



ECONOMICS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Members present:

Mr LP Power MP (Chair)
Mr RA Stevens MP (via teleconference)
Mr ST O'Connor MP
Mr TR Watts MP
Ms KE Richards MP (via videoconference)
Mr LR McCallum MP

Staff present:

Ms L Manderson (Committee Secretary)
Mr J Gilchrist (Assistant Committee Secretary)

PUBLIC BRIEFING—INQUIRY INTO THE QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC RESPONSE TO COVID-19

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MONDAY, 22 JUNE 2020

Brisbane

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The committee met at 12.33 pm.

CHAIR: Good afternoon. I declare this public briefing open. Today's proceedings are being conducted using videoconference and teleconference facilities, so I ask all of our participants and anyone watching the live broadcast to please bear with us if we encounter any technical issues. I would like to continue with today's proceedings by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we participate today and paying my respects to elders past and present.

My name is Linus Power, the member for Logan and chair of the committee. The other members of the committee are: Ray Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair, who is joining us today via teleconference; Lance McCallum, the member for Bundamba; Sam O'Connor, the member for Bonney; Kim Richards, the member for Redlands, who is joining us today via teleconference; and Trevor Watts, the member for Toowoomba North.

The purpose of today's briefing is to assist the committee with its inquiry into the Queensland government's economic response to COVID-19. Key areas of focus for this briefing include the Queensland government's housing support and assistance, support of Queensland businesses through procurement of services and public works, and support for the arts, tourism, sports, recreation and fitness sectors.

The briefing is a proceeding of the Queensland parliament and is subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is being recorded and broadcast live on the parliament's website. I remind committee members that officers appearing today are here to provide factual or technical information. Any questions about government or opposition policy should be directed to the responsible minister or shadow minister or left to debate on the floor of the House. If you are not joining us this afternoon via videoconference connection on your mobile phone, I ask you to turn your mobile phone off or switch it to silent, and to also please place microphones on mute unless you are speaking. This will prevent audio interference and background noise.

BAILEY, Ms Sharon, Deputy Director-General, Portfolio Strategy, Department of Housing and Public Works

BISHOP, Ms Tess, Deputy Director-General, Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation

CARROLL, Ms Liza, Director-General, Department of Housing and Public Works

CODDINGTON, Ms Leanne, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism and Events Queensland

HARVIE, Ms Kirstine, Executive Director, Strategic Policy and Legislation, Housing, Homelessness and Sport, Department of Housing and Public Works

HERRING, Ms Kirsten, Deputy Director-General, Arts and Heritage, Department of Environment and Science

JACOBS, Mr Mark, Deputy Director-General, Science and Technology, Department of Environment and Science

KLAASSEN, Mr Ben, Deputy Director-General, Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services and Partnerships, Department of Environment and Science

MERRICK, Mr Jamie, Director-General, Department of Environment and Science

O'BRIEN, Ms Gayle, General Manager, Economic Policy and Recovery, Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation

SLY, Mr Andrew, Acting Assistant Director-General, Sport and Recreation, Department of Housing and Public Works

WALKER, Mr Damien, Director-General, Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation

WALL, Mr Mark, General Manager, Strategy Policy and Programs, Housing, Homelessness and Sport, Department of Housing and Public Works

WOOLLEY, Ms Trish, Deputy Director-General, Housing, Homelessness and Sport, Department of Housing and Public Works

CHAIR: I now welcome witnesses from the Department of Housing and Public Works, the Department of Environment and Science, and the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation. Thank you for the written briefings each of you provided in advance of this afternoon's proceedings. They were published on the committee's inquiry webpage earlier today. In view of the briefing today being broadcast via videoconference, and given the absence of name plates and more limited visual cues, I ask that you please identify yourself by name when speaking, and particularly when adding to a question that has already been answered or the first time you are asked a question. The committee members will also be endeavouring to ensure they clearly identify themselves when asking questions to minimise any confusion for you and for members of the public watching the broadcast, as well as to assist Hansard in their transcription of the proceedings.

I will now invite you each to make an opening statement, after which committee members will have some questions for you. We might start with the Department of Housing and Public Works, followed by the Department of Science and Environment, and we will finish the opening statements with the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation.

Ms Carroll: I would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners on whose land we meet today and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. As has already been mentioned, the department has provided some briefing material to the committee which outlines some of our key work during COVID-19. Housing and Public Works has a broad portfolio of interests across a range of industries and support for individual Queenslanders, industries including contract providers and suppliers, and government agencies.

There has been regular ongoing engagement by the department with the building and construction sector, the housing and homelessness sector and the sport and recreation sectors. Through this period the department has played a key response, in particular in relation to housing assistance with respect to rental grants, the approach to assisting landlords and tenants and assistance for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. We have also had a key role in the procurement of equipment and services, supporting building suppliers and contractors to continue to operate and deliver projects and programs, managing digital and other inquiry channels for members of the public, and development of industry assistance plans in the sport and recreation sector and in the housing and homelessness sector.

Smart Service Queensland, which is part of the department, has provided significant immediate support through supporting Queensland Health with their 1300 health line where we have taken over 387,000 calls since March. We have also made 262,000 outbound welfare calls to vulnerable Queenslanders and 21,000 calls to people who are in self-quarantine.

Our housing support has been driven through a housing rental hub which was established in April. Since that time we have had over 300,000 views of that hub. The department has also provided 2,700 Queenslanders with a COVID-19 rental grant. There has also been emergency housing assistance applied through the \$24.7 million support package for housing and homelessness services.

Within the sport and recreation sector, the department has worked with the industry closely in looking at the return to play and assisting with the development of COVID-19 return to play plans. The government has also provided additional support of \$51.3 million to help the sport and recreation sector resume their normal activity.

Recovery packages have also been announced by the government and are being administered by the department. This includes a \$21 million expansion of the Household Resilience Program, \$100 million additional funds in the housing construction area around social housing, and \$10 million in senior accessibility through the Home Assist Secure providers. We are happy to take further questions during the course of this hearing.

CHAIR: Thank you. We now turn to the Department of Environment and Science. Do you wish to give a briefing?

Mr Merrick: I also start by acknowledging the traditional owners on whose land we respectfully gather and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I will commence by just touching on the arts sector. The sector has been amongst the most severely impacted of sectors across the Queensland economy as a result of the necessary measures taken by governments to inhibit the spread of COVID-19. The sector is vitally important, contributing some \$12.3 billion to the state's economy and employing 92,000 Queenslanders directly and indirectly. According to Deloitte Access Economics, between mid-March and mid-April, jobs in the creative and performing arts sector contracted by 29.5 per cent.

It is reasonable to assume that indoor performance spaces will be amongst the last to reopen in full as restrictions are wound back. The importance of this careful approach is confirmed in the report issued this morning by the Grattan Institute that details the infection risks associated with large-scale indoor static gatherings and the difficulty they present for contact tracing. This makes the arts and cultural sector particularly fragile.

The duration and scale of impacts will also be shaped by the confidence of audiences to return, and this will have a significant effect on demand and consumption of arts experiences now and into the future. In recognition of this, last week the Queensland government announced a \$22.5 million arts recovery package as part of Queensland's economic recovery strategy stage 2. This investment will support a range of measures to strengthen the sector's foundations, drive new creative work, employ artists and art workers, retain the state's skilled creatives, grow audiences, and activate our venues and other non-traditional spaces. With this package, the Queensland government has now committed more than \$42.5 million in relief and recovery measures to the sector. The funding acknowledges the sector's critical role in providing the state with a distinct and competitive edge moving forward and is an important driver of vital social, economic and wellbeing outcomes in the state's recovery.

With the implementation of stage 2 of Queensland's road map to a COVID-19 safe recovery, Queensland's arts companies and artists have been able to recommence rehearsals and training. Reactivation of the sector is essential in supporting employment for performers, artists and art workers, and it means companies will be ready to perform again and engage in live community audiences when the time is right.

Arts Queensland and Queensland Health are continuing to work with this sector, particularly industry peak bodies such as Ausdance, Stage Queensland and QMusic, to support the development and progression of relevant COVID-safe plans so that artists and audiences can soon come together in a safe shared experience.

I might very quickly turn to national parks and recreation areas and the role they play in supporting tourism. The Department of Environment and Science manages over 1,000 national parks, conservation parks, recreation areas and state forests. These areas are critical for many tourism businesses that cater to many visitors who want to access a unique natural environment. To support tourism businesses, daily passenger fees have been waived for an initial period from 1 February 2020 to 31 July 2020. The Queensland government has also committed a further \$8.93 million to improve infrastructure and visitor facilities at national parks throughout the state. Key projects will include walking trails on Magnetic Island, and upgrade of facilities at Daisy Hill and visitor facilities at Bowling Green Bay National Park. This will both enhance our tourism offering and provide construction opportunities for local tradies.

During the peak of COVID-19 impacts on Queensland, over 95 per cent of parks and forests remained open for Queenslanders to use. Notably, visitation to a number of parks and forests has seen a very significant increase in the last two months as people crave an outdoor experience. From early June 2020 all parks and forests, except for those subject to biosecurity or restricted area declarations, were open. Campgrounds also reopened from early June.

Camping is important for many Queenslanders and provides an important boost to regional economies. The Department of Environment and Science worked with Queensland's Chief Health Officer to prepare a COVID-safe industry plan for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service's 569 campgrounds. This plan ensures the safe operation of campgrounds with a range of measures implemented to support visitors and staff. Over 20,000 bookings have now been made since reopening in early June.

Finally, I will touch upon the work we are undertaking with Queensland universities, work on which we are engaging closely with the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation. The COVID-19 restrictions on travel and social distancing have had serious impacts on universities, Brisbane

in particular from falling international student numbers and collapsing international student revenue but also from disruptions to research, closures of campus facilities and impacts on commercial partnerships and incomes. In Queensland it has been estimated that more than 4,000 university jobs are potentially at risk, with many of these in the regions. Universities are a major employer in many regional centres, bringing highly skilled, highly paid workers to Queensland's regions.

Queensland universities play an important direct role themselves in fighting COVID-19. The University of Queensland, for example, is leading the development of a COVID-19 vaccine and multiple teams at Griffith University, James Cook University, Queensland University of Technology and CSIRO are also working to discover new vaccines and treatments to track or cure COVID-19. As at early June 2020 the Queensland government had committed \$10 million to fast-track the University of Queensland's vaccine development effort and over \$15 million for a statewide international education and assistance package, including support for students experiencing severe financial hardship as a result of COVID-19. I am happy to take any questions.

CHAIR: We now turn to the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation. Mr Walker, do you have an opening statement?

Mr Walker: I do. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this briefing regarding the inquiry into the Queensland government's economic response to COVID-19. I, too, would like to begin by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we respectively meet and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. Today I want to outline how the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation has worked hand in hand with tourism and events stakeholders since January 2020 to respond to the crisis and support recovery.

Prior to COVID-19, the tourism industry was worth \$27 billion to the Queensland economy, representing 57,000 businesses and employing 236,000 Queenslanders. The sector has been significantly impacted by COVID-19. Queensland was the first Australian state to respond to the needs of the tourism industry, with an immediate response package in February 2020. We have continuously led our interstate counterparts in helping our tourism businesses back to business. We have taken four key steps to ensure Queensland's tourism and events sector can reopen and re-employ and can remain globally competitive. These are: to sustain our tourism businesses through proactive engagement and response measures to protect jobs; to invest in tourism infrastructure to open faster and better; to boost aviation capacity by restarting pre-COVID-19 air routes and attracting new air routes; and to market Queensland destinations to create demand as restrictions are eased.

In terms of sustain, the Queensland government has acted quickly to the concerns raised by the sector. As early as February 2020 we developed a \$27.25 million support package. This package included immediate relief to tourism and events businesses impacted by decreased patronage as well as marketing support. It formed the first part of the Queensland government's \$6 billion COVID-19 support initiative including measures for impacted businesses, workers, households, communities and the health sector. The department has listened carefully to make sure we provided the right support at the right time. We have worked with our partners to set up a COVID-19 industry support unit within the department that engaged with over 1,600 businesses from February to June 2020 to help tourism associations develop industry COVID-safe plans to enable tourism and accommodation businesses to open faster and to establish a tourism response to assist tourism businesses and event proponents undertake COVID-safe planning for their businesses.

We have helped shape the right response to sustain tourism businesses through the pandemic and help position them to be competitive in recovery. We have championed the needs of the tourism and events sector as the Queensland government put together its \$6 billion package of response measures to protect the economy and position it to recover. Those measures that have supported the tourism industry include: a \$300 million small business adaptation grant program to provide \$10,000 grants to small businesses; payroll tax relief to small businesses; \$400 million to support retail and commercial tenants to deliver land tax relief for property owners, which must be passed on to tenants; around \$50 million in the deferral of gaming tax for pubs, clubs and casinos between April and June 2020; an estimated \$22.7 million to waive the renewal of liquor licensing fees for the 2020-21 financial year; low-interest loans of up to \$250,000 as part of a \$1 billion COVID-19 Jobs Support Loans program; an additional \$22.5 million arts recovery package that will help to provide a pipeline of performing arts and live music to support our cultural and tourism recovery; \$7 million for the Growing Indigenous Tourism in Queensland Fund; and \$500,000 for the COVID-19 Exhibited Animal Assistance Program to help exhibited animal industry operators meet their animal welfare obligations. As at 8 June 2020, 741 tourism related businesses across Queensland had been approved loans totalling \$109.2 million and supporting some 9,866 local jobs.

In terms of investment, as restrictions started to ease we pivoted to invest in infrastructure and experiences that reinvigorate the tourism sector so it can reopen better than ever. We have announced a \$50 million industry support package to include \$25 million to support the development of tourism products, experiences and infrastructure by funding shovel-ready projects that will stimulate local economies and \$25 million to support Queensland's tourism icons while they return to business, with these funds going to key attractions so they can continue to pay workers. Through our agency partners such as the Department of Environment and Science we are also investing almost \$9 million to provide visitor infrastructure upgrades and enhancements to re-energise nature based tourism in our national parks.

In terms of aviation, we know that strong aviation links are critical to support tourism hotspots in the outback and Far North Queensland—and not exclusively those locations. To boost aviation, the government will invest an additional \$15 million in regional airports and Brisbane Airport to attract new air routes or restart pre-COVID-19 air routes. We have also been leading discussions with major airline partners to build strong intrastate aviation links, and we have spoken to carriers about interstate and New Zealand routes when borders reopen.

In terms of market, a key element in our plan to get tourism back to business has been to market our great state and drive demand. We want to encourage Queenslanders to holiday in their own state. To do this we have allocated \$7 million to market Queensland, encouraging more Queenslanders to holiday in Queensland, and we have launched the Queensland You're Good to Go campaign, inspiring Queenslanders to holiday in their state. This campaign is projected to deliver \$1 billion in overnight accommodation for hard-hit tourism operators across all regions of Queensland.

In terms of advocacy, COVID-19 has seen a stronger working relationship between state and federal governments. We have made the most of this opportunity to influence outcomes to better our tourism and events sector. We engaged with the Australian government on potential tourism initiatives for their \$1 billion industry support package and sought support for airlines, zoos and aquariums that led to the \$94.6 million support package to assist zoos and aquariums to get through the COVID-19 crisis.

In terms of future steps, we will continue to listen to stakeholders and industry and stand with them as they unite and recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will continue to work in partnership with our agency partners and key stakeholders in this sector as well as across all levels of government. At an officer level, we have asked to work with the federal government to accelerate opportunities that will help our hardest hit regions when temporary measures such as JobKeeper expire. We are focused on delivering for tourism as part of the Queensland economic recovery strategy to unite and recover for Queensland jobs. The tourism industry is already recording increased bookings for the coming months, providing a much needed boost for the tourism industry's recovery. That concludes my opening statement. We are happy to take any questions the committee may have.

CHAIR: I want to make clear that, because we are covering such a wide variety of areas, if any of the deputy directors-general or other officers wish to make a statement they may do so. I did see that most of the directors-general had covered all of the aspects in their portfolios. It is unusual and I really appreciate you all being here. We do not get to use 'directors-general'—plural—very often, so thank you very much for appearing.

Mr STEVENS: Ms Carroll, you advised in your briefing that there are 80,000 Queenslanders on regulated accommodation. What percentage of those people receiving assistance from the state have requested rental suspensions and have been granted rental suspensions? At what financial cost would that be to the department?

Ms Carroll: Could I just clarify the particular cohort the member is interested in? I just want to make sure we answer the question correctly. Which cohort are you referring to?

CHAIR: I am presuming that for many in social housing their rental is linked to their income.

Mr STEVENS: Correct.

CHAIR: Were you looking for statistics in general? That is always the way it works. Is there a particular group you are looking at?

Mr STEVENS: I was looking for statistics right across the board. There is a percentage of pensions taken from some people in homes et cetera. I was looking for the number of people who had requested rental suspensions—some obviously would be due to work issues such as if their incomes had dropped below a certain level—and the financial cost that would be to the department.

CHAIR: Just to clarify, member for Mermaid Beach, that would still be available through the JobKeeper or JobSeeker if they were stood down from work. You are asking what percentage had informed the department of a reduction in income because of COVID?

Mr STEVENS: Correct—and had required a rental suspension. Some would have lost their jobs and may not have qualified for other payments and they would therefore request some rental suspensions.

CHAIR: I think that clarifies some of the intention of the member's question.

Ms Carroll: Thank you to the member for that clarification. In social housing most of our tenants are on some form of income support, an age pension or a disability pension, so those individuals have not been impacted in the same way. Where people may have some personal additional work related income that then is not available, obviously there is a mechanism—it happens anyway, even outside of COVID—whereby those particular individuals can come back to the department and have an adjustment made in the rent they pay. It would be very unusual that we would ever require someone to pay no rent, because the individuals within department properties would be receiving some form of income support.

I can tell you a couple of things the department has done for social housing in terms of hardship measures. We did look at a moratorium on evictions, consistent with what has happened in the private rental area. If there is a dangerous tenancy et cetera it is done on a case-by-case basis, but just for non-payment of rent and those sorts of things we have had that moratorium on evictions. We have had a pausing on the collection of arrears, taking into account people's particular circumstances, and we have put a pause on our debt management activity. Obviously, in terms of people's rent that is done on a case-by-case basis. For the majority of social housing tenants their circumstances have not changed and therefore the normal rental process occurs.

Mr STEVENS: From what I could hear, that covers it. My other question relates to the rule on sport for kids in Queensland. Why has Queensland not adopted the one-person-per-four-square-metre rule? It provides a commonsense approach in kids' sports to allow more kids to return to community sport. For example, I know of soccer clubs that are limiting it to 20 kids on the whole soccer oval at a time. Why has Queensland not gone to the one-person-per-four-square-metre rule for kids' sport?

Ms Carroll: I might start with a response and then hand over to Trish Woolley. I will just explain to the committee how the COVID-safe plan for community sport has come into being. The department has a committee which is made up of key representatives from sport and active recreation. Through that process the Chief Health Officer determines in each of the stages of easing restrictions what the framework is. The department has worked really closely with the industry, and the industry has developed effectively a COVID-safe plan which then the different sporting clubs can utilise to have more than a particular number of people.

Taking field sports as an example, using the COVID-safe plan clubs are able to break their fields into areas and have 20 per specific area. Those plans have in them diagrams and things to assist the clubs. All of these plans have to be approved through the Chief Health Officer, and she applies the set of principles and guidelines that she is applying across all of Queensland. I might hand over to Ms Woolley to give you more detail.

Ms Woolley: There is a lot of information available on the website through the section on easing of restrictions. It directly relates, as Ms Carroll said, to the different types of sport. In the case of field sports there is quite a detailed matrix which goes with every type of sport, whether it is hockey, touch football or AFL. It talks about the size of the playing space or the field and how it can be provided, and it provides guidance to the sporting club or organisation about how to ensure safety—in this case for stage 2—for training. Many of the clubs or organisations that are operating in Queensland—there are around 7,000 in Queensland—have availed themselves of the use of this industry plan, particularly for field sport, and have resumed training in stage 2.

CHAIR: I can report that the Park Ridge Panthers, where my son plays soccer, certainly have those plans in place. They have more than 20, but they are split to designated fields and they have a COVID-safe plan in place. The question was specifically about the one-per-four-square-metre rule. Junior soccer has many bigger areas and has not requested to have that many people in a designated area with that kind of crowding because they are spread out more as a general part of play.

Ms Carroll: I think the key principles the Chief Health Officer has been working on for stage 2, which are then applied in the COVID-safe plans, have been framing around groups of 20 and then how you break up playing spaces for those groups of 20. Then there are obviously additional complications in terms of making sure that, when people come and go, there are not lots of people joined together. That has been part of Queensland's success in making sure that the no-transmission rate in the community is managed. That is the framing that the Chief Health Officer has been using, as far as I understand.

CHAIR: I can report that it is working well with the soccer club in Park Ridge.

Ms RICHARDS: My question is for each department. With respect to the JobKeeper allowance, can you talk about how that supported your individual sectors or if there have been any issues? Further, what would be the impact on your sectors if it ends in September or sooner?

Ms Carroll: I will start with housing. In terms of private rentals, one of the things that the JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments have enabled is for people to stay in their private tenancies. There has not been as much disruption in that particular area. While people have had reduced incomes and there have been negotiations with their landlords, that has been very successful.

In the sporting sector, obviously JobKeeper is utilised by clubs and active recreation organisations that have a number of paid employees. That has been an important part while those clubs and active recreation organisations are coming back, which will particularly happen in stage 3. The broader homelessness sector has not actually had a reduction particularly in income, so there has not been a significant impact there.

In the building and construction sector they have been able to keep going, but there have been reports where people have had some drop-off in business and therefore have been able to avail themselves of JobKeeper.

CHAIR: When I have been talking to landlords they have been very appreciative of the fact that JobKeeper has been able to underpin the rental housing market. If it was abruptly pulled away, would that mean that a lot more people would seek to negotiate their rent with landlords?

Ms Carroll: Obviously, in terms of the cost of living, a big part of what you use your income on is your rent or your mortgage payments. You would anticipate there would be some impact, but I guess what we are doing at the moment is monitoring what that looks like going forward and what the issues are as they flow through to the Residential Tenancies Authority.

Ms RICHARDS: Post September, would you imagine a substantial increase in the housing and rental market with the ending of JobKeeper?

Ms Carroll: I would find it really hard to say definitively, because in the private rental market obviously the department does not have an overview of how impacted individuals are in terms of what they are able to afford to pay and how many people are being supported by JobKeeper. Obviously, that has enabled the private rental market to come through this in a relatively comfortable way. There have been a lot of conciliations through the Residential Tenancies Authority, but we do not have that data and information. We have a committee that includes REIQ as well as Tenants Queensland and QCOSS, so we have a process by which we are monitoring what this might look like going forward.

Mr Merrick: In terms of the data that we have in terms of JobKeeper support for the sector, with regard to small to medium organisations, 23 of 38 organisations have been eligible and in receipt of JobKeeper. That applies to some 181 full-time jobs, and the value of that is \$3.5 million. In terms of the major performing arts organisations, four out of five have been eligible, supporting 318 jobs and \$6.2 million in terms of the value of JobKeeper. What I would say, though, is that statutory arts organisations such as QPAC, Queensland Museum and so forth have not been eligible, nor have council owned venues. They have not been eligible for JobKeeper either.

The other issue surrounding the arts sector has been necessarily the casualised nature of the sector. The contract based nature of the sector has meant that a large number of individual artists have not been eligible for JobKeeper either. In terms of the universities, they have not been eligible for JobKeeper either.

CHAIR: Director-General, Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation, do you have any comments in relation to JobKeeper?

Mr Walker: I will limit it to the tourism and events sector and particularly what you have heard from the industry. For those who do qualify it has certainly been of significant assistance. I guess the issue has been around who qualifies and who does not. Mr Merrick also made the point about the nature of employment within the broader tourism and events sector that not everyone is eligible. I think one thing to note about the tourism and events sector is that it is a very important part of the broader Queensland economy from a regionalised point of view. What has been helpful about JobKeeper is keeping skilled staff in situ in the regions, ready to continue to deliver services once the tourism sector is up and running, as it should be in the near future. I guess it has been particularly helpful there. I have heard concerns at its ending and what that might mean for being able to retain staff in regional Queensland in particular as the tourism sector starts to ramp up. I also note Mr Merrick's comments that one of the broader parts of the tourism family is international education. Universities have been cut out of the JobKeeper arrangements, which they tell me has had a particular impact on them.

Mr O'CONNOR: Going back to the department of housing, point 14 in the briefing you provided to us mentions the partnership with Scape, which moved up to 300 people into apartments in Toowong. How much does that arrangement cost and when will it expire?

Ms Carroll: I will start and then hand over to Ms Woolley, who can give some of the specific details. In the context of utilising the facility Scape, it fits within a broader framework that every state and territory has been undertaking, which is making sure that, for those people who live in congregate care as well as people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, there is suitable accommodation for that group so as to ensure the health outcomes for the broader community, as well as those individuals. I will hand over to Ms Woolley to speak on the specifics of the Scape building.

Ms Woolley: The cost for Scape, in terms of the building leasing costs, is \$6.6 million, GST inclusive, for the period 9 April 2020 through to 18 January 2021. There are also some additional costs that are associated with the operational expenses that are already provisioned for the organisations that deliver the services at Toowong. Those are delivered by Bric Housing, St Vincent de Paul, the Salvation Army and Mission Australia. In effect, those service models have been relocated into the operation at Toowong, thereby effectively utilising existing operational expenses that would have otherwise been used.

Mr O'CONNOR: Thank you for that detail. Are there any plans to extend the lease beyond that time?

Ms Woolley: The department is working with the partners at the site at Toowong. We have a congregate care model partnership executive group, which includes the partners of those organisations that are providing support working with the department to look at the future of that site. Later in the year we will be working through the transition arrangements or otherwise of that site.

Mr O'CONNOR: My electorate is on the Gold Coast, where we have a significant homelessness issue—as I am sure you are aware—around Southport, in particular, and in the fringe areas such as the suburb of Labrador. Could you run us through the response of your department on the Gold Coast in terms of the support provided, particularly outreach services if you fund any of those? Do you have any of that detail?

Ms Woolley: I have quite a lot of detail as to what is happening around the Gold Coast, because it is part of a strategy that the department has had in place for a period around nine locations across Queensland where we are looking at an intensive response to rough sleeping and homelessness. The Gold Coast is one of those nine areas. For some time we have been working out of the Gold Coast. It has also benefited from a proportion of the funds made available through the COVID immediate response package for housing and homelessness. A portion of that funding has also been dedicated to Gold Coast providers. Through that period, \$643,135 worth of additional brokerage funding has been provided to the existing service providers to assist with temporary accommodation and supports for people experiencing homelessness. A further \$120,000 has been allocated for enhanced outreach services on the Gold Coast for people sleeping rough.

That all sits within the context of a couple of key initiatives around case coordination. There is an Advance to Zero panel, which is a collaborative model to work with clients to prioritise housing support. There is 7CareConnect, which is a mobile app that is used to look at the geographic location of people and provide them with services such as showers and food. Street CRED is a collaborative partnership between the Gold Coast Youth Service, the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women and the Queensland Police Service that targets young people. In addition to that, the Gold Coast Homelessness Network has been working with the department through this place based response team that works with service delivery partners such as the Queensland police, the City of Gold Coast council, the Homeless Health Outreach team and the Department of Child Safety, Youth and Women. It works through a case management approach to identify rough sleepers and those people requiring assistance. It is a bit like a panel arrangement, which then looks at the placement of people within the system. There is lots of information that we can provide, if that is of assistance, about the particular organisations that are funded and the amounts of funding.

Mr WATTS: You said there were nine areas. Could you tell us which areas they are and if that includes Toowoomba?

Ms Woolley: I can. I will need to find that, because I do not want to get the nine locations wrong.

CHAIR: We might return to you later, Ms Woolley, if that is alright, and get those details.

Mr McCALLUM: My question is to the team from the Department of Housing and Public Works. It relates to sport, specifically to the over \$51 million Return to Play package. Community sport is an integral part of all of our communities. When it comes to community clubs, be it the clubs themselves
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or sporting participants, could you step us through some details on exactly what can be accessed as part of the Return to Play package? If you are a sporting club or a participant in community sport in my electorate, what kinds of things can you access under that program?

Ms Carroll: Obviously the program covers a range of things but has three key components. The first component has already kicked off, which is a \$2,000 grant that is available to community clubs to assist them in the return to play. Some clubs needed to, for example, buy a lot more hand sanitiser or cleaning equipment and those sorts of things. It is to enable a boost for that. There are Fair Play vouchers. As more formal community sport gets to return in stage 3, vouchers will be available for organisations and people on lower incomes will be able to access those. There will be a grant round as well. I will hand over to Ms Woolley to talk about the details of each of the component parts.

Ms Woolley: As Ms Carroll said, there is \$14 million for the COVID SAFE Active Clubs Kickstart program, which is the \$2,000 grants to clubs to purchase hygiene supplies and products, training and equipment. A sum of \$11 million has been committed to Fair Play vouchers. Vouchers valued at up to \$150 will be available for around 73,000 young people to get back into sport. There is \$15.5 million committed to Active Restart Infrastructure Recovery Fund programs to look at minor works and equipment to support up to 3,000 clubs. In addition to that, there is \$10.8 million for the Active Industry Fund, which was really bringing forward some funding to 77 state-level sporting organisations and two industry peak bodies to support the overall sustainability of the sector and to support, obviously, the restart of organisations with the easing of restrictions. Those are the component parts that make up the fund.

Mr WATTS: My question is to the Department of Housing and Public Works. In terms of the drop-and-go rules for kids at sport, I am curious to understand if that is a national cabinet principle or a Queensland-specific principle. What consideration has been put in place around child safety and/or individual child needs for those who might be a bit anxious if their parents are not around?

Ms Woolley: In the context of stage 2 easing of restrictions around training and in the development of industry plans, the context for the reference to dropping young people or to minimising adult activity around the site was around managing ingress and egress of participants, volunteers and young people to be able to maximise the opportunity for a return to training on the field of play and to try to limit some of the numbers that might result in mass gatherings. There is some guidance within the industry plan—it is only guidance—around the ways in which clubs at a local level might think through those issues. The industry plan talks about the principles around minimising large numbers of people and for clubs to avail themselves of the opportunity to train more young people through stage 2. It offers that as a suggested form of managing those arrangements.

CHAIR: In my case, I can have line of sight over my son when he is training, but in other circumstances parents might be nervous. Can clubs introduce a socially distanced or physically distanced process where parents would not be interacting with each other but could still have some confidence that they had some oversight of their children doing their activities?

Ms Woolley: Absolutely. The intention of the plan was not to be prescriptive about those arrangements, because we know that there are over 7,000 clubs operating in Queensland and they will all have different circumstances in terms of their physical layout. It was simply about trying to suggest to the clubs to think about the management of the flow of traffic. As we see, that is a common feature of industry plans in terms of how you minimise bottlenecks where people might gather in car parks or around the field of play in ways that might be unhelpful in terms of social distancing.

Ms RICHARDS: I start by thanking Damien Walker and his team for the work that they did in my community in negotiating with the private sector during the height of COVID to make sure that supply chains were managed and that my island communities were able to get food supplies and deliveries. I can tell you that the work that your team did has given ongoing benefit to my community going forward. I thank you very much for that.

Yesterday I had the opportunity to catch up with the Lamb Island Residents Association. Quite a few of them are owners of Airbnb properties on the island. They were saying that there seems to be a little bit of a boom going on there at the moment. They are actually almost fully booked in the lead-in to the school holidays. Is the department getting any early indicators on the success of the Queensland, You're Good to Go campaign? Can we get an outline in regard to the types of projects that will be funded in the 2020 Growing Tourism Infrastructure Program?

Mr Walker: Thank you for the compliment regarding the Care Army and the work that we were doing. I am pleased that that has lasting benefits for your island communities. The commentary around the Good to Go campaign and the impacts it is having are primarily anecdotal at this stage.

In due course we will get more detailed data. In a moment I will refer to the Chief Executive of Tourism Events Queensland, Leanne Coddington, to provide some additional commentary. One of the things that I am picking up on a regular basis is that we are starting to see a return of bookings. That will take a little bit of time as confidence builds and people are able to get on and holiday, as they are certainly invited to by the Good to Go campaign. Today I was speaking to Mark Olsen, who is not in the member's patch but from Tropical North Queensland. They are starting to see—again, anecdotally—some increased bookings into the future, which is really heartening.

I think places like your wonderful islands in the Moreton Bay present themselves as a tremendous opportunity for people on the mainland and in Brisbane to discover what we believe to be some of the world's most picturesque locations. I am very pleased to hear that your Airbnb owners and operators are starting to get some strong bookings. I think increasingly one of the things we will see is this confidence building, and I think a lot of the credit must go to the Department of Health and the work they have done in managing the health crisis. I think what we will see is people increasingly having a level of confidence to step out and enjoy this wonderful Queensland tourism opportunity that we have here, including your backyard. I am pleased to hear that. It is anecdotal at this stage. It is slow. It is building. It is pleasing.

We have much more work to do, and I guess in my opening remarks we are really crystal clear on what we need to do—that is, sustain tourism businesses, because this is going to be a challenging exercise for a number of months still, but we need to sustain them and keep them in place. We need to invest the right sorts of infrastructure dollars and the right sorts of product, infrastructure and experiences. We need to make sure that we boost aviation. We need to market appropriately. I will get Leanne to make some comment about Good to Go in a moment.

What I will do is close in terms of my commentary around the investment that we might make in the Growing Tourism Infrastructure Fund. That is a process and it is a competitive one. We will have a number of applicants over the coming weeks put their applications forward. We will move very quickly to make an assessment. I think what we are really looking for are shovel-ready projects. It is important that these projects that take some time to get out of the ground start getting out of the ground now for a whole bunch of reasons, including that we want these improved tourism experiences, products and infrastructure to be ready for people to experience sooner rather than later. We want money being spent locally on Queenslanders and employing people locally, and I think we generally just need momentum so it is particularly important that they get away. We will move quickly on those. I cannot tell you precisely what will get funded, but announcements will follow in due course—once the panel works through the appropriate evaluation process, which will be underway shortly. I might ask Leanne Coddington to provide some commentary on Good to Go.

Ms Coddington: Thank you, Damien, and good afternoon to the committee. We launched our Queensland, You're Good to Go campaign two weeks ago. It started with print and social media activity. We then last Sunday launched the television campaign that goes alongside that utilising Busby Marou, as we have previously when we launched the Beautiful One Day campaign. I think the difference in the consumers, and we have seen through our research, is that they are looking for confidence on the back of COVID—that places are safe to go to.

Good to Go has two strings to it. One is obviously encouraging Queenslanders to get out and that they are good to go. The other is to assure them that the industry is good to go. Through the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse listing, operators can indicate that they are COVID compliant and therefore the Good to Go stamp can appear on their website listing, which is beneficial as well from a consumer's perspective.

In regard to the campaign to leverage it, the government directed \$7 million to us. We allocated \$4 million of that across the 13 regional tourism organisations so that they could do their own destination based activity but leveraging off the Good to Go campaign as well to give us further reach, but also ensuring that all of the various experiences that are available the breadth and width of the state are in the marketplace. The campaign has been designed obviously for Queenslanders at this stage. As the restrictions ease it is designed so that we can take that campaign interstate.

CHAIR: Thank you. We have all had enough of staycations; I think we are all ready for a 'Q-cation'. I will just add to your anecdotes: my wife tells me that the motorhome we are renting this weekend is the very last one that was available, so people are getting out there and we want to encourage that.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you for your personal advices there. We are doing our bit by heading to Stanthorpe in the school holidays.

CHAIR: I might see you out there, member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: That would be nice, member for Logan. Which winery are you going to?

CHAIR: I have kids, member for Mermaid Beach, so we might be in different areas of the fantastic Stanthorpe area.

Mr STEVENS: I am doing the Girraween National Park.

CHAIR: We might see you on the walk, then. Sorry, we digress. Member for Mermaid Beach, do you have a question?

Mr STEVENS: Thank you very much, Chair, for your indulgence. I have a question to the director-general of the Department of State Development, Tourism and Innovation, Mr Walker: what modelling has the department or TEQ done in relation to the economic impact that closed state borders are having on Queensland's tourism industry?

Mr Walker: In terms of modelling around the broader economic impacts of COVID-19, that is the responsibility of Treasury so I must admit that that is something I would need to refer to my Treasury colleagues. We are certainly mindful of various information that does come forward on a regular basis. I understand there was some federal Treasury modelling in recent times. I am not sure that was specific either to any particular closure. I think it is more around stepping through the three stages of the road map as set out by the federal government and then subsequently the state's own three-stage process. It is probably a matter that needs to be taken up with Treasury, I am afraid.

Mr STEVENS: Again, I do not have any follow-up on that because I cannot hear the answer. I will have to wait for *Hansard*.

Mr McCALLUM: My question is to the team from the Department of Environment and Science and relates to arts and the announcement of the over \$21 million support package for our vital arts industry. Could you step through some of the different initiatives and grants in greater detail that are available in that package? In answer to an earlier question in relation to the federal government's JobKeeper program there was mention of the eligibility of certain workers in the arts sector. Specifically in relation to that, has there been any communication with your federal counterparts around requesting eligibility of those excluded workers? How has that gone?

CHAIR: Also, if I could just to add to that, when it comes to arts workers it is about not just the performers and artists themselves but also those who do the ticketing and lighting and audio. Could you also comment on those people who do those ancillary tasks, not just the people involved in the performance or art itself?

Ms Herring: To answer the first question—I think there were two—\$22.5 million was announced last week as being part of an arts and cultural recovery package. That is to cover the whole state. It is a great commitment to help workers with our arts and cultural organisations, to ensure that artists and arts workers, as the chair correctly pointed out, continue to maintain employment opportunities during this very difficult time and to ensure that venues can continue to operate to employ artists and arts workers so we can maintain a connection with audiences, because you cannot really have presentation of the arts or the performing arts without an audience. The goal is to make sure that those three elements—the audience, the venue and the artists and arts workers—can all come together in a framework for funding support. It is an 18-month package but certainly the next six to 12 months will be really critical.

I will go through it element by element. The first element was \$11.3 million to assist in offsetting revenue losses and stabilise businesses in our live music and performing arts organisations. As we know, social distancing creates requirements on organisations to have only one person per four square metres inside their venues. We know that inside spaces are more at risk of transmission of the virus than outdoor venues, so it has been our indoor venues that have been particularly harshly hit. It is very difficult to operate live music at the moment with social distancing, simply because the business model does not really stack up to open a venue in this circumstance. A live music venue has to pay its own outgoings. Often it programs its live music artists using a combination of the revenue model that often will include bar sales. You do need a volume of people to generate the revenue to invest in the live music artist. What we are trying to do is make sure that there is money there to actually employ local artists through our Play Local program so that live artists in both live music and performing arts can come together and work inside our venues right across the state. When I talk about venues, I am talking very much about the council owned venues that were not eligible for JobKeeper payments. We have to keep those venues open employing local workers and connecting with their audiences and their local artists. That is a really critical part of the package.

Another big part of the package is to support our Indigenous arts centres through the cape and Far North Queensland. As we know, there have been restrictions on movements in and out of Indigenous communities and that has particularly hit our First Nation arts workers. There will be a

funding boost back to those arts centres to continue that high-quality pipeline of visual arts coming through the system. We are really excited about when that artwork can be sold next year at key events like our Cairns Indigenous Arts Fair and particularly to build the model now online to get more of our First Nation artists' work seen across Australia through a virtual platform. The funding package certainly supports that as well.

The director-general mentioned that the casualisation of arts is a real challenge, because you have a lot of independent artists and a lot of contract workers in this space who are not receiving support. We want to make sure that our independent artists are continuing to create and do creative development and then show their work, even if it is a smaller audience. We accept that. That is the reality of this circumstance. Both our government owned venues—the Judith Wright Centre and the Cairns Bulmba-ja centre—will be doing special creative development funding to make sure that there is a pipeline of new performing arts product coming through.

One other significant program we will also be looking at is thinking about how we can tie into that regional cultural tourism opportunity. We know that both live music outdoors, visual arts installations outdoors, lots of different creative ideas that communities can come up with themselves or in partnership with private sector entities—they will be able to actually come up with some great ideas to connect different locations across regional communities and in towns significantly affected during this difficult time. We are very excited. We have around \$2.9 million to support local councils, venues, artists and festivals, to program those opportunities.

I hope that gives a little bit of an oversight of where the money will be going. It is statewide. I did want to note that we have also started a pilot program—\$200,000 before this funding package started—to program five venues across the state to make sure they could start to become COVID safe and understand what it is like to work in this new world. The member for Bundamba would know the Ipswich Civic Centre that is participating in that. On the Gold Coast we have the Home of the Arts participating, which is fantastic. In Cairns we have both the Cairns Performing Arts Centre and the Tanks; in Toowoomba we have the Empire Theatre participating; and in Brisbane we have the Powerhouse. We are keen to open; we just need to do it in a COVID-safe way and we are keen to support venues to do that.

To answer the second question, it is just such a good question about JobKeeper and the fact that our statutory bodies, venues and other arts workers have been ineligible. I know that the minister has worked very hard to represent that case at the federal level. At the federal level all ministers come together through what we call the MCM framework, the Meeting of Cultural Ministers. The minister certainly progressed the case for JobKeeper to be open to a wider range of arts venues and organisations and, of course, Queensland government statutory bodies, and the minister also progressed the argument that we should be doing more once JobKeeper falls away at the end of September, that the federal government should certainly be looking at what that next stage of support for arts and entertainment across the nation looks like.

Mr O'CONNOR: To the tourism department or possibly TEQ, what plans do you have in place for the marketing of Queensland for when the interstate border opens? This could be within the next few weeks. I note that the regional snapshot for the Gold Coast showed that interstate visitors are more than 2:1 in terms of the nights that they stay in my city, for example. What plans do you have, considering that this could be reopening within a few weeks.

CHAIR: Sorry, maybe I did not hear your question properly, but—

Mr O'CONNOR: Plans to market or promote Queensland for when the interstate border reopens, because it could be within a few weeks.

Mr Walker: I will make a couple of comments and then pass to Ms Coddington to talk you through that. Again, this is very much premised on a decision to be made by government based on health advice with regard to the borders opening. The member is quite right: the road map, as announced by the Premier some weeks ago, did certainly talk about the opportunity for interstate travel commencing around that 10 July mark, so there certainly has been planning work underway. In the first stage of that you would have seen, as Ms Coddington referred to earlier, that some two weeks ago we commenced, particularly in print form, the Good to Go campaign. The opportunity to springboard from there sits well for us. I will ask Ms Coddington to talk in a bit more detail to that.

Ms Coddington: The Good to Go campaign has been designed in a way that it is ready to go to our interstate markets. We have been doing a lot of pre-planning. The media schedules are ready, just to be flexible for when the restrictions allow, to give us much time as we have so that we can go to those interstate markets. Our biggest markets interstate are New South Wales and Victoria, predominantly Sydney and Melbourne, but we will also be looking at other markets. There is an
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opportunity to look at regional communities as well as South Australia and potentially Tasmania. When the time is right, we certainly will be going into those markets. In the meantime, though, aligned with the launch of the campaign, we also refreshed our queensland.com web presence. Of course, the web has no boundaries, so people interstate and overseas can already be dreaming and planning about their next Queensland holiday. That content is fresh. It is really aligned to our brand proposition, and we have seen people start to look at that as well.

Mr O'CONNOR: Are we able to have tabled the funding breakdown from the department of housing on those nine regions and the programs that were discussed before?

Ms Carroll: Is that the homelessness?

Mr O'CONNOR: Yes, the breakdown of the program funding. Are we able to have that?

Ms Carroll: I can give you the list of nine, which was a question from the member for Toowoomba North. They are Cairns, Gold Coast, Townsville, Logan, Mackay, Moreton Bay, Redlands, Brisbane and the Sunshine Coast. Toowoomba also has a homelessness hub. It was actually our very first homelessness hub. That is in addition to those other nine. It was our test site where we were trialling the methodology and the model. We can give you some breakdown of the funding for each of those different areas.

CHAIR: To clarify, member for Bonney, are you asking for specific funding to do with the COVID response?

Mr O'CONNOR: The funding that was detailed before, which I think a significant amount was due to the COVID response.

CHAIR: The generic budget?

Mr O'CONNOR: As was detailed before, yes.

Ms Carroll: I think the funding detailed before by Ms Woolley was specific. That was for the Gold Coast and that was specifically COVID-19 funding. We can look at the breakdown for each of the areas of the COVID-19 funding.

Mr O'CONNOR: That would be great.

Ms RICHARDS: Ms Carroll, could you talk us through the \$100 million housing construction Works for Tradies program—where you see those key benefits lie, particularly in social housing, and what that regional allocation might look like?

Ms Carroll: I might start and we can go to the details. The \$100 million is on top of the already existing Housing Construction Jobs Program, which is ongoing funding for the development of social housing. The focus of the \$100 million is to kick in very quickly, because the construction industry has indicated that it is concerned that around October there will be a drop-off in approvals and those sorts of things. We will be able to go very quickly to market with that \$100 million because we already have an established methodology through developers and builders, through our Housing Construction Jobs Program. The housing construction jobs will keep going and then the \$100 million comes in over the top of that. I will ask Ms Woolley to talk about the split and where we think the funding will go in those different areas.

Ms Woolley: As Ms Carroll said, the funding goes towards 215 projects that will commence construction before the end of the 2020-21 financial year and will support approximately 235 jobs in the construction centre. The regional program targets are as follows: South-East Queensland, 70 new dwellings; Central Queensland, 25; Darling Downs, 21; Far North Queensland, 30; Mackay-Whitsunday, 20; Townsville, 25; and Wide Bay, 24.

CHAIR: I have a question that is probably for Deputy Director-General Klaassen or possibly for the director-general. With both the deputy chair and me going to Girraween National Park—I am not being facetious—how are you preparing for people who will be enthusiastically returning to national parks and keeping that experience safe as well?

Mr Klaassen: Our rangers have continued to work throughout the COVID pandemic. They have been out in the field every day continuing to do the work they do. They have been maintaining walking tracks, upgrading campgrounds and doing maintenance so that when people go out to the national parks they will be in very good condition as a result of the excellent work the rangers have been doing. There is a water shortage out at Girraween, so just be cautious around using the water. We have got the campground open, but it is restricted to no showers.

CHAIR: We have the motorhome, so we will bring our own.

Mr Klaassen: We also have the recent \$8.93 million that the government injected into the system to upgrade various national parks and do maintenance across the state. We are doing a lot of work to ensure that the national parks are well presented and are very well received by visitors. We have had a significant boost in visitation, as the director-general mentioned earlier. A park like Daisy Hill has gone from an average of 50,000 users a month to over 100,000 users a month in the last April and May. There have been significant increases just with local people getting out and about and enjoying our national parks.

Mr STEVENS: To the director-general of the Department of State Development, Tourism, and Innovation, has the department identified through the national hook-up how many people employed in the tourism industry are receiving JobKeeper?

Mr Walker: I must admit, I cannot recall getting that level of detail from the federal government regarding tourism and events sector staff receiving JobKeeper. I must admit that I cannot answer that question specifically.

Mr STEVENS: Is it possible, Chair, for the director-general to find out for the committee and forward that information on?

CHAIR: What would be great, Deputy Chair, is perhaps—we have extended an invitation to the federal Treasury to come and speak. They would no doubt be keen. I might include that in my letter.

Mr STEVENS: I think the federal Treasury is not coming, for obvious reasons.

CHAIR: Director-General, would you endeavour to ask the federal government for that information? I know that that has been put as a question of notice federally and there is not a lot of information forthcoming, so we might need to be tolerant about you getting back to us if they are not forthcoming on that level of detail. Deputy Chair, I have asked the director-general to ask the federal government. Obviously it is not under his control to answer that question, so we just might need—

Mr STEVENS: That would be of help, Mr Chair. I support that entirely. I thought it might have been part of the serious discussions about the economic consequences on the tourism industry that we have had for Queensland in finding out how many folk are actually on JobKeeper, keeping them in the tourism industry at the current time, because if JobKeeper stops in September, that will have a massive impact on the number of employees in the tourism industry.

CHAIR: That was going to be the first question I asked the federal Treasury when they came. Director-General, do you have anything to add?

Mr Walker: All I would add is that I am always happy to seek that information from the federal government. I think your caveats are appropriate. I, sadly, cannot control what the federal government do or do not provide me, but I will certainly reach out and seek that information. I must admit, just to draw out, I have had multiple conversations, as have my department, with the federal government. We continue to work closely with them. I am unaware, however, of any data regarding JobKeeper being provided in the tourism sector, but I am happy to chase that up.

CHAIR: Certainly. It is a concern for the committee because we know that, especially where there is a lot of social contact in the important tourism that they provide, the ongoing provision of JobKeeper will be important to keep those people with those skills connected to their employers.

Mr McCALLUM: Although this question is nominally for Tourism, I would be interested if any other department has any other comments. I refer to the report that was released yesterday by the well-regarded Grattan Institute which I believe Mr Merrick from the Department of Environment and Science mentioned in his opening remarks. With respect to the tourism industry, that report effectively concluded that Western Australia and Queensland have done the right thing with respect to their border stance. Whilst acknowledging that the tourism industry is very important, the report's author said that if it is not safe and it runs the risk of COVID-19 escalating again, and we go back into this exponential growth phase, it is just not worth it for them to open their borders. In terms of the risk associated with a second wave and how that would impact your various sectors and industries, I would be very interested to hear your thoughts.

CHAIR: Have we lost—

Mr Walker: Mr Chair, can you hear me?

CHAIR: Yes, we can hear.

Mr Walker: My apologies, we have had a technical hitch at this end. Halfway through the member's question, our system shut down.

CHAIR: I will ask the member for Bundamba to restate the question and we will see how we go.

Mr Walker: Thank you. My apologies.

Mr McCALLUM: No problem at all. Which bit did you hear up to?

Mr Walker: I heard the context about the Grattan Institute, and then my system went off. I apologise.

Mr McCALLUM: No worries. I was quoting the lead author of the report saying that, whilst it acknowledges that the tourism industry is very important, if it is not safe and it runs the risk of COVID-19 escalating again and we go back into this expedient growth phase, it is just not worth it for them to open up their borders, and that was talking about Queensland and Western Australia. My question was around the threat associated with a second wave and the kind of damage that that could do to your sector or indeed any of the other sectors that are appearing before the committee today.

CHAIR: With respect to the member for Bundamba, to some extent this might be across policy or opposition policy issues, so I ask you to answer within those constraints, Director-General.

Mr Walker: I have a couple of comments. Most importantly, I am not across the Grattan Institute report in any detail, so I do apologise; that will be something that I will turn my mind to. The challenge of managing a health crisis with an economic crisis is a very difficult balance, so that health advice is absolutely fundamental to what we do next and how we do it. We touched on this a little earlier when Ms Coddington and I spoke to the Good to Go campaign. One thing we do know is that there is certainly a sentiment out there amongst visitors that they want to know before they travel that things are safe, and that is absolutely fundamental. Again, to the extent that we need to take good health advice, I think that is important because it does have an impact on the confidence of our visitors. The second point I would make would simply be that generally amongst businesses I know there is a desire to get moving to get the economy pushing along. I think there is also a reluctance to see a second wave and the impact that that would have, and that needs to be carefully balanced with regard to the health advice and the decisions we make around the economy more generally. That is probably the extent of my comments as they pertain to your question, member.

CHAIR: Thank you. This is obviously quickly moving and we have identified that confidence is important. Even if the borders were open, I do not think too many Queenslanders would be heading to Victoria this weekend. There being no further questions, I want to thank everyone for their participation today. We have two questions on notice that I might deal with. The first one is information from the Department of Housing and Public Works—that is, a question on COVID-19 related funding for homelessness housing programs. My understanding is that we had concluded that discussion. Was there anything further to add?

Ms Carroll: We can provide the breakdown by area on notice.

CHAIR: No worries. It would be fantastic if you could take that question on notice and respond by 12 pm on Friday, 26 June. The next question on notice was for someone to get information from the federal Treasury on JobKeeper for tourism, I thought. With the indulgence of the committee, I might make the unilateral decision for you to report back to us by 12 pm on Friday, 26 June whether you have the information, but we are very happy to receive it later than that date because we understand that it is not under your control to provide that information and we understand that we have to make some allowances for that.

Thank you all for the information you have provided today. I really appreciate all of you taking the time and preparing yourselves for today. This is a huge challenge socially, from a health perspective and economically, and I know that thousands of public servants all over the state are really working hard to work out the best way to guide Queensland's economic and social recovery. A transcript of these proceedings will be available on the committee's parliamentary webpage in due course. Having dealt with the questions on notice, I now declare this public briefing closed. Thank you.

The committee adjourned at 2.04 pm.