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ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Mr Pitt (Chairman)

Mr Beanland	Mr Purcell
Mrs Bird	Mr Rowell
Mr Cooper	Mr T. B. Sullivan

The Committee commenced at 11.30 a.m.

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE AND ATTORNEY-GENERAL AND MINISTER FOR THE ARTS**In Attendance**

Hon. D. Wells, Minister for Justice and Attorney-General and Minister for the Arts

Mr Barry Smith, Director-General

Mr Ken Levy, Deputy Director-General

Mr W. Meredith, Deputy Director-General

Mr K. Maddock, Deputy Director-General

Mr Royce Miller QC, Director of Prosecutions

Mr Steven Davey, Prosecutions Office

Mr John Mylne, Director, Crown Law Division

Mr D. Hook, Director, Courts Division

Mr Barry Read, Manager, Magistrates Courts Branch

Mr Ian McEwan, State Reporting Bureau

Mr Tim Beale, Cabinet Legislation and Liaison Officer

Mr David Robson, Director, Freedom of Information and Administrative Law Division

Mr Kevin Martin, Public Trustee

Mr John Hodgins, Director, Legal Aid Commission of Queensland

Ms Zrinka Johnston, Commissioner, Anti-discrimination Commission

Mr Des O'Shea, Commissioner, Electoral Commission

Mr R. O'Regan, Chairman, Criminal Justice Commission

Mr Graham Brighton, Executive Director, Criminal Justice Commission

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee B now open. Mr Tony Fitzgerald, QC, observed in his report that the operation of the party system in a unicameral Assembly, the continuing growth in the scale and extent of Government activity and the increasing complexities of policy making affect the ability of Parliament to review the Government's legislative activity or public administration.

If Parliament is to perform its vital role, procedures which allow it to obtain and analyse information are essential. Elsewhere, the effective and efficient operation of Parliament has been enhanced by the setting up of all-party policy and investigatory committees. The committees have become a vital and energetic part of giving effect to the democratic process, particularly in respect of

complex issues. They serve as a Parliament's research arm and as an independent source of information to aid proper parliamentary debate.

The new Estimates committees are a crucial reform which places Ministers, senior public servants and each departmental Budget under scrutiny and deliver to the people of Queensland a level of accountability in respect of the Budget never seen before. Scrutiny of Government legislative activity and of public administration will be more effective as a consequence of the introduction of the bipartisan Estimates process.

The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 1994 and the Appropriation Parliament Bill 1994 for the areas as set out in the Sessional Orders. The Committee has determined that units will be examined in the following order: Department of Justice and Attorney-General and Office of the Arts; Police and Corrective Services; Queensland Emergency Services; Office of Rural Communities and Consumer Affairs.

The following allocation of time will be made under the three portfolios. Department of Justice, Attorney-General and the Arts: Justice and Attorney-General, one and a half hours; Arts, half an hour and, should time permit, a half hour for additional questions for Justice, Attorney-General and the Arts. Police and Corrective Services Commission: Police, one and a half hours; Corrective Services, one and a half hours. Again, should time permit, a half an hour for additional questions for Police and Corrective Services Commission. Queensland Emergency Services, Office of Rural Communities and Consumer Affairs: QES, two and a half hours; Consumer Affairs, half an hour; Rural Communities, half an hour. Finally, should time permit, a half hour for additional questions for Emergency Services, Office of Rural Communities and Consumer Affairs. The Committee has also agreed that it will suspend the hearings for meal breaks from approximately 2 p.m. to 3 p.m. and from approximately 6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

Members of the public and press are reminded that the Committee has resolved that no audio or visual recordings are to be made of the proceedings. However, notes may be taken. I remind members of the Committee and others that the time limit for questions is one minute and, for answers, three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning, and a double chime will sound at the conclusion of these time limits.

As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from Government members, and so on in rotation. The Sessional Orders also require equal time to be afforded to Government and non-Government members. Therefore, where a time period has been allotted which is less than 40 minutes, that time will be shared equally. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. For the benefit of Hansard staff, I ask departmental witnesses to identify themselves before they first answer a question.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the area of the Department of Justice to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditures be agreed to."

Mr Minister, is it your wish to make a short introductory statement, or do you wish to proceed direct to questioning? If you do wish to make a statement to the Committee, we ask that you limit it to two minutes.

Mr WELLS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. I shall speak very briefly, because I want to leave the maximum amount of time available for questions. I shall just make a point about methodology. Because of the particular nature of this portfolio, there may be some questions which it is desirable from the very beginning to refer to the appropriate officer. For example, in the case of the Electoral Commissioner, I think it is appropriate—since he is entirely impartial between all parties—that all parties should have direct access to him. If there are any questions of the Electoral Commissioner, I will ask him to come forward, and he will answer all questions apart from any that he might choose to refer to me. It may be that while the Electoral Commissioner is sitting at the table, members might try to get all the questions to him at once. That is all I wanted to say.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members.

Mr BEANLAND: Thank you for the opportunity. First of all, I refer to the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. I refer to page 60 of the departmental Estimates. I notice that you are instituting a Matters Management system—a new computer system for \$415,000. How many working hours will be saved a year by the system when it is fully operational?

Mr WELLS: The amount cannot be predicted exactly in advance. The Matters Management system is a new computer system which is designed to enable the Director of Prosecutions to run a case flow management system of a kind which has previously been impossible to implement. I would expect that it would save many thousands of person hours and enable cases to be brought more expeditiously before the courts. One of the difficulties which one faces when one is running a prosecutorial system is the difficulty of finalising cases for the court when there is always a possibility of a late plea of guilty. That late plea of guilty can be avoided and an earlier plea of guilty put in place if an appropriate Matters Management system is available so that the most up-to-date and most effective information is made available to the prosecutor. The number of person hours that would be saved in the Director of Prosecutions's office is only the beginning of the sort of saves that might occur as a result of this kind of matters management process.

You have to throw into that also the amount of court time that might be saved by the Matters Management system in terms of cases that do not involve a plea of guilty when you get into court that were as expected to go to trial and matters that do not involve nolle prosequi. If the plea of guilty only

occurs when you get into court and there is no previous knowledge that a plea of guilty is going to be made then, the consequence might be that you have a certain number of hours set aside by the court for the hearing of that case. The result of that could be that when that case falls over the whole sittings for that day fall over, and that is a very expensive waste of the court's time. These are the kinds of difficulties which the Matters Management system is designed to address. As a result of the inchoate nature of those difficulties, the amount of human resources and time that is going to be saved is incalculable, but you would have my assurance that it would be extremely considerable.

Mr BEANLAND: When will the system be fully implemented? That is not quite clear from the Budget documents.

Mr WELLS: I would expect that the system would be fully implemented by the end of this year.

Mr BEANLAND: Is that this financial year or calendar year?

Mr WELLS: Calendar year. I have received departmental advice that it might be not be completely operational until early in the next calendar year, but for the most part the system will start to bite earlier than that.

Mr BEANLAND: Still referring to the Office of the Director of Prosecutions, I notice that at the end of April there was a breakdown in the Office of the Director of Prosecutions that led to Mr Justice Demack in April of this year in the Rockhampton Supreme Court aborting for a second time an armed robbery trial. I am wanting to know what action you have taken in this Budget to ensure that this will not occur again in the future.

Mr WELLS: The case that you refer to in Rockhampton before Mr Justice Demack involved forensic material—it was due to the unavailability of certain forensic evidence. The forensic evidence is not supplied by any instrumentality that is related to my department. The Director of Prosecutions is not a District Attorney; it does not have the overall responsibilities for the gathering of forensic evidence. Consequently, you would have to ask the appropriate Minister that question.

Mr BEANLAND: Still in relation to the Director of Prosecutions, again I noticed in the latter part of last month that the Children's Court President, Judge McGuire, indicated during a case before the Children's Court that the court needed consistent prosecutors with a maturity of outlook and sensitivity to the special jurisdiction of juvenile crime. Instead, the prosecutors' office was disorganised and nobody knew what was going on. What funds have been allocated specifically and what action specifically has been taken by you in this Budget to rectify this appalling situation?

Mr WELLS: Could you refer me to the line in the Budget Estimates in respect of which the question of the Children's Court referred?

Mr BEANLAND: I refer to the amount for the Office of the Director of Prosecutions on page 12 of the departmental Estimates. The figure there is \$11,668,000.

Mr WELLS: But that is for the Director of Prosecutions, is it not? That is not for the Children's Court.

Mr BEANLAND: The judge referred to the Office of the Director of Prosecutions in this matter.

Mr WELLS: Matters with respect to the Juvenile Justice Act and its implementation are matters for the Minister for Family Services. I will have to ask you to raise the matter with her.

Mr BEANLAND: So you are saying that the prosecutors' office had no role in this case whatsoever?

Mr WELLS: No. I do not want to be verbed—at least not in public. What I said was that the matter of the implementation of the Juvenile Justice Act was a matter for the Minister for Family Services.

Mr BEANLAND: With respect to the Minister, the judge specifically referred to the prosecutor's office. He was not referring to the Family Services Department. He specifically referred to the Office of the Director of the Prosecutions in relation to this matter. You are saying that I should be directing this matter to Family Services. I appreciate their role, but the judge in this instance specifically referred to the Office of the Director of Prosecutions in relation to his statements. My question is: what funds have been allocated specifically in this Budget to overcome this particular problem?

Mr WELLS: You will notice that we have a system known as "Program Budgeting"—the Budget is divided into particular programs. The program relating to the Juvenile Justice Act falls under the portfolio of the Department of Family Services. You will find in the Department of Family Services Budget items relating to the implementation of the policy of the Juvenile Justice Act. I would suggest that you go to it.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to the Office of the Director of Prosecutions, I notice that each year there is an annual report being produced. Exactly what is the funded amount in this 1994-95 Budget for the annual report and what number of copies is that based upon?

Mr WELLS: I can get you that figure—\$25,000 and 250 copies.

Mr BEANLAND: In this year's Budget you allocate an additional \$300,000 for the Director of Prosecutions' staff. I am inquiring as to what is the number of the additional staff?

Mr WELLS: It is not \$300,000 for the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. It is more like \$1m. There is the \$400,000-odd—I think that it is \$415,000—for the Matters Management system, \$300,000 for the additional staffing matters, and there is on top of that a sum of between \$300,000 and \$400,000 arising out of the \$800,000 three-year program to deal with the problem of violence against women and children. That is a new unit which has been specifically set up to assist victims of violent and sexual offences. So the figure as you have quoted it is very much deflated.

That figure of \$300,000 that I mentioned with respect to staff has not yet at this stage been converted into specific staffing allocations, but you will be interested to know that the numbers in the Director of Prosecutions Office have almost doubled since the Goss Labor Government came into office. You would probably be interested if I could give you the actual figures. Just bear with me for a moment, I will give you those figures. As well as doubling in terms of numbers of actual people working in the Director of Prosecutions Office and delivering justice, there has been a very considerable increase in the budget for non-salary related matters, including computer systems, the regionalisation of the office and so forth. So the Director of Prosecutions is now in receipt of over \$11m—pushing \$12m—compared with when the Opposition was in Government, when the amount was just over \$4m. So the amount of money made available to the administration of justice and to the enforcement of law by this Government has practically tripled, and the services which have been provided have been very greatly expanded.

In terms of those expanded services, I would like to highlight the unit to assist the victims of violent and domestic crime. That unit plays a very large and important role not only in assisting those victims but ensuring that justice is delivered. I will just give you the actual staff numbers. In 1989, 82 and this year, anticipated 153.

Mr BEANLAND: I refer to page 229 of Budget Paper No. 3 where it says that an additional amount of some \$300,000 per annum is also to be provided for additional prosecutions staff to meet increasing workload levels, and I ask the Minister: as he does not seem to know the number of staff that he is going to appoint with this \$300,000, how is the figure of \$300,000 arrived at—if you do not know the number of staff that you are going to appoint?

Mr WELLS: Every year, there has been an increase in the funding available to the Director of Prosecutions Office. We started, as I indicated previously, from an extremely low base. That base from which we started was quite insufficient to enable us to run an effective prosecutorial system and so, each year, in every Budget, there has been a substantial enhancement of the Director of Prosecutions Office not only in terms of staff but also in terms of the non-human resources that are available to assist the Director of Prosecutions.

The honourable member is now asking how many people will that \$300,000 buy. It will depend on the level at which they were appointed, whether they are support staff or prosecutors. It is intended that there should be a mix of those. We established the Unit for Violence Against Women and Children for \$309,000. That has seven officers plus additional equipment and other kinds of assistance. That is what it costs to deliver justice in that particular area. I would expect that the amount that we will be able to increase the Director of Prosecutions establishment by that \$300,000 will be something of that order, but the matter is to be finally determined by the Department in conjunction with Human Resource Management.

The member also wanted to know how was the initial number determined. The initial number was determined virtually by reference to the fact that from the very beginning in the Director of Prosecutions Office we were starting from an incredibly low base. The previous Government left us a very, very, sorry legacy indeed in terms of resources to deal with crime. They were extremely strong on law and order rhetoric but they were very poor on delivery, and consequently we had to adopt a policy of trying, in each Budget, to enhance the Director of Prosecutions Office until we get to the optimum level. We are getting closer to that optimum level. The amount was stipulated by reference to what we thought we might be able to effectively take on board in the forthcoming financial year. This was the amount that we thought that we could incorporate without dislocation to the functioning of the office and this was the amount that we will be incorporating and using to deliver justice in Queensland.

Mr BEANLAND: I take it then that the Minister is telling the Committee that the sum of \$300,000 has been allocated without actually knowing the number of staff that is going to be appointed. I have listened to the rhetoric but we still have not got down to the number of staff. I have heard the various programs that you are looking at. You have allocated the sum, but you have not really worked out the number of staff that you will be appointing.

Mr WELLS: I have given you a very clear indication of the number of staff that that will buy. I have indicated that as many as can be appointed for that sum of money will be appointed.

Mr BEANLAND: That goes without saying. It would be as many as possible but my question is, how many is possible?

Mr WELLS: I have indicated to you that it may be seven—maybe between seven and 10, but that is going to depend on the process. The point is—and it may be a point that has escaped the honourable member—that the more resources you can devote to the administration of justice in this particular area, the more effective a job you can do. With the resources that we inherited from your lot, we were never in any sort of situation where we could set up a unit to deal with violence against women and children. Consequently, we are still in the situation of developing the Director of Prosecutions Office in the direction of an optimum.

Mr BEANLAND: Mr Chairman, if I could move on to the Legal Aid Commission? I notice the projected approved applications for legal assistance in 1993-94 was 18 737. With regard to the 1994-95 financial year, is it expected that this figure will be exceeded? I refer to the sum that has been allocated to Legal Aid, which is on page 230 of Budget Paper No. 3, and which is \$8.9m. What is the expected figure for the financial year 1994-95?

Mr WELLS: I am sorry, page 30 of which document?

Mr BEANLAND: It is page 20 of the

departmental Estimates or page 230 of Budget Paper No. 3 where you have allocated \$8,944,000 to the Legal Aid Commission.

Mr WELLS: Yes.

Mr BEANLAND: I am saying with regard to the 1994-95 financial year, is it expected that the figure which is estimated in 1993-94 of 18 737 be exceeded this coming financial year?

Mr WELLS: I expect that it will be about the same. You will note that this figure of \$8,944m to the Legal Aid Commission is \$8,944m more than was allocated during the previous Government.

Mr BEANLAND: If I could still refer to the Legal Aid Commission—I have noticed lately that the Commission has been producing a newsletter called *Headnotes*. What funds have been allocated for its production and distribution in the 1994-95 Budget?

Mr WELLS: Bear with me. The Legal Aid Commission is an independent Commission, and what happens is that I approve its budget when it comes to me. The Legal Aid Commission has not finalised its forthcoming budget for the next financial year. The best estimate that the Director is able to give me at this stage is \$3,000.

Mr BEANLAND: Thank you. Was that \$3,000?

Mr WELLS: That was the best estimate that he was able to give me.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation—

Mr WELLS: I emphasise that that is an estimate. They have not been through their Budget process at this stage. That is largely dependent on this \$8,944m, so it would not make sense for them to do their budget before we did ours.

Mr BEANLAND: In view of the funding cuts to the Legal Aid Commission prior to the forthcoming financial year—and the figure has dropped from \$9.9m to \$8.9m—is it proposed to implement new stricter criteria for those applying for legal aid?

Mr WELLS: I deny the premise on which that question is based. It is disingenuous, at the very least, to ask that question; page 20 indicates an amount of \$8,694,000. As indicated in the footnote, the Budget for the previous year contained a \$2m one-off special grant to the Legal Aid Commission. That \$2m, one-off grant came from Commonwealth and State—mainly from State—funding, and went into the Commission's reserves. It was not part of the recurrent consolidated revenue grant, which has actually increased.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions by non-Government members has expired.

Mrs BIRD: I refer to pages 8 and 12 of the Estimates statements. I notice that the allocation for alternative dispute resolution has increased from \$397,000 to \$448,000. On page 12, under the policy program for dispute resolution, the allocation to ADR has increased from \$1,202m to \$1,356m. Will this increased funding be used for service delivery, particularly in further expanding ADR throughout the State?

Mr WELLS: Yes. This is a new initiative that comes through the current Budget to expand

dispute resolution processes to central Queensland and to the far north. The Director of my Alternative Dispute Resolution Division and her staff have recently been making their presence known in central Queensland. In Rockhampton, a large number of people applied to become mediators under the Community Justice Program. The program to establish a panel of mediators in central Queensland has yielded 12 people who will be trained to become mediators. A much larger pool of people were interested in becoming mediators in Rockhampton, but the application process and selection procedure are extremely stringent. Very few people have the personality required to become a mediator. Not very many people in our trade would be suitable to become Community Justice Program mediators.

Very soon, those people will be trained. Over the next few months and into the early part of next year, we will be interested in training people in other major centres in central Queensland. Recently, I wrote to the Rockhampton City Council inviting it to participate in the program by providing some assistance. It had previously called for the establishment of the program in Rockhampton. I indicated that it would be helpful if it could provide a room in the council or somewhere else from which our coordinators could work. We do not intend to spend money on bricks and mortar for establishing a permanent facility anywhere. We operate the mediation program on a network with panels of local mediators, and with local mediation meeting places provided by the local facilities. As yet, I have not been vouchsafed a reply by the Rockhampton City Council, but I will have to get in touch with it more directly in order to encourage it to assist us. This program will be extremely important for central Queensland and extremely valuable, particularly for Rockhampton.

Mr PURCELL: You said that 12 people have approached you about training for mediators. Have you trained anyone yet? What part of central Queensland will they operate in? Will they be based in different centres or based in Rockhampton?

Mr WELLS: Twelve people have been selected. Very many more people approached us. Mediators everywhere have proven to be extremely keen and to have had a high degree of willingness to travel. It is nothing for a Brisbane based mediator to be willing to drive to either the Gold Coast or the Sunshine Coast. For example, I do not think there would be any reluctance on the part of Rockhampton-trained mediators to drive for an hour to Gladstone for a mediation.

In addition, recently we have expanded the mediation panel in Cairns by 11, taking it to about 23. These mediators will be willing to travel over considerable tracts of the far north with a view to bringing mediation services to that important part of Australia.

Mr PURCELL: You said that you have 11 mediators in Cairns. Will there be people in those communities further up the cape?

Mr WELLS: Those 11 people come from various parts of the far north. Some people from Aboriginal communities are already trained mediators.

A very considerable number of the mediators from the far north are trained in that way. We will be expanding the pool even further. I understand that 18 have recently been selected for training as mediators in the far north. The Community Justice Program has proven itself extremely apt for resolving disputes in Aboriginal communities.

There have been a number of dispute resolutions in those communities, with consequent benefits for everybody—that is, it not only resolves conflict and therefore generates a more harmonious society in those communities but also serves the traditional role that mediation serves of keeping people out of court. That has been immensely valuable in those communities. I understand that 22 people from Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander communities have been trained to become mediators.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer to the departmental Estimates, pages 8 and 13. There is a footnote about the Anti-discrimination Commission. Could you explain, firstly, why there was the need to make a one-off grant worth about \$215,000 and, secondly, why this is now a recurrent grant?

Mr WELLS: The reason for that is the larger than expected uptake of the services under the Anti-discrimination Act and associated tribunal. The Anti-discrimination Commission operates as part of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission. Instead of setting up two bureaucracies, we merged them so that people would have a one-stop shop. The effect of that was that a very large proportion of discrimination complaints that went to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission for resolution—something like 70 per cent—proved to be complaints that were dealt with under the State legislation.

There was a 50-50 arrangement with the Commonwealth—and there continues to be a 50-50 arrangement with the Commonwealth—with respect to the funding of the processes of the Commission. But we are resolving about 70 per cent of the cases under our Act. That is because we have a state-of-the-art Act, which is in advance of that possessed by any other State.

In 1992-93, the Commission handled 419 anti-discrimination complaints, and 133 Federal complaints. So that is 419 based on the State statute and 133 based on the Federal statute. There were 1 227 written inquiries and 12 424 telephone inquiries. There were 50 000 telephone calls directed towards the resolution of these matters. They did 320 education sessions, which informed something like 10 000 people. The first nine months of operation suggests that those figures will be exceeded in the 1993-94. Consequently, it was necessary to provide supplementation to the original Budget, and that supplementation was of the order of \$215,000.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: So it was basically to cover the extra workload of those inquiries coming in?

Mr WELLS: Yes.

Mrs BIRD: What area would be the largest? What is the most frequent complaint?

Mr WELLS: The largest area is employment. In respect of discrimination in employment, the two largest areas of complaint are sexual harassment and impairment.

Mrs BIRD: So you have been fairly successful in resolving those. Would you have a percentage for that?

Mr WELLS: I suppose the best indication of the success of the State Act is that almost all cases are dealt with by a process of conciliation rather than a process of determination by a tribunal. It is a two-tier process. If a complaint is lodged under the Anti-Discrimination Act, initially that complaint is dealt with by a conciliator from the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission under either Commonwealth or State legislation; but, as I have said, it is mainly under State legislation. If it is impossible to resolve it by that process, then the matter goes to a tribunal. Now, if I remember correctly, so far the State tribunal has heard only one case, which means that all the others have been dealt with by a process of conciliation. I think that is probably the best of the indicia available for the success of the program.

Mr PURCELL: I have a question from page 8 of the Department's Estimates. It relates to FOI. I notice that half a million dollars is being allocated to FOI. Can the Minister guarantee that this is in fact value for money?

Mr WELLS: Yes. There have been an enormous number of applications under FOI. I will ask my staff to confirm the exact number. In the period it has been in operation, there have been about 11 000 applications. I thought that the number was 13 000. Of any jurisdiction in this country, that is the highest uptake. The vast majority of those were in respect of people who were making applications concerning their own files. They were interested in knowing—

Mr PURCELL: Ha, ha!

Mr WELLS: Why is that funny?

Mr PURCELL: I have an idea what those files were about.

Mr WELLS: They were interested in information about themselves that was held by Government. I believe that this very high degree of uptake is an important indication of the success of the program. Of course, freedom of information reverses an assumption that used to exist in Government, and that assumption was that everything is secret unless there is some overwhelmingly good reason to the contrary. The reverse assumption now operates under the Freedom of Information Act; that is, everything is available unless there is some overwhelmingly good reason to the contrary. That has an impact not only in terms of the extent to which citizens are comfortable with their role as citizens in a democracy; it also has an effect with respect to the quality of Government decision making. The benefits of that are incalculable.

Mr PURCELL: I have one quick supplementary question. Would you have any idea how many of those inquiries would be from union officials on Special Branch files?

Mr WELLS: I am not aware of any applications in respect of that type of matter. The number is in fact zero.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer the Minister to page 12 of the Estimates, the second line item, the justices of the peace section. There appears to have been an increase of almost \$300,000 over last year's allocation. Given that the Justices of the Peace and Commissioners for Declarations Act came into force a few years ago now, why is such a significant increase necessary in that allocation to the justices of the peace section?

Mr WELLS: I am just looking for a figure here. The reason for the very significant increase is because of the unexpected popularity of the reform process of the justice of the peace system. We have had well over 5 000 people processed to become commissioners for declarations and well over 1 000—I think it is probably up to about 1 300 now—who have become justices of the peace (qualified). As a result of that, it has been necessary to supplement the budget of the justices of the peace section by increasing its staff from 3 to 14 in order to handle the additional workload. That has required supplementation of something like the amount that you note there.

Of course, the value of this to the community is enormous. The fact that we now have a system whereby people can say to everybody, "I am a justice of the peace. I am qualified. I have the body of knowledge which it is necessary for me to have to hold in my hands the liberty of my fellow citizen" is something which is very precious in a democracy. To achieve that, I think that that degree of supplementation out of Justice Department funds is very valuable indeed.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: From the number of people who have contacted their offices, each member of Parliament could give an indication of the number of new applicants or existing JPs converting from the old system to the three-tier system. Can you give us some idea of the Statewide figures of new applicants or the converting JPs for which this money is allocated?

Mr WELLS: In April 1994, there were 2 213 applications for CDec and JP (Qual) in hand. The average registrations for this period of transfers from the old system of justices of the peace to the new system was 210. Since July 1993, there has been a 7 000 per cent increase in the number of applications for transfer to commissioner for declarations. In July 1993, it was 21; in April 1994, it was 1 115. These reforms—which I might mention were bipartisan in their inception and supported by all the Parliament—have proved to be extremely popular with people in terms of their taking up of the offices under the new system.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: So existing JPs are

ignoring the advice of a certain association and are in fact availing themselves of the new upgrading facilities?

Mr WELLS: I do not know whether they are ignoring the advice of some association or other. I do not read it very closely—in fact, I do not read it at all—but they are taking up the new system. I think that justices of the peace are motivated by a spirit of community service. They are very anxious to serve their community, either as justices of the peace (qualified) or as commissioners for declarations. I think that it is the new structure which was decided on by this Parliament more than anything else which is attracting people and making them to seek to hold one of these new offices.

Mr PURCELL: If I could follow on from there. You know that I have well over 500 JPs in my area. Is any money set aside in the Budget for the new system to operate in rural areas or for ethnic or Aboriginal and Islander people spread throughout Queensland?

Mr WELLS: Yes. An amount of \$240,000 has been allocated for training of justices of the peace of the Magistrates Court. The justices of the peace of the Magistrates Court are the third tier of the system. They will routinely handle hearing-determined cases and hand down sentences in those cases. Justices of the peace of the Magistrates Court will be needed in rural, remote and isolated communities, where justices of the peace now traditionally sit on the bench. An amount of \$240,000 has been earmarked for a program to train justices of the peace of the Magistrates Court in those isolated areas. We have recently had a program to train people to that status in Longreach, and there are also programs running in a number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities where it has always been the case that justices of the peace sat on the Magistrates Court bench.

Mrs BIRD: I have a fairly parochial question. I have about 500 JPs in my electorate and 440 are still accredited under that old system. Only five have become JP (Qualified) and 67 have become commissioners for declarations. Can you tell me how any of the money will be used in my electorate to promote the new JP system?

Mr WELLS: Your electorate will benefit from the overall increase in funds to the justices of the peace system—

The CHAIRMAN: The 20 minutes set aside for Government members to pose their questions has now lapsed and we move back to the non-Government members for their questions.

Mr BEANLAND: I again refer to the Legal Aid Commission, page 231 of Budget Paper No. 3. A number of references have been made in relation to the greater use of in-house lawyers by the Legal Aid Commission because it is stated that it produces far better Budget results. What is the estimated savings with the use of in-house solicitors compared to private solicitors on a one-for-one basis?

Mr WELLS: When you say on a one-to-one

basis, do you mean how much do you save by having an in-house solicitor as against hiring a solicitor?

Mr BEANLAND: Yes. Overall, how much do you save?

Mr WELLS: Do you mean one against one or do you mean the total global figure?

Mr BEANLAND: One against one. There must be some figure that you have that you work from to say that it is cheaper to have in-house solicitors than private solicitors.

Mr WELLS: It would depend on the nature of the issue. If, for example, you are dealing with a personal injuries case that was going to be handled in-house and somebody comes to the in-house solicitor and spends a certain amount of time with that in-house solicitor, then what you would be measuring would be the amount of time that the in-house solicitor spent. You would work out the salary of that person and then compare it with what it would cost to hire a solicitor outside. That would effectively mean a saving. Over a period of time, the Legal Aid Commission has been experimenting and has found that the appropriate mix is to increase the number of in-house solicitors, but not beyond a certain point. They have been trying to find the optimum level. It is very hard for them to find that optimum level simply because the only way you can do it is by trial and error. It is a process which every Legal Aid Commission in the country has attempted to work out for themselves, but there is no way of proceeding except empirically, and they have found that they get the best value for money by the slight increase in in-house work which they have achieved over the last few years. Do you want the global figure as well?

Mr BEANLAND: Yes, if you have it.

Mr WELLS: At the moment, the Legal Aid Commission, which I indicated previously is an independent Commission with its own processes, is conducting a time-costing system so that they can get some data on this question. They believe that in-house counsel and solicitors are more effective in respect of criminal matters and that it is more effective to brief out in respect of other kinds of matters such as family law and civil. However, that is just their belief at this stage. They are working empirically to try to get the answer. As I indicated, I believe that other Legal Aid Commissions around the country are trying to do the same thing.

Mr BEANLAND: Again on the Legal Aid Commission, are there any funds allocated in this 1994-95 Budget for overseas travel and, if so, what are the details?

Mr WELLS: The answer to the first part is: no. The answer to the second part is not applicable. I might also mention that no Legal Aid moneys have ever been spent on overseas travel.

Mr BEANLAND: Would you detail to the Committee what savings the Legal Aid Commission expect to make in the 1994-95 financial year through productivity improvements?

Mr WELLS: Do you have a few of these questions on Legal Aid?

Mr BEANLAND: It depends how this one goes, Minister. Take one at a time.

Mr WELLS: I will invite the Director of the Legal Aid Commission to answer that question for you.

Mr HODGINS: My name is John Hodgins, I am Director of Legal Aid with the Legal Aid Commission. The Commission is maximising its productivity in all areas and has a range of targets set pursuant to its corporate plan for improvement of its performance, and that is basically the stance that it is taking across each area to improve the efficiency. For example, in relation to some advice work, there are targets of 5 per cent improvement, etc. So there are different measures according to the level of service.

Mr BEANLAND: Is it possible to be a little bit more specific than that? When you say it is different levels according to different services, what are we looking at, civil cases, criminal cases? How are you handling this when you are looking at productivity?

Mr WELLS: I will ask the Director to answer that question.

Mr HODGINS: The Commission is yet to finalise its 1994-95 Budget and does not meet until Tuesday night to establish the levels for 1994-95, but the range of services have been improved over the last year and there has been a lift in legal advice. In relation to information—the Commission has introduced a telephone information service with no additional costs incurred other than the normal Budget allocation so that the Commission is now handling some 60 000 telephone calls per annum. In relation to the duty lawyer service—the Commission is now handling 2 200 sessions in 1993-94 compared with 2 015 in 1992-93 and 1 563 in 1991-92. In relation to in-house case work—the Commission has sustained the level of case work activity and, as part of its productivity measure, has increased the complexity of the work conducted in-house, particularly so in the Criminal Law Division. Also, in regional offices, the complexity of the in-house work has been increased by prescribed crime—the more serious criminal matters—being handled by in-house officers.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to the Legal Aid Commission, I notice that you indicated before that the number of applications for the coming year is expected to be similar to last year. Do you also expect the mix to be the same, in other words the number of civil cases, family law cases and criminal cases, because in recent times, as we would all appreciate, there has been a drop in the number of civil cases and family law cases getting Legal Aid assistance.

Mr WELLS: I would expect that there would be a considerable increase in the number of civil cases that were handled. This would be as a result of the \$4m Public Trustee Civil Legal Aid Scheme which was recently established. That \$4m which is available from the Public Trustee, pursuant to the guidelines established during the time of T. J. Ryan,

is going to be a very valuable program and is only just starting to begin the higher parts of its flight.

Up till 31 March 1994, 1 137 applications were received for this scheme. By virtue of the fact that there is that very considerable amount of money available, which is effectively a \$4m increase in Legal Aid funding above what is mentioned here in the Estimates, there would be a very considerable number of those which would be capable of being funded. So you would expect that the content of cases of a civil nature—personal injuries in particular—handled by the Legal Aid Commission would increase quite dramatically during the forthcoming year.

Mr BEANLAND: I turn now to the Criminal Justice Commission. I refer to page 225 of Budget Paper No. 3, the Program Statements, in relation to the Criminal Justice Commission. I refer to the Budget allocation of \$20.8m to the Criminal Justice Commission. I notice that on page 225 it states that four public hearings were commenced during 1993-94. I ask: what funds have been budgeted in 1994-95 for these four public hearings, and what was the cost of the public hearings for 1993-94?

Mr WELLS: The sum of \$592,820 was the total cost to the Commission of those inquiries.

Mr BEANLAND: That was for 1993-94. What has been budgeted for 1994-95?

Mr WELLS: The total amount budgeted for 1994-95 is \$776,429.

Mr BEANLAND: That is on the same four public hearings. Thank you. I refer further to the Criminal Justice Commission. I notice again on page 225 a listed number of research projects. I inquire as to what funds were expended on research and production of each of the various research reports produced during the 1993-94 financial year, and what has been allocated for 1994-95 for each of the items listed in the Budget. There are seven items listed there.

Mr WELLS: I shall ask the Chairman of the CJC to answer it, if you will bear with us for a minute. While we are waiting, I might mention that the subtotal for the Research and Coordination Division was \$1,050,052. I will allow the Chairman of the CJC to answer in more detail.

Mr O'REGAN: Mr Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Rob O'Regan. I chair the Criminal Justice Commission. The total budgetary allocation for the Research and Coordination Division is \$1,050,052. The consulting fee which is comprised in that is \$133,500. The projects to be commenced in 1994-95—are those the ones to which you wish me to particularly direct attention?

Mr BEANLAND: Yes.

Mr O'REGAN: Review of police discipline and complaints procedures; review of domestic violence legislation; evaluation of the Inala shopfront; performance indicators and workload measures for detectives; and information paper on youth crime. There are a number of current projects which will be completed during that budgetary period. I can identify those also, if you wish me to.

Mr BEANLAND: If you could, please.

Mr O'REGAN: They are: funding of criminal justice agencies; evaluation of the Queensland Police Service informal complaint resolution procedures; analysis of 1991 crime victim survey; the production of a beat policing manual; and a research paper titled "Fear of Crime".

Mr BEANLAND: Is there a breakdown of figures for each of those items?

Mr O'REGAN: No, there is not, I am sorry.

Mr BEANLAND: You have the overall budget for the Research and Coordination Division, but you do not have a breakdown within that for each of the various research programs that you are running?

Mr O'Regan: No, not for the individual discrete projects.

Mr BEANLAND: In July 1993, you produced a discussion paper "Cannabis and the Law in Queensland". I was going to ask what was the cost of investigation and production of that report. I presume you would not have that figure broken down as such. I was also going to ask you whether you had allocated funds in 1994-95 for that, because that was a discussion paper, and there is to be a further report made on that.

Mr O'REGAN: It would be difficult to quantify with any exactitude the figure which truly represents the cost of the production of that particular paper. There are various reasons for that, not the least of which is that the committee comprised a group of people from within and without the Criminal Justice Commission. But that discussion paper has led to the production of a final report which the Commission hopes to be in a position to table within the next month or so.

Mr BEANLAND: Further on this matter—the Supreme Court of Queensland, I think, indicated that the Criminal Justice Commission had legislative responsibility to inquire into the administration of criminal justice in this State. I understood by some article or other that I read that the report was to be published in April. Could you indicate to us what the completion date of that might be and whether there are funds allocated in your Research and Coordination Division for this project, keeping in mind that I appreciate that you are not going to be able to give me the figure that you are spending on that particular matter?

Mr O'REGAN: Funds have been allocated for the completion of that project, but I am unable to give you the precise figure. However, I indicate that the work on the project is well advanced, and it is anticipated that it will be concluded in the next couple of months.

Mr BEANLAND: Further on the Criminal Justice Commission—I ask: what funds, if any, have been allocated in the 1994-95 Budget by the Commission for overseas travel and, if there are funds allocated, details of that overseas travel?

Mr O'REGAN: No such funds have been allocated.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to the Criminal Justice Commission's accommodation—I notice in

the Budget documents that I received from the Committee that there is a figure allocated for accommodation of \$2,697,000, which relates to the premises at Coronation Drive and, as I understand it, to the MLC Court building. I was wondering what floor space the Commission occupied in relation to both of those buildings, what the length of the lease is for each of those buildings and when the current leases expire for those buildings.

Mr O'REGAN: The terms of the respective leases are four years in the case of MLC Court and 10 years in the case of the premises which the Commission occupies at Toowong. I am unable to give you the dimensions without some notice.

Mr BEANLAND: I turn back to the Department itself. I refer the Minister to page 235 of Budget Paper No. 3, the Corporate Services Support area of the Department. Would you be able to detail what savings you expect to make this year through improved productivity performance in the 1994-95 financial year in the Corporate Services area?

The CHAIRMAN: The time set aside for non-Government questions has now elapsed.

Mr WELLS: Can I take the opportunity to correct a small error in a previous answer that I gave? The honourable member for Indooroopilly asked me how much it was going cost to produce the annual report for the Office of the Director of Prosecutions. I asked one of my officers and off the cuff he said \$25,000. The correct figure is \$5,000.

Mr PURCELL: On page 12, under "Director of Prosecutions", I notice that there has been an increase of money for the Director of Prosecutions. Could the Minister explain whether this increase is for specific purposes or as part of the Government's policy of increased funding for that office overall?

Mr WELLS: The increase in the funding for the Director of Prosecutions?

Mr PURCELL: Yes.

Mr WELLS: There are three components of the \$1m increase—it is more than \$1m, actually. The first component is—off the top of my head—\$415,000 for the new matters management system. The next component is \$300,000, which is acceleration—that is, increases approved by Treasury. The third component is the proportion of the \$800,000 three-year program for victims of violent and sexual offences which it is anticipated will be expended in this financial year. I think as a result of certain carry-overs the amount that will be expended from that program in this financial year is closer to \$400,000 rather than \$300,000 for victims of violent and sexual offences.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer to page 12. The item "Criminal Injury Compensation"—there is a footnote at the bottom of the table. Would you please advise, firstly, whether the Government is paying 100 per cent of the criminal compensation awarded by a court or whether the Government is following the previous Government's example of paying approximately 40 per cent to 80 per cent of the court-ordered amount.

Mr WELLS: Where it pays criminal compensation, the Government is continuing to pay 100 per cent of the court-ordered amount. Under the previous Government, the amount that was paid was between 40 per cent and 80 per cent of the amount that was awarded by the court. When I first became Attorney-General, I was unable to find any reason for this parsimonious attitude, so I took the approach that where compensation was payable it would be at the rate of 100 per cent of the amount that was ordered by the court.

Over the years, there has been considerable acceleration in the amount that is payable in respect of criminal injury compensation. The funds which are paid out are a Treasury special; in other words, they come directly out of consolidated revenue. As you see from the figures, the estimated actual for 1993-94 is \$3.412m. If I recall correctly, in the last financial year in respect of which the previous Government had a hand in the matter, it was about \$240,000. So there has been a massive increase in the amount of money paid in terms of criminal injury compensation. I might say that while there has been that massive increase, it is impossible to remedy the situation which occurs as a result of a criminal act. You cannot actually ever fix it, but what you can do is acknowledge it. This Government has adopted a policy of acknowledging fairly and squarely what the court has ordered.

Mrs BIRD: I refer the Attorney to page 14 in relation to the Department's Violence Against Women Unit. I realise the unit has been working for a fairly short time, but can you identify how much money is being spent in the area of domestic violence? How would the Minister evaluate the value of this unit in terms of its Budget allocations and the service provided?

Mr WELLS: To answer the second part of your question, the purpose of the unit is to assist victims of crime through the prosecution process. Victims of crime very frequently have to appear in court. That means that they have to make statements to the police, they have to make statements to the prosecution, and they have to appear in court. All of these things can be traumatic for the victim and make the victim relive the events. You cannot ever take away that trauma. You cannot ever take away the painful experience that the victim is going to have, but you can mitigate its harshest effects. The way you can do that is to ensure that when they have to make these statements, they are in the company of somebody whom they trust and know or they are doing it in comfortable circumstances, such as in their own home.

The other thing you can do is to ensure that the special witness provisions of the Evidence Act are looked into when appropriate. I would pay credit to the Cooper Government under whose administration the special witnesses provisions were inserted into the Evidence Act. Those things can be done for victims of crime. Doing those things for victims of crime is one of those intangible things, the benefit of which resounds in human lives rather than in terms of dollars and cents. But it also ensures that the victims of crime are able to give the most effective evidence

possible when they get to court. That might lead to the further enhancement of the number of convictions that are secured, because if the victims of crime go into court with the confidence which is borne of the support that they have received from this unit, that will only enhance their capacity to go through the ordeal of a court appearance. The benefits in terms of the conviction of those who ought justly to be convicted again are intangible but again very considerable for the community.

Mrs BIRD: I refer you back to my question and ask: could you tell me how much money has been allocated to that area?

Mr WELLS: Over the whole of Government, \$10m—\$3.1m to fund domestic violence services, \$45,000 for community education and training on domestic violence legislation for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, \$4.193m to continue expansion of the Women's Health—Prevention of Violence Against Women Program, \$500,000 to expand the Neighbourhood Safety Audit Program, \$2.1m for reforms to improve safety on public transport, \$410,000 to the prosecutions for that purpose and, of course, the unit in my department to which I have referred repeatedly.

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Minister to page 18, which contains items relating to disabled persons. There is an amount listed there for \$310,000 for improvements. Could the Minister outline which courts, and at what cost, will be upgraded? I imagine that would be for ramps. Is it?

Mr WELLS: Bear with me. We have got a Budget of \$200,000 for the provision of disabled access into departmental buildings. We have got Mount Isa, \$12,350 approved; Sandgate, \$36,251; Chinchilla, \$15,569; Yeppoon, \$17,443; Mackay, \$113,150—and that includes a lift—and Gympie, \$13,830. That involves a slight overrun of the Budget. It comes to \$208,593.

Mr PURCELL: Thank you.

Mr WELLS: Sorry, can I mention that there is a carry over from last year of \$310,000, which will also go into court improvements.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: On page 20, on the Legal Aid Commission and the footnote that goes with it, could you just clarify something because there appears to be an apparent decrease of funding of about \$1m? I listened to your answers before but I just want you to clarify exactly what that funding situation is with Legal Aid and what is your commitment towards Legal Aid funding?

Mr WELLS: There is indeed an increase of something like \$1m in Legal Aid funding out of consolidated revenue for the forthcoming year. In the last financial year, there was a \$2m one-off grant, which was specified to go into the Legal Aid Commission's reserves. It did not constitute part of the cash flow of Legal Aid for the purposes of the provision of legal aid, but it went into the reserves for the purpose of the management of this self-governing, independent Commission so that it could handle its arrangements with its various creditors. That was a one-off thing. The recurrent funding from consolidated revenue to go into the Legal Aid

Commission itself has increased this year from \$7,986m to \$8,944m, which constitutes an increase of \$1m.

I might say that the Government has an agreement with the Commonwealth—the Commonwealth/State Legal Aid Agreement—and that agreement requires 45 per cent of the funds to come from State sources, however sourced, and 55 per cent to come from the Commonwealth. We are ahead in our funding obligations as far as the Commonwealth/State regulated agreement is concerned. Over the last three years, consolidated revenue has contributed an additional \$4.82m above the State's agreed contribution under the Commonwealth/State Legal Aid Agreement, and this is without referring to the \$4m Public Trustee funded Civil Legal Aid Scheme. So we are way ahead of our obligations under the Commonwealth/State agreement and the commitment of this Government to Legal Aid and the legal aid system is of a very high order indeed.

I understand that our Public Trustee Legal Aid Scheme is envied by a number of other States. Inquiries of my departmental officers have been made by departmental officers in a number of other States as to how the scheme works. It is perceived by interstate people to be functioning extremely effectively, and while all Legal Aid Commissions throughout Australia have been through a difficult period over the last few years as a result of the reduction in the interest rate from solicitors' trust funds, the Queensland Legal Aid Commission has received influxes of funds of an order unknown to the other States.

Mr PURCELL: Following on from that, I notice on page 27 there is \$4m set aside, and on page 49, there is a line item on that. Could the Minister explain briefly whether the trustee is actually providing legal aid or whether it is some sort of funding relationship between the trustee and the Legal Aid Service? Who provides the service?

Mr WELLS: The service is supplied by the Legal Aid Commission. There is a joint committee of the Public Trustee and the Legal Aid Commission to oversee the approvals of cases and then the legal cases are run according to the processes of the Legal Aid Commission in more or less the usual way. In most cases—in all cases—the matter is briefed out according to the usual processes.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I have just a brief question. On page 30, the item on the AJAC funding—the Government has publicly expressed commitment to implementing the recommendations of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. Why is it that this allocation seems to have been decreased?

Mr WELLS: The funding here comes through the Commonwealth, and the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee is funded by that method. The figure that you have got there of \$350,000 for the previous financial year includes a seeding grant of \$86,000 and other set-up costs. So the figure of \$264,000 which you see there is the ongoing running costs of that body. I might mention that one of the

important results of that—I am awfully sorry, can I just say a bit more on that?

Mr PURCELL: Certainly, you can.

Mr WELLS: I think that it is something that ought to be drawn to the attention of the Committee. One of the important results of that is a program for the education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander commissioners for declarations and justices of the peace. It is a program which was embraced enthusiastically by the Aboriginal Justice Advisory Committee and they, jointly with the Justice of the Peace Council, have prosecuted this program very effectively. So there has been an exponential increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who are commissioners for declarations and justices of the peace (qualified), and that increase will continue.

The result of it will be that that community will be very much better served in that the awareness of that community of matters relating to the legal system will increase very substantially. That is a quiet little program and one that is not terribly high profile, but I think it is terribly important in terms of addressing the underlying problems of that particular community and its relationship with the legal system. It is assisting them to be part of the ongoing processes.

Mr PURCELL: Could I refer you to page 30, Capital Works? I refer to an almost threefold increase in the allocation of money for capital works, which I agree with. I would like it to be noted that the courthouse in Southport no longer adequately meets the needs of this community, which has grown significantly in the last 10 to 15 years. Will the Minister advise of any money that has been allocated for the upgrading of that courthouse?

Mr WELLS: Yes. This Capital Works Budget is basically for the courthouses. We have got \$18.2m as a total. During the forthcoming year, \$1.78m will be expended on the development of the courthouse and, over a period of time—that is over the period of time required to build a new courthouse at Southport—\$16.4m will be further expended above that figure. The need for a new courthouse at Southport is significant. You are perfectly correct in saying that that community is rapidly outgrowing the quite large courthouse it has already. We need one that will be big enough for the longer term, rather than just for the next few years, so this construction program has been undertaken. I am sure that it will be of benefit to the community.

Mrs BIRD: I have a question about QGAP, which is on page 12. There is a decrease of \$50,000 in funding to QGAP. Does that mean that the Government is now less committed to providing those services to rural Queensland?

Mr WELLS: No. That program has been transferred to the Minister for Rural Communities. That is a part of the rural communities program; it is no longer in the Justice Department.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: On page 60, there is an item on video conferencing. Could you outline what video conferencing is and what the \$200,000 allocation was for? From my activity on the Public

Works Committee, I believe it is used specifically with children. Or am I referring to a different program?

Mr WELLS: Perhaps you are thinking of children who are treated as special witnesses.

The CHAIRMAN: The 20 minutes for this block has now expired. As there is less than 40 minutes in the time block remaining—I believe that in the order of 10 minutes remains—we will divide it evenly between Government members and non-Government members. I now ask Mr Beanland to pose the first question for non-Government members.

Mr BEANLAND: I return to the matter that I raised previously on page 235 of Budget Paper No. 3. In relation to the corporate support area, would you detail what savings in dollar terms you expect to make through improved productivity performance in the 1994-95 financial year?

Mr WELLS: The improvement in services will be reflected in that there will be a much greater output than previously, but no increases in staff and very limited increases in costs. A lot of new initiatives are being undertaken with no extra funding in the Corporate Services section. There are new policies and procedures for human resource management practice. There is the Equal Employment Opportunity Education Program. Recently, I had occasion to launch the departmental seminar for that program. There is a necessity for awareness training of departmental officers in anti-discrimination practices. There is a need for skills management and training.

Forward planning needs to be undertaken for computer initiatives, capital works, minor works and better systems of resource allocation. Better financial reporting systems commitment, accounting, accrual accounting following from the development and completion of our assets register in respect of chattels, support for problem resolution by management—all of these things require additional training, which is undertaken by the Corporate Services section. It will not get any additional funds to do that. Consequently, this will require an increase in productivity.

Mr BEANLAND: I take it from your answer that you have not been able to quantify that in dollar terms.

Mr WELLS: I suppose the dollar term quantification is implicit: you are getting it all for nothing.

Mr BEANLAND: I heard what you said—the rhetoric—but I was looking for a figure.

Mr WELLS: I do not understand the question, though.

Mr BEANLAND: It was very simple: what did you expect to save in dollar terms?

Mr WELLS: I am telling you that it is free.

Mr BEANLAND: There is no such thing as a free lunch. In relation to the department's rates, I ask the Minister: what funds have been budgeted for overseas travel in the 1994-95 financial year for himself and ministerial staff, and what are the details?

Mr WELLS: I do not know. I do not have any plans to travel overseas in the forthcoming financial year—and I plan for my staff to stay with me.

Mr BEANLAND: Have any funds been allocated for overseas travel in the 1994-95 financial year for backbench members of Parliament that would be allocated against your departmental votes?

Mr WELLS: No.

Mr BEANLAND: What funds have been allocated for domestic travel for 1994-95 for yourself and your ministerial staff, and what are the details?

Mr WELLS: I do not know. I intend to do a fair bit of travelling around Queensland in the forthcoming financial year. I will take the question on notice and get back to you.

Mr BEANLAND: What funds have been budgeted in the financial year, if any, for domestic travel for backbench members of Parliament, and what are the details?

Mr WELLS: None. But if I had budgeted any, I would have let you know about it; I would want to take you.

Mr BEANLAND: You are so generous. What funds have been budgeted for overseas travel in 1994-95 for public servants within the department, and what are the details?

Mr WELLS: None.

Mr BEANLAND: What funds have been allocated by the department in the forthcoming Budget for consultancy work, and could we have the details of that work?

Mr WELLS: I think the figures would be quite similar to the figures that were revealed in the Budget last year. They have not finalised that, but we are not expecting any more than there were last year. The amount across-the-board for everything last year was \$487,000. You could expect a similar amount.

Mr BEANLAND: Could we have the details of that?

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questioning by non-Government members has now elapsed. If Mr Beanland wishes to pursue that question, he may do so in the half hour allotted at the end of this process.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I ask the Attorney-General a question following on from an initial question asked by my colleague the member for Bulimba. On page 30 of the Estimates, there appears to be a very significant increase of almost \$265m extra for capital works. You gave a fairly broad picture of that funding and made reference to Southport. Is the south-east corner of Queensland the main beneficiary of this largess? How do our country and rural centres fare in terms of the capital work program of your department?

Mr WELLS: We have a number of major courthouse programs—Caboolture courthouse, Rockhampton courthouse, Hervey Bay courthouse. In addition, work will be done at the Brisbane Magistrates Court. The funds allocated under that program include \$5.49m in Caboolture; \$12.99m in Rockhampton; and \$3.5m in Hervey Bay. The Hervey

Bay courthouse will be extremely timely. The existing courthouse was perfectly appropriate to a country town, but that is not what Hervey Bay is anymore. Hervey Bay is a bustling regional centre, and it needs a courthouse of a size and of a capacity that will meet the needs of such a centre for the forthcoming years.

Caboolture is one of the fastest growing areas of the whole State—indeed, one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is rapidly outgrowing the courthouse that it has. In the case of Rockhampton, we are in the situation that the Supreme Court in Rockhampton is urgently in need of refurbishment. It is a heritage building, and it is the oldest courthouse which is still being used as a courthouse in Queensland. It is a beautiful building, but it is no longer capable of serving the purpose for which it was originally intended. That is a matter of some urgency that needs to be addressed. We will fix up the whole situation in Rockhampton as we go through. The Capital Works Program is not just Brisbane-based. In fact, it is very much a regional program which will bring not only a new courthouse but also new employment to those important regional centres.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I had hoped to follow up Mr Beanland's questioning on overseas travel, but since there is no allocation, I cannot. I had hoped that there would have been some so that we could open our otherwise insular thinking. Perhaps we will have to wait till next year. Because the time has almost gone, could you perhaps provide us with a brief statement on notice on the video conferencing allocation on page 60, or do you have that information available now?

Mr WELLS: Yes. The video conferencing facility is a connection between the Arthur Gorrie centre and the court. The purpose of that is to avoid the necessity of transporting prisoners from the Arthur Gorrie centre into the court. That saves resources, and it also reduces the risk profile if prisoners can have their remands or whatever dealt with as a result of that process. The video conferencing facility will be run in accordance with a budget of \$200,000 from the budget of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services and \$200,000 from my budget. Effectively, that will provide a video telephone. A person will be able to sit in front of a video screen and they will be able to see the person who is talking to them on the other end. This will mean that, in certain court proceedings, the examination of a witness where the witness is the prisoner can take place without the prisoner having to move. For the reasons that I gave, it is very desirable to make it convenient for prisoners to stay where they are.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates of expenditure for the Department of Justice in this block has now expired. The next item for consideration is the Office of the Arts. The time allotted is one half hour. I remind all present that at the conclusion of this period—

Mr WELLS: Excuse me. Mr Chairman, one of my departmental officers has asked me to make a clarification with respect to the answer on QGAP.

When I said that the program had been transferred to the Office of Rural Communities, it has taken on the responsibility for paying the relevant fees. That is how I should have put it rather than the rather nebulous way I did put it.

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps you could have waited for the half-hour period allotted for further determination later on to make that clarification.

I remind all present that at the conclusion of this period, a further half hour has been set aside for Committee members to raise further questions in respect of the Department of Justice, the Attorney-General and the Arts.

The CHAIRMAN: For the information of the new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound the expiration of those time limits. As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from Government members, and so on in rotation. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they answer a question. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Office of the Arts to be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members.

Mrs SHELDON: I seek leave to appear with the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Leave is granted.

Mrs SHELDON: I refer to page 39, "1993-94 Achievements". Arts Queensland hosted the Cultural Ministers Council meeting in June 1993 for the second time. How much was the total cost of staging the Cultural Ministers Council meeting?

Mr WELLS: \$40,000.

Mrs SHELDON: Could you tell me which serving rather than acting Ministers attended?

Mr WELLS: From my memory, all serving Ministers attended.

Mrs SHELDON: What was the venue?

Mr WELLS: Parliament House.

Mrs SHELDON: What entertainment was paid for by the Queensland taxpayers as host of that council meeting?

Mr WELLS: The official dinner and a reception for the arts community.

Mrs SHELDON: So that was all the entertainment—the official dinner and the reception for the arts community. Would you please give me the total cost of that dinner and reception and any other entertainment?

Mr WELLS: We will take that question on notice. We do not have that information with us.

Mrs SHELDON: How many ministerial advisers and departmental representatives were included in that dinner and entertainment?

Mr WELLS: I do not recall any, but we will take that question on notice and get back to you.

Mrs SHELDON: What were the three most important decisions taken at the Cultural Ministers Council meeting?

Mr WELLS: You are asking for a value judgment. It is a question of one's priorities. I think probably the most important one concerned getting together a full catalogue of valuable artefacts held in museums around Australia. The situation at present is that there is no such catalogue in existence. In all sorts of out-of-the-way museums that few people have heard of, there exist priceless parts of our heritage. The extent to which those are available to people is very slight, because nobody knows that they are there. But worse still, some of those out-of-the-way museums do not have advantages of the type which the large metropolitan museums enjoy, namely the curatorial facilities, the capacity to keep those priceless objects in circumstances in which they will not decay and, generally speaking, the capacity to house them.

In addition, there are some museums that have really quite priceless objects in their possession but do not have the facilities for displaying these objects or, in some cases, the skills to properly display these objects. This is an Australia-wide problem. If we are to gain control of our heritage, we really need to address that problem. In my opinion, the cooperative venture in that respect was the most important decision that was taken.

I would think that the next most important decision was the decision to move down the track of moral rights for artists. Moral rights are rights which should belong to artists but which are not accorded to them by the laws of copyright. They are the right, for example, not to have one's work plagiarised or bastardised by somebody else lampooning it or satirising it or using it for some other benefit. These are rights which are not recognised by law but which there has been a consistent demand from artists throughout the world to have recognised. The Commonwealth Government wishes to consult extensively with the States on the question of whether to proceed down a moral rights path as has been done in a number of overseas countries; for example, France springs to mind. The Commonwealth Government is now proceeding down that path as a result of the unanimous recommendation of the council.

Mrs SHELDON: I refer to the strategy ensuring that the State's collections are properly maintained, developed and accessible to all Queensland. What percentage of the State's collections are currently on display?

Mr WELLS: Have you got a few more questions about the museum?

Mrs SHELDON: Yes. What percentage are in storage in ministerial offices and in departmental offices?

Mr WELLS: You are talking about museum artefacts or art gallery artefacts?

Mrs SHELDON: No. I am talking specifically about the art gallery.

Mr WELLS: I have got to assume that you are talking about paintings and objects other than works that are on paper, because the advice that I have received from the art gallery is that a lot of their works are on paper so they could not be on permanent display, anyway. They want to take the question on notice by virtue of the fact that they would be rotating their collection, anyway, even if there were some that—

Mrs SHELDON: I realise that. I am happy to take that question on notice.

Mr WELLS: Glad to make it available.

Mrs SHELDON: From the whole of the State's collection in the past year, have any items gone missing?

Mr WELLS: No.

Mrs SHELDON: So all items can be accounted for?

Mr WELLS: Yes, they have just done a complete inventory.

Mrs SHELDON: Over the past five years, local government contributions to the cost of operating public library services has increased by 69.5 per cent while contributions by the State Government have actually dropped from 29 per cent of the total to some 24 per cent. In this Budget, we have seen an increase in funding of some \$2m, although the Mead report, which you will agree was a very detailed report done by a previous Local Government Director, clearly indicated that an immediate injection of some \$6m is needed, with future increases of some \$4.5m a year for two years. Can you explain why your Government did not implement the Mead report recommendations and why your Government is now insisting that all libraries buy their books from a centralised facility to be run by the State Government?

Mr WELLS: I think there were methodological problems with the Mead report. The \$2m increase which has been announced in this Budget is a very significant increase which will be concentrated on book stock. One of the things which the Government is very concerned to achieve is an increase in the availability of book stock in public libraries. One of the strategies by which we intend to maximise the amount of book stock is the strategy of arranging for the economies of scale which can be achieved as a result of bulk buying of books. The process by which we would like to achieve that increase is not one which will deny the local libraries their capacity to make individual choices about the content of their book stock, but it is a process which will enable the economies of scale which are endemic in large scale operations to benefit the reading public of Queensland.

Mrs SHELDON: Mr Minister, that percentage—

Mr WELLS: If I can complete my answer—

The CHAIRMAN: I would appreciate it if no-one interrupted people in answering their questions. Questions are separate. We will not have any of that. The Minister will complete his answer.

Mr WELLS: What I was going to say was that the result of that is that the increase of \$2m is, in effect, considerably more than \$2m as a result of the additional books that will be capable of being purchased as a result of those economies of scale.

Mrs SHELDON: Doing one's sums on that, it would appear that the per capita increase—and this is information from the libraries—is going to be something like 4c per capita.

Mr WELLS: That is a very interesting sum. If you are going to say that a \$2m increase is 4c per capita over a population of 3 million, I just do not know how you could possibly get that, doing those figures.

Mrs SHELDON: If you are buying books. We are not dividing \$2m by the population of Queensland.

Mr WELLS: So the value of the dollar goes down when you turn it into books, is that right?

The CHAIRMAN: I would ask the Minister and the member to just take a deep breath and we will go back to a question from the member.

Mrs SHELDON: Why have you changed the funding formula for library grants which I understand will see the demise of the qualified staff subsidy?

Mr WELLS: There is not any change in the funding formula. All that has been decided at this stage is that there will be an increase of \$2m in the amount of money to be available for book stock. I just do not know how you are doing your arithmetic if you can work out that an increase of \$2m means a cut in anything.

Mrs SHELDON: Is the subsidy for qualified staff to be reduced at all, and, if so, by how much?

Mr WELLS: There has been no decision taken, apart from the decision to increase the amount available for book stock by \$2m and to engage in the bulk purchasing process which will yield additional books.

Mrs SHELDON: So will there be any decision in the next financial year made on that decrease of qualified staff subsidy?

Mr WELLS: I think you are asking me, "In respect of a matter about which you have not made up your mind, what are you going to decide?"

Mrs SHELDON: With all due respect, you have not made up your mind?

Mr WELLS: That is what I am saying to you. These matters have not been decided. What we have got is a decision to increase book stock by \$2m and that is all we have got—a decision to increase book stock. The rest that you are speculating about is not something which has occurred, it is not an event in history.

Mrs SHELDON: I refer you to the third strategy listed on page 37. There, the Department has listed out its strategies as an overall forecast for the arts in Queensland. Given that the staging of the

Phantom of the Opera in Melbourne demonstrated the potential of cultural events to promote tourism and economic stimulus several years ago, in the past two years, has any single arts event in Queensland been funded by your Government in a bid to emulate Victoria's success?

Mr WELLS: I am not sure what you mean by "funded like the Phantom of the Opera", but if you are talking about stimulus to important cultural events—cultural spectacles—these have not been underwritten by the Government out of consolidated revenue. However, the Performing Arts Trust has put on and guaranteed a large number of significant programs, for example, *The King and I*, which undoubtedly have added to the tourism potential of Queensland.

Mrs SHELDON: What is the total cost of operating peer assessment panels and advisory panels? Could you tell me what this cost was in 1993-94 and the forecasts for 1994-95?

Mr WELLS: It is \$50,000. It is not expected that that will change in the forthcoming financial year.

Mrs SHELDON: Of that total, how much was paid to the peer and advisory panel members?

Mr WELLS: As distinct from what? I am sorry, I do not understand.

Mrs SHELDON: There has been a total outlay to peer and advisory panel members, I assume to support staff, in rental and office equipment and in air fares and travel allowances.

Mr WELLS: We are talking about \$50,000 which was paid to the panel members. That is how much was paid to the panel members.

Mrs SHELDON: So that was paid to the peer and advisory panel members themselves?

Mr WELLS: Yes.

Mrs SHELDON: Could you tell me what allocation was made for support staff and, as I said, in rental and office equipment and in air fares and travel allowances?

Mr WELLS: The distribution of Arts grants is one of the purposes for which the Arts Division or the Office of the Arts exists. It is not as if some portion of the office staff of Arts Queensland is hived off and attached to the assessment process. Their very reason for existence is to do, among other things, the administration of the Arts Grants Program; so they are not separately apportioned. I can, however, tell you—

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from non-Government members has expired.

Mrs BIRD: I refer you to page 39 in relation to the RADF funding. You can pick the rural people, can you not? In the March 1994 round of RADF funding in my electorate, the artists received \$5,300 worth of regional arts development funding. Could you confirm that this Budget will ensure that the RADF will continue but, further than that, that the emphasis on local communities making their own funding decisions will remain?

Mr WELLS: Yes, indeed. As a matter of fact, the Regional Arts Development Fund has been in the

process of being increased from \$5m to \$10m. That \$10m in that fund will be achieved by the end of this financial year. It will continue our regional-based process involving local councils and local assessment panels, so that we have input from local communities. It is a regional fund. It is not designed to assist those who have immediate access to the brilliant cultural facilities that are available in the capital. It is designed to assist those artistic talents which find themselves in slightly more distant and, in some cases, quite far-flung areas, so that they are able to pursue their artistic endeavours.

I can give you an assurance that that program is going to continue and that it will continue to be regional. I can give you a further assurance that if any of your constituents apply—as they have done successfully in the past—they will be rewarded by having their applications determined by the independent, transparently fair process of peer review. We do not have any more in the State the system which used to operate under the previous Government whereby there was a slush fund which was carted around from place to place by the Minister concerned, out of which Arts grants were paid. Rather, we have a system whereby people who make applications for Arts funding are judged by their peers. Those recommendations are made to the Government. No funds have gone out of the funds allocated for the Regional Arts Development Fund to any person who was not recommended by the peer assessment process.

Mrs BIRD: Also on page 39—in relation to the Queensland TV Commission, an entry is made concerning the establishment of the Film Queensland Production Investment Fund. Could the Minister provide more details about this fund, what it will do and how it is funded?

Mr WELLS: The Production Investment Fund was worth \$750,000 in 1993-94, and it was allocated to increase film production by way of direct investment into film production. The way the fund is accessed is by productions that use Queensland creative talent—producers, writers or directors. To date, Film Queensland has invested \$280,000 in two projects: *Rough Diamonds*, \$3.2m; and *Ocean Girl II*, \$4.2m. Four other projects, namely, *Fatal Shore*, *White Lies*, *Fire* and *Lizzie's Library*, have applied for investments totalling \$1m and are under consideration. They have combined Budgets worth \$14.8m. Film Queensland has prepared a submission for an increase in funding to the level of \$1.2m for equity investment in 1994-95.

With respect to the Queensland film industry—the Queensland Film Office is very anxious to encourage investment in local Queensland productions—indigenous film rather than exported film. Although the value of film produced in Queensland was something like \$130m in the last financial year, and although we expect that significant increase to continue, in the past there has been a less than desirable proportion of indigenous product. In the last financial year, however, 33 per cent, that is, a third of that figure of \$130m, is indigenous film product. That will protect Queensland against the scorners who say that the

Queensland film industry will be in trouble as soon as the exchange rate changes. We are not reliant on the exchange rate. We have a thriving and developing indigenous film industry which takes advantage of the splendid facilities available in Queensland.

Mr PURCELL: I have a few questions about the Arts. The Minister knows of my love of the Arts, as would the other members of the Committee. I follow on from what Lorraine asked about that line item on page 39. I presume that the Film Commission is dealing with producers from other countries, and money is changed in denominations other than Australian. Would the Minister outline whether fluctuations of currency have any impact on the Film Commission's or, indeed, the State's investments?

Mr WELLS: That gives me the opportunity to spell out the point that I was alluding to previously. Some people have said that the Queensland film industry is entirely dependent on the fact that we have an exchange rate whereby the Australian dollar is low against the American dollar and, consequently, this makes it attractive for American film makers to come to Queensland in order to make their films. Undoubtedly, that exchange rate is an incentive for American companies to come to Queensland to make their films, and undoubtedly many of them have because of that incentive—among others. But what I was anxious to demonstrate—and which I did rather briefly when I was responding to the member for Whitsunday—was that we are not entirely dependent on overseas product in order to achieve a viable film industry in Queensland.

As a result of various initiatives which we have taken, we now have a much higher proportion—at least a third and going towards half—of indigenous Australian product which will be with us whatever the exchange rate may be. So the future of Queensland film development is extremely rosy. It will continue to be a major industry in Queensland, whatever might happen to the exchange rate.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: If I can go from the rosy film to the more substantial capital works—there is a table at the bottom of page 36. Would you comment on the \$5.8m for Stage 5 of the Queensland Performing Arts Complex and the other capital moneys going to the refurbishment of the QTC and \$1.1m for the Library? That seems to be a significant amount.

Mr WELLS: The \$5m sum is for Stage 5, which is the Drama Theatre part of the Cultural Centre. It was always envisaged from the very beginning that there would be a Stage 5 of the Cultural Centre, but it took the previous Arts Minister—the Premier—to actually proceed down the track of doing it, taking the decision to do it and allocating the moneys to do it. We are in the construction stage now of that drama theatre. It will be a drama theatre which, from memory, seats 860 people. This is probably as large a drama theatre as you can get and still maintain the intimacy you need in order to have dramatic live productions.

The size of that theatre and the quality of it will be such as will enable Queensland to attract productions of a kind that previously have not come to Queensland. It will be attractive to international

touring groups in a way that no other venue in Queensland is. We are proceeding down the track of construction with a reference group of, basically, actors who will ensure that at each stage of the construction no mistakes are made and the building which is constructed is in fact one which is ideal for the purposes of drama. It will be capable of being used for other purposes as well, but it will be ideal for that purpose. The theatre will cost overall \$45.8m. The seating is actually 850; I said "860" off the top of my head. So this is going to be a very important addition to our cultural landscape.

In relation to the refurbishment of accommodation for the Queensland Theatre Company and the relocation of the Public Libraries Division, the latter is to do with storage—we are not going to be shifting them from South Bank. The refurbishment of the accommodation for the Queensland Theatre Company will enable them to operate and prepare in spaces which are slightly more upgraded than those they are now already in.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: You refer to the total cost—the right-hand column of that same table shows approximately \$39m expenditure beyond this current financial year. What time frame does that cover before this complex is complete?

Mr WELLS: The complex will be complete in the second half of 1996—September 1996.

Mrs BIRD: I refer to page 86. Can you please detail whether the PFTC, Film Queensland or the State Government are in any way exposed through the termination of *Paradise Beach*?

Mr WELLS: No, we are not exposed at all. The company made significant overseas sales and as a result of that they are in a perfectly successful financial situation and will be able to meet their commitments to the Pacific Film and Television Commission.

Mrs BIRD: While I have you there, can you tell me what kind of productions are attracted to Queensland?

Mr WELLS: By the PFTC?

Mrs BIRD: Yes.

Mr WELLS: In 1991, the PFTC attracted *Sniper*, a USA film, \$11m; *Jailbird's Run*, a Japanese film, \$6m, *Surviving the Savage Seas*, a USA film, \$4m; *Ocean Girl*, an Australian film, \$3.2m; *No Escape*, a USA film, \$26.9m; *Traps*, an Australian film, \$3.5m; *Kansas*, \$3m; *All Men Are Liars*, an Australian film, \$2.5m; *Ocean Girl II*, \$4.9m. I might mention that filming of these productions is widely dispersed throughout Queensland. *Sniper* was filmed in Cairns and Port Douglas; *Jailbird's Run*, Mount Isa and Brisbane; *Surviving the Savage Seas*, Port Douglas; *Ocean Girl*, Port Douglas; *No Escape*, Atherton and Canungra; *Traps*, Innisfail; *Kansas*, Darling Downs; *All Men Are Liars*, Mission Beach; and *Ocean Girl*, Port Douglas. The Pacific Film and Television Corporation is not only attracting a very large number of big budget films to Queensland and greatly enhancing Queensland's revenue, but also it is being disbursed around Queensland significantly and serving the regional policy of this Government.

The CHAIRMAN: As this section of the hearings of the Committee will conclude promptly at 2 p.m., we have approximately 20 minutes remaining. In that period we will divide the time evenly between Government and non-Government members. I now invite a non-Government member of the Committee to pose the first question.

Mrs SHELDON: The first question relates to Arts. I refer to page 44 of the subprogram, the Queensland Cultural Centre Trust. Under the heading "Security", it is stated—

"The South Bank Development has placed greater demands on the centre's security, particular in the late at night time zone."

How much was spent on security at the QCC in 1992-93 and in 1993-94, and how much is forecast to be spent on security at the centre in 1994-95?

Mr WELLS: We do not have that off the top of anybody's head. We will take that on notice.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to your department, what funds have been allocated for redundancies of the department in the 1994-95 Budget? What number of officers is that based upon?

Mr WELLS: We know of no redundancies.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to the 1993-94 year, could the Minister inform the Committee what the costs were for redundancies and the number of the redundancies within the department?

Mr WELLS: You are talking about the whole department, are you not?

Mr BEANLAND: Yes.

Mr WELLS: There was only one. My Director-General has told me that the cost of that redundancy was about \$80,000.

Mr BEANLAND: I move onto something that has had a little publicity in recent times—judges' travel. I particularly refer to the Appeal Court judges. I refer to the allocation for Courts where I presume this would come under. On page 12 of the departmental Estimates, the figure is \$69.325m. I particularly refer to that and ask: what funds have been allocated in the 1994-95 Budget for overseas travel by Appeal Court judges?

Mr WELLS: I will refer this to the Director-General who is the statutory accountable officer.

Mr SMITH: My name is Barry Smith. I am the Director-General of the Department. Under the current provisions that relate to the Judges of Appeal of whom there are four, plus the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Queensland, adequate funds are made available for them to travel with their spouses overseas once during the financial year.

Mr BEANLAND: What funds have been actually allocated? You say "adequate funds". Exactly what funds have been allocated? I presume you mean all four Appeal Court Judges plus the Chief Justice, when you say that.

Mr SMITH: Last year, for example, the total expenditure for five of them who travelled overseas

was about \$110,000, including their spouses, including conference fees, etc. So averaging that between the five, that would be about \$20,000 each per annum.

Mr BEANLAND: Following on from that, what funds have been allocated in the 1994-95 Budget for Appeal Court judges for domestic travel?

Mr SMITH: As with the arrangements for overseas travel for the Judges of Appeal, each Judge of Appeal, plus the Chief Justice, is allocated adequate funds for them and their spouses to travel twice within Australia. Last year, the cost of that was just in excess of \$20,000 including, of course, conference fees, etc. Consequently, that would average between \$3,000 and \$4,000 per Judge.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to this matter, where are these arrangements publicly documented? We do have the Judges Tribunal report that comes to Parliament as a public document. Where are these arrangements for travel because, going through the documents here, I am unable to locate them?

Mr SMITH: The travel arrangements for the Judges of Appeal were determined by the Governor in Council.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to the overseas travel, I presume that Judges travel first class by air, do they?

Mr SMITH: Yes, they do.

Mr BEANLAND: In relation to the current year, 1993-94, could you advise the Committee which Judges of the Appeal Court went where and the cost of that?

Mr SMITH: Yes, I can. In terms of the Chairman, Mr Justice Fitzgerald, he principally went to a Canadian Appellate Court Seminar between 10 and 14 April this year in Montreal, Quebec, but in addition to that, he attended a court sittings in Ontario at the Appeal Court, Ontario. He attended the Federal Court of Appeal in Ottawa. He attended sittings of the Alberta Court of Appeal in Edmonton and Calgary and he attended sittings of the British Columbia Court of Appeal. He attended meetings of a variety of Judges of Appeal and Supreme Court Judges around North America and, indeed, I can table for your benefit a copy of the program which he attended at Quebec.

Mr BEANLAND: Thank you.

Mr SMITH: So far as Mr Justice Davies is concerned, this year, he attended a conference titled Appellate Judges Seminar Series at Georgia. In addition to that, he attended the Supreme Court of Arizona. He visited the Washington Federal Judicial Centre and he also attended the Centre for State Courts in Williamsburg in Virginia. Likewise, I can table the conference papers.

So far as Mr Justice Pincus is concerned, I can record that he travelled to the United Kingdom where he attended a Cambridge International Symposium on Economic Crime. He attended meetings at the Law Commission in London and the Criminal Bar Association and he attended the Criminal Court of Appeal in London. Likewise, I can

table a copy of the details of the Cambridge conference for Mr Justice Pincus.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has now expired. We move across to the Government members.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer to the departmental Estimates for the Electoral Commission of Queensland, and perhaps the Electrical Commissioner may need to come to the table. First, on page 6 of the Estimates, there appears to be an overall decrease in funding for the ECC—about a quarter of a million dollars less this year. Considering the importance for the democratic process in Queensland of fair and equitable elections, how can you justify this decreased allocation for the Electoral Commission?

Mr WELLS: I will ask the Electoral Commissioner to answer. I think members are entitled to direct access to the Electoral Commissioner.

Mr O'SHEA: The difference in figures between the estimated actual for this financial year and the estimated Budget for 1994-95 results in the carry over, the amount of money that was carried over at the beginning of this current financial year and the amount we forecast as carrying over the next financial year. There was a large carry over at the start of the 1993-94 financial year relating to non-voter processing, the development of a new scanning system and the opening of a warehouse, which we did not have before. That money has largely been spent during this financial year. It is a once-up cost and there will not be that sort of funding in the future.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Specifically, the first item on that page 6 table, Education and Research, there seems to be some increase in that. Can you explain what some of that Education and Research allocation will do?

Mr O'SHEA: I think the main reason for that increase is that we did not spend what was allocated to us, to that field, during this current financial year. We actually carried forward a sum for the preparation of reports that are already in progress of some \$25,000. We are developing a short course through the Queensland University of Technology for electoral officials generally, and there is a sum of \$30,000 we are carrying forward to meet that cost.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I know that I appreciate and many of my colleagues appreciate the statistical data and material that comes from your Commission. Under which of those items does that budget for that support for us come from?

Mr O'SHEA: Under the Education and Research allocation.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Thank you. Minister, could I refer to page 12 of the Departmental Estimates about the State Reporting Bureau?

Mr WELLS: Excuse me, could I ask? Does anybody else want to ask the Electoral Commissioner—

Mr PURCELL: If I could, through the Chairman—I do not know whether he may rule it out of order or not—

The CHAIRMAN: We will soon find out.

Mr PURCELL: With the amount of people who are pouring into Queensland on a weekly basis, can you give us an indication whether there will be a redistribution after the next election?

Mr O'SHEA: The minimum period under the Act, I think, is seven and a half years, unless the number of electorates are out of quota by more than 10 per cent—the number of electorates being a third, I think it is 30—for more than three months. The indications are that there may be as many as 15 or 18 electorates by the end of that seven-year period—after the next election and before the next one—that will be over the 10 per cent. What we cannot forecast with any degree of accuracy is how many might drop out of the bottom because of the moving average across the whole 89 electorates. It could well be touch-and-go.

Mr PURCELL: So there may not be one? Is that the answer?

Mr O'SHEA: My personal view is that there will not be one, but my statistical people would argue that it is going to be lineball.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Purcell, for that question out of bipartisan interest.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: There is no interest like self-interest. Minister, I refer you to page 12, the item on the State Reporting Bureau. I presume the decrease in funds is related to increased efficiencies—or I would hope so, anyway—but I notice on page 15 of the departmental Budget document that the Bureau's workload has increased by 15.5 per cent. If this is so, can you comment or give some sort of guarantee that the decrease in funding will not, in fact, hamper the productivity of that bureau?

Mr WELLS: Yes, certainly. The decrease in funds is as a result of savings that have been achieved by greater efficiencies in this area. The use of machine rather than pen to take down the proceedings of both the courts—and also of this place—has led to time savings for operators, which has led to the efficiencies that we are now achieving.

A consequence of this is that we have had a 13.7 per cent increase in the workload between 1992-93, and a 22.8 per cent increase in productivity from the previous year. That has led to a saving of \$1.51m. In the subsequent financial year, there was an 18.5 per cent increase in workload, a 16.7 per cent increase in productivity, with a saving of \$1.15m. As a result of that increased productivity, the unit has been able to function much more effectively. There has also been a \$500,000 loan repaid, and that transferral of funds accounts for some of the change that you see.

Mr PURCELL: I refer the Minister to arts funding—I know that he would like to finish on a good note. Mrs Sheldon asked you about grants and peer assessment. You gave assurances that that "patently clear system" would continue. I would like to follow up on that issue. If that is to continue, will there be an update of the guidelines that require peer assessment for those people who are making

applications for grants and who are on that assessment panel?

Mr WELLS: As you indicated, this was a matter canvassed by the honourable member for Caloundra. However, before she had ever thought of the matter, I had undertaken a review of it. The system will be that anybody who has a personal application for arts funding through that process will not be eligible to sit on any of the peer assessment panels. Consequently, it will be even more transparently fair. It will mean that a number of very skilled people will be excluded from the panel, but those are the swings and roundabouts of the game.

Mr PURCELL: I have a follow-up question. On page 39, I note that there is an increase in the arts grants funding enabling greater Statewide touring by the State's major—

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates of expenditure for the Department of Justice and Attorney-General and the Office of the Arts has now expired. I thank any non-committee members of the Legislative Assembly who have taken part in this session of the Committee's hearing. I also place on record the Committee's thanks to the Minister and his officers for their attendance. The Committee's hearings are now adjourned and will resume at 3 p.m. Thank you.

The Committee adjourned at 1.58 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 2.55 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF POLICE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

In Attendance

Hon. P. Braddy, Minister for Police and Minister for Corrective Services
 Mr J. O'Sullivan, Commissioner of Police
 Mr W. Aldrich, Deputy Commissioner, Executive Director, Operations
 Mr R. Warry, Executive Director, Corporate Services
 Mr J. Just, Director, Finance Division
 Dr E. Hann, Director, Information Management Division
 Mr J. Hardie, Manager, Human Resource Management Branch
 Mr A. Stefan, Statistics Co-ordinator, Information Management Branch
 Chief Supt. D. Smith, Commissioner's Inspectorate
 Inspector R. Atkinson, Officer in Charge, PSMC Implementation Unit
 Mr M. Dunsmore, Cabinet Legislation and Liaison Officer, Office of the Commissioner
 Prof. Patrick Weller, Chairperson
 Mr Keith Hamburger, Director-General
 Mr Stan Macionis, Deputy Director-General
 Mr Ian Stewart, Assistant Deputy Director-General
 Mr Wayne Shennan, Director, Audit and Investigations
 Mr Gary Taylor, General Manager, Finance and Administration
 Mr Peter Rule, General Manager, Human Resources
 Mr Neil McAllister, Principal Adviser, Policy, Research and Analysis
 Mr Gavin Wright, General Manager, Operations Support Custodial

**Queensland Police Service
 Corrective Services Commission**

The CHAIRMAN: The hearings of Estimates Committee B are now resumed. The next item for consideration is the Queensland Police Service and the Corrective Services Commission. The time allotted is three hours—one and a half hours for the Police Service and one and a half hours for the Corrective Services Commission. The Committee will begin with the Queensland Police Service.

For the information of the new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning, and a double chime will sound the expiration of those time limits. As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions

will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from Government members, and so on in rotation. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they answer a question. That is for the benefit of Hansard.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Police Department to be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members.

Mr BRADDY: Mr Chairman, I understood there was time for an opening address.

The CHAIRMAN: You are correct. Time is made available for the Minister to make a short introductory address, and that time is two minutes.

Mr BRADDY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. The Government has allocated \$503m for the Police budget in 1994-95, which represents an increase of 5.6 per cent over last year's allocation. I propose to highlight some of the key budget initiatives. Within the capital works allocation, \$22.5m will be spent on new and existing police facilities, with the majority devoted to the construction and completion of replacement police stations and watch-houses.

Initiatives within the personal safety program area will see continuing emphasis on appropriate responses to incidents and closer cooperation with the public on programs such as the Women's Safety Project and the Domestic Violence Strategic Plan. Priorities within the Public Order and Safety Program include the enhancement of intelligence methods of identifying major criminal activity and closer cooperation with emergency services.

The Police Aboriginal Liaison Officer Scheme, currently in place in a number of regional centres, is to be expanded through the doubling of police officer numbers and the extension of the scheme into Brisbane and other areas of south-east Queensland.

In the area of property security, the Budget funds the continuation of successful schemes such as Neighbourhood Watch and the Safety Audit and Home Secure programs, as well as several important new initiatives. Chief among these is \$2.4m for the establishment of a 32-member Statewide Property Crime Squad to tackle break-and-enter offences and other property crimes. An amount of \$1.75m has been allocated for the extension of the successful Police Beat Shopfront Program. This expansion will result in a total of 30 permanent and relocatable shopfronts in shopping centres around the State by the end of the year. Funds have also been allocated for the extension of the successful Police Service/Criminal Justice Commission Police Beat Scheme trialled in Toowoomba.

Road safety program initiatives for 1994-95 include the streamlining of traffic offence notice data and an extension of the Random Road Watch Program already in operation in many areas. Some 150 regional and rural police stations not yet

connected to the police central computer network and the Transport Department's transport registration integrated licensing system will also be connected.

Within the Corporate Services Program, \$10m is allocated as part of a three-year program to develop an integrated information system to improve police access to data and cut the time spent on paperwork and data entry—a process estimated to be equivalent to employing an additional 400 police officers. The ongoing introduction of the computerised Crime Reporting Information System for Police into all eight police regions will continue in order to enable a more strategic allocation of police resources.

Restructuring of the service's education and training programs will continue to address recruitment and in-service needs, career development and Statewide access to training. There will be new emphasis on the training needs of middle and senior managers and the ongoing education of police officers in the implications of new and amended legislation.

In summary, this Budget further builds on the Government's law and order reforms by funding a Police Service more representative and responsive to the changing needs of the Queensland public.

Mr COOPER: I refer you to page 33 of Budget Paper No. 4, which refers to watch-houses. How many new and/or replacement watch-houses will be completed in 1994-95? Could you tell me where they are located, how much each will cost, and the design capacity of each one?

Mr BRADY: The new watch-house facilities will be constructed as components of Bundaberg, Cleveland, Doomadgee, Mackay, Moranbah and Warwick. Existing watch-houses are being progressively upgraded in conjunction with the minor works program. The Queensland Police Service is currently investigating demountable modular cell systems for new watch-houses to minimise self-injury points and provide better accommodation for prisoners.

The Cairns watch-house is new, but it has had problems because of the high temperatures experienced in the region. Therefore, \$550,000 has been allocated in 1994-95 for airconditioning of that watch-house. As you may be aware, the Kowanyama watch-house was destroyed by fire on 26 May. Options for a replacement facility are currently being investigated as a high priority. An amount of \$1m has provisionally been redirected from the Doomadgee project in 1994-95 to fund a replacement watch-house at Kowanyama.

Approximately \$4.2m—which is about 18.5 per cent of the Police capital works program—will be expended on the upgrading and replacement of watch-house facilities throughout the State. That activity includes the Cairns project that I have mentioned; \$1m at Kowanyama, which I have mentioned; \$400,000 at Warwick; \$1.85m for Bundaberg, Mackay, Wynnum, Moranbah and Mission Beach put together; and \$400,000 in the various watch-house upgrades.

Mr COOPER: Thank you for that information, but another part of that question was: how many of these new and replacement watch-houses will actually be completed this financial year, 1994-95?

Mr BRADY: We could obtain that data for you before we finish today. We would not need to flick it over to you until next week. We can get that for you before we finish.

Mr COOPER: On any of the questions that I have got, if there is any problem in supplying the information right now, I am happy to have it on Tuesday.

Mr BRADY: For questions such as that, I do not think there would be any problem getting the answer for you fairly quickly.

Mr COOPER: I want you to know that I am looking for information; if it takes till Tuesday next week, I am happy.

Mr BRADY: If I can also say, as a general rule, when the question requires technical data such as that, what we will try to do is get the information today, or if that is not done, we will provide it by Tuesday.

Mr COOPER: That is which watch-houses will be actually completed, but I also want to know the design capacity of each one.

Mr BRADY: You mean the number of prisoners or the number of cells?

Mr COOPER: Beds. What is the maximum design capacity of all watch-houses on a watch-house by watch-house basis, that is, all existing watch-houses as well as those that you have on the plan? I think you understand my point.

Mr BRADY: I see, not just the news ones?

Mr COOPER: The ones you are expecting—

Mr BRADY: Every watch-house in Queensland?

Mr COOPER: As well as those that are on the books for construction.

Mr BRADY: We might need till Tuesday to put all that together.

Mr COOPER: As I said, it is information that I want.

The CHAIRMAN: Now that we have the ground rules laid down as to how you want to conduct the hearings, we might go on to the next question.

Mr COOPER: What has been the average daily occupancy rate and the peak occupancy of all police watch-houses on a watch-house by watch-house basis since 1 July 1993?

Mr BRADY: Does this really relate to an expenditure item in the—

Mr COOPER: It does in the sense that all prisoners going through a watch-house do cost money.

Mr BRADY: Of course. What would you like to know?

Mr COOPER: The average daily occupancy rate and the peak occupancy rate of all police

watch-houses on a watch-house by watch-house basis since 1 July 1993. I am sure you could get those figures from the desk sergeants' records.

Mr BRADY: Obviously, I would need till Tuesday to answer that.

The CHAIRMAN: So that question is being placed on notice.

Mr COOPER: What would be the average daily cost of keeping a prisoner in a watch-house? Again, that is all budgetary.

Mr BRADY: We will get that for you.

Mr COOPER: Of all watch-house inmates since 1 July 1993, how many have been or are convicted prisoners awaiting transfer to a Corrective Services facility and how many prisoner days have been spent in watch-houses by these prisoners in that time?

Mr BRADY: This is fairly detailed statistical information.

Mr COOPER: I realise that. When I was writing the questions I knew very well that it would take some time to get this information.

Mr BRADY: You have decided to stop writing letters to me every day and do it here today?

Mr COOPER: That is right. What estimate does the Police Service have of the cost of holding convicted prisoners in watch-houses since 1 July 1993?

Mr BRADY: You mean per prisoner or total?

Mr COOPER: Total.

Mr BRADY: Since what date?

Mr COOPER: 1 July 1993.

Mr BRADY: We will do our best to supply that one. I have some doubt about that information.

Mr COOPER: Let me explain, because the records will show whether they are prisoners on remand, whether they are sentenced prisoners or whether they are—

Mr BRADY: But when you say the "costs", they are all mixed in together.

Mr COOPER: As we said before, you would know the average daily cost of keeping a prisoner in a watch-house, because it is much cheaper to keep them in a watch-house than it is to keep them in a gaol. We know that it is \$42,000 a year for a prisoner in a high-security prison.

Mr BRADY: To the extent that these figures—

The CHAIRMAN: May I just make a comment here, Mr Cooper. Perhaps if we are going to enter into these sorts of detailed, piece-by-piece questions, it may have been appropriate to provide these as written questions to the Minister in advance so he could have done something about it beforehand, but continue.

Mr BRADY: Again, I will do my best with the Police Service to give each question as precise an answer as possible; that is all I can say.

Mr COOPER: We are all on learning curves. As I said in the initial stages, if the answers come next week or as a result of a letter, as long as I get the answers, I am happy. What capital works allocations have been made for the Brisbane watch-house for 1994-95?

Mr BRADY: There are none. We can answer that one now.

Mr COOPER: You have outlined changes to some of the capital works programs for watch-houses. I received a letter today from a person who described herself as a distraught mother. In that letter, this woman said that she was horrified at what she called the medieval conditions her son had suffered in two weeks and is likely to suffer for some weeks yet. She says, "I pity those in custody". Do you believe that the measures that you have outlined so far about the reconstruction of watch-houses and so on will go some way towards helping people like that?

Mr BRADY: In relation to the period spent in the watch-house—of course, the Queensland Police Service operates under legislation which you yourself introduced, Mr Cooper, which enables people to be detained for 31 days, and the law is complied with in that regard.

In terms of what has occurred—I think it is important to put on the record that between 1988 and June of 1993, the number of prisoners held in our Queensland correctional centres actually fell, and this is relevant, of course, because it dictates to some extent how quickly people get out of the watch-house. That is a very important factor. They fell by 8 per cent. Having risen quite modestly by a few per cent a year up until 1988, between 1984 and 1988 they actually fell by 8 per cent between 1988 and June of 1993. Between June of 1993 and today there has been an increase in prisoners of 18 per cent. That has been the major factor in dictating the increased length of stay that people spend in watch-houses.

I believe that, in turn, there have been two factors in this. One factor is that the minor offenders are no longer being imprisoned as often as previously. Not as many people are going to prison for up to 12 months. All of the new changes in the law to encourage options other than imprisonment for fine defaulters and minor offenders are biting. The second factor is that there are significantly more police employed now than previously. There are some 1 500 more operational police, and they are effective.

So we have had this 18 per cent increase. That has been the situation. The Government has addressed this by several measures: the 318-cell expansion in existing prisons; the announcement of the 400-cell Woodford prison total rebuilding; and an initial batch of 150 doubling up prisoners in our existing prison and my announcement yesterday of another 112. But it is dictated primarily by the significant increase in prisoner intake. We are doing our best in those circumstances, and a lot of public money is being spent.

Mr COOPER: Mr Chairman, in deference to you and to demonstrate my bona fides, I have taken out a few technical questions, but since 1 July 1993 what Estimate is there of the cost of providing medical services for inmates, that is, as far as the Police budget is concerned?

Mr BRADY: Medical services for inmates of where?

Mr COOPER: Watch-houses.

Mr BRADY: All Queensland watch-houses?

Mr COOPER: Yes.

Mr BRADY: Again, we will do our best to get that information.

Mr COOPER: Again, it is a budgetary item against Police.

Mr BRADY: We will do our best.

Mr COOPER: I am a defender of the Police budget, and I want to make sure that the funds that are supposed to have been spent have been spent and that they have not gone to another area. Since 1 July, what cost has been carried by the Police Service to house convicted prisoners awaiting transfer to Corrective Services facilities? Again, that is another cost that comes against Police.

Mr BRADY: Again, we will do our best to supply that information.

Mr COOPER: I move to another watch-house, that is, the Southport Watch-house. As you know, I was there recently. I would like to know if there are any capital works to provide how many new beds at the Southport Watch-house and at what cost in 1994-95.

Mr BRADY: There is no money budgeted for expenditure on the Southport Watch-house in 1994-95.

Mr COOPER: So there are no cells or beds planned for the Southport Watch-house—no relief in sight in that area?

Mr BRADY: There is no expenditure.

Mr COOPER: Speaking again of watch-houses—I refer to the replacement of the district headquarters and watch-house in Mackay. The sum of \$2.7m is provided for design and documentation and commencement of construction in 1994-95. Works are scheduled to be completed in 1995-96 at a total cost of \$8.6m. When was this project first announced, and has it appeared in any other previous Budgets?

Mr BRADY: It certainly has been announced previously, and I understand that there was some budgeting for it in the planning in the early stages in the 1993-94 Budget. I add to that that \$600,000 was allocated for design and documentation in 1993-94. There were problems associated with the design of the project, including site configuration and heritage requirements, which delayed the design process. As I understand it, the money was not expended in total, but some \$200,000 of the budgeted amount was in fact spent.

Mr COOPER: In 1993-94?

Mr BRADY: In 1993-94.

Mr COOPER: What is the scheduled completion date for that watch-house?

Mr BRADY: It is the 1995-96 financial year. My information is that construction should commence in December of 1994—in or about December.

Mr COOPER: What is the planned capacity of that watch-house?

Mr BRADY: I would have to get that information for you—as to the cell capacity in the watch-house.

Mr COOPER: And the capacity of the existing watch-house as well. I am trying to make comparisons with the capacity of the existing watch-house.

Mr BRADY: All right. In view of the detail we are being asked for—which is fair enough—when will the Hansard record be available for us to check our facts against? This afternoon or tonight?

The CHAIRMAN: It is indicated to me that that should be available about two hours after the evidence is given.

Mr COOPER: In relation to similar watch-houses—there is the replacement district headquarters and watch-house in Bundaberg. The sum of \$4m is provided for commencement of construction in 1994-95. Works are scheduled to be completed in 1995-96 at a total cost of \$7m. Is this the first Budget in which this particular watch-house and headquarters have been included?

Mr BRADY: No. The sum of \$600,000 was allocated in 1992-93, and \$872,000 was allocated in 1993-94. I understand that problems in Q-Build delayed the design and documentation over that period. However, the schematic design has now been completed to the satisfaction of the Queensland Police Service, and \$4m is being allocated in this Budget for documentation and the actual commencement of construction.

Mr COOPER: I mention that fact because some of these items have been in previous Budgets two or three times. As you have indicated, quite often the funds have not been expended, and they keep being brought forward. I presume this one is now going to be completed?

Mr BRADY: As I indicated in my answer both in relation to this one and the Mackay one—the problems associated with both of them have been able to be remedied.

Mr COOPER: It is an opportunity for the people to feel assured that it will now become a reality. As to the replacement station at Doomadgee—the sum of \$1.3m is provided in 1994-95 for design, documentation and commencement of construction at a total cost of \$3.5m. I think this is another one that has been in at least three, maybe four, previous Budgets. I believe that Doomadgee has been in the last two, three or four Budgets, and still it is not constructed.

Mr BRADY: I indicated previously that, because of problems at Doomadgee, it may well be that the burning of the Kowanyama watch-house may take priority, and money for this one may be

diverted. There is a particular problem with Doomadgee in that the acquisition of the land has been delayed pending the resolution of Mabo legislation and claims relating to it. Unlike Bundaberg and Mackay, where the problems associated with those projects have been sorted out, unfortunately I cannot assure you that the same can be said about Doomadgee. The sum of \$1.25m has been allocated for the completion of design and documentation and the commencement of construction on the assumption that the acquisition will be finalised. We will have to have a look and see what happens with the Mabo situation and how that will be sorted out. As you know, it is an Aboriginal community.

Mr COOPER: I make the point that it has been in previous Budgets—I think this could be the fourth Budget. It seems strange that some of these figures are mentioned in various Budgets but the works do not actually get carried out.

Mr BRADY: The other two have been explained. This particular one has a particular problem. The Mabo situation is very new to Australia. That really has to be sorted out. It is of great relevance to a community such as Doomadgee. We will not be wasting the money. If we do not spend it at Doomadgee, we will spend it at Kowanyama.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from non-Government members in this time block has expired. We now move to Government members.

Mrs BIRD: I refer to page one of Budget Related Paper No. 2, which makes reference to growth funding providing for the employment of additional civilians to release police for operational duties. Can you tell me what impact the civilianisation component of the growth funding program will have?

Mr BRADY: In our \$40m law and order initiative—which, as we announced in the 1993-94 Budget, will be implemented over a period of three years—we announced a blueprint for civilianisation up to 30 June 1996. In general terms, the \$40m growth funding program provides for an increase of 100 sworn officers and 300 unsworn—that is, civilian staff—by 30 June 1996. A total of 125 unsworn staff either have been or will be employed to implement new initiatives, such as the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Police Liaison Officer scheme. Whilst they are counted in the unsworn staff, we are doubling those from 47 to 94. They are a very important new component in police operations. Whilst they are counted in the unsworn and civilianisation program, they are very significantly part of our operational process in the regional cities where they are currently operating. Of course, we are going to expand them. The rest of the unsworn staff will be sent to the computerised Crime Reporting Information System, rendering assistance to the police in the way that scheme operates.

I think you would all be familiar with the Police Beat Shopfront Program, which is something that the public support. As to the expansion of the police communications network—again, it is very important in a modern Police Service to have a good police communications network.

In this financial year, we will actually provide 79 public service positions and 32 wages staff in addition to those previously put together under the program. Of the 79 public service positions, 47 of those will release police positions for reallocation to operational duties. We put in 79 civilians and that will directly release 47 police officers to do police duties. All 32 wages staff whom I mentioned will release police positions for reallocation to operational duties. Also in 1994-95, the Government's crime prevention initiative will provide an additional 15 public service positions for the extension of Shopfronts, the four public service positions to the Property Crime Squad and the Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers to whom I referred before. It is very important to realise that our civilianisation program means that we can increase police operational staff not only by employing more police officers but also by civilianisation and releasing police officers.

Mrs BIRD: That brings me to my second question, which is from Budget Paper No. 2, page 1. The "Public Safety" section on page 3 advises that the number of sworn police officers for June 1993 is 6 377. How many sworn police officers do we have now? Could you please explain any variations? How many of these officers are actually operational?

Mr BRADY: The funded strength for 1994-95 in the Budget is 6 340 police officers. At the present time, as at 1 June this year, there were 6 211 sworn officers, so we have to increase it from 6 211 to 6 340 over the time of this Budget. I can tell the Committee that 62 recruits will be sworn in as constables next month and a further 100 before the end of 1994. With recruits who are already in training we will have another 160. It is also a matter of pride to the Police Service to be able to say that they now have approximately 90 per cent of their total police strength as operational police officers. This has risen from something in the order of 78 per cent about four or five years ago. There has been a deliberate effort, both through budgetary measures and administrative efforts within the Police Service, to achieve this. It is very important because in the end, if you are judging a Police Service on how efficient it is in its operations, it is just as important to not only count how many police you have on your strength but also how many are doing police work. If only half of them were doing police work, clearly it would be very inefficient. The civilianisation program is working. It is something that both the Commissioner and I take great interest in and we are determined to continue to make sure that we get police officers out there working as police officers.

Mr PURCELL: Naturally this is a follow on from that statement. In Budget Paper No.1 on page 14, the service has been given an increase of \$40m over three years to increase police funding to a level equivalent to the growth in the number of people coming into the State of Queensland. As you know, we are having fairly substantial growth at the moment. Will the operational areas of the service receive the full benefit of these funds with an increase in police numbers in line with that growth, or will a percentage of those funds be chewed up by administration costs and operational costs with regard to cars?

Mr BRADY: It certainly follows from the previous question. It is very important that the program be adhered to, because in order to achieve some of the aims that we have in the way that the Police Service is conducted, we have to make sure that this \$40m growth program is properly spent. Thirteen projects have been programmed under the growth funding, all related to operational policing. The major areas include the Aboriginal Police Liaison Officers who have been, as I say, a great success in the major regional cities of Cairns, Rockhampton, Townsville and Mount Isa and, therefore, certainly warrant expansion to Brisbane and south-east Queensland—Ipswich and places that we that we intend to expand to under this Budget.

In relation to the CRISP program, which is a technical program of recording and communicating police data, in order to properly service that you need to use some of that growth funding. That will release police to do a lot more policing work and spend far less time recording data manually or trying to obtain data to go about their police work. There will be civilianisation of communications, which again will be important to release trained police officers from doing communications work. We were able to facilitate detective training skill by funding under this program.

We are a very large State and we need to have highly trained detectives and police operatives of that nature right throughout the State in relation to the investigation of crime and major crime, which is certainly not confined to the south-east corner, although that is the major area of concern. Then, of course, there is staffing for technical support areas as well. The later years of the growth funding will see funds provided for—as well as those areas to which I have referred—in-service training, remote area equipment and communication equipment. The police are really planning well in the way that they are using this \$40m growth funding and the increase of 400 in the police staff to get the maximum benefit and to enable them to put trained police officers into police work and technically qualified and efficient civilians into areas where they should be working.

Mr PURCELL: The same page in Budget Paper No. 1 refers to the Property Squad—

". . . to target break and enter offences and vehicle theft."

Will the police be transferred from other areas to man those squads or will they be picked up from your increases?

Mr BRADY: The Property Crime Squad is a very important innovation in this year's Budget. It is set up to target break and enter offences and vehicle theft—areas of great concern right throughout Queensland and Australia, and to the great concern and annoyance to the public. The police will not be transferred from other squads to do this work. The Property Crime Squad will be in addition to current police strength. The Budget for the Property Crime Squad allows for four additional public service positions and 28 sworn police officers. All will be additional to the current Queensland Police Service. They will target offenders in locations where stolen property is sold. They will establish and collate an

intelligence database. Membership of the squad will include an intelligence analyst to work with the unit to identify crime trends and hot spots. They will be in a position to enforce legislation in relation to pawnbrokers and second-hand dealers.

What they will generally be able to do is—they will not be doing all the investigation by any means in relation to breaking and entering offences and vehicle thefts in Queensland—they are additional experts to the people who are working as detectives and police officers right throughout the State. So once they are able to target a particular hot spot, they will zoom in on that particular area, including travelling to and working in the area. For example, if there was a significant outbreak in vehicle theft or break and entering in Cairns, they will go and assist the police in Cairns not only with data and intelligence, but they will be actually on the spot. They will have people who will be working as undercover police officers as part of the squad, who will be able to go into an area, of course, and not be known to the locals as police officers. All of them will be there, or employed specifically, for this Property Crime Squad.

Although there are other crimes that are more vicious and worrying to the community, such as murder and sexual assault, the level of property crime in modern society is such that we think that this particular squad is highly justified and justifies doing it not by pulling people out of existing squads and existing police stations but by expanding the Police Service specifically to do it. They will also be engaged in educating regional police better in relation to their roles and responsibilities regarding property offences.

Mr PURCELL: That is good news for people out my way. Can I just wrap up a question about prisoners that was asked previously? You said that there was an increase in the prison numbers over the last 18 months. Could I take it from that, then, that we have a better clean-up rate, that is, if we are getting more prisoners, the clean-up rate must be improving?

Mr BRADY: That is certainly true. I think the fact that we have now extra police in significant numbers—we believe the figures would now be in the order of 1 500 more operational police than there were four or five years ago—and the enormous increase in prisoners has occurred over the last 10 months, something in the order of 30 to 34 a month, each month; they are climbing over what was there before—there is no doubt that the police are working very effectively and very efficiently. I think that that is going to create great interest not only for the police but also for the public as to what will occur when they get this Property Crime Squad as well, particularly with the technical ability now available through this year's Budget—through data recording and the obtaining of information process. You will certainly see a continuation in the improvement in some areas where the crime rate is high in our modern society, and where the clear-up rates are starting to improve in various regions across Queensland. I think that will continue.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: In Budget Paper No. 2 relating to information technology, it states that this Budget allocates about \$30m for information technology. A couple of years ago, there was about \$10m spent—the Apple computers were bought and there was another \$5m in backup. That is about \$45m of taxpayers' money that has gone to the Police Service in information technology. What benefits are we seeing from that and how are you going to be spending that money as part of the police work?

Mr BRADY: Right. In relation to the \$45m that is being expended, CRISP, which is the data processing, will be on line pretty well throughout Queensland by the end of this year. It enables people to record and obtain data more quickly. I think that it might be a good idea if the Commissioner answers this question because as a person of experience in relation to working in the field, he would be able to give you an even better indication of just how this will work than I can.

Mr O'SULLIVAN: The Crime Reporting System will enable us to establish 1 800 Apple computers throughout the State in every police station. The Crime Reporting System is state-of-the-art technology. Whereas our police officers spend up to two hours per shift compiling documentation, crime reports and so on, we anticipate that there will be a saving of approximately two hours per shift because they will place the information on the database at the scene of the crime by way of telephone or radio. So there will be a tremendous number of man-hours saved and those hours, of course, will result in the police officers themselves being on the street and a visible police presence for a greater period of time than is the case at present.

The new network will be connected to all of the police stations throughout Queensland, and it will enable police officers to access information such as vehicles of interest, criminal histories and so forth, instantly. That is not the case now. We believe that the benefits to the community, of course, will result in a far greater apprehension of criminals and offenders because of the greater police presence, the access to intelligence and the immediate access to the information required by police officers to act immediately. There will be, as I said, an improved clear-up rate. We anticipate a reduced incidence of crime. That has occurred where the reporting system is in place now. There will be more police officers seen publicly actively engaged in operational police duties. There will be less administrative work, more rapid identification of wanted persons and wanted vehicles and improved information sharing throughout the State. Of course, all of those information systems, including our intelligence system, will be available on that Crime Reporting System.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Referring to the Estimates document, page 3, the summary of programs on personal safety and property security, there seems to be a number of initiatives introduced in this Budget. I have heard it said that some people in the rural communities believe that this concentration is only for the metropolitan or the south-east corner, yet there are personal safety

needs for people throughout regional and remote Queensland. What allocation has been made in your budget to cater for the rural and remote areas of Queensland?

Mr BRADY: Under this budget—

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, the time has passed. We will now move on to the non-Government members.

Mr COOPER: I have just a couple of questions to wrap up on those capital works that we were on about before. I just remind you, Minister, that you made statements in your opening remarks relative to the Capital Works Program and how that \$22.5m will be spent. I just have to remind you, and I know that the Committee will be interested as well, that a capital works program in the last four years has not been met yet. So we are all keeping an eye on that to make sure it happens. We referred before to the Brisbane watch-house, and in answer to my question you indicated that you do not intend to spend any money for 1994-95. So does that mean that you consider the conditions at Brisbane watch-house are satisfactory to the point that no further capital works are necessary, at least in the foreseeable future?

Mr BRADY: In relation to the Brisbane watch-house, as a Government, two things should be said: firstly, we take advice from the Queensland Police Service in relation to priorities. There is no recommendation for priority spending in the Brisbane watch-house that we have received, and I can assure you that we certainly have not rejected advice by the Queensland Police Service in relation to that. What the Queensland Police Service is anxious to see is what I am anxious to see, and that is that the problems relating to the Brisbane watch-house are fixed by people staying there for a short period of time.

The major problem with the Brisbane watch-house is that it is designed, as all watch-houses are, for very short periods of stay—days rather than weeks. The Government has acknowledged that with the extraordinary growth in prisoner numbers over the last 10 months, we are dissatisfied with the numbers of people who are housed in the Brisbane watch-house. We are addressing that by very, very expensive measures of building the 318 cells in existing prisons and a complete rebuilding of Woodford to cater for 400, which will make it the biggest prison in the State. Mr Cooper, that is equivalent to building three prisons the size of Borallon.

Mr COOPER: We will deal with Corrective Services later.

The CHAIRMAN: I have already had to say this once today. I will not tolerate people interrupting the answers from the Minister or witnesses. Mr Cooper, you will have plenty of time after the Minister has finished his answer to either pose a new question or pass a comment and pose a question.

Mr BRADY: While it is a matter in relation to prisons, it very much relates to the need to release pressure, particularly in the south-east Queensland and in the Brisbane watch-houses. You know about the other short-term measures that we have taken

also to address that problem. However, it is not as though the Brisbane watch-house is so wonderful that it does not need any money spent on it at all. In fact, the draft capital works program recommendation from the Queensland Police Service—recommended by it, not dictated by the Government—is that we should spend \$1.5m there, spread over two financial years, 1996-97 and 1997-98. There is \$750,000 for each of those two years under the draft capital works program.

Mr COOPER: You touched before on the additional \$40m growth funding over the next three years. You provided me with an answer on 23 November last that this funding would be divided in the following way: 1993-94, \$6.5m; 1994-95, \$13.1m; and 1995-96, \$19.9. That a total of \$39.5m. Is that funding formula still in place?

Mr BRADY: Yes.

Mr COOPER: You might like to take this question on notice. How was the 1993-94 allocation of \$6.5m spent, and how will the 1994-95 allocation of \$13.1m be spent?

Mr BRADY: Bear with me; I will see whether I can give you those figures immediately. I think it would be best to give you the information later; it is in a form that would be a bit difficult to dissect.

Mr COOPER: Certainly.

Mr BRADY: We have to amalgamate certain data.

Mr COOPER: You spoke about police numbers before. I think you said that, by the end of the 1994-95 Budget, the number of sworn police officers will be 6 340. I refer to page 3 of Budget Related Paper No. 2. That is really a reduction compared with the June 1993 levels. You had 6 377 listed there. That means that you would go to 6 340 by June 1995. That is 37 fewer. Would you like to comment on that to clarify it.

Mr BRADY: I gave the information before, but I will give it again. Actual police numbers at any one time are dictated not only by the Budget funded strength but also by the resignation rate in relation to any particular period. For several years now, we have had a very low resignation rate—no doubt to do with several factors. For one period of time, the actual budgeted funded strength was exceeded by the number of people employed. However, that situation has changed. Now we have an estimated separation rate this financial year of 4.1 per cent—people who will be leaving the service. You have to make estimates and guesses from time to time as to how that is going.

The predicted strength by 30 June 1995, which will take us into the end of this financial year, will be something of the order of 6 257, with 6 340 positions funded. But a few days later, 140 police officers that we intend to recruit will be sworn in in July 1995. This year, we will have four graduations. We anticipate that we will have 60 police officers sworn in in July, another 18 in September, 82 in December, and 140 in April. In the financial year about to commence, we anticipate swearing in another 300 police. In the future, we will continue to do that. There will probably be another 380 in the year after.

This represents an attempt to keep actual strength in accordance with funded strength.

Mr COOPER: We will catch up with all of those numbers as we go through *Hansard* later. It is a bit confusing whether the numbers are going up or down. Page 279 of Budget Paper No. 3 states—

"Reductions in the time spent on paperwork and data entry, and greater efficiencies . . . should result in police having considerably more time for operational duties—estimated to be the equivalent of about 400 full time police officers."

What criteria are used to arrive at that figure of 400? It used the words "estimated to be the equivalent". It stated that time savings on paperwork and data entry and so on would lead to greater efficiencies equal to having 400 extra officers.

Mr BRADY: The information in relation to this very important initiative makes sense. It is amazing how much police operational time you can save and put back into operations by proper use of data and data equipment. If police save only one hour of work for each of the 310 000 offences recorded each year, there will be a time saving from that of the equivalent of 400 full-time police officers. That is a fairly modest sort of saving. The amount of time currently lost to police in getting off the street and sitting in offices searching and recording data is quite extensive. It eats up a lot of their time. What we need—and what we keep seeking—is to get police doing police work, and doing it as efficiently as possible.

I repeat: if in each of the 310 000 offences alone you save one hour, you would achieve that target. I am informed that the time saved in being able to locate and analyse information more quickly is a minimum of 30 minutes per offence. In many instances, it would be more than that.

That is only the aspect of locating information and analysing it. You have to also record the offence. The time taken in relation to that, we believe, by using CRISP will be seven minutes. At the present time, recording an offence takes about 45 minutes. So we will save 38 minutes. We will save 38 minutes on the time taken to get information out of the system.

From those two pieces of data alone, it can be seen that the very expensive CRISP system is well worth the funding devoted to it. Police will be able to get in, get the information, get out, arrest the offenders, record the offence and get back and do their work. It will save the equivalent of the police hours that we are talking about.

Mr COOPER: I want to refer to what might be called the foot soldiers. Between 30 June 1992 and 30 June 1993, the total number of police officers at constable and senior constable rank fell by 137 from 4 326 to 4 189. What are the predicted totals of these ranks as at 30 June 1994 and 30 June 1995?

Mr BRADY: We do not have a breakdown by rank structure. We would have to get that for you.

Mr COOPER: I hope you understand what I am driving at there. I am talking about those police

officers who are office bound and those who are operational on the street.

Mr BRADY: I am assured that we can get that information. It is probably a little old fashioned to think that the constables and the senior constables are the only ones doing the work.

Mr COOPER: I know.

Mr BRADY: I know that you do not mean that absolutely. With the change to our drive for operational policing, there are a few sergeants who were very comfortable sitting behind desks who now are perhaps not so comfortable, but they are really earning their money. There are presently many more sergeants—and there will be even more in the future—out there doing police work with their constables and senior constables than there were before. That is the only way we can maintain our operational policing figure of 90 per cent and improve on it. The days of a person being able to relax in the comfort of the office once they had reached the rank of sergeant are certainly no longer true—if ever that were true to any extent.

Mr COOPER: What was the on-the-beat—that is, the operational police—overtime budget in 1993-94? Could I also have the estimates for 1994-95? As we all know, Saturday and Sunday are the prime crime times. That is a very difficult period. Because of budgetary factors, police are often not able to be out there in numbers on the weekend to the same extent that they are during the week. Would you please give me the overtime figure for last year and the estimate for 1994-95?

Mr BRADY: Yes. You would appreciate that we do not have those figures and that each region makes its own decision. It must also be borne in mind that major crime activity during certain periods can change the figures significantly, so they are only estimates. The other factor is that we are changing the method of pay, which will also significantly change the figures. The amount of overtime available will not be as important in the coming financial year as it has been in the past. In future, many operational police will be rostered at times that suit us and that are more advantageous to the public. Certainly, we can give you the figures for the past and an estimate for the future. However, you will have to bear in mind that the method of paying operational police officers in 24-hour stations will be changed significantly so that we will be achieving greater efficiency from them. Those changes mean that police will be working hours that at present attract overtime but that in the future will not, because it will be part of their base pay.

Mr COOPER: That was going to be one of my questions. I realise that the negotiations in relation to the flexible working week—any five days in seven—have been ongoing for a couple of years now. From your answer, I gather that those negotiations are proceeding reasonably well. I believe that those sorts of rostering arrangements are absolutely vital in order to combat the prime crime time period on the weekends. I will be monitoring those negotiations with interest.

Mr BRADY: Could I just comment on that? Those negotiations in fact started about nine months ago. As you would appreciate, they are protracted and complex. The proposal is that police officers will give up penalty rates and have it as part of their base pay. Clearly, they and their union have a significant interest in that outcome. I am pleased to inform the Committee that the police who are likely to be affected by that proposal have given in-principle support to it. They are as aware as anyone that the Thursday night to Sunday morning syndrome in criminal behaviour is very real. That is when we need a lot of police out there. If there is a hell of a lot happening on Friday night, we do not need them falling over each other on Tuesday morning when there is not a lot happening. The police are aware of that, and they are supportive of it. Negotiations have been ongoing for only nine months. They have been very productive and very positive. I am very, very confident that we will achieve a satisfactory outcome in the early part of the financial year that is about to commence.

Mr COOPER: I am pleased to hear it. I turn now to the costs of local authority rates and other statutory authority charges in the Police Service budget. In the last couple of years, the Police Service has had to take these costs on board. I do not disagree with that. The costs need to be shown, and they are reflected in the budget, but the Police Budget has to meet those costs. In order to see how those charges affect the Police Budget, could I have the local authority rates and the statutory charges on a region-by-region basis?

Mr BRADY: We will take that on board and we will get that to you.

Mr COOPER: I mentioned earlier the operational overtime budget for 1993-94. You have said that that will be superseded. However, I would still like to have those figures, and I would like them also to be on a region-by-region basis.

Mr BRADY: Yes. We are not abolishing overtime in the Police Service. I referred earlier to the new way of paying certain police officers. About half of the police officers in the State will fall into that category, but the other half will not fall into that category. There will still be the necessity to pay overtime to the latter group of officers. For example, detectives working on a case will not be brought under the new scheme. If they have to work overtime, they will be paid overtime, as will specialist squads and a whole lot of other people. With general duties officers who work in the 24-hour stations, we can predict that we will need more of them in the Valley or wherever it might be on a Friday night rather than on a Friday morning, when there is not so much activity going on. We will get back to you on the overtime, and I note that you want it on a region-by-region basis.

Mr COOPER: For 1993-94 and 1994-95.

The CHAIRMAN: Time has expired.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Could I go back to the question that you did not have time to answer before relating to the policing initiatives in rural and remote communities. As you said, the focus has been to a

large extent on Brisbane and the south-east corner, but what is there for the remote areas of Queensland?

Mr BRADY: In relation to the rural areas, in excess of \$23m in the budget will be spent on State Crime Operations Command, which targets major organised crime right through the State. It by no means has only a Brisbane or south-east Queensland focus. State Crime Operations Command frequently targets operations in police regions outside the south-east corner. The establishment of the Asian Crime Squad and the Property Crime Squad will impact on crimes committed through the State. All programs conducted through the Crime Prevention, Policing Policy and Strategy Branch are intended to address the threat of crime in both rural and urban areas. Rural Watch is now well and truly operative. That program is promoted and maintained throughout rural areas. Each police region conducts specific projects designed to address the needs of their particular communities.

Following recent crime prevention courses for police, the need was identified for specific information and materials to be developed which address rural security and safety issues. The police themselves identified that as a need. Although much of the information required is available, it was considered by rural police and community members to be targeting only urban communities, and they asked for that information to be made available to them more readily. With the implementation of the CRISP system, which has already been mentioned several times, police will be able to identify and target specific crime trends within rural communities and will have access to that data.

We will also be sending home and business security displays to all parts of the State. In fact, staff from the Crime Prevention Squad spend more time educating local police and community members and presenting the displays in rural areas than they do in urban areas. In terms of police and community education for home and business security, the bias, if any, is in favour of the rural areas, which receive a disproportionate amount of the time and resources available. That is always well received by those people. That is probably one of the reasons why they get more than a fair go in that regard.

Mrs BIRD: I refer you to the departmental Estimates document at page 19, I think it is. Corporate Services provides a financial service to support police. With regionalisation, what responsibility for financial management has been devolved to that level, and what benefits have there been to the Queensland Police Service?

Mr BRADY: In relation to the regional Budgets, the situation should be clearly understood by the Committee and the community that they are allocated on a global basis. These include: population, police strength, area of region, crime rates and clear up rates, etc., so every effort is made to make sure that it is on an equitable basis. The Corporate Services Division, therefore, must make sure that the data it uses is accurate. When that is done, the Assistant Commissioners have the full responsibility to allocate their budget within the

region on local needs. The Commissioner and the Service has attempted to devolve as much responsibility as possible to the regions to ensure that the decisions are made there. However, a number of systems are in place to ensure that regions manage their funds in a professional way. These systems include: biannual presentations to the Police Board of Management; monthly reporting on performance; quarterly position assessments; local procedures, including Budget committees; and on-line access to financial data. So, while all regions are required to manage their funds and use their own responsibility, the system is designed by Corporate Services as a financial service to support the police and the community and have this ability to follow through and give advice and, where necessary, make changes to decisions that are made at a local and a regional level.

Mrs BIRD: On Budget Paper No. 3 again, page 273, there is reference to police shopfronts. The shopfronts are being extended at a cost of \$1.75m. This appears to me to be a fairly expensive public relations exercise. Are they successful enough to justify this sort of expenditure?

Mr BRADY: Yes. Whilst it is true that you could say that the shop front program does have some public relations benefits to it, it is not designed as a public relations exercise; it is designed as an operational exercise which, as a bonus, picks up public relations benefits. A lot of good policing does that. For example, if police investigate a car stealing and they keep the victim informed as to the progress of their investigation, that is a public relations exercise, too, but the primary thing is the investigation. Police shopfronts have a similar public relations effect. Police shopfronts put police right in the path of where the people are. Those members of the Committee who think about modern Queensland life know how important shopping centres are, particularly in the regional cities such as Mackay, Cairns, Rockhampton and some of the outer Brisbane suburbs where people gather in their thousands in air-conditioned shopping centres to do their business. Crime still occurs in these sorts of places. Today, it is very important that police are where the people are. That is why we are expanding this program.

We have had an evaluation done not only by ourselves, but also by the Queensland University of Technology in relation to this. It is a fact that women particularly say that they would rather shop at a place where there are police in close proximity, such as in a shopping centre where the car parks are dark, because they feel safer. There has been a reduction of car thefts from shopping centres where the police shopfronts are, and people go to them to receive all sorts of information from police.

A lot of information on domestic violence is sought by women particularly shopping in the shopping centres. If you go and ask police officers who work in the suburban stations about the number of inquiries they receive, they often say that no-one knocks on their door all day or that they might get one or two inquiries. However, where police are patrolling shopping centres, there are a lot of request

for information which is vital to a person who might be a victim or a potential victim.

It is the old story—shopping centres are very much part of the late twentieth century Queensland lifestyle and it is very important that the police be there. By the police being there, they reduce crime, they give information and they give a feeling of security. One thing that is very clear about how successful they are is that shopping centre managers are falling over themselves now to get us to establish a police shopfront in their shopping centres. They cannot get one there quickly enough because they know that their customers and the boutique and specialist shop people who spend a lot of their time in shopping centres very much appreciate that it really is an important part of modern life in Queensland and how successful it is.

Mr PURCELL: I would like to follow up on one of Mr Cooper's questions on capital works. I notice on page 36 of Budget Paper No. 4 that a little bit over \$22m will be spent on capital works. How do you arrive at where those expenditures will occur, and are they given any priority? I have a very ageing police station in my electorate and I would like to know how the priorities are allocated?

Mr BRADY: I will just speak very briefly. The priorities for capital works under our administration and under my ministerial responsibility are very much a matter for the police themselves. I am not at all heavy handed in relation to that. I think we have a very efficient police administration now in Queensland, so the general principles are that they draw it up and they come to the Government for approval and we basically go along with them. Perhaps I will ask Mr Warry, Executive Director of the Queensland Police Service, to give a more detailed explanation of that.

Mr PURCELL: I will just let you know that my electorate is Bulimba.

Mr WARRY: My name is Richard Symes Warry, Executive Director, Corporate Services. The Capital Works Program is based on a five-year rolling program and each year it is rolled forward. Generally, the new projects are determined from a pool of known needs and they filter through basically a four-year planning process. However, we do have a capacity to address non-program projects which essentially are late initiatives or emergencies or the opportunities that might present themselves as a result of changed circumstances or the market. The broad influences that impact on those priorities are essentially the operational needs, the pressures generated by the growth of community and the movement of population and some enabling factors such as the availability of land, various legislative requirements and our ability to design and construct within a given Budget and the resources we have available.

For 1994-95, for example, the priorities were based on previous planning and they took advantage of some opportunities that did present themselves to meet particular needs that emerged. If I could just categorise some of the projects in 1994-95 under those headings—the previously planned projects included some that have already been mentioned

here today, such as Bundaberg and Mackay in which there were particular design difficulties that attenuated that process. They also included places like Moranbah and Wynnum, where you have a combination of growth pressure, in the first instance, and a need to replace an older facility in the second. Again, as indicated previously, we have got a potential emergency project on our books now following the fire at Kowanyama. It is likely that that will become a significant project in 1994-95.

Finally, there are the opportunity projects. Two examples of that would be the ability to acquire the replacement station for Surfers Paradise, because of the state of the real estate market, and the ability to acquire the West End complex for storage. We were able to take advantage of those opportunities.

Mr PURCELL: According to your departmental Estimates, on page 13 you make provision for your Property Crime Squad, your Police Beat Shopfront Program, and so forth. There is a fair bit of public disorder—and there has been—in public places. I do not think I need to remind you of some of those public siege-type demonstrations that have been going on. Is there any provision in this Budget to set up something to take care of those types of situations? Do you see that they need special attention?

Mr BRADY: Yes. Certainly there is a need in modern policing to have specialist squads. We talked earlier about the new Property Crime Squad. Where large groups of villains get together and impose on people—whether it be destructive riots arising out of some cause, or smaller gangs getting together to rob and assault people—you must have that capacity. So we have two very important specialist squads, namely, the Public Safety Response Team and the Special Emergency Response Team.

At present, the Public Safety Response Team is a part-time squad of some 56 members drawn from the Metropolitan South and Metropolitan North regions and the Operations Support Command. However, from 1 July—the beginning of this financial year—there will be a full-time Public Safety Response Team of 27 members. This full-time squad will continue to be supplemented by part-time personnel if part-time people are required.

The Public Safety Response Team is used for conventional crowd control, control of violent crowd disorder, security at the court appearances of high-risk prisoners, and specialised patrols to identify trouble spots. I think the member for Bulimba would be familiar with one of those, being not that far away across the river from Fortitude Valley, where the squad was used. We make no apology for that. We have been attacked by some people, particularly in the civil liberties area, for putting in specialist squads.

One thing that I was assured of by the Commissioner, and which has turned out to be wholly accurate in practice, is that even this part-time squad are very disciplined police officers. They are not thugs in uniforms; they are very disciplined, well-controlled, well-trained police officers. Where they have been called upon to go in to work, they have worked efficiently and well. To my knowledge, there

has been no occasion of any complaint at all about the behaviour of the Public Safety Response Team. Therefore, the ability that we are now demonstrating to move from a part-time squad to a full-time squad will be very important.

The SERT team also receives a fair bit of publicity on occasions. It commenced operations on a Statewide basis in 1992 with a major squad of 35 full-time personnel in Brisbane and smaller squads in Cairns, Townsville and Rockhampton. It is available for the even more dangerous situations of terrorist incidents, and it has a capacity where there is potential violence of a very violent nature indeed. Those squads are very important to our future.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I ask a question on education and training, and I refer to the Estimates on page 21—the top table. The Fitzgerald report highlighted previous inadequacies and faults in training and development of police officers. Since then, the PSMC and CJC reports have addressed this issue to some degree. What will the proposed expenditure on education and training in this Budget do, and what are you aiming your training at?

Mr BRADY: The education and training of modern police officers is very important. We have had to make some significant changes in recent times. This has been assisted, of course, by the change in the nature of the personnel who are joining the Queensland Police Service. We now have the capacity to recruit people who are mostly either university graduates or have significant tertiary experience. They are young people. I think the average age of recruits is now about 24 years. They are young people who are fit young men and women who also have a reasonably good tertiary or higher education. Our education and training program takes that into account these days.

By being able to save some money on not having to continue with the Fitzgerald suggestion of sending them all to university while they are employed, we are able to put a lot more of our effort and resources into in-service education. Two critically important objectives will therefore be pursued in this financial year. In continuing with the adequate training for recruits in relation to law and police procedure, which we adjudged had fallen to some extent, we will develop a range of in-service professional development programs for our existing police officers. That will be very important over the next couple of years.

The CHAIRMAN: By my reckoning, we have about 10 minutes left in this timeslot. Under Sessional Orders, because it is less than a 40-minute period, we will divide the remaining time approximately equally between the Government members and non-Government members. I now turn to the non-Government members of the Committee to provide the next question.

Miss SIMPSON: I seek leave of the Chair to ask questions.

The CHAIRMAN: Leave is granted.

Miss SIMPSON: Statistics two years ago showed that about 40 per cent of crimes against property were committed by children. How many

Juvenile Aid Bureau officers for 1994-95 will there be out of what total number of operational police?

Mr BRADY: We will have to take that on notice and get that information to you.

Miss SIMPSON: Probably in line with that is a supplementary question: if I could also have details of JAB officers per district as well?

Mr BRADY: Per police district?

Miss SIMPSON: Per police district, and also the Queensland total out of operational police. Following on from that—do you have any up-to-date statistics on the breakdown of juvenile crime in various categories of crime as a percentage of the total offences?

Mr BRADY: If you are talking about breaking and entering—you would like to know if we have statistics that show how many of those were committed by juveniles as distinct from adults?

Miss SIMPSON: Yes, offences against property, and the other categories of offences. I understand that, a couple of years ago, there were some statistics available; I have not been able to find them. And as it relates to staffing levels.

Mr BRADY: Unfortunately, neither the Police Service nor the ABS figures would be of any help there. They are not recorded.

Miss SIMPSON: I ask that question because juvenile crime is obviously an area of concern—as if affects staffing levels in the JAB. That is why that issue would concern me. Are there any moves to perhaps improve that gathering of statistics?

Mr BRADY: No. Although Juvenile Aid Bureau officers are there to be used obviously for people who are suspected of committing crimes and who are juveniles, breaking and entering and property offences are investigated by CI Branch officers and general duties officers as well. It is only when it is known at the outset that the villains are juveniles that officers from the Juvenile Aid Bureau would automatically attend. One encouraging thing that I have been informed is that the CRISP System that we have been talking about—the criminal recording system—will enable us to get a lot more data in relation to that. You are right. If necessary—if it demonstrated a need to send more juvenile aid officers to a particular area or across the State, that will be possible with the new data that will be recorded. I will take it on notice in that regard.

Miss SIMPSON: In relation to the Budgets for administering the regional offices, could I ask you on notice to provide a breakdown of what it costs to run the regional offices—a detailed Budget for all regions in Queensland.

Mr BRADY: I might be able to assist you with some of that information.

Miss SIMPSON: I would be seeking information as to what it costs for the staff in those regional offices, what it costs for their actual Budgets—a Budget breakdown—the cost of rental, that kind of thing.

Mr BRADY: We can give you some pretty

good information. We have a breakdown here. I will ask Mr Warry to answer that question.

MR WARRY: Rather than attempt to read you the three tables that I have here, what we do have is the cost of the regional officers by each office, by salary and related costs, by administration, the rental of premises and the number of police and public servants. I imagine that we would table this.

Miss SIMPSON: Thank you. That would be acceptable.

Mr COOPER: On page 279 of Budget Paper No. 3, this appears—

"A training program will commence in September 1994 for all police officers, based on the changes to the Criminal Code, the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act, and the Summary Offences Act and other minor Acts."

What is meant by "all police officers"? Is it everyone who is in the force and if so, or for whoever it is, what Budget has been allocated for that training program? What time factors are involved, given that we are all fully aware of the crime rate and the need for visible operational police to be on the beat? How long will that training course take? Will it be a matter of weeks or months and how many police officers is it going to involve?

Mr BRADY: We will take it on notice. You will get an answer.

Mrs BIRD: I have two questions in relation to Budget Paper No. 3 at page 275, but I am only allowed one. One is parochial and one is non-parochial. I want you to be really clear that this is the non-parochial one. The Budget appears to make no provision for policing in respect of prostitution. What action is being taken to address these concerns?

Mr BRADY: I am delighted that you asked your non-parochial question first. In the last financial year, we established a Special Operations Team in relation to organised prostitution. This squad will continue in the course of the current year. The Special Operations Team has conducted 16 operations and provided investigative assistance with a further seven operations by regional police since its inception early in 1993. Further operations are currently under way along the full length of the Queensland coast—it is certainly not confined to Brisbane or the Gold Coast. The total number of charges laid by officers from the Special Operations Team would be of interest to you. There have been 322 charges laid, of which 50 per cent or slightly less than 50 per cent relate to prostitution alleged in relation to being found on premises. The next biggest category was participation in the provision of prostitution—some 90 charges have been laid in relation to that. Following these charges, property to the value of \$150,000 has been forfeited to the Queensland Government as a result of convictions in relation to this. A further approximately \$1.5m is presently or shortly to be subject to application by the Crown as a result of convictions in relation to this. It can be seen that by using modern methods and our ability in our legislation to obtain forfeiture of assets and funds, we hope to shortly be in

possession of a further \$1.5m. We are continuing to target organised prostitution and associations between organised prostitution and organised crime. Not all of these efforts will be at the expense of the taxpayer and the Queensland Government and the Queensland Police Service. Some of it will now be able to be financed by forfeiture of funds and assets obtained in the course of convictions.

Mr T.B. SULLIVAN: It is my colleague's turn really, but he is going to let me jump in if I can give you a question on notice. I believe that the drug scene is a cause of a lot of crime. Could you provide on notice a brief statement about the programs to counter the drug scene and drug trade in Queensland?

Mr BRADY: You want that on notice?

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: On notice, please.

Mr PURCELL: This question refers to Budget Paper No. 3, page 273. It is said that a man's home is his castle. I want to know what is being done to address the problem of crime against private homes as criminals see the elderly as a soft target. I have a lot of elderly people in my electorate.

Mr BRADY: It is very important that the public and the police work together in this particular area. There is no way that the police working on their own can provide a professional security system to protect everyone's home. We have to have a combination of things. The Property Crime Squad is the major initiative in this Budget and will play an important part in that, I am quite confident. The Neighbourhood Watch Program, the Rural Watch Program, the shopfronts—they all play a significant part. I made reference before to the home security displays, which are travelling around the State, particularly into rural areas, and the Crime Prevention Training Program addressing home and other security issues, which are conducted regularly through a training cycle, commencing with recruits and going through to other members of the Queensland Police Service. The growth of Neighbourhood Watch and its associated watches—Rural Watch, Commercial Watch, realty, taxi, school and marine—are very pronounced and very important. I think that the way to make people feel better about security is tell them to get involved in Neighbourhood Watch and School Watch.

Mr PITT: The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates of Expenditure of the Queensland Police Service has now expired. I thank the officers for their attendance and I ask that they remain in the Chamber until excused at 6.30 p.m. The next item for consideration is the Corrective Services Commission and the time allotted one and a half hours.

Corrective Services Commission

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Corrective Services Commission to be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members, but prior to that I invite the Minister to make a short address to the Committee, if he so desires.

Mr BRADY: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Today, we are looking at the budget provided for the Queensland Corrective Services Commission for 1994-95 and the way public funds are to be spent carrying out these important functions. I first mention some of the current achievements and initiatives of the Commission and related agencies. In capital works funding, the Commission has received a Budget allocation of \$53m this year for the cell expansion program in Queensland correctional centres and to start work on the Woodford Correctional Centre.

In the area of suicide prevention—the Commission is overseeing the establishment of a high-risk assessment team at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre and comprehensive internal procedures for the management of at-risk prisoners, which include the use of a Night Observation Unit.

There has been a substantial capital outlay to upgrade the perimeter security in most correctional centres in this State. This year, another \$4.2m has been allocated to complete the perimeter upgrade program.

The new sentence management practices will be further enhanced as specific training of Sentence Management Team members is undertaken during the year.

This year, the Budget allocates \$800,000 for the development and implementation of standardised core programs and other specific programs for offenders. There is provision of \$150,000 for the implementation of some of the strategies identified in the young offenders report.

These are just a few examples of the wide range of programs and projects being undertaken by the Commission. This organisation is undertaking more work and introducing more meaningful programs into Corrections than any other jurisdiction in the country.

This year's Commission budget, which totals almost \$187m, will not only cover the daily operations of Corrections but will provide infrastructure which will enable that operation to be more effective. The Commission is faced with an unprecedented increase in prison numbers, and the budget has been framed to address the demand. It appears the Government's policies on cracking down on crime are biting, and for that I make no apology. There has been a decrease in the number of people coming into the prison system, but an increase in the prison population, highlighting the fact that violent and habitual criminals are now spending much more

time behind bars. The development has been and is being monitored continually.

The Government has approved the construction of another 718 cells to accommodate the growing prisoner population. That, as you would understand, comes about by prisoners staying there longer as well as new prisoners.

These medium and long-term measures, which will provide the equivalent of three new prisons the size of Borallon Correctional Centre, is complemented by the immediate measure announced this week which will see another 112 spaces opened up at Arthur Gorrie and David Longland Correctional Centre.

Mr Chairman and Committee members, I believe the Corrective Services Commission not only has a workable budget this year but has a budget which will lay the foundations for big improvement in facilities in the years ahead.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Minister. I now invite Mr Cooper to ask the first question.

Mr COOPER: I refer the Minister to page 297 of Budget Paper No. 3. You will see down the bottom there the budget figures are listed out—Community Custody, Community Supervision and so on—and you can have a look at those figures. While you are looking at those, my question is: excluding the capital outlays, what is the estimated actual recurrent budget for 1993-94 and the estimated recurrent budget for 1994-95? Given the difference in the figures, and there generally is a difference, does the recurrent 1994-95 budget indicate acceptance of the December 1993 PSMC recommendation that, "to achieve satisfactory progress, the Commission requires a stable budgetary base over the next three years and it is recommended that no further reductions in the Commission's recurrent budget in real terms occur over this period"? Can I just reiterate while you are finding that—I am just saying, taking away the capital works component of those budgetary figures, you will be left with the recurrent budgetary figures.

Mr BRADY: The recurrent budget figures for 1994-95 show an expenditure of \$130.1m. The capital is \$56.8m of a total budget figure of \$186.9m. What it shows is that there has been an increase from last year. In relation to the recurrent, it has gone up from \$124.3m to \$130.1m, which you can see is a figure well and truly in accordance with the situation in Queensland at present—the inflation rate and the growth rate is certainly up. So the recurrent figures, while not as dramatic as the Capital Works Program which, from time to time, has to be dramatic—you, yourself, Mr Cooper, will recall a very dramatic increase in capital works expenditure at a time when you had the responsibility for these things—but the recurrent budget is not neglected. There has been that increase and the situation, I believe, will continue to be funded by this Government on that basis. Where necessary, of course, it will be increased as well, but we try to be consistent over a period of years, and the increase this year, I think, is reasonable and proper and will proceed accordingly.

Of course, there will be an increase in cell accommodation, and even with the provisions I announced yesterday, we have to make special allocation from time to time not only for capital works but for recurrent expenditure to put on new staff when we increase the size or the capacity of a prison to take particular offenders. That has certainly been taken into account and will continue to be taken into account where emergencies arise.

Mr COOPER: Thank you. You mentioned the statement you made yesterday. I take this in the context of new prison cells referred to on page 297 of Budget Paper No.3—the 318 beds—and I take that in conjunction with the statement you made yesterday to provide an additional and immediate 112 places at a cost of \$2.85m. You have indicated that that is a special allocation from Treasury, so I take that as read, unless it is wrong. In so far as the 60 places at the Arthur Gorrie centre are concerned, can you tell me the total estimated cost of those 60 places?

Mr BRADY: The \$2.85m was extra money that I will have to obtain through the Budget process. I have the agreement of my relevant colleague—the Premier and the Treasurer—to this. There were some Budget surplus funds also to be expended, as I understand it, in relation to that as well. There are some funds already allocated for Arthur Gorrie in relation to it. So it is not just the \$2.85m, that is extra money we will need. Some of the expansion money Arthur Gorrie was going to receive, anyway. In relation to Arthur Gorrie, in the full year, the extra cost that we will have to spend there will be \$1.95m, and at Sir David Longland, \$1.7m.

Mr COOPER: You just mentioned also that budget that Arthur Gorrie had. My figure is \$2.497m estimated capital works expenditure at Arthur Gorrie by 30 June 1995. So I assume that those funds will come from that budget?

Mr BRADY: The funds about which I spoke are recurrent funds, not capital works funds. They are additional to the capital works funds that are in the Budget relating to Arthur Gorrie.

Mr COOPER: Are these 60 beds included in the Budget program to provide the 80 beds at Arthur Gorrie by 30 June 1995? You would recall that there were to be 80 temporaries.

Mr BRADY: Yes, they are. There is some offset—

Mr COOPER: So those 60 beds are part of the total of 80?

Mr BRADY: Yes.

Mr COOPER: So those are not in addition to that?

Mr BRADY: They will be when they come on stream. We are making them available for use now in a different way more quickly, but they will be made available this way now. The Capital Works Program will enable them to be available in a permanent and effective way.

Mr COOPER: I will come back to those descriptions of "permanent" and "temporary" later on.

For these 60 cells, what additional infrastructure works, such as extra toilets, showers, kitchen extensions, exercise yard extensions, and so on, are planned to handle these extra 60 beds and the total of 80 beds by 30 June 1995 at Arthur Gorrie.

Mr BRADY: I will ask Mr Macionis to make a comment. As to the 60 beds—that bedding is available because there is doubling up in cells. We have to make extra staff available, in terms of capital works. But in relation to the permanent construction of the extra 80-cell accommodation, there will be some extra capital works activity required there.

Mr MACIONIS: The additional infrastructure that is required to support the additional 80 cells will be in the form of some augmentation of the kitchen facilities and also the provision of additional programs buildings, which in this financial year will be portable programs buildings on both the remand and reception side of the centre. That is included in that capital works funding. But the vast majority of that is for the construction of the cells themselves.

Mr COOPER: The 80 cells were originally referred to as "temporary accommodation". We had 318, and 80 of those were temporary. Will these 60 and then 80 cells be temporary or permanent? Will they be permanent cells at Arthur Gorrie?

Mr BRADY: No, the intention is to get them on stream as quickly as we can—the original 80—whilst we proceed with the construction of cells in the other prisons around the State. When all of the construction at the other correctional centres is completed, it is intended to use the 80-cell accommodation for programs buildings. For members of the Committee who are not aware of what programs are, I point out that there are programs conducted for prisoners—educational, training and industrial programs—to keep them usefully occupied. So once we are able to do away with the 80 temporary increased cell accommodation at Arthur Gorrie, we will put those buildings to good use in running programs for prisoners.

Mr COOPER: In the meantime, how many of those 80 cells will be single? Or will they be doubled up?

Mr BRADY: I believe the 80-cell temporary accommodation that is being constructed is probably not suitable for doubling up. They will be single cells. Bear in mind, even with the situation of needing this increase, 89 per cent of our prisoners in Queensland are housed in single-cell accommodation and only 11 per cent will be, even when this new program comes into place in the next couple of weeks, accommodated in double-cell accommodation. So the vast majority of our prisoners will remain in single cell accommodation, the lowest rate of, I might add, any prison system in mainland Australia for double-cell accommodation.

Mr COOPER: As you said today, only 11 per cent will be double and 89 per cent single. What are your projected figures to, say, 30 June 1995?

Mr BRADY: The projection at this stage, on the information and data we have available—and it can change rapidly, as you know, as it has done in

the last 10 months—we should be holding about that level.

Mr COOPER: Shifting the subject slightly—by 30 June 1995, how many prisoner places will there be at all correctional centres? Can you give us an overall tally?

Mr BRADY: The projection is that in 1994-95 the average number of offenders will be 2 540.

Mr COOPER: Does that convert to prisoner places?

Mr BRADY: Prisoner places. I also should inform the Committee that that does not include about 200 extra prisoners in work camps. These are prisoners housed in correctional centres. So in addition to that 2 540, we would anticipate having about 200 in work camps as well.

Mr COOPER: What are your estimates for June 1994-95 broken down facility by facility?

Mr BRADY: We do not have the figures immediately, but we could supply an estimate of how many each correctional centre should be holding by 30 June 1995. We will get back to you with that figure.

Mr COOPER: The extra intake—the extra 112 people—that you will have to put into the prison system in the next couple of weeks, will no doubt require some extra overtime. Has that been budgeted for, or are you planning to budget for it? And, if so, what is the estimated overtime budget as a total, and what is the estimated overtime budget facility by facility? Could I have a comparison of those estimates with the 1993-94 overtime actuals?

Mr BRADY: You want the estimated overtime for each correctional centre in Queensland for 1994-95 and 1993-94?

Mr COOPER: Correct. That will give us the total.

Mr BRADY: We will total it as well. We will supply that.

Mr COOPER: Of the State-wide total of prisoner beds by June 1995, how many will be considered permanent and how many will be considered temporary?

Mr BRADY: Do you mean permanent cell accommodation?

Mr COOPER: Yes.

Mr BRADY: I think the only temporary accommodation by June 1995 will be the 80-cell accommodation at Arthur Gorrie.

Mr COOPER: What about Lotus Glen? The 80 at Arthur Gorrie will be the only anticipated temporary cell accommodation by June 1995.

Mr COOPER: I refer to the Capital Works Budget Paper No. 4 at pages 34 and 35. Mr De Lacy announced on 15 February that program of which you will be aware, the \$25m prison infrastructure program which has been incorporated with that \$52.7m capital works budget for 1994-95. How much of that \$25m that the Treasurer described on 15 February, as we recall, as being urgently required, has been or will be spent by 30 June 1994?

Mr BRADY: In relation to that, you have to of course vote the money and get on with it. A lot of the initial time is taken up with design, planning and negotiation in relation to the commencement of construction and the method, particularly where some of it, as will be the case here, occurs in non-QCSC correctional centres, where it has been constructed by private operators. I understand that the actual money expended at this stage in relation to that in 1993-94 was \$1.36m. But a lot of work has been done in relation to getting ready for the expenditure of the balance of it, or the majority of it, in 1994-95.

Mr COOPER: What do you anticipate by 30 June?

Mr BRADY: 1995?

Mr COOPER: I am sorry, right now. You have virtually spent all you are going to spend by the end of this year? We have only a fortnight to go, I guess.

Mr BRADY: No, that is the estimate for 1993-94—\$1.36m.

Mr COOPER: What are the prison-by-prison implementation dates for the provision of those extra beds that we are talking about, the 318? Could you give me a run-down?

Mr BRADY: In relation to the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, the estimate now is early to mid-November 1994. In relation to the Borallon Correctional Centre, the estimate is somewhere from the beginning of early February to early March 1995. In relation to the Sir David Longland centre, it is anticipated that should be completed by the end of 1995. In relation to the Lotus Glen Correctional Centre, the completion date for the new accommodation units is currently believed to be June 1995.

Mr COOPER: I refer to the Woodford gaol, and I guess we are still on page 297 of Budget Paper No. 3. What is the estimated completion date for Woodford? That is, when will it take its first prisoners?

Mr BRADY: That is even more of an educated guess than the others. December 1996 or January 1997 would be the best estimate we could give at this time.

Mr PURCELL: I refer to the figures appearing in Budget Paper No. 3 on page 306. Those papers indicate a massive blow-out in the funding being allocated to the corporate support area. It appears it has been allocated more than half the increase in the recurrent budget. With a total of more than \$30m, it seems to have a grossly disproportionate share of available funds. Can you explain what appears to be a top-heavy funding in central office at the expense of the operational side of the Commission's job?

Mr BRADY: Certainly, it is important to lay on the record an explanation in relation to it because the figures, without explanation, would require and beg some further information in relation to it. In fact, comparative figures from last year's allocation show that corporate support has actually received a cut in funding. The increase in corporate support funding represents about 60 per cent of the overall increase

in the Commission's recurrent budget. In money terms, this is \$3.59m. However, this includes a number of operational and special items totalling \$3.84m.

There are significant operational changes which are listed under the general heading of corporate support. For example, costed into here are new award funds of \$1.5m which were previously held by Treasury. There are new initiatives in relation to suicide prevention which are very much operational matters and of great importance to the prisoners and the staff, and they account for \$0.4m. There are recoverable funding repayments of \$1m, an allocation of \$0.25m for vehicle replacement for the transport and escort group, and new initiatives for programs for prisoners, called offender programs, which account for \$0.25m.

So the total corporate services budget of \$30m contains a number of operational items such as the transport and escort group of over \$4m. The three directorates of custodial, offender development and community are also in there along with health and medical services, Commonwealth-funded projects and specialist areas such as the Corrective Services Investigation Unit. That is the police service which carries out investigations into incidents that occur amongst staff or the prisoners and so on. Although they are listed under the general heading of corporate support, it is significant that they are very much operational support.

It should be noted that there is objective evidence of this. The Public Sector Management Commission, in its review of the Commission, observed that the percentage of QCSC central office staff to all Commission staff is 7.3 per cent compared with an average of 10.3 per cent for the equivalent in the other Australian jurisdictions. The conclusion must not be drawn that the QCSC central staff is out of balance. In fact, it is less than the Australian average.

Mr PURCELL: I would like to follow a line that Mr Cooper questioned you in regard to, namely, cell numbers and accommodation. I think you would realise that throughout the Budget papers there is a fairly large emphasis by the Government and your department on law and order and increasing the capacity of the State's correctional facilities. I think you explained earlier that the increase has come about as a result of the population being increased and that criminals are staying longer in gaol, and also an increase in the police clean-up rate. Are you confident that the measures in the Budget, with the additional funding that was announced earlier this year, will overcome the crowding?

Mr BRADY: Do you want me to come back to that or take it on notice?

The CHAIRMAN: That was just a question. He exhausted his one minute in which to ask the question.

Mr PURCELL: And what will you do if it is not enough money?

Mr BRADY: One of the things that this Government has demonstrated is the capacity to find the extra dollars where necessary in both law and

order and prisons initiatives generally. So the first answer is that, looking at the figures that we have had for 10 months, we believe that the measures we are taking now are appropriate and would meet the bill. We would of course prefer to have the new accommodation available as quickly as possible rather than have to make the special initiatives in relation to doubling up. I can give no absolute assurance that the admission rates and retention rates in prisons will stay the same as they are now; nobody can. The rates fell by 8 per cent for five years from 1988 to June 1993 and they have risen by 18 per cent from June 1993 to the present time. We make budgetary decisions, including urgent and emergency budgetary decisions, based on figures as they come through. If necessary, we must do that again.

I repeat: we are building or have budgeted for the equivalent cell accommodation of three Borallons. That demonstrates not only the Government's commitment but also the situation as we assess it in terms of numbers. The situation has changed. When Woodford closed in 1991, the occupancy rate in Queensland prisons was about 85 per cent. Now it is over 100 per cent. We have assessed that Woodford could not be retained in its present condition. It was bequeathed to us as a Government with totally inadequate security. It had chicken wire, virtually, which is what most of the prisons had for perimeter fencing. That is why the escape rate was so high, particularly in the first year that we had responsibility for it. Woodford had lots of other inadequacies. We made those decisions. To rebuild rather than to refurbish at Woodford is a more expensive option. However, it was an inadequate prison in terms of security and other reasons.

Mr T.B. SULLIVAN: I ask the Minister a question on the Community Corrections Directorate. Page 306 of Budget Paper No. 3 incorporates a figure of about half a million dollars in the commission's Corporate Support Program. I believe that that directorate was established as a result of a PSMC review recommendation and I also understand that an internal review of Community Corrections was conducted last year by the commission itself. Is the Minister confident that this half a million dollars will be adequate to fund the Community Corrections Directorate in its first year of operation?

Mr BRADY: Yes. The upgrading, if you like, of the status of Community Corrections by the recommendation of the PSMC which was accepted by the Government and which is being funded here is certainly to be welcomed by all people with experience in prison administration. By that new funding and status in the system, the Community Corrections Directorate will be able to operate in a way that demonstrates its importance.

The directorate will develop a model for resourcing area offices that can be used in Budget negotiations. It will establish a program of research into the effectiveness of Community Corrections programs and supervision strategies, including the assessment of alternative supervision methods. It will be involved in assessing the staffing and

infrastructure requirements for other areas. We will have the provision of a policy and procedures manual and the development of an induction and training course for Community Corrections officers.

By working through the system in this way, I believe that the budget is appropriate. A considerable number of people have left the prison system but remain the concern of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission directly through the Community Corrections area, and alternative systems would also be covered by that funding. The WORC Scheme will also become part of the Community Corrections area. Funding of that nature will go not to administration but to the direct supervision of and working in the rehabilitation of many, many people in the community who have been at some stage through other areas of the prison system or the law and order system or who otherwise might have to go through that system. So this is very much operational and work oriented, not administratively and bureaucratically oriented.

Mr T.B. SULLIVAN: One concern that a lot of people have is about the sentence management and security classification of prisoners. Budget Paper No. 3 at page 305 includes funding for that area of your portfolio. Recommendation 24 of the PSMC requires the commission to provide further training of sentence management team members. There is some allocation in this Budget—and that is to be welcomed—but public concern is often expressed about prisoner management, especially the way in which they achieve security classification and their transfer to various correctional facilities. Can you give us some insight into how the funding will facilitate that sentence management process, especially how the decisions are made; have these changed in the past 12 months; will they be changing; and do we need further allocations for it?

Mr BRADY: One must keep sentence management policy constantly in the forefront of one's thinking in this area. The policy underwent major reviews, and changes were approved by the Board of the QCSC in 1991 and again in 1993. Clearly, that area touches on how people get out of the prison system back into the community, how quickly and in what condition they arrive back in the community. I know that some members of the community want to see them stay there and throw away the key. The reality is that other than a few handfuls of prisoners who are lifers and who are genuinely there for a long time, anyone who goes to prison will come out. We must have a good system of sentence management.

We keep sentence management constantly under review. You would be familiar with the major areas of classification—high security, medium, low or open security. Security assessment is based on logical areas that you would expect, such as the length of the sentence, the seriousness of the offence, the criminal history of the offender, the escape history of the offender and parole eligibility.

The review of the security classification for any particular offender is based on the prisoner's addressing the offending behaviour; programs response—the reaction of the prisoner to programs

offered within the prison; the institutional behaviour of the prisoner; any proven incidents of misconduct; and, of course, any change of status. That will occur if the prisoner is convicted of other offences while a prisoner. Under the present rules, prisoners who have escaped must not be classified lower than medium security for two years following their escape from secure custody or for 12 months following escape from an open security institution such as Numinbah or Palen Creek. Prisoners with outstanding charges must not be classified lower than medium security.

They are some of the rules by which the commission officers go. I endorse the commission's policy of keeping those rules under constant review to make sure that people who will come back into the community come back as far as can be humanly ordained at the appropriate time and with the best possible chance that they will not commit further offences.

Mrs BIRD: I have a question on young offenders. The Budget papers contain no specific references to funding. Budget Paper No. 3 contains some general references on pages 299, 301, 303, 305 and 307. There is a specific allocation of \$150,000 in the Budget for implementing specific programs for young offenders. It does not seem to be an overgenerous amount, but I assume that young offenders in the prison system would also have access to all other programs and that that amount is an additional sum over and above general expenditure. What are we getting for that \$150,000? Are any outside complementary programs being set up by the commission?

Mr BRADY: A Young Offenders Advisory Committee was formed quite early in the life of the Commission, which started in 1988. The recommendations in relation to young offenders have been addressed. Some 30 recommendations were identified as requiring further attention. In prioritised order, the policy statements and actions for the young offenders working group are these: preventing them offending again; recidivism being addressed; programs which seek to address offending behaviour are attempted to be culturally relevant; programs must offer a range of opportunities for personal growth; and develop and implement strategies which divert, where possible, young offenders from custody. Some of the recommendations will form part of other projects—for example, the core programs projects. The recommendations in themselves, as you perhaps indicated in your question, do not just rely on the \$150,000 specific allocation. Others will be assessed and separately costed—for example, a separate centre for young offenders.

The \$150,000 allocated in this budget will address the preparation and implementation of policy and programs. There will certainly be opportunities for young offenders to participate in other areas which are funded in other ways.

Mrs BIRD: I have a similar question concerning women's policy. There is no specific mention of funding for that in the Estimates, but there is a general reference in Budget Paper No. 3 on page

305. I was pleasantly surprised to learn that the Commission is developing a special policy for female inmates, a policy which will cater for their specific needs. I assume that funding for the implementation of those policies has been included in the program budget and probably in other areas of the budget depending on the recommendations contained in that policy. Can you tell me a little more about the funding?

Mr BRADY: The programs that are being addressed at Brisbane Women's Correctional Centre are covered by what is called the general programs area. The major component of that is drug and alcohol programs counselling. We have only about 80 prisoners at Brisbane women's prison. It is important, given the nature of the women who are there, that there be counselling for drug and alcohol addiction. The programs offered include Narcotics Anonymous, which is available fortnightly; Alcoholics Anonymous, a weekly program; the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Drug and Alcohol Group, which comes in weekly; individual counselling by correctional counsellors; and a psychologist and a visiting voluntary medical officer also offer support to the fairly high proportion of women at the prison who need support in this particular area. There is also the Boonah program. This involves a small group of prisoners and staff attending the Outlook at Boonah as part of the rehabilitation process, and many of them move on to the Helena James Community Centre program.

The CHAIRMAN: Time has expired in that 20-minute block for Government members. I now invite Mr Cooper to direct a question to you.

Mr COOPER: I seek to have clarified once and for all the issue of escapes. When responding to a question on that issue, you said that the number of escapes was higher when you took office than it is now because of poor perimeter security. Why do you not provide the figures to the Committee for, let us say, 1988-89, 1989-90, 1990-91, 1991-92 and 1992-93? Let us have the matter cleared up. I will not enter into a slanging match on this. All of us want to see the prevention of escapes rather than indulgence in tit-for-tat.

Mr BRADY: We could mention——

Mr COOPER: That includes absconding, as well. Sorry to interrupt.

Mr BRADY: In 1990-91, which is the first full year of our Government being in operation, the prisons were in substantially the same condition as they were when we first inherited them. In that period, there were 45 escapes from secure custody. By comparison, this year, which has almost concluded, there have been 15 escapes. So there has been a good progression over that time. In 1990-91, there were 45 escapes from secure custody; in 1991-92, there were 34; in 1992-93, there were 17; and this year, with the year almost completed, there have been 15. That shows a steady improvement, which one would hope and expect with the amount of money that we have spent on razor wire and electronic surveillance and doing away with the old chicken-wire fences that too many of the prisons

had, some of which has still not been totally replaced.

When I refer to escapes from open-security prisons, I basically mean prison farms. They are trusted prisoners who can in effect elect to walk off pretty much as they like. They have been given that trust and, if they break it, they are very foolish. I will give you the number of escapes from open-security prisons in recent years. In 1990-91, there were 17; in 1991-92, there were 21; in 1992-93, there were 27; and so far in 1993-94 there have been 15. By far the best year in both categories is the current year, in which there has been a total of 30 escapes, and the worst year was 1990-91, during which there were 62 escapes.

Mr COOPER: May I have the figures for the number of people who have absconded from programs such as home detention or day release?

Mr BRADY: During the current financial year, up to 26 May 1994, there have been 27 absconders from leave of absence granted to prisoners from custodial corrections.

Mr COOPER: Back to the other business of Woodford——

Mr BRADY: Sorry, I should give you another figure. Up to that same date, there have been 45 absconders from leave of absence granted to prisoners from community corrections centres and on home detention.

Mr COOPER: I meant all of those programs.

Mr BRADY: The first ones were leave of absence granted to prisoners from custodial corrections. The second ones were 45 from the other categories.

Mr COOPER: Back to Woodford. Will that institution be administered directly by the Corrective Services Commission, or is it going out to contract?

Mr BRADY: That correctional centre will be constructed to cater for high and medium-security prisoners. The Government has devoted the money for that in its Budget. The basis on which it will be constructed has yet to be determined. That decision will be made in due course by the Government. I will certainly have to take a submission to Cabinet in relation to that issue. It is anticipated that we should have a Cabinet submission ready in relation to the strategies to be adopted in August 1994. I would not discuss it any further at this time until I have had an opportunity to receive advice from the Commission and take a submission to Cabinet for a final decision by Government.

Mr COOPER: Just to clarify one thing, you outlined how it would be constructed; I meant how would it be administered.

Mr BRADY: Constructed and administered. As you know, there are many different combinations that could be adopted as to the construction and operation of Woodford, and absolutely no decision has been made in relation to that at this time.

Mr COOPER: In the same context—and I have to use the Police budget here because it is directly to do with Corrective Services—being a high-security gaol, obviously there could well be security

problems there. Quite obviously, you need a fairly high and strong police presence in case of trouble. Knowing that the Woodford area does not have a great infrastructure from a police point of view, what budgetary factors are you taking into account? What predictions are you making and what estimations will you have to do in order to cater for a far greater police presence?

Mr BRADY: As indicated to the Committee in my answer to a previous question, it is anticipated that the new Woodford prison will be constructed and operating in December 1996 or January 1997. So that is down the track. The Police Service and the Corrective Services Commission have adequate time to make decisions in relation to the staff. I could not tell you now what staff will be employed by the Commission in what capacity at Woodford. I certainly could not tell you what changes would be made at this stage in relation to the policing of that district and in the stations around it, but those decisions will be made in due course and in adequate time.

Mr COOPER: With respect, you have made plans to build a new gaol there; I suggest that these things can get left behind and when the time comes, you could find yourself saying, "I wish we had done something about the police there." I am suggesting that you take it on board and include it in your planning because, being a high-security prison, it will be needed. How many beds will be in single accommodation at that gaol?

Mr BRADY: Four hundred.

Mr COOPER: They will all be single?

Mr BRADY: We have just budgeted the money for it. No design has been done. Who will be doing the designing and on what basis is part of the process to be determined, but the general strategy at this stage is that there will be a 400-cell prison with single accommodation.

Mr COOPER: What is the breakdown of the allocation of that \$7.3m for this financial year? I take it that includes design?

Mr BRADY: Mr Hamburger can answer that one.

Mr HAMBURGER: The \$7.3m will basically be for design and site preparation, which will take place in this coming financial year plus, no doubt, ordering of further equipment and things of that nature.

Mr COOPER: When do you anticipate tenders will be called for construction?

Mr BRADY: The probabilities are early in 1995. That is as precise as we can be. As I say, we are anticipating going to Cabinet in August with a submission in relation to how we would go about it. We would anticipate working to a tender process early in the 1995 chronological year.

Mr COOPER: What is the predicted annual operating cost of the gaol? Have you got as far advanced as that yet?

Mr BRADY: The current estimate for 400-cell accommodation at Woodford, high to medium security, is \$13m to \$15m per annum.

Mr COOPER: In Budget Paper No. 4, page 34, it states that this gaol will replace older prisons. Which older prisons is it going to replace? One of the documents from estimates that were sent to us states—

"Commissioning this facility could permit the closure of Wacol and Moreton Correctional Centres, depending on future growth patterns."

There are 385 cells there. As one door closes, does another door open? Is that the way you will go?

Mr BRADY: If you look at the wording to which you have referred, it says "could permit". There is certainly no planning on the basis that it will authorise the closing of those prisons. It again will depend upon the prisoner accommodation rate required at the time. What we have decided as a Government is that it is needed and that we will build it. If the prison numbers dropped off to the stage where we could close another prison, then we would do it. However, if the numbers continue to go as they are, obviously we will not have that luxury.

We have put a lot of money into some of the other prisons, particularly into perimeter security. Moreton and Wacol, which are the older prisons, would be possibilities for closure, and only if the prison numbers warranted it. Obviously, you would close the older ones if that was possible, but there is no indication in the Budget that that will happen—it is just a possibility.

We have decided to build the prison on an either/or basis. It will be needed irrespective of whether we close the other prisons, and the closure of the other prisons will occur only if the prison numbers drop again. However, my current belief is that that will not be possible. As Minister, I will be going ahead on the basis that all of those existing correctional centres will be continuing.

Mr COOPER: I understand what you are saying. It is just that you will have to make some estimations and projections for the upgrading of Moreton and Wacol and also Etna Creek, because the PSMC report in December 1993 indicated that it was on the way down and that it would have to be reconstructed by the year 2000. Was there any budgetary allowance for Etna Creek in this Budget?

Mr BRADY: There have certainly been some improvements in relation to Etna Creek. Forty-eight cells have been reopened at Etna Creek. Work is being done at all of the older prisons. At this stage, we are spending money, and it seems to me that we will be required to spend more money. The most urgent financial requirements were the 318 cells and the \$50m prison at Woodford, but certainly there are minor amounts of money being spent across the various prisons. If you look in the Budget, you will see that there are minor works totalling over \$4m, and Rockhampton and other places have got high-priority bids in relation to some of that money. We are not neglecting capital expenditure in these areas, but that does not mean it will not need more in the future.

Mr COOPER: We have seen the list of major capital works items for 1994-95, but you also have minor capital works. I do not expect you to provide

this information now, but could I have a rundown of minor capital works for all of the gaols on a gaol-by-gaol account?

Mr BRADY: At this stage, we are not in a position to do that. We have all the bids in. A moment ago, I made reference to Rockhampton having a high-priority bid, but the final decisions on those bids have not been decided. So we are not in a position to give you the details at this stage. My best estimate is that we could provide that information within three weeks. Certainly by the end of July we should be in a position to notify you of those decisions and the specifics of them.

Mr COOPER: That is the minor capital works for each facility?

Mr BRADY: I believe we will be in a position to give you the minor capital works information by the end of July.

Mr COOPER: We have talked about cell numbers at Wacol, Moreton and Etna Creek and the fact that, more than likely, they will stay open. At the time of the opening of the new gaol at Woodford, what would be the projected number of permanent prison beds in all of the gaol facilities in the State?

Mr BRADY: You would like to know what our estimate is of permanent cell accommodation in each of the other correctional centres in Queensland as from the date that Woodford opens?

Mr COOPER: Yes. It gives us something to aim for, to predict whether the prisoner population will keep increasing. You have also mentioned that there will be scope for an increase at Woodford from 400 cells to 600 cells, but that at this stage you do not have any plans to increase cell numbers to 600?

Mr BRADY: No, there is a footprint for Woodford which would enable it to be a prison of 600 cells. I can tell you at this stage that the current belief is that, on current understanding of the data that is available to us, on the opening of Woodford we will probably have a 90 per cent occupancy rate in our prisons, which of course is a decrease from the current 100 per cent-plus occupancy rate that we are operating on at the moment. That is the current thinking. That will be monitored as we go through the next 12 months or so in the first stage of preparing for the Woodford construction.

Mr COOPER: Still on capital works—in that allocated \$52.7m for 1994-95, are much of those funds not expended from 1993-94?

Mr BRADY: There was a carryover of \$11.6m of capital works in 1993-94. The major item in that was the redevelopment of Townsville prison—some \$6m. The extensive local consultation delayed the project by some nine months, so well over 50 per cent of the moneys were lost there. With the Women's Prison there was some delay—\$0.2m—because of a final decision regarding the total future use of the Boggo Road site. Once the Government decided that the Women's Prison was staying there, we could proceed.

There was a \$0.5m underexpenditure in relation to the work expansion because of the need to resolve building requirements in far-north

Queensland. There was a \$1.5m underexpenditure so far because of delay in procuring razor tape, which is in very short supply, for Borallon. That is now available. There was also a \$1.48m underexpenditure in minor works. But the funds are committed and the projects are in progress now. There was also a \$1m underexpenditure in relation to the security upgrade at Sir David Longland prison, again because of the Australiawide shortage of razor tape.

Mr COOPER: I just want to clarify those figures for the absconders from all the programs—not just 1993-94, but taking it back to 1990-91.

Mr BRADY: Do you want those figures supplied?

Mr COOPER: Yes. You agreed to do 1993-94.

Mr BRADY: I gave you 1993-94.

Mr COOPER: I think you said you would be coming back.

Mr BRADY: The data in earlier years was not as well kept as it is now, but we will do our best, and we will give you the figures that are available.

Mr COOPER: I have mentioned the local government rates. Obviously, the Commission is paying local government rates and charges and all other statutory body costs that have to be debited to the Corrective Services Budget. Could I have those figures on a facility-by-facility basis?

Mr BRADY: We will take that on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: Of our one and a half hours allotted to this block, 10 minutes remain. Under Sessional Orders, it is proposed to share that evenly between Government and non-Government members. I ask a Government member to direct the next question.

Mr PURCELL: I have a question in regard to out-stations and community justice groups on Aboriginal communities. The reason for it will become apparent by the end of my question. I have done a fair bit of travelling in the north with another Minister. I know the effort that has been put in with regard to discussions and consultations with Aboriginals and Islanders in regard to being locked up in correctional centres. It is an ongoing thing. I am talking about secure prisons, I suppose. Could the Minister give me an indication of the type of consultation work that is continuing? Because I cannot find any specific mention of this funding in the Budget, could the Minister indicate how and where the Commission gets funds for this area?

Mr BRADY: Yes. It is certainly an important area, particularly for far-north Queensland. I think that something of the order of 55 per cent of the prisoners in Lotus Glen Correctional Centre are Aboriginal people. These community out-stations are very important. The report of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody emphasised the importance of the provision of services to Aboriginal people by Aboriginal people. We have two operating now: one about 70 kilometres from the main town of Aurukun at a place called Wathandam, and another

one at Baa's Yard, which is about 20 kilometres from Pormpuraaw.

These out-stations are actually operated by the communities themselves for suitable prisoners during the community integration part of prisoners' sentences. We have cooperation from Palm Island and Kowanyama communities in relation to community corrections area officers, but we believe that we really do need to expand our operations in relation to this particular area.

The 1994-95 Budget—the current Budget—for Wathandam and Baa's Yard, catering for up to 20 offenders, is \$208,000. The Commission also has a Budget commitment of \$90,000 for Palm Island and \$40,000 for Kowanyama. We have commenced negotiations with other communities to address corrections issues in those communities. There is a fair degree of probability that we could have two more community out-stations operating in far-north Queensland, which will enable us to release suitable Aboriginal prisoners from Lotus Glen and Townsville prison particularly to do useful work in their communities out on those out-stations supervised by their own people. We will be proceeding with that prospect that we will have two more to complement what has already been done.

The CHAIRMAN: Just to clear up a point—in respect of my last statement regarding the time remaining in the one and a half hour time block—I was incorrect. I had miscalculated. There is still 20 minutes, and this is part of the last 20 minutes for Government members. Then we will have 10 minutes remaining to be shared evenly.

Mr PURCELL: As to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders again—as you mentioned, there is a disproportionate number of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders in the prison system in proportion to their percentage the population. We have not been able to reduce the numbers, even with the Commission's best efforts. What can the Commission do to reduce their numbers in our correctional centres, and what is planned for 1994-95?

Mr BRADY: In Queensland prisons, about 20 per cent of the prisoners are of Aboriginal and Islander descent, which is a high figure in terms of their percentage of the population. However, I might say that it is significantly better than, say, Western Australia, which has a very high percentage—or the Northern Territory.

It has been stable for some time. It is a much lower figure than of, say, a couple decades ago, but it is still too high. The Commission has set itself the target of reducing this level to 10 per cent. It is not just in the power of the Commission, of course, the people commit offences of a sufficiently serious nature. The social issues which influence offending have been well documented. The alcohol problem is the major factor—there is no doubt about that—and the domestic violence that flows with the alcohol problem, and so there is the need for education and awareness. As best we can, as a Commission, we try to make a real contribution. For example, at the time of the royal commission report, less than 1 per cent of Commission staff were of Aboriginal or Island descent. We now have over 5 per cent of people

employed by the Commission who are of Aboriginal or Island descent, in all sorts of capacities. They are not just custodial officers—psychologists, counsellors, and people of similar professions as well. As far as making a contribution in that way—by letting the Aboriginal people know that there are Aboriginal people in the system on the right side of the bars as well—we think that is important, and the royal commission report in that respect was very accurate and timely.

With that program and better programs in the prisons in relation to matters that would be of interest to Aboriginal prisoners, we will continue to increase our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island employees as a percentage to offer programs that are relevant, to increase those out-stations where we hope we can rehabilitate people better and get them out of the mainstream prisons. They are the sorts of areas that we can work on and we will continue to do so.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I have a question that relates to implementation of the recommendations of the Aboriginal deaths in custody report. Suicide prevention strategies are mentioned in five Budget or Budget related papers. I want to ask a question as how that relates specifically to Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders. What will this Budget facilitate in terms of implementing the recommendations of that royal commission, and is there some responsibility to report on the progress from the Commission's side?

Mr BRADY: It certainly is a very complex area. Even in the three minutes available, I could not deal with it adequately. Of the 340 recommendations of the royal commission, about 100 are relevant to the Corrective Services Commission. In general terms, the Commission has responded to almost every one of the recommendations. Most of them have been implemented. A recent achievement was a revision of the Minimum Standard Guidelines for Corrections in Australia, which was adopted by the Ministers recently. The Commission has as a strategy the comprehensive implementation of the recommendations.

The major areas of success in implementing recommendations of the report are these: greater ownership of initiatives by the Aboriginal community themselves—I mentioned them when I was talking to Mr Purcell; the employees of the out-stations and their involvement in the programs—the development of the alternatives to secure custody, improve custodial practices and, of course, and probably the best of all, dealing with the underlying issues contributing to criminal behaviour. We have spread funding for all of these initiatives across all directives of the Commission. When we talk about more than 5 per cent Aborigines employed by the Commission, that means some 76 Aboriginal and Islander people get their employment from the Queensland Correctives Services Commission at this time.

I think that it is important to be able to say that the QCSC has implemented most of the recommendations and is determined to continue along that road to achieve success. I think it can be done.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: In a similar vein on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, Budget Paper No. 3, at pages 301 to 303 mentions programs for special needs, such as young offenders, women, and sex offenders, both in gaols and under community supervision, but it does not mention the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. Can you give some indication of the type of programs that this Budget will implement for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders both in the prison environment and in the Community Correction area.

Mr BRADY: Certainly. Firstly, the Aboriginal prisoners are encouraged to participate in the first stream of programs, that is, the general ones—particularly primary, secondary, and tertiary education courses. They are very much available to them along with all other prisoners, including personal development courses and recreational courses. There is a second stream particularly developed for Aboriginal inmates. Whilst they vary from centre to centre, the common theme of these courses concentrates on drug and alcohol counselling—a very important area—and cultural and heritage education including painting and dance, and, of course, literacy. When you visit the prisons you will see, particularly in a couple of them in the north, great advantage being taken by the Aboriginal prisoners of the cultural programs and the development of the very acute artistic skills that many of the prisoners have in terms of painting and the manufacture of Aboriginal implements for sale. I think that it is one of the very successful initiatives that the Aboriginal prisoners really respond to. They access both the mainstream programs and the special programs as well.

Clients of the Community Corrections area of the Commission mainly access programs available in the community through TAFE courses or specific programs for them as well. On the northern out-stations a range of skills are taught—from cattle work to art and recreation skills. The Aboriginal prisoners now are getting access to programs in a way and of a type that are useful to them in terms of work and also in terms of their cultural and spiritual development. I shall assure you from my personal observations that they are really taking advantage of them.

Mrs BIRD: Page 68 of Budget Paper No. 2 carries an allocation of \$800,000 to enhance the quality and extent of prisoner training education. It also states that this will rise to \$1m in subsequent years to improve rehabilitation opportunities for prisoners. The Commission has a stated philosophy of aiming at properly preparing prisoners for integration into the community. This is done in a number of ways, including phased release, and the delivery of programs aimed at encouraging offenders to address their offending behaviour. Funding for this type of activity is spent throughout the Budget Papers under variety of headings but, given that a great number of offenders are now returning to prison, are we spending our \$800,000 wisely?

Mr BRADY: Certainly. It is one of the areas that I think is very important in the fight against

recidivism, and the Commission has some justifiable pride in the figures that are now coming through. There are two. The first major area for a prison system is to make sure that the prisoners are kept secure, particularly where they are high and medium security prisoners who have not been granted the open opportunities. But after that is done, it is very important that we embark on real rehabilitation efforts. I can give you some information which I think is relevant to that. When the Commission started, the recidivism rate was some 56 per cent. It has fallen down to 46.6 per cent—the lowest of all the mainland Australian States. The program area is very important in making a contribution to this. It is certainly an area in which I will be expecting the new board of the Commission to address and to make sure that we get the programs fairly distributed through all the prisons.

It is already true to say that the number of program staff has increased significantly in all the regional centres and that the impact on the prison and the inmates has been positive. The current Budget provides opportunities for some new initiatives for funding in the programs area, and I think that is one of the great challenges for the commission and for the new board—to spend that money wisely and to make sure that we get value for it and that the prisoners get these programs which will help keep the return rate to the prisons to an even lower figure than we have at the present time.

Mrs BIRD: I certainly hope so. Budget Paper No. 3, page 300—intensive corrections orders are mentioned under the Community Supervision Program.

Mr BRADY: Yes.

Mrs BIRD: Could the Minister explain the intent of these orders, when they are likely to come into effect and their anticipated impact?

Mr BRADY: Right. The intensive corrections orders are an option available to the courts after an offender has been convicted and sentenced to a one year term of imprisonment or less. The offender must agree to being placed on an intensive correction order. It is described as a prison sentence served in the community and, of course, what it is useful for is keeping the very minor offenders out of prison.

We are aware that we are now getting prisoners who are in gaol for longer periods. I think that is an important point. If they are placed on an intensive correction order, it can only be with their consent, and conditions are applied. They must not commit another offence or else they lose the benefit of it; they must report to and receive visits from an authorised officer at least twice a week; they must participate in counselling and satisfactorily attend programs as directed by the court; they must perform community service; and they must, if directed, reside at a community residential facility.

We anticipate about 1 000 admissions to intensive corrections orders each year, with a daily case load of around 320 once they get under way. I repeat that they are only for minor offenders who have received a term of imprisonment of a year or less. So once it gets under way, additional Community Corrections staff will be required to

supervise these particular orders. Funding has been allocated in the Community Corrections budget for this. We hope to commence them from 1 July. This, in turn, will make another contribution towards lowering the current prison numbers. Again, I stress that they are only for appropriate prisoners, that is, people who have committed minor offences and can be adequately punished, supervised and helped whilst they still reside in the community.

Mrs BIRD: Thank you, Minister.

Mr PURCELL: Minister, could I ask you a question with regard to the value of community service work? That is for prisoners who are out on community service or who are receiving fine options. There is usually a fair bit of criticism in regard to supervision—whether they do their work or whether they even turn up for work. Community service has really been put in place to keep out of prison minor offenders, I suppose, or people who you do not want to get mixed up in the prison system. Do you support this type of sentencing option, and are there sufficient funds in the Budget to handle the type of supervision that would be needed?

Mr BRADDY: I think the community would be more supportive if they knew how genuinely important it was just to the community in terms of value—

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, you may be able to take that up, if Mr Purcell wants to redirect the question to you, during the call-back period. I should say that we still have 10 minutes remaining. That is going to be divided evenly between Government and non-Government members. I invite Mr Cooper to ask the next question.

Mr COOPER: Mr Chairman, I have some housekeeping matters. In Budget Paper No. 3, page 297, it is stated that \$53.7m will be spent on capital works in 1994-95. Budget Paper No. 4 on page 34 says "\$52.7m". Which is the true figure? For heaven's sake, when you say it quickly, \$1m does not sound much, but in this context I would be grabbing the lot myself. On page 34 of book four it says "\$52.7m" and the other one says "\$53.7m".

Mr BRADDY: I believe \$52.7m is the correct figure. That is the right figure. It must be a misprint—\$52.696m, to be precise.

Mr COOPER: Bang goes one million bucks. That was quick.

Mr BRADDY: No, it was a misprint. We never spent it.

Mr COOPER: No, I know you did not spend it. You did not get a chance to.

Mr BRADDY: No, we never intended to spend it.

Mr COOPER: As long as we know that, for the record, it is a misprint. With reference to Budget Paper No. 3, page 297, the statement is made that \$5.454m has been included to service the additional bed spaces, that is, the 318. Given that the PSMC in its review for the QCSC concluded that it costs an average of \$42,000 a year to service a bed space, is it not true that the allocation would service only

about 130 beds and that, really, you should have been looking at about \$13.35m to service the 318?

Mr BRADDY: The basic bed rate you are talking about, of course, is starting from scratch. These 318—they are all additional prisoner accommodation at existing areas—are marginal rates on top of the existing rate. They do not come out on the same per capita basis as the others, and negotiations were able to be entered into to achieve that.

Mr COOPER: Okay. As long as you are covered for the 318. You are saying that \$5.454m is the figure. That is adequate.

Mr BRADDY: That is the figure.

Mr COOPER: Budget Paper No. 3 at page 297 states that the cost of providing these 318 beds is \$26m, while Budget Paper No. 4, page 34, says that the work will cost \$5.3m at Borallon, \$11m at Sir David Longland, \$5m at Lotus Glen and \$2.4 at Arthur Gorrie. That is a total of \$23.7m. That is two figures but the Treasurer, in his 15 February statement, said that up to \$25m would be provided. So we have three figures. Could you tell me which is the correct one?

Mr BRADDY: The figures are taken in different contexts, depending on whether the perimeter security, for example, is taken into account or not. So what I will do is make sure that all the figures are supplied accurately; make sure that apples are counted as apples in each case and not sometimes turned into oranges, as has occurred, I think, in the way these figures are used at different times. We will get that information to you.

Mr COOPER: Okay. Thank you for that. We might as well get it clarified. Budget Paper No. 3, page 304, the Secure Custody Program, and Budget Paper No. 3, page 300, the Community Supervision Program—it does apply to quite a number of programs because it does say at one stage that there is going to be a 10 per cent reduction in workplace injuries, illnesses and assaults on staff as well as a reduction of the average level of sick leave. That is mentioned on quite a few occasions through there. I am just wondering: how did you arrive at that figure of 10 per cent? How did you decide that you are going to automatically have 10 per cent less of everything? On what do you base that prediction?

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions by non-Government members has now expired. Minister, would you like to take that question on notice?

Mr BRADDY: We will get back to you on that one.

Mr PURCELL: I will return to the question I asked earlier when the bell got us both. I asked about the value of community work and about the supervision of prisoners?

Mr BRADDY: If the community knew what this work was really achieving, I think it would become very enthusiastic. As to community correction orders and fine option orders—in 1993-94 it is estimated that work worth some \$25m, or 2.26 million hours, was performed. More than 14 000 people completed

community service or fine option orders last financial year. So you can see that it is now a very important tool in the community.

It is a very effective punishment. That is why the extension of the orders to juvenile offenders was very important, and probably more important for juveniles than for anyone else. Some of those kids just do not have any confidence in themselves. They have never done anything, and they do not have any faith in themselves. Some 14 000 people were involved in providing \$25m worth of work. It is an ideal way of making offenders repay society for their offending behaviour, provided that the offending behaviour is minor and does not require imprisonment.

I get the impression that the community is now responding more. I note that more and more organisations are cooperating and wishing to be involved—including you, Mr Purcell. It is terrific that people such as yourself are asking, "How do we get our organisations in these programs?" These people have formed the view that prisoners can do useful work—and are doing it. It is a darned sight better for all of us to have minor offenders out in the community doing this work, as opposed to locking them away, which costs people a lot of money. Often, the rehabilitation value of this work is a major reason, I believe, for their not reoffending. Many of them gain self-confidence and self-esteem, and realise that they do have an innate worth. It is a great program. It must have a very good future.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I would like to ask a question about drugs in prisons. There is no specific allocation for the problem, but it is part of the general operation of correctional centres. Can you outline what measures are being taken to combat the supply and use of illicit drugs in prisons? Given that this has been a problem for some time, what sort of plan do you have to beat it, or to at least reduce it?

Mr BRADY: The three main elements to addressing the problem of drugs in prisons are deterrence, detection and treatment. In relation to deterrence, it is important that the contact visits, which have been noted as a potential source of drugs, be controlled in a way so that we can exclude drugs, as much as possible, from being passed on. We have installed closed-circuit television surveillance of visits areas in all secure facilities to try to assist in that. Training and maintenance and consistency of staffing to visits areas are also being looked at. Educating visitors and inmates themselves in relation to what we are doing is very important.

All centres now have a controlled search process in place to assist in the detection of illicit drugs. Random urine tests are conducted at centres as part of the audit process. Fifteen per cent of the custodial correction population is tested annually.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted in this block for consideration of the Estimates of the expenditure for the Corrective Services Commission has now expired. I thank the officers for their attendance thus far, and ask them to remain in the Chamber until excused at 6.30 p.m. As indicated earlier, under sessional orders the Committee will continue to meet until 6.30 p.m. It will then adjourn

promptly. There is an amount of time left for recall, which will be divided evenly between Government and non-Government members.

Mr LAMING: My question refers to page 5 of Budget Paper No. 2 and to the section stating that the 1994-95 Budget has allocated \$1.6m to the Queensland Police Service to undertake a program of water police vessel replacements and maintenance. I ask: in light of repeated requests from both myself—and, as I understand it, the region—can you advise whether the Maroochydore district will be getting such a replacement, and give me any details that you might have available?

Mr BRADY: You are interested particularly in the water police unit at Mooloolaba; is that right?

Mr LAMING: Yes, that would be correct.

Mr BRADY: There has been an allocation of \$180,000 for a new vessel to set up a water police unit at Mooloolaba. I will ask the commissioner to add to that. That is the extent of my information about that.

Mr O'SULLIVAN: There is an ongoing rolling Budget for water police, as allocated in this Budget and in the previous Budget. The Minister has said that there is provision for a replacement vessel. There is \$1.2m allocated for Thursday Island and \$180,000 for Mooloolaba. There will be two police officers, as usual, allocated for that vessel. That is in the 1994-95 Budget. I assume that will occur this financial year. The \$180,000 is for the new vessel to be set up at Mooloolaba in the 1994-95 Budget. Added to that will be the provision for two police officers and the overtime and weekend units that will accompany the provision.

Mr BRADY: And that will be in this financial year.

Mr LAMING: So you cannot be any clearer about the timing?

Mr BRADY: No.

Mr COOPER: My last question related to page 299 or 300 of Budget Paper No. 3, which states—

"A 10 per cent reduction in the number of reportable workplace injuries and illnesses and assaults on staff will be achieved together with reducing the average level of sick leave taken per staff member."

How did you arrive at a figure of 10 per cent, without knowing who will get sick or assaulted?

Mr BRADY: I will hand that over to Mr Macionis, the Deputy Director-General, to make a contribution.

Mr MACIONIS: In fact, there are a number of strategies being put into place which are already beginning to work. For example, the number of assaults is lower this year than it was last financial year. We can provide those figures; I do not have them here.

In terms of illness, a lot of our significant sick leave comes from areas such as stress. We have a comprehensive rehabilitation strategy in place. The Commission has trained and accredited a number of rehabilitation officers and we are now finding that,

through the process of bringing these people back to work as quickly as possible, usually into different duties initially, the return to work rate is increasing. We believe that there is already a turnover and over the next financial year we will see those strategies bite. We expect that the increase in stress levels that we have been experiencing will turn around.

We also have established at all correctional centres occupational health and safety committees, and in the community corrections and central office areas as well. Those committees are coming up with a number of local initiatives to implement in the centres in order to make improvements. Along with most other organisations, slips, trips and falls are still our main area of concern in the way of injury and illness, and this becomes very much a local issue in terms of identifying the hazard areas and putting into place improvements.

We are also putting in place a Commissionwide program for the protection of our outdoor workers with the provision of sunscreens and clothing, and putting in place other initiatives in relation to deployment of pregnant female officers. Overall, we believe that we can reverse the trend in the stress leave situation that we have had, and that we can continue the improvement in the level of assaults.

Mr COOPER: Thank you. We will see you back here next year. I wish you well. I refer to page 302 in Budget Paper No. 3 relating to the open custody program. This program includes programs for violent offenders. Why would programs for violent offenders be included in the outlook for 1994-95 for this program which, by its description, relies on direct supervision and trust in areas without a secure perimeter?

Mr BRADY: It is not happening. They used the same form of words from the secure custody program. In fact, you are right. It should not be done, and it is not going to be done. It is not appropriate.

Mr COOPER: That is good. I am pleased about that.

Mrs BIRD: I am conscious of Mr Laming's question to you about the Water Police, but we live in hope, so I am going to ask mine as well. In Budget Paper No. 3 there is mention of a new police launch for Townsville in 1993-94. In Budget Related Paper No. 2 there is mention of \$1.6m for the vessel in 1994-95. How does this service intend to spend those moneys to ensure optimal resource usage in my electorate of Whitsunday?

Mr BRADY: I cannot identify any particular expenditure relating to Whitsunday. Are you seeking to identify that?

Mrs BIRD: I live in hope.

Mr BRADY: No. The Water Police expenditure particularly referred to relates to Townsville, Thursday Island and Mooloolaba.

Mrs BIRD: Is that what the \$1.6m is going to go to? Are there three launches, one for Townsville—

Mr BRADY: No. Thursday Island is \$1.2m and Mooloolaba is \$180,000. I will hand over to the operational police. They can explain it precisely.

Mr ALDRICH: I am William Aldrich, Deputy Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service. Firstly, the Townsville boat is already in service. The \$1.2m is for the Thursday Island vessel and the \$180,000 is for the Mooloolaba vessel. In addition, there is provision in this budget to provide what we call miscellaneous vessels. There are a number of smaller vessels to service inland waters and do the more hands-on water policing that the larger vessels are not able to do.

Mrs BIRD: Are you talking about the small tinnies with outboards, or something like that?

Mr ALDRICH: Not quite that small. They are not the bigger boats. We have a number of them in place and none of them is going to the Whitsundays. We have a number of smaller vessels already in place and they need to be maintained. They run down as low as the tinnies up to five-metre and six-metre boats.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I have a question of the Minister relating to the Public Order and Safety Program. In recent months on television and in the media we have seen a fair bit about the breakdown in communications between the police and the ATSI community. What programs have been employed by your department to try to improve relations in this area?

Mr BRADY: I will invite the Commissioner to answer that question, too, Mr Sullivan.

Mr O'SULLIVAN: There are many items within our Budget allocated specifically to that very problem. There is the development and introduction of the following cross-cultural training programs in a variety of forms. We have put them forward to cater for these various policing initiatives. No. 1, there is Statewide training for police officers using the mobile cross-cultural awareness training unit and there is an intensive community-based cross-cultural training program for selected staff, and that is operating through Cherbourg Aboriginal community.

We have the Kowanyama cross-cultural communication awareness for senior police officers and our police specialising in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues. In addition to those programs, we have the cross-cultural training and communication program at Innisfail TAFE College which is designed to provide cross-cultural communication skills for police and also to educate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders for future admission to the Queensland Police Service as recruits.

In addition to that program, we have a training program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers to upgrade their communication and negotiation skills. We are continually integrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander policing issues into our own mainstream pre-service training at our Police Academy. We continually conduct conferences with the Queensland Aboriginal and Islander Legal Service and, despite problems, we enjoy a professional relationship with the Aboriginal community. We employ 47 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander liaison officers. As you know, funding

has been allocated for an additional 47 officers throughout the State.

Mr PURCELL: You will find this at page 14 of Budget Paper No. 1. The Treasurer will be quite pleased that I am referring to his Budget Speech. There is concern amongst the community regarding the perceived escalation of criminal activity in the community. How does this Budget assist operational police and how does it address community concerns regarding the increase in the crime rate?

Mr BRADY: I invite Mr Aldrich as the senior officer in operational policing to make another contribution.

Mr ALDRICH: The Budget provides further assistance in a number of areas. In the Domestic Violence Prevention Unit, increased information technology will lead to the identification more readily of hot spots and will now allow us to direct our resources to those hot spots. We have already produced and distributed a number of brochures on women's safety issues. In the near future—in July—the first group of television advertisements will appear addressing women's safety issues. We have a whole range of similar programs.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank any non-Committee members of the Legislative Assembly who have contributed to this session of the Committee's hearings. I also place on record the Committee's thanks to the Minister and his officers for their attendance. The Committee's hearings are now adjourned and will resume at 7.30 p.m.

The Committee adjourned at 6.32 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 7.32 p.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND
CORRECTIVE SERVICES**

In Attendance

Prof. Patrick Weller, Chairperson
 Mr Keith Hamburger, Director-General
 Mr Stan Macionis, Deputy Director-General
 Mr Ian Stewart, Assistant Deputy Director-General
 Mr Wayne Shennan, Director, Audit and Investigations
 Mr Gary Taylor, General Manager, Finance and Administration
 Mr Peter Rule, General Manager, Human Resources
 Mr Neil McAllister, Principal Adviser, Policy, Research and Analysis
 Mr Gavin Wright, General Manager, Operations Support Custodial
 Mr Brian Stewart, Director-General
 Dr Leo Keliher, Deputy Director-General
 Mr John Sosso, Acting Commissioner
 Ms Carolyn Burlew, Director, Operational Services
 Ms Leigh Roach, Executive Manager, Policy Branch
 Mr Geoff Skerritt, Commissioner
 Mr Bob Barchard, Deputy Commissioner, Rural Operations
 Mr Chris McCombe, Deputy Commissioner, Operations
 Dr Gerry FitzGerald, Commissioner
 Mr Gerard Lawler, Deputy Commissioner
 Mr Ian Boddice, Manager, Support Services
 Ms Susan Bradshaw, Executive Director
 Mr Mike Lewis, Acting Director, Finance
 Mr Bernie Elder, Acting Management Accountant
 Mr John Parsons, Management Accounting Officer
 Mr Dennis Jones, Management Accounting Officer
 Mr Mark Douglas, Acting Financial Accounting Officer
 Mr Alan Dayman, Acting Financial Accounting Officer
 Mr Dennis Bray, Acting Director, Facilities and Asset Management
 Mr Ken Hawkins, Manager, Personnel Services
 Ms Vivian Thelander, Director, Information Management
 Mr Ian Hess, Acting Director, Human Resource Management
 Mr Michael Kinnane, Executive Director

Mr Phil Perrow, Operations Officer
 Ms Fiona McKersie, Acting Director, Operational Policy and Planning Unit
 Mr Alan Brunner, Acting Director, CHEM Unit
 Ms Julie Ling, Director
 Mr Lloyd Lacey, Manager, Policy
 Mr Doug Angus, Acting Executive Director
 Mr George McDonald, Executive Director
 Mr Ken Cullum, Deputy Director, State Emergency Services
 Mr John Baker, Manager, Volunteer Marine Rescue

Queensland Emergency Services

The CHAIRMAN: The hearings of Estimates Committee B are now resumed. The next item for consideration is Queensland Emergency Services and the time allotted is two hours. For the information of the new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15 second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of these time limits.

As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from Government members, and so on in rotation. The Sessional Orders also require equal time to be afforded to Government and non-Government members. Therefore, when a time period has been allotted which is less than 40 minutes, that time will be shared equally. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they answer a question. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Queensland Emergency Services to be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Mr Burns, is it your wish to make a short introductory statement in relation to this office?

Mr BURNS: I do.

The CHAIRMAN: Or do you wish to proceed directly to questioning?

Mr BURNS: I will make a statement.

The CHAIRMAN: The Committee would ask you to limit that statement to approximately two minutes.

Mr BURNS: At the outset tonight, I want to nail the lie being peddled about the so-called missing \$40m in local community funds allegedly stolen by the Queensland Ambulance Service. When the new Statewide Queensland Ambulance Service was created in July 1991, a total of \$7.424m, not \$40m, was held in trust funds belonging to former local QATB committees. Under the legislation establishing the Queensland Ambulance Service, all trust fund moneys of former QATB committees were required to be transferred to the relevant local ambulance

committee in the area. Where there is no LAC, funds are held in trust for the respective communities.

When LACs are reconstituted, the money is returned to the local communities through the LAC. There has been a very deliberate attempt to confuse those trust moneys held by LACs with QATB committee general funds. QATB committee general funds largely comprise subscriber revenue and Government grants for operational funds; in other words, money for day-to-day operations such as paying the wages, buying the petrol and repairing the tyres. QATB general funds of \$19.16m, not \$40m, were transferred to the Queensland Ambulance Service according to the legislation.

Prior to the transfer of general funds, local committees were given the opportunity to identify their cash holdings within the general fund and to stipulate the purpose for which the money was to be used. The committees were given an assurance that local funds would be applied within the communities which raised them. In his report, the Auditor-General said, "The Auditor is satisfied that all amounts were transferred in accordance with the requirements of the Ambulance Service Act of 1991."

The new QAS has also had to assume responsibility for a number of former QATB committees that were in overdraft and had significant building loans. There can be no complaint over spending money for local motor vehicle replacement to overcome years of neglect by former Governments, which left us with some of the oldest and poorly equipped ambulance vehicles in the country. The QAS is continuing to foster LACs. By appropriate management, community support is increasing. I hope that there is an end to this issue after tonight's hearing.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members. I turn to Mr Littleproud.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Before I go on to the first question, I thank the departmental staff for the preparation of the material that I have. Almost all of my questions will come from the statement that you prepared, with only one question coming from the Budget papers. My first question relates to page 6 on the departmental Estimates statement. It is about the Consolidated Fund. On page 7, note No. 3 says that corporate services costs will not be allocated to the Ambulance Service and State Fire Service Trust Funds in 1994-95 and that those costs will be recovered from the trust funds on a user-charge basis and will be treated as credit to vote items within the Corporate Service Program. Could you enlarge on that for me?

Mr BURNS: No. I will pass it straight to the Ambulance Commissioner and ask him to enlarge on it for you. It is page 6. Do you want the Director-General to do it?

Dr FITZGERALD: Yes, the Director-General.

Mr STEWART: The situation with the creation of the department in October 1993 meant that funding came from corporate services in the former Department of Consumer Affairs. That was combined with the vote that was already provided for the

corporate services of the Bureau of Emergency Services and some additional funding that was approved by Cabinet in November or December of 1993. Those three sums combined to form the pool of funds which has been maintained at that level for the 1994-95 year.

When I took duty, one of the difficulties was trying to work out how to allocate equitably the corporate service funds across the programs and then, in the future, to ensure that some of the benefits from savings would go to the major areas that created them. For example, if a payroll system is put in place for the Ambulance Service and that system results in significant savings in corporate services, we would want that to be credited to the Ambulance Service component of the department rather than to be spread over other areas.

The reason why some of the figures in the Estimates are different this year to last year is that we started by allocating the corporate services costs on an operational headcount between each of the services, divisions or programs. Next year, we will have refined that so that the cost drivers which are driving the corporate services costs for each program are fully identified. Then we can identify the savings and they can be credited to each of the operational divisions that have caused the savings to occur.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I understand the user-charge principle and the way in which costs will be charged against that section of the Bureau of Emergency Services which uses the service. That is fair enough. The next question relates to two statements. First of all, page 35 of Budget Paper No. 4, which is the Capital Works statement, states—

"Program Area 024 Public Safety

An amount of \$10.5 million including a special funding enhancement of \$8.4 million to the Queensland Emergency Services in 1994-95 will provide for new and replacement ambulance stations and the upgrading of several others throughout the State."

I then refer you to Budget Paper No. 1, which is the Budget Speech. I refer to page 7, the fourth paragraph down. I will wait for you.

Mr BURNS: They have to find it for you. We have killed a few trees getting ready for this. The Environment Department Estimates it is not.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The fourth paragraph down on page 7 states—

"An additional \$15 million will be allocated to provide new and upgraded ambulance stations and new equipment for ambulance and urban and rural fire services. \$11 million will be funded from the Budget and the rest from increases in user charges."

I appreciate that that paragraph refers to ambulance and urban and rural fire services and that the other paragraph refers only to ambulances. However, one paragraph mentions \$10.5m and the other refers to \$11m from the Budget in capital

works. Is there any variation in the figures you are quoting, or is it just that I have not read it properly?

Mr BURNS: I do not think you have read it properly. We asked consolidated revenue for \$11m, which they gave us, and we asked for an increase in ambulance user charges, to which they agreed. As far as the money is concerned—of that \$11m, not all of it went to the ambulance. An amount of \$1.7m went to rural fires and \$885,000 went to the counter disaster organisation, and that left us with around—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: \$8.4m, I think it is.

Mr BURNS: That left us with \$8.4m to put into the capital works fund there. There is some money that comes to the Ambulance Service as capital works that we did not spend. I am sure you are going to ask us about Toowoomba and places such as that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You have picked me in one.

Mr BURNS: In one case, \$1m was left over from underspending. In other cases, we are selling a few buildings. For example, everybody wants to buy the ambulance station in Cairns. We have been offered \$2.25m for it. In fact, apparently someone is going to sue us because we did not accept their offer. We decided to go out to tender because we thought we might get a little bit more. It will probably cost as much as \$2m to rebuild in Cairns, because we will have to build a very large station there.

In my own area at Wynnum, there is a station that is over 100 years of age. There is a proposal to sell off that station and two buildings next door. Unfortunately, someone has slapped a heritage tag on the station, so I do not know that we will get as much money as we thought we were going to. There is also the moneys from the LACs that are held in trust, where they have put some money aside towards stations. That adds towards the capital. In the case of Wynnum—I cannot remember the figure—there is some money in the LAC account, and we will recoup some money from selling the property. Eventually, we will spend a substantial sum on building a new station. There is no discrepancy in the figures. The money is there. As we move through the questions tonight, I am pretty certain that we will tidy all of that up for you.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The next question relates to page 39 of Budget Paper No. 4 and relates to the land purchase at Hervey Bay. I am aware that some months ago you made an announcement about the construction of a second fire station there. You have allocated \$306,000 for that purpose to come out of this year's Budget.

Mr BURNS: But we have to go and buy the land. For example, in this year's Budget there is an allocation of \$1m for an ambulance station in Emerald, but in that amount is a substantial land component that has not yet been purchased. It is a bit of a pity, because sometimes when we make an announcement that we are going to look for something, the fellows are sitting on the fence waiting for us to come along. They are aware of the announcement, and they know the money is there. We had this money coming, so we made the

announcement. I do not think we have purchased the land at this stage. The land is still to be purchased.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: But you had him locked in, because I understand the position is on the northern end of the bay; is that right?

Mr BURNS: Yes. We are pretty much locked in ourselves, of course, in that area. That is where we want to site that next station. We will buy the land, and we promise that we will build the station. That process is under way.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: For the interests of continuity, I might pursue the issue of Hervey Bay a bit further. You would be aware, as I am, that there was a strong feeling within the community that they would like a 24-hour manned service. You have been up there to talk to them. The other decision you have made is to buy the second station and have it manned by auxiliaries. I understand that Gympie is smaller than Hervey Bay but it has a 24-hour manned service. Is your decision with regard to Hervey Bay a trend for the future?

Mr BURNS: No, not at all. Prior to my becoming the Minister—and remember that I became the Minister only on 18 October last year, so many of these decisions were not mine—for some years now, the union and the Fire Service have been undertaking what they call risk mapping or standards of fire cover. They have produced a document which I am about ready to take to Cabinet which should lay down a plan on how to man and equip fire stations. Everybody wants 24-hour stations; everybody wants full-time fire people sitting there. However, if that were the case, the sorts of charges that we would have to impose would not be the sorts of charges that are included in this Budget. Everybody wants to achieve that level of staffing by pressure. I cannot let Hervey Bay or anybody else decide the manning for a station by running a lot of newspaper stories. If I do so, people will say, "Burns is nice and weak. Next week we will run a big campaign and he will re-man it." If that occurs, in the end I will have to take people away, because once the Budget has been delivered, we do not receive any further funding.

Decisions cannot be taken in that way. The best way to approach it is through risk mapping. When the PSMC looked at it, they said, "It is a proposal that will have far-reaching effects, because it will be the basis on which you argue with these towns about what they should and should not get. You better make certain it is right." So we hired some consultants. They have been through it, and they now say that the risk mapping methodology is correct. I am prepared to go to Cabinet on it. I must say this: it will take five to 10 years to implement it, because it will mean in some cases closure of stations; in other cases it will mean changes to staffing.

It is true, as you said, that some people have very good services because they had a fire board that raised a lot of money, and they provided full-time, 24-hour services. Others had a fire board with a different money-raising attitude, where they have auxiliaries. Others have part auxiliaries, part full-time; others have just volunteers. It will take a while to sort out a program. There will be some

industrial fights over it, too. We will probably start with some pilot programs and implement them in the major areas—Townsville, the Gold Coast, Brisbane and areas such as that. Before we do it, we have to use the money we have been given this year to buy some big pumpers and big equipment. It is not much use talking about putting extra men in there if you do not have the equipment to reach the high-rise buildings or the new supermarkets and things that are being constructed today.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The flipside is that there are other places out there, as you have agreed, that have an excellent service with 24-hour manning. Following the risk management assessment, such services may be downgraded.

Mr BURNS: Most certainly. I would think we would have to do it by allowing people to retire—the voluntary early retirement and things like that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Natural attrition.

Mr BURNS: Or offer them transfers. The younger ones might be prepared to accept a transfer to the more exciting stations where more fires occur. Fire fighters like fighting fires. It is that sort of profession. They join the service because that is what they want to do. One sees them trying to transfer to districts in which more fires occur rather than sitting around all day.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Point taken. Places such as Gympie and Warwick are probably good cases in point.

Mr BURNS: The Commissioner might like to say something about risk mapping.

Mr SKERRITT: I understand that people are anxious about the response strategies that we have been talking about. However, in the hours between 11 p.m. and 7 a.m. in Hervey Bay, there are six structural fires per year on average. To have permanent fire fighters on evening duty and sleeping for that level of activity could be regarded as being financially irresponsible. I do not consider that 24-hour permanent staffing is warranted in Hervey Bay at the present time. I will quote to you some examples from interstate. Lismore has almost the same population as Hervey Bay. I can tell you that we have risk mapped it, and it has almost the same risk profile and approximately the same number of fire calls. It has two permanent officers. They are volunteers, who are exactly the same as our auxiliaries. Orange has a population of 29 000, one day work permanent officer and auxiliaries.

Mr BURNS: What does Hervey Bay have?

Mr SKERRITT: It has 13 permanent officers. The number of calls received at Hervey Bay fire station in 1992-93 was approximately 260, and 40 per cent of those were false alarms. The next largest group would be grass and bushfires. There were 36 structural fires for the year. That is not considered a heavy workload.

The present financial situation is that the Hervey Bay Fire Service is close to a break-even situation; that is, annual revenue is almost equal to annual expenditure, but it does not take into consideration administrative costs, capital

depreciation, training and corporate service support. Any further expansion in staffing would result in additional expenditure on salaries.

Mr BURNS: Could I break in there? Brian, you know and I know that the money raised in the town cannot just be spent on fires, because little towns would get nothing. It is the same as raising petrol tax money and things like that. It is spread across the community. We would not talk about payroll tax or things like that. We cannot accept that argument, because if as politicians we do accept it, some of the people in some of our towns will miss out and others will have Rolls Royce services. It is a matter of spreading the money across the services. That is a good argument locally when they want to get to you emotionally and nail you to the wall.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will close the issue there by saying that you have a sell job to do up there. The next question comes from your Estimates statement, page 8, and it is all about the allocation for operational expenses. I can appreciate that the service has to recover what it sees as its cost per hour when it goes out on any sort of service. However, I wish to put forward a proposal here. I am aware that there are many community organisations out there, such as show societies, camp drafts and sporting fixtures, that are forced to have an ambulance vehicle and staff present at their functions. In some instances, they find your charges per hour pretty horrendous. Where they have auxiliaries who are prepared to donate their time, would you consider that the charge levy by the QAS be only for the vehicle that is being used?

Mr BURNS: We would be only too pleased to talk. We have talked to the show society groups over it and we have had a look at it. This is an area that has hurt us a lot. The people who were raising money for the Ambulance Service said that all of a sudden they had to pay for the show society or the rodeo. We sent our officers to talk about to them about it. The first thing that we should do is to let the local officer make the decision. An important point that needs to be accepted is that our ambulance may go to these functions and stay there, but if there is a major accident down the road, we ought to be able to send that ambulance there. Some people would argue that we should stay at the function all day.

In addition do that, there is an opportunity for us to train far more people in first aid and have some honoraries who are able to stay at functions. Your idea about auxiliaries is a good one. We have said that the locals can pay for it, but we have reduced some of the charges that are involved. We have also said that the local officer should make the decision, that he should negotiate with those organisations. I think we can resolve this problem. If you wish to have some input, you would be welcome.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is the answer I wanted. I have already made a request of your district officer at Roma about it. I am pleased to hear that. I think it makes good sense.

Mr BURNS: I am sure that the Commissioner would be pleased to listen to your proposal—not that we will underwrite it here tonight.

Mr FITZGERALD: Gerry FitzGerald, Commissioner of the Ambulance Service. There is actually a review going on about this whole area and a major new policy procedure is being developed. It is being consulted at the moment with show societies, etc. The essence of that is, in general, a reduction of fees. The particular issue you raise, however, is rather a thorny question, that is, if we send out just honoraries, do we charge a different rate than if we send permanent officers? You may understand that that causes some industrial disputation amongst our permanent officers who see a source of income lost or a threat to their jobs. What we have been trying to work on is that, really, in a lot of these incidents, it is written into their terms of engagement, if you like, that they need an ambulance. What they often need is a first aid service rather than an ambulance service. What we are trying to do is to get the local officers, as the Minister has said, to talk with the show societies—not so much the show societies, but some of the others—

Mr BURNS: Sporting clubs.

Mr FITZGERALD: Sporting clubs. We need to really talk to them about providing an on-site first aid service and backing that up with integration into the Ambulance Service.

Mr BURNS: We would like to train some of their officers. It would be a good idea for us. About 12 000 people got certificates last year for first aid, which is a lot of people in Queensland. Training is a fairly good business for the Ambulance Service, because your life could be saved if your son or daughter—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I think we are going along the right track. I will press on to the next question. I am still on page 8, and I think this question still relates to operational expenses. I am talking now about communications. I am very much aware of your plans for district communications centres. You would be aware that there is criticism in various parts of Queensland with regard to the possibility of human error or lack of knowledge of an area other than where the person operating the communication is actually located. There has been some pretty poor instances of resulting mishaps where people felt that their lives were endangered. On the other hand, you, as a service, come up with the argument that it corrects operational deficiencies and that response times are pretty good. Do you think you still have some way to go down the track?

Mr BURNS: I think the big thing we have to do is educate people to give the right information to the Ambulance Service. The other day, a woman rang up and said, "There's a fellow outside PRD Realty, I think he's had a heart attack", and then hung up. If you are using district communications, PRD Realty could be in five towns in the area. In that instance, luckily enough we were able to get other information and get to the man. However, the concept is good, the problem is educating the locals.

Another point of concern is that a lot of the people who we employ in the Ambulance Service are no longer locals. The 30 people who we will put through this next course will all be from around

south-east Queensland, but we will be wanting them to go out into the bush. I was in Eidsvold the other day, and the fellow came from Bundaberg; I was in Biggenden and the fellow came from the Sunshine Coast. These people do not have the amount of local knowledge that the old ambulance fellows who stayed in towns for 30 or 40 years have.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Presently, there has been a fair bit of movement within your service, and that is not contributing to it. But you will probably overcome some of your problems where these people get a chance to pick up local knowledge.

Mr BURNS: One of the problems is that—

The CHAIRMAN: The 20-minute block time has expired.

Mr BURNS: Can I just finish that question?

The CHAIRMAN: You may, Minister.

Mr BURNS: When I was in Biggenden, the young fellow said to me that he does 17 cases a month there. He said that he had to get to a place like Bundaberg that does 600 or 700 cases, or whatever the numbers are. He said that if he did not get to do a heart-start or to use a defibrillator, or never get into road rescue much, he would lose his skills. He said that he did not want to stay in the same place for a long time. The old ambulance officer in Biggenden just wanted to be an ambulance officer and live his life out there. For the new ambulance officers, it is a career service now. They see it is an opportunity to go somewhere. They do training because they want to get into the system and they want to be mobile. There is not much we can do about it. We cannot say, "We will employ you and you must stay there".

Mrs BIRD: Page 15 of the Department Estimates statement shows that \$4.4m is to be spent on the replacement of aged ambulance vehicles. How will this affect the age of the existing ambulance fleet and how many vehicles will this pay for?

Mr BURNS: At present, we have 242 vehicles of various categories in the fleet which have been in service in excess of eight years. With a similar Budget for 1995-96 to what we have this year, we could reduce that down to at least eight years. The fleet is old. The problem with them is that parts are hard to get. In addition to that, the new modern fibreglass, better bodies are far better for them, so we need to work on getting more of them. We need to get the old ones out of the service. Next year, for example, we will have 28 class 1 stretcher vehicles. One of the problems we have is that Ford are no longer making those big F100 and 250 chassis that we use. They no longer make them, so we have been building a fibreglass body that sits on the back. You buy a new chassis, you put this thing on the back and you work from there. The Ambulance Service—and Gerry might like to talk on this—has done a good job in getting over to a new, more modern type of vehicle. We are using Falcons and we are now using a stretch Holden, but it is a single stretcher vehicle. Gerry, do you want to add to that, especially about the age?

Mr FITZGERALD: As of the end of last year, there were 242 which were over eight years old,

which is broadly considered within Australia as the optimal or maximum age of an ambulance vehicle beyond which the repairs and maintenance start making the vehicle uneconomic to run. The amount of money that is set aside this year will purchase 90 new ambulances, they will be a mix of 4-wheel drive class 1, which is what we consider two berths, two stretcher ambulances and class 2 or single stretcher ambulance vehicles. Clearly, that is going to start significantly reducing that backlog of aged vehicles.

Mr BURNS: Leo Keliher just sent me a note that says that last year we replaced a 21-year old ambulance in Roma. It had reached its majority. We pensioned it off.

Mrs BIRD: The cost of the ambulance now, how does it compare with what you have been paying in the past and what has been done to reduce those costs?

Mr BURNS: I think it is \$100,000. It is very expensive at present. I will always ask Gerry to answer that. As I said, they have been very creative. In fact, some of the work that they have done in relation to Holdens is being copied now in other States. I will flick it over to the Commissioner.

Dr FITZGERALD: Up until recently, the cost of a Class 1 ambulance vehicle was \$80,000. Unfortunately, Ford, which have made the cab chassis up until now, are going out of production in Australia. After this current build of ambulance vehicles, we are looking at having to import a powerhouse, if you like, for the major vehicle. However, as the Minister mentioned, there has been a lot of creative work done by the New South Wales ambulance based on a Commodore vehicle, which enables the actual cabin, if you like, at the back to be bolted onto a utility cab chassis and just replaced after 40 000 kilometres. So for the price of half of one of the big vehicles we can get two of the smaller vehicles and get three lives out of them. As you can imagine, when you sell the 40 000-kilometre vehicle, you get your money back at that stage.

Mr BURNS: Some of our old ones you would not get anything for—they are that old. One of the reasons why we are building a new Maleny station—if you ever drive through Maleny at present, the new station is nearly finished—you will see that our ambulance is always parked out on the road because it cannot fit in the station. The big new ones will not fit in the old station.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer you to the Estimates—page 38. Under the Outlook, the seventh dot point down from the top, in relation to the provision of portable hand-held radios—I guess that especially considering a particularly sad incident that happened this year—what amount of money are you spending on hand-held radios, and is it envisaged that all fire officers will eventually be provided with these?

Mr BURNS: Before I pass that to the Fire Commissioner, can I just say that I do not think we should get into the Southport issue tonight. I must say thanks to Brian Littleproud. He has been very good in relation to the Southport issue. We did a whole inquiry into the Southport issue ourselves. We

have finished that inquiry. We have talked to the Coroner's people and we have handed over our information there. We have not in any way tried to give it any publicity, and I do not think we should. It is a matter for the Coroner's Court and some determination at that time. I am sure the Fire Commissioner can talk about the amount of money we are going to spend on it and why he sees them as important.

Mr SKERRITT: The provision of portable hand-held radios for our firefighters is an important part of our Budget for this coming financial year. An amount of \$100,000 is programmed for expenditure on those particular units. This will provide approximately an extra 100 portable radios.

These units are particularly important to ensure that there is communication when our firefighters enter, in breathing apparatus, a building, to be able to maintain contact with their officers and controllers on the outside of a building to ensure that people know where they are, what they are doing and when they are due out. It is an integral part of our operational management systems. A considerable amount of training has been carried out using this equipment. This initiative will provide more crews with fire ground communications.

Included in the purchase will be a number of intrinsically safe hand-held radios, which have also been budgeted to cater for explosive environments. These will not be on every vehicle, but certainly selected vehicles will be equipped with intrinsically safe radios in areas where they are likely to come in contact with explosive atmospheres.

There will also be a maintenance program introduced. One of the criticisms of the existing systems was the batteries and the battery life. The report to me by our technical staff indicates that, through better maintenance programs, the purchasing of better quality batteries and training on how to maintain radios after they have been used in fires—because clearly they are subject to water damage during firefighting—will improve that situation. We want our firefighters to be confident in the equipment that they are using. We already have approximately 360 portable radios throughout the service, and 34 of those are intrinsically safe at present. We also have 536 mobile two-way radios fitted to appliances throughout the State.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: There are two linked items on pages 34 and 37 of the Estimates in relation to the rural and urban breakdown. On page 34, there is a footnote that says that the rural operation costs are now provided within the other major activities. Can you give an idea of the expenditure in the rural area—whether it is an increase or decrease? Part of that then links with page 37. The top table, No. 2, talks about the increase of rural fire brigade appliances but does not give an idea of urban. Could you give us an idea of both sides of those coins?

Mr BURNS: While I am talking about rural, the Fire Chief can look up urban. The Queensland Fire Service's Rural Fire Division has a base Budget of \$2.63m. This has been increased over the years in line with the CPI. As a result of the Canning report, we provided some funds for a three-year period for

safety equipment provided to volunteer firefighters in 1992-93, 1993-94 and 1994-95. This is the last year of it. That amounted to about \$3.22m. That gave them quite a bit of safety equipment. It was very helpful to Bob Barchard, the Rural Fire Chief.

This year, we had that very disastrous wildfire in New South Wales. As a result of that, we did a fire audit not only in the Rural Fire Brigade but in National Parks, Forestry, Environment and Heritage and others that have parklands and things like that. We asked the Cabinet for more money. The rural fire audit has not gone to Cabinet at this stage. We are sufficiently aware that it is going to recommend more money. We asked for more money, and we got the \$1.7m extra, which Bob has been able to spend. Can I let Bob talk for a few minutes? He is sitting behind me. I am not too sure what the arrangements are.

The CHAIRMAN: All Bob has to do is take a seat at the table, identify himself and away he goes.

Mr BARCHARD: I am Bob Barchard, Deputy Commissioner, Rural Fire Operations, Queensland Fire Service. A fairly significant sum has been committed to capital works for rural fires this year. The \$1.7m that has been allocated over and above the normal Budget forms part of a \$3.265m allocation for capital works programs. That represents equipment and facilities this year for our Rural Fire Brigades.

There is \$1.650m, which will purchase two rural fire tankers, 34 rural fire appliances, 10 firefighting trailers, and 25 rural fire stations will be subsidised. In addition, \$180,000 goes to brigade radios and \$300,000 to protective dress. In total, \$1.6m will go to current grants and subsidies, which will cover general funds for the nuts and bolts type of equipment for Rural Fire Brigades. Last year, 51 rural firefighting appliances were purchased or subsidised. This year, there will be a further 36 new appliances purchased, in addition to 10 urban appliances which will be refurbished for Rural Fire Brigades.

Mr BURNS: On the urban side, we will let the Fire Chief come back.

The CHAIRMAN: Hold it a minute. We have a two-part question, and you are going to run out of time. I might ask Mr Sullivan to direct the second question to you.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Could you tell us about the urban fire appliances and what changes there will be to that?

Mr SKERRITT: The Queensland Fire Service situation in relation to its fleet has been very serious since at least July 1990, when the Fire Service was formed. At present, the age of our fleet is also a critical factor. A study done in New South Wales fire brigades by Pat Coyne and Associates indicated that 15 years is an optimum age for appliances. Of the Queensland Fire Service fleet, there is somewhere in the order of in excess of 180 vehicles older than 15 years. Again, as has already been stated, there are problems in maintenance because of spare parts problems.

During this coming financial year there has been a dramatic increase in the ability through the increase

to our funding to improve our capital replacement program for major fire appliances. While the number has not dramatically increased over this year compared with last year, it needs to be borne in mind that fire appliances of different kinds are very expensive units. For example, we will be purchasing two high-reach aerial appliances, which are planned to replace units at Brisbane and Southport—these units typically run into a cost of approximately \$1m each—and four telescopic aerial pumpers, which are mid-range telescopic aerial units—more suitable for provincial cities—to replace units in the northern region of Brisbane and the north coast regions. These are very cost-effective units, and we are going to buy four of these. There are the standard urban pumpers, and these typically come in at around a quarter of a million dollars. We are buying ten of these for the cities and larger provincial towns. For the country centres we are now getting into the purchase of a more effective fleet of pumper tankers rather than sending out typical urban appliances because in the country areas they have grass and scrub fires, so there will be 14 pumper tankers. These cost in the order of \$100,000 each.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: A quick question before I pass on to my colleague. Is it true that a number of the fire service vehicles are fitted with fax machines but they are rarely used?

Mr BURNS: I will deflect that to Geoff.

Mr SKERRITT: It is true that a number of our vehicles are fitted with facsimile machines. They are an integral and important part of our operations. We specifically have responsibility for chemical incidents. It is not possible for all of our fire fighters to be expert at chemistry. Notwithstanding the fact that we have very valuable support from the CHEM unit and from my colleagues in Statewide Services Division, there are occasions when the firefighters are at chemical incidents on their own. Our chemical emergency response vehicles have fitted to them facsimile machines, and so do our BA HAZMAT vehicles and some of our rescue tenders so our that we can fax chemical information—and other information, I might add—direct from our communication centres to the field. So they are a very, very valuable and important asset. It is true to say that there is some equipment that we have that is not used every day but is very useful.

Mr BURNS: Mike Kinnane from the CHEM Unit might like to talk about that. I think it is because of sensitivity that we use the fax sometimes and not all the time.

Mr KINNANE: I am Michael Kinnane, Executive Director, Statewide Services, which covers the Chemical Hazards Emergency Management Unit. As the Fire Commissioner has mentioned, the CHEM Unit has instituted a 24-hour on-call chemical advisory service, which enables scientific advisers not only in south-east Queensland but also in 22 localities throughout the State to attend the incidents of chemical incidents and fires to provide on-the-scene specialist scientific advice to the Scene Commander from the Fire Service and also assistance and information to the Scene Coordinator from the Police Service. That

information also includes data that is available on databases from the head office and also can be transmitted to one of the RACE vehicles based in south-east Queensland. It simply means that we can now access this very valuable accurate information at the scene of the fire for the use of the Fire Service.

Mr BURNS: The Everhard Industries fire proved the success of having RACE people available when everybody was talking about evacuating the whole community. These people were able to get there with the manager and sort out very quickly that the smoke was dirty and black, but it was not toxic as the paper said next morning.

Mr PURCELL: I refer to your own papers. On page 31 of those Forward Estimates, I note there for the Counter Disaster Management you have less to spend in your Forward Estimates than you had last year. Will this mean any less protection for people against disasters here in Queensland? Could you give us a breakdown of the number of people working in the disaster area in this State and how they are employed?

Mr BURNS: The SES story is a good story this year. There are a couple of things that we are doing. I will leave the Budget side of it for the Director-General to handle in a moment. One of the good stories is the couple of hundred thousand dollars special for cadets under 16 years of age. As you know, everyone is looking for volunteers. We are looking for young people. I think it is a good opportunity to train young people in skills. Our SES people can abseil. They are very good at protective work, boating and things of that nature, so there is a lot of work there for them. We have had an increase in the SES from \$3.8m to \$4.13m. In addition, the big increase in the area—we are going to put a couple of the area managers on who will be transferred to SES for restructuring. Counter Disaster is the group that really runs the State Emergency Services, under Alan Windsor. The cadet scheme is a very positive scheme, but the other scheme is to increase the subsidies to local authorities. Small local authorities under 300 persons in the SES, we give them \$1,700. We are going to raise that to \$3,000 and we are going to substantially raise the next one—I think it is \$3,200 for the next area, and it grows for three lots. There are three lots of subsidy. The idea is that we give that to the council in the area to help subsidise the SES at the same time and then we encourage volunteers. This week is Volunteer Awareness Week. We have been running campaigns up and down the State to convince people that these volunteers are really heroes who help out the men and women who are there. There is a substantial amount of work that they do for which we could not pay. Governments could never afford it. But the other two figures are 301 to 499—\$1,900 for the second group and \$2,100 for units over 500 members. So there is a substantial money going out to councils in that SES area.

The CHAIRMAN: We are now one for one. In the spirit of cooperation that has existed so far, I allowed the Minister to go over time with Mr Littleproud's question and also with a non-Government member. We will continue that

practice if no-one minds. The next 20 minutes is given over to non-Government members, and I ask Mr Littleproud for the first question.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Returning to Ambulance Services, I was talking before about your Capital Program. I note the \$10.5m provided for ambulance and capital works included in what is termed a special funding enhancement of \$8.4m to the QES in 1994-95. Was any of this amount carried over from the year before, or is it new funding?

Mr BURNS: The \$8.4m is new money, and that most certainly is not carried over. I am certain that there is some money carried over from the year before, and I think it is \$1m.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Toowoomba would be a case in point?

Mr BURNS: Yes, Toowoomba would be a case in point. As you know, Toowoomba has been running for some time. Last year we had some problems with councils and the sale of a house and things like that, but everybody knows that we had a 1991-92 problem financially when some capital works money was used for wages and things like that. People have been dealt with as a result of their particular indiscretions, if we can use it that way, at that time. We have had to recover from that. What we have done this year with the extra capital works money that we have received from Consolidated Revenue, we will call tenders for Toowoomba next week. You can help us put the ad in the paper to make certain that it is done. In relation to all of those commitments that we have made, we can now meet them. The money is there and the Budget review people said we must dedicate that \$8.4m to capital works. Of course we had our normal capital works.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You can give me those other figures of the carry over later on, so I can prepare more questions, if you do not mind, Mr Minister. I turn to page 12 of the Estimates statements, and it is with regard to staffing for training and development. I noticed that you have transferred some of these things to Ambulance Support Services. There have been comments coming to me that in fact more and more of the ambulance personnel are being asked to do their training in their own time; whereas, before there was a trend to do the training in their working hours. Can you give an assurance that there is not a shift in policy.

Mr BURNS: I think we will let the Commissioner answer about the shift in policy. It is true that it is very difficult for a lot of the older people. I think that we have to be pretty grateful that a lot of our old ambulance blokes who have been in the service for a long, long while are prepared to undertake the Associate Diploma training. We really need to lift the training standards of the service. We had a particularly difficult case out in the far west, where we had a fellow who had worked for 14 years and could not pass those sorts of standards. You do not need that. No-one wants that type of person pulling up when a relative has been seriously injured and needs some help.

We have to improve the standards. We are raising them to national standards, and we are going through a very intensive training program. In fact, prior to my time, we went through negotiation with the union and agreed on a memorandum of understanding that ties us down to trying to get them all trained by the end of this year. That has created tremendous problems for those blokes on the job, because we have had to take a lot of people off the job. We have had pressures put on them.

I have just received a note that we have got \$6m for QAS training in 1994-95. We spent \$6.8 last year, so it is a little bit less this year than last year. But we have got a very good training system. The training system is now winning awards for the work that is done out in the field. As far as the difficulties with staffing people and having to do the training on the job—I think I should ask the Commissioner, who is the operations man, to answer that part of it.

Mr FITZGERALD: Over the last three or four years, the Ambulance Service has been going through a massive upskilling of its work force, whereby all of our officers have been offered the opportunity to train up to the national standard, which is an Associate Diploma of Health Science, through TAFE. The decision was made that all the current serving officers would do so, whereas in other States the current serving officers were often just given recognition for their time and given a new qualification, or a pseudo qualification. That has obviously been a massive effort, and it has reduced some of the operational availability and caused some problems.

However, linked to that qualification is a significant increase in salary as well. They are actually promoted to the rank of Qualified Ambulance Officer. So I believe that it is not unreasonable to expect them, as most other people in terms of gaining qualifications and gaining an increased income, to put in some commitment in their own time on that sort of training. New officers coming into the service will largely do most of their block-release training in company time, if you like, but obviously they will still be required to do assignments and other study out of hours.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will follow on with staffing, Minister. In Budget Paper No. 3, you make a statement that 33 per cent of your staff will have the diploma by 30 June 1994. Then there is a statement in this Estimates document which says that the majority of officers will be obtaining an Associate Diploma of Applied Science (Ambulance) by 31 December 1994. In light of that statement, I would like to bring to something to your attention. I understand that the Regional Training Coordinator in Q3, which is the Downs and South West, today sent out a memorandum to officers in that area in which he said that, on his assessment of the QAS protocols for coronary care, drug abuse treatment and intermuscular injections, three-quarters of the officers in Q3 are incompetent. He directed these officers to bring their qualifications up to standard and, until they do, he says that they should only go out on duty with a properly qualified assistant. Are you aware of that statement going out today?

Mr BURNS: I think Wally Lewis would not be able to pass one as quickly as I am going to pass this one.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Make sure that you are not offside, though.

Mr BURNS: Gerry, you are on.

Mr FITZGERALD: I am not aware of that statement that has been made today. Obviously, I will make myself aware of it as soon as possible, and have some discussions with the Regional Training Coordinator.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I thought you would. Could I follow up pretty quickly on that? If that is the case, what are the legal ramifications? The situation is that you have had these people out there for quite a while now, and it could be seen that in fact they were not competent, according to the protocols you set. I think you talked about national standards.

Mr BURNS: It would be a worry if you set that out. We expect to get everybody up to a national standard. The sort of figures that we are looking at—we have set ourselves 33 per cent by 31 June, that is, 365; 1 100 by December; and as at June, right now, we have got 244 at the start of the month finished. We have got a lot of people part-way through the course. There are 1 232 we have nominated for the first section. There are a whole lot of people who have done part courses, and we are hoping that we will be able to meet our commitments there. I do not think that we are in any trouble about the trained officers that we have got. They all meet a standard, but they do not meet the standard that we desire, and the standard that we desire is a national standard. There was virtually none when this program started.

So we have had to develop a whole training area, spend a lot of money, and we are getting there. But we will have to have a look, too, because we do rely a lot more on our ambulance blokes in the bush than we do in the city. They do not have the backups that city people do. An ambulance fellow in Winton told me that he had been in Southport. The first time he went to Winton he said that he was called out for an accident and he called for a crane. They said, "We haven't got a crane, you've got to do it yourself." He said that in Southport, if someone sneezed, he called for backup ambulance people and they were there everywhere to help him. Once he got out there, he learned about being self-reliant and having to do it. So those blokes just do not have that. That is why we say that when we get to the paramedics, we are going to try to get as many as we can in the country areas before we start to shove them into where there is a hospital, or they know that they are in the shadow of a hospital, when there is an accident.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will carry on with staffing. I want to talk about your suburban stations, because I have been aware of criticism coming from your own officers that when you get to a night shift, there are only two officers on duty because you have got a clamp on overtime, and if one of those people reports in sick, you invariably close that station. So that particular part of Brisbane is covered

by another station. I understand that, when drivers are out on Code 1 incidents, they are complaining that they have to drive longer distances, with the sirens going and the inherent risks that occur with that. The suggestion was put to me that if in fact you were to get rid of those docs—and I think that you have got rid of the bugs out of the system now—and you made your officers-in-charge the coordinating officers for those stations, you may in fact save money, and that would enable you to use overtime to keep those suburban stations open. Have you got any plans in that regard?

Mr BURNS: Our overtime has been substantial. I will ask the Commissioner to follow me in a moment. District communications helps us a bit in the metropolitan area. It used to be in my particular area that if someone had a heart attack at Carindale, the person had to come from Wynnum to them and the Balmoral Ambulance could be sitting idle not so very far away. What happens now—I think the best way to explain is through anecdotal evidence—I went out to Dayboro to visit the station straight after a major stabbing had occurred at the hotel the night before. I walked into the ambulance station on the Saturday morning and the young fellow was there. I said, "How are you going?" He said, "I had a terrible experience here last night. A bloke got stabbed 28 times in the car park of the hotel." He said, "I was own my own"—it is a one-person station—"and I got called down there." He said, "I have never seen so much blood in all my life." He said, "I was putting pads on him to stop the bleeding and I thought to myself, 'How am I going to get him to hospital? I am going to have him in the back of the car. He is going to die in there while I am driving.'" He said, "Just then, the Petrie Ambulance turned up—two officers—and they said, 'We have been sent to take him away.'" That system of someone centrally sending them out is our lifesaver.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am not against that; it is just a matter of keeping as many suburban stations open as you can.

Mr BURNS: I am of the view that having someone sitting in the station is not what an ambulance service is all about. It is all about having ambulances on the road so that you can help, so that if someone is moving out of his station to service someone here, we can move an ambulance up to take his place. That is part of the system. The old problem was that someone always had to stay behind at the station. The communications system allows everybody to leave the station and go to an accident or go to a problem and we can then, from that central office, start to send people around to cover our weak areas. There are always going to be weak areas. I do not think that in my lifetime or yours we are going to have an optimum Ambulance Service where it does all the things that we want or all the things that the workers want. I think Gerry should probably explain his version of what we should do in the metropolitan area.

Mr FITZGERALD: It is quite interesting that in many of the major cities overseas, ambulances actually do not park at ambulance stations any more; they park on the side of the road, or they park at

hospitals, or they park at convenient locations which are the optimum choice so that they can meet the response times of where the people are.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: They can park at sporting events for nothing.

Mr FITZGERALD: Yes, that is quite appropriate. Unfortunately, we have still got a bit of a concept in Australia that ambulances have to be at ambulance stations and that unless the ambulance is parked there, an ambulance service is not available, whereas really what would be better for the people is having ambulances out roaming the streets and being at a place which is more convenient or closer to where the population is. You are quite right; there are stations where we have been moving resources around at night in the metropolitan area.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Okay. I turn to page 15, Minister, where you talk about items in the major capital works program. You have got a statement there about local Ambulance Committee contributions of \$458,000 to the major capital works. Could you just give us an explanation of that? Are those funds identified out there already, or are they funds that you are going to call on from these committees that are going to be benefiting from your capital works program?

Mr BURNS: The subtotal is \$458,000. Some \$250,000 will come from Charters Towers for its replacement station. It has a constituted LAC; therefore, that would be trust fund money. They will give it to me. The other day, I went to Maleny. We have nearly finished the station there. It should have been finished in May, but rain slowed work a bit. I was handed a check for \$305,000.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Was that money put together since 1 July 1991?

Mr BURNS: No. They had trust funds set aside for buildings. It all came into the central office. As LACs are opened up, we send the money back. We are building a station at Maleny. They gave us \$303,000, which they set aside prior to 1991. They had set aside a little less than that, but there was more when interest was added. They gave us that money. It is similar to the Monto money that has been in all of the headlines. That was \$173,000. We are spending about \$580,000 on their station. They did have \$170,000; I took it off them last year. But if they still had that money, they would have paid their check as part of the process. So \$250,000 came from Charters Towers. There was \$150,000 from the Wynnum station. There was \$8,000 from Dunwich, which will get a replacement station. There was \$50,000 from Kuranda for its station. That gives a total of \$458,000.

In addition, a lot of others help us. We are building in Nanango. From the sale of its assets, we expect to get \$80,000. The LAC expects to give us \$60,000 for equipment and a new station. That was money that they had put aside. The cost of that station is \$529,000. So they will give us \$140,000. They will get a \$529,000 station. Noosa will get \$788,000. It will give us \$9,000. That is all they had saved towards a new station. As I said, Maleny gave us some money. Monto gave us \$204,000. An

estimate for its station is \$570,000. Caboolture's station will cost about \$850,000. We expect to get \$550,000 for the assets of the old station, which is in the heart of the town. We expect to get \$400,000 from the sale of those assets in Wynnum.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Page 16 refers to Trust and Special Funds for the Ambulance Service. An amount of \$12m was allocated last financial year and again this financial year from Queensland Health for interhospital transfers. I want to ask two questions. Firstly, is it correct that at one stage the bookkeeping for the amounts you should have charged Queensland Health were not up to date and that it looked like you were not going to claim the \$12m to which you were entitled?

Secondly, I understand that, if a transfer is over two hours by car, the preference is for aerial ambulance. I understand that in lots of cases people are still going by car when the preferred method is by aeroplane.

Dr FITZGERALD: That \$12m was agreed for introduction in 1993-94 to cover interhospital transfers. There were some negotiations earlier this year—

Mr BURNS: About getting a bit more.

Dr FITZGERALD:— about introducing a user-charge system. The negotiations came to some grief because they started to produce a lot of administrative costs, resulting in the situation that actual money coming across would be reduced by the costs of raising it and transferring it from Queensland Health. So there has been agreement recently that the money should be on an overall service agreement with Health, and that the \$12m would continue to come across.

With respect to the two hour trip by car—that certainly is our general principle. We have linked with Queensland Health through a series of what are termed "clinical coordinators", expert medical professionals, who give advice to our ambulance people about appropriate transportation and clinical care of a patient. Certainly, if any patient is going more than two hours by car, we will contact them. In general, we feel that it is not proper for the patients to be travelling for more than two hours in the back of an ambulance.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Sending people by car also impacts badly on the staff of a local centre. There is probably some impact on the life of your vehicles, too. But it is an impact that you could probably do without.

Dr FITZGERALD: That is particularly so in the south west of the State. In the past they were often travelling for many hours, even for a day or so, by the time they got down to Brisbane and back. It was really quite a dangerous situation. We would prefer to fly these patients out. There is a slight anomaly at the moment in that there is still a different billing arrangement. Fortunately, the patients do not pay any more. But Queensland Health is paying directly for aerial transport through this \$12m for road transports. It is hoped that that anomaly will be fixed by the 1995-96 financial year.

Mr BURNS: Michael Kinnane runs our air service. There is a Statewide Government committee looking at ambulances and our planes.

Mr KINNANE: As a result of the PSMC report of the former Bureau of Emergency Services, the department has commenced a Government aviation committee, which is chaired by our Director-General and made up of heads of departments from five departments. They have actually commissioned an independent consultancy to review the provision and delivery and deployment of Government aviation services right throughout the State.

It would be particularly relevant for me to point out here that of critical importance to that review is the delivery of, for example, helicopter services out to south west of the State. I can report to the Committee that the consultant has been to Roma and is in the process of having a number of discussions with regional health authorities on the Darling Downs together with, of course, other clients in other parts of the State.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I refer to the roles of LACs—and I suppose that I can tie it in with maintenance of buildings, plant and equipment. I understand that a circular was sent out recently to LACs called Priority Enhancement Projects. It talks about calling for the supply of certain things, such as immediate response kits, and so on. Would there not be an expectation that the Ambulance Service would provide these basics, and the enhancements from LACs, rather than being asked to put these basics in?

Mr BURNS: Firstly, you asked about the role of the LACs. We have to do something to improve the role of the LACs. There is no doubt about that. I think LACs feel themselves a bit out of it as a result of the changes from the old QATB. We are very lucky; we have a lot more LACs than we had when we took over the old ambulance boards. They are very good. This year in July there will be a State conference of LACs. We are going to ask them at that stage to elect a couple of people who will help to us to set the public works program in future for stations and things of that nature, so that they will be involved. We will be asking them to write the constitution about their role. Gerry can talk about the circular that went out, because I am unaware of that.

We want to them to raise money, but we also want to have a bit of a say in what they spent it on. It needs to meet the QAS's requirements, otherwise we have some problems.

Dr FITZGERALD: The main reason that the circular was sent out was following a number of meetings that we had local ambulance committees around the State, and they started to ask us just what they could spend the money on and what our priorities would be. We identified a number of things, such as those kits and so on. Determining what LACs spend their money on is really very difficult. Obviously, we do not expect them to spend money on petrol or on the cost of running of vehicles. As we are building up our stocks of vehicles and equipment, a lot of them are quite happy to spend money on things which would ordinarily be the

responsibility of the organisation. And it is really just that interim developmental phase.

Mr PURCELL: Earlier, I asked a question about the number of people employed in counter disaster in this State. How many do we have?

Mr BURNS: I have a standing joke with the Deputy Director-General in relation to this. Whenever they send me out to make a speech at an SES or rural fire function, the number of volunteers in our service changes. We have anywhere from 85 000 to 100 000 in the service, depending on who writes the notes for me. They are never set down along the line. Our permanent staff amounts to 62. That includes all of our operational staff, training officers, area managers, executive directors, and two deputies, as well as four administrative personnel. That is 54 of them. We have one manager of communication.

If you look at your figures, you will find that we had two, but they were brought down before we finished our restructure. The final restructure established one position. We have radio technicians and operations officers. There were eight listed in the document. That is another area in which there have been changes. We have a lot of gear out in the area. We have even got substantial SES communities now right through the Aboriginal communities up in the gulf. There are between 30 000 and 40 000 SES volunteers. We do not keep a day-to-day track of them. As I said before when I was answering you, we are keen to get the young cadet scheme going. We think that is a good way of getting young people into it. We think it is another way of giving young people some training and experience, and it may be helpful in that area of law and order in giving them something to do.

We have a lot of rescue boats. For those of us who are a bit keen on fishing, I see that Finch Hatton is getting a rescue boat. I am not too sure why some of those places need rescue boats. They include Finch Hatton, Miriam Vale, Nanango, Leyburn and Moranbah. They are getting rescue boats. Then a 3.6 metre Halifax—that is a fishing boat—is going to Balonne. There must be yellowbelly out there. There is also Hungerford, Morven, Dajarra, Tambo, Julia Creek and Coolool. Coolool sounds a bit more like it. Rescue trailers are being provided. This is new gear that is going through the system. Some 172 boats and 22 caravans will also be provided. There is a lot of other gear there, right down to single-axle vehicles. Our subsidies in some areas are very substantial. In rural fires especially it is substantial, and in SES as well.

Mr PURCELL: I would like to refer you to a Public Sector Management Commission report wherein the recommendation was to regionalise counter-disaster services throughout Queensland. Could you advise us how far this program of regionalisation has advanced and how much you intend to spend on it this year?

Mr BURNS: It has started. It is under way. There is a proposal for a couple of extra managers to come in. It will entail an additional two staff, the redesignation of other areas, and the sum of \$885,000, as I said earlier, had been allocated in the

Budget. What we need in the State Emergency Service is more trainers. We talk about managers and we call them managers and district coordinators, but really their job is to get the people who volunteer and give them skills. The worst thing that could happen to us is that a lot of volunteers could turn up on the job in a flood or a cyclone where there are live wires and such things and we could lose someone. Our training is very good. As I said, we had Volunteer Awareness Week this week. We were out at the police training centre and young men were doing what Gary Sweet does, namely, running forward down the face of buildings and things such as that. All of that was being shown and it was magic to see our young trainees and the women involved in it.

The districts will operate six regions with the Brisbane and south-east region combined. Our people have it fairly well under way. It will be in place very quickly.

Mrs BIRD: I notice in the departmental Estimates on page 42 that \$1.4m is to be spent on the CHEM Unit. Last year, I spent some time at both demonstrations and the real thing and I thought that the CHEM Unit was fairly efficient and fairly modern. What are you going to do with the \$1.4m?

Mr BURNS: I think this will be an opportunity for Michael Kinnane to tell us where he is spending the money.

Mr KINNANE: I am Michael Kinnane, the Executive Director, Statewide Services Division, covering the CHEM Unit. The Committee might be aware, of course, that there is a provision there for a reduction in funding for the CHEM Unit. The main reason for that is simply the elimination of the carry over from 1992-93 to 1993-94, which was for principally the Gurulmundi Secure Land Fill access road and for an adjustment for Corporate Services costs. For the benefit of the Committee, I indicate that that is the reason why there has been a reduction.

Much of the funding for the Chemical Hazards Emergency Management Unit in 1994-95 will continue to be on the provision of the 24-hour RACE, which is called Response Advice for Chemical Emergencies Project, where we intend to extend the RACE on-call service to 23 localities around the State, and we do expect to be able to recruit some additional volunteer RACE officers to a figure of about 43, and most of those will continue to come from the private sector. We believe it is extremely important to be able to provide that specialist scientific support to the emergency services, principally the Fire Service, at the scene of a chemical incident or a fire. Other provisions in the CHEM Unit funding will continue to be on the provision of joint training for emergency services and police. We intend to extend those forces to local authority officers, particularly environmental officers, from local authorities throughout the State. We have been very proud of the fact that we have had over 4 000 emergency services personnel trained through those courses throughout the State in the last four years. Our principal emphasis in the funding will continue to be the RACE on-call project, joint

training for emergency services, continuation of the public awareness program in relation to chemicals and associated support projects for the emergency services, particularly in relation to geographic information systems.

The whole role of the CHEM Unit is very much focused on providing specialised scientific support to the operational emergency services aimed at enhancing emergency response and maximising the safety of emergency services personnel at the scene of an incident.

Mrs BIRD: Minister, if I could also ask whether included in that—or do they come under another heading—are public education and especially the CHEM Unit telephone referral service. Is that separate to that or is that the same?

Mr BURNS: I will ask Michael to continue with the answer.

Mr KINNANE: Mrs Bird may be referring to the 008 chemical telephone inquiry service that we instituted in December last year, which the Minister launched. You will recall that that is part of the established QDIAL service which has now been operating for some time, which is meant to provide a free call service for people, irrespective of where they live in Queensland, who can ring the number to find out what department and what Government agency can assist them with their inquiry in relation to chemicals. That of course is not to be confused with the Poisons Information Service or the 000 emergency number. There is no particular funding for that. The funding is a continuation under QDIAL.

In relation to public awareness programs, we are looking forward to working closely with the Fire Service with its focus on fire prevention. We believe that there is some room there for some public awareness programs based on the safe use of chemicals in the home, and we are looking forward to an extension of those activities in 1994-95.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer to page 36 of the Estimates. This is under the technical support side of things. The third heading down is "Delivery of Service". One of the items mentioned is technical communications support. Although this is under fire, I remember being with you at one stage when we looked at a problem whereby the police, the fire, the ambulance and the marine safety people in the Torres Strait could not communicate with each other. I would like to ask you a general question about what is being done to coordinate the communication between your particular emergency services and, say, the police.

Mr BURNS: I will flick it to the Fire Chief in a moment. I suppose you can get yourself into trouble talking about what you believe is the way to go, but when you go out to some of these places now, many of our volunteers in the State Emergency Service are also the rural fire blokes; they just change their uniform. You go to one function at one place and they are in a uniform of one colour, and you go next door and they say you have got to wait because they are getting changed from the last function with you. It may be that in some of the smaller communities it is better off having one service. I

think if they report that in the *Courier-Mail* tomorrow I will be run out of town on a rail in a few places around the State. However, it is a better use of the facility.

The same applies to a lot of our services where we put up a mast for the ambulance and then down the road they are talking about putting up a mast for the Fire Service. As an example, there was a major motor vehicle accident south of Sarina and one portion of our service could call the head office in Mackay and the other portion of the service could not even call the people down the road. That is a matter we have to address. We have quite a bit of money in both of these departments for communications this year. Maybe we will ask Geoff first and then Gerry if they want to respond.

Mr SKERRITT: I am Geoff Skerritt, Commissioner of Fire Services. Since the establishment of what was the Bureau of Emergency Services, now the Queensland Emergency Service, there has been the ability for each element within QES to be able to liaise with each other and have available to each other through negotiation and discussion each other's radio channels. If I can speak for my colleague the Ambulance Service Commissioner, I know that ambulances carry police radios within their units and that some fire units are fitted with UHF channel 34. We also have access to channel 2 on VHF and a common channel with SES on channel 1.

During the major bushfires in late 1991, it became clear that one of the benefits of the close working relationship between the elements of the BES—and it is still there with the QES—was the ability of the SES to crank up very quickly additional portable radios and some other more long-range radio equipment for us to be able to use to ensure effective communications. During the early stages of the BES, proposals were put for a joint communications centre with the Queensland Police Service. There are continuing organisational communications with the Queensland Police Service on joint communications.

The CHAIRMAN: Time has now expired.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: What coordination would the Ambulance Service be trying to achieve with the communications with the other services?

Mr BURNS: I will ask Gerry to supplement that.

Dr FITZGERALD: As Mr Skerritt has already said, the ambulances in south-east Queensland carry police radios, which overcomes a problem that existed some time ago whereby police were unable to talk with the ambulance officers. There has also been a major upgrade in ambulance communications throughout the State. We have put a number of repeaters in place throughout the State, which has eliminated a lot of radio black holes or black spots in the State. We have also been having some discussions with the Fire Service about co-locating our communications centres, which will be the major initiative that will reduce some of the problems with communications.

Mr BURNS: Leo has a few points that he wants to make on this issue.

Dr KELIHER: In addition to what Commissioner FitzGerald mentioned, the Fire Service intends to spend \$507,000 this year on upgrading radio links in Mount Isa, Atherton, Mareeba and Cairns and turnout radio links for Gordonvale to Cairns and on improving the Cairns Fire Comm by upgrading it. The Ingham-Townsville link will be improved and the VHF turnout link will be upgraded. Gladstone, Rockhampton, Miriam Vale and Calliope will have alarm monitoring links. The Rockhampton Fire Comm will be upgraded with a voice logging recorder. The Mackay VHF will have a radio upgrade. Toowoomba will have a combined Queensland Ambulance Service and Fire Service communications centre. Stanthorpe and Toowoomba will have improved radio alarm monitoring and turnout via radio links. Ipswich and Brisbane will be improved with radio alarm monitoring and turnout facilities. South Beaudesert/Kooralbyn have will have joint communications projects for police, ambulance and fire. The Murgon district will have an upgraded radio system to meet with DOTAC requirements, and Maryborough/Hervey Bay/Kawana will have links in place with radio, also.

Mr T.B. SULLIVAN: My final question on the technical support is again on page 36. Under the bold heading "Major Program Issues", the third point down refers to an upgrade of the fire alarm monitoring equipment. What is that and what do you intend to do in that area?

Mr BURNS: The replacement of the automatic fire alarm monitoring equipment is required because of Telecom's technology upgrade to fibre-optic cable. It will provide us with a more efficient system and will cost us about \$1.6m. However, we should get some of that back. The commissioner may have to correct my figures, but about 46 per cent of our fire calls are false alarms. A fairly substantial amount of the work of the fire brigade is in responding to those bells that we hear from time to time, when we see the fire brigade waiting outside a building while firemen check whether there is a fire. Do you remember the percentage?

Mr SKERRITT: It is 40 per cent.

Mr BURNS: The new equipment is coming because Telecom is changing to fibre-optic cable. We must spend the money, but we will recover it over a three-year period in charges for the service.

Mr PURCELL: I notice that you made a two-minute statement on funds to start off tonight. I have a question here that I had on speculation that ambulance committee funds had been improperly used. You can enlighten the Committee as to the accuracy or otherwise of that. If you want to use a further three minutes, you can use that.

Mr BURNS: I do not. The issue is over. The more we raise it, the more we raise concerns in the community. Brian will agree with me that we need to get the public behind the Ambulance Service again and to get the Ambulance Service working as well as it can. The big thing that we have done now is to tell LACs that every penny they raise in their area, they

can spend in their area and keep in their area. That is why, when they asked us for a list of things that they should buy, we suggested that to them.

We had a crazy situation in which organisations in some areas had a lot of money in the bank but only one officer went out in the ambulance. Other organisations had a lot of money in the bank but had very old ambulance services. Sometimes the test was how much money they had in the bank. In their annual reports, they reported a substantial amount of funds. In reality, others never had a zack, if I can use that old-fashioned word, in the bank but were providing every penny they could in service delivery.

The test for us in trying to start a statewide emergency service and to provide it in towns where it was not previously available is to get as many of the LACs—the local ambulance committees—behind us as we can. The State conference that we will hold this year will be very important. We must try to convince the community that the bad news stories are not correct. The national response time for the ambulances is 10 minutes. In Victoria, the Government has started to privatise the Ambulance Service. They have page after page of people who have died because the ambulance has not turned up or because the ambulance did not come with a person who could service them; he was only a driver.

We must convince the people that knocking the service will not get it anywhere. If you ring for an ambulance because your mum is crook, you do not look at your watch to see what time you rang and what time the ambulance arrived. However, you will guarantee that it took 20 minutes. Our people have Telecom logging and they know that it took 8 or 10 minutes. The Ambulance Service will never win that argument because people in that position are so worried and concerned. Any time that you have ever sat watching the hands of a clock go around for one minute, you will know that that minute has been a long time.

People say in the newspaper, "The ambulance was not on time." Sure, our blokes will make mistakes. Make no bones about it. We all make mistakes. However, the service is a lot better. The equipment is a lot better. The vehicles are a lot better. We must now address that issue of community support for the Ambulance Service.

The CHAIRMAN: That 20 minute period is over and I turn to Mr Littleproud.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I turn now to the Queensland Fire Service. I am aware of the comments made before by Mr Barchard on the Rural Fires Division and its funding. I am aware of the extra funding that you are putting towards that. The Budget papers refer to the rural/urban interface. After the fires around Sydney, we have a concern. Comment was made on the introduction of a compulsory levy on land that was zoned rural urban. I do not see anything in the Budget papers on that. If that is the way that you want to go—and I would support that—I put in a qualification that some rural urban zones are already adequately covered by bush fire brigades and I would hate to see them caught up in an overall net of a compulsory levy. I would like to know what your plans are on that.

Mr BURNS: I have not backed away from my original position. I started it before the fires occurred in New South Wales because of what I have seen in the service itself. It is true that there are some very good services. Some of the rural urban areas are paying an urban levy. I was talking to the auxiliary officers in Murgon. I said, "Who looks after the people on the farms?" They said, "We do. They pay the same levy as the people in town." That was a decision of the old—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Is it zoned rural urban?

Mr BURNS: I think they pay the same levy. That is what the firefighters told me. I did not check with Bill Roberts or any of those people. No-one raised it and it seemed that that was the way. My belief is that, if a council zones an area rural residential, those people should pay a rural residential levy. I would like the council to sit down with the rural fire brigade in the area and say, "What do you need?" We subsidise pumpers eight to one. That is the subsidy on vehicles.

Mr ROBERTS: On vehicles it is.

Mr BURNS: It is a very substantial subsidy. Once you have bought a pumper or a four-wheel-drive vehicle, you do not need one every year and they do not need a continuing levy. But from time to time they need to sit down and say, "This year we need \$20,000. How are we going to raise it? Will we raise it by a \$20 levy?"

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Do you think you are covering the urban/rural interface along the escarpments and just in from the cities?

Mr BURNS: Geoff Skerritt has a different idea from mine on this. His idea is that, as part of the fire cover area, we should have another group named urban volunteers and that they should cover the area on the outskirts of the city but not do rural fires. My problem with that is that a rural fire brigade has looked after Mount Nebo for years and has done so very well. If we tell those people that they are no longer able to look after Mount Nebo because urban volunteers are going to take over, we will destroy that organisation, which has very good morale. Geoff and I will have to negotiate that one as we go through the fire cover.

My view is that I am prepared to go down the track of a compulsory levy if the councils do not do it. I think it would be silly for the councils not to do it. In negotiating in that way, I think the councils would find it a lot cheaper for their people. As well, the money stays in the area and is spent on the fire brigades and the equipment that they want in their area. That is a far better proposal. I am heartened by the support offered by Mr Littleproud, Di McCauley and others who have commented in their local papers that they believe we ought to do something about it.

We are not interested in the real rural people out there. We are concerned about this spread of rural residential blocks. Bob Barchard tells me that there are places in some of the mountains very close to here where we could not get a vehicle to the house. The design of the block is such that we could

not get up to them to help them if required. Some areas do not have a water supply. They have tanks.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I live in one of those places. I like to talk about rain.

Mr BURNS: If they do not have rain, they do not have water, either. They are dependent upon tanks. The problem with such people is that they all go to work during the day. It is not like any other rural volunteer fire brigade where you ring and say, "There is a fire down the road. Will you all come down?", because they are all somewhere else. We need to put some funds into that area, and we need to look at what will work. That is why Geoff talks about urban volunteers. As I said, I have a different view.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: With regard to the fees and charges for the Queensland Fire Service, it would seem that there is some inconsistency in your callout charges. In some instances across the State, I understand that the first callout vehicle is charged for. Recently, I referred you to a case on the Marlborough stretch in which an horrendous bill was issued for a vehicle. I did not tell you the full story, and I will not repeat it here, but is it correct that there is some variation in the charges for the callout duty?

Mr SKERRITT: There is a code of practice on charging for services at fires. I cannot go into the specifics of those at the present time, but that code of practice specifies the charging process for all fire officers across Queensland. It is still early days in terms of the implementation of the Queensland Fire Service. It may be that there are still some educative problems in the field, but wherever those sorts of problems occur, I would be pleased to address those where they do not follow the code of practice.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: They will probably come through my office, so I will refer them to you.

Mr SKERRITT: Thank you, sir.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The next question probably refers to both the Queensland Fire Service and the Queensland Ambulance Service, and it relates to the replacement of plant and equipment. You probably do not have the figures here, but would you be able to provide me with the figures to show that the present system of acquiring administrative vehicles through Q-Fleet is in fact a saving compared with the old system, whereby the service itself purchased the vehicle without paying sales tax and then was able to trade them on, make a profit and keep itself in new vehicles? I will put that on notice.

Mr BURNS: I think I will have to declare my interests here. I used to be the Minister responsible for Q-Fleet. I used to make them all do it. Now that I am over here, they keep telling me that we should not do it. Who wants the flick?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will put it on notice if you like.

Dr KELIHER: Can I begin by saying that many times the people who bought those vehicles in rural areas or in provincial cities and then sold them and pocketed a few dollars in some cases or cut square in others did not really take into account the full

costs. Their line was, "We paid \$10,000 for the vehicle and we sold it for \$11,000; we were making money." However, they never took into account the delivery costs, the registration costs or the maintenance costs. All those overheads were conveniently ignored. They are not ignored by Q-Fleet; they are made quite plain. Q-Fleet's costs reflect the real cost.

Mr BURNS: They give us a kickback, too, do they not? There is a commission.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is a better word.

Mr BURNS: I will delete that from *Hansard* and stick with "commission".

Dr KELIHER: Of course, with our ambulance fleet and fire fleet—the appliances and tankers and so on—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is a different kettle of fish.

Dr KELIHER: —are not purchased through Q-Fleet.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will try to cover some other areas now. I am on to the voluntary rescue services. I am aware that a number of voluntary rescue services operate in Moreton Bay. There is the coast guard and the air sea rescue. I know that they are all entitled to a subsidy if they raise a certain amount of money. I think it is up to a maximum of \$20,000. Is there a need for some sort of review there, and could you make better use of State money?

Mr BURNS: I will have John Baker answer that question. He handles our voluntary marine rescue subsidy scheme. We provide a tremendous amount of subsidy to many of these organisations. It is a substantial amount. I thought that you might have asked questions about the surf lifesavers, because we have Gary Kenning—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will get to that.

Mr BAKER: John Baker, Manager, Volunteer Marine Rescue Services. In answer to the question—one of the major developments in the volunteer marine rescue area over the last 12 months has been the development of an accreditation system for volunteer marine rescue organisations in Queensland. This Government accreditation of volunteer marine rescue units will address the issues of proliferation of units, duplication of services and optimum use of resources. Accreditation will provide for formal recognition of units to operate in Queensland and will form the basis for future Government funding. Accreditation guidelines have been developed for the Air Sea Rescue Association of Queensland, the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard and Surf Lifesaving Queensland. All those organisations have been involved in the development process of the guidelines. The guidelines are at the approval stage at the present time, and it is envisaged that implementation will take approximately two years to complete.

On the issue of Moreton Bay, a number of organisations in the Moreton Bay area are providing volunteer marine rescue services. The duplication of services has been recognised by Queensland

Emergency Services and also by the two major marine rescue organisations in Moreton Bay, the Air Sea Rescue Association of Queensland and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard. The organisations have been requested to cut back on major projects until such time as the accreditation process can be undertaken and we can properly address the issue of proliferation of organisations.

Mr BURNS: It is true that we need to zone it a bit. Some of them have silly areas of coverage that are very small. I think we can work it out so that they all get their share and are able to continue, but it is a matter that really has to be addressed.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You notice that I am asking questions mostly on outcomes and not so much on the amounts of money spent. This next one is in the same vein. It relates to the cases in which very expensive rescues have to be undertaken. There are probably two ways you can go about it: exercise some sort of control over when you close the jetties so that people cannot go out, and the recovery of costs. I see nothing in the Budget papers with regard to that. Is that part of the review to which Mr Baker referred?

Mr BURNS: That would be part of the review. I have been pretty outspoken on this issue. I live on the Esplanade at Wynnum. Sometimes, I see the prawn trawlers tied up—they will not go out and they are not earning a quid because it is too dangerous—yet I see three or four blokes in a 14-foot tinnie, heading out in a boat that one would not go out in on a calm day. These volunteers are all putting their lives at risk and spending many thousands of dollars. We have our helicopters in the air; we have everybody out searching for some careless people.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Do you want to signal some ideas?

Mr BURNS: It is a very difficult issue. If you make it too tough, people will not call when they are in trouble because they think it is going to cost money. That would be dangerous. We would not want to see anyone lose their life because they think, "This is going to cost me fifty grand. I am not calling." One cannot put a price on it. I believe that after a rescue people should be required to sit down with the rescue services and talk it over and reach some agreement. The volunteer organisations do not want a lot of money out of the people that they rescue, but they do want some recognition that it has cost them some money and some training for the people there. Many of the things that we have been saying in the papers—you have been saying it and I have been saying it—are starting to make people think a little bit about it.

A large floating gin palace got into trouble near Moreton Island. Because of the hard sand there, it could not hold the bottom. That was worth \$300,000. When they pulled him off, he gave them a \$5 Scratch-it—fair dinkum! I would have scratched it first, then I would have pushed him back on. The Transport Department has installed EPIRBs. Everybody is looking at the issue, and I realise that we have to do something about it. I think people are obliged to pay if they are foolish and stupid. I do not

think the honest boaties should, but I just do not know how we can work it out. It seems to be very difficult. I am going to pursue it, and I have asked the volunteer groups to pursue it, because they carry out the rescues, and they ought to know what it is all about.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I want to go on now to the Aviation Services. The Budget Papers show that there is a decline from \$4.635m to \$3.461m, and I know there is a review going on. Is there planning for the replacement of some aircraft? I know of one firm that is talking about approaching you where they will provide vehicles at your disposal around the State and you pay an annual fee for them.

Mr BURNS: As a result of the PSMC review, there is a complete review of the Government aircraft services, and that includes the ambulance services, our helicopters and the King Air jet. We have given them open slather. We undertake any recommendation. A lot of our stuff is pretty old. Most of our planes and equipment that we have are 10 and 12 years old. To replace all of that equipment involves a fairly substantial cost. Maybe chartering or contracting is the way to go, but the committee is looking at that itself.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: When would that report come out?

Mr BURNS: I think it is July. In fact, I will hand over to Michael Kinnane, because he knows a bit more about it. He runs that service.

Mr KINNANE: Michael Kinnane, Executive Director, Statewide Services Division. As the Minister has indicated, there is an independent review of Government aviation services right throughout the State which will impact on the extent of coordination with community aviation providers and so on. A Government Aviation Committee was established in March this year which contracted the firm Travis Morgan Pty Ltd to carry out the review. It is expected that the consultant will report back to the Government Aviation Committee by the end of July. We are hopeful that the Government Aviation Committee will be able to consider that report during August for then a further report of course to the Minister and possibly consideration by Cabinet.

I imagine it would be of interest to the Committee to know that the consultants in fact are travelling extensively throughout the State to discuss aviation needs with a range of organisations and clients, including the Royal Flying Doctor Service, regional health authorities, the community aviation providers such as the Gold and Sunshine Coast Helicopter Review Services and, of course, the Queensland Ambulance Service and other Government departments with a direct interest in this area such as Health, Police and Transport where consultants have already carried out some extensive travel.

I would report to the Committee that the key issues that the consultant will look at, in addition to many others, will include the capability of current aircraft, both fixed-wing and helicopter, to meet client needs, for example aero-medical tasks and search and rescue tasks. We need to look at the

issue of a properly aero-medical configured aircraft, for example. The consultant will be reporting on the need for an asset replacement program and a policy for current aircraft, and this will be the first time that aviation services will be considered in fact from a whole-of-Government perspective and where there will be maximum coordination between Government departments.

Mr BURNS: You might explain the reason why the Budget dropped back a bit.

Mr KINNANE: As Mr Littleproud has correctly mentioned, the projected expenditure for 1993-94 totals \$4.635m. The forecast for 1994-95 is \$3.461m. The reason for that adjustment is simply because of a mid-year adjustment approved by Cabinet earlier this year of \$785,000 for maintenance and other costs, principally for the Brisbane based helicopter, because it is getting old, its maintenance costs are increasing and there is projected to be a decrease in corporate services costs of \$417,000, so both of those adjustments—

Mr BURNS: Politicians are always claiming that they are misquoted, but at one stage I argued that the Health Department should pay us the aircraft costs involved with organ transport, because we do that service. We are negotiating that. It was reported that I said that we would charge for organ transplant operations, which was not what I said. However, might I point out that we are doing less hours in the aircraft now, picking up hearts and livers, because there are more people in that business of organ transplants in various other areas. Where we used to fly across to Perth and down to Melbourne to pick up a heart or a liver on a more regular basis, those hours have reduced. So our operating costs are down a bit there.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will go back to a couple of ambulance matters that I passed over to make sure that I covered some of these other areas. With regard to the ambulance at Kings Beach, Caloundra, what is the state of that? It is now quite run down. Do you expect to dispose of it in 1994-95? What will it be used for and what is the estimated return from the site?

Mr BURNS: Gerry has the answer, I hope.

Mr FITZGERALD: The answer is that we are seeking to dispose of that property. It actually was held against a loan to fund the purchase of the new ambulance station at Caloundra, so the funds are actually not going to come back into the Ambulance Service but go to pay out that loan.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: What sort of value was it worth, do you know?

Mr FITZGERALD: I think the figure was about \$400,000 to \$500,000.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I understand you have a new site planned also for Maroochydoore. I have seen the ambulance centre there and it is cactus. Are you thinking about doing what you did at Gracemere, where you have one centre for both QFS and QAS?

Mr BURNS: There is a protocol that has been sent out in the department that they should not try to build a single station where we can combine the

Ambulance and Fire Services together. It is not always easy, because sometimes in these places, just three years ago a you-beaut, new fire station or a you-beaut new ambulance station has been built and neither one wants to vacate to move into a joint venture. However, Gracemere is a good example of what we should do and what we could do to save a lot of money in the new Emergency Services arrangement. However, under the arrangements, they are not allowed to build a single station unless they look at the dual support first.

Mr KELIHER: Leo Keliher, Deputy Director-General. That is exactly right. We have an in-house policy that before any capital works planning is undertaken in detail, there must be discussions between all major divisions with respect to joint locations. In the case of Maroochydore, there certainly will be discussions regarding the possible joint or co-location of fire and ambulance services there.

Mr BURNS: Sue Bradshaw might add something on that, she handles this matter.

Ms BRADSHAW: Sue Bradshaw, the Director of Corporate Services. Yes, the new policy that has been developed has been in response to the requirement of the PSMC review and there is also the associated new process for the future development and management of the Capital Works Program which will incorporate consideration of joint facilities. The policy and procedure establishes the priority of joint facilities including criteria and responsibility for their planning and development, and the integration of funding for Queensland Emergency Services has actually facilitated the development of the joint facilities. The policy does, though, provide for consultation to be carried out with staff and communities over concerns they might have for joint facilities.

Mr BURNS: It is a pity that the time has run out. I was going to ask Gerry to talk about Caboolture, where we are going to do just that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I understand the policy. It is an ongoing thing.

The CHAIRMAN: We now move on to our last 20-minute block in this particular section. It is over to Government members.

Mr PURCELL: I would like to refer you to page 14 of your Departmental Estimates—Major Capital Works Projects. There has been some criticism of the new QAS as opposed to the old QATB. Could you enlighten the Committee in regard to the benefit of the QAS where substantial funds are now made available where possibly funds would not have been made available under the old system?

Mr BURNS: You should remember that this was a change that was not created by our Government; it was created by an all-party parliamentary committee that said that we ought to have a Statewide Ambulance Service, that it ought to be a first response quality service and an emergency service. That could not be done with the old system. Under the old system, the ambulance station at Wynnum had a big bus that took people to ambulance bingo and took them up to hospital and

came back that afternoon. It took them up at 9 o'clock in the morning and came back at 2 o'clock in the afternoon, and at the same time we only had one person in the ambulance and people were dying of heart attacks because one ambulance officer could not do all the work. We did not have defibrillators and that type of equipment there.

So, the first big advantage of QAS over QATB is a collection of all the boards together and an opportunity for the workers themselves to get a career path. Years ago, a friend of mine who lived in Rockhampton had to resign from the Ambulance Service because after his son was diagnosed with leukaemia shortly after he was born, they had to come to Brisbane for hospital treatment and there was no way he could get transfer down under the old system. At that time, officers could not transfer between centres. So he came down here. That is just wrong, that it should be like that. The training system is going to be a lot better.

We were talking with Brian before about this. Some stations had a lot of money, and they had three or four ambulances and everything there, and the next station down the road had nothing at all—could not afford a new ambulance, could not afford the training, could not afford the equipment and could not afford the staff. So the idea of us all working together for the betterment of the community is the first big benefit, I think, out of QAS.

The great benefit is that now it is starting to stabilise so far as money is concerned. We have this new money—the capital money; the new consolidated revenue money. There are a lot of things that we can do as regards new ambulances, new ambulance stations and training. We need to get into the Aboriginal communities so far as the Ambulance Service is concerned. We need more honoraries, and we need to be able to use country people in country towns. We have just reached agreement, after some argument, that we will be able to hire—or try in our next hiring to have local people in local areas and use probably most of our honoraries, or a lot of our honoraries—and see if we can train them. You cannot get people to go to some country towns. Jim Pearce was talking about this today. So there is a lot that can be done under a new united service.

Mr PURCELL: What was the situation with regard to the availability of defibrillators or, as you call them, Packer whackers, under the old QATB system, and how does it compare with the present? Do you have an example of how those new Packer whackers—

Mr BURNS: The reason everybody calls them Packer whackers is that after Packer was saved by one he gave—I wish he had had his accident up here, because every ambulance in New South Wales got a machine. I think they are worth about \$10,000 each.

Some people from the Mater Hospital—I was going to name them—senior people from the Mater Hospital have said to me that we are delivering more people alive, or in a condition where they can be saved, to hospitals today from the ambulance than

ever before. It is because of that campaign. That campaign had a lot to do with Franklins, where they ran it through their stores. They had a lot to do with a lot of our LACs and a lot of people. You asked for an example. There is one that I use fairly regularly, because we all know him.

If you know Mal Grierson, the Deputy Director-General of the Department of Admin. Services—he and his brother-in-law were standing on the beach at Kirra, and his brother-in-law from Perth dropped dead. They dragged him up the beach. There was a doctor there. He said, "No, there is not much you can do for him." The ambulance people came along, and with the machine they were able to revive him. They were able to get him to a hospital. About a week later, he gave me \$50,000 for the Ambulance Service to buy defibrillators. One of them went to Roma, you fellows will be pleased to know, because Mal's daughter is teaching out there. He said, "We had better have one out where she might get some value out of it." There was a man who, without one of those machines, would have been dead. Without that new training we were talking about, he would have been dead. Now we have one defibrillator in every first-response vehicle. I think Gerry might like to add to that.

Dr FITZGERALD: Prior to about the last four years, the defibrillators were all manual defibrillators, which required special training. About four years ago, the technology changed, so that semiautomatic defibrillators, which require less training and less competency maintenance, were more readily available. So it has been over the last three years that a major campaign has been going on to equip all first-response vehicles. We now have a little over 400 defibrillators, which ensures that there is a defibrillator available whenever an emergency ambulance is dispatched. Obviously, all of the officers are trained, and their skills are maintained in the management of that equipment.

Mr BURNS: We ought to say "thank you" to a lot of LACs who helped in that area. There were only about 69 of the old manuals when we took over. There are about 400 there now, and a lot of them have come from people who have been prepared to put their hands in their pockets, and the LACs have done a pretty good job.

Mrs BIRD: I wanted to talk to you about something that was on page two of form BT2, which follows page 39 in the departmental Estimates. There is a statement in there for \$1.175m, and it is classified as "Repayments of Loan QTC". Can I have an explanation for that?

Mr BURNS: It is repayment of the loan to the QTC. I will put this bloke on. He is going to help me.

Mr ELDER: Bernie Elder, acting manager and accountant. The QTC loans were loans that were outstanding—a combination of the Fire Brigade Boards in 1990. The amount was around \$32m at that time. This \$1.175m is a principal repayment of the loan. The loans have about another eight years to go. The loan is held with the QTC.

Mr SKERRITT: At the creation of the Queensland Fire Service as an entity in July 1990,

the actual total debt consisted of two parts. The overdraft was peaking at \$36m, and there were consolidated loans from the fire boards in the order of \$27.7m, making a total indebtedness of \$73m. Since that time, we have reduced the overdraft to a position where it is currently at about \$4.5m. The \$1.175m is indeed the redemption payment on the consolidated loans. That has been reduced, in fact, through negotiations with the Queensland Treasury Corporation to enable more capital to be available. So we have actually extended the loan repayment over about eight years to enable more funds to be applied to our capital programs rather than to actually service the debt that was inherited at the time.

Mr BURNS: I think that, if anything, we tried to pay it off too quickly. It was \$63m, if you add the figures up. We tried to pay it off too quickly. We were paying off substantial amounts each year. It reduced the capital fund. A great percentage of our money is wages in any of these services—Ambulance or Fire. Most of the money goes out in wages. If you start to pay off those substantial debts, they reduce it very substantially. I think Leo and Geoff went to the Treasury and argued that we ought to slow up that repayment and use a bit more money. We have some of the oldest heritage fire brigade vehicles in the world here, I think. We could set up a museum anywhere. Some of them are beauts. They have never done any miles, either—only to get cups of tea in the morning. I will get into trouble over that tomorrow.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: I refer to page eight of the Estimates. In the table in the middle of the page, the fourth item down is "Training and Development AOTC". Last year, the figure was \$3.3m. This year, nothing is shown. But earlier, you and your Director-General said that there is a substantial amount of training occurring. Where does that training money now show up? What is the picture?

Mr BURNS: Last year, we had four or five programs. We have reduced them down to two programs this year: Ambulance Operation and Ambulance Support Services. We have tried to concentrate very much on it. I had the figures back to front before. It was \$6.1m and \$6.8m over the last two years. The big job of the Ambulance Service is substantially the training of the AD—the Associate Diploma—for all of our ambulance officers. We have "AOTC", as you will see there. That is the Ambulance Officer Training College at South Brisbane. It turns out a fine set of officers. As I said earlier, we have won a lot of training awards.

The modern ambulance officer is not a first-aider on wheels. He really is a well-trained professional deliverer of an emergency service—a first-response service. We expect that over 90 per cent have undertaken training—even the 60-year-olds. We are passing out diplomas to people older than I am. I must say that I would not want to start the training that they have started. As I said earlier, we have to be grateful that many of those old officers have been prepared to go and start again after 30 years in the service and do the training and pass the exam. On old fellow up in your area said to me, "I had to do it. My sons and daughters all have

degrees on the wall and I had to prove that I could do it." He did, too. We handed him a certificate and it was a proud day for him and me. I hand over to Gerry.

Mr FITZGERALD: My name is Gerry FitzGerald. I am the Queensland Ambulance Service Commissioner. The money identified in that table—the \$3.3m—constitutes funds which are actually expended on the Ambulance Officer Training Centre alone. Clearly there is other training that occurs and was under the general heading of Ambulance Operations previously. All training is now under the heading of Ambulance Operations. In the detailed accounts we can identify that the expenditure in 1994-95 will be \$6.8m which compares to expenditure of \$6.1m in 1993-94. The reason that that has gone up is that there has been an effort to complete the Associate Diploma in this financial year. Obviously, overall expenditure on training will come down in the following financial year as that major Associate Diploma completes.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: The final question. On page 28, which relates to a more directional policy area, the second bar point down the left-hand side reflects the new combined department. It states—

"There will be a combined payroll and HRM system."

Do you see potential joint facilities and closer coordination with the various arms of the emergency services in the next couple of years?

Mr BURNS: The Director-General will answer that as it applies to Corporate Services.

Mr STEWART: The recommendations of the PSMC were that there were going to be some significant benefits in economies of scale by combining a number of activities within the Corporate Services Division. Ambulance and Fire have traditionally had separate payrolls and there is a public service payroll as well. We have recently gone out on an expression of interest to see if we cannot put in place a much better system with respect to the payroll by which we will produce those economies of scale, thus savings, and they can be sent out to operational areas, so we are putting the funds back into where they are delivering services out into the community. Payroll is one area where we can get that sort of economy of scale. There are other areas, such as Facilities and Assets Management, other areas in the HR such as training and joint training in management and also in the delivery in a number of other particular training programs. Other examples in the HR area where we are getting the economies of scale are in the implementation of performance planning and review where there is one training program, for example, for one system right throughout the service; although there are obviously slight variations across it.

Mr BURNS: Sue, would you like to add anything?

Ms BRADSHAW: In relation to the personnel payroll, other than integration of the payroll system we are also looking at an integrated Human Resource Management system that is associated with the payroll, which will give information to managers at all

levels, whether it is district, regional or central office. That will be on issues such as leave management and occupational health and safety, and it will enable managers to be managing at their level in relation to their own personnel. That information is currently not available, so I think that is a very important part of the payroll system and Human Resource Management system.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: The savings from those economies of scale could then be put back into the service delivery side of things?

Ms BRADSHAW: That would be the idea. In fact, it will enhance service delivery, because we will be managing much better our human resource, which is the most important part of the service delivery.

Mr PURCELL: I would like the Minister to turn to page 29. It shows that Corporate Services is decreasing in 1994-95 from the present 405 employees to 262. That is at the bottom of the page. How is this reduction being achieved? Are we sacking them all?

Mr BURNS: Are you sacking them all, Mr Director-General?

Mr STEWART: There have been a number of changes. In fact, one of the most significant changes in that downsizing of numbers is that 125 staff who have been involved in the administration of the ambulance subscriber system will be transferred back across into the Queensland Ambulance Service. They will be retaining their status as public servants, but their management will be on a regional and local basis rather than through that centralisation of services in Brisbane as part of a corporate service. We are very conscious of how that will happen. It has to work in with the development of the Ambulance Subscription System. The principle is that their daily management is by the Regional Assistant Commissioners in Ambulance and by the various district officers who will ultimately have responsibility for the Ambulance Subscription System so they are more responsive locally. Another 17 staff will be transferred into the Queensland Fire Service. Their staff spend their time exclusively working for the Queensland Fire Service senior officers and it only makes sense that they should be answerable to the Fire Commissioner and his senior officers so we are transferring them out of Corporate Services back into the line operational area. Again, we are able to do that now because we have place some good Human Resource Management Systems which include good performance planning for the staff so they are getting feedback on just how their performance is going. There are probably another three or four jobs in that same category, but that is the intention. We will move those staff back to the line operational areas where they are managed on day-to-day basis by the staff in the operational divisions.

Mr PURCELL: We are not sacking anybody, is that what you are telling me?

Mr STEWART: No. Out of the creation of a new department there have been only two or three voluntary early retirements, such has been the

management of that process of the integration of the two departments.

Mr PURCELL: Thank you, Mr Stewart. Can you elaborate on the performance of the Baby Capsule Hire Scheme since it was transferred from the Transport Department to the Ambulance Service? This is a scheme that I would have been interested in a few years ago, as I have five kids. It is a great scheme, but it is too late.

Mr BURNS: I think Geoff will end up answering this question. There has been a change in the type of baby capsule hire equipment and we are now trying to improve the service by these new capsules. We successfully tendered for the State Government Baby Capsule Hire Service in 1992, and we had 3 575 capsules at that time. They were transferred from the Department of Transport. Transport agreed to replace this stock with the new ones, which are harness-style ones which are safer because in simulated roll-over vehicle crashes they have been proved to be safer. We let out 4 500 baby capsules last year. It is the only way to save people money. With that new capsule coming in, a lot of people would have had to get rid of their old gear and buy a new one. Especially you, with five or six kids, you would not have been able to use it for all of the kids. This way you can hire it. It is cheaper. We put them in. If they let us put them in they are safer.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates of expenditure for Queensland Emergency Services has now expired.

I thank the officers of the Department of Emergency Services for their attendance. Normally, at this stage we would ask those officers to remain behind for their half-hour recall period, but it has been indicated to me by Mr Littleproud, the Opposition spokesman for Emergency Services, and Government members that there are no further questions for officers of that Department. So you are invited to stay behind if you wish; otherwise, you are quite free to go.

Department of Consumer Affairs

The CHAIRMAN: The next item for consideration is the Office of Consumer Affairs, and the time allotted is half an hour. For the information of the new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute, and for answers, three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of these time limits. As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes will be from Government members, and so on in rotation.

The Sessional Orders also require equal time to be afforded to Government and non-Government members. Therefore, where a time period has been allotted that is less than 40 minutes, that time will be shared equally. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they answer a question for the benefit of Hansard. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Office of Consumer Affairs be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

I invite the Minister to give two minutes of introductory remarks, if he so wishes.

Mr BURNS: Thank you, Mr Chairman. On 18 October 1993, the Department of Consumer Affairs merged with the Bureau of Emergency Services to form the new Department of Emergency Services. Prior to the merger, the Department of Consumer Affairs consisted of two programs, the Fair Trading program and the Corporate Services program. Due to the merger, Corporate Services has been realigned across the total Department. As a result of the merger, there are some figures in Budget Paper No. 3 which require clarification. Page 64 of Budget Paper No. 3 shows Corporate Services' allocation reduced to \$1.427m. This is, in part, due to the reallocation of Corporate Services across to Queensland Emergency Services. In addition, the Corporate Services program of the former Department of Consumer Affairs contained costs such as accommodation and electricity, which have now been allocated across to QES. The bottom line is that the new Office of Consumer Affairs has not been deprived of funds it would otherwise have received and the exercise is more of an accounting nature.

Capital outlays have increased to \$752,000 due to an allocation of \$717,000 for the Queensland Motor Vehicle Securities Register to fund the development of a national Vehicle Encumbrance Register.

The total program funding source for the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund shows an increase for an Estimate actual of \$13.68m to a budget of \$18.145m. This is due mainly to increases in contingent liabilities relating to payment of claims. It includes one claim of \$3.1m.

Other reasons include an increase in the contingent liability for Vocational Training and Education Grants. Current grants and subsidies show

an increase from \$637,000 to \$4.552m, which is due to the inclusion of contingent liabilities of \$3.9m for claims against the fund. It should be pointed out that the majority of the moneys are merely contingencies and, if they are not spent, they stay in the fund. In conclusion, Consumer Affairs has not been financially disadvantaged in the merger with Emergency Services. The Government's commitment to consumerism remains a priority, and although the Fair Trading program is small in staff numbers, it plays a critical role in ensuring a fair and equitable marketplace in Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. There will be a 15-minute time block for non-Government members.

Mr ROWELL: In joining in these Budget Estimates for the Department of Consumer Affairs, my first question is to the Deputy Premier. The Forward Estimate allocated in the 1993-94 Budget Paper No. 3 for the Department of Consumer Affairs Fair Trading program, page 125, was a gross outlay of \$20.33m while the estimated actual expenditure for that period as shown in Budget Paper No. 3 at page 64 was \$29.52m, an increase of 45 per cent, or \$9.187m on the 1994-95 Estimates. How do you account for the blow-out of this proportion?

Mr ELDER: The figure of \$20,339,000 for the Fair Trading program includes an unrequited transfer—Mr Burns' favourite—from the Auctioneers and Agents Trust Fund to the Consolidated Fund. The net figure, and unfortunately I have not got Budget Paper No. 2 from 1993-94 here with me, is \$15,639,000, and that is the correct figure. Budget Paper No. 2—I am sorry, I am not very familiar with this book.

Mr BURNS: What page is it on?

Mr ROWELL: Page 125, 1993-94.

Mr BURNS: Can we take it on notice?

Mr ROWELL: Yes.

Mr BURNS: At the end of this, we will find it for you and give it back to you in a moment.

Mr ROWELL: The estimate of receipts and expenditure for the Trust and Special Fund, and that is the page 148, indicates that the total receipts into the fund will be \$8.691m whilst the expenditure for the fund will be \$18.145m. The difference is \$9.454m. Can you explain the difference?

Mr SOSSO: I have not got the figures in front of me, but I perhaps could give it to you in an historical perspective until those actual figures were found. The Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund, as you would know, grew from a fairly small base in the early 1980s to an extremely large base by the early 1990s. In fact, by the end of the 1980s, the then Auditor-General raised a number of concerns about the growth of the fund. As a result of those, in 1989 a sum of \$2.5m was paid from the fund to establish the Rental Bond Authority and in 1991, with I believe tripartisan support, the Act was amended to allow greater use of the funds for a number of purposes. They were used for housing assistance programs, vocational education and training, the administration of the Act as well as

actual claims from it. As a result of that, because of the lead-in time where the moneys were not used productively for a number of years, there has been a period now over the last three years where the outflows from the fund have exceeded the inflows into the fund. However, we have put in place a number of processes whereby the viability of the fund, we believe, will be able to be guaranteed in the longer term.

As you would appreciate, if you look at the figures over the last three years, there have been extremely large outflows from it, as a result mainly of housing assistance programs but also to take account of new areas such as, as I have said, housing assistance programs and, since 1991, the administration of the fund.

In addition, as has historically been the case, there have also been amounts paid out for the main purpose of the fund, which is to assist consumers who have been disadvantaged as a result of the actions of licensees. Whilst the amount paid out to compensate people who have been disadvantaged by the actions of licensees has remained fairly static over the years, there has been, in the last 18 months or so, a worrying trend whereby there has been one claim, for example, of \$3.1m lodged, which is being investigated.

In addition, there has been a claim of \$2m, which is the subject of investigations by the Queensland Police Service. So, as you can see from that potted historical background, we are catching up from a situation in which there was little outflow from the fund to a situation in which we are now rectifying that. But in addition to that, there are a number of contingent liabilities brought about by more recent trends in the marketplace.

Mr BURNS: You could also tell them about the work we are now doing to look at trust funds for which we think there has been money that we have not received.

Mr SOSSO: In December 1993, a working party was established to look at the whole of the fund for the first time on a holistic basis.

Mr BURNS: Basically, a professional officer was engaged to do a census of all trust accounts operated by licensees as well as accounts of a trust nature presently held in banks. There seems to be some money that we do not have that we should have received.

Mr ROWELL: I would like to go on with that a bit further. The Budget Papers state that the opening cash balance of the fund was \$54.547m. It had estimated receipts of some \$8.691m. As you were saying, with the expenditure of the \$18.145m, the closing balance would be about \$45m; is that correct?

Mr BURNS: Those are your figures. We will accept those.

Mr ROWELL: Can we go through actuarial liability relating to the Auctioneer and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund?

Mr BURNS: We have asked the Treasury to have a look at the fund for us. The Government

makes the decisions about whether it wants to fund housing or other things from there. This is a straight policy decision for the Government. As we said, we have set up a committee to see what we can do about the fund. It is still in a very good position to cover any debts. We put contingencies aside. There are a couple of big ones—and one very big one—that we have not had before. As you know, most of the claims are to do with motor dealers. They generally concern car issues. On this occasion, we have one big one. But I am not concerned about it. And I do not think that we have an actuarial assessment of it, other than to say that we have asked Treasury to go through it for us.

Our estimate of the balance at the end of 1993-94 would be \$60m. Our estimate for this year, at the end of 1994-95, would be \$54.5m, which is about \$10m more than you have mentioned.

Mr SOSSO: I should also point out that, as a result of the work of that committee, for the first time in our history—initially, at least—we have written 9 000 letters out to all licensees seeking information as to the status of their trust funds. The object of that exercise is then to compare the information we are obtaining with the information we are receiving from the banks as to trust accounts on which interest is being paid. We have not finished that exercise yet, but we are discovering some interesting information with respect to possible deficiencies in the interest we are being paid by the banks. So that is one area at which we are looking. As I said, 9 000 letters were sent out initially. That was only two months ago. We have sent a further 2 500 follow-up letters. We have received a response rate as of last week of 96 per cent. We are following that up now with the banks. We are comparing the data we have from the real estate agents with the data that we have been supplied by the banks. We are finding discrepancies. We are following that up with both licensees and the banks.

Mr BURNS: In 1993-94 we started with \$60m. We estimated at the end of that period that we would end up with \$53m, not the figure I told you a few moments ago. This year we expect \$32,000 from regulatory fees, licences and permits; \$2.5m in interest from fund deposits held; \$6m from interest on banks accounts; \$100,000 from expenditure recovered; \$8.6m from total receipts; and \$18m in expenditure. And the final closing balance should be \$45m, as you suggested when you asked your question.

Mr ROWELL: On page 6 of your department's corporate plan, it states in relation to fair trading practice that the regulation and ensuring of compliance places a heavy burden on Government. It goes on to say that effecting changes in the marketplace behaviour through the adoption of the preventative strategies will involve higher leverage activities. Could you please explain what the higher leverage activity is, and/or what it entails?

Mr STEWART: In the area of consumer affairs, if we look at each of the individual complaints that we come across in this State, we are effectively going around putting band-aids on the problems that arise. We receive thousands of telephone calls every

week from consumers. Thousands of complaints a year come into the department for us to look at. If we continue to act on the basis of fixing up individual problems, we face an incoming tide against which it is very hard to fight. In the process that we put in place through that corporate planning process—and which we reported on in the last financial year—we have become involved in more powerful activities with business and consumer groups and people in education so that we overcome the problems in a global sense, as opposed to individually. That is not to say that we do not continue to look at all of the individual cases—which we do—as they come in and prioritise them according to what we can actually achieve. The higher leverage activities are the ones which give us more of an outcome than we would otherwise have.

Some of the initiatives that we put in place in the last 12 to 18 months have included education programs in the schools. They have also included targeting a number of groups who have been prevailed upon, such as the elderly. We are looking at non-English speaking background groups as well, because they are targeted also by a number of traders that we regularly have difficulties with. So they are the higher leverage activities that we are talking about in the context of planning, which is to use the resources as best we can to get the greatest possible outcome.

Mr ROWELL: I refer to page 64 of Budget Paper No. 3 for the 1994-95 financial year. The item listed as current grants and subsidies has shown a substantial rise in the past two years. The annual report of the Department of Consumer Affairs for the year ended 30 June 1993 listed the total of these grants as being \$43,000. For the financial year 1993-94, Budget Paper No. 3, at page 64, shows the estimated actual expenditure on current grants and subsidies as \$637,000. This is a pretty substantial jump.

However, for this coming year, Budget Paper No. 3, at page 64, indicates grants and subsidies as over \$4.5m. I ask why there was such a huge jump, and what people and organisations will receive grants and subsidies? Would you also give the purposes for each of these grants, perhaps in a written answer, in order to save the time of this Committee?

Mr PARSONS: In relation to the estimate for 1993-94 against the Budget Papers for previous years—there has been a different format for presenting the papers. The estimated actual of \$637,000 for 1993-94 consists of an amount of approximately \$500,000 for payment of claims against the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund, an amount of approximately \$100,000 for education and housing grants, and an amount of \$37,000, being for two other grants—one to child accident prevention and one to the Queensland Injury Surveillance Prevention Project (QISPP).

The estimated actual in 1994-95 is based on the same premise, the difference being an amount of approximately \$3.9m for claims against the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund.

Included in that figure is an amount of \$3.1m, being a contingent liability against that fund.

Mr BURNS: As I noted in my introductory statement, total program funding shows an increase in its estimate of \$13.6m. This is due mainly to increasing contingent liabilities. It includes one claim of \$3.1m. Other reasons include an increase in the contingent liabilities for vocational training and education grants. It goes on to say that current grants and subsidies show an increase from \$637,000 to \$4.5m. And that really includes the \$3.9m contingent liability, which means that we are still giving the same money.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for questioning by non-Government members has elapsed.

Mr BURNS: Mr Chairman, you have allowed me a couple of minutes to help Marc previously. The grants we give are to people such as the REIQ for training. There are fairly substantial areas in the training and education areas. If you like, Marc, you can come to my office next week and I will get someone to assist you. I will make arrangements for you to meet with officers and for them to come and brief you.

Mrs BIRD: Minister, I refer you to Item 15 on page 21 of the departmental Estimates and note that there will be amendments to the Credit Act and the introduction of template consumer credit legislation. Will there be some safeguards in this new consumer credit legislation which will safeguard the possessions of farmers who may need their equipment to work their way through times of financial difficulty?

Mr BURNS: Yes, there will be. We are the only State that is talking about giving relief against possession of certain goods for farmers. We have tried to convince the others to do the same. Everybody is moving for uniformity. They want uniformity. Under the arrangements that were negotiated with Glen Milliner, we will be the State that introduces the template legislation. All of the Ministers are now finally agreed, I think, on the final draft of the legislation. John might be able to add to this when I have finished. However, it has reached the stage where we will have a Consumer Affairs Ministers conference here in July. Straight after that, we should introduce that legislation on behalf of all of the State Governments of Australia—all bar Western Australia, by the look of it.

However, there is one section that does not help the farmers as far as farmers' credit is concerned. It has been approved that we introduce our own legislation on that. Under the current Credit Act, section 116 allows a mortgagor, where a mortgagee gives notice under section 108 of the Act, to take possession of goods comprising farm machinery or commercial vehicles, and such an application prevents the mortgagee from taking possession of the goods, or, if possession has been taken, to suspend the power of the mortgagee to sell the goods. It would also allow the court to make an order that the mortgagee's power to take possession be suspended for 12 months. In other words, if a bloke has a crop and he has a bit of equipment and

he has a bit of a chance to get out of it, you should not come and take his goods away and destroy his chances. So we are going to try to do something about that with our own piece of State legislation. While we are aiming for national uniformity, it has been agreed, although no one else agrees with us at present, that we should go ahead and look after the farmer.

Mr SOSSO: There is not much I can add to that, Minister, except that at the present time, as the Minister says, under section 116 of the Credit Act there is the capacity for a farmer to make an application to suspend the mortgagee's power of sale for 12 months where he can show to the court that he has a realistic chance of being able to repay the whole or part of the debt if he is able to hold onto his machinery. Under the proposed legislation the Minister is talking about, the Credit (Rural Finance) Bill, which will be introduced at the same time as the other Bill, that provision will remain in force. As the Minister says, we will be the only State that is going ahead with that.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Minister, on page 21 of the departmental Estimates, Unit 16 refers to consumer education, largely with schools, and you might make a comment on that. However, I want to look at education at the other end of the age spectrum. My electorate has a very high percentage of people over 60, and your Consumer Affairs Office helped a lady who was almost fleeced of a large amount of money. With an increasingly ageing population, what is the Consumer Affairs Office doing to help the elderly in this regard?

Mr STEWART: There are a number of specific programs that we have. In fact, the one that you mentioned was one of the examples of very successful work between members of the community and the Office of Consumer Affairs. In fact, as I recall, there may have been some assistance from a member of one of the financial institutions who noticed one of the elderly clients coming into a building society or a bank, or whatever it was, with someone who looked very suspicious. Unfortunately, there are many occasions when breaches of the Door to Door (Sales) Act occur and traders will come around and prevail on the elderly and then, as you know, either take them to the bank or take them to the cleaners over house painting and a whole variety of other matters.

We put in place a strategy which has at least four or five parts to it. The first part is that we are liaising with other State Consumer Affairs and the Trade Practices Commission to ensure that we get a bit of a handle on where these traders are coming from. A lot of them winter in Queensland and they will move up the coast from around about May through to June or July, and we see an increased activity there. That gives us the opportunity, once we establish those patterns, to talk to the local communities and talk to the local media who provide tremendous assistance and warn the community of the dangers that are likely to occur.

There are a whole range of scams against the elderly and seniors, and with people tending to live longer and a lot of them maintaining their

independence longer, it is becoming more and more a problem. The elderly are one of our target groups that we are looking at from the point of view of some good concerted education campaigns as well. The second part of the strategy is to get onto it in a way that we understand where the problems are and then identify them from the industry point of view. In fact, we have had a lot of cooperation from a number of the major industry groups.

Mr PURCELL: Minister, I refer you to page 20, to Item 6, which talks about the business of marketing plans for the Queensland Motor Vehicle Securities Register. What steps are being taken to improve consumer protection in relation to the purchase of motor vehicles?

Mr BURNS: I will start it off, but Carolyn, I think, would like to say something on this particular matter. In 1991, the Heads of Government agreed to establish a national link-up of motor vehicle security registers to minimise the illegal interstate trade. As part of this progress, the Office of Consumer Affairs has been investigating ways of doing it. I will ask Carolyn Burlew from the department to tell you about it.

Ms BURLEW: I am Carolyn Burlew from the Office of Consumer Affairs. Currently there are over 560 000 vehicles that are transferred per annum in Queensland, and of these, only 18 per cent are protected through the purchase of a certificate from the Motor Vehicle Securities Register. This means that 82 per cent of all vehicles that are transferred are not protected and the people who buy those cars are at risk of having them repossessed because of an encumbrance on the vehicle.

In addition to that, there is a general lack of awareness about the role of the Motor Vehicle Securities Register and the protection that the certificate provides to the purchasers of those vehicles. From the information that we have available, approximately 70 per cent of all transfers that occur do so in relation to a transfer with a motor dealer. They are not private sales, they are sales relating to the motor dealer. That means that the motor dealers themselves—the motor industry itself—are not protecting the consumers who buy the motor vehicles and so the initiative that we are putting in place is that when somebody does a search of the Motor Vehicle Securities Register, they will have to get a certificate and that certificate will then determine whether there is title for the vehicle or not—an encumbrance on the vehicle or not. That is the big consumer protection initiative that we can put in.

In addition to that, 99.7 per cent of all consumers who do a search on our register already get a certificate, so it is the dealers who are not protecting the consumers. So we need to put something in place that will ensure that the dealers protect the consumers when they buy a motor vehicle.

The other problem that we have is the lack of awareness about the Motor Vehicle Securities Register and we are doing a couple of things about that. In the initiative that we are proposing, we will actually go out and do quite a marketing campaign to

let people know about it. We will advertise in the motor industry part of the papers so that when people are looking to buy a used motor car they will see that they have to do that, and we have brochures and other sorts of things. But clearly we need to inform people. Lately, we have been going out and talking in the schools and talking to the school leavers because they are the people who are going to go and buy a motor car, and they need to be made aware of the protection.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: On page 21, Item 13 states that something is being done to develop a database to record all auctioneers and agents licence trust accounts. I ask: how will the department ensure that all trust accounts can be accounted for by your department when there is such a proliferation of real estate agents all around the State?

Mr SOSSO: That exercise is part of the work of the committee that I referred to earlier. As I mentioned, that committee is considering a number of options to ensure the long-term viability of the fund. One of the things that it is doing is writing out to all licensees, with 2 500 follow-up letters and a 96 per cent response rate, to check the data against the data that we are receiving from the banks. That exercise is, if you like, a looking-back exercise to check whether the information that we received in the past from real estate agents and the interest that we received from the banks is correct.

In addition, we are looking forward to ensuring that this sort of thing does not happen in the future. To do that, we are doing two things. Firstly, we are entering into new agreements with financial institutions under the Auctioneers and Agents Act. In 1991, the Act was amended to allow for approved banks to pay interest into the fund. When we negotiated agreements in 1991 and entered into them in 1992, the terms of the agreements were not necessarily uniform throughout. The agreements were generally about three years in duration. They are now falling due. We are now negotiating with all of the banks. As the Act was amended last year to include financial institutions, we are also negotiating with building societies and credit unions.

The object of that exercise is twofold. One is to increase the amount of money that we are getting into the fund. Banks now pay 65 per cent of the interest that they earn into the fund, which compares favourably with the interest rates in some other States, in particular, New South Wales where, without breaching confidence, I can say that it is much, much lower than that—far less than 50 per cent. We are looking at increasing that. We hope to get more money.

In addition, we are hoping to have better terms in the agreement with respect to the information that the banks will give to us so that we will not be in a position of asking banks out of the goodness of their hearts for information. They will have a legal obligation to give it to us. On the basis that we get the information from the banks, we then need a computerised database which we can input the information to and which we can access it from. At the present time, it is paper driven. As a result, problems arise in collating the inspectorial area with

the licensing area and the finance area. The object of the database is to bring it all together and make sure that the fund is operated on a very professional basis.

Mr PURCELL: I refer again to page 20. I refer to item 4 under the heading "Significant Developments and Policy Changes" and the Business Names Compliance Project. Could the Minister outline how the department is checking compliance within the business community in relation to the registration of business names?

Mr BURNS: I can. The other day when Matt Foley got into trouble for sending a notice to a parlour, I wondered whether I would get into trouble. We have been chasing people up in the Yellow Pages and elsewhere. I thought, "There but for the grace of God go I." I might have been defending why I had sent a notice to one of those people saying, "Why are you not registered?" We know that a lot of people do not register, and that causes problems. One purpose of registration is that people can check that there is no name that is similar to their own. Carolyn would like to speak on this. We identified 40 000 unregistered Queensland business names. Luckily, we did not identify any that would get me into trouble.

Ms BURLEW: As the Minister said, we identified a number of unregistered business names. We thought that there would be about 40 000. We initiated a project under which we could try to identify who those people were. We used the Yellow Pages and we used a consulting firm to help us. We called it a merge-purge process to bring the two databases together and to generate a whole series of letters. The merge-purge is a bit of a joke because it does not sound very nice. We used that process to send letters to a number of businesses that we determined were unregistered. We have been doing that now for this financial year and the result has been very successful. It has identified that a number of businesses need to be continually reminded that they have a responsibility to be registered under the Business Names Act. There is a social justice issue involved. If some people use the Act, everybody must use it. It is a compliance and enforcement issue.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates for the expenditure of the Office of Consumer Affairs has now expired. I thank the officers of the Office of Consumer Affairs for their attendance. I remind everyone of the recall period concluding at 11 p.m. and ask departmental officers of the Office of Consumer Affairs to remain in case they are needed. The next item for consideration is the Office of Rural Communities. The time allotted is half an hour.

For the information of the new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers it is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15 second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of those time limits. As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from Government members and so on in rotation. The Sessional Orders also require equal time to be afforded to Government and non-

Government members. Therefore, when a time period has been allotted which is less than 40 minutes, that time will be shared equally. The end of those time periods will be indicated by three chimes. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they answer a question.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Office of Rural Communities to be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, is it your wish to make a short introductory statement on the elements within your portfolio or do you wish to proceed direct to questioning? If you do wish to make a statement, the Committee asks that you limit it to two minutes.

Mr BURNS: The Office of Rural Communities, unlike the other elements of the QES portfolio, operates as a central agency of Government. Its primary purpose is to provide advice on all policy matters coming before the Government having implications for rural communities. The brief of the Office of Rural Communities is to monitor policy developments across all 18 portfolios of Government and to seek fair treatment of rural communities in relation to Government policy initiatives.

The staff of the office are required to deal with a broad range of issues across all 18 departments and to provide high quality assessment and advice on the implications of Government decisions for rural communities. The initial expenditure and staffing Estimates for 1994-95 were prepared according to the Budget Estimates cycle and in advance of the Cabinet decision of 23 May 1994 which established the Rural Communities Policy Package. Accordingly, it is necessary to provide amendments to those initial Estimates, and copies are available for circulation to the Committee.

Specifically, the estimated full-time equivalent employees allocation for 1994-95 is to be adjusted downwards from 24 to 21. Accordingly, adjustments are required in the outlays for 1994-95 for salaries and non-labour operating costs. However, the total program funding of \$2.964m remains unaltered. The details of adjustments within the total ORC budget are on the sheet provided. It has been handed out.

Specific activities of ORC include: providing advice on Cabinet submissions affecting rural communities and promoting coordination and strategic management of rural issues through the Rural Communities Strategic Coordination Interdepartmental Committee. ORC also encourages development of regional management forums to increase coordination at the regional level. ORC participates in interdepartmental and intergovernmental groups dealing with topics such as forward planning and liaising, drought, libraries, International Year of the Family and teacher transfer.

ORC participates in steering committees to coordinate reviews of the public sector activities in areas such as regionalisation and drought support for families. ORC gathers rural information by liaising with peak body representatives, attending regional

managers' forums, conferences and intergovernmental meetings on rural affairs, monitoring rural newspapers and meeting with community groups on issues such as the Priority Area Country Area Program, community reference groups for QGAP neighbourhood centres and requests for assistance with rural women's issues.

ORC monitors the guidelines for withdrawal of service to ensure that changes in service delivery are managed by departments in a way that is understood and accepted by rural communities. In addition, ORC administers the QGAP program, which provides information and transaction services to rural communities. ORC also produces information publications, including the *Rural Community Service Directory* and the monthly newsletter the *Bush Telegraph*. A guide to Queensland regional development schemes is in publication. I point out that the only line delivery item that we have is QGAP. It is the only place where we deliver a service. Other than that, it is all advice and assistance.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of 15 minutes for questions will commence with non-Government members.

Mr LINGARD: During the Estimates committee yesterday, the Premier was asked about the Special Rural Cabinet Committee which has been set up in this Budget. The Premier stated—

"There was a need for the country message to be heard in Cabinet, and the rail debacle was a typical example."

Your 1994-95 program goal, as you have just outlined, states that the Office of Rural Communities is there to provide policy advice for Government to ensure fair treatment of rural communities in relation to Government policy initiatives. Why did you not, as Minister for Rural Communities, have enough details to convey the message about the railways to Cabinet? Why has the Rural Communities portfolio become a public relations exercise for the Government and been unable to carry out its program goal?

Mr BURNS: That is a policy item. It has nothing to do with the Estimates.

Mr LINGARD: The Estimates certainly outline that there is to be a Special Rural Cabinet Committee. I am clearly asking why there is a need for a Special Rural Cabinet Committee when in your program goal that function was supposed to be performed by the Office of Rural Communities.

Mr BURNS: I think there is a need for a Special Rural Cabinet Committee because it is a way of getting them out there and giving people an opportunity to talk with the Cabinet itself. To take the whole Cabinet to small country areas, to the smaller towns, would be fairly difficult. We suggested that there is a need for a lot more consultation, and in fact we have Ministers who wanted to be on such a committee. The number has increased to the stage where it now numbers eight instead of the smaller committee that I envisaged at the time. I thought that on a couple of occasions a year we could visit towns—especially in areas where there are some sorts of issues arising—and that a

group of us could meet delegations and work with them, work it through. It really has nothing to do with the Rail Taskforce or those matters at all.

It works three ways. Firstly, as a result of the drought we came up with a proposal that we ought to have a better consultation process on a permanent basis between the Government and locals. I would say quite truthfully that we learned a lot of lessons out of a pretty bad drought in that we sat down around the table with the UGA, the Cattlemen's Union, the graingrowers and everybody else and talked through the RAS scheme and the difficulties with it. Mr Lingard would be the first to admit, I am sure, that it worked fairly well. When they did have a problem—and we were trying to convince the Feds to spend more money in the area—they came to us. We worked out that they were right, and we got Casey to put a proposal on their behalf from Government to Government. We were not as successful as we hoped. We got Crean and others to come and have a look at the problem, and they did help in some ways.

Basically, that consultation is there to help. We have set up a group representing the rural groups, the Local Government Association, the community groups and the Queensland Council of Social Service. We have put them together and we have said to them, "You work through some matters; you work up some policies. We will take it from there to the rural Cabinet, and we will take it from there to the major Cabinet."

In the package, that is the component that has been best accepted in the bush. In other words, there is some formal network for rural people to have a say through the process. They felt left out of the process, and I think this lets them in. I think it lets them in in a formal way. The other positive feature of it is that we have written into the Budget process now that, when you have consultation, in the Budget documents you have a paper that says, "Consultation. I talked to Treasury and they said, 'No, you cannot have the money.'" The results of the consultation must be outlined. You say, "No money is coming from Treasury." The effect of that on rural areas must now be outlined, which will make departments think when they are making these decisions and it will make them consciously write down what the impact will be. I think that is a pretty good decision.

Mr LINGARD: Clearly, as I have indicated, the Office of Rural Communities did not carry out its program goal. The 1993-94 estimated expenditure for the Office of Rural Communities was \$919,000. However, on page 62 of 1994-95 Budget Paper No. 3, the estimated actual expenditure of the Office of Rural Communities amounts to \$2.1m. As the Premier's comments yesterday show that your office has become a public relations unit and needs a special Cabinet committee to support it, why have the taxpayers of Queensland been presented with an excessive public relations bill, and why has the massive blowout occurred?

Mr BURNS: Do you want it closed down?

Mr LINGARD: I have asked you—

Mr BURNS: I am asking you back: do you want me to close it down? Are you recommending to the people of country Queensland that there should not be an Office of Rural Communities? Is that the National Party's policy?

Mr LINGARD: Clearly, I am indicating that the Office of Rural Communities has not done its job as per the program goal. That is why a special Cabinet committee has had to be set up. That is exactly what I am asking you.

Mr BURNS: I will answer you. You are wrong—

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, gentlemen.

Mr BURNS: —you are always wrong, and you are wrong again now.

Mr LINGARD: Minister—

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Lingard, you have asked a question. I would ask you now to let the Minister answer that question, and then you can proceed with the next question. You have three minutes, Minister.

Mr BURNS: My answer simply is this: after this meeting tonight, I will be out on the street saying that the National Party does not want an Office of Rural Communities, it believes that the old way it operated was the way to go. I believe this group has done a good job. I believe it has made contact with people in the community more than ever before. For example, we are now doing more work with country women, who had never been consulted under the male-dominated National Party organisation. We have helped women and children as a result of what we learned from the Uniting Church in the drought, and we learned it from Julie and her group. We learned it because they were out there listening to people and talking to people on the ground. That is what it is about.

The Office of Rural Communities will never be a large organisation. For the first time, as I said, it has QGAP. I do not believe it should be a line delivery organisation. It is a listening organisation. It aims to put in place a group of people whose job is to talk to rural people, to listen to rural people and gather information. I just cannot believe that Mr Lingard would suggest that we should not have it. People everywhere are saying that it is a good idea; it is the way to go. People in his own organisation are saying that. In fact, people in his own organisation have written about it in that way. It is just silly to use politics in this way.

Let me say again that its advice is not always accepted. They give us advice regularly, and we make political decisions. That is what Governments are about—making political decisions. However, in the process at some stage we must provide advice that makes departments think of the consequences of their decisions. That applied to the rail review; it applied to the courthouses and all of those other issues. We must build into the process itself a formal process that requires them to consult.

For example, in relation to staff reductions, I now must be approached. In certain areas—and it is not rail or a couple of areas that are excluded from the process because they are operational

areas—such as Lands or DPI, when they think about transferring officers, I must be approached. The other day in my own area, there was a proposal to transfer the fire officer from Barcaldine to Longreach. I said to them, "If you ask me as the Minister, I will tell you 'no', but if you asked the Office of Rural Communities, they would go off their brain." It is their job to say, "Why are you doing it?" In most cases, most departments will find it easy to put their people in the bigger towns. It is better for their workers; there is no doubt about that. It is better for them from an organisational perspective. Structurally, it is better to have them all in the one centre. However, if that occurs, it is of very great harm to small towns. Their job is to always put that small town point of view.

Mr LINGARD: I remind the Minister that pre-1989 there was a policy by the then Government to set up the Office of Rural Communities. Clearly, we are concerned that the Premier yesterday said—

"There was a need for the country message to be heard in Cabinet, and the rail debacle was a typical example."

I refer again to the fact that the Premier believes there is a need for a new group to represent rural concerns to the Cabinet. The Minister for Local Government states that you have cut from 131 to 82 the number of local shires that will benefit from the Rural Living Infrastructure Program. The cutback of 49 shires has seriously affected some of the most remote rural areas in this State. How can you support a rural package which excludes areas such as Camooweal, Calliope and Daringa, and why did you allow such a decision to pass through Cabinet?

Mr BURNS: If we would have restricted it to towns, it would have affected 17 more towns. We went for the little shires. We went for the little battler. That is what it was all about. There is no complaint from councils in rural areas about this particular matter. There has been no cutback at all.

As we looked at it, what we started to do was increase the numbers. We decided on 10 000. We could have decided on 15 000, we could have decided on 8 000. That is an argument that you will always have and that is an argument you will have to reach a decision on. We decided on 10 000. If you think that people out there see it as a cutback, you will be very surprised. In every town that I have been to in the last few days, people are asking about how they can do something to be in it. This is going to address quality of life issues for people in towns who were not considered in the drought package at all. This is for the old worker who works for the council and, as soon as the council loses some of the rates, he is the one who loses his job. This decision was made consciously. Councils did that, but at the same time complained if the Government drew one worker out of the town. The councils were prepared to put them off. If a bloke does not have a job in town, what does he do? He leaves town and looks for work somewhere else.

This package was always about small towns. In fact, Jim Pennell from local government said that it is the right sort of package for the real little town. The bigger the town, the more chance it has of helping

itself. If you look at the details of the package you will see that the smaller towns get bigger subsidies. As the town gets up to the 10 000 population, it gets lesser subsidies. We could have probably gone to 12 000 or 15 000, but they would have been getting very small subsidies. This way the package will affect the real battler out there in the real little town that has missed out all along because of the size of his or her town.

Mr LINGARD: You know as well as I do that the word about the 10 000 has not got out into the rural community yet because, clearly, the angle of the 10 000 will exclude shires like Calliope, Daringa, Esk, Gatton, Jondaryan, Kingaroy and Stanthorpe. It will exclude Rosenthal, it will exclude Glengallan and it will exclude Allora, which has now amalgamated with Warwick and has a population over 10 000. Clearly, Jim Pennell, at Boonah, is in a shire of less than 10 000. Now we have an area like Boonah which is included in the program and an area like Killarney over the ranges which is excluded, yet you continue to talk about a little battler. It excludes communities like Camooweal that is inside a shire greater than 10 000. How strictly do you intend to enforce those guidelines?

Mr BURNS: That is a matter for Terry Mackenroth's department. They are not the guidelines that I will be operating on because we do not enforce those guidelines. It helps Betoota and Bedourie and Boulia and Birdsville, the towns in the real bush, not the ones you are always worried about in the shadow of Brisbane, the ones that are a two-hour drive away and that your members represent. We are talking about the people who are far flung out there who do not get a decent TV reception, the ones who did not see the football tonight because they get shaky, dotted lines on their TV all the time, people whose kids have to go off to boarding school because there is not a high school in the area and there never will be because of the numbers. Those are the people who we are looking at—towns like Betoota and Bedourie. We are helping towns like Augathella, and towns like Blackall where the pub burned down and the powerhouse did not come to them, the towns that should be the heartland of the National Party. You should be applauding that they are getting the money out of this. Instead, you are running around looking for ways of being a nark. An old fashioned nark is what you are. You are not interested in anything that is going to help those people out there. You will whinge and whine and knock and try to find something wrong with it instead of coming to us and saying, "Let us have a look at it; is there a way we can improve it?" Never once in your period in the Parliament, or in my period in this Parliament, have I heard a National Party member other than Brian Littleproud come to me and say, "I think you can improve this process here; I think you can do more for my people." That is what is wrong with you. That is why your leader is only getting a 12 per cent popularity rating. That is why your leader is doing so bad. He is doing so bad because you look like narks, you sound like narks, you whinge and whine and you are narks.

Mr LINGARD: I refer to Budget Paper No. 2, page 63, paragraph 4, which states that the

showground improvements and the current showground subsidy will be subsumed within the Rural Living Infrastructure Program. First of all, I would like to hear your comments about what the word "subsumed" means. Secondly, as the Rural Living Infrastructure Program is subject to the eligibility requirement of the total population not to exceed 10 000 in the respective shire, does this now exclude showgrounds in shires where the total shire population exceeds 10 000 from access to the previously openly available showground improvements subsidies? If it does, how do you vindicate a decision which would allow an area such as Killarney Showground to miss out on a subsidy when an area like Boonah would qualify or, for that matter, how can you allow Killarney to be excluded from this program when Boonah is included and go back to your little battler and talk about your anomalies?

Mr BURNS: I will tell the people of Boonah that you do not want them to get anything out of this. You are supposed to represent them, are you not? Is that not your territory out there?

Mr LINGARD: That is not my electorate.

Mr BURNS: It is pretty close to your electorate and they vote for your mob. I will be out there to tell them that you do not want them in it. Terry Mackenroth runs it; he answered this question yesterday, I should not have to answer it again today, but I will answer it clearly for you. Towns of 10 000 are not restricted. The Show Subsidy Scheme still applies for the one and a half million, not for the five as you said in the Parliament the other day and it does not apply in this program.

Mr LINGARD: You talk about the fact that you are on top of policy and programs. I refer to the Governor's Speech 18 months ago when she said that the ticks would be removed from a line south of Townsville to Mount Isa. What is the program at present about tick control?

Mr BURNS: It is doing very well in Taroom. I was in Taroom on Monday night. I met Nev Hewitt's son, who was telling me how well it is going. New Hewitt used to be a member of Parliament. In fact, they were asking me for continuing funding from the State Government to pay for the staff. There is a girl working the system out at Taroom. There are a whole lot of rural properties out there in one of the worse tick-affected areas in the State and it is jumping for joy that we are trying to do it.

The CHAIRMAN: Time has expired, Minister.

Mr BURNS: If Casey is successful there, then he will be able to do something in some of the other areas. It is helping the people you are supposed to represent and you forgot them.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has expired, Minister. The next question from one of the Government members, thank you.

Mrs BIRD: I would just like to say that the Department may well be having problems with National Party members in terms of rural communities, but believe me, it is the best thing that ever happened to my district. I would like to refer you to the Estimates statements, page 24. It states

that ORC has improved access to Government information for rural communities during 1993-94.

Mr BURNS: I will get Julie Ling, the Director, to respond.

Mrs BIRD: Can you explain, with special reference to women, how this is being done?

Ms LING: Julie Ling, Director of the Office of Rural Communities. The Office of Rural Communities has a number of strategies for improving access to Government information for rural communities. Principally, these have been through providing the coordination for the Queensland Government Agent Project and also the operation of the QDIAL service. The QDIAL service operates a 008 number, which is a free telephone for people in rural areas to phone and to make any number of inquiries about any Government department. It is a free service that is provided, the cost of which is borne by my office. During the last 12 months, there have been 12 500 calls made to that 008 number. There are also show visits by mobile display units and officers and in 1993, QDIAL attended 48 local shows and 18 000 people visited those particular QDIAL displays. There were approximately 500 direct referrals to departments with about 2 000 general inquiries handled. In 1994, which is the year of this Estimate, it is planned to visit another 48 sites and there are plans for a further additional 13 visits to towns to brief community-based groups on QDIAL services. So, QDIAL is in fact intending to move beyond only the tent service into a more pro-active role with rural communities to ensure that they are able to be aware of Government programs.

We also have a number of publications, particularly the Rural Services Directories, which are produced regionally so that ordinary people are able to pick up a small booklet and find the telephone number, the address and a brief description of the programs that might be suitable for them. We have not done that on a Statewide basis because we believe that people actually think and operate regionally. These directories cover the whole State, with the exception of Brisbane and Moreton regional areas. We also have a monthly newsletter which is called the *Bush Telegraph*, which we encourage rural people to write themselves so that they are in the position to tell each other about these stories and to encourage each other in the development of rural areas.

In terms of working with rural women, women from my office have been very directly involved in working in the initial stages of the Queensland Rural Women's Network before it was a formal rural women's network. They undertook significant consultations with women and encouraged them and spent some many hours facilitating those women in coming together. We now also are providing the funding for the Rural Women's Award, which is a direct way of saying that women are recognised and valued for their contribution to rural Queensland.

Mrs BIRD: On page 25 of the departmental Estimates statement, it is indicated that \$1.5m in appropriation has been received for the expansion of QGAP and QDIAL for 1994-95. Is the \$1.5m the full

cost of QGAP and QDIAL and, if not, where will the remaining funding come from?

Mr BURNS: I will let Julie continue. QGAP is the Government Agent Program. It has now become a major item for us. It has become a permanent feature. It was a pilot scheme for a couple of years. Cabinet has now decided that it is permanent, that it should increase to 26. QDIAL visits the shows. It is an opportunity at the small country shows to take our tent and our person. We have three groups who travel the shows, and we try to do most of the shows each year—to deliver information about the Government. It is surprising. It has a 008 number. QDIAL is the idea of it. It has a 008 number, so that people can ring Brisbane for free. We have a QDIAL operator. There are operators here who then try to get the information back to them. It is a very popular innovation at the shows. In small country shows, there are not a lot of other things to see. People really go through the material. Now that it is a permanent feature—with QDIAL and QGAP, we have to tie them together. We have accessed the Commonwealth's program, and we are trying to work with them. We have already got QGAP working to do some social security and CES in some towns. Everybody has to be out there, but someone has to deliver the service.

Ms LING: The Cabinet decision to implement QGAP as an on-going program has replaced what was the previous method of funding QGAP; that was in the way by which the series of retainer fees were levied. The allocation of the \$1.5m will be supplemented by revenue from fees earned from the provision of transaction services. So if the Department of Transport is having its work done by the Department of Justice, then the Department of Transport pays the Department of Justice a fee, as it would pay any other agency a fee to have that work done.

The CHAIRMAN: Members of the Committee are having difficulty hearing you. Would you mind moving closer to the microphone and repeating your answer?

Ms LING: The Cabinet decision to implement QGAP as a permanent program has changed its pilot nature, so it is now funded under a different model. The \$1.5m provides some of the funding for it. However, there are two other principal sources of funding for the program. The other two of those are through user departments. They pay an hourly fee. So the Department of Transport will pay the Department of Primary Industries if it is delivering that agency for them, in the same way as it would pay any other private sector or local government to do that.

In addition to managing departments—whoever the department is that is asked to be the lead agency in that site contributes towards the overall cost of the program. The total cost of the program—and this is estimated at this point, because we have changed the funding model—is \$3.7m for 26 agency sites.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: On page 25 of the Estimates, the first table there shows an increase of staff from 19 to 24—about a 30 per cent increase.

Could you explain to the Committee what the people in these extra positions will do? Are they policy officers or support staff? What does the 30 per cent increase in staff do?

Mr BURNS: They were temporary. They have now become permanent as part of this process. I will let Julie explain.

Ms LING: As the Minister explained in his opening remarks, the public servants figures have been brought back into the correct figure, which is 21. There are an additional five positions in those figures. The five temporary positions from QGAP and QDIAL, which came across from the Administrative Services Department to the Office of Rural Communities, have been made permanent. That is the principal reason for the increase in those numbers. That is a part of the Government's commitment to making QGAP and QDIAL a permanent feature of the Government landscape. So to take any anxiety or concern that this was not a genuine effort to provide services to rural areas, those positions have been made permanent positions rather than temporary positions.

In addition, to ensure that those members of the public service who are providing a unique service, which is a whole-of-Government agency service—a very complex thing to do; and many of them are in very isolated areas—are given sufficient training, we have a training and evaluation officer, which is a new addition to the office. It will be their job to ensure on-site training as well as the process of bringing people together to make sure that they are fully up-to-date with legislation changes or any requirement changes in terms of customer service—to ensure that that is done and that they are fully supported and assisted in their role.

Mr PURCELL: I would like to go back to QGAP. On page 25 it says that there will be an extra 13 sites for the new offices. I understand that there is fairly popular demand from the community to have these offices set up in their towns. Will all those sites be finished this year in this Budget, or part finished? What will happen to those?

Mr BURNS: Our job is to get them out there. Now that they are permanent, and now that we have got through the review—there was a lot of argument about the funding arrangements. Getting the money out of Consolidated Revenue and making the Government put the money up front makes it a lot easier to go from there.

In addition to that, we are trying to use places—Government buildings and others that have been vacated, because that keeps the cost down—and we are trying to work with departments. We have just announced Sarina—a courthouse is now being converted and becoming a QGAP agency. QGAP delivers a lot more services and better services than the old courthouse did. The courthouse depended very much on a person who was employed by Justice to be the court official. If he or she was very keen, he delivered all types of services—if he could get Government departments to send it. Under this direction, the Cabinet has said that QGAP is the way to go, and departments are required to be part of the process. Some of them are

quite keen. Some are not as keen, because they just do not have the work out there to be done.

In some of these towns you have half a week's work for your department, or a quarter of a week; add it up, and you can put a couple of people in. In many cases, we are looking at extra staffing in some of these towns. The big thing about QGAP now is to sort out the number of applications. In fact, Brian Littleproud has written to me about two towns in his area. He sees the value of them. A lot of National Party members do, and they raise it with me, and have been raising them with me for some time. I suppose the biggest pressure has been: "When are you going to expand them? You promised to expand them. When are you going to do it?" We had to go through this process of finalising the funding arrangements, and now we can. That will be the hard task now: sorting out which ones will get it and which ones will not. There are quite a number of towns that we have looked at. We have had strong representations from local authorities about it and from members of Parliament. We will now have to go through a process. Julie can tell you some of the guidelines for selecting them.

Ms LING: In the future, all QGAP sites will be decided after we do a cost-benefit analysis about where people will get the best value for money. We will be considering a number of factors in that cost-benefit analysis, which will include the client demand for departmental services and the potential revenue that can be raised between the user departments as one pays another. With the population catchment area—we are very keen to try to find ways to make sure that the service is able to provide a service to as many people as is possible for that dollar. The issue of whether there is access to alternative service points will be one of the things that we consider. We are going to consider the socioeconomic status of the towns, and we will be looking at the population range to make sure that the services that are able to be provided are the ones that are going to be appropriate to that population mix.

Mr BURNS: I have always been of the view that, one day, Governments might be able to supply in very small communities of 50 and 100 people. The local shopkeeper could probably hang a shingle out and become the Government agent. You could put a computer-type terminal into the shop—that sort of information—with a 008 phone number. People could go in there and access Government services where you would never be able to afford a public servant in that very small community.

Mrs BIRD: I have one QGAP at Collinsville. They are not totally confined to rural communities as such. Some are for disadvantaged areas. I think I applied to you for one for another part of my electorate.

Mr BURNS: I do not know whether you are allowed to use the Estimates Committee to lobby.

Mrs BIRD: I use most things.

Mr BURNS: Collinsville is one of our agencies. It is not a rural community. The thing is the provision of services in a town. As Julie said, sometimes you

look at a town and you can see around it that there is an opportunity to draw services to it and that people use this town. One of the things we have learnt a bit when the banks have pulled out—when we have written to them and argued with them about closing their banks in a town, they have said, "People don't bank here. They bank in the town 50 miles away." They do their banking there, even though we have had a bank here. We have had a bank there and they have gone to the next place. You will find that that is the natural place where they shop—the place where they naturally go. They are going from their own town and their own bank in that town and using another bank 30, 40, 50 miles away. That town in many ways seems to be the natural hub. We also then have to look at the place where the banks pulled out, because what would you do to it if it keeps drawing down? It is very difficult for us. We have to make decisions on the need in the area and the community itself and its ability to move about. One of the decisions that was made years ago was that if you were within 100 kilometres of another service that was okay.

A hundred kilometres does not sound much on a good road with the cars these days. If you have a car, you can get there, but there aren't any bus services out there. There is very little opportunity to move from one town to the other if you don't have a car. If you don't have a car, the fact that the Government says that there is another service 100 kilometres away is just a waste of time. They are not being considered at all. So there are a lot of things to be considered when you are talking about the service.

I come back to what I was saying when we finished the last question. The day will come when it will not just be delivered this way. I think that this is the start of a long-term thing where Governments will deliver the services.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for consideration of the Estimates of expenditure for the Office of Rural Communities has now expired. As you all know, the Committee must conclude its hearings by 11 p.m. tonight. The time remaining will be divided equally between Government and non-Government members.

I have two points to make before we proceed. Firstly, I intend to strictly enforce the resolution of the Committee in respect of relevance to the Estimates and, secondly, I will not tolerate debate between members of the Committee and witnesses. I now call upon Mr Rowell to ask a question on Consumer Affairs.

Mr ROWELL: Mr Minister, I draw your attention to page 64 of Budget Paper No. 3. I have a couple of questions on the outlays of the Fair Trading Program. Over the past couple of years, by the time the actuals come in, there have been substantial departures from the estimates. Salaries, wages and related payments were estimated in the 1993-94 Budget at \$8.9m, but the estimated actuals came in at \$897,000 more and the estimate for this year's rise is about \$325,000. How do you account for the increase between the estimate and the actual

for 1993-94, and why will it cost \$325,000 more this year when there are only two additional staff?

Mr BURNS: I think you will have to repeat the question. I was just getting all my staff up to the table. I have two finance officers here, and each is pointing at the other.

Mr ROWELL: I refer you to page 64 of Budget Paper No. 3. I have a couple of questions on the outlays for the Fair Trading Program. Over the past couple of years, by the time the actuals come in, there have been substantial departures from the estimates. Salaries, wages and related payments were estimated in the 1993-94 Budget at \$8.9m, but the estimated actuals came in at \$897,000 more and the estimate for this year rises by another \$325,000. How do you account for the increase between the estimate and the actual for 1993-94, and why will it cost \$325,000 more this year when there are only two additional staff?

Mr BURNS: Can you answer it, John? I am getting the flick pass right before my eyes. I have two fellows here, and each wants the other to answer the question. I do not know why the outlays or the estimates have been wrong by nearly \$897,000 in one year and we estimate \$300,000 more this year. The normal things they tell me when I ask these questions are about increases in wage costs, increases in charges. When I keep asking these questions about my own office I find out that rents, payroll tax and so on has been added to our charges and that all the costs have increased. I cannot really answer about last year when I was not the Minister. If my officers cannot answer it tonight, we will take it on notice.

Mr ELDER: I can answer it. The estimate for 1993-94, \$9.853m, is only one part of—in Budget Paper No. 3 for 1993-94, \$8.956m, and then there was provision for future liabilities of \$1.337m, which makes a salary, wages and related costs estimate of \$10.293m. In actual fact, there is a reduction of some \$440,000.

Mr BURNS: So there was no increase; there was a reduction. It is up to you, Marc. I do not know whether you got a good answer or not. It is up to you to go from here.

Mr LINGARD: I refer to the Rural Communities Policy Package 1994 to be administered over a three-year period and, specifically, to the Rural Living Infrastructure Program and Rural Families Support Package components of the aforementioned policy package which amount to some \$40m on pages 62 and 78 of the Budget Overview, Budget Paper No. 2. I ask: Can you guarantee that the funds to be used in the respective program and package are in fact new funds? Or are these funds that have been transferred from other Budget areas?

Mr BURNS: It is not my Budget; it is not my Estimates. It has got nothing to do with me.

Mr ROWELL: I would just like to try to clarify that previous question.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has now expired for questions from non-Government members. I invite a member of the Government to ask a question.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: Mr Minister, I wish to raise a Consumer Affairs matter. On page 20, Item 5, the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages has a very practical set of applications to a lot of families that have to try to get certificates for enrolment in preschool, sporting teams and a whole range of other things. I notice that there has been some arrangement with other States to link up with the Births, Deaths and Marriages. Through this program, what is some of the money going to be spent on to improve the service in this area?

Mr BURNS: I have a note here, but Carolyn might like to answer that.

Ms BURLEW: The Interfax service is a service that all of the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registries throughout Australia are using. It enables people who live outside the State to go to the local Registry and to request a birth certificate. You can do that either way. We get requests from other States for birth certificates that are here, or for people who were born here and who are now living out of the State. But we are now getting more requests for people who are now resident in Queensland and who were born out of the State. I guess that says something about the migration of people from other States to Queensland.

The sort of revenue that we are getting for that is really just the fax fee because the service that we are providing is the purchase of the certificate in another State. The only service that we provide is the fax, so the fee that we raise for that service is very minimal.

Mr T. B. SULLIVAN: My question was not just for the interstate ones but for the locals as well. What changes and what improvements in service, if any, is the Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages providing? There seem to be complexities with people having to chase up birth certificates for their children for a whole range of reasons.

Mr BURNS: It is really a policy issue, but we are making some changes. I will let Carolyn talk about them in a moment. We have been asked to address a number of questions in relation to parents and registration certificates. We have gone really thoroughly into a business plan for Births, Deaths and Marriages. People say that when their baby is born, the birth certificate we hand out is a pretty mundane type of thing. They are looking at something different. At that stage, here is the first baby, or the second baby—or grandad would probably be one—and they want a better type of certificate. They want all sorts of services that we might be prepared to give, or we might be prepared to contract out and let someone else provide that type of service. We still do the current registration.

Ms BURLEW: In the Births, Deaths and Marriages area, we have looked at a number of initiatives that we can implement with value-added services that we can provide. As the Minister said, some of the things that we have looked at is providing designer birth certificates, because we have found both in New South Wales and Victoria there is quite a market for designer birth certificates. People are quite keen to get a birth certificate to commemorate. You know, they get them for twenty-

firsts and fiftieths, and a whole range of other things. There is quite a market for those, as has been indicated in both New South Wales and Victoria. So that is one of the initiatives that we have looked at in relation to the Births, Deaths and Marriages area.

There are other things that we are looking at, such as birth cards. The people who are underage and who are unable to get a licence often need some method of identification. At the moment in the Births, Deaths and Marriages area, we provide two types of certificates. We provide a birth certificate and a birth extract, and what we are recommending is that the birth extract be continued because people need those for certain reasons, but that we, in addition, have a birth card that would be the size of a credit card or a driver's licence. Optionally, we can put a photo on it so that people can then take that, keep it in their wallet, and when they need to produce some form of identification at the bank, or to get into certain establishments, or to get on buses or whatever, they have got something that indicates their date of birth and their identification.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. In conclusion, I must say it has been a pleasure to chair this particular session of the Committee's hearings, given the generally good spirit which has pervaded them. At this stage, I wish to record my appreciation to all witnesses who appeared before the Committee, along with all employees of the Parliamentary Service Commission.

I particularly thank Mr Dan O'Connor and Mr Neil Laurie, who continue to act as Committee secretariat. In addition, I sincerely thank Government and non-Government members for their diligence and input at these public hearings. That concludes the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 28 April 1994. I now declare this public hearing closed.

The Committee adjourned at 11.02 p.m.