very proud of your conduct and your maturity. Welcome.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, my question is along similar lines as the member for Cook's question and refers to the SDS at page 5. How will the First Nations economic development strategy benefit Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: Economic development and strength is a key platform of ensuring that we see equity and prosperity, not just for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people but for all Queenslanders. The Queensland government is developing a new whole-of-government First Nations Economic Strategy to support economic participation outcomes and self-empowerment for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, communities and businesses. The new strategy will build on the successful outcomes achieved under the Queensland government's previous First Nations economic strategy which was called Moving Ahead. Economic empowerment is a vital element of the statement of commitment to a reframed relationship between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and the Queensland government. The strategy will provide a holistic, agile and coordinated approach to support self-determination and economic empowerment in partnership with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Queensland.

Targeted consultation was undertaken in 2022 to ensure that First Nations voices, aspirations and solutions informed the development of the strategy. The consultation process engaged First Nations people across Queensland through in-person and online sessions and a survey. The strategy will acknowledge the longstanding contribution to Queensland's economy by First Nations Queenslanders and seek agile and coordinated whole-of-government participation in partnership with First Nations peoples to support current and emerging economic development opportunities. The strategy will also ensure economic development initiatives align with other key reforms being progressed in partnership with First Nations peoples, including Path to Treaty, Local Thriving Communities and Voice to Government, and support Queensland's progress towards achieving Closing the Gap targets.

Funding of \$1.4 million over four years from 2023-24 announced during this year's state budget will be used to establish and provide ongoing support for a First Nations Economic Committee. This body will work with government to ensure it is implemented in genuine co-design with First Nations people and government, industry, business and communities. Working together, government agencies and First Nations communities and organisations will identify opportunities of greater strategic value and impact in promoting economic opportunities. Emerging opportunities include developments in infrastructure, resources, renewable energy, climate change, agriculture and aquaculture and, significantly, the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games. This collaborative approach ensures First Nations peoples and communities are at the forefront of driving innovative pathways to jobs, skills and training, education and business development opportunities throughout Queensland.

CHAIR: Minister, following on with that theme, why is investment mapping important for First Nations communities and how is the government undertaking this work?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for this question, and it is an important one so that we understand exactly what it is that is occurring currently and what is required to be able to move economies forward, particularly in discrete and remote communities. Providing First Nations communities with information on government services in particular, including investment, available on the ground is critical to supporting local decision-making and improving outcomes. That is why under the Local Thriving Communities Action Plan 2022-2024 community-level investment mapping is a key priority. Investment mapping gives First Nations communities oversight of funding investment to reduce duplication, maximise local outcomes and ensure funding is directed towards community priorities and employment. Fundamentally, this is about ensuring that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people locally are able to have a say over the way that investment is being made and understanding how that is happening.

The potential benefits of investment mapping are significant both in terms of enabling that self-determination by providing local level information and identification of possible savings that could be redirected towards activities that respond to community values and interests. I think that is a really important part of this investment mapping piece that my agency has been involved in. This work is also strongly aligned with priority areas 1 and 4 under the National Agreement on Closing the Gap which

calls for partnerships and shared decision-making and data sharing. I absolutely support the calls from First Nations leaders for increased access to data and information on government investment and services. Information about government programs, initiatives and investments enables local leaders to be able to have informed, equitable discussions about what is working in the communities, what is not and why that might be the case.

This information will assist local decision-making bodies to make informed decisions about the design, the delivery and any future funding approaches for services in their community. The service audit analysis on government funded services being completed for Mornington Island, for instance, has been an absolutely key first step. The project was co-designed with the Mornington Shire Council and included extensive engagement with the Mornington Island community. This whole-of-government initiative, led through a cross-agency funded partnership between Queensland Health and my agency and supported by the government champion secretariat, seeks to provide transparency of government investment across the community including in health, employment, education, housing, justice and safety.

Key learnings and resources produced from this project will be used to enhance investment-mapping priorities for other communities in line with the Local Thriving Communities reform. Investment mapping is expanding to 11 other remote communities. These include Aurukun, Doomadgee, Hope Vale, Kowanyama, Mapoon, Napranum, the Northern Peninsula Area, Palm Island, Woorabinda, Wujal Wujal—I am the ministerial champion—and Yarrabah. This program is part of an ongoing commitment to investment mapping in First Nations communities, with the next phase proposed to support broader work across all remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. This work aims to ensure Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have access to locally relevant data and information to set and monitor their communities' priorities and progress in government's efforts to close the gap.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, could you update the committee on the reconciliation efforts that are now underway since the launch of the Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan 2023-2025?

Ms ENOCH: Reconciliation is a key foundation of the work that not just our government but also jurisdictions across the nation are engaged in—and businesses as well. The latest Reconciliation Action Plan is really designed to advance reconciliation as we work towards Voice, treaty and truth. It was launched by the Premier during National Reconciliation Week and it was absolutely fantastic to be there when she did that.

This plan reaffirms our government's commitment to achieving the priority reforms of Closing the Gap and to advancing equity through a reframed relationship with First Nations peoples. It is a plan that sets out 24 outcomes across four key areas: relationships, respect, opportunities and accountabilities. The actions include a commitment to co-designing policies, programs and initiatives with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, increasing spend with First Nations owned businesses, growing the number of First Nations employees in leadership roles in the Queensland government, and improving the cultural capability of the public sector. Many of these actions are already underway, including progressing the Path to Treaty, as the committee well knows, and implementing the Many Voices: Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Languages Policy.

CHAIR: We might leave it there, Minister. I am sorry to interrupt. I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I table question on notice 166 for the committee.

CHAIR: Can we get a copy to the minister and the director-general. Deputy Chair?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, the tabled document is your answer to a question on notice in 2020. The question is: what progress has been made on the Brisbane Indigenous cultural centre first promised for Musgrave Park by Peter Beattie in 1999?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. It is somewhat related to the next session, but I am happy to answer it. I will take your guidance, Chair. It is an arts related question.

CHAIR: We have adequate time to address the arts.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to move on.

CHAIR: I might just ask the member to move on and we will move that to the arts.

Mr LANGBROEK: The next question is in reference to the minister's opening statement about procurement. What are the government and the department doing about black cladding with regard to procurement?

Ms ENOCH: So that the committee understands the term 'black cladding', it is a case where non-Indigenous organisations or companies might employ an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander person to appear as though they are a First Nations organisation when in fact they are not. That is another reason Aboriginal people might talk directly to each other without non-Indigenous present, to discuss issues pertaining to that. Obviously it is important and an issue that has been at the forefront of a lot of discussions for quite some years. What I can say is that the Indigenous Procurement Policy, as the member would know, is a whole-of-government framework to increase the value of Queensland government procurement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. It relies on the commitment from all Queensland government agencies to be part of this. It also looks to ensure that we are, indeed, working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and organisations.

Each quarter the department compiles a list of known Indigenous businesses—there is some utilisation of different directories that are out there currently—and looks for businesses that are 50 per cent or more owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. The department looks to directories that already exist. Supply Nation, for instance, is a really good source of information to cross-reference with regard to accredited Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander businesses. There is Black Business Finder and, of course, there is the Office of the Register of Indigenous Corporations.

To be clear, for the purposes of the Queensland Indigenous Procurement Policy—and they are the numbers that I have been utilising already in my responses to questions today—Indigenous businesses are defined as those that are 50 per cent owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and include a range of entities participating in government supply chains, including social enterprises and non-government organisations. The definition for the purposes of the QIPP is that they are 50 per cent owned by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.


Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, could you provide an update on the water contamination issue in Yarrabah, please?

CHAIR: Minister, you have about one minute.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. It is a matter that is the responsibility of another agency. That minister has already had their estimates hearing. I would have expected that the member would have asked that question of the relevant minister. However, what I will say is that I have had conversations with the mayor directly with regard to these issues. At the time he was satisfied with the communications that were underway, but certainly I would refer the member to the relevant agency and the relevant minister.

CHAIR: Members, that concludes the committee's examination of the estimates for the treaty and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partnerships portfolio areas. I thank the public servants who have given up their very valuable time today to support this process. The committee certainly recognises what you do every day to support Queenslanders. The committee will now adjourn for a short break. I thank the minister. I thank the director-general. The hearing will resume at 10.45 am with the examination of the estimates for the communities and the arts portfolio areas.

Proceedings suspended from 10.30 am to 10.45 am.

 **CHAIR:** The hearing is resumed. Welcome back, Minister Leeanne Enoch, public servants and officials. The committee will now examine the estimates for the communities and arts portfolio areas until 11.45 am.

Ms ENOCH: Chair, can I make a short statement to the committee with regards to the questioning that we saw in the last part of the session?

CHAIR: I am sorry, Minister. I should have called the member. If you are wanting to make a statement suddenly arising, I will allow that. I will take it off government questioning time. I call the minister.

Ms ENOCH: The line of questioning from the member for Surfers Paradise in the last part of this session for me was incredibly offensive. To me personally, as an Aboriginal person, it was incredibly offensive. To me professionally, as a member of this House, it was incredibly offensive. The line of questioning was bordering on racism. Not only did the member for Surfers Paradise not make clear his position on the Voice; he was supported by the member for Burnett and the member for Oodgeroo in his line of questioning towards me—

Dr ROBINSON: Madam Chair, point of order.

Ms ENOCH:—with regards to cultural practices.

CHAIR: I am sorry, member for Oodgeroo. I will allow the minister to finish and then I will turn to you.

Dr ROBINSON: I have a point of order. I find those comments offensive and I ask them to be withdrawn.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Oodgeroo. Minister, did you have anything more to add?

Ms ENOCH: Discrediting cultural practices in the way that that line of questioning did is offensive.

Dr ROBINSON: Madam Chair, point of order.

Ms ENOCH: I think it is beneath a committee and a member of a parliament to engage in those sort of practices.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Oodgeroo, you have a point of order?

Dr ROBINSON: I find the minister's comments offensive, racial slurs, and I ask them to be withdrawn.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Oodgeroo. I will ask the minister to withdraw but, prior to that, I would prefer that we do not get into a debate about racism here this morning for the benefit of our First Nations peoples, particularly, as we journey this path towards further reconciliation and the Voice to Parliament. Member for Oodgeroo, I take your point of order. Minister, do you withdraw?

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw but I also take a point of order.

Dr ROBINSON: Madam Chair, it is meant to be without condition.

CHAIR: Member for Oodgeroo, I am very capable of managing this House. Minister, would you please withdraw unconditionally? If you have a further matter arising, by all means I will consider that.

Ms ENOCH: I withdraw unconditionally.

CHAIR: Do you have a further matter arising?

Ms ENOCH: A point of order. The member for Oodgeroo referred to my comments as racial slurs. I take personal offence to that and I ask him to withdraw.

Dr ROBINSON: I withdraw.

CHAIR: Member for Oodgeroo, the minister has taken personal offence. Do you withdraw?

Dr ROBINSON: I withdrew.

CHAIR: For the benefit of the dignity of the Queensland parliament, we are going to move on from this commentary. I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I will refer to the shadow minister.

Dr ROWAN: Good morning, Minister, Director-General and representatives. My first question is to the Director-General with reference to SDS page 25 and the Queensland Art Gallery. In the latest contract disclosure report I note the expenditure of almost \$30,000 on the Four Seasons Hotel, Singapore, by the Queensland Art Gallery in March of this year. Given the expenditure, how many rooms and nights and for whom was this accommodation?

Ms O'Connor: I will call forward the Director of the Art Gallery, please.

Mr Saines: Those room nights relate to a stay by a group of 19 gallery patrons so they were all fully funded by the patrons themselves. It was not at a direct cost to the gallery. It was part of an organised three-day tour of Singapore to look at the Singapore Biennale and other exhibitions and museums, which I led.

CHAIR: I have just sought some clarification in relation to the matters that I have been chairing and managing in the last few minutes. The minister may wish to take the matter that she raised to the Ethics Committee through writing to the Speaker of the House. Further, a committee of the House may report that a matter involving its proceedings has arisen and recommend that that matter be referred to the Ethics Committee, in which case the matter stands referred to the Ethics Committee. Minister, I will manage the committee business in the next private meeting of the committee. I do want to make note that you, as the minister, may wish to refer that matter to the Ethics Committee. I call the member for Moggill.

Dr ROWAN: I have a further question to the director-general in relation to the trip. I have heard the response from Mr Saines, but was there any expenditure incurred by the gallery beyond the accommodation in relation to food and beverage, room services or dining?

Ms O'Connor: I refer that question to Mr Saines.

Mr Saines: I can report that all of the costs—food, beverage, travel—associated with that trip were met by the group that participated in the trip. There were two gallery representatives—myself and the manager of the philanthropy side of the foundation—and all of our costs were met by the contributions made by what would be a net number of 17 participants in that tour.

CHAIR: I welcome a number of people to the committee. Member for Maroochydore, it is wonderful to have you here as a visiting member to the committee. I also acknowledge the young people who have joined us in the gallery. Students, you should be very proud of your conduct and your maturity here today. Thank you for being here. Member for Moggill?

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, I also note the expenditure of over \$11½ thousand on accommodation at the Ramada By Wyndham in Cairns in October last year. Given the October room rate at this hotel is approximately \$150 per night, can I ask how many rooms, nights and who this accommodation was booked for?

Ms O'Connor: Is this a matter still pertaining to the gallery?

Dr ROWAN: Still to the gallery.

CHAIR: Can I just interrupt and advise: member for Moggill, you are quite within your rights to ask the director directly, just to save you some time.

Dr ROWAN: I have asked it through the director-general, but if the director-general wishes to refer it to the director of the gallery I am happy with that.

Ms O'Connor: I will, because I think he will have the details.

Mr Saines: I will need to take some further advice on the specific details of that accommodation. I may need to ask for further advice from my team. Minister, would you be prepared to take that on notice?

Ms ENOCH: We will look to have that advice available before the end of the hearing.

Mr Saines: I can assure you that it will be available very shortly. I think it relates to a group on an artist exchange program that was conducted in Cairns at about that time. I will get that information promptly.

Dr ROWAN: I might direct this question to Mr Saines because it does relate to the Art Gallery. Since 2019 the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art have spent almost \$95,000 on boutique travel agencies. Why is the Queensland Art Gallery booking its travel through a travel agency that specialises in tailored itineraries and bespoke holiday packages rather than utilising the state government's QTravel services?

Mr Saines: We use a company called Travel Associates, based in Rosalie here in Brisbane. It has had a great deal of experience working with us over many years in securing the best accommodation and air travel in particular. That is the area that can be the most expensive, with international travel. I cannot give a specific answer as to why we have not elected to use the Queensland government travel agency for that purpose, but I know that we have been using Travel Associates for at least as long I have worked at the gallery, which is around 10 years.

Dr ROWAN: Mr Saines, given that it has been in existence for 10 years, what is the procurement process for the selection and use of this bespoke travel agency? How often is that reviewed?

Mr Saines: Our ordinary procurement processes are reviewed regularly, I think on a three-year basis. I cannot specifically answer your question as to when that review was last conducted, but I know that with all contracts of that nature we do review them regularly, in accordance with government policy to do so.

CHAIR: Member for Moggill, unless the term 'bespoke' is mentioned in the title of the company, I ask you to remain objective in your questioning.

Dr ROWAN: It is my understanding, Chair, that that is used as part of their marketing material.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Dr ROWAN: I would like to ask the director-general whether, in reviewing the procurement processes in relation to the selection of these agencies, there is additional information that could be furthered to the committee as to how often that is occurring and if it is in line with the government's procurement policies.

Ms O'Connor: You are referring to a statutory entity and that procurement takes place through the statutory entity. I guess the key point about it being a statutory entity is that it is covered by a board, and that board will take responsibility for its spend across these categories.

Dr ROWAN: Can the minister assure the committee that the procurement processes in relation to the selection of this particular agency or agencies are occurring in line with the policies established by the government in relation to not only the allocation of it but also the reviewing of those contractual arrangements?

Ms ENOCH: The director-general has already answered that question. It is a statutory body. There is a board that takes responsibility for those policies et cetera. The director-general has already answered that question.

Dr ROWAN: Director-General, with reference to page 8 of the SDS and the Queensland government's arts and cultural priorities, can you please advise the total funding that will be delivered over the next 12 months and the forward estimates by the department to the Queensland Maritime Museum? Why has specific funding not been allocated to save the historic Brisbane tugboat the *Forceful* being sold for scrap parts?

Ms O'Connor: The Queensland Maritime Museum, as you know, is an independent, membership-based charity organisation that focuses on the stories of Queensland's maritime history. The Maritime Museum has been supported in a number of ways by the Queensland government over many years. In 2011 the Department of the Premier and Cabinet provided \$320,000 to the Queensland Maritime Museum. In addition, in 2018 funding of \$600,000 was announced over three years to support operations, capital and maintenance. You have asked particularly in relation to the *Forceful*. There is no forecast expenditure in 2023-24 on the *Forceful*.

CHAIR: I call the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 8 of the SDS, how are arts statutory bodies contributing to truth-telling and advancing First Nations' perspectives?

Ms ENOCH: Truth-telling and advancing First Nations' perspectives is something that is very much at the heart of the work that we do in the arts sector. The arts is the expression of culture and so our ability to be able to tell these stories, to make sense of them and to help our broader community connect around these stories as we go forward will be important. That is why our government is committed to building the relationships that value and respect Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures.

With the historic passing of treaty legislation, which received bipartisan support, we are embarking on an important process to reframe relationships with First Nations peoples and progress a path to reconciliation and healing. As part of this journey, it has been a long-held ambition to establish a First Nations cultural centre to showcase the unique stories, traditions and cultures of First Nations peoples in Queensland.

To realise this vision we are developing a business case for a First Nations cultural centre in Brisbane as part of the South East Queensland City Deal and also a First Nations cultural centre in Cairns. It is envisaged that these centres will be places to share histories, stories and truth-telling and act as hubs that connect with First Nations communities across the state. Dedicated First Nations cultural centres will bring communities together and foster social and economic benefits by creating employment, training and skills development opportunities.

I am absolutely delighted to announce today that we have reached a significant milestone this month. My department has appointed Georgina Richters as the First Nations project lead to steer the development of the business cases for these two First Nations cultural centres following a First Nations-led selection process. Georgina Richters is the principal and lead of First Nations Advisory and has significant expertise in delivering complex projects through her work at a national, state, local and community level over more than 25 years.

It is anticipated that the business cases will ultimately inform an overarching approach to the consideration of First Nations centres in Queensland, building upon, of course, the previous work on a First Nations cultural centre in Brisbane, including the options assessment which identified community support for the centre, which was an important step towards having this particular cultural centre established. The options assessment also identified a hub-and-spoke model that could connect a Brisbane-based centre to regional and remote areas, providing improved economic outcomes and jobs for First Nations peoples and enhanced tourism opportunities in regional areas. As an important gateway to Far North Queensland, a First Nations cultural centre in Cairns would build upon this model

to provide a deeper view of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures of the Far North Queensland region. First Nation-led engagement with traditional owners and stakeholders is a key priority during the business case development. I look forward to seeing this work in terms of both the Cairns and the Brisbane First Nations cultural centres progress.

Of course, as we look to the future we must also acknowledge the past, including the role of repatriation, which is fundamental to progressing our commitment to treaty. The 2023-24 state budget is providing \$4.6 million over five years to the Queensland Museum Network to support the repatriation of ancestral remains and sacred objects belonging to Queensland's First Nations peoples and countries. The Museum Network has been returning remains and secret and sacred objects to community since 1990. This funding boost comes amid a marked increase in the number of remains and significant cultural heritage items in their care, due to public surrender and returns from international and interstate entities.

All of this work fits under the umbrella of the Palaszczuk government's Creative together: a 10-year road map for arts, culture and creativity in Queensland, which includes a commitment to elevating First Nations arts and reaffirms the significance of the arts as central to the cultures of First Nations peoples.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, I refer to page 6 of the SDS. How is the delivery of Communities 2032 supporting vulnerable Queenslanders and strengthening Queensland communities?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question and his commitment to ensuring we are meeting the needs of community members, particularly those who are vulnerable. The Communities 2032 strategy is a first-of-its-kind vision for Queensland communities where every person is supported and empowered to connect, participate, contribute and thrive. I am pleased to say that the inaugural action plan for 2022-2025 is well underway in its implementation, bringing to life a range of cross-government commitments. This includes delivering on our commitment to respond to every recommendation of the parliamentary inquiry into social isolation and loneliness.

We heard loud and clear throughout the inquiry of the critical role that neighbourhood centres play across the state in supporting Queenslanders to participate and thrive. I take a moment to again acknowledge this committee for all the work that every single member did with regard to that inquiry into social isolation and loneliness. It is an incredibly platform for the work that we are seeing now in our action plan.

We recognise that Queenslanders know what is best for their own communities. When the people have the opportunity to speak up, challenge old ideas and find new solutions we see a real impact. It is why the principles of being place based and community led are foundational to the Communities 2032 strategy and why this year we established the \$4 million Communities Innovation Fund. Grant funding will support organisations to refine, implement and evaluate their innovative, community-led responses to social issues and is a flagship initiative of Communities 2032—the Palaszczuk government's 10-year plan for supporting vibrant, inclusive, safe and welcoming communities.

I am pleased to announce today that 10 recipients have been successful in the first round of this fund. These recipients will deliver a range of community-led initiatives across the state from the cape to the south-east corner, seeking to bring innovative approaches to tackling social isolation and loneliness. These approaches are diverse, just as Queensland's communities are.

The Communities 2032 strategy recognises diversity—cultural, heritage, identity and ability—as part of what makes this state an incredible place to live, work, connect and play. The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in inclusive, safe and welcoming communities. Last year's budget included a record increase in operational funding for neighbourhood centres—some \$51.8 million over four years. We also funded more Community Connect workers in areas of high need, with \$9.3 million over four years for 20 additional workers in neighbourhood centres committed in 2022-23. This additional investment expands this program to a total of 32 Community Connect workers in neighbourhood centres across the state.

We are also delivering on our commitment to support a strong community and social services sector, including by entering into longer term contracts with many providers across the state from July 2023, to give that certainty to the sector, which they absolutely welcome. We are delivering a range of actions to ensure all Queenslanders feel included and celebrated. This includes our historic path to treaty legislation, truth-telling and healing, investing in partnerships with organisations in our multicultural communities, listening to the voice of young Queenslanders and re-establishing the LGBTIQ+ round table. I am pleased to chair the round table and to be working alongside community members in delivering the state's first ever LGBTIQ+ strategy.

Communities 2032 is a whole-of-government strategy, leveraging the significant investment happening right across the Palaszczuk government. The strategy supports our efforts to grow the supply of social and affordable housing, strengthen the prevention of and response to domestic, family and sexual violence, support disaster preparedness, response and recovery, and deliver on the state infrastructure strategy and regional infrastructure plans. Communities 2032 is setting the foundation for change that will build a lasting legacy for Queensland communities for years to come.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 8 of the SDS, I am particularly interested in how the Queensland government is supporting the development of cultural tourism through blockbuster exhibition funding provided to arts statutory bodies.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question and her interest in the arts and, of course, the blockbuster program that has been absolutely incredible in Queensland—something that I think every single Queenslander should be proud of. I do want to acknowledge the member for Moggill, who is a regular attendee at a number of the blockbuster events that the Queensland government has contributed to.

As we prepare to host the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we have an opportunity to showcase Queensland's unique cultural identity and the calibre of our cultural institutions. The 2023-24 state budget is helping to deliver internationally significant cultural experiences ahead of Brisbane 2032, with \$13.4 million invested over three years to lock in the World Science Festival Brisbane and secure blockbuster exhibitions for the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art. QAGoMA's current pair of exhibitions—*Beautiful Wickedness* and *The Favourite* by some incredible artists—which opened in June, continues the galleries' track record of sharing artistic excellence. Again I acknowledge the member for Moggill, who was present at the opening of those two exhibitions at QAGoMA. These are the latest QAGoMA exhibitions to be supported through the Palaszczuk government's blockbuster funding, attracting visitors to our state.

The 2023-24 state budget is providing QAGoMA with blockbuster funding of \$4.4 million over four years from 2025-26 followed by an annual ongoing \$2.2 million for blockbuster exhibitions. Since 2016, blockbuster funding of \$26.8 million has enabled QAGoMA to present exclusive exhibitions like *Air* and the megahits *European Masterpieces* from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York and *Marvel: Creating the Cinematic Universe*—absolutely incredible exhibitions. Importantly, together these blockbuster exhibitions have generated more than \$140 million for Queensland's economy. That is fantastic.

Blockbuster funding also supports QAGoMA's signature Asia Pacific Triennial—the APT as we refer to it—which across 10 exhibitions has drawn more than four million visitors and helped QAGoMA to build a world-leading contemporary collection of art from the Asia-Pacific region. In an exciting coup for Queensland, the APT will be presented in London in 2026 as part of an international partnership between QAGoMA and the Victoria and Albert Museum. This is an incredible coup for Queensland. The APT is a true Queensland success story and shows the real value of our blockbuster funding in fostering exceptional opportunities for cultural tourism.

In another exciting investment from this year's budget, the Queensland Museum Network will continue to host World Science Festival Brisbane and World Science Festival Queensland—an event that is exclusive to our state—with \$9 million over three years from 2024-25. This year, World Science Festival Brisbane hosted more than 130 events featuring cutting-edge science, thought-provoking talks and the ever popular turtle hatchery. The 2023 event has already toured during July to Toowoomba, Chinchilla, Townsville and Gladstone—I was happy to be in Gladstone just recently for the event there—and will finish its run in Ipswich in August.

Since its inception in 2016, the festival has attracted 1.2 million visitors and generated almost \$40 million for the state's economy, creating employment opportunities and boosting cultural tourism outcomes for Queensland. Our ongoing support will continue to deliver exclusive and engaging cultural experiences and showcase Queensland as an international destination in the lead-up to Brisbane 2032.

CHAIR: I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I will hand over to the member for Moggill.

Dr ROWAN: Minister, with reference to page 32 of the SDS and the Queensland Museum Network, the South Australian and Western Australian maritime museums are both state funded. Will the state government incorporate the Queensland Maritime Museum into the Queensland Museum Network with dedicated funding?

Ms ENOCH: As the member knows, the Queensland Maritime Museum is an independent, membership-based organisation that is overseen by a board. It has been like that since its inception. We are a strong supporter of the Queensland Maritime Museum and we have been over many years—and we have provided financial contribution. In fact, I was the minister at the time who was able to provide funding of \$600,000 over three years, with further funding of over \$218,000 provided towards special projects.

The Queensland Museum Network has also offered their assistance to the Queensland Maritime Museum with regard to how to manage their collection—their curation, their program development, their shared marketing opportunities. They were instrumental in their COVID-safe planning and of course remain available for further advice. The Queensland Museum Network has been working very closely with the Maritime Museum around their collection in particular.

Ms SIMPSON: Can the minister advise when legislation will be introduced to enact the recommendations of the Public Records Act review, which was finished last year?

Ms ENOCH: As the member knows—she is a former Speaker of the House—the legislative program is not in my remit. I do not determine the legislative program.

Ms SIMPSON: Page 3 of the SDS.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, I ask that the minister be given the opportunity to respond to the question. I understand the minister was being responsive.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. Just to be clear, because the member did ask about when: I do not determine the legislative program. The member knows that.

Ms SIMPSON: But it actually is in the estimates papers.

CHAIR: No. Member for Maroochydore, you are a visiting member to this committee. This is not how my committee, the Community Support and Services Committee, conducts itself. We will allow the minister to finish. Then, should you have a follow-up question, I will call you.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you. If the member allows me to continue, it might be useful information for her. The timing of the introduction of legislation is a matter for parliament to determine, not for this committee to determine. What I will say, because I understand the member's interest in the Public Records Act, is that there has been a great deal of work in this space. We have seen the Public Records Act review finalised. An independent panel delivered their final report. All recommendations in the report were supported or supported in principle by government. There has been public consultation with regard to that which has taken some time, of course. Given the complex changes in technology and in our community since the inception of this act, we need to ensure that we have all of the information and that we have an information and records management framework that supports that good governance and decision-making by government. We need to ensure all of that has been undertaken.

Ultimately, what we want is efficient record keeping in the digital environment that will also include First Nations perspectives. A lot of work has been happening in that space. I do want to commend the work of the State Archives which, as part of this agency, has been doing an incredible amount of work to decolonise our State Archives. As I mentioned earlier, there have been over 16,000 records digitised due to the work that the State Archives has been doing in that space. We continue to do this work, as we finalise preparations with regard to the outcomes of the review of the Public Records Act.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, do you have a follow-up question?

Ms SIMPSON: I certainly do, Madam Chair. Perhaps to assist the minister, page 3 of the Service Delivery Statements references this act, as it is in the minister's responsibility. My question to the minister is: given that the review which was completed last year recommended that the new legislation include a new offence for deletion of public records, will the legislation be referred to as 'Minister Mark Bailey's laws'?

Ms ENOCH: That is ridiculous!

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, I made the comment earlier that this is not the way this committee conducts itself. Should you have a question that does not contain imputations, inferences or an opinion, I would be very happy for you to rephrase that question and ask it of the minister.

Ms SIMPSON: Minister, given that this legislation is the responsibility of the minister and has been referred to in the portfolio statement, does the minister have a time line as to when the minister will be taking this matter through cabinet and tabling the legislation in the parliament, given that it is not parliament that determines the schedule of when this legislation is tabled; it will be the minister and the cabinet?

CHAIR: Minister, I will give you some leeway in responding to that question.

Ms ENOCH: As the member knows, I do not determine the program for parliament—

Ms SIMPSON: The minister is responsible for the legislation—

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, that is the third time now—

Ms SIMPSON: The minister is misleading the committee. The minister is responsible for the legislation.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore, as chair of the committee I do not appreciate being interrupted. That is the third time you have spoken over me and it will not happen again. Member for Maroochydore, the minister will respond to the question, but she will do so with the respect that a minister of the cabinet deserves, as does every member of this committee when they ask a question or are listening to a response.

Ms ENOCH: If the member had allowed me to continue, yes, the Public Records Act falls within my portfolio. As I have outlined, there has been a great deal of work undertaken to ready further work around this. Respectfully, the member has not been a minister so maybe does not understand that it is not the minister who determines the parliamentary scheduling of legislation. My work is to take responsibility for this particular act. I have been doing that, and I have outlined all of the work that has happened thus far.

Ms SIMPSON: So it has not been scheduled.

CHAIR: Member for Maroochydore! Member for South Brisbane, I feel very honoured to be calling you for your next question.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, page 103 of Budget Paper No. 4 details funding for critical emergency food relief. Could you provide a summary of the programs and initiatives that are supported by this funding, including any specific First Nation programs in remote communities?

CHAIR: Minister, just before you respond I am going to warn the member for Maroochydore under the standing orders. Member, you are formally warned. I will not accept that conduct in this chamber.

Ms ENOCH: Member, I know from our own conversations with each other that national cost-of-living pressures are being felt by every walk of life right across the state. We are all feeling the national cost-of-living pressures, and that is why this state budget is very squarely focused on tackling those pressures. We are delivering \$8.2 billion in concessions. As the member mentioned, we have also announced some \$5.6 million for emergency relief. There has been more funding to Foodbank, SecondBite and OzHarvest. I am just getting the right numbers for you, member. With regard to emergency relief, there was \$3.936 million for emergency and food relief announced in March. A further \$315,000 for Foodbank was announced as part of this budget on top of what was already announced.

There is funding around emergency relief. As the member knows, we have about 88 providers across Queensland that are funded to deliver emergency relief services. Funding for emergency relief and food relief providers in 2022-23 was doubled following the Housing Summit, where an additional \$3.3 million was allocated. The funding will also allow emergency relief funding to be offered to an additional 92 state funded neighbourhood centres that do not currently receive emergency relief funding. That will mean that all of our 128 state funded neighbourhood centres will have the ability to be offered that emergency relief programming. That means we will have greater capacity across Queensland to see emergency relief funding being allocated. There is further work happening with regard to remote Indigenous communities around emergency relief also, keeping in mind there are some unique challenges in those locations. We already have a strong relationship with Community Enterprise Queensland, which of course operates in a number of communities, and we continue to work with them also.

I do want to acknowledge this question; it is a good one. It is a very sound question about people's ability to put food on the table. It is a harrowing decision to have to choose between food on the table or a roof over your head. That is why the expansion of the Emergency Relief Program is very critical. It is my belief that neighbourhood centres are at the centre of the ability to reach people quickly in an agile fashion at the time of greatest need. I know from those neighbourhood centres I have visited across the state which have not been able to access the Emergency Relief Program previously that this will be much welcomed.

CHAIR: Member for Burnett, we have time for one quick question and the minister will have about two minutes to respond.

Mr LANGBROEK: My question is to the director-general. It relates to last year's estimates hearing and it has to do with the integrity services unit. At last year's hearing—I understand you were not here—Mr Nye, who was Deputy Director-General, Strategy and Corporate Services, gave us an update about corrupt conduct matters. Last year there were four allegations under investigation with two further referred to human resources. I am wondering if we could get an update as to the outcome of those matters from last year.

Ms O'Connor: In 2022-23 the department's ethical standards unit received 26 new referrals regarding employee conduct: three of the matters related to alleged corrupt conduct; 21 matters related to alleged misconduct; and two matters remained in assessment as at 30 June 2023. Is that what you were after?

Mr LANGBROEK: No, but I appreciate that. That is for 2022-23. I am asking about last year's hearing. There were four allegations at the time of last year's hearing that were under investigation with a further two referred to human resources. That is for the 2021-22 year.

Ms O'Connor: I will just have to check if the deputy director-general of corporate has that information to hand because I do not have it, I am sorry.

CHAIR: Director-General, were you calling the deputy director-general?

Ms O'Connor: I am just checking if she has that information to hand. Just excuse me.

CHAIR: In the meantime, I am going to get some advice. The advice from the table is that if the deputy director-general or director-general wishes to respond to the question comparatively between financial years and expenditure that would be appropriate.

Ms O'Connor: I am just wondering though, Chair, whether this is about this portfolio, because Matt Nye is not in this portfolio.

Mr LANGBROEK: Last year Matt Nye gave that to us as part of a global thing, so I just referred to him today because I believed he was in this position where he could give us an overview of the whole department last year.

Ms O'Connor: Member, the whole department last year of course included housing, for example, and this department included disability services and seniors, so we would not be able to have a comparison that would be worthwhile. I have given the numbers that we have to hand.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, we might leave it there.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is fine.

CHAIR: If you have a question without notice, a letter to the relevant department might be more appropriate. Member for Surfers Paradise, do you have another question?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes. The reference is page 38 of the annual report. Director-General, could you provide us a breakdown of communities staff including diversity? The annual report, which was when the department was slightly different last year, had 179 people in communities. I am interested in what the figure is now, at 30 June 2023. Page 39 has it broken down into: gender, of woman, man and non-binary; and diversity groups, of women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, people with a disability, culturally and linguistically diverse, et cetera. I am happy for it to be taken on notice.

Ms O'Connor: We will try to deal with it now. We have about 200 staff in communities and across that 200 staff we have employees indicating they are as follows: culturally and linguistically diverse or born overseas, 13.46 per cent; employees who speak a language other than English at home, 7.31 per cent; employees who identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, 5.38 per cent; employees identifying that they have a disability, 8.46 per cent; women, 75 per cent; and women in leadership, 71 per cent. These figures are drawn from the equality of employment opportunity census and it had an excellent return of 85 per cent.

CHAIR: We have time for one more question, member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you, Chair. Director-General, can you expand on the answer that you gave at the start about the Integrity Services Unit? You gave the 2022-23 report. Could that be broken down into departments, please?

Ms O'Connor: In terms of the 2022-23 matters, the figures are: ATSIP—corrupt conduct two, misconduct 14; communities—corrupt conduct zero, misconduct four; youth—corrupt conduct one, misconduct one, and that is a new part of the department; and arts—corrupt conduct zero, misconduct two.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General. Minister, do you have something you want to address?

Ms ENOCH: I have a correction. I earlier inadvertently said that QAGoMA was receiving \$4.4 million over four years. I should have said \$4.4 million over two years and then \$2.2 million ongoing. That is just to correct the record.

CHAIR: Thank you. We will now turn to government questions.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 8 of the SDS, how is Grow 2022-2026 helping to expand the base of non-government funding for the arts and cultural sector and delivering more creative experiences for Queenslanders statewide?

Ms ENOCH: This second action plan is something that all Queenslanders can be really proud of. As the arts minister, I am certainly very proud of the 10-year road map and the fact that we have been able to secure funding for our second action plan, which is well and truly underway. A key program under this action plan is the new Strategic Partnerships Fund, launched in October 2022. This new fund works to drive creative business growth with a focus on leveraging government investment to enable further revenue generation and co-investment opportunities through financial and philanthropic partnerships and collaborations. The Strategic Partnerships Fund also encourages partnering with those outside the arts sector to focus on social wellbeing and community outcomes and increasing employment for professional artists and arts workers. I am pleased to see that the sector is responding to this new funding opportunity which is supporting the growth of sustainable companies.

More than \$3.35 million has been committed through the Strategic Partnerships Fund to support Queensland organisations. As part of a national collaboration with the Creative Partnerships Australia Plus1 program, an investment of \$376,000 has supported nine Queensland arts companies, including two organisations based in Townsville, to strengthen their fundraising efforts and grow new income streams. A Strategic Partnerships Fund investment of \$650,000 supported world renowned company Circa with its ambitious new Circa Cairns, launched in July 2022, to realise First Nations leadership and artist participation in circus as an art form and to provide career pathways and employment for First Nations artists and art workers. Through the Strategic Partnerships Fund, Circa leveraged this funds investment to secure Tim Fairfax Family Foundation funding of \$900,000 for Circa Cairns over three years—demonstrating how matched philanthropic or private sector funding can make a key difference in creating a stronger arts funding pool.

I can announce today that seven organisations will leverage \$2.7 million to boost revenue streams, drive sustainable business models and deliver arts-led economic and social impacts for Queensland. Queensland-based Dead Puppet Society will receive over \$589,000 in multiyear investment to build its capacity to attract new investors and create additional income for three new large-scale productions with national and international touring potential. The Wynnum Fringe Festival—I know that the member for Lytton has been a massive advocate for the Wynnum Fringe Festival so I am very pleased to be able to announce this funding today for this absolute success story that was brought to life to the community during COVID—is receiving investment of just over \$694,000 to deliver on a growth plan focused on new revenue streams employing artists and securing a sustainable business model. Shine On Productions received funding of just over \$553,000 for the brand new First Nations arts and cultural festival Shine on Gimuy, working with investors to create an annual event in Cairns to strengthen community connections and drive economic health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Strategic Partnerships Fund is about incentivising collaborations for Queensland arts organisations and expanding the impact and reach that arts initiatives can have on communities. The Strategic Partnerships Fund will continue to build sector sustainability ahead of the significant opportunities of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Chair, if it is possible, I am able to bring back Chris Saines to give you some of the information that was asked for earlier.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I was going to address that unfinished business prior to the end of today's session. I thank you, Director, for being here.

Mr Saines: Thank you. In response, if I can return to the member's two questions. With regard to travel associates, I am correct in saying it has been a longstanding arrangement. It does meet the gallery's procurement policy. In fact, within recent months we reviewed that procurement policy through a CAA report—Corporate Administration Agency report—an internal audit, which was found to be consistent with government practice for appropriate procurement representing fair value.

In regards to the second point about the Ramada Hotel occupancy in Cairns, it relates to a program which we conducted in combination with the Department of Education called Design Tracks: Creative Pathways. It brought together Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander high school students from

across the Far North of Queensland. There were 20 students, nine supervising teachers from across the state, and four members of the gallery staff or learning team that were involved in the delivery of that program. The major benefactor of the program, the Nielson Foundation, directly supported the program through its accommodation and through other costs that were met through that support. I think that responds to the question posed by the member.

CHAIR: Thank you very much for your diligence in relation to addressing that follow-up matter. There are no further questions that will be left over from today's session. Minister, we are coming to the close of this session. Would you like to make some closing remarks?

Ms ENOCH: I want to thank you, Chair, and committee members for your time today. Thank you also to Hansard and other parliamentary staff supporting the committee. I would like to acknowledge my director-general, deputy directors-general and staff from the department for their hard work preparing for this hearing. I also want to mention all of the representatives of the statutory arts bodies that are here with us in this particular session. I would also like to thank representatives of the Family Responsibilities Commission and the Meriba Omasker Kaziw Kazipa Commission for making themselves available to be here for the committee's deliberations today.

Finally, a big thankyou to my ministerial staff for the work they have done in preparing for today. It does take a lot of effort to ensure that all the information is available for the committee ahead of a session like this, so I do want to acknowledge all of the hard work that they have done.

It has been an absolute honour to speak on the achievements of this department and the work we plan to undertake in the future. As a state and as a parliament, we are at a pivotal time in history. When you consider the work that all of the committee did to get us on a path with regards to the legislation relating to treaty—there is much more to do yet—but it is something that I think will be the legacy of every member of this committee going forward, and I look forward, of course, to the legacy that all Australians will have once we see the referendum with a vote of yes.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Director-General, you had a follow-up?

Ms O'Connor: Can I correct the record? I said communities have 200 staff. Because of the corporate allocation sitting against that as at 30 June, it will show up as 250. Thank you.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Director-General. The time allocated for the consideration of proposed estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Treaty, Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships, Minister for Communities and Minister for the Arts has expired. I note that there has not been any questions taken on notice yet to be answered, so I thank all public servants and the minister for their work in relation to that.

Minister, on behalf of the committee, I want to thank you for the opportunity that you have given this committee to do an amount of very important work for your department, particularly the Path to Treaty Bill, as well as inquiries into social isolation and loneliness. The committee feel very honoured to be doing that important work and we certainly acknowledge the relationship that the committee has with not only you and your staff but also with your department. We thank the department for their tremendous work as we carry on our business as a committee of the Queensland parliament.

Director-General, officials, public servants who are here today, can I thank you for all your work. It does take away from your core business and the work that you do to support Queenslanders, but certainly the committee appreciates all that you do to contribute to this very important part of our democracy and this very important part of the justification of the expenditure of the taxpayers' money here in Queensland.

The hearing will resume at 1 pm for the examination of the estimates of the portfolio of the Minister for Housing. Once again I thank you and wish you a good day. The committee will now adjourn for a break.

Proceedings suspended from 11.45 am to 1.00 pm.

ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE— HOUSING

In Attendance

Hon. MA Scanlon, Minister for Housing


Ms C Manton, Chief of Staff

Ms K Cook, Senior Adviser

Department of Housing

Mr M Cridland, Director-General

Ms A Proberts, Director, Office of the Director-General

 **CHAIR:** Good afternoon. The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the portfolio of the Minister for Housing. As was determined by the House, the committee will examine areas within the minister's portfolio as follows: housing from 1 pm to 3.45 pm. I remind honourable members that matters relating to this portfolio area can only be raised during the time specified for the area as was agreed by the House on 16 June 2023. The committee will briefly suspend proceedings for a break from 2.30 pm to 2.45 pm.

The committee has granted leave for a number of non-committee members to attend and ask questions at the hearing today. I note that we have been joined by the member for Everton this afternoon. Welcome, member for Everton. We welcome you as a visitor to our committee. Other members may seek leave over the course of the proceedings and I will endeavour to keep the committee up to date with that.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. I also remind honourable members that matters relating to portfolio areas can only be raised during the time specified for the area as was agreed by the House. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in the Legislative Assembly apply here in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

At this point I wish to reiterate for all those participating in today's hearing the sentiment of Mr Speaker's ruling of 30 July 2018 when he recognised the importance of maintaining the dignity of the estimates process in terms of questioning, general behaviour, members' conduct and adherence to standing orders. Standing order 185 in relation to disorderly members further determines the conduct of parliamentarians during estimates hearings. I will exercise this standing order as required to ensure that our behaviour today reflects the behaviour that is expected of each of our communities, those communities that we represent. I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as chair or by order of the committee.

While mobile phone use is not permitted in the public gallery, an exception has been made for staff who are assisting witnesses here today. I do ask all present at this point in time, however, to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode and to refrain from taking photos or filming any of the proceedings. I also remind everyone that food is not permitted in this chamber.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the Minister for Housing, the Hon. Meaghan Scanlon. We welcome you, member for Gaven, the director-general, officials and members of the public to the hearing. For the benefit of Hansard I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or by the director-general. Minister and Director-General, of course, there is no need for you to do this.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of housing open for examination. The question before this committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Ms SCANLON: Thank you, Chair, committee members and staff. I, too, would like to start by respectfully acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which we gather, the Yagara and Turrbal people, and pay my deepest respects to elders past, present and emerging.

I am incredibly proud to have been entrusted with the responsibility to serve as this state's housing minister and to appear before you today for the first time in this role. It is certainly not something that I take lightly. Since coming to the portfolio I have made it a priority to listen to the people on the ground—to our frontline service centre staff, to our homelessness sector, to social housing tenants, to those on the register, to renters and to builders. I have held forums with housing and homelessness groups in Brisbane, Logan, Cairns, the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Townsville, the Gold Coast, Mackay and Ipswich.

What is clear is that there is no doubt the housing landscape has experienced significant change across the country. We have seen increased pressure throughout the housing spectrum, from labour shortages to surging demand for materials, and Queensland is not immune to those pressures. Queensland's housing landscape has also fundamentally shifted. For example, Queensland Treasury analysis shows that since 2015 we have seen the average household size drop dramatically, from 2.6 persons per household to fewer than 2.5 persons per household. That may seem insignificant, but the practical impact is that 77,000 new dwellings are needed to accommodate that same population. Of course, we know that population is growing exponentially, with our strong handling of the pandemic and economic recovery bringing more people across the border than ever. Who could blame them? Queensland is the place to be. However, we know that how we respond to the challenges of this growth has never been more important.

The Palaszczuk government is laser focused on supporting Queenslanders who need help into safe and secure places they can call home. We are using every lever at our disposal to put a roof over people's heads. This includes our record investment in the supply of more social and affordable housing. We have also announced an additional \$1.1 billion investment as part of our state budget, bringing our total investment to \$5 billion, to deliver more social and affordable housing. This is the single largest concentrated investment in Queensland's history and will help us to deliver 13,500 homes.

Since taking this portfolio I have visited more than 764 social and affordable housing properties, with many either under construction or nearing completion. It includes a \$2 billion investment in our flagship Housing Investment Fund, which will generate investment returns to support 5,600 social and affordable homes across Queensland. We have now seen the first two new construction projects funded through the Housing Investment Fund commence work, in Chermside and Redcliffe, with around 116 social and affordable homes in those two developments—homes where families can live and thrive. We have also announced that an additional 71 proposals have been short-listed, 60 per cent of which are outside of Brisbane.

The supply of more social and affordable housing continues to be a priority. We have delivered 858 social homes across the state in the 2022-23 financial year. In fact, we have delivered on average 10 new social homes each week since coming to government in 2015. However, building new homes anywhere takes time, and we know that there are Queenslanders who need a roof over their heads now. That is why we are looking for out-of-the-box solutions such as purchasing or leasing vacant aged-care homes for transitional or long-term social housing within short time frames. We are also delivering modular homes and tiny homes and repurposing into social housing properties owned by the Department of Transport and Main Roads that were acquired to make way for the Logan rail corridor. We are also saving homes that are exiting the Australian government's National Rental Affordability Scheme.

While we build and buy, we are also investing in keeping families in private tenancies. In the 2022-23 financial year the Palaszczuk government provided almost 213,000 forms of housing assistance to Queensland households, including private market assistance products like rental grants and bond loans. I also want to ensure that renters have access to advice or assistance when they need it.

This morning I announced that we have approved funding of \$44.4 million over five years to Tenants Queensland to continue the Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service, which provides renters with free and independent advice. Since 2015, QSTARS has been providing information to tenants on their rights and responsibilities and support to resolve tenants' issues and offer assistance when talking to landlords or property managers. The service was established after the LNP cut funding to tenancy support services across Queensland and then, of course, rejected federal government funding for a period of time, as well.

QSTARS also provides targeted resources and assistance for vulnerable renters who may require more intensive support to achieve positive outcomes in tenancy matters such as help to prepare for a QCAT hearing or referrals to other support services. Around 120,000 Queensland households are assisted through QSTARS each year, and this funding locks in that support for the next five years. These are just some of the key initiatives under way across the state, but we know that there is more to do. As a government, we will continue to look at every lever available to continue to assist Queenslanders in need.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee will now commence the examination of estimates for the housing portfolio area. I call the member for Burnett and the deputy chair.

Mr BENNETT: I will hand over to the shadow minister.

Mr MANDER: My first question is to the director-general. Director-General, could you please provide the committee with the total Queensland government investment in social housing since the Labor government was elected in 2015?

CHAIR: While the director-general is seeking some information, I welcome the member for South Brisbane to our committee.

Mr Cridland: Since July 2015, the Queensland government has committed to investing \$6 billion in social and affordable housing supply to support the commencement of 13,500 social and affordable homes by 30 June 2027.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, according to prehearing question on notice No. 15, since 2018 the Palaszczuk government has spent \$1.655 billion on Indigenous housing. Despite the enormity of that investment, according to the Productivity Commission the number of state owned and managed Indigenous housing over the last five years fell by 63 properties. Could you explain that, please?

Mr Cridland: I will seek some further information, but it is my understanding that since 2015 there have been 638 new homes and 80 extensions and studios for families, along with 297 newly developed lots of land for further housing to be delivered in remote Indigenous communities in partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander local government authorities.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, the Productivity Commission states that at the end of 2018, there were 3,292 properties in the Indigenous community that were state owned. In 2022 it is 3,229—a fall of 63. Then when we look at the community housing in Indigenous communities for the same period, it has fallen by 40. These are the independent Productivity Commission figures. It seems extraordinary that \$1.655 billion has been spent on Indigenous housing and we actually have 103 fewer houses in Indigenous communities over the last five years. Would you please explain?

Mr Cridland: I will come back to you on that. My understanding is that in some of those numbers there are also transfers to home ownership from the Indigenous housing providers. One of the things we seek to do is to promote home ownership from that stock, but I will get some more information for you.

Mr MANDER: Could you elaborate on how that might affect the figures? You are saying that the figures have been reduced because some stock has been transferred to private ownership?

Mr Cridland: Yes, correct.

Mr MANDER: I would love to know what that number is. That would be great.

Mr Cridland: I will come back to you with that.

CHAIR: Director-General, let me know as chair when you have that information and I will certainly provide an opportunity for you.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, on a different issue, could you please advise the committee how many additional households applied and were added to the Social Housing Register in the last financial year?

Mr Cridland: I am advised that there were 6,603 applicants added to the register last year. On the other question: I understand that in terms of the RoGS data, a return for one of the larger Indigenous councils was not provided for that year and that is why there is a discrepancy here.

Mr MANDER: Are you able to provide that figure?

Mr Cridland: Yes, we will get that figure of what was left off.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Let me make sure I heard that right. For the last year there was 6,603 additional people put onto the register?

Mr Cridland: There were 6,603 applications added to the register. Some of those will go on multiple times. They may go on, their circumstances change and the same person may come back onto the register again. We count distinct applications—not the people who might apply multiple times during that one year—so 6,603 applications were added to the register.

Mr MANDER: Help me understand: why would somebody apply and drop off? Do they withdraw their application?

Mr Cridland: They may have a private market rental or some other support.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, how many applications were actually removed from the register in the last financial year?

Mr Cridland: For the last financial year there were 3,620 applications removed for being non-contactable; 2,066 that were not eligible; 1,297 who no longer needed housing; and 370 for other reasons—for example, they might not have shown up for their housing interview.

Mr MANDER: On a point of clarification: when I heard the first figure, I was assuming that was the total. Are they separate figures?

Mr Cridland: Yes, correct.

Mr MANDER: Would you mind repeating them? Sorry, I thought they were inclusive.

Mr Cridland: There were 3,620 who were non-contactable; 2,066 who were no longer eligible; 1,297 who no longer needed housing; and 370 for various other reasons—for example, they did not turn up for their interview for social housing.

Mr MANDER: Thank you. Director-General, could you also tell me how many householders were actually allocated a home from the register last year?

Mr Cridland: Five thousand households were assisted into social housing last year.

Mr MANDER: Five thousand even?

Mr Cridland: Even.

Mr MANDER: It is a nice coincidence. I will have a quick count of those figures; bear with me for a moment. Director-General, can you confirm that there were more people culled or removed from the Social Housing Register last year than were actually allocated houses?

Mr Cridland: I prefer to refer to it in terms of applications, because there could be multiple applications coming on and coming off within a year. So yes, there were more applications removed from the register than added.

Mr MANDER: Thank you.

Mr Cridland: There were also 5,000 households assisted, so it is a very dynamic and responsive register that changes every day.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, I note from the prehearing question on notice that 25,364 householders were on the register as at June 2023. Could you provide the committee with the actual number of people that converts to?

Mr Cridland: I understand—and I will confirm this—that it is approximately 41,400 people.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, are you able to tell us, out of that 41,400, how many of those are children?

Mr Cridland: No. I can tell you how many are families.

Mr MANDER: That would be great; thank you.

Mr Cridland: There are 7,050 families on the register.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, the minister said previously, in her preamble, that the average number of people a household is, I think she said, 2.5. What is the average number of people in a household that are in social housing at the moment?

Mr Cridland: I do not have that information to hand, but what I could tell you is that the majority of people on the register are single-person households—well over 50 per cent.

Mr MANDER: Minister, what is your target for the number of households that you want on the Social Housing Register reduced to by 30 June 2024?

Ms SCANLON: As you would know, the targets outlined around how we assist people on the register are public information. We have made a commitment, though, that we will be delivering 13,500 new homes. That is a significant investment, particularly in contrast to the reduction in housing that we saw under the former Liberal National Party government, in which you were the housing minister. There was a 428-household reduction under your watch.

Mr MANDER: It is a pretty specific question, Minister. The figure this year was 23-odd thousand households—sorry, 25,364. What would you like that number to be at the end of the financial year next year?

Ms SCANLON: As I said, we have made our commitment to the largest investment in social and affordable housing. We have also outlined the targets around how we assist people on the register into housing. We are very clear on trying to build and add more stock to the social housing portfolio so we can help more people quickly. As I said, in the last financial year I am pleased that we have been able to deliver 858 new homes. That is a significant increase on the previous financial year. We are not the only people responsible for investment in social and affordable housing. As you would know, there is currently a bill before the federal parliament to invest more money in social and affordable housing. That would allow us to help more people on the register, but your political party is blocking that at the moment. That would provide 30,000 additional homes across the country. As you just said, our Social Housing Register number—

Mr MANDER: Point of order, Chair.

CHAIR: Sorry, Minister. I am very sorry to interrupt. Member for Everton—

Mr MANDER: I am not. In your preamble—

CHAIR: Member for Everton—

Mr MANDER: I am not.

CHAIR: No, no, no. Member for Everton, you will wait to be called. I will not be spoken to in that way. Member for Everton, you raised a point of order. What is your point of order?

Mr MANDER: Your preamble said that the answers should be relevant and succinct. The minister is not being relevant or succinct. I would ask that you keep the minister to the expectations that you set at the beginning of the meeting.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Everton. I am very capable of leading this chamber today and I will be sure to ensure that the standing orders of this parliament are followed. Minister, do you have anything further to add to the question that the member asked?

Ms SCANLON: Chair, I would say that the member asked about how we are helping, what the target is around—

Mr MANDER: No, that is not what I asked.

Ms SCANLON: You did not let me finish.

Mr MANDER: Point of order.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, you have been in this chamber for long enough to know that if you have a point of order you raise a point of order and I will be very respectful and responsive to that. We do not just yell across the chamber. We will allow the minister to finish. If you have a point of order, I would then be happy to hear that point of order. I call the minister.

Ms SCANLON: Thank you, Chair. I would like to see the Social Housing Register number reduce, because that means we are helping more families and individuals. As has been mentioned, the most recent data shows that there is a reduction in the number of people on the register, and I am committed to making sure that we deliver more houses to help more people on the register. As has been mentioned, we could do more with an investment from the federal government. There are 30,000 homes that could be delivered through the Housing Australia Future Fund. That is more homes than people on the current Social Housing Register in Queensland and right now that is being blocked.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Everton, do you have a further question?

Mr MANDER: I do, Chair; thank you very much. Director-General, in prehearing question on notice 14 a question was asked about wilful or malicious damage. We received a response with a figure but described it as 'excessive wear and tear'. Would you explain the difference between wilful or malicious damage and excessive wear and tear, please?

Mr Cridland: I think in this instance the wilful and malicious damage is more of a legal construct. Wear and tear is what happens to all capital properties, and that is what we have identified in terms of the excessive wear and tear damage, like any landlord.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, is there a different figure for wilful damage where—

Mr Cridland: No.

Mr MANDER:—it has not been through wear and tear; it has been people who have damaged the property?

Mr Cridland: No.

Mr MANDER: No? So that is the figure?

Mr Cridland: Yes.

Mr MANDER: Okay. Director-General, can you advise how much it would cost to repair a property that has been used as a drug lab?

CHAIR: Director-General, if you need some time, we can move on to the next question and come back to it.

Mr Cridland: Yes, that would be great; thank you, Chair.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, the director-general will come back to that question. Do you have a further question?

Mr MANDER: I do, Chair. The deputy chair is going to table some documents. These are pictures of a damaged property in regional Queensland.

CHAIR: Sorry, member for Everton. I mentioned earlier that you have been in this House long enough to understand the standing orders and the rules of this parliament. The member for Burnett is tabling documents, which he is quite within his rights to do as a member of the committee. I will make sure that the minister and the director-general get a copy prior to you continuing. Do the minister and director-general have a copy of those photos?

Ms SCANLON: Yes.

CHAIR: Member for Everton.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, would you describe that as excessive wear and tear or is that wilful malicious damage? This is a property in regional Queensland—a social housing property.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, as chair of the committee I identify that you are seeking an opinion of the director-general. I will give the director-general the leeway to answer the question or not as he sees fit, but it would appear that you are seeking an opinion.

Mr Cridland: Thank you, Chair. I have a couple of comments. Without any details about this property, I cannot verify that that is from one of our houses. I would also say that I am not really qualified to give you a legal opinion on what wilful and malicious damage is, but I can come back to your question around the total remediation costs for the clandestine drug labs. The cost is \$64,804 in remediation costs.

CHAIR: Member, I am also cognisant of the fact that this could be any house anywhere in the world.

Mr MANDER: Madam Chair, I can confirm that this is a public social housing property in regional Queensland.

CHAIR: With all due respect, member—

Mr MANDER: I have the documentation here that proves that, so if you need to see that it is there. It is legitimate.

CHAIR: I would like to see that document in confidence. I will hand it directly back to you. Thank you, member for Everton. Member for Everton, do you have any further questions?

Mr MANDER: One final question on that, if you do not mind, Chair. Director-General, I find it very hard to accept that \$90,000 or thereabouts of expenditure referred to wear and tear last year when we see properties like this and when you have just informed me that a drug lab would cost around \$64,000 to remediate. How can that figure possibly be accurate?

Mr Cridland: The \$64,000 that I mentioned was specifically for drug labs. The overall remediation costs for properties was, for excessive wear and tear, the \$89,704 that was in the QoN, but for general remediation costs across the portfolio it is about \$1.791 million per annum. So there are different things that you asked me about.

CHAIR: Could you clarify: is it \$1.79 million or \$1 million per annum? I was a bit confused.

Mr Cridland: 1.791.

Mr MANDER: So it is \$1.7 million. You differentiate between excessive wear and tear and general remediation, but you are inferring that the damages that are relevant to a drug lab would be in general remediation not in excessive wear and tear, is that what you are inferring?

Mr Cridland: No. It is layered, if I might. You asked me specifically about cleaning for drug labs. That is the \$64,804. That is a subset of overall cleaning costs which is again a subset of the overall maintenance budget for planned and responsive maintenance activities across the year. If you count all planned and unplanned maintenance activities for the portfolio, 55,000 properties, approximately \$325 million is our annual budget for the coming year.

CHAIR: Time has expired for the non-government questions. I now call the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Can the minister advise how the Palaszczuk government is partnering with community housing providers to deliver more social and affordable homes and is she aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms SCANLON: It gives me great pleasure to update the committee on how we are partnering with the community housing sector to deliver social and affordable homes across Queensland. The Palaszczuk government, as I have mentioned, is investing \$5 billion to deliver social and affordable homes across the state to deliver our target of 13,500 homes. Key to delivering on that commitment is our partnership with community housing providers. Our government has partnered with the community housing sector to contract thousands of social and affordable homes across Queensland. We have homes being delivered with providers from across the South-East Queensland corner, in Far North Queensland, Darling Downs, Wide Bay, Mackay-Whitsunday region, right through to the outback. Homes we have already delivered are currently being enjoyed by thousands of Queenslanders. I have visited a number of those with committee members here today, visiting people like Patricia. During the pandemic we partnered with Brisbane Housing Company to build a 32-unit complex in Inner City Brisbane which she now calls home. I had the pleasure of meeting her alongside Penny Wong to hear her story—a reminder of certainly why Labor governments will always be about working for the many and not the few—and meeting with those tenants there.

In 2022-23 alone we saw 1,146 homes contracted and 300 homes delivered in partnership with community housing providers. We continue to work with community housing providers on a pipeline of hundreds of homes across the state. For example, last month I visited a site in Basin Pocket where work is well underway on 40 new homes, in partnership with Churches of Christ Housing Services along with our Ipswich MPs, designed to cater for older Queenslanders wanting to downsize to smaller, more manageable accommodation. The 40 homes will consist of 34 one-bedroom units and six two-bedroom units which will, in turn, free up homes for families in the region.

In June, as part of the Vinnies CEO Sleepout, I also announced that we are partnering with Vinnies housing to deliver 147 new social homes which will be in Newtown in Toowoomba, Walkervale in Bundaberg and in my electorate in Nerang on the Gold Coast. The project will cost about \$71 million, with the government contributing \$58.65 million and St Vincent de Paul Society Queensland contributing more than \$12 million including the land, and is now moving through the planning approval processes with construction targeted to commence next year.

In addition, we have seen community housing providers bring forward innovative proposals through the Housing Investment Fund, including up to 1,200 homes to be delivered in partnership with the Brisbane Housing Company in partnership with Australian Retirement Trust and QIC. We would, of course, like to see more community housing providers partner with developers, builders, institutional investors and superannuation funds to develop finance and operate social and affordable housing across Queensland and that is why we are delivering grants of up to \$50,000 to support capacity building initiatives for the community housing sector. This program, the Community Housing Futures Program, is being delivered by peak body Q Shelter and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Queensland, the Community Housing Industry Association of Queensland in partnership with the Palaszczuk government. The Community Housing Futures Program offers access to specialised advice, tools and training to help community housing providers grow and manage larger portfolios of social and affordable housing. This program includes strengthening their skills in areas including property development, financial capability, governance and planning. By partnering with Queensland's three peak community housing bodies to build these resources, tools and programs, we are confident that community housing organisations in Queensland will benefit, as well as thousands of tenants.

These outcomes are possible because of the close partnership we have with the community housing sector and, of course, there are many other opportunities if the Housing Australia Future Fund is able to be passed through the federal parliament for this sector as well. I look forward to updating the committee further in the future.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, could you give us some advice on what is being done to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, particularly in regional Queensland?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Nicklin for the question. It was great to join you recently in your electorate where we announced more funding to work with the community housing sector to purchase National Rental Affordability Scheme homes. We are continuing also to support individuals, families and support services in regional Queensland to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. I can advise the committee that in regional Queensland—and we define that as outside the South-East Queensland in terms of the way the data is captured—in the 2023-24 budget we are funding \$69.2 million to 56 organisational providers to deliver 80 core specialist services to a range of Queenslanders in need. I want to thank a number of those services who I have had the opportunity to sit down and talk to. As I mentioned in my introductory remarks, I have travelled the state and talked to a number of those services to hear directly from them about what they are seeing and how we can further support them and I look forward to travelling to other parts of Queensland to make sure that we are listening to our partners all across Queensland.

My department has also collaborated across government to integrate our frontline housing and homelessness services with broader sector services delivery to assist people to obtain and sustain housing and to access additional support services. This collaboration has been enhanced by the local place-based response teams and care coordination groups to really better integrate and coordinate services for people, particularly some of Queensland's most vulnerable members of our community. For example, in the 2022-23 financial year, investment into care coordination facilitators across 10 local government areas supported 930 households, including 512 families and 418 individuals. Of the 562 households who completed the care coordination during this period, the majority achieved a housing outcome at the end of that process so I think it shows why that coordination process works really effectively with working across government and across the sector.

The department also delivered 38 places of accommodation for adults, including mature age women and First Nations people, through the lease of a local accommodation site in Cairns. We are also now refurbishing a second site in Cairns that will deliver an additional six places of semi-self-contained accommodation from August this year. In Townsville, the Queensland government is investing \$19 million in the construction of a new youth foyer, which is on track to be completed this year. I had the opportunity to visit that recently with our Townsville members. The youth foyer will provide a safe and stable place for up to 40 young people, and those young people need to be aged between 16 and 25. It will be supported with a 24/7 specialist homelessness service. In Toowoomba, the department has purchased a former aged-care property that will also be redesigned to provide a home for at least 50 residents. As you can see, there is a lot of work happening across regional Queensland to make sure that we are not only assisting support services with funding but also helping Queenslanders in need.

CHAIR: Minister, can you advise what the government is doing to ensure renters understand their rights?

Ms SCANLON: Supporting Queensland's rental market is an important part of the Palaszczuk government's plan to ensure that every Queenslander has safe and affordable housing. We have already made significant progress in modernising and improving rental laws and we will continue working towards a strong and well-functioning rental market that is fair for everyone.

Stage 1 rental law reforms have been implemented to increase safety, security and certainty for both renters and rental property owners. These stage 1 reforms provide a strong, balanced approach while improving stability in the rental market by providing changes that ended without-grounds evictions, providing more certainty about how and when a tenancy can end. We strengthened protections for renters against retaliatory actions such as evictions and rent increases if they try to enforce their rights. We have set minimum housing standards to ensure rental properties in Queensland are safe, secure and functional; made it easier for renters to have a pet; and given renters experiencing domestic and family violence the right to end their interest in a tenancy with limited liability for end-of-lease costs. I am pleased to confirm that all stage 1 reforms have commenced except minimum housing standards, which will apply to new tenancies entered from September this year and to all tenancies from 1 September 2024.

We have also released an options paper for stage 2 rental reforms, seeking public feedback on five key reform priorities which include: installing safety, security and accessibility modifications; making minor personalisation changes; balancing the renter's right to privacy and the owner's need to access the property; improving the rental bond process; and fairer fees and charges. As with stage 1 reforms, future rental law reform proposals will be informed by rigorous independent economic analysis and will aim to appropriately balance the rights and interests of renters and rental property owners.

We also continue to advance rental law reform to protect consumers and give investors the confidence to participate in Queensland's private market. Today I had the pleasure of announcing that we have locked in \$44 million to continue the Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service for the next five years. I had the opportunity of meeting Penny and the team this morning and having a chat with the staff. They do incredible work making sure that we assist Queenslanders with that important advice. The service gives tenants across Queensland free independent advice on their rights.

I have also heard from renters directly on how important this service is. You would think it would be something that everyone would get behind. That is why it was bizarre to me that one of the great legacies of the member for Everton as housing minister was to cut funding to this service. In fact, not only did they cut funding; they rejected funding from the federal government for the very service that provides assistance to renters. I can think of no better demonstration of the contempt members have for renters than saying no to money from another level of government for a service that helps people. I think that is disappointing. Of course, I am very proud that this government will stand up for renters even when others will not.

Ms LUI: Minister, can you please advise what has been done to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Brisbane?

Ms SCANLON: I am pleased to update the committee on what the Palaszczuk government is doing to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness in Brisbane. The Palaszczuk government has committed \$59 million in the 2023-24 financial year for 32 non-government organisations to deliver homelessness services in the Brisbane local government area. These services include delivering crisis or transitional accommodation and other support services to help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

In Brisbane, the Department of Housing has stood up five new accommodation sites and helped more than 230 people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness with dedicated support and alternative accommodation for individuals, couples and families. That includes people such as Glen, whom I had the opportunity to meet earlier this week. After experiencing homelessness, staff from the department and Micah Projects have been able to help him find a new social home. He is enjoying his new home and is now focused on building up his strength physically to return to employment.

The department is also tackling the challenges of inner-city Brisbane homelessness including the cyclical nature of rough sleeping. In partnership with one of our funded specialist homelessness services providers, Micah Projects—again, I had the privilege of going out with them on my first night as housing minister—are delivering daily outreach to people sleeping rough in various known rough-sleeper locations. These include places like Musgrave Park and the Kurilpa precinct around the William Jolly and Go Between bridges, and Emma Miller Place near Wickham Park. In partnership with our funded specialist homelessness services we also deliver regular outreach to other known locations including Cathedral Square and other inner-city Brisbane parks, Woody Point and the Shorncliffe boat ramp. Again, I had the opportunity to join Micah Projects and see all of the locations they visit. I thank them for the work that they do.

While we are working to get more social and affordable homes up off the ground as soon as possible, we are also acting to help those who need immediate supports and accommodation. The team has worked hard to help people where they need support. As members would know, collaboration is key to ending homelessness. Government, business, communities, individuals and councils all have a role to play. Ultimately, Chair, I think we all believe that everyone should have access to a safe and secure place to call home. That is why we will continue to do everything we can to assist Queenslanders who are doing it tough.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, can you please advise how the Palaszczuk government is helping Queenslanders to stay in their homes and maintain their private tenancies?

Ms SCANLON: It gives me pleasure to update the committee on how we are investing to help Queenslanders maintain private tenancy. The Queensland government recognises the unprecedented pressures on the housing sector in Queensland. That is why we are continuing to assist by offering a

range of products and services for private renters to help with housing affordability and cost-of-living pressures. That all adds up to some of the broader cost-of-living measures that we have announced through the budget—things like electricity rebates, free kindy and cost-of-living measures that assist families.

In terms of what my department specifically provides, we provide assistance to renters through the whole lifecycle of renting in the private market, from the stage at which someone might be looking for or applying for a rental property and through the duration of the tenancy when someone may be finding it difficult to pay rent or meet the costs of maintaining their tenancy. At the outset, we provide direct assistance to those seeking support to find an affordable private rental market property and to enter into a tenancy agreement. We assist with that process. The department can also offer no-interest loans to assist Queenslanders pay a rental bond and a non-repayable financial grant of two weeks rent to get people in a private rental property. Throughout a tenancy, the department also offers financial assistance to eligible people to help pay rent for up to 12 months and funding grants tailored to Queenslanders' specific needs to really help people maintain their private tenancy. This includes financial assistance to help with moving costs or purchase necessary household items. Through a range of private market assistance products, in the 2022-23 financial year the Queensland government has assisted over 78,000 households.

As an outcome of the housing summit, we responded to the unprecedented housing market conditions by investing that additional \$10 million over the 2022-23 and 2023-24 financial years to expand private rental assistance products and services to people experiencing rental stress. This \$10 million funding boost has also increased the maximum amount of rent that can be paid by the department on behalf of an eligible Queenslanders from \$5,000 to \$12,000 and, as I said, that is part of a subsidy that helps people pay that gap so that they can maintain that private tenancy.

The department also funds non-government organisations to deliver private market assistance products and services across the state. That includes things like: tenancy advice services; interest- and fee-free loans to assist with expenses incurred in either commencing or maintaining a private rental tenancy; and tenancy training and assistance to help older people and people with a disability living in their home. Further, the additional \$11.7 million investment in the specialist homelessness services—to expand tenancy sustainment responses—as a housing summit outcome has supported over 2,800 at risk of homelessness to maintain their tenancy.

As you can see, Chair, we have a comprehensive package available to people but we have also undertaken a review of our private rental assistance products and are currently analysing these findings to ensure that we are providing the best possible response to Queenslanders. I look forward to updating the committee in the future.

CHAIR: Minister, we have time for a very quick question. Can the minister outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing to specifically support young people who are experiencing homelessness across Queensland? Minister, if you could summarise that in about one minute, please?

Ms SCANLON: I have a lot to say about this as the former minister for youth affairs. I think I covered some of this in my previous answers anyway. Of course, we are really pleased not only to be delivering more youth foyers across the state. As I said, we have a youth foyer that is under construction in Townsville. I had the privilege as a local Gold Coast MP of turning the sod on the Gold Coast youth foyer. I had the privilege of visiting the Logan youth foyer as the housing minister and meeting I think it was Jenna-Leigh who had been housed in that particular place for a number of years. When I was there she was actually moving out, which was great, because she is now able to maintain private tenancy on her own which is wonderful.

In addition to the infrastructure that we are building to help young people, we have also allocated funding to 39 non-government organisations to help deliver specialist homelessness services for young people throughout the state. This week I had the privilege of going to Brisbane Youth Service's Daggy Jumper Day where I wore my daggy jumper all day to try and support the work that they are doing. We partner with them along with many other organisations to make sure that they can help young people doing it tough.

CHAIR: Lovely. Thank you, Minister; and I am sorry to limit that. Member for Burnett?

Mr BENNETT: Thank you. I will hand back to the shadow minister.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, I want to start where we left off. We threw a few figures around. I want to make sure that I have this right. There were three figures: \$90,000 or thereabouts for wear and tear; \$100 million for remedial work; and I think you said \$325 million for general maintenance. Did I get that right?

Mr Cridland: Yes, close.

Mr MANDER: They are the three categories?

Mr Cridland: Sure. For our \$19 billion portfolio of social homes we have an expenditure allocation for planned and responsive maintenance. In 2022-23 that was around \$340 million. The total for the four clandestine drug labs that you asked me about was \$64,804.

Mr MANDER: Great, thank you. So any damage to property along the lines that I showed that was deliberate, that would come out of the remedial funding to fix?

Mr Cridland: Yes, it would come out of the planned and responsive maintenance allocation.

Mr MANDER: Minister, the question on notice was very clear: it was about wilful or malicious damage. The answer that came back we have now found out is totally misleading—\$89,000. What are you trying to hide? It is obvious that there is more money being spent on wilful damage. If a drug lab is not wilful damage or if the photos that I showed you are not wilful damage, what is?

CHAIR: Member for Everton, your question contained inferences. I am going to ask you to rephrase that question without the inference being made.

Mr MANDER: Why was the question not answered accurately when it asked specifically about wilful and malicious damage? We have now found that that category does exist but it is in a different pot.

Ms SCANLON: No, that is not correct. Wilful and malicious damage is a legal, criminal term. That is not a classification that the department uses. To suggest that I was misleading anyone is nonsense. I answered the question as best we could because you used a term that is not used by the department.

Mr MANDER: So it is very convenient, isn't it?

Ms SCANLON: No.

Mr MANDER: A drug lab is not malicious damage?

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SCANLON: I would have—

CHAIR: Sorry, Minister. Member for Everton, I outlined under standing order 185 at the beginning of this session that this parliament operates using specific standing orders. Interrupting others whilst the minister was being responsive could be considered 'disorderly conduct'. I have made it very clear the standards that we expect as a committee in this House. Minister, I ask you to respond without interruption by the member.

Ms SCANLON: Thank you, Chair. As I have mentioned, despite the fact that the member asked me a question about a definition that is not one that the department uses, I still answered the question as best I could. I could have just said that that is not a definition that the department uses and not answered your question, but I provided you with information. No-one is disputing the fact that where there is damage done to property there is an expectation it is fixed and there is an expectation that people are held to account. It should be fixed and it is fixed by QBuild, an organisation within government that you gutted funding from I should say. Our government is focused on making sure that we addressed homes that have been damaged. As I said, people who do the wrong thing are held to account.

I can advise that when it comes to maintenance, repairs and how we deal with vacancy, we have the best vacancy management in the country. That is because of the work that this department does and the work that QBuild does in repairing and maintaining our housing stock despite the fact that we have one of the largest public housing portfolios in the state which is incredibly diverse. I think that QBuild and the department should be congratulated for the work that they do.

As I said, anyone who does the wrong thing should be held to account. There are processes in place and we do everything we can to get properties fixed as quickly as possible but, as I said, I responded to the member as best I could. I would have thought that as a former housing minister he would understand that that is not a definition used by the department.

Mr MANDER: A definition that has been used for the previous five years and never been questioned. It never came to your mind, Minister, that the intent of the question was—

CHAIR: Member for Everton, order! If you have a question of the minister—

Mr MANDER: I am trying to ask the question, Chair.

CHAIR: Well, ask a question rather than comment.

Mr MANDER: I am asking the question; I am trying to.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, please ask.

Mr MANDER: Why did the minister not follow the original intent of the question and give the figure closer to \$1.8 million, which I think the director-general has already mentioned, rather than \$90,000.

Ms SCANLON: Member, the intent of the question and what the question is are two different things. If you want me to answer a question, ask the right question. We have just answered those questions for you.

Mr MANDER: The average Queenslander would see that. They want to know what money is being spent in this area, and you are hiding it.

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SCANLON: We have just answered the question.

CHAIR: Member and minister, please cease this quarrelling across the chamber. Member for Burnett?

Mr BENNETT: I defer to the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, you have said that you will look at every lever to support Queenslanders. Will this government freeze rent increases?

Ms SCANLON: As you would know, we have already passed laws that limit the number of times rent can be increased to once a year.

Mr MANDER: That went well.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Everton, you are now warned under standing order 185. I call the member for South Brisbane.

Dr MacMAHON: I will let the minister continue.

Ms SCANLON: As I said, we have brought in those proposed changes. I note the member for Everton's interjection. I have heard a lot of commentary from him in the media about this. I did not see the Liberal National Party move amendments or vote against these laws.

We, of course, are focused on supply. We are also trying to make sure that we have a fair and balanced rental system. That is why we brought in those changes. We have also put out a discussion paper to look at attaching that particular change to the property rather than the tenancy agreement. That discussion paper is out for consultation right now. I will report back once we have done that consultation and government has had an opportunity to consider it.

Dr MacMAHON: Can I clarify: are you ruling out that you will be putting a freeze on the amount by which rent can go up in Queensland?

Ms SCANLON: We have been very clear that the laws we have put forward are the government's position. Any other proposed changes are matters for the Greens political party, but we are focused right now on supply and our stage 2 rental reforms. As I said, we have that discussion paper out right now to look at a proposed change around that annual rent increase limit.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, do you know how many renters across the state are in housing insecurity or are at risk of homelessness and how many property investors are in housing insecurity?

Ms SCANLON: There is a whole range of different reports that provide information around people who are experiencing housing stress. We have some of the Census data that articulates people who might be experiencing homelessness. That definition is quite large. That talks to different types of homelessness that people may be experiencing. I would perhaps have to have a conversation offline or if there is a follow-up question around specifically what data you are after because that is a fairly vague question that covers a very large cohort of people.

Dr MacMAHON: The question is: how many renters are in housing stress? Perhaps you could take the standard figure, which is paying more than 30 per cent of their income on rent. How many renters are in that situation and how many property investors are in that situation?

Ms SCANLON: What we are doing at the moment—as part of our response to the QAO and the Housing Summit—is undertaking modelling, which is being done by AHURI, that looks at both supply and demand and the needs of Queenslanders. I am not sure that we would be able to give you a

figure—I do not know if any jurisdiction would be able to give you that figure—but we are working on how we can get better data, particularly on the needs of Queenslanders and how we address those needs, both for renters and for people who may own a home.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I just wanted to make sure I heard the answer to the member for South Brisbane's question correctly. Did you say that you are looking at the amount of rent increase?

Ms SCANLON: No, I said that we have a discussion paper out right now in relation to our limit on the number of times rent can increase, which was a measure that went through the parliament.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, prehearing question on notice 5 states that there are 75,111 social housing dwellings in Queensland today. Are you able to provide the equivalent number—the total dwellings—as at 30 June 2015? I am trying to get a comparison in terms of figures, numbers and categories that you provided in that answer to the question on notice?

CHAIR: Director-General, you have just a couple of minutes to respond.

Mr Cridland: I believe that the total number of social homes at the end of the 2014-15 financial year was 71,719.

Mr MANDER: Are they the same categories that you provided in the answer to the question on notice?

Mr Cridland: We would say yes.

Mr MANDER: Are you able to provide those separate figures?

Mr Cridland: I am sorry, I do not quite understand the question.

Mr MANDER: You have categorised the numbers with regard to the social housing portfolio—state managed, community managed, Indigenous. I want to get a like-for-like comparison, if I could.

Mr Cridland: I think we provided that in answer to question on notice 5. You are looking for a breakdown of what is state owned and managed—

Mr MANDER: Exactly; the same breakdown but as at the end of the financial year in 2015.

Mr Cridland: I would have to come back to you on that.

Mr MANDER: I appreciate that.

CHAIR: We will follow up later in the session. I call member for the Cook.

Ms LUI: Can the minister advise how the Palaszczuk government is delivering a pipeline of social and affordable homes through QuickStarts Qld and other initiatives, and is she aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms SCANLON: I am very proud to be part of a government that is committed to commencing 13,500 social and affordable homes across Queensland by 2027. To achieve that goal we have a \$5 billion investment—the largest single concentrated investment in Queensland's history. As mentioned before, the state budget saw an increased funding commitment of \$1.1 billion for the delivery of social housing across Queensland. That includes \$322.2 million to expand the QuickStarts program by an additional 500 homes. That will bring our target to 3,265 commencements by 30 June 2025. The Commonwealth government has also delivered an additional \$398 million to support the building of more social and affordable housing.

I am pleased to report to the committee that since 2015-16—when we came to government—there have been 4,742 new Housing homes delivered. This includes 858 social homes delivered in the 2022-23 financial year. While we are certainly not immune to the critical shortages in building materials and the impacts on labour shortages, we are continuing to get on with the job of delivering more homes and purchasing homes where we can as well.

As I have mentioned before, the Palaszczuk government has also established the Housing Investment Fund. That fund provides \$130 million per annum to help with the delivery of our target of 5,600 new social and affordable homes. Some 1,500 homes have already been approved under that particular fund.

Our government is also supporting the supply of social housing through headleasing in the private market. As of 30 June 2023, 2,331 properties are headleased through the department. As well, there is funding to non-government providers to directly headlease via the state. This is providing accommodation for people right now while we build more. People like Michael and his teenage kids now have a safe place to live close to their school and have benefited from the Palaszczuk government's funding to headlease properties. It has been bizarre to hear that the opposition does not

support this investment, because that investment is providing, as I said, 2,331 households currently housed in headleased properties a safe place to call home while we build more homes. We make no apology for purchasing or leasing while we build because it helps individuals and families with their housing needs right now.

Mr SKELTON: Can the minister please outline how the Palaszczuk government is supporting frontline staff and the community services sector to support Queenslanders who are homeless or at risk of homelessness?

Ms SCANLON: I am pleased to update the committee on how the Palaszczuk government is supporting frontline staff and the community services sector to support Queenslanders who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness. We are committed to supporting Queenslanders who are feeling the pinch due to current cost-of-living and housing challenges, particularly the most vulnerable people and families in our community.

Our housing service centre staff work with individuals and families to explore their housing and support options, achieving safe, secure and affordable housing and hopefully improving their wellbeing as well. On average, 564 customers a day attend housing service centres across the state seeking housing assistance and support. Frontline staff are working with Queenslanders including some who are seeking housing assistance for the very first time.

In 2022-23, there were almost 213,000 forms of housing assistance provided to Queensland households or individuals. That includes emergency housing, social housing, private market assistance and homelessness services. Our homelessness response includes the 24/7 homelessness hotline, place-based organisations that deliver mobile support, after-hours and outreach services, and temporary emergency supported accommodation. An estimated 40,000 people have been assisted across the state by 130 funded specialist homelessness services in the 2022-23 financial year. As I mentioned before, the Palaszczuk government is investing more and specialist homelessness services and the department's frontline service delivery team to deliver better outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders.

Under the Coordinated Housing and Homelessness Responses initiative, we have 10 care coordination teams across the state working to improve multiagency responses for people with complex needs. These are located in Cairns, Townsville, Mackay, the Sunshine Coast, Moreton Bay, Brisbane, the Redlands, Logan, Toowoomba and the Gold Coast. The department also responds to known homelessness hotspots across the state—and I mentioned some of the work they do earlier.

Housing staff also work with specialist homelessness services, local councils and other stakeholders as part of a co-responder approach. This approach supports people experiencing or at risk of homelessness to secure housing and support pathways to safe and affordable accommodation.

I would like to thank and acknowledge the efforts of our frontline staff, our community housing providers, specialist homelessness services, peak bodies, non-government providers and colleagues from across government agencies who help achieve and support housing outcomes for Queenslanders every day. They do an amazing job.

CHAIR: Can the minister advise what impact federal funding cuts have had on the delivery of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing? What is the Palaszczuk government doing to close the gap?

Ms SCANLON: I am happy to update the committee on the actions the Palaszczuk government has taken to close the gap on housing outcomes for First Nations Queenslanders. In July 2020 a new National Agreement on Closing the Gap was announced and it included a target to reduce overcrowding in housing and First Nations communities. The target is to increase the proportion of people living in homes with appropriate bedroom numbers to 88 per cent by 2031.

Following the decision of the former LNP federal government to walk away completely from the National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Housing, there is now no federal funding provided under this agreement to support the targeted reduction of overcrowding unless the Housing Australia Future Fund is passed through the parliament. Despite this though, under our government we are making progress towards this target with the 2021 census finding that 81.2 per cent of First Nations people in Queensland live in appropriately sized, not overcrowded, dwellings. Of course, we want to see that get better but it is good to see it improving.

We know, of course though, that ending NPARIH has created a shortfall that really needs to be filled. The Queensland government has responded though to the immediate federal funding shortfall by committing \$40 million for capital works to maintain housing construction and local jobs in remote

communities. The Queensland government has further prioritised Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing by implementing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan 2019-2023, which provided total funding of \$67 million over four years. Through this investment we are supporting the delivery of up to 201 new houses and 52 extensions to current dwellings, along with 177 new land lots for further social housing. This builds upon the 718 households supported through new homes, extensions and studios for families, along with 297 newly developed lots of land delivered since 2015.

Just yesterday I also met Paul, a self-described proud Aboriginal man, who lived in Zillmere for close to 10 years. Before I met him yesterday he used to live in a house more than 100 years old and very much at the end of its lifespan. Very soon he will be moving into one of our four new social homes being built on the very same site. That is because of a partnership between the Palaszczuk government and Umpi Korumba Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Corporation for Housing. Paul has provided plenty of input into the design of his new home and says he cannot wait to move back in. I also met his neighbour who said that Paul is the best neighbour she has ever had, which was wonderful.

Providing improved outcomes and closing the gap is achieved by investing and strengthening the First Nations housing sector, providing increased home ownership pathways and supporting families through delivering a range of products and services to help all First Nations Queenslanders find secure housing in the private market. Census data from the ABS shows that overcrowding increases with remoteness for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This is a known challenge in Queensland and, given the vast geographical dispersal of people and communities, it is something we need to keep focusing on.

We are investing \$51.3 million over four years for the second Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing action plan—Our Place: A First Nations Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2024-27—to progress the Closing the Gap initiatives and deliver housing supply solutions. We have also allocated \$77 million over four years through this year's budget to continue delivery of existing targets to increase the supply of new dwellings in remote and discrete communities, acknowledging again the increased costs that the market is experiencing and that we need to invest to deliver on these targets.

We will continue to advocate to the Commonwealth for needs-based funding that reflects the dynamic indicators of housing demand and reflects the costs of service delivery in a highly regionalised state with many remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. I look forward to updating the House.

Ms LUI: Can the minister outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing to specifically support victims of domestic and family violence with acute housing needs across Queensland?

CHAIR: Minister, you have three minutes.

Ms SCANLON: Our hardworking team in the Department of Housing provide priority services to support women and children experiencing domestic, family and sexual violence in Queensland. Safety is the department's first priority. The Palaszczuk government is investing \$250 million across the state to continue our homelessness services for a range of Queenslanders. Specifically, the department works with specialist domestic and family violence and sexual violence services and other agencies to support women and children who require assistance. Those with immediate safety needs are helped to access safe accommodation with appropriate support.

The department also helps women overcome financial barriers accessing or sustaining safe housing by providing brokerage assistance for goods and services needed immediately such as relocation and removalist costs. The Department of Housing is also a core agency in the Palaszczuk government's high-risk teams program, which is a multiagency specialist unit that provides integrated response to victims and their children who are at high risk of serious harm. The department's high-risk officers assist to identify and source immediate accommodation and longer term housing including, as I said, relocation. The department has also established a dedicated specialist response team which provides expert support to frontline housing staff and high-risk teams, helping to identify safety issues, tailor housing assistance and harness broader service system resources.

Queensland's non-government sector is also obviously a key partner in responding to the needs of women and children experiencing domestic and family violence. The Department of Justice and Attorney-General funds specialist homelessness services, including women's shelters. I am sure the Attorney-General talked through that in her session. Some of that funding will provide around 340 places for accommodation for women and children per night across the year, so there is substantial investment going into this space. We know that we need to continue to work to make sure that people

have access to safe housing. We have a working group, and one of my priorities is to work across government to make sure we provide those individuals, who are often in a crisis in those moments of need, with the assistance we can to help them. I look forward to updating the committee.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, picking up where we left off about housing numbers, I asked if you could provide some figures and you will in the future. The question on notice basically says that there are 3,392 extra dwellings since 30 June 2015. If I add that figure to the Productivity Commission figure of the same date, 2015, I come up 530 short of the figure that you have stated of 75,111. I am just trying to get a like-for-like comparison. Could you help me out with regard to what the baseline was? That was also the purpose of my previous question to you.

Mr Cridland: I think the challenge with trying to match the RoGS data with the data I have provided is that our data encompasses a whole social housing portfolio, government owned and non-government owned. It includes housing in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, it includes crisis accommodation and it includes properties leased by the department. The figures I gave you are defined differently to the RoGS data.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, has there been a change in the way the numbers are put together? Have these categories changed?

Mr Cridland: No, not in terms of how the department records them. I could not comment on the RoGS methodology, but I do know they are different.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, how are the Productivity Commission's figures viewed by the department? Are they viewed as accurate and reliable? Are they used at all?

CHAIR: Member for Everton, you are seeking an opinion. Could I ask you to rephrase that question directed to a public servant?

Mr MANDER: Are the Productivity Commission's figures accurate?

Mr Cridland: For their methodology, yes.

Mr MANDER: For their methodology.

Mr Cridland: Yes.

Mr MANDER: The Productivity Commission is obviously an independent and respected entity. It is also recognised by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare. Why would the department not use the same measurements so we could have consistency in knowing what the actual increases have been year on year?

CHAIR: Member for Everton, with all due respect, can I ask you to rephrase the question. The question should be directed to the Department of Housing director-general or the minister. If the question is directed to the Productivity Commission, that would be a question for the Productivity Commission. Could you please rephrase the question for the audience that we have in front of us.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, to make it easier for consistency and for people to fully understand the increased numbers in the social housing portfolio, has the department considered measuring the number of houses using the same methodology that the Productivity Commission does?

Mr Cridland: Were we to use the same methodology as the Productivity Commission, I am sure we would be entirely consistent. We want to know what the total outcome is—the total number of dwellings available, regardless of their category, for people we can place into when they need housing, so we do count crisis accommodation and headlease properties. I am sure that if we were to use the Productivity Commission's methodology for that part of it we would no doubt match, because I am sure we probably provide that data to the Productivity Commission in the first place. We count more than they do in their methodology so we know our total available properties for people.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, I will just confirm that before the end of the hearing you are going to provide the figures from 2015 consistent with the categories that you have provided.

Mr Cridland: We are endeavouring to do that now.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, in the last 12 months how many existing dwellings has the department purchased?

Mr Cridland: For 2022-23, out of the 858 homes delivered, 373 were purchased.

Mr MANDER: Is it possible to have the figures for the previous five years for the same question?

Mr Cridland: I would have to check that in the break, member. I can access that, yes.

Mr MANDER: Minister, the Help to Home initiative was meant to house 1,000 Queenslanders. It housed 55. Why was that promise not kept?

Ms SCANLON: As was made very clear at the time, funding was available for people to submit properties the department could headlease. I can advise there were 139 EOIs considered, which is less than 1,000. I cannot force people to offer their homes forward to us, but the money was there. It was available from the Queensland government to headlease properties. I have heard the opposition's criticism of this program which I find baffling, because this is helping families right now as we build more homes. I also find it hypocritical because properties were in fact leased when you were the housing minister as well. This has long been a policy under governments.

I have also heard the Leader of the Opposition criticise our decision to purchase National Rental Affordability Scheme homes using the Housing Investment Fund. Again, we make no apology for purchasing and leasing properties to help families now. Again, I find it hypocritical for the LNP to criticise us for using that fund to purchase these properties when I have correspondence from the deputy leader of the LNP asking me to ask the department to purchase NRAS properties in his electorate. On the one hand they are asking me to purchase these properties; on the other hand they are criticising us in the media for using that fund to purchase those properties. I think there is clearly some dysfunction happening within the LNP. I make no apology for what we are doing to help Queenslanders with their housing needs right now as we deliver a record investment to build even more.

CHAIR: Member for Burnett or member for Everton, we have about one minute. Do you have another question?

Mr MANDER: Minister, when that policy was proposed, did it ever enter your mind or that of others that, with the private rental vacancy rates at one per cent, the target of 1,000 was never going to be met?

Ms SCANLON: We make no apology for being ambitious. We of course wanted to see—

Mr MANDER: What about being silly?

Ms SCANLON: Buying houses is silly, is it?

CHAIR: Order!

Ms SCANLON: Is that your position?


Mr MANDER: It is a silly policy.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Everton, you have been warned under standing order 185. I will allow the minister to answer your question. Should I have another interaction like that, I will be asking you to leave the chamber.

Ms SCANLON: Thank you, Chair. I find it concerning that the former LNP housing minister and current shadow housing minister thinks that it is silly for us to help lease 60 homes under that program right now to help vulnerable families. That is what he said—that he thinks it is a silly policy. That is bizarre. We make no apology for putting in place policies, putting investment on the table, to help Queenslanders right now.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for this session has come to an end. The committee will take a short break. The hearing will resume at 2.45 pm with the continued examination of the estimates for the housing portfolio area.

Proceedings suspended from 2.30 pm to 2.45 pm.

 **CHAIR:** The hearing is resumed. The committee will now continue the estimates examination for the housing portfolio area. I remind those members on a warning that those warnings still stand in this session.

Mr BENNETT: My question is to the director-general. I am after an update and maybe the initiatives that have worked with not-for-profits, particularly around the Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative, in particular domestic violence providers and if we are getting homes built out there.

Mr Cridland: Are you asking about homes via our community housing providers? Is that correct?

Mr BENNETT: No. I understand the Housing Investment Growth Initiative is a mechanism for not-for-profits—not for everyone, but it is for not-for-profits—to be able to progress projects with the department. I am particularly interested around the domestic violence area.

Mr Cridland: I think I understand your question. I will just go to the data. Specifically, in terms of the domestic and family violence issue that you raised—

Mr BENNETT: It could be more generic around not-for-profits, if it is easier. I just want to get a feel of how it is going out there. I am happy for you to come back to me later in the session if that works with you, Minister.

Ms SCANLON: I think the QHIGI program is a particular program that already exists. I am wondering whether you mean specifically that program or the Queensland investment fund. There are many NGOs that would work with—

Mr BENNETT: The Queensland Housing Investment Growth Initiative is a specific area. I understand that is the body that is dealing with some providers—

Ms SCANLON: It is one of.

Mr BENNETT:—to provide some solutions for housing. My question was about the not-for-profit sector.

Ms SCANLON: We probably have to come back at the end of the session to provide you with a breakdown of those organisations.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you.

CHAIR: I thank the minister and the director-general.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, just going back to Help to Home: I understand it had a budget of \$40 million. How much of that budget was expended?

Mr Cridland: In terms of the \$40 million planned allocation, it is currently at: \$24.7 million over four years has been allocated to increase headleases through existing programs; \$2.4 million to secure additional temporary accommodation; \$4.6 million spent to date up until 30 June 2023 to secure leased accommodation from the private residential and commercial property markets; and \$7.9 million to secure more residential and commercial accommodation. I think specifically to answer your question: \$4.6 million spent up until 30 June 2023.

Mr MANDER: If I am right, the balance has been used to lease more properties. Is that what has happened?

Mr Cridland: Yes, it has been allocated.

Mr MANDER: Minister, at the Housing Summit the Deputy Premier said—

The best way we can relieve pressure on public and social housing is indeed making sure that there is affordable housing in the private market to avoid pushing people out of that private market into social or public housing or, worse still, homelessness.

How does that statement reconcile with you continuing to buy existing properties out of the private rental market?

Ms SCANLON: As the Deputy Premier has also said, we have launched a draft South East Queensland Regional Plan that talks about a very significant increase to the amount of homes that need to be delivered throughout South-East Queensland and we are working with local councils to make sure that those are delivered on. For the first time, we also have a target of 20 per cent social and affordable homes through that draft plan.

The Deputy Premier is absolutely correct; we need to see increased supply in the private market but we make no apology for purchasing homes like those homes that are coming off the National Rental Affordability Scheme. Because the former LNP government chose to discontinue that program, if we did not purchase those homes, they would go back into the private market and those tenants—or any tenants for that matter—would not get that subsidised housing. If the LNP's position is you do not want us to purchase these homes, it seems to be in contrast to what the deputy leader of the LNP has written to me asking me to do.

Mr MANDER: I do not appreciate being verballed because that is not what I have said. No-one—

Ms SCANLON: Well, I am unclear what the LNP's position is because there seems to be two—

Mr MANDER: I am not worried about our position. This is estimates about your position.

Ms SCANLON: I have been very clear on our position: we want to buy more national—

CHAIR: Order! Minister and member for Everton, please stop quarrelling across the chamber. Member for Everton, do you have a further question?

Mr MANDER: I do. Minister, you will continue to buy existing properties from the private rental market, which is experiencing the greatest stress ever at around one per cent vacancy rates, knowing that it will contribute to more pressure being put on the market?

Ms SCANLON: I do not accept that purchasing homes which would come off the National Rental Affordability Scheme is going to—

Mr MANDER: Point of order.

CHAIR: The member for Everton has raised a point of order.

Mr MANDER: Point of order on relevance. I never mentioned the National Rental Affordability Scheme.

Ms SCANLON: Those are the homes that we are buying.

Mr MANDER: Their purchasing goes well beyond NRAS. It is obviously a deliberate policy, and my question refers to the general policy of buying properties from the private rental market.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, I believe that your point of order is a frivolous one. They must cease. I will ask the minister, who was being responsive to your question, to continue. As you are under a warning, I ask that you hear the minister out until she has completed her response, at which time you may have a follow-up question, which is absolutely permissible. I call the minister.

Ms SCANLON: Thank you, Chair. We make no apology for purchasing homes that were part of the National Rental Affordability Scheme through the Housing Investment Fund. We are also purchasing properties that, in many cases, were vacant properties, like retirement villages and aged-care homes, to make sure that we utilise that stock to help vulnerable Queenslanders. I think most people would say that that is a good thing: the government purchases or leases vacant properties and utilises them to help vulnerable Queenslanders. If the LNP does not support that, that is a matter for them, but I think that is what Queenslanders would expect from a responsive government that is here to help vulnerable Queenslanders and to do everything we can to assist people with their needs now while we build more homes.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, do you have a follow-up question?

Mr MANDER: I do, Chair. Minister, in relation to the retirement homes you have just mentioned and, I think, a hotel that the government—

Ms SCANLON: I did not, but we have bought that, too.

Mr MANDER: Yes. You have probably answered the question. Have you bought those or are you leasing those retirement homes and a hotel?

Ms SCANLON: A combination of both. We committed funding in this year's budget specifically for Brisbane to both purchase and lease properties to try to make sure we provide more homes for people who are in housing stress.

Mr MANDER: How long are those leases, Minister?

Ms SCANLON: There has been one purchase so far. The department, I understand, is in contract negotiations on another property. I will refer to the director-general, who may have some more information on the allocation of those funds, but obviously it was only just announced as part of the budget.

Mr Cridland: I will have to come back to you on the length of leases.

Mr MANDER: Minister, as a result of a number of unfortunate comments made by the Premier and Deputy Premier on rental caps, the government introduced new legislation limiting rent increases to once per year. We now know that that has led to many leases being prematurely ended so that rents may be increased. With whom did the department consult regarding those legislative changes?

Ms SCANLON: I would be interested in what you are referring to around 'prematurely ended'. The legislation is around limiting rent increases. If people ended their tenancy agreement at the expiration of the six months then that is part of their tenancy agreement, but if they ended it earlier then I would recommend those people perhaps talk to the Residential Tenancies Authority or the Queensland Statewide Tenant Advice and Referral Service, to which we have just provided increased funding.

When it comes to the reforms that we put through the parliament, obviously they went through a parliamentary process. Stakeholders put forward their views. The REIQ put forward their views. We listened to stakeholders. Ultimately, though, we put forward legislation to try to bring our laws in line with other jurisdictions to try to, as I said, put a limit to the amount of times someone would experience a rent increase, and I think most people would accept that that was the right thing to do.

Mr MANDER: To clarify that, Minister, you are saying that went through the normal parliamentary processes. That was fast-tracked after the Premier and Deputy Premier made some now-in-hindsight comments that they probably wish they did not make about rental caps. This was simply a policy done quickly to cover up those gaps, was it not?

Ms SCANLON: No. As I said, it went through the parliament. I do not believe—

Mr MANDER: Through the parliament, yes.

Ms SCANLON: Yes, and I do not believe the member made any amendments. If you had any concerns you maybe should have made amendments, which you did not do.

Mr MANDER: We are not the ones making—

Ms SCANLON: You are an elected member of—

CHAIR: Order! You are reverting, member for Everton, to your former conduct. When you ask a question, the common decency is to allow the minister to respond. Should you have a follow-up question, I would be more than happy to allow that, but when you ask a question, please show respect to the minister and allow her to answer the question.

Ms SCANLON: As I said, we put forward this reform to bring us in line with almost every other jurisdiction in the country. We make no apology for bringing in laws to try to make sure that we have a fair renting system. I can advise as well that some of the advice we have received from the RTA is that there were a number of tenants who experienced more than one rent increase in 2022. This was about making sure that we limit the amount of rent increases that those individuals or families might see.

Mr MANDER: Minister, you have made recently available \$50,000 to each community housing provider to increase the capability of their organisations. How will the department measure the success or otherwise of that investment?

Ms SCANLON: As I said, we have seen an increase in the amount of community housing homes under our government. We are working in partnership with community housing providers. Ultimately, they are external to government, though, so the decisions they make about their investment are a matter for them. I do not know if the director-general has anything to add to that around that particular program.

Mr Cridland: It is an ongoing program and we are continuing to actively provide support to community housing providers. On that, I am able to come back to a question you asked me earlier about registered community housing providers. Since 2017 the department has contracted 2,117 homes with registered community housing providers and 537 of those have been delivered.

CHAIR: Member for Burnett, does that answer your question?

Mr BENNETT: Yes, thank you.

CHAIR: I will now move to government questions.

Mr SKELTON: The director-general might have touched on this earlier. Can the minister advise what the Palaszczuk government has done to help more First Nations people into home ownership?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Nicklin for the question. It gives me an opportunity to talk about the work the Palaszczuk government is doing to help more First Nations people in particular into home ownership. This government is supporting First Nations families into home ownership by resolving outstanding entitlements, providing increased opportunities and pathways into private home ownership and helping to build capacity to maintain privately owned homes. This government continues to deliver our \$75 million Remote Home Ownership Program to provide First Nations residents of discrete communities with pathways to home ownership. The department is working closely with partner agencies, trustees, traditional owner groups and communities to support residents of these communities into ownership.

Our government's commitment to First Nations home ownership has enabled 208 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families across 15 remote and discrete communities to achieve home ownership through the transfer of a social housing dwelling. These positive outcomes have been achieved through the resolution of outstanding Land Holding Act leases and entitlements and 99-year home ownership leases. The department supports social housing tenants in urban and regional areas to purchase their social housing dwellings through the Sales to Tenants program with further support available to First Nations residents of Queensland through a suite of loan products including the shared equity solutions for social housing tenants. Work to identify new innovative pathways to home ownership for First Nations families continues through the local trustees of remote communities and investigation of models to support home ownership outcomes such as new shared equity arrangements.

As part of the commitment to transfer social housing dwellings into private home ownership we continue to support new home owners. New owners are being supported through the Queensland government funding to local organisations to deliver community toolboxes in three remote and discrete communities in the Cape and Torres Strait region. These toolboxes are available for all owners to borrow tools and access resources to support them undertaking their own repairs and maintaining their homes. Informed decision-making which supports self-determination by families is critical to sustainable home ownership as well as the delivery of housing and home ownership roadshows to drive engagement with potential future home owners to discuss home ownership options in community.

The Palaszczuk government continues to invest in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander home ownership. This includes investing \$9.95 million in the 2023-24 financial year to support more families into ownership in remote and discrete communities as part of delivering the whole-of-government \$75 million Remote Home Ownership Program which was funded through the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017 to 2027. I look forward to updating the House further on what I know is an important initiative and no doubt will be a continued discussion through the next iteration of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Housing Action Plan.

Ms LUI: Can the minister advise what the government is doing to deliver more social and affordable homes in regional Queensland including in my electorate of Cook?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the member for Cook for the question. I know that when we visited the member's community this was a very important issue that was raised with the former minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch. I acknowledge the important work that she is doing in the treaty process and, of course, the measures that we took from that engagement with your community around cost-of-living and how we support families in your electorate.

We recognise that to tackle the national housing challenges we really do need everyone to work together. Our QuickStarts program is a statewide capital program that is being delivered through department delivered projects as a partnership between the Queensland government registered community housing providers, community organisations and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils. I also had the opportunity of meeting with local government representatives at a Local Government Association event in Far North Queensland in the first few weeks of being the housing minister. I acknowledge the advocacy from your community.

We divided nine development regions across Queensland made up of local government areas from the far north to our southern border and the west through the Queensland outback. The electorate of Cook sits across the Cape York, outback and Far North Queensland regions when it comes to the QuickStarts program. The original target of 2,765 homes will see 181 new social homes in Cape York, 255 in Far North Queensland and 118 in the outback. As at 30 June 2023 under the QuickStarts program contracts have been awarded for 35 new homes in the Cape York region, 123 in the Far North Queensland region and 41 in the outback. Of these, 53 are in the electorate of Cook.

This strong Labor budget also commits an additional \$322 million to expand the program with another 500 social housing homes on the horizon. That will increase that QuickStarts target to 3,265. We also committed funding in the budget in acknowledgement of the cost escalation that everyone is experiencing right now in building so that not only can we deliver on our target but obviously we have that additional money for the increased target as well.

The budget also commits \$127 million for greater First Nations housing outcomes. That includes, as I said, around \$50 million to deliver outcomes for the new First Nations housing action plan. My department has already been out to communities to hear about their priorities and make sure we can deliver locally led, place-based housing solutions.

The budget also includes \$77 million to continue to deliver on the remote and discrete community social housing investment. While we continue to invest more in housing for remote communities, it is clear there is still more to do, and that is where the plan for this funding and steps in it will be really important. The department will continue to deliver homes where they are needed the most with a focus on increasing immediate supply. That includes acquiring existing homes from the market and developing a program to deliver factory built dwellings across Queensland. We have committed to establishing a new QBuild facility in Cairns to build those prefabricated homes. I have had the opportunity to look at the one in Brisbane. I know it will be really important for the regions to be able to get that stock out quickly.

Following our Housing Summit we also committed an additional billion dollars to the Housing Investment Fund, which increases that fund to \$2 billion. That will mean we can deliver 5,600 social and affordable homes through that scheme. As I mentioned earlier, 71 projects have gone through to

the next round; they have been short-listed. Of those, 60 per cent are outside Brisbane. I can report that includes proposals that would be within Far North Queensland. I look forward to announcing the outcomes of that short-listed process when the department has gone through that process.

As I said, in addition to all of this we also have additional funding from the Commonwealth government. We will update the committee and the Queensland community around how that will be allocated in due course.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Cook, and I thank the minister. Minister, my question is to you. Can the minister advise what the government is doing to deliver more social and affordable homes in South-East Queensland including in my electorate of Mansfield?

Ms SCANLON: I thank the chair for the question. I joined the chair in the first week or so of me being the housing minister to look at a complex that was being delivered by the Brisbane Housing Company and the Queensland government that will provide social and affordable homes for residents in her community and the South-East Queensland area. I can advise that our statewide capital program is delivering thousands of homes right across the state, and a number of those homes are in South-East Queensland. That includes 83 that have been delivered or are in the pipeline in the electorate of Mansfield.

As I said, we went to that property in Mount Gravatt which is providing a home for people—a \$12.8 million project in partnership with BHC. It is another demonstration of how we are working with the community housing sector to try to make sure that we increase homes across the state. More broadly across Brisbane, contracts have been awarded under QuickStarts for 282 new homes. Again, we are delivering for people who need a safe place to call home.

The department will obviously continue to deliver social homes where they are most needed. As I mentioned, the Housing Investment Fund will deliver 5,600 homes. While 60 per cent will be outside of Brisbane, there are a significant amount of applications that are looking at the Brisbane area and, of course, the broader South-East Queensland region. We also have the draft South East Queensland Regional Plan where we are working with local councils to unlock more supply and, importantly, more social and affordable homes. I know that the Deputy Premier and his department have been doing work to identify statewide land where there are opportunities. The Premier made a significant announcement recently around not only the work we are doing on one of those parcels of land to open more social and affordable housing in one of those developments but also broader housing that will increase supply in the private market. I look forward to updating you on your electorate as we continue to build more homes.

Mr SKELTON: Can the minister advise the outcome of the government's land audit report?

Ms SCANLON: The land audit was a key outcome of the Queensland Housing Summit. While we were doing that work, we obviously continued to do work, through our QuickStarts program and other programs, to deliver more social and affordable homes. As I mentioned earlier, on average we have delivered 10 new homes per week since coming to government, with a significant investment to build more homes and in some cases purchase homes as well. Of course, Queensland is not immune to housing pressures and we have made it really clear that we need to look at creative solutions. That is why we undertook that statewide land audit. Not only did we look at our own sites; we also invited councils to look at their land and faith-based organisations to look at their land. I had a great meeting recently with the Catholic archdiocese and I have been meeting with other stakeholders who I know are looking at their assets and where there may be opportunities.

I can report that the statewide land audit—that extensive piece of work—identified 20,000 parcels of land initially reviewed. Economic Development Queensland has been investigating 17 sites identified during the audit and is now working to prioritise those sites that are most suitable for the delivery of a housing outcome. As I mentioned, the Premier announced just before her estimates appearance that there will be a dedicated social and affordable housing development site at Northshore Hamilton which was released by EDQ to the market. A second opportunity was announced for a market housing development on approximately 4.1 hectares of land across three superlot development sites directly adjoining the social and affordable housing site.

We are looking at other avenues and opportunities to make sure particularly vulnerable Queenslanders can have a roof over their head. Only recently I joined local MPs and the Deputy Premier at a retirement village that we have purchased in the Moreton Bay region. We have also purchased and leased retirement and aged-care facilities in Clayfield and Toowoomba and we have purchased a hotel in inner-city Brisbane. The Premier and I had an opportunity to meet Shona at the Clayfield Retirement Village. Shona had been couch surfing with friends and family when she became

homeless for six months. Obviously, it was an incredibly stressful time for her, made worse by the fact that she had a medical condition of fibromuscular dysplasia. We were able to find her a new home at this former retirement village. When she found out, she was so relieved that she told us that she cried. That is why we are leaving no stone unturned. We want to make sure that we can help more people like Shona.

We know that people are feeling the impact of national cost-of-living pressures right now. That is why we are purchasing products where we can. It is also why we are undertaking that work around identifying where there might be land that we can build on and where there might be under-utilised land and buildings that might be suitable for residential development. We have our Housing Opportunities Portal, which is an opportunity for people to put forward any ideas that they may have to be assessed by the department. I look forward to updating members as we go through those processes and consider those proposals. No doubt we will have more announcements to come.

Mr MANDER: Minister, I wanted to continue on the topic of the community housing sector and the \$50,000 funding for those that want to apply. Is the purpose of the fund to build the capacity of community housing providers to manage more state owned properties?

CHAIR: I welcome the member for South Brisbane, who has returned to the table.

Ms SCANLON: The purpose of the Community Housing Futures grant is to provide funds of up to \$50,000 to improve the long-term viability of Queensland's community housing sector to deliver larger scale housing supply projects; to diversify operating models; to enhance CHP capacity to bid for government investment; and to deliver additional affordable housing. I should say: it is important that they build up the capacity because of the Housing Australia Future Fund—if it gets through the parliament, if the LNP and the Greens stop blocking it.

Mr MANDER: Minister, can you explain why the number of dwellings run by community housing providers in Queensland declined by nearly 100 properties between 2015 and 2022?

Ms SCANLON: I believe that the member is referring to the RoGS data. As the director-general outlined previously, that particular data does not include all of the information that we would count. What I would say is that you are neglecting to mention that community housing has actually increased as of the most recent financial year.

Mr MANDER: Would you provide the figure?

Ms SCANLON: You have seen the figure, no doubt, that is in the RoGS data. You were referring to the RoGS data, so you can—

Mr MANDER: You are saying that is wrong.

Ms SCANLON: I can tell you in terms of this financial year, if you give me one moment—

Mr MANDER: So there is consistency with the question, I would like to know—and I think you are suggesting—that the community housing sector is managing more properties than it was in 2015. I would like to know that figure.

Ms SCANLON: Managing properties?

Mr MANDER: Yes—managing state owned properties.

Ms SCANLON: We would probably have to come back to you on that one. I can advise that, as at 2023, there are 12,139 social homes managed by CHPs. I would have to get you a specific date, but, as you can see, that is increasing.

CHAIR: Member for Everton, does that answer your question?

Mr MANDER: I am not sure if the director-general was trying to provide further information.

Mr Cridland: Not unless there are further questions.

Dr ROBINSON: Minister, with regard to the government's housing round tables and Housing Summit—specifically the first round table, which occurred almost 328 days ago—the Premier said that there were 90 parcels of land made available by the Catholic Church. How many of those parcels of land now have construction occurring on them to house Queenslanders?

Ms SCANLON: I may have to refer to the director-general to update you. Before I do, what I would say is that those parcels of land are owned by those individual organisations. There is nothing preventing them from necessarily doing work themselves on those properties. We are always willing to work with faith-based organisations or anyone who might have land that is available. As I said, I met with an organisation recently. I know that, in terms of one of the properties they were talking about, the

department had done some work to look at the feasibility of doing some upgrades. The department has been actively working with them while we build more of our own stock. I might hand over to the director-general.

Mr Cridland: We are continuing to work with the archdiocese around the properties they identified through the summit. We have got down to a short list of sites with them. In fact, I am meeting with the archdiocese next week, I believe, on 19 potential sites that they have refined out of that longer list that was raised at the round table.

Dr MacMAHON: Director-General, with regard to the \$2 billion Housing Investment Fund, after two years of this fund can you advise how many Queenslanders are currently living in new homes constructed by the Housing Investment Fund?

Mr Cridland: New homes?

Dr MacMAHON: New homes.

Mr Cridland: I can tell you that, in terms of people living in properties that are new to our portfolio—in other words, that we did not have before to provide people with housing—it is 168.

Dr MacMAHON: And newly constructed homes?

Mr Cridland: No. They are new additional properties within our overall portfolio, so they are providing housing outcomes to vulnerable Queenslanders.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, it sounds like from that answer there are no Queenslanders living in new homes currently that have been built with support from the Housing Investment Fund. Is that correct?

Ms SCANLON: There are homes under construction. It takes time to build homes, and I find the line of questioning pretty hypocritical given the Greens and the LNP have got an unholy alliance at the moment to block the very same fund federally. That is 30,000 homes that are being stopped from being funded by the federal government—homes and support for remote Indigenous communities for repair and maintenance and improvements to housing. That is also stopping \$100 million for crisis and transitional housing options for women and children fleeing domestic and family violence. That is also stopping \$30 million to build more housing and specialist services for veterans.

We have always been very clear that the Housing Investment Fund is one of a number of funds that the Queensland government has to deliver social and affordable housing. It provides a pipeline of work to work with institutional investors, superannuation companies and community housing providers to get stock up off the ground. As you have seen, there are two housing projects that are currently with work underway. I had the opportunity to, I believe in the member's electorate, announce a proposal that has been approved through the Housing Investment Fund. We could do more, though, as I said, if we had the Housing Australia Future Fund.

Dr ROBINSON: Minister, as a quick follow-up to my last question, in terms of the 90 parcels of land offered almost a year ago by the Catholic Church to be able to construct new housing on, what month do you plan for people to move in to these new builds?

Ms SCANLON: As the director-general outlined, we are having continued conversations with them. There are some problems with some of those sites, so we need to work through those impediments and work through whether there is in fact an opportunity. We are thankful though for them putting forward those suggestions. We will work with them.

As I said, we need to make sure that Queenslanders are getting the right outcome when we are investing money that it is appropriate in terms of the settings around any agreement that there might be in place between a faith-based organisation and the delivery of particularly Queensland government capital. We will provide feedback to the community about all of our social housing projects, and I am happy to continue to report to Queenslanders about all of the projects. We have hundreds of social housing homes under construction right now. I can also report that we have approved a number of homes to be built in partnership with Vinnies, as I said earlier, in Nerang and Bundaberg, so we are working with those organisations already.

Mr MANDER: Director-General, can you provide an update on the transition of the Pinkenba quarantine facility to emergency accommodation please?

Mr Cridland: Yes, certainly. My understanding of the current situation of the Centre for National Resilience at Pinkenba is it is an Australian government designed, built and owned facility specifically established for quarantine purposes. The Australian government has recently confirmed it is proceeding with arrangements for the Department of Defence to use the centre to support logistics, staging and

future deployment as needed. The Commonwealth also continues to support the centre as a long-term investment in an emergency response capacity. Queensland has requested that the Australian government determine whether these uses are consistent with temporary housing use. If this threshold issue can be resolved, Queensland has committed \$10 million as a capital contribution to assist in repurposing the facilities.

Whilst these issues are resolved at the Commonwealth level, the department has been getting on with delivering innovative solutions that address the immediate needs for people experiencing housing insecurity. As part of our broad response to current housing challenges, we are leasing and purchasing suitable accommodation located near supports and services, including former retirement villages, vacant unit buildings and hotels, to allow us to secure housing for Queenslanders in need quickly. As at 30 June 2023, we had over 2,280 places of temporary and some longer term supported accommodation in Queensland. Some 484 of those places are secured through purchased refurbished sites and headleases just in these recent years.

Mr MANDER: Just keeping on the theme of the homeless and housing those people, Minister, I refer to the Griffith University offer of 200 bedrooms that the government deemed to be not appropriate. The replacement policy was 64 homes that were purchased right throughout the state. Minister, how does that meet the demands for emergency accommodation in South-East Queensland as a replacement policy?

CHAIR: Minister, you have three minutes.

Ms SCANLON: What I would say is we obviously have announced that we were purchasing other homes in replacement of that particular proposal because there were factors around that proposal that I might let the director-general talk through in a moment. In addition to that though, we in this year's budget have announced over \$60 million to purchase and lease emergency accommodation. We have also increased funding to deliver more social and affordable homes. Again though I would say we could do more if we had the Housing Australia Future Fund that would deliver 30,000 additional homes that you could help with if you got on the phone to people like Peter Dutton and others and told them to stop blocking it. Director-General, did you have anything to add?

Mr Cridland: Through the repurposed funding our department has purchased 65 dwellings with the potential to house up to 185 people across 20 suburbs through the \$25 million allocation to provide emergency accommodation faster. As at 11 July 2023, 56 dwellings have settled which are housing up to 170 people. This is the investment that replaced the previously proposed Griffith University student accommodation initiative.

CHAIR: I call the member for Cook.

Ms LUI: Can the minister provide an update on the implementation of the Queensland Audit Office report recommendations?

Ms SCANLON: I can update the committee on the Department of Housing's progress in delivering the eight recommendations made by the Queensland Audit Office as part of the *Delivering social housing services* report tabled in parliament in July 2022. The department accepted all eight recommendations aimed at improving the department's housing register management at the application and allocation processes and tenant ongoing eligibility for social housing. Five of the eight recommendations have been delivered, with the remaining three on track to be delivered by December 2023. This includes a response I announced last week to how we manage the Social Housing Register. The improvements will be made to better manage the housing register and ensure it prioritises people most in need and reflects Queenslanders ready to accept an offer of social housing. I am sorry: I think I just said 'last week'; I think it was earlier this week.

The Department of Housing is also continually and regularly contacting all applicants on the Social Housing Register to ensure they are getting the support that they need. I understand there may have been some comments by the member for Everton today about that particular process and I think it is important for the committee to know that this is a process that has always existed. In fact, when I asked the department about this process, they have a policy document I believe as far back as 1995—so nearly my entire life—that shows that this has been the process of us continuing to contact applicants, and where they are not able to be contacted there is a process. That is the same process that has always existed. In fact, the member for Everton responded to the member for Bundamba at the time to the same accord: that this has always been a policy in place. It was suspended during COVID.

We also have updated the department's website to clearly communicate the needs assessment process for social housing applicants. A statewide approach has been implemented to identify, approve and record priority allocations, and new processes have been implemented to provide consistent and system-based social housing application and pre-allocation reviews. The department is also working with the Australasian Housing and Urban Research Institute, industry experts and key agencies to support the development of the model for future demand, as I mentioned before. In addition to these recommendations and consistent with other states, policy reforms will limit the number of reasonable social housing offers an applicant can refuse while remaining on the register. As I said, this is a system that is consistent with other jurisdictions and in some cases more generous than in other jurisdictions.

I have also made a decision to more regularly report on Social Housing Register data, with information on the number of active and inactive applications on the register to move from yearly reporting to quarterly reporting. I want to make sure that Queenslanders have access to that information transparently every quarter. I think it is important that we have increased that level of reporting. Our government is committed to continuing to improve the delivery of service and housing outcomes for vulnerable Queenslanders, and I certainly look forward to updating the committee further in the future as we progress with those other recommendations.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Before I call the member for Nicklin, I just want to remind the director-general and the minister of outstanding information that has been requested. There are still five matters. I will leave time at the end. The first is the outstanding Indigenous housing that is state owned. One agency or one council had not reported. The second was the categories of social housing breakdown as at the end of 2014 and 2015. The third matter was the number of properties purchased by the department in the last five years. The fourth issue was the retirement homes bought and leased and the length of the lease. The fifth matter was the categories used during 2015 and whether there was an increase from 2015 to 2022.

Mr Cridland: I think that is the same breakdown.

CHAIR: Great. So, there were four matters. I call the member for Nicklin.

Mr SKELTON: Can the minister outline how the Palaszczuk government is investing and growing supported accommodation across our state?

Ms SCANLON: The Palaszczuk government is committed to ensuring Queenslanders have safe and affordable housing. Everyone deserves safe and affordable housing. I am pleased to provide an update on our investment in supported accommodation across the state, something that I know is really important to the sector. We are working closely with people who are feeling the impact of increased pressure on the private housing market which is being felt across the country.

Across Queensland, a range of opportunities to increase housing choice and availability are being considered, including initiatives that provide extra support for those most in need. The department is continuing to explore and identify headleasing and purchasing opportunities across the state for the use of social housing and temporary supported accommodation. This has resulted in identifying and putting into operation 10 new and two refurbished temporary supported accommodation sites over the last three years, providing more than 350 places of accommodation for adults and families in places like Brisbane, Toowoomba, Redland Bay, Gympie and the Sunshine Coast. This is an investment of more than \$26.1 million in site purchases and \$8.7 million in leasing opportunities since 2020.

In this time we have also committed more than \$39 million to support funding to further assist adults and families residing in these properties. This funding is bolstered by the Palaszczuk government's investment of \$10 million in the Housing Summit temporary accommodation program and \$49.8 million for the critical housing response. When the department inspects a potential site, consideration is obviously given to its proximity to support services, shops, public transport and schools as well as other measures that are appropriate for the cohort and support model that people would need for that particular site.

Another key component of the state's acquisition strategy is whether a site can be economically converted for re-use. As I said, we are doing this at a number of our sites, including retirement villages and aged-care facilities that were vacant properties and now support Queenslanders in need—or will support Queenslanders in need once we do that work to them. The standards we have implemented while sourcing properties will ensure we provide a safe and secure environment for Queenslanders to thrive in. Of course, we will continue to look at these opportunities and I look forward to updating the committee.

CHAIR: Can the minister outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing to specifically support people with a disability with housing need, including accessibility?

Ms SCANLON: As of 30 June this year, 49 per cent of households living in government managed social housing identified at least one person as having a disability. At the same time, almost 46.5 per cent of applicants on the Social Housing Register identified as being a person with a disability. That is why the Palaszczuk government is committed to providing safe, accessible housing that meets livable housing design standards in the properties that we own and manage. Under the Livable Housing Design Guidelines, gold-level dwellings provide features such as level thresholds and showers, wider doorways and hallways and provision for grab rails, making them suitable for people with varying levels of mobility. Platinum-level dwellings include additional clearances, making them particularly suitable for people who mobilise in wheelchairs. The member for Nicklin and I recently visited one of those properties, where Coast2Bay were showing us some of the provisions they had incorporated into the design.

The department has also developed a modular homes design library that also meets livable housing design and specialist disability accommodation standards. Modular designs will be useful in areas where build costs are high or where it is difficult to find a local builder. Additionally, the Palaszczuk government is investing \$13.15 million to deliver a target of 2,713 disability modifications in social housing in the 2023-24 financial year. More than 34,500 people, including people with a disability, also accessed the Home Assist Secure program through 41 providers across Queensland in 2022-23. These services deliver free information and referrals regarding health and safety, home security, maintenance, repairs and minor modifications and, if eligible, subsidised minor modifications and home maintenance.

People with a disability are obviously a priority cohort under Queensland's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. The plan aims to promote the rights, choice, control, accessibility and inclusion in housing with support for people with disability. It also aims to co-design housing responses with people with a disability and expert organisations. It aims to work with the NDIA to assist Queenslanders access and maximise NDIS packages and specialist disability accommodation as well as work across government to deliver integrated responses that increase the diversity and supply of housing for people with a disability.

Queenslanders with Disability Network were engaged to bring together a diverse group of around 60 stakeholders for co-design workshops in 2022 to inform a new disability housing action plan that will be released hopefully this year. I had the opportunity to meet with QDN recently and confirmed that this is certainly a priority of mine and a priority of our government, and I look forward to updating the committee as we progress with that plan.

CHAIR: There are a number of matters to be discussed following up on non-government questioning, so we may just take some time now to ensure we have adequate opportunity for the director-general or for you, Minister, to clarify any matters. Director-General, would you like me to guide you through each matter or are you happy to lead the way?

Mr Cridland: I will work my way through it, Chair, if that is okay. In relation to the question about the RoGS data and reductions in relation to the state owned and managed Indigenous housing dwelling portfolio, I can advise that this is due to a number of incomings and outgoings. We have 20 demolitions, sales including sales to tenants totalling 60 before the statewide clause was put in place in July 2022 and then adding the purchase of 14 dwellings and transfer of other state owned dwellings. All that nets out to the figure you see in the RoGS. That is matter 1.

In terms of the breakdown of the categories for the 2014-15 financial year—this is the breakdown of the 71,719—community housing was 13,073, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander was 3,350, public housing was 50,620 and remote Indigenous housing was 4,676. In terms of the lease of the Redlands retirement village, the lease term is two years with a further one-year option. In terms of the purchase of existing properties back to 2015-16, the total is 648.

CHAIR: Thank you, Director-General.

Ms SCANLON: Chair, I want to clarify an issue raised earlier. The term 'wilful and malicious damage' is not a term used by the department to describe behaviour of tenants resulting in damage to houses. Under the fair expectation of behaviour policy, the department can hold tenants accountable for proven wilful damage during tenancy. Nevertheless, I have provided the dollar figure either way. I wanted to clarify that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Cook?

Ms LUI: Minister, can you please advise how the Housing Investment Fund is delivering more social and affordable housing for Queenslanders and is the minister aware of any alternative approaches?

Ms SCANLON: I am always happy to talk about the Housing Investment Fund, which is the first of its kind in Queensland. The fund will support 5,600 social and affordable homes by 2027. This commitment from the Palaszczuk government leverages the capacity of community housing providers and the private sector including institutional investors. What is clear is that all levels of government, industry and the community housing sector need to work hand in hand to address the national housing pressures that we are experiencing. This fund allows us to do that together.

Under the fund, \$130 million per annum is available to support a projected 5,600 social and affordable homes. This is in addition to programs like QuickStarts, as I mentioned. To date, over 1,500 homes have been approved for support by the Housing Investment Fund. That includes 116 social and affordable homes currently under construction and work is underway in developments in Chermside and Redcliffe with the Brisbane Housing Company and the Queensland Investment Corporation.

Earlier this week I had the pleasure of joining Coast2Bay in Yandina, with the member for Nicklin and the member for Caloundra, to announce that we are also partnering with them to purchase 121 more homes in the Sunshine Coast, Gympie and Moreton Bay regions, many of which were coming off the National Rental Affordability Scheme. As I said, that scheme was unfortunately walked away from by the previous Morrison LNP government.

It is not just ex-National Rental Affordability Scheme tenants who are happy that we are purchasing those homes. As I said, there are a number of members who I know think that this is a very important measure that the Queensland government is providing to help make sure that we not only assist people on the social housing register but also increase the amount of supply we have and that we make sure that those homes continue to provide subsidised housing for people who, if those properties left the market, would be subject to market conditions that can be really challenging for some families at the moment.

I look forward to updating the House as we progress with the Housing Investment Fund with, as I said, 71 properties. I should also update the House that, as we speak, 82 NRAS homes located in South-East Queensland and Townsville are now tenanted, supporting 168 people, including new families from the Social Housing Register.

CHAIR: Minister, you may wish to make a closing remark for a minute before I wrap up.

Ms SCANLON: Chair, I want to thank you for the opportunity to share information and respond to questions from the committee and members of parliament about the housing portfolio. Obviously, we are focused on working hard every day to support Queenslanders who may have housing needs. I thank you, Chair, committee members and visiting members of parliament for your interest in this area.

Importantly, I acknowledge all of the Department of Housing staff not only for their efforts in today's proceedings but also for what they do every day to support Queenslanders in housing need. Thank you, in particular, to the Department of Housing staff here today: Director-General Mark Cridland as well as Matthew, Sarah, Chantal, Mark, Sharon, Kirstine, Corynne, Karl, Josephine, Tim, Alice and Emma. We also have CEO Jennifer Smith from the RTA and representatives from the RTA here today. I conclude by acknowledging my office: Clare, Kirby, Dan, David, Emma, Kobe, Francis, Megan, Steph and Tim. They have worked very hard to ensure that we were able to answer the committee's questions today.

CHAIR: Minister, on behalf of the committee I thank you, the director-general and officials for your attendance. The committee recognises the work that our public servants do every day to support not only our most vulnerable Queenslanders but also Queenslanders right across the state who require our support, assistance and service. I thank you for the great work that you do every day.

The committee will now adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 4 pm for the examination of the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services. I declare this section of the estimates closed.

Proceedings suspended from 3.46 pm to 4.00 pm.

**ESTIMATES—COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND SERVICES COMMITTEE—CHILD
SAFETY; SENIORS AND DISABILITY SERVICES****In Attendance**

Hon. CD Crawford, Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services


Mr D Wilson, Chief of Staff

Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services

Ms K Connors, Acting Director-General

Mr M Wise, Deputy Director-General, Disability, Seniors and Carers

Mr M Lupi, Deputy Director-General, Disability Accommodation and Respite Services & Forensic
Disability Service

 **CHAIR:** The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2023 for the portfolios of the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services until 6.45 pm. As determined by the House, the committee will examine areas within the minister's portfolio areas as follows: seniors and disability services from 4 pm to 5.15 pm; and child safety from 5.30 pm to 6.45 pm. I remind members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during the time specified for the area as agreed by the House on 16 June 2023. The committee will suspend proceedings for a break from 5.15 pm to 5.30 pm. The committee has granted leave for a number of non-committee members to attend and ask questions at the hearing today. I note that we have been joined by the member for Surfers Paradise. Other visiting members may join us throughout the evening.

I remind those present today that the committee's proceedings are proceedings of the Queensland parliament and subject to the standing rules and orders of the Legislative Assembly. I also remind honourable members that matters relating to these portfolio areas can only be raised during times specified for the area as was agreed in the House. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in the Legislative Assembly apply in this hearing. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115 in this regard. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings today so that relevant issues can be explored fully and to ensure there is adequate opportunity to address questions from government and non-government members of the committee.

I wish to reiterate to all those participating in today's hearing of the sentiment of Mr Speaker's ruling of July 2018 when he recognised the importance of maintaining the dignity of the estimates committee process in terms of questioning, general behaviour and conduct, and adherence to the standing orders. Standing order 185 in relation to disorderly members further determines the conduct of parliamentarians during estimates hearings. I will exercise this standing order as required to ensure that our behaviour today reflects the expectations of the communities each and every one of us serves.

I remind everyone present that any person may be excluded from the proceedings at the direction of me as chair or by order of the committee. While mobile phone use is not permitted in the public gallery, an exception has been made for staff who are assisting witnesses here today. I do ask all present, however, to ensure that phones and other electronic devices are switched to silent mode and to refrain from taking photos or filming any of the proceedings. I also remind everyone that food is not permitted in the chamber.

On behalf of the committee I welcome the minister, the director-general, officials and members of the public to the hearing. At this point I would also like to welcome our Auslan interpreters for this section of our public hearing program. I thank the Auslan interpreters for the service that they deliver to some of our community right across the state. For the benefit of Hansard and our Auslan interpreters, I ask officials to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them by the minister or the director-general. The minister and the director-general do not need to do this.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of child safety, seniors and disability services open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes before the examination of your portfolio areas.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you very much, Chair. I acknowledge that we meet on the land of Aboriginal people and I pay respects to elders past, present and emerging. I want to acknowledge you, Chair, and the committee. I know that it has been a long day. We are nearly there. I am the last minister of the last session; it is a strong come-home at the end. I also want to acknowledge our Auslan interpreters. Hello, Mikey. It is good to see you again, mate. It is great to see the committee again, this time in a slightly different portfolio. I am still under your overwatch, but the titles have changed a little bit.

With me today I have my acting director-general, Kate Connors. The director-general, Deidre Mulkerin, is on leave at the moment. As diligent as I know she is, I am sure that she will be watching the live broadcast of this hearing and will probably give us some frank feedback over the next few days. I have great faith in our acting director-general and all of her executives to answer all of the committee's questions. I have here a range of senior executives from across the agency, including the acting director of Forensic Disability for questions in relation to the FDS. We can certainly call on each and every one of them for their knowledge and expertise. I am very pleased to say that I think the senior executive I have with me here today and in this portfolio are some of the best that I have seen operate in the government. I have held many portfolios now in the government, and I think the people around me are some of the best senior operators I have seen.

At the outset I place on record my appreciation for the dedication and efforts of the more than 5,000 staff that we have out there in the field who work in the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services all across this fantastic state. It is my honour and my privilege to be the minister responsible for this portfolio. I am always humbled and impressed by the talent and commitment of our departmental staff. To this I would like to add my gratitude for the support and hard work of all the peak bodies—our partners that provide advice and advocacy to government each and every day.

Quickly covering across our three portfolios, in Seniors we know that the cost of living is one of the most significant things that seniors are interested in and talking about. We obviously made some big announcements around electricity rebates and the \$1.8 billion cost-of-living rebates for all Queenslanders including seniors in our recent budget. Around 600,000 vulnerable households, including seniors, will be eligible for an additional \$700 cost-of-living rebate in addition to the ongoing electricity rebate for eligible seniors of \$372.20. For eligible Queensland seniors, the additional \$700 can bring them up to over \$1,000 taken off their electricity bills over the next financial year. We have been continuing to run a number of seniors expos and forums across the state. We have been able to have direct conversation with thousands of seniors about the cost of living, elder abuse and a range of many other issues. In conjunction with seniors legal and support services we have funded the Elder Abuse Prevention Unit, making sure we shine the light on elder abuse in our community.

In Disability Services, the NDIS review is currently underway. As minister, I am determined to make sure that the \$2.2 billion that Queensland contributes to the federally funded NDI scheme delivers the best possible outcomes for the people in this state. Later this year the NDIS Review report and another incredibly important report—the final report from the disability royal commission—will be released. Both of these will no doubt have significant recommendations for the disability sector, businesses, governments and broader organisations. Since our estimates hearing last year we have also made the announcement to continue Accommodation Support and Respite Services, AS&RS.

In child safety, as mentioned before, what I have found is a very dedicated, incredible team of frontline staff all over the state. I have now visited more than 15 frontline centres across Queensland. I have had many conversations with hundreds of staff. A big one in this year's budget for child safety is our work towards delegated authorities. There is a lot of interest out there in relation to that. I am very keen to talk about that more in this session. Delegated authority will give more First Nations communities self-determination when it comes to child protection. Obviously, we also have the review into residential care that we announced recently. The review will specifically look at children under 12, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people, and children and young people with a disability who reside in residential care.

With that said, Chair, I am happy to let you kick off. We are here to help and provide whatever information we can.

CHAIR: As always, Minister, it is wonderful to have your collegiality. Minister, we will start with the examination of estimates for the seniors and disability services portfolio areas. I call the member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I will defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I welcome the minister, senior public servants and the FDS commissioner. I acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet. Minister, I refer to page 7 of the SDS—‘Supporting Queenslanders with disability to participate as equal citizens in society’. I refer to the McIntyre Centre Riding for the Disabled in Pinjarra Hills. Given the significant state government investment into this centre, would you advise the committee about any actions your government has taken to ensure vital services can still be provided?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am very aware of the McIntyre Centre. I have had personal dialogue with the member for Moggill who has been quite a strong supporter of that. It is disappointing to hear that the McIntyre Centre is closing.

The Commonwealth government administers the NDIS which funds reasonable and necessary supports for people with disability. The NDIA maintains a price guide which determines what funding service providers receive for services delivered to NDIS participants. The McIntyre Centre has provided fantastic support for people with disability over an extended period. There remains a healthy and competitive range of providers that offer horseriding for people with disability in Brisbane.

As the provider regulator, the NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission is made aware when providers cease operations. Any further inquiries should be directed to the commission. I understand that Help Enterprises is currently exploring future options for a potential site. These discussions remain ongoing so it would be inappropriate to talk further on that. As I mentioned before, I have had personal conversations with the member for Moggill. This is purely a decision for Help Enterprises and it is not something that the government can intervene in.

Mr LANGBROEK: I want to acknowledge Mikey Webb. I always like to see him have to sign about himself when I see him at citizenship ceremonies.

Mr CRAWFORD: You should see him dance!

Mr LANGBROEK: Welcome, Mikey; nice to see you. My next question about the same issue is: is the state government considering purchasing the land and have there been any discussions with the federal government about this?

Mr CRAWFORD: We are not considering purchasing the land. We have raised the issue of the McIntyre Centre with the federal government. I do not think that they are interested in purchasing it either.

Mr BENNETT: I seek to table a letter signed by acting director-general Kate Connors.

Mr LANGBROEK: I have done 10 copies. It is a letter from the acting DG that I want to refer to in my next question. I have done copies for everyone to see before I ask the question.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, I notice that the acting director-general’s contact details are on this letter. It is general practice that we do not publish public servants’ details. Are you happy for me to quickly remove those for you?

Mr LANGBROEK: Whatever is appropriate, Madam Chair. We will give a copy to the minister and to the acting director-general to look at. Can I ask that the staff rip off the bottom section, please. The minister and acting director-general can have a copy. I am sure the minister knows where the acting director-general lives.

Mr CRAWFORD: I actually don’t, but I know what her phone number is.

CHAIR: Can I ask members to give that document to the staff to remove those details. Minister and acting director-general, when you are ready the member for Surfers Paradise will begin his question. Members of the committee will get a copy of that letter when your details are removed, Acting Director-General. Can I also ask that the letter in the hands of the minister and acting director-general not be tabled until those details are removed, please. Over to you, member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is something I am sure the acting director-general is aware of. It is really for your information, Minister. It is about AS&RS, Accommodation Support and Respite Services. It is about a couple of specific places that are mentioned in the letter. It is really about looking for a reassurance for the tenants, who are people with disabilities, because they have been waiting since October 2022 in relation to this matter. It was originally referred to the then minister for housing. I am going to ask a couple of questions about AS&RS. This one is very specifically about two places and whether you can give some reassurance to those people.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am happy to get the acting director-general to respond to that, but I am not quite sure what the specific question was.

Mr LANGBROEK: They are living under extreme uncertainty because of the fact that their houses are potentially going to be sold out from under them. I am asking whether there is some advice as to what might happen to them and when.

Ms Connors: We are trying to resolve this issue, but I can assure the tenants that we are absolutely concerned for their interests and any solutions that we are looking for in relation to the issues raised in this letter we are looking for continuity of their tenancy. We are trying to resolve this issue for them. We will do everything we can to be able to settle this as quickly as possible so we can provide them with that reassurance.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can I ask the minister or acting director-general how many properties the department has responsibility for with respect to disability housing? I note that I have read the annual report that says 479 clients for accommodation support and 266 for respite, but I am interested in the number of properties that might be affected similar to those that I have just asked about.

Ms Connors: Because you might ask a few questions about this, I might call up the deputy director-general who has responsibility for these matters and he will be able to answer your questions in more detail.

Mr Lupi: I can add some further detail. The properties that you have referred to in the earlier tabled document are part of a small property portfolio the department has had for many years as part of the state's investment in disability accommodation. Many of those are operated by non-government organisations now fully under the NDIS. They were previously funded by the state when we delivered and administered services. There are about 82 properties that the state operates under the specialist disability accommodation program that are operated by NGOs. We own the property and allow service users to use those for continuity. They were living in them prior to the transition.

In addition to that, the state has a small portfolio. AS&RS does not own all of its properties. Some of the service users in AS&RS live in public housing properties as tenants of the public housing department, as do many people with disabilities living in Queensland. They would live like other people as social housing tenants. At the moment about 68 per cent—I think, if I do the maths, it is maybe 140—of our service users live in departmentally owned properties, which is about 44 properties, and the remainder live in social housing properties supported by our staff.

CHAIR: If there are any further questions to the deputy director-general, they will have to go through either the director-general or the minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I have sought answers about two particular properties. Does that mean that the future of all 82 properties could be being considered now?

Ms Connors: No. There is a specific matter in relation to those two properties. We are not considering anything with the other properties.

Mr LANGBROEK: Because Mr Lupi is here, I would like to ask for a briefing about the operations at the FDS, particularly in relation to client numbers. I saw that two clients are back in the community. I would like to ask for a general briefing, if possible.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am very happy for that. We have had this conversation at previous estimates. The department has more of an administration role over the FDS, but I also have here the Director of Forensic Disability, who has oversight. They might have to share some of those questions. I am happy for you to let them rip and we can work out who takes them.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, ask your discrete questions and then the minister will determine the allocation.

Mr LANGBROEK: Firstly, I want to ask about client numbers this year compared to last; issues with LCTs—reports on whether there have been any issues with those; and, finally, staff turnover. I can ask them individually. I think they are more to do with not the oversight but the actual on-the-ground operations.

Ms Connors: Given we have Mr Lupi at the table, I will let him answer those questions for you.

Mr Lupi: There are currently five individuals whose forensic order issued by the Mental Health Review Tribunal detains them to the FDS. That is relatively the same as last year. We have had a couple of clients leave and a couple of new clients join the service in order to undertake their treatment and rehabilitation programs.

Over the course of 2022-23, I think there were about 590—I will get the exact figure—LCT events, limited community treatment. That is a condition of an order that is part of the rehabilitation and opportunities for reintegration for our service users. Even though they are detained to the facility, they get the opportunity to engage in learning and programs and our staff facilitate those programs. There were 552 approved events. If the Mental Health Review Tribunal believe it is appropriate and safe for an individual resident, they would then be supported in community activities. So 552 were facilitated in the reporting year across the range of clients that live there.

CHAIR: We have time for another question.

Mr LANGBROEK: The last one I would like to ask about the FDS—through you, Minister and Acting Director-General, to Mr Lupi—is about separations. In an answer to a question on notice, for the last four years there were four voluntary separations in 2019-20; two in 2020-21; and then 23 in 2021-22—19 were voluntary and four were involuntary. Can I have the number of separations for 2022-23 and broken down into voluntary and involuntary?

Ms Connors: I will let Mr Lupi answer that question.

Mr Lupi: Are you talking about staff separations or client exits now?

Mr LANGBROEK: Staff. We have never had 23 clients.

Mr Lupi: No, but it was not abundantly clear. Let me try to find the data for this year. I think you did ask that in a question on notice last year but not this year.

CHAIR: Deputy Director-General, if you need a little bit of time, we can move to the next question.

Ms Connors: We might provide that information as soon as we can find it.

CHAIR: Member for Surfers Paradise, you can ask one more question.

Mr LANGBROEK: The last question in this segment refers to page 52 of the annual report and the integrity unit and the numbers of suspected corrupt conduct and misconduct matters. There were 31 corrupt conduct matters and 82 misconduct matters. Minister or Acting Director-General, I am interested in the outcomes of those.

Ms Connors: We have our figures for June 2023 and they have been split between what the former department was. You are talking about Seniors and Disability Services, member?

Mr LANGBROEK: Yes.

Ms Connors: I am just finding what the matters were about. I do not think I have that information. You are referring to the 44 open matters?

Mr LANGBROEK: No. I know the department has changed. What I am looking for is the 2022-23 figures. In 2021-22 there were 131 referrals. That is on page 52 of the annual report. I understand that I may not be able to ask about all the outcomes of those matters that were outstanding because the department has changed. Can you advise what the 2022-23 figures are for referrals and whether they were corrupt conduct, misconduct or did not reach the threshold?

Ms Connors: I do not have that in front of me but I will take that on notice.

CHAIR: Acting Director-General, I think what you are saying is that you will come back later in the session?

Ms Connors: Yes, we will come back later in the session.

Ms LUI: My question is to the minister. How do the Queensland government's concession cards and rebate schemes benefit seniors and other vulnerable seniors on low and fixed incomes?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am pleased to say that more than one million Queenslanders hold a Queensland Seniors Card or a Queensland Seniors Business Discount Card. In 2022-23 that was 88 per cent of all eligible older Queenslanders. Seniors and other vulnerable Queenslanders on low or fixed incomes are benefiting from the Palaszczuk government's spend on concessions of \$1.8 billion in this financial year.

I encourage all Queenslanders who are eligible to sign up for the Seniors Card or the Seniors Business Discount Card because they can help ease cost-of-living pressures. For example, in 2023-24 eligible Queenslanders with a Seniors Card will access a \$700 Cost of Living Rebate on their electricity bill that will be paid in addition to the \$372.20 Electricity Rebate Scheme. The total value for Queenslanders with a Seniors Card will be \$1,072.20 in this financial year.

They can also receive a 50 per cent reduction on the registration component for cars and boats. They can receive discounted rail travel, \$87 off their reticulated natural gas, \$200 for the pensioner rates subsidy, free basic prescription spectacles once every two years and free dental treatment including dentures through public dental clinics and hospitals. They are just some examples of savings for seniors and other Queenslanders on low or fixed incomes. For further information they can go online to queenslandsavers.qld.gov.au.

Eligible seniors can get everyday discounts on goods and services by using their Seniors Business Discount Card. The Seniors Business Discount Card is accepted at more than 7,060 businesses across Queensland. They can search online for businesses near them that offer discounts. Seniors can access the free Senior Shopper service to make sure they are getting discounts and the best price on things such as electrical goods, travel, motor vehicles, computers, mowers, power tools, furniture, white goods, lawn bowls gear, fishing tackle, pools, cameras and the list goes on.

CHAIR: The member for Burnett is very interested in the fishing gear for when he retires. Perhaps one day.

Mr CRAWFORD: I do not think he makes the age bracket just yet.

Mr BENNETT: You would be surprised!

Mr SKELTON: With reference to page 4 of the Service Delivery Statements, would the minister please outline what support the Palaszczuk government provides to vulnerable seniors at risk of exploitation and abuse?

Mr CRAWFORD: It is well known that our seniors stand at the front line when it comes to risk, particularly around things such as scams, whether they come online or sometimes to the front door. It is always a significant concern for seniors as well as government. We also know that elder abuse is reportedly on the rise. That is why we continue to fund elder abuse prevention campaigns as well as World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. The campaign this year focuses on positive relationships, taking the tagline 'Some things never grow old' and seeks to build awareness of the Elder Abuse Helpline. This year we have invested \$8.6 million.

We are seeking to target elder abuse in the community. That includes \$7.2 million to provide seniors legal and support services in 16 locations across Queensland. That is an expansion of five new locations since last year. We want to make sure that we cast the net wide across the state to make sure support is available. That includes things like social support, legal advice, financial advice and ensuring vulnerable seniors have someone to turn to if they are feeling exploited or abused.

What we know about elder abuse is that often it is someone close to seniors who are most likely to be the perpetrator of that abuse. It is crucial that seniors know their rights and have someone they can trust to turn to. It is very easy: they can contact one of our SLASS services. It is free for seniors. They can get free legal advice. No question is too hard for the SLASS teams. When we do seniors forums we often have representatives from SLASS coming to speak to them. You would be amazed at the variety of questions around things like scams and some of the things coming through on phones and how to manage that, how to deal with some of the more complex things nowadays.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 4 of the Service Delivery Statements, would you please outline the types of information that older Queenslanders are hearing through Seniors Expos?

Mr CRAWFORD: In addition to our very popular expos our department also hosts Seniors Savings Pop-ups at local shopping centres or as part of community events targeted towards seniors. With an ageing population, the Palaszczuk government is keen to engage with this growing part of our community and ensure that seniors remain connected to their communities. In the last financial year almost 5,000 people attended either an expo or a pop-up event, with the largest expo being held in Toowoomba, which was attended by both the members for Toowoomba North and Toowoomba South, which was good to see. The events are held right across Queensland, and there is a Seniors Expo just next week in Mackay.

During the last financial year 11 expos were held across the state in places such as Cairns, Scenic Rim, Thursday Island and Wynnum. We also scheduled an LGBTIQ+ event in Brisbane. Seniors Expos provide a range of information for older Queenslanders, including advice on cost-of-living support, how to stay safe in their homes and their community, and how to avoid scams and fraud. Attendees also have an opportunity to directly engage with staff from various government agencies. Pop-up events provide an opportunity for Queenslanders to talk with a government representative about things like cards, concessions and rebates as well as other government services such as transport and the like.

Through these activities and via an online survey seniors are invited to let the government know what matters to them most. As expected, the cost of living is a major issue at the moment for seniors and other Queenslanders. That is why we have allocated money in our budget. We also know that seniors are often the 'bank of mum and dad', and that can also put extra stress on them at this time with higher living costs. I am committed to ensuring that seniors are aware of all of the discounts, rebates and concessions available to them. Our feedback and intel tells us that there are still a lot of seniors who are not accessing their full entitlements. It is something that members will have heard me say in parliament many times and I often say at all of our forums, particularly around energy rebates: 'Ergon and Energex do not know how old you are. You have to tell them if you are of an eligible age.' I encourage everyone out there—I am sure there are thousands of people watching us live—to give your elderly parents or maybe a neighbour a hand. Get them to find their bill, have a look and see if you can find a concession on it. If it is not on there, they are not getting it.

Ms LUI: Minister, can you outline the events and activities the government has funded to celebrate Seniors Month throughout Queensland?

Mr CRAWFORD: This year marks Queensland's third annual Seniors Month celebrations. It begins 1 October, which is the United Nations International Day of Older Persons and includes Grandparents Day on 29 October. This year older Queenslanders will be snapping selfies, bowling barefoot and connecting through croquet as our communities gear up for a month-long celebration. The Palaszczuk government, in conjunction with the Council on the Aging, the peak body for seniors, will also be holding a landmark seniors event with keynote speakers. In addition, 59 community organisations are receiving a grant of up to \$2,000 each to host a wide range of inclusive events and activities across Queensland during October. There is such a diverse range of activities—from a selfie scavenger hunt and barefoot bowls to ukulele classes and croquet, as I mentioned before.

This year I am delighted by the number of organisations supporting older men applying for Seniors Month grants. TOMNET in Toowoomba will be hosting a celestial day out that will delve into the evolution of the solar system and the mystery of the cosmos. In Bundaberg a fantastic seniors' concert and expo will showcase the talents of older people in the region. On Thursday Island the Mura Kosker Sorority will celebrate elders in the community.

In 2022 Seniors Month celebrations set a record for the number of events held, with 1,581 events registered engaging an estimated 146,000 people. Queensland Seniors Month aims to provide opportunities for people across all generations to connect and challenge stereotypes around ageing.

Mr SKELTON: I refer to page 4 of the SDS. Will the minister outline what steps the government has taken to ensure people with disabilities and their families can continue to access services delivered by the state run Accommodation Support & Respite Services?

Mr CRAWFORD: Before I answer that, I have just received a post-it note that says my director-general has the answers ready for those questions on notice we took before.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. At an appropriate time we will move to non-government questions and we will deal with it then.

Mr CRAWFORD: No worries; just letting you know it is there. Many families rely on our services and always express the desire to remain with us, particularly through the transition to the NDIS. Establishing the NDIS and transitioning from the provision of state and territory disability services to a nationally consistent approach has been a significant social change and reform program. When Queensland committed to the NDIS we agreed to continue to provide some specialist disability services as in-kind contributions to the scheme. This included delivering AS&RS services; however, these in-kind arrangements are due to end 30 June this year.

My department has successfully negotiated with the Commonwealth government for an extension until 31 December of this year. As part of this year's state budget, the Queensland government has made a commitment to continue operating and delivering AS&RS beyond June 2025 subject to further consultation and design work to develop a future service delivery model.

The government's commitment to continuing to provide these services gives families, service users and our staff certainty. It reassures them that the service will remain operating despite the upcoming changes to the in-kind funding arrangements. I know that this news has been welcomed by clients, families and our staff who care for the clients entrusted in the department's care.

As of June this year, 572 Queenslanders living with disability were supported through independent living arrangements and short-term overnight respite stays provided by the service. This includes 25 older Australians who receive continuity of support arrangements through the

Commonwealth's Disability Support for Older Australians Program. The remaining clients are all NDIS clients. The department is currently undertaking steps for AS&RS to become a registered NDIS service provider for supported independent living and short-term accommodation or respite and will draw down funds from participants' NDIS plans hopefully from 1 January 2024. This will allow us to consider the outcomes of the independent review of the NDIS and the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability. The bilateral agreement reached with the Commonwealth government also acknowledges how reforms to the disability support market and workforce are ongoing. Consultation on the future service delivery model with staff, families and guardians as well as our industrial bodies is commencing later this year.

CHAIR: We will now move to non-government questions.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, for students in kinship, parent and long-term care, from my understanding, to access the school transport assistance program they need a sign-off from a child safety officer as opposed to their foster or kinship carer. This is feedback I have been hearing from parents. Are you aware of this? What measures are being made to address this so that responsibility lies with the carers rather than a CSO?

CHAIR: Member for South Brisbane, I want to check that you have the right session. You have crossed a number of portfolio areas there—transport, education, child safety and disability.

Dr MacMAHON: It is a complicated question.

Mr CRAWFORD: We can do it.

CHAIR: The minister has the information and the knowledge.

Mr CRAWFORD: I am going to ask the director-general to address it. It probably does fit more into child safety in the second session, but it is essentially the same team of people.

Ms Connors: There would be many examples where it is the responsibility of the child safety officer to sign things like that. I just want to ask you what issue has been raised with you. Is it timeliness?

Dr MacMAHON: No. The issue is that day-to-day decision-making related to children in the care of foster and kinship carers is their responsibility; however, to access the school transport assistance program for students with disabilities a child safety officer is responsible for signing the application and the annual review, as opposed to the kinship carer who holds broader responsibility for the transport of that child. It seems inappropriate that in that case a child safety officer would have to do that sign-off for something quite simple.

Ms Connors: I will make the offer that I could come and talk to you about this issue.

Dr MacMAHON: That would be great.

Ms Connors: It is not one that has been brought to my attention. If you do have constituents who have raised this, I would be very happy to meet with you and we can talk about it.

Dr MacMAHON: That sounds great.

CHAIR: Thank you, Acting Director-General. That is very kind of you to do that.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, people with disabilities face particular challenges in terms of accessing their sexual and reproductive rights. Can you advise what advice you have given to the Department of Health, which is currently developing an action plan for abortion access, in terms of specific challenges for people with disabilities?

CHAIR: Again, that is perhaps a question for the Minister for Health, but I will allow you to contribute in any way you can, Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chair. It is a really good question. When you talk about advice, I think the best advice for the Department of Health would be to ensure they consult, as they always do, quite widely, particularly with people with lived experience. I know that QDN, Queenslanders with Disability Network, have strong relationships with the Department of Health. In line with the state Disability Plan and various other instruments that we have, that would be my advice to that department—that is, to consult widely and broadly with people with lived experience.

Dr MacMAHON: Minister, in relation to your response to our question on notice regarding the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, you mentioned that the department is investigating a long-term transport policy for NDIS participants. Can you shed any light on what that long-term policy might look like?

Mr CRAWFORD: It is owned by the department of transport but we work with the department of transport on this. This one has been around for some time. The Taxi Subsidy Scheme and other broader transport issues have arisen from time to time. There are ongoing conversations at the Commonwealth level and across states and territories to get uniformity on this. To be perfectly honest, every state and

territory is in a different spot on this. The negotiation around it occurs within the department of transport. What we do from our department's perspective is, once we have nailed down what the transport department's position is on something, take that forward to the disability reform ministers forum. At the moment, the Taxi Subsidy Scheme is continuing. There is no plan at this stage to terminate that. We are hoping that within the next couple of years we can have that sorted out. We are waiting to see the outcome of the NDIS review primarily. For everyone out there who is accessing particularly the Taxi Subsidy Scheme, there is no change to what they are receiving at the moment.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, my next question relates to employment in the disability care and support sector. Given the workforce challenges across our community, have the minister or department made any representations about recent changes to the student visa subclass 500 work restrictions that have seen workable hours drop to 48 hours per fortnight if working in disability support? Just as background, that only started on 1 July. A company I met with said that their students are concerned about losing the amount of work they will be able to do, but in aged care an extension has been granted until 31 December to allow 76 hours per fortnight. I am asking whether you have made any representations federally about these visa matters.

CHAIR: I am glad to hear you say that it is a federal matter. Minister, again, I ask that you respond in any way you see fit.

Mr CRAWFORD: I have not made any representations—you are right that it is owned by another jurisdiction—but I am very happy to. Perhaps you could write to me direct. I am happy to take that one up. More broadly, and across other sectors of our department as well, workforce challenges are certainly a challenge for all of us so I certainly support you in that. If you write to me, we can then take that up. I do not know if the director-general has anything more to say. I do know that she has some other questions on notice from before that she could get through.

CHAIR: Acting Director-General, do you have anything more to add to the minister's response?

Ms Connors: No.

CHAIR: You can address those two matters that are outstanding and then I will return to questions.

Ms Connors: In relation to the member's question regarding the FDS and separations, in 2022-23 eight staff separated from the FDS—all voluntary separations. In relation to corrupt conduct and misconduct matters, there were 28 finalised matters: 24 had allegations capable of substantiation; four had allegations where management action was taken; seven allegations were not capable of substantiation—I just note that these numbers do not add up because there can be multiple allegations within a matter; and there was one where there were no findings or action taken. There were 31 subject officers involved in the finalised matter. None of those officers were terminated; 13 were disciplined.

In relation to misconduct, there were 56 finalised matters. Forty-two had allegations capable of substantiation. Twenty-eight had allegations where management action was taken. Eight had allegations that were not capable of substantiation. Eleven had allegations where no finding or action was taken. I would note again one matter can have multiple allegations that result in different outcomes, of course. There were 77 subject officers involved in finalised matters. Five were terminated, three were disciplined excluding termination and one officer resigned prior to the outcome.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is about the QDN doing a co-design for an inclusive housing workshop that I understand the department was a stakeholder in and I am wondering about whether the minister could provide an update on progress and the department's input into the Queensland State Disability Housing Action Plan, please.

Mr CRAWFORD: I can. What an amazing organisation QDN certainly is. In respect to your question, certainly as disability reform ministers—this is across the country—we have all agreed for priority work to be undertaken around exploring options to address the challenge for people with disability in accessing safe, affordable and suitable housing options.

The member would be aware that building ministers recently agreed across the country for the silver standard for construction. Certainly this department does not hold the primary responsibility for those, but works alongside other agencies that do, particularly housing and also communities when we are talking about housing and homelessness plans et cetera. We work very strongly with QDN. They are probably the strongest advocates. Our expectation would be that other departments would be primarily connecting with QDN, but we know across the country, access to accommodation is tight for everyone. We know that access to accommodation if you live with disability is even harder; if you are needing specialist disability accommodation, it is even harder again. The best way to answer the question is to say that we are continuing to advocate.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question comes from Budget Paper 4, budget measures, page 37. It is about NDIS assessment services—\$16.2 million over four years. The question is: how will this overcome the fact that in rural and remote areas, there is a thin market problem? I heard you speak about the fact that it is an ongoing issue in rural and remote areas, and for Indigenous people as well, Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: I definitely share your concerns. That is not only a concern we have in Queensland—we are very much aware of it—but also particularly in Western Australia and the Northern Territory. One of the best things that Queensland did, going back a couple of financial years ago, was to convince the Commonwealth government to allow us putting together an access and referral team, or an ART team of people, to go out there into the community and find people that need the assistance to get onto the scheme. Whilst that is no longer funded by the feds, we continue to fund that, and that is still continued to be funded in this year's budget. That is the team that do exactly the work that you are speaking of. They have spent a lot of time particularly getting out into the remote areas. They have been very successful in being able to find people who either have never been able to get onto the scheme or did not even know that the scheme was there. A lot of those are in our First Nations communities or in our First Nations families even in some larger communities, such as around Brisbane and the south-east corner, as well as the smaller ones.

Some raw numbers, Chair: last financial year, 685 people were supported by ART's intensive case management model to access the NDIS where 51 per cent of them lived in regional and remote communities; 51 per cent identified as being disengaged from education or leaving school; a quarter of them were engaged or at risk of entering the justice system or child protection system; and almost a quarter of them identified as being First Nations. 582 of these new NDIS participants now have plans.

The other thing that ART also does as well—we have seen them do work where sometimes people have a plan but it is not suitable for purpose; it is not enough. ART have been very successful in being able to argue that case with the NDIA to get more services in.

We have also used ART in places like Longreach and other small towns where we know that sometimes there is not enough knowledge. There are very capable staff in our team. They are almost like bounty hunters. They will go into a community and they know who to talk to—they know the four or five people. They go straight to the school, they go to the hospital and they work their way around and they find people, and they are very effective at it. We are very proud of it. It is one of the main reasons why we have seen a continual uptick in the number of Queenslanders who are getting successful NDIS plans.

We still do have an issue at the other end. The member is correct about thin markets. It is one thing to have a plan; it is another thing to be able to use it on something. There is still a lot of work that has to occur in relation to service providers in particularly thin-market areas. That is something that we have taken a very strong case to the NDIS reviewers on. I know Bruce Bonyhady, one of the reviewers, has visited a number of remote communities all across Australia, and he has some ideas. We will start to see that, as state and territory ministers, probably by the end of this month or next month as to how the agency plans to go about that. There is certainly a problem in that how can you have choice and control if there is no provider to provide anything at all? There is still a lot of work to occur on that, and we certainly would appreciate all the help we could get.

CHAIR: Minister, I will turn to the member for Cook for her next question.

Ms LUI: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the Service Delivery Statements, can you please give an update on NDIS plans for Queenslanders in 2022-23?

Mr CRAWFORD: Queensland provides over \$2 billion per annum to the NDIS. As a government, we are dedicated to ensure that our contribution is maximised so that we get the best return, outcomes and value for money for Queenslanders. As of March this year, there were 125,549 Queenslanders with an active NDIS plan. That includes 81,901 Queenslanders who are receiving funded disability supports for the first time. The NDIS quarterly report for March 2023 indicated that 86 per cent of Queensland participants were satisfied with the planning process. There continues to be high numbers of Queenslanders with disability entering the NDIS, with participation in Queensland increasing by almost 18,000 people in the year to March 2023.

Since March 2022, plan budgets for Queensland participants have risen by eight per cent on average. NDIS data indicates that the scheme experience is improving for Queensland participants. The NDIS quarterly report for March this year demonstrates that the number of complaints made to the

NDIA has fallen and the rate of referrals to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal has significantly decreased. From July 2022 to June 2023 the department escalated 45 complaints relating to NDIA plans to the NDIA. This is less than half the number of complaints that we received in the previous year.

Just to reiterate those last two points, we have seen a significant drop in the number of NDIS clients coming to us as well as complaining to the Commonwealth about problems with either the way their plans have been managed or ridiculously being sent to an Administrative Appeals Tribunal for sometimes the most trivial things. Those numbers have dropped off significantly. I think that is through some great work from the federal government. I want to commend Bill Shorten, because that was a big thing that Bill went after and we supported him—the state and territory ministers—in that.

We used to receive a number of calls and letters in my electorate office, to our department and sometimes on my own phone from people who were frustrated with something to do with the NDIS. We do not receive many of them now at all. I would not say it has dried up completely, but we do not receive many now and that is a good thing.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, you were commenting before about some of these matters. Could you comment on the adverse findings made against the Queensland government and the Department of Child Safety, Seniors and Disability Services following counsel assisting's submissions arising from public hearing 33?

Mr CRAWFORD: This is quite an important one. The disability royal commission held the final substantive public hearing for the inquiry in May of this year focused on the violence, abuse, neglect and deprivation of human rights experienced by two young people, Kaleb and Jonathon—not their real names—who live with disability and reside in Queensland. Several Queensland government witnesses appeared before the disability royal commission and gave evidence about Kaleb and Jonathon's interactions with Queensland child safety, disability, health, housing, police and education services over a 20-year period between the years 2000 and 2020. I expressed sincere regret at the experiences of the two young people. These circumstances should never be repeated and there is always an opportunity to do more.

It is at the discretion of the disability royal commission to consider the evidence explored during the public hearing and make conclusions it considers appropriate. These conclusions will be considered in the context of other evidence, issues and findings explored over the four years of the disability royal commission in the final report. I note that representatives from the department provided evidence that at the time the events were occurring officers operated in accordance with the Child Protection Act 1999 and the practices and procedures that were considered best practice at the time. Since that time there have been a number of changes to the evidence and the frameworks that the child protection system operates within to safeguard children in Queensland. Multiple agencies had interaction with the family and provided avenues for assistance.

The Queensland government and the Commonwealth through the NDIS have made significant reforms to strengthen and improve service delivery across all departments and agencies that provide services to people with disability including those who may experience periods of vulnerability or risk. Public hearing 33 provided an opportunity to reflect on better outcomes for children and young people with disability and their families. The Queensland government, led by this department, will consider all relevant recommendations from the disability royal commission final report and publicly report on acceptance and implementation of recommendations.

CHAIR: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the Service Delivery Statements, would you please explain what outcomes have been delivered under the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 during 2022-23?

Mr CRAWFORD: I think one of the best bits of being the Minister for Disability Services is that every now and again you get to see the dogs and the incredible work they do. You have to remind yourself, of course, that they are working; you cannot climb down on the ground and play with them. It is incredible to see the work that goes into training guide, hearing and assistance dogs and the dedication of the staff but also of the dogs themselves. They are a key support for people living with disability. They increase their independence and access to the community and they can reduce the need for other funded supports.

The act has two objects: firstly, to assist people with a disability who rely on guide, hearing or assistance dogs to have independent access to the community; secondly, to ensure the quality and accountability of guide, hearing and assistance dog training services. Only trainers approved under the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009 can certify dogs and their handlers. This is an important

safeguard for people with disability. During 2022-23 the department provided identification documents to 279 new approved handlers and renewed identification documents to 278 handlers and approved one new individual trainer and one new training institution. Approved trainers and training institutions certified 435 dogs under the act during the same period.

I am also pleased that my department has been responding to the more than 70 complaints and inquiries received about access rights under the Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009. In the same period the government has been working with the Commonwealth to explore nationally consistent approaches. I look forward to the ongoing work in 2023-24 to ensure that people with disability who rely on guide, hearing and assistance dogs are able to have similar protections and protected access no matter which state they live in.

Mr SKELTON: In keeping with the levity shown by the minister, this could possibly be the most important question today. Minister, when is Disability Action Week to be held this year?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am pleased to advise that this year Disability Action Week will be held from Saturday, 25 November to Sunday, 2 December. This year's theme will build upon the success of previous years' campaigns and last year's tag line 'Workforce diversity—open up to opportunity' and will promote the benefits of inclusive and accessible employment practices to Queensland enterprise. Again in 2023 we will focus on increasing employment and economic participation of people with disability with the new tagline 'Access ignites—it's good business'.

It is important that we continue to encourage more businesses to consider the advantages of employing people with disability and highlight the business and economic benefits of a diverse workforce. The Queensland government has been prioritising initiatives to increase workforce participation for people with disability and to encourage employers to consider how they could tap into this pool of qualified and skilled workers. I can recall that one day last year I met a lady who was vision-impaired and she had seven degrees. You tell me she is not employable.

We want to connect skilled candidates who are living with disability and employers who are telling us they need talented, qualified and dedicated staff. The continued focus on employment reinforces the Queensland government's priorities to support good, secure jobs in traditional and emerging industries and create greater social inclusion and improved social outcomes. Further information about Disability Action Week will be made available on our website soon. I encourage everyone to get involved.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Burnett?

Mr BENNETT: Thank you. I defer to the shadow minister.

Mr LANGBROEK: I refer again to Budget Paper 4, page 38, and the \$17.6 million over four years supporting people with disability who are ineligible for the NDIS. My question is: can the minister confirm this is about residency status and, therefore, it is for non-Australian citizens?

Mr CRAWFORD: I can confirm. In the past there have generally been two cohorts. There have been people who have residency status issues—they are not Australian residents—or when we did the changeover to NDIS there were some people who were receiving state funding who did not qualify for the NDIS. In other words, they could not meet the thresholds. As a result, it is like grandfathering if you like, where the government continues to provide supports for those people. Currently, there are 13 Queenslanders who are aged under 65 who are accessing their disability funded support under the Continuity of Support Programme. All of those 13 did not meet the residency requirements however, during the last financial year, the department's ART team supported one client to reapply to NDIS who transitioned in July 2022. That client was the remaining client accessing continuity of support because they did not meet the disability access requirements. Long story short: there are 13 of them left. They have residency requirements and until they sought their residency requirements, that will obviously continue until NDIS allow them in.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is from the top of the same page: '\$19.3 million over 5 years', 'Reform of Queensland's Positive Behaviour Support and Restrictive Practices'. The question is: will the government's proposed reform of restrictive practices in Queensland create less red tape and paperwork for disability service providers who are seeking to do the right thing?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you. That is certainly what we would like. What we are mainly looking at, at the moment, is to have nationally consistent systems. None of us are in the business of trying to create more red tape. It is the wish that when we get to the end of this phase we will have nationally consistent procedures that work, not only for clients, but also for operators and providers as well.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That answers your question, Member. One more question with a couple of minutes left.

Mr LANGBROEK: The next question is on the Queensland Disability Advocacy Program on page 38 of Budget Paper No. 4. Will the government ensure Queenslanders in rural and remote areas receive an equal share of the \$16.2 million for advocacy services and are not left without services again?

Mr CRAWFORD: It is a good question and it is a very important one as well, because traditionally there have been pockets of the state that have not been properly serviced for advocacy. You probably would remember that a year or two ago that we again kicked off funding for advocacy across the state. We are certainly continuing that funding, and some of that funding has gone into specific advocacy organisations that service especially outback Queensland, as well as the cape, the gulf and the Torres Strait. It is our expectation that these organisations will service those areas. It is obviously harder in some areas than in others, but people who are living in the bush, the Cape and the Gulf deserve the same contact and the same ability to access advocacy as everyone else. I have visited some of these organisations; they are great organisations. Some of them have been around for a very, very long time and they predate most of us. We will continue to provide support for them.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee is going to take a very short break. That concludes the committee's examinations of estimates as it relates to the seniors and disability services portfolio areas. I am sure, minister, you will join with me in thanking our Auslan interpreters for their fine work supporting the committee today—thank you Mikey! The committee will adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 5.30 pm with the estimates for the child safety portfolio area. Thank you.

Proceedings suspended from 5.14 pm to 5.30 pm.

CHAIR: Welcome back, Minister, Acting Director-General, Deputy Director-General, officials and public servants. The committee will now examine the estimates for the child safety portfolio area. At this point I want to remind all members of the chamber that there are strict protocols under the Child Protection Act and I remind members that under standing order 117 we do not refer to children in any identifying manner, as is quite appropriate for this session. I now call the member for Burnett for his first question.

Mr BENNETT: Thank you, and I defer to the shadow minister.

Ms CAMM: Thank you, Chair, for having me here.

CHAIR: I am sorry. I welcome the member for Whitsunday to our committee.

Ms CAMM: Thank you, Chair; I appreciate that. Good evening, everyone. I know that we are at the end of the day. Minister, the most up-to-date data shows that the number of children in out-of-home care has increased from 11,527 to 11,626 in just three months, from 31 December last year to 31 March this year. We are now in August. Have you seen the June quarter data?

Mr CRAWFORD: My recollection is that I do not think I have, no. It has not been brought to me yet.

CHAIR: Acting Director-General, did you want to say something?

Ms Connors: The June quarter data is in preparation at the moment. We have quite a lengthy data-cleansing process, so the minister has not seen the data yet.

Ms CAMM: Minister, you have been in the role now for over 2½ months. To not have been briefed on the latest data: do you think that is acceptable?

Mr CRAWFORD: I have been in the role for 84 days. I received a very good briefing when I came into the role—an exceptional briefing, I should say—and I also received a very good briefing in relation to the latest published data, which is the March quarter. I am very happy with the way the department reports its data and I have full confidence in the department that when the June data is prepared—when it is ready to go—they will bring it to me and it will be published, but I might ask the director-general to provide further information on that.

Ms Connors: Just to give some more information on the process for our data—

Ms CAMM: Chair, if you do not mind—

CHAIR: Sorry, member for Whitsunday. The minister and the acting director-general were intending to answer your question to the full—

Ms CAMM: Chair—

CHAIR: Sorry, but please do not interrupt me, member. The acting director-general and the minister collectively were trying to provide you with a fulsome account. If you are concerned about not having enough time to ask your questions, there is no need to be worried about that.

Ms CAMM: Chair, I just think the question was answered.

CHAIR: I will just let the acting director-general finish her statement very quickly and then I will refer to you.

Ms Connors: I just wanted to briefly explain: the reason the June data is not available yet is that we cut the data off and then our staff are still entering in case notes and data that form part of that data after that, so there is a lag period between when we do the cut-off date and when the June data is available. That is just to explain why there is a distance between the data periods.

Ms CAMM: To clarify then, Acting Director-General, do you have a date the data will be released?

Ms Connors: My understanding is that the June data will be ready in a few weeks, so the team are cleansing it now. Our data is on our website at regular periods. I do not have on me the date we are expecting to put the June data up. I can ask the team when we would anticipate that, but it will be as soon as the data is cleansed and the minister is briefed and we are ready.

Ms CAMM: I understand now with the background of the data, but can the minister state the number of children who are currently in residential care as of today?

Mr CRAWFORD: What I can give is the last reported number, which is 1,759, and that was at the end of March.

Ms CAMM: Minister, in response to prehearing question on notice 11 you have provided the average case load per CSO by region—noting, though, that somehow the department could not provide the number of cases managed per region. Can you tell me whether that average case load is based on the number of cases managed divided by the number of funded CSOs? It is just that the explanation in the question on notice was a little confusing, so I am seeking clarification. It is part c to question No. 11.

Mr CRAWFORD: My understanding is that it is divided by the funded FTEs, but I will ask the director-general to provide further information.

Ms Connors: Yes, that is correct.

Ms CAMM: Minister, given the fact that in North Queensland, for example, on a previous question there is a vacancy rate of around 30 per cent, the averaging of case load over staff in Far North Queensland is being averaged out over positions that are not currently filled; is that correct?

Mr CRAWFORD: That would be my understanding; correct, yes.

Ms CAMM: Okay. Minister, I guess to clarify that, and in the expectation of Queenslanders, how exactly can an empty position be responsible for a case load or a case management file of a child?

Mr CRAWFORD: It is Far North Queensland I think you are referring to, the Cairns region?

Ms CAMM: Correct.

Mr CRAWFORD: Yes, it is running a vacancy rate of around, I think it is, 28 per cent or 29 per cent at the moment, but that is only in referring to CSO positions themselves. We have begun implementing other positions into those service centres such as paralegals and more support staff. This is where it gets a bit complicated around calculating workload, because it is very difficult to compare apples with apples because in some of our service centres there are a decent number of support staff and paralegals who are helping to soak up a lot of the additional work in terms of some of the legalistic work. There are often a lot of court briefing documents and those sorts of things, and the Far North region and northern region are some of those areas where that is occurring. We are well aware of our issues in Far North Queensland. We also have high vacancies in the south-west region but not as much as up north. We are doing everything we can to recruit more CSOs into those positions. In the meantime, where we cannot we will put more support staff in to help our CSOs out.

Ms CAMM: Acting Director-General, on 10 July the minister announced a review into residential care delivery. Can you tell me how much funding has been allocated to the review and the date you expect the review to be completed?

Ms Connors: Yes. We will be conducting the review within internal resources and the minister has asked for a report by December.

Ms CAMM: Acting Director-General, can you tell me how many full-time-equivalent staff have been allocated to the review, given it is being conducted internally?

Ms Connors: I probably cannot give you exact numbers of staff at this point. They are an internal team. I have an investment and commissioning team and they will be doing the policy work centrally so there will be around 10 officers working on that. We are also doing regional forums across the state. There will be a series of forums running in the regions. A number of our regional officers will be involved in that. All of the department that have some sort of responsibility for residential care will be involved in the review. Child safety officers will be conducting interviews with children and young people who are living in residential care as well. I probably cannot say it is a team of 20 because there will be work spanning across the whole of the department.

Ms CAMM: Are any staff at all involved in the review being taken offline from their normal role or duties to be dedicated as part of this work?

Ms Connors: We will have a dedicated team centrally who are coordinating this work. That is around 10 people who will be working on the review, but they will be doing the kind of coordination pieces. They will probably be doing some of their other work at the same time, because much of the work we are doing in the review we are also continuing to do work on residential care as well. We have been commissioning work already on models of residential care. We have been doing work on the kind of financial costs and sustainability. Those teams will be working largely on the review, but much of that—for the central team—is the work that they are doing anyway on our work on residential care.

Ms CAMM: Minister, given that we have over 500 children under the age of 12 in residential care—and I noted your comments that the review would focus on children under 12, and we compare ourselves with Victoria that has only 45 children of the same age bracket in residential care—do you think it is fair on the department that the review is being undertaken internally instead of bringing in external resources and a level of independence given the department is already under significant pressure with their vacancy rates across the state?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am very comfortable with the department's response. I did not instruct the department on how the review should work. I spoke to the director-general—as in Director-General Mulkerin—about wanting to do some work in relation to this. The director-general and her team, and now the acting director-general as well, have put together what this looks like. You are correct about the under-12s. That has been a key focus of mine and I made very clear to the department that I wanted to see some particular work on this. We are not about taking people away from their frontline job, but the very people that we need to talk to about this, and the very people that hold a lot of the answers to what we seek, I believe, are a lot of our frontline staff.

In relation to external agencies, we have had long dialogue with the QFCC who have indicated strong support and will be providing oversight directly to us. They will be attending some of the events that will be around. Also PeakCare as well. I have had a range of conversations with CEOs from some of the major resi-care organisations. I think you are actually meeting with some of them tomorrow, which is good. I welcome that. They have expressed a desire as well to want to be part of a dialogue. I think that is a good thing. I do not think we need to bring in external consultants or anyone like that to tell our people what our people already know.

The other big part of the resi review is that I talked with the department about how we involve the very young people that we are talking about. I sat in my office a couple of nights ago and I had a group of young people that Mercy had brought in. There was about half a dozen of them—incredible young people—who come from resi care and foster and a range of things and they did not hold back, Chair, when they told me what they thought was good, what was bad, and it was quite enlightening. I think when we look at the resi review we want to hear the voices of our young people. I am not convinced that going to an external organisation will actually deliver that. We have explored ways inside the department of saying, 'How do we get our CSOs to have a conversation with as many of our young people in resi care as we can to understand what their world looks like?'

When I came into this portfolio 84 days ago, I thought that everyone in resi care wanted to get out. I heard strong stories two nights ago of kids saying, 'I love it in resi care. It is better than foster care.' They said, 'Minister, don't get rid of this. I am in a better place right now than what I was.' That opened my eyes. I think we have the resources within our team, within our partners and within our young people, and I do not think we need to go external.

Mr BERKMAN: I appreciate your time this evening, folks. I wanted to start off with a couple of questions around the response to question on notice 19 which indicates that the government provided almost \$440 million for individual placement and support, or the fee-for-service packages, in the 2020-21 financial year. I will put the question to the director-general in the first instance. Is there a straightforward explanation as to why that figure almost doubled over that two-year period from just over \$220 million in the 2019 financial year?

Ms Connors: The reason that figure has changed is it is the reality of demand on the system. It is some of the packages that we provide to children and young people who are in residential care. It is part of what we need to look at in the review. To some extent we are supporting children with very complex needs. Some of those needs have even increased in complexity over that period of time, but some of those packages would reflect the accommodation packages for young people in residential care and that is part of the resetting of the system that we want to look at in the course of the review.

Mr BERKMAN: Just to follow on from that point specifically, I broadly understand that these kinds of specialised packages are intended for rare cases where a child has specific or complex needs, but they now make up, it seems, more than half of the department's spending on resi care. Is this because there are increasingly sparse or inadequate options to meet children's needs through contracted outsourced service delivery and particularly unlicensed care providers?

Ms Connors: Some of the need for us to use packages is about the number of placements that we have available. Over the course of the last year we have generated far more foster and kinship care places and the ability through outsource service delivery to service those. We have also brought more residential care places, but in some parts of Queensland I suppose the demand and the nature of complex young people coming into care—particularly we have seen an increase in older complex young people coming into care—has meant we have needed to use the individual support packages.

As I said, this is absolutely part of what we are looking at in the review in partnership with our service providers: how can we get the settings right in residential care where we have got outsourced service delivery with providers that is providing the kind of packages that we need and we do not need to do it through so many of the individualised placements.

CHAIR: We have time for another quick question.

Mr BERKMAN: I will move as quickly as I can. I was hoping to get one more clarification after this one, but we will see how we go. I understand that as of March 2023 the department had 68 unlicensed organisations providing 328 placements and 48 licensed organisations providing 1,393. That indicates that unlicensed organisations are providing less than a quarter of placements. On what basis did they receive almost 40 per cent of the funding in 2022 and 55 per cent in 2021?

Ms Connors: It is important to be really clear. Under the Child Protection Act there is a system of licensing services that provides care for children, but the act does also provide that the chief executive can have a child cared for by services under different arrangements. That includes an entity conducting a departmental care service, which is a service type we do not use; a licensee; and an unlicensed care provider.

We have used unlicensed providers since that was in the act. We do often work with providers to move to being licensed. I would be really clear: unlicensed does not mean unregulated or unmonitored. Those unlicensed providers are subject to the same regimes of monitoring and oversight by the oversight bodies. The children who are in those residential care placements still have the visitors who visit them. All of those things are still in place. We still have strict controls over the services they provide but we have seen more unlicensed providers into the market.

Again, this is part of what we want to do to work with providers as part of the residential care review. PeakCare, the peak organisation, has a real interest in how the sector will work. Part of that is looking at the ratio of licensed and unlicensed providers. We are really keen to work with that as part of the review. That will be one of the absolute features of the work we are doing.

Mr BERKMAN: Chair, if I could be really cheeky, I am seeking a little clarification.

CHAIR: Member for Maiwar, you owe the member for Burnett. You may ask a very quick question.

Mr BERKMAN: He is a good man, I am sure. With the way that I framed the years referred to in question on notice No. 19, I inadvertently have not asked for figures for the most recent financial year, the 2022-23 financial year. Are we able to get those figures at some point?

Ms Connors: We can take that on notice.

CHAIR: Is the minister taking on that notice or can you provide it beforehand?

Mr CRAWFORD: We can have that by the end of the session. We will see how we go, Chair.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Member for Cook?

Ms LUI: Minister, can you please outline the Palaszczuk government's recently announced review into the residential care system including any interim learnings?

Mr CRAWFORD: This goes to what we have talked about in the past few questions. Since I announced the residential care review, the department has partnered with key stakeholders to finalise terms of reference to establish the key lines of inquiry underpinning the review, the scope and the review deliverables. I have asked Luke Twyford, the principal commissioner of the Queensland Family and Child Commission, to provide expert advice and an independent oversight role, reporting regularly to me as the review progresses. He has agreed with that. We have a consultation plan that gives opportunities for stakeholders and subject matter experts across the state to contribute to the review.

Most importantly, the consultation plan outlines how children and young people in care and those with a previous care experience can voice their opinions and ideas. In the lingo in this agency it is called 'ageing out', which means obviously turning 18. Hearing their views will provide us with vital information to continue our work to provide better care experiences. We need to hear what children and young people think about the support they receive and how we can improve or change the residential care system to meet their needs and make their lives better.

Input into the review is open to all Queenslanders through written submissions via the Get Involved website. Partnering with Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Child Protection Peak, QATSICPP, will ensure the review is informed by the child safety sector service providers and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander partners. PeakCare will support peak organisations to ensure their members and broader sector partners have an opportunity to engage in the review. I have been very clear in establishing this review that I welcome all ideas from everywhere on how we can do this better.

I am pleased to report that the first place-based regional workshop, held on 2 August, just a couple of days ago, was in the south-east region. Providers of residential care and support services were very engaged and motivated. Our colleagues provided their insights, challenges and opportunities. Some of the common themes from the first discussion were: how important it is to wrap the right supports around young people when they need it; building and maintaining connection to family, community and country; and the importance of structured case work and planning to assist children and young people to reach their full potential.

Following more regional forums, targeted discussions and place-based focus groups, in September this year key stakeholders will join me in a ministerial round table to draw together the consultation insights and start to shape the development of the road map for residential care for Queensland. As I have stated previously, I have asked the director-general to provide a report of the review in December of this year.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, will you outline what steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to address workforce challenges in the child protection sector?

Mr CRAWFORD: This is a really important and challenging space. In 2022-23 the government invested in boosting the number of CSOs by 34.2 and in 2023-24 we have a commitment to boost frontline and frontline support roles by a further 123 FTEs. Since 2015, the Palaszczuk Labor government has employed 982 child and family services staff. In the wake of COVID-19, Australia has had low levels of unemployment, and the market for skilled labour—whether that be for teachers, police officers, psychologists or, indeed, social workers—has been tight. Queensland is not unique in facing these issues, but as I have travelled around the state in my first few months as minister I have seen my department implement unique solutions.

In my home town of Cairns and in Mackay I visited a number of child safety services that are rolling out an innovative trial by hiring paralegals to assist child safety officers to be more productive. Legal work takes up a significant amount of a child safety officer's time. Like all frontline workers, they want to be out in the community helping young people and families and keeping them safe, not necessarily always in the office writing affidavits. For this reason, the paralegal trial has been very popular with staff in the Far North, on the Sunshine Coast and in the central region. As I have learned by speaking with CSOs in the Cannon Hill office in Brisbane, many staff here are looking forward to welcoming their very own paralegals when the trial is expanded.

Other paraprofessionals are also playing an important role in helping CSOs do their job. Child safety support officers—that is, CSSOs—provide critical support for CSOs in monitoring family contact, moving children around and providing practical support to CSOs when they need it. For many CSSOs and other department staff, working for Child Safety is just the first step in a rewarding career. In

Townsville I met with a young admin officer named Shandel, who is studying social work with the support of the department. For many staff like Shandel, being an admin officer or a child safety support officer is the first step towards a long career in social work. Being able to both work and study with the support of their employer is critical in allowing them to take that next step towards becoming a CSO. I remember my conversation with Shandel. She had just passed her degree and she was getting ready to move to another desk, which was pretty cool.

In another innovative approach, the department is expanding the number of student placements for university students studying social work. In Roma I met Jessie-Lee, a young woman who is completing a paid placement. She was earning a wage, contributing to the community and working productively in the centre as a child safety support officer. She came from the coast. She came from your part of the world, member for Nicklin, on the Sunshine Coast somewhere. She was out at Roma working as a paid student, which again was really good. It is great for her and also great for that service centre because she is a dynamic young woman who is helping to take the load off. We are pulling out all the stops that we can.

Jessie-Lee is one of 32 young Queenslanders offered a paid placement in the last financial year. More than 851 students have completed placements with the department since 2019 and, out of those, 214 are now employed with the department as a CSO in another role. Child safety officers do one of the most rewarding and challenging jobs in Queensland. We are very thankful for the work that they do each and every day. We know that CSOs expect us to do more to help them do the important work of looking after families. We are making every effort to recruit and retain the exceptional staff that we already have.

CHAIR: Minister, as the lead agency coordinating the Queensland government's participation in the 10-year National Redress Scheme, what has been delivered in the last five years since the scheme commenced?

Mr CRAWFORD: The National Redress Scheme was created in response to recommendations by the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. The royal commission listened to thousands of people about the abuse they experienced as children. The abuse happened in orphanages, children's homes, schools, churches and other religious organisations, sports clubs, hospitals, foster care and other institutions. The National Redress Scheme acknowledges that many children were sexually abused in Australian institutions. It recognises the suffering they endured because of this abuse, holds institutions accountable for this abuse and helps people who have experienced institutional child sexual abuse gain access to counselling, a direct personal response and a redress payment. The scheme is about justice and healing and it is my honour and privilege to lead this work on behalf of the Queensland government.

As you say, we are now over halfway through the 10-year scheme. I am pleased to say that much has been delivered and continues to be delivered as part of the Queensland government's commitment to support people with lived experience of childhood institutional abuse. National data as at 14 July 2023 goes part of the way to showing the volume of need, with 28,341 applications to the scheme received nationally and 12,145 payments totalling approximately \$1.077 billion having been completed. We have committed \$500 million for Queensland government's participation in the scheme, including: redress payments; facilitation of direct personal responses; and counselling support through the scheme. We have actively stepped up as a government taking on funder-of-last-resort responsibility for 19 government agencies that are now defunct or financially unable to participate in the full extent required so that eligible Queenslanders can access the support and services they require.

As of 30 June this year we had 2,564 Queensland resident redress recipients accept counselling and psychological care services, with 237 having commenced the service. As at the same date we have provided apologies on behalf of Queensland government institutions totalling 124 matters, and a further 45 institutional apologies are in progress.

Not only have we participated in the national redress scheme, Queensland has also led the way through the establishment of the Truth, Healing and Reconciliation Taskforce. The taskforce was established by our government on 3 September 2018. It was established to ensure that the Queensland government's implementation of the royal commission recommendations was informed by the voices of those with lived experience of abuse as children in Queensland institutions and the organisations supporting them.

The taskforce chair, Bob Atkinson was one of six commissioners on the royal commission. Alongside Mr Atkinson, the work of the taskforce is driven by dedicated, passionate and inspiring members including: people who have lived experience of institutional child abuse; representatives of

not-for-profit and non-government sectors; and religious institutions. Taskforce members have spoken openly about the honour and privilege they have experienced in meeting with Queenslanders as they have travelled across the state conducting their listening tour. Having completed 12 forums to date, the tour has enabled the task force to hear from people with lived experience and to hear how abuse has impacted and continues to impact their lives and those of their families and loved ones.

Ms LUI: Minister, I refer to page 5 of the SDS and ensuring the voices of children and young people are heard. I note the results of the *My Life In Care Survey* have been published. Could the Minister outline the findings from this survey and whether there are any plans to continue this important work into the future?

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you, member for Cook. Chair, with your permission, I would like to table a document. We have plenty of copies. It is called *My Life In Care Survey*.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I will just have a look at that document and then I will seek leave to table the document should it meet the committee's expectations, which I am sure it will. The minister has sought leave to table a document. All those in favour say 'aye'. All those against say 'no'. The document is tabled. Thank you, Minister.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chair. Our government is committed to delivering the best services we can to children and young people in care. It is important that we hear directly from them about their care experiences. That is why I was so pleased to release the findings of the *My Life In Care Survey* that was undertaken last year. Over 500 children and young people in care responded to the survey. I thank them for the time that they took to share their thoughts and to provide us with their valuable feedback. I would also like to thank our foster carers, child safety officers, residential care workers and regional staff who encouraged children and young people to complete the survey.

The survey asked children and young people a number of questions about their feelings of safety, wellbeing, health, education and having a say in decisions about their life. I would like to start with some of the positive findings which are so heartwarming: 70 per cent said that they feel happy in care; 88 per cent said they feel safe and secure always or most of the time; 83 per cent feel loved and cared for by someone; 94 per cent said that they have someone in their life that they trust; and 78 per cent said that they got to do recreational activities a lot.

Chair, if I can draw to the attention of committee members a couple of ones that jumped out at me: page 4 of the report gives a very simple chart of what life was like for children before they came into care and what it was like afterwards. You will see there that 55 per cent said that before coming into care they were sad, scared and worried, but 69.9 per cent I think said that they now feel happy. I think that chart says a lot. It does not mean that things are perfect, but it says a lot for before and after. Also on page 5, you will see that 89 per cent say that they always or most times have the things that they need. On page 14, 94 per cent say that they sometimes or most times have someone in their life they can trust. This is really important. You will also notice there that provide a breakdown as to who they trust. Our CSOs appear very high on that list, which is pretty impressive.

But there are some things we need to do better. Page 8 refers to access to items when they need them: 11.6 per cent said that they do not get or sometimes only get access to the medication—not good enough; 11.8 per cent said that they do not or sometimes do not get access to toiletries; and 14.4 per cent said they do not or sometimes do not get access to tampons or pads. That is absolutely not good enough. If it is one thing that we are unified on, we will resolve those ones because no young person should go without those items, and that is something that we will work on. Obviously we have strong relationships with our partners, and we will make sure that we can tidy up on that.

This is the first time that this survey has been done. We plan to do this survey now on an annual basis. When I talked before about talking to our kids in resi care and our young people in resi care, we will use the same sort of conversations and questions as well with them. This will form a really important baseline for going forward on how we can interact. I welcome members to have a read of that. There are some really interesting stats in there. They have been quite honest. They have told us whether they are using cigarettes and vapes and all those sorts of things. They are giving it to us straight.

CHAIR: As I would expect of our young people, Minister! We have time for one quick question from the member for Nicklin.

Mr SKELTON: Minister, last year the government made a commitment to extend support for young people leaving care to 21 rather than 18 from 1 July 2023. Could the minister update the committee on what support is now available to young people?

Mr CRAWFORD: The government was very proud to announce an historic commitment to extending support for young people in care to 21 years of age. That started from 1 July this year. We know the transition to adulthood is important and a momentous stage in the life of any person but, particularly for young people, in leaving care it is even more so. Over the past year the department has worked closely with key stakeholders, most importantly young people themselves, to determine the best way to implement this historic funding commitment.

I am pleased to advise that 1 July this year marked the commencement of the extended post-care support initiative with the following coming into effect: the government has approved 16 new extended post-care support services across Queensland. These new services will be delivered by NGOs which will provide culturally-appropriate wraparound support to young adults leaving care from their 18th birthday until their 21st birthday.

Young adults will be proactively supported to access a safe place to live, maintain their connection to country, culture and community and have someone to walk with, guide and mentor them post care. The rollout of these services will be incremental as young people age in the service and reach their 18th birthday. Obviously it will begin low and build up over the next couple of years. The department will be hosting a service implementation workshop with all the new providers at the end of this month. By 1 January next year there will be a total of 19 extended post-care support services across Queensland.

In relation to financial support, financial support of up to \$16,000 a year is also now available for young adults who exit the care system into their living arrangements. This essential financial assistance will support them to meet some of the essential costs associated with living independently. Everyday living costs of young adults who remain living in a carer household will be met by the young adult's former carer or guardian, who will now continue to receive the care allowance until that young person reaches 21. This investment builds on established initiatives and programs like Next Step Plus, the Transition and Post Care Support Program, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services and the Create Foundation's Go Your Own Way Info Kit.

With the current housing jam that everyone knows about, it is important that we make sure that our young people coming out of care at 18 are not just out there wandering the streets and that they continue to be looked after.

CHAIR: Absolutely. Over to you, member for Burnett.

Mr BENNETT: I will defer to the shadow minister.

Ms CAMM: Minister, I recognise the care survey of young people and the comments you made about residential care. What is the Queensland government's policy and the department of child safety's policy on the use of vapes and illegal substances in residential care?

Mr CRAWFORD: The policy is no different to using vapes or cigarettes in any public place. If something is illegal, it is illegal.

Ms CAMM: Minister, whistleblowers—and these are youth workers in residential care facilities, both licensed and unlicensed—have been in contact with the opposition and have been instructed by Child Safety to hand back vapes to 12-year-old children when a child makes that request. This does not seem to be aligned with your previous answer. What is your response to that, Minister?

Mr CRAWFORD: I will hand to the acting director-general for the operational side of it, but certainly from where I sit—going back to my first answer—if it is illegal, it is illegal. That conduct should not be happening. I would be very happy to receive some of that whistleblower information, if you have any details, particularly about the NGO or whatever like that. I am very happy to hand that to the department for investigation. I will ask the acting director-general to comment.

Ms Connors: I was going to echo the minister's comments. I am not aware of those allegations. We would be very happy to receive more detail about the comments that the whistleblowers have made to you and we would be happy to investigate any of that.

Ms CAMM: I will write to the minister on that matter. Minister, whistleblowers—again youth workers in residential care facilities; this is a licensed one—were in touch with my office this week with regard to being instructed by Child Safety to allow children aged 16 to use bongs for marijuana use in residential care facilities that are in fact private rental properties. Is this allowed by the Queensland government and the department of child safety?

CHAIR: Minister, just before you provide a response, I make the assumption, out of the respect that I have for the member for Whitsunday, that she can substantiate these allegations, but they certainly do seem a little wayward. I provide you with the opportunity, Minister, to respond in the best way you see fit.

Ms CAMM: Chair, thank you. I can substantiate it.

Mr CRAWFORD: It is a good line of questioning. The answer is very simple. In terms of the use of bongs, marijuana et cetera, it is an illegal substance. You are not allowed to use it at school. You are not allowed to use it in the street. You are not allowed to use it in jail. You are not allowed to really use it anywhere. Residential facilities are not exempt from that. I am not aware of a law that says that they are exempt. That practice that you refer to is an illegal practice. Again, if there are examples or allegations or anything like that, I am very happy to take them. You can bring that information directly to me. I am very happy to take that on. If that is a practice then it is an illegal practice and it should be clamped down on.

CHAIR: Thank you for your response, Minister. I am also aware that there is mandatory reporting for public servants working with children, so those people coming to you should be reminded of their mandatory reporting requirements under the act. Member for Whitsunday, do you have another question?

Ms CAMM: I do. Minister, this is in regard to residential care facilities again. I have spoken to a resident of a residential care facility in Cairns and also in Mackay who told me that they are released at 9 am and are told not to return until 4.30 pm, with no food and no money. Is the minister aware of such practices occurring with regard to residential care providers—that is, young people being sent out on the streets with no resources?

Mr CRAWFORD: I am not aware of that at all. I find that completely unacceptable, if it is true. Again, I am very happy to have information like that come forward. Sometimes people will bring information to me, as they do to you. All of these things need to be looked into. It is a very challenging space, but conduct like that is certainly not good enough. I am very comfortable that my senior executive would dig into that. The more factual the information we can get, the better. Again, like the previous cases, I am very happy to look into it.

Ms CAMM: I have a follow-up question for the director-general.

CHAIR: We will come back to you, member. You will not miss out. Director-General, I know that you had something to add.

Ms Connors: There is significant oversight of residential care both by us as the department and by the Community Visitor Program. Young people have the opportunity, are aware and there are numbers in all residential care houses to contact the community visitors with any concerns. Again, just to echo the minister's comments, if you have people who have come to you with information we are happy to meet and discuss those concerns, and we will investigate those fully.

CHAIR: The secretariat has just informed me also that we would be in breach of the standing orders if those allegations cannot be substantiated, so by all means continue to report these allegations to the director-general. Member for Whitsunday, do you have another question?

Ms CAMM: I do thank you, Chair. This may be best directed to the acting director-general. When we talk about substantiating information, Chair, I met a young man Dillon who approached me on the street, Acting Director-General, during our regional sitting of parliament in Cairns as I was conducting a press conference. He has been in care since he was two years old. He is almost 18 years old now and he is trying to get a driver's licence. He has a revolving door of child safety case management. He is in residential care. He articulated to me that he was unable to get the support that he needed because of the ever-revolving door of people he is engaging with. I understand that the Far North Queensland retention and turnover rates are around 30 per cent. For a young person in residential care, can you outline for me what type of case management support a young man like Dillon has access to on a day-to-day basis? I was very concerned about his mental health and wellbeing and his welfare overall.

Ms Connors: Obviously I cannot comment on any particular circumstances of a young person in care. I can talk to you generally about how we are doing support for transition from care. The minister spoke about the historic commitment that we now have to extend support for care to 21. We have programs in place at the moment like Next Step Plus, Transition and Post Care Support Program, Youth Housing and Reintegration Services and the Create Foundation's Go Your Own Way Info Kit, which includes resources and information on transitioning from care.

We commence planning for young people's transition from care usually around the time they are 15 and 16. They are provided with their documents. They meet with their CSO. They do case planning around how they will transition from care and the supports that they need. Now we will have the extended post-care support services and allowances. That will also involve young people being allocated a youth worker who will continue to help them, guide and navigate as they move from care into their adult transition.

Mr CRAWFORD: I think it is a really important topic. This is one of the issues that was raised the other night with the other young people who came and saw me. The main thing that they talked about was exactly what the member for Whitsunday is talking about—that is, the turnover of CSOs and how young people yearn to have a long relationship with a person that they can talk to and go to and ask for things. They get frustrated when suddenly their CSO changes and they have this new person and this new person does not know anything about them.

I heard some really sad stories the other night. One of them was along a similar vein to the young person that you are talking about in relation to getting a driver's licence and those sorts of things. We know that that is a real problem for our young people in care because of the requirements for getting a driver's licence in terms of the number of hours involved. You have to have access to a car, a licensed person who can sit beside you and then the hundred-odd hours of driving. That is very difficult. There are partners that provide that but they are oversubscribed.

In situations like that—and for all members of parliament who might from time to time stumble across a young person like that—please feed that information directly to us. That sounds to me like a young man who probably has a disconnection with his CSO and we would need to re-establish that. We should have him in a driving lesson program and all of those sorts of things. That is actually quite sad to hear.

CHAIR: Member for Whitsunday, do you have one final question?

Ms CAMM: I do, Chair. Minister, you have published a consultation paper into a reportable conduct scheme in Queensland, and you announced that today. This was in response to the 2018 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sex Abuse, which was six years ago. Why has it taken arguably one of the Australia's worst child abuse cases in this past week for the Palaszczuk government to step up and finally protect Queensland children?

CHAIR: Sorry, member. Would you mind rephrasing that question to avoid the inferences and the imputations.

Ms CAMM: I will rephrase it. I will not restate the whole question. I think you are referring to that last paragraph, Chair. Minister, why has it taken one of the worst child abuse cases reported and alleged in the media for you, as minister, to announce a consultation paper that aims to protect Queensland children that were otherwise at risk prior to your announcement?

CHAIR: Sorry, member. You are creating a cause and effect relationship between an event and what you perceive to be the minister's reaction to an event which cannot be substantiated. That relationship between the two events cannot be substantiated. Would you mind rephrasing your question?

Ms CAMM: I will rephrase it. I will not further embark upon what is potentially going to be before the courts and troubling to mums and dads all across Queensland. Why has it taken six years for a consultation paper to be announced on a recommendation that was accepted by this government six years ago?

CHAIR: Thank you, member.

Mr CRAWFORD: I think we are there. The first point is that this work has been coming for some time and has not been as a result of any recent events. A simple time line is as follows: the royal commission findings came down in, I think, 2016 or 2017 or thereabouts. In 2018 COAG met—that is the old national cabinet—and all first ministers agreed that they would all move towards a nationally consistent framework around child safety business more broadly. Some states were already there. New South Wales has had a reportable conduct scheme now since about 1999. The royal commission actually made reference to that and said that everyone should be doing something like New South Wales. Every state and territory went off and did their work. Queensland was coming from quite a distance in comparison to where New South Wales was, so we had a lot of work to do.

The first few years was about building the drive to ask: 'What does this work look like?' Over 2019, 2020 and 2021—COVID smashed us over the top of that as well—the government was working on the consultation work: 'Do we have a reportable conduct scheme? Is that something that we should put together?' To give the committee a bit of background as to what that would look like, it would mean that, for an organisation as big as the Broncos or as small as a little suburban football club, if there were any allegations inside those clubs of inappropriate conduct, the investigation of that did not just stop with the club executive—that there was somewhere for it to go. As the committee would know, blue cards capture people who have either been charged with or committed of an offence but, if someone is saying, 'Something over there is not right about that person,' there is nowhere to capture that. That is what a reportable conduct scheme does.

The decision was through all of the stakeholder engagement that Queensland should have a reportable conduct scheme. Over the next year or two it was about building up what are the options. The department has done a great job in putting this together. Three options were brought forward. One was maintain the status quo—just do what we are doing at the moment and rely on our blue card system to capture any of that conduct. The other two options were about a reportable conduct scheme and how formal it should be—is it an opt-in kind of thing or is it a very structured operation? The preferred option from the government is the third one—a formal structured reportable conduct scheme.

The next step, like with anything when government make a major change, was to look at the regulatory impact—the RIS. What is going to happen when we do that? For those little footy clubs that I mentioned and for the Scout groups and for all of the other small places out there, it means more work for volunteers and for paid people and everything like that—so what are the impacts? As government does across a range of portfolios, we wanted to release a RIS, and that is what we released this morning.

Again, I can assure the committee that this work has been coming for some time. I have been in this role for 84 days. When I came into this role, I was briefed about the RIS which was going to be coming to me within weeks. This puts us in a strong position going forward and I believe we will get into a very strong place, but there is no comparison whatsoever, Chair, to be drawn between the events of the last few weeks and today's release.

CHAIR: Thank you for clarifying that, Minister. I will move to government questions. Will the minister please advise what steps the Palaszczuk government is taking to support foster and kinship carers in the important work they do in caring for some of Queensland's most vulnerable children?

Mr CRAWFORD: Foster and kinship carers are our partners, and we feel very strongly about that and the language we use to describe them. They are our partners and colleagues; they are the backbone of the child protection system. They care for 85 per cent of all young people in out-of-home care. There are more than 6,000 Queensland families that have opened their homes and hearts to more than 10,000 children. The Palaszczuk government will provide nearly \$160 million this financial year in funding to foster and kinship care and intensive foster care services to provide recruitment, training and direct support to foster and kinship carers. This is a \$9 million increase on what was provided in the last financial year and a statement of our commitment to improving the experiences of foster and kinship carers.

We work closely with Queensland Foster and Kinship Care and their CEO, Mr Bryan Smith. Bryan was one of the very first people I met with in my first couple of weeks as the incoming Minister for Child Safety. QFKC worked with carers to provide information on how to raise concerns or complaints with the department and how to work with carers to support them during those matters. They play a key role in managing our foster and kinship care recruitment hotline, which is an important tool in our efforts to recruit more foster and kinship carers. Foster and kinship carers are supported by a range of programs, including allowances and reimbursements for eligible care costs. In recognition of the increased cost of living, the government indexed the foster carer allowance by eight per cent on 1 January. For a carer looking after a 12-year-old, that translates to an increase in the caring allowance of nearly \$1,300 a year. Where increased supports are needed, the department provides tailored, individualised placement support packages to help carers meet the needs of children in their care.

The department is committed to delivering training to foster and kinship carers to help prepare them to care for young people who have often experienced complex trauma and may exhibit challenging behaviours. In May 2022 the department began the rollout of new Hope and Healing training to foster carers to help them understand and respond to the trauma experienced by the children and young people they care for. This is now a core part of the training all foster carers undertake in their first 12 months. We are seeking to recruit more foster carers and are redoubling our efforts to find and support kinship carers as well to half our residential care rates. That is why we are continuing our nearly

\$700,000 foster carer recruitment campaign titled 'We need more foster carers, like you'. Foster carers are an incredibly important part of the child protection system, and our government is committed to support them in the exceptional work they do. If there is anyone out there watching who is even thinking about it, please make the inquiry.

Ms LUI: Minister, with regard to the delivery of child safety services, could you please outline the innovative Family caring for family program being developed to better meet the care needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, young people and families in the future.

Mr CRAWFORD: The Palaszczuk government is committed to delivering the best services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people and supporting families and communities to care for their children. I am very pleased to share information on the Family caring for family program being developed and trialled over the next two years. The Family caring for family program is being developed in partnership with QATSICPP and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community controlled organisations. The program is founded on the recognition that the role of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families caring for children to whom they are related is fundamentally different from that of foster carers due to the unique challenges faced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Our commitment to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families is a key part of Queensland's Our Way strategy 2021-2037. It aligns with our department's target to increase the proportion of children and young people being placed with kin to 70 per cent by 2026. The Family caring for family program will offer a range of responses to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and families. It aims to improve the wellbeing of children and families by building the capacity of families to take on the care of children aged zero to 18 years. It increases the number of children and young people being cared for by family and decreases the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children being cared for by non-Indigenous foster carers or living in residential care arrangements.

When children are at risk or the decision has been made that they are unable to safely live with their parents, the Family caring for family service provider will work with parents and family to identify the family member best placed to care for the children. For example, if a grandmother has a challenging relationship with a child's parents and has been identified as an alternative carer, services will work to strengthen the family relationship and connection to work towards this becoming a relative care option, ensuring children are always connected to kin, community and culture.

CHAIR: We have time for another question.

Mr SKELTON: My question is to the minister. Can you outline what the Palaszczuk government is doing to support children and young people living with disability in out-of-home care?

Mr CRAWFORD: One of the first crossovers that I really noticed when I came into this new portfolio was the significant crossover between disability services and child safety. It was quite remarkable. Our government is committed to delivering better services for Queenslanders living with disability, and that includes working with children and families involved in the child protection system. Our department cares for some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the state, and children and young people living with disability can be especially so. The department works hard with children, their families and services that support them to meet their disability needs, including facilitating and supporting children, and occasionally their parents, to access the NDIS.

In 2022, in addition to the My Life in Care Survey, which sought feedback from young people, my department conducted the first children in care census—an holistic survey of children and young people in out-of-home care completed by those who were caring for them. The census revealed that 37 per cent of children and young people in out-of-home care had either a diagnosed or suspected disability—37 per cent. The department estimates that between 16 and 20 per cent of those subject to ongoing child protection intervention have disability needs that are likely to make them eligible for the NDIS and is taking active steps to ensure those entitled to an NDIS plan are able to access one. As at the end of June this year there are almost 3,800 children and young people subject to ongoing child protection intervention who have been referred to the NDIS, and more than 3,100 of them have approved plans. This includes more than 1,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people.

In addition to supporting children and young people living with disability to access the NDIS, the department has employed 17 specialist clinicians and 12 transition officers to work as part of a specialist team to support child safety officers to work with children and young people with high and complex

behaviours. This team works closely with evolved therapeutic services to respond to challenging behaviours that young people can display as a result of their disability, mental and trauma related behaviours.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I understand there are a couple of matters outstanding so I will hand over to you, Director-General.

Ms Connors: In relation to the question around when our June data would be available, our June data cuts off on 31 August. That is in accordance with national reporting definitions. It will be released in late September, early October.

CHAIR: I will make sure that the member for Whitsunday is made aware of that update.

Ms Connors: Then we had the question around OSD and IPS funding for 2022-23. In terms of the total amount of funding the government provided to outsource service delivery residential care contracts for the period ending 30 June 2023, OSD was \$241.5 million and for the fee-for-service packages—referred to in the question as individual placement and support—it was \$531.9 million.

CHAIR: Thank you. Do you have one more?

Ms Connors: I have a small point of clarification. The team was keen that I say that, when we were talking about the residential care review, while we are conducting the review and it is within existing resources, we will be potentially commissioning some pieces of work, like financial modelling or support to conduct some of our regional forums. I just wanted to make that clear. We will be commissioning some support for us.

CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, I know you always like to take an opportunity to speak at the end of the session, prior to me formally adjourning.

Mr BERKMAN: Excuse me, Chair. I appreciate the extra information that has come through. What I was hoping to get was the figures as broken down under all four limbs of that question for the 2022-23 financial year. I realise it is very late in the session. If it is possible for that to be taken on notice, it would be greatly appreciated.

CHAIR: Acting Director-General, are you happy to take up the matter with the member for Maiwar offline, as you indicated earlier?

Ms Connors: Yes. We can provide those figures.

Mr CRAWFORD: We are happy to do that. Instead of it being part of the formal session, we will make that commitment directly with the member.

CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, over to you.

Mr CRAWFORD: Thank you, Chair. I thank the committee. I know it has been a long day for you, as it was for all of the other committees. I thank you and all the parliamentary staff who have put estimates together. I give a big thank you to my team—my ministerial team and the department as well. I especially thank our Acting DG. It was her first time in the estimates hot seat and I am sure the DG would approve. I say a final big thank you to all of our incredible staff out there who do an amazing job in a very challenging and very competitive environment. I also thank all of our partners who support us.

My closing remarks are that the business of child protection needs to be bipartisan. We cannot weaponise child protection. We need to be parliamentarians when it comes to this business. There is so much at stake—our next generation and the generation that comes beyond that. As we have heard, there are well over 10,000 young people in out-of-home care. If there is one thing that I implore for the committee and everyone in parliament, it is to let us not weaponise child protection if we do not need to.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee certainly appreciates your support, as the committee that supports you. Prior to closing, I want to say that there were some allegations made tonight that were reported to the opposition about possible self-harm, behaviours that cause harm to our young people and allegations of young people being placed in harm. I remind every public servant and every member of parliament sitting in the room tonight that, if we have that reported to us, it is a statutory obligation for every single one of us to mandatorily report to the department of child safety or the Queensland Police Service. I remind every single person who may receive an allegation—whether it is substantiated or not—that you are obliged under the law of this land to mandatorily report.

That concludes our time together today. I thank the minister for your work. I thank all of your staff: your ministerial staff, the director-general, the deputy director-generals and all of the public servants who support Queenslanders every day, particularly those who are most vulnerable. Minister, you have the responsibility of our seniors, those who have a disability and also our children—the most vulnerable members of our Queensland community. I thank each and every one of you for all that you do every single day to serve those who are less fortunate than us or those who are more vulnerable than us.

I thank the members of the committee today, both visiting members as well as committee members. It is an absolute honour to lead this committee. They are a wonderful group of people to work with and we are very proud of the work we have done to support your department. I thank Hansard. I thank the secretariat who provide the support to us every day. I thank the broadcast staff and everyone else who has been involved in the estimates process. It is a significant task that is very important for our democracy. The time allocated for the consideration of the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Child Safety and Minister for Seniors and Disability Services has now expired. I declare this hearing closed. I wish you all a wonderful Friday and a wonderful weekend.

The committee adjourned at 6.45 pm.