

CONTENTS

Department of Education	177
Department of Health	208
Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations	235

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Mrs Edmond

Mr Briskey Mr Santoro

Mr Horan Ms Spence

Mr Quinn Mr J. H. Sullivan

The Committee commenced at 11.30 a.m.**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION****In Attendance**

Hon. P. Comben, Minister for Education

Mr Peter Macdonald, Acting Director-General

Mr Frank Peach, Deputy Director-General
(Corporate Services)Ms Robin Sullivan, Acting Deputy Director-General
(Schooling)Mr Bob Lenahan, Director (Facilities and
Services) and Program Manager—School
TransportMr Mike Keily, Director (Finance) and
Subprogram Manager—Financial ServicesMr Peter Blatch, Coordinator (Low Incidence
Support Centre) and Acting Subprogram
Manager—Special EducationDr Barry Cameron, Director (Office of the
Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority)Mr John Campbell, Manager (Administrative
Support Unit)Mr Warren Davis, Director (Executive Services)
and Subprogram Manager—Executive
ServicesMr Warren Edwards, Manager (Budget
Administration Branch)Mr Rod Gilbert, Manager (Queensland
Education Overseas Unit)Mr David Ham, Director (Human Resources) and
Subprogram Manager—Human Resource
ServicesMr Phil Hay, Principal Policy Officer (Executive
Support Unit)Ms Anna Van Hoof, Principal Policy Officer,
Languages and Cultures UnitMr Les McNamara, Director (Audit Operations)
and Subprogram Manager—Audit
OperationsMr Jeff Payne, A/Manager (Management
Information Services Branch) and
A/Subprogram Manager—Management
Information ServicesMr John Pitman, Director (Office of the Board
of Senior Secondary School Studies)Mr David Scott, Principal Policy Officer
(Regional Operations)Mr Bob Small, Chief Research Officer, Quality
Assurance Directorate

Ms Leigh Tabrett, Director (Office of Higher

Education) and Program
Manager—Assistance to Tertiary
InstitutionsMs Carol Watson, Assistant Director (Human
Resources) and Special Adviser
(Employment Equity) and Subprogram
Manager—EquityMr Doug Watson, Executive Officer (Office of
Non-State Schooling) and Program
Manager Assistance for Non-State
EducationThe Committee commenced at 11.30 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee C now open. In doing so, I wish to place on record my enthusiastic support for the introduction of Budget Estimates committees as a further step towards increasing Government accountability. The success of this reform will be measured not by the size of the media headlines, but rather by the continuum of improved departmental reporting and openness with regard to the decision-making process.

Estimates Committee C is a multi-party committee of the Parliament which brings together a diversity of experiences, ideology and opinion, but I hope it also brings a unity of purpose and cooperation to the scrutiny and consideration of these Estimates. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 1994 for the areas as set out in the Sessional Orders. The Committee has determined that the units will be examined in the following order—

Department of Education: 11.30 a.m. to
3.55 p.m.

Department of Health: 3.55 p.m. to 8.20 p.m.

Department of Employment, Vocational
Education, Training and Industrial
Relations: 8.20 p.m. to 12 midnight.

The Committee has also agreed that it will suspend the hearing for meal breaks from 1 p.m. to 1.45 p.m. and from 6.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m.

I remind members of the Committee and others that 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 end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. 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. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental witnesses to identify themselves before they answer a question.

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

"That the proposed expenditures be agreed to."

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

Mr COMBEN: I will say a few words, if I may. We would direct the Committee's attention to the Corporate Mission of the Department of Education, which is to provide quality education appropriate to the needs of our students and of society. In those terms, we believe that the Estimates proposed are appropriate and proper. We would draw your attention to the fact that we believe this Department is changing its management style. It has an improved financial management at the present time. It has increased its number of staff— particularly teachers—in recent times. We have improved our performance and our building programs and a number of other areas. We are orientated towards outcomes; not processes, but learning, which is what our core business is.

I would ask the Committee to be aware that there is a lot of difficulty in the Estimates before us in relation to comparisons, and especially that we compare apples with apples and oranges with oranges, because the program management system has changed in recent times. We look forward to the public scrutiny that this Estimates Committee provides and would welcome any suggestions for change or improvement. I would particularly ask that if members of the Committee refer to the Departmental Estimates statements provided to each Committee member, they give us the page to which they are referring.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions will commence with the non-Government members. I call on Mr Quinn to ask the first question.

Mr QUINN: I draw your attention to the assistance to non-Government education or non-State education in the Program Statements on pages 108 and 109. On page 109 it mentions the notional per student cost of educating a child and the fact that the Government is establishing a clear link between the non-Government sector and the State school sector. I ask: what is the current percentage of the per student cost that is being given to the non-Government sector? What was it in the previous year? What is the reason for the change?

Mr COMBEN: It is currently 19.9 per cent, which is the State Government percentage. It has varied in recent times. I would have to take it on notice or defer for a few moments whilst we get some support up here if you want it in previous years. But the system in the future concerning the basket nexus will be that that 19.9 will increase over the next four years to approximately 22 per cent.

Mr QUINN: What is the reason for the increase?

Mr COMBEN: Over those years? Just to support the non-State system. It is very difficult to work out first of all what that percentage should have

been. Do you include things within the education system—the Education Department— such as TEPA or the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies? Do we include things that are already shared? So it was with some difficulty and it was as much a compromise as to how we got towards a percentage that was broadly acceptable to non-State schools that we started at 19.9 and we will be going towards approximately 22 per cent.

Mr QUINN: Will that 22 per cent take account of the impact of non-contact time which will automatically flow to the non-Government sector after the State schools introduce it?

Mr COMBEN: Now with the basket nexus, things such as non-contact time—in the past, if there was a new initiative in the Budget it was for State schooling. Now, with the basket nexus, they will automatically get that increase. If there is an increase in the State system, then that will flow to the non-State system.

Mr QUINN: It will be a percentage of it?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, 19.9.

Mr QUINN: This year the statement also says that the percentage allocated for needs-based funding of the recurrent grants has increased from 10 per cent to 12 per cent. Do you have a maximum figure for that?

Mr COMBEN: Over time?

Mr QUINN: Over time—as you do with the notional per student.

Mr COMBEN: No. It is a matter of some controversy out there in terms of the non-State schooling system. You would appreciate that there are two large blocks out there of the Catholic system and the broadly independent system, and you also get smaller systemics such as the Christian Schools Association and the Lutheran system. Some elements of those non-State school systems would like us to have it 100 per cent on the basis of needs. Others would be saying, "Just give us money and we will work out our own destiny."

Mr QUINN: On what criteria do you base your decision each year to increase or decrease that particular section of funding?

Mr COMBEN: We use broadly the Commonwealth index, and I cannot give you the name of the index immediately. They have a system whereby they have an index for wealthy schools with good facilities down to schools that are inappropriately resourced. So we have been using that broadly. It is still a matter of controversy, discussion, consultation and debate out there between ourselves and the independent sector at present.

Mr WATSON: My name is Douglas Watson. I am the Executive Officer of the Office of Non-State Schooling. At present, 75 per cent of needs funding is distributed on the basis of the Educational Resources Index, which is what the Minister referred to. The other 25 per cent is distributed on the basis of data collected from schools in an annual census, which identifies the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, English as a Second

Language students, students with disabilities and isolated students and also where schools are giving fee concessions for boarding-school students because of need.

Mr QUINN: And is that 75 per cent to 25 per cent divide a set figure each particular year or does it vary each year?

Mr WATSON: It varies each year. The agreement that we have with the non-State authorities is that the per capita grant will remain in dollar terms at \$933 per secondary student and \$582 per primary student for the triennium 1993-94 to 1995-96. At that point in time, we will look at the mechanism again and see if any changes need to be made.

Mr QUINN: Moving to the Interest Assistance Scheme, which I understand is being phased out and being replaced with a Capital Assistance Scheme, what is the liability for the State Government now for the remainder of the Interest Assistance Scheme, and when will it finally expire?

Mr COMBEN: I think it is approximately—have you got figures?

Mr WATSON: We would anticipate that it is approximately \$20m, and it will expire in the years 2001-2002.

Mr COMBEN: Is that a year?

Mr WATSON: No, that is the total amount, I understand.

Mr QUINN: Is there any thought within the Government of paying out that money and moving immediately to the Capital Assistance rather than dragging on the Interest Assistance Scheme?

Mr COMBEN: Strange you should raise that; that has just been given to us formally by the independent sector—that we should pay it out. We are presently examining that and we will look at it fairly positively. A reasonably good proposal to the benefit of both the States and the independent schools has been put forward. We are examining that in some detail.

Mr QUINN: Under legislation such as anti-discrimination legislation and some others, non-Government schools are now becoming the target of parents who wish to enrol their children with special needs and the non-Government sector, I think, is rather concerned that, in future, they may not have the resources or the capabilities to respond to those legislative requirements. Is the Government investigating or looking at any means of funding for children with special needs as they enrol in the non-Government sector?

Mr COMBEN: We are certainly very conscious of the question. It is one that comes up constantly. In terms of special funding, we would hope that the basket nexus connection, that is, as we increase funding to students with special needs—which we have done this year; \$4.5m extra, \$3m extra last year—that that will flow on automatically. We are examining on a case-by-case situation the transport of students with special needs. We have a committee now which examines those matters and we have given support in a number of instances.

Mr PEACH: There is a committee comprised of the non-Government school sectors, which is looking at the non-State school registration and accountability issues and the issue of special education provision. The issues relating to transport of students in special education circumstances in non-Government schools is a major focus of that committee. The committee expects to report to the Minister within the next three months.

Mr QUINN: We move now to preschool education. I think that is on Program Statements pages 114 and 115 and in your departmental Estimates, it starts at about page 5.

Mr COMBEN: Thank you.

Mr QUINN: Just a general clarification before we move on to that particular subprogram—in the Program Statements and in the Budget Speech, mention was made of an extra 261 teachers this year to be employed by the Department itself. I wonder if you could provide a breakdown of where those teachers will be employed? In other words, how many are necessary for non-contact time, how many are necessary for LOTE, and how many are necessary for growth in other specialist areas?

Mr COMBEN: In broad terms, approximately 100 teachers for the LOTE program, which is also, of course, used for non-contact time. So that is really a doubling up that we provide of LOTE and non-contact time. It is about 170 for the expansion of enrolments—would that be right? LOTE growth is 80, new facilities and general enrolment growth is about 54, non-contact time an additional 127. So that is an extra 261. I will just run through them again. Enrolment growth, 35; new facilities, 19; LOTE, 80; and non-contact time, 127.

Mr QUINN: You have got 54 there for growth. I understand that this year the growth in the primary and the secondary sectors will be something like 5 000 students.

Mr COMBEN: No. Especially in the secondary sector, numbers are going down.

Mr QUINN: Your forecast—and it is suggested that it might probably be out of one of your magazines; I have not got the source—this year is something in the order of 261 000 primary students. It is expected to jump to 263 000 next year—am I right there?

Mr COMBEN: We would expect our enrolments for preschool to increase by 1.7 per cent from 35 250 to 35 850; Years 1 to 3, from 110 000—I will broaden them out, if you do not mind—110 000 to 112 000, which is a 1.54 increase; Years 4 to 7 is 149 000 to 151 000, which is an increase of 1 per cent; Years 8 to 10, from 94 000 to 95 000, which is 1.33 per cent; Years 11 and 12, from 51 000 to 48 000, which is minus 5.21 per cent. So the total increase is 0.6 of 1 per cent.

Mr QUINN: In raw numbers?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, they are raw numbers—sorry, in total numbers?

Mr QUINN: Yes.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, 1993-94, 444 210; 1994-95, 446 885.

Mr QUINN: So it is only a matter of hundreds, not thousands?

Mr COMBEN: An increase of 2 675.

Mr QUINN: Thank you. Mine must have been old figures.

Mr COMBEN: I would point out that it depends when you take the numbers, and the figure for the budgetary purpose of 1994-95 is, of course, over two census periods.

Mr QUINN: Back to page 114 of the subprogram.

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: In each of the subprograms within this Department there seems to be a realignment of staffing figures. For instance, in the 1993-94 Program Statements under the heading "Estimated Full-time Equivalent Employees", the estimated equivalent for 1993-94 was some 2 151, and all of a sudden, within the 1994-95 documents, that falls to 1 711. In fact, there are similar discrepancies right across-the-board in the whole Department. Can you explain, that please?

Mr COMBEN: In staffing numbers?

Mr QUINN: Yes, in staffing numbers.

Mr COMBEN: Part of it—if I can answer you in one sentence—is to do with the discrepancies between budget control limits, which was the system always used by Treasury, and the comparison with our actual numbers and our costs. You would appreciate that historically everyone has tried to reconcile the two, and it has been very difficult. So we now opt for dollars and cents based on how many staff we have, so that we can put the true number. It is not possible to compare the full-time equivalent staff numbers shown for 30 June 1994 in the 1993-94 Budget Papers with that shown for the estimated actual in the 1993-94 and 1994-95 Budget Papers. This is because the methodology used to generate staffing estimates in this year's Budget Papers is substantially different from that used in the past.

Until this year, employment figures contained in the Budget Papers were derived by adjusting the prior year's figures by changes announced in the Budget. So if you made a mistake, you added onto the mistake. We acknowledge that. For example, if the primary subprogram was to receive an increase in teaching staff of 11 to cater for facilities growth, this was added to the total staffing figure budgeted for in 1992-93. This method provides useful information because the effects of staffing changes in the Budget are reflected in staffing numbers. This method of reporting has been in place since the last major analysis of staffing numbers, which occurred in 1990-91 for the 1991-92 Budget Papers.

Therefore, staffing information in the 1993-94 Budget Papers uses the 1990-91 information as a starting point. In the intervening years, the staffing information has changed from being an estimate of full-time equivalent employment over a full year to numbers at a point in time. You would be aware, Mr Quinn, of the difficulties in saying, "This is the

number in a school." School and staff numbers go up and down, and there is leave and so on.

From the base start in 1990-91, staffing numbers were not changed to reflect the shift in method. Also, the department undertook substantial organisational restructuring in 1991-92 and in the early part of 1992-93. Change in the program structure also occurred over this time. The full effect of these structural changes have now been reflected in the 1994-95 Budget Papers. The implementation of a new payroll system, HRMS, for the department prevented these changes from occurring earlier than the 1994-95 Budget. The comparison of staffing levels contained in the 1994-95 Budget Papers is valid and reflects actual staffing commitments. I have some more information, if you would like it.

Mr QUINN: Are we right in saying that staffing numbers reflected particularly in the department's Estimates statements are the numbers of actual people on the ground?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: Before, they were Budget control limits derived by Treasury in dollar terms, which tried to equate those to staff terms?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. We had considerable difficulty doing it. That is an honest system.

Mr QUINN: That is the point I was making. In previous years, when the department said, "We will boost teacher numbers by 300, and there are the dollar amounts for them," in actual fact those teachers sometimes never found their way into schools; would I be right?

Mr COMBEN: That is an interpretation of the figures.

Mr QUINN: Would it be an accurate interpretation?

Mr COMBEN: It would be one that, if I were in Opposition, I would be saying was accurate, yes.

Mr QUINN: Whilst the Budget Papers in the past have tended to show large increases in teacher numbers, those teachers have not made it into the schools?

Mr COMBEN: That happens both ways. It could be that suddenly there had to be extra teachers put on for the Budget control limits. It is a two-way flow. But generally it acted against the warm bodies being in schools. I have just had it pointed out to me that the figures in here are, of course, especially when you deal with the end of the 1994 financial year, estimates. But they are fairly close to it. I would hope the tolerance would be very small numbers that we could all live with, not the sort of numbers that you just quoted which have occurred in the past.

Mr QUINN: If we were to analyse the figures in the 1993-94 Budget documents and compare them with those in the 1994-95 documents, we would find a discrepancy of some 1 200 equivalent full-time staff mentioned in the papers. Would that be right?

Mr COMBEN: This would be a comparison of apples with oranges, not apples with apples. We do have the difficulty of the system being based on

warm bodies this year and Budget control limits last year, and when the numbers are taken. The number taken on one day can vary as much as 100 for the next day because of resignations, secondments, changes, leave and so on.

Mr PEACH: As well as the change in methodology which the Minister has outlined, there are a number of other factors that give rise to daily fluctuations. There is the recent resignation factor, where the numbers could change from day to day across 1 300 school locations. A number of people resign and are not replaced immediately. At any time in the system, that could be 50 to 100 teachers. Secondly, the regional management of long service leave means that at this time of year and at the time when the estimated numbers are included in the Budget for the end of the financial year, we are coming into the second semester, which is traditionally the time when large numbers of people wish to go on long service leave. In some regions, the number of vacant positions being created could be as many as 20 per region, which could give you a fair fluctuation.

Also, a one-off situation will exist on 30 June—that is, 203.5 full-time equivalent teacher numbers which were previously used for educational advisers are not being used in Semester 1 and will be employed from Semester 2 for curriculum coordination time. Those numbers were not used for six months. So there are 203 as well. Those fluctuations can contribute quite significant to the methodology issues that the Minister raised.

The CHAIRMAN: The time period allocated for questions from non-Government members has expired. I will now ask Ms Spence to ask questions for the Government.

Ms SPENCE: We have talked about the fact that there are only an additional 261 teachers to be employed in the next year. But the increase in full-time employee numbers is estimated in 1993-94 to be 771. What types of employees will make up the balance?

Mr COMBEN: Across the full gamut, you would appreciate that we have some 45 000 employees in the department, and 27 000 of those are teachers. Some 5 000 are cleaners and some 6 000 are teacher aides. So we would include a range of different things in those numbers. The 770 full-time equivalents are as follows: for teachers for the non-contact time, facilities growth, enrolment growth, and LOTE, which I have already referred to in response to Mr Quinn. On top of that are 210 curriculum coordinators. The changed in-service arrangements increase at this time is 265. The changed in-service arrangement we have reduced by 25. Staffing officers to the public service are 24. We are changing from teaching to the public service.

For the public service, there are 24 staffing officers; for the growth, mainly in the administrative assistance enhancement program, of 18.; and for wages staff, teachers aides growth is 39. The growth in the number of janitor/grounds people is 10. That gives 778 full-time equivalents. I notice that in that list the teacher increases, as against the ones in the classrooms, are 687.

Ms SPENCE: What do you mean by that, then?

Mr COMBEN: A number of those are not in classrooms. When we were talking about classroom growth before, it is about non-contact time, facilities growth, enrolment growth and LOTE. But on top of that, for teachers being employed, curriculum coordination, and the increase with the change of figures, effectively it is 265.

Ms SPENCE: You mentioned that 210 people will be employed as curriculum coordinators. Could you explain what they are to us, please?

Mr COMBEN: As that is a highly professional issue, I will let the acting Director-General explain what a curriculum coordinator is.

Mr MacDONALD: Curriculum coordinator is not a position that will really exist. It is curriculum coordination time that we are funding. It will vary in its application from school to school. It will be a part-time appointment in primary and special schools, and it will allow people to coordinate across a subject area in those schools. It will give some middle management support in primary schools that would be equivalent to some of the work that subject masters have done in high schools. It may be the appointment of a teacher to work in a teacher's classroom who is already appointed to allow that teacher who may have art expertise, for example, to coordinate all art programs in a school. It covers any subject area or area of need that you could think of.

Ms SPENCE: When you talk about 210 curriculum coordinators, that is not necessarily an additional 210 people being employed in the system for those positions?

Mr MACDONALD: It could be many more in terms of part-time employment because in more remote, smaller schools, it is likely that some of them will cluster together, add their curriculum coordination time up, and they might actually appoint a person who services their needs across a group of schools. That could add up to one person, but in any other school it would not be a full-time position for anyone.

Mr COMBEN: But that person could easily be someone in the school who gets taken offline to do curriculum coordination. They are not all part-time jobs.

Mr MACDONALD: No.

Mr COMBEN: They could be using part of their time for this purpose.

Ms SPENCE: My next question is also on numbers. You explained where the additional 261 teachers will fit into the system. Could you also explain how they will be divided regionally?

Mr COMBEN: Could we defer that question? I will get the answer for you in a moment or two.

Mr PEACH: That decision has not been taken yet, and it will not be able to be taken until after the July census. There will have to be a consideration of some more detailed enrolment patterns and needs and applications for transfer from teachers, so the decision will be made prior to the staffing conference in August. It is not possible to give a definite

breakdown at this time. However, you can make some general comments along the lines that the metropolitan regions which are declining—metropolitan east and metropolitan west—are not likely to attract many of the numbers and that the growing regions—such as south coast, Sunshine Coast and Wide Bay in particular—will pick up more, but it has to be very general at this stage.

Ms SPENCE: My next question has to do with relief teachers. What percentage of the teacher aide salaries funds are allocated to relief teachers? Many schools have found the current allocation, when distributed, to be inadequate to meet their needs. The 2.2 days for each teacher when they have a sick leave entitlement of 10 days a year is seen to be inadequate. Why is more money not allocated to relief teachers?

Mr COMBEN: We spend \$12m already on relief for teachers. That is adequate. There are a range of ways in which we can fill the position of that teacher if they are away. We cannot have an open-ended system whereby if a teacher is not at school then that teacher's position is filled. We have negotiated with the union a range of methods by which we can look at other teachers going into the classroom—especially with non-contact time, they can be used. Some of the specialty teachers can at times be used. In terms of modern personnel management and maximising the dollars that we have, we think that that allocation is highly appropriate.

Ms SPENCE: Fair enough. Does the department plan to offer the retirement incentives package again this year?

Mr COMBEN: The voluntary—

Ms SPENCE: Yes, the voluntary retirement package to open up vacancies for new graduates.

Mr COMBEN: No, because it would be making a farce of the system if we did. There are two reasons. The first is: why would we want to? The second relates to whether we need to. As to whether we would want to—last year, 347 took the voluntary early retirement package. It was described by some people as being a rusty handshake and not a golden one, but nevertheless it freed up some positions, and we were thankful for that. Our real problem with teacher numbers and retirement is that we do not have the number of people retiring that we used to have. It used to be around about 2 500 a year. It has dropped to less than 1 000. Whilst interest rates remain low, people will stay in the system beyond 55, whereas most people had begun to get out of the system at 55.

It is our belief that as interest rates rise over the next year or so and as some of those older teachers who had dreamt for 20 years of getting out at 55 decide, "Well, we have gone on for a further three years and we have built up the nest egg a bit more. We are tired; let's go", they will go. The numbers retiring will be increasing over the next year or 18 months. There are now some predictions around the State from the tertiary institutions and from the department that we could be short of teachers in Queensland in four to six to eight years, depending

on who gives the estimate. I do not think that a VER scheme is appropriate at this time. We would also have difficulties with the Taxation Commissioner, who would not see it as a genuine voluntary early retirement to free up positions; he would see it as an enhanced package or an enhanced retirement and would be wanting to tax it. Therefore, we have some technical difficulties.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: If I could follow on from that question. Surely there must be an additional salaries cost component of teachers staying in the system for a longer period than they had previously stayed in the system?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Could you please tell us what the salary implications of that are and what those implications may be if your projections of people retiring in the future are not met?

Mr COMBEN: The difference between a new graduate and a teacher on a full incremental is about \$17,000. A graduate comes in in broad figures on \$23,000 and then works up over a period of years to the top scale for a classroom teacher of \$40,000. That is a \$17,000 difference. So, if only 1 000 teachers remain in there, that is \$17m. There is a huge difference. One of the reasons why we have had to so carefully scrutinise our own budget over the last three years is that the cohort of teachers was going towards the top of the scale, and that was costing us many millions of dollars. I have had some difficulty explaining that to various meetings of teachers, who say, "We do not have any extras, but you say that we have all this extra money in the budget."

Some of the estimates are that, with non-retirement of some people, we could be paying anything up to \$25m extra on top of what we normally would if we had the general breakdown of new graduates coming in—in the vicinity of 2 000 to 2 500 at the beginning—and 2 500 teachers retiring at the other end. Instead of going out, they are staying there, and that is an extra year at \$17,000. There is a huge implication for our budget from that.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: You may not have the ability to answer this question, but in the last five years, what would be the cumulative effect to the wages portion of your budget of that lack of retirement?

Mr COMBEN: Could you repeat that again?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Over the last five years, what would be the cumulative effect on your budget?

Mr COMBEN: I do not think anyone could give you that figure. We could give you some estimates. I think I am being told here a difference of \$300 per person. The average cost for a teacher in metropolitan east—which is the area with the largest older population, because generally a teacher has done country service and come back there—as compared with one of the country areas is \$300 per teacher per fortnight. That is a huge amount. It is something that the system has to grapple with in terms of social justice. Without even seeing and understanding it, we have some schools which are

perceived as being unattractive and which, as a result of the older teachers not wanting to go there, we generally fill with the younger teachers—not necessarily the new graduates. They will effectively be receiving less of the educational dollars than a school which is seen as highly attractive, whereas the needs-based funding would require us to spend more money in that unattractive school, because the very things that make it unattractive are the things that we should be concentrating on. I think that answers the question.

Ms SPENCE: Back to Basics in Budget Related Paper No. 5 states under key initiatives that this is a record \$2.4 billion budget—\$100m more than last year's comparable budget. The same paper last year claimed a \$2.35 billion budget. How did a \$50m difference then become a \$100m difference?

Mr COMBEN: Budget Related Paper No. 5 is prepared by the Treasury, who advise that the only comparable adjustment was on account of nurse education transferring from a State responsibility to a Commonwealth responsibility, so that is minus effectively \$5m. That would be part of the answer. Mike, do you want to add to that? I think it is comparing apples with oranges, is it not?

Mr KEILY: Essentially, Treasury has seen the only comparability adjustment between the two allocations as the transfer of nurse education to Commonwealth responsibility, and when those two figures are taken out, something in the order of \$16m in 1993-94 and half a million dollars in 1994-95, the resultant comparable Budgets for 1993-94 are about \$2.3 billion and 1994-95 \$2.4 billion, giving a difference of \$100m or 4.3 per cent.

Mr COMBEN: There was also some rounding off, I think. When I looked at that question, there was some rounding off done as well by Treasury as against the actual figures which were in the other Budget Papers.

Ms SPENCE: So this \$50m we are spending on nurse education—

Mr COMBEN: \$60m.

Ms SPENCE: This \$60m is continuing to be budgeted for under the Education Department Budget in the future, is it?

Mr COMBEN: No, it is a Commonwealth responsibility now.

Ms SPENCE: It is not totally Commonwealth?

Mr KEILY: Yes, it is phased out of State responsibility and it has been picked up fully by the Commonwealth in the future. There is half a million dollars in our budget in 1994-95 to conclude our responsibility.

Ms SPENCE: So, in future, that money will not be seen anywhere in the State Government Budget papers under any department; is that correct?

Mr KEILY: That is my understanding, yes—full Commonwealth responsibility.

Mr COMBEN: I have been given advice that Treasury's roundings are quite substantial, that last year the rounding was 2.43 when in actual fact their figure was 2.4. There was also rounding this year. It

is rounding off of figures rather than actuals. We can give you actuals presently, if you like.

Ms SPENCE: Are you saying that Treasury rounded it down this year from 2.43 to 2.4?

Mr COMBEN: They rounded down last year and rounded up this year.

Ms SPENCE: So they do it both ways?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, but generally only one way with us. But I must appreciate the great work done by Treasury. They come in and say, "We are the people from Treasury. We are here to help you."

Mr BRISKEY: I have a question about primary school education, specifically regarding the primary computer program for 1994-95 and the provision of the computer hardware under that program. Could you tell me what are the coverage targets, that is, the number of students and the year levels that will be fixed up for 1994-95 in that program?

Mr COMBEN: Targets in terms of the number of students being part of the program—this year, some 17 000 students in Year 6 and Year 7 to have access to computers that have never had it before. The longer-term target, which is the one I generally use publicly, is that we are aiming to have one computer for every 10 children in place by 1997. That is the aim of the outcome of the program.

Mr BRISKEY: What about year levels?

Mr COMBEN: Generally, Year 6 and Year 7 is what it is aimed at, and there will be 1 to 10 across the entire board—in Years 6 to 7. In 1993-94, there are three components to the initiative—primary computers, primary maintenance program and secondary maintenance program. The support for it includes 11 regional educational advisers, four regional project officers, three staff at central office, four staff in low incidence support centre, professional development programs for teachers, research and support for the use of adaptive technology by disabled students or students with disabilities, and development of multi-media and software programs for learning and professional development. Non-Government schools have been allocated funds, and apropos what Mr Quinn was asking earlier, that was the first program ever where the State had said to the non-Government schools, "This is a new initiative for us. Here is your share of the money."

In 1993-94, over 640 primary and special schools have received funding for the use of computers. Regional personnel were provided with a professional development and support video and booklet, which was produced to help primary schools in the selection of computer hardware. Also, an internet trial is being conducted to investigate the potential it may have to support and enhance learning and teaching, and teachers are developing skills in the use of computers to help with learning and teaching. We anticipate this year that all primary schools will have at least one Year 6/7 class involved in the program. That is where we are aiming it. The secondary schools are generally fairly well set up for it.

Mr BRISKEY: I have another question on primary schools, specifically with regard to special schools, in relation to non-contact time. The \$7m that has been provided—the 127 specialist teachers—to implement this non-contact time; does that guarantee specialist teachers to all preschools, primary schools and special schools, particularly those in remote locations?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. I could leave the answer at that, but I think I had better expand on it. The difficulties we are going to have, and which have already been referred to by Mr MacDonald, are how are we going to supply non-contact time to a teacher at Yaraka or Jundah—those sorts of places? It is not going to be easy. The broad feeling that we have at present, which we have flagged with the Principals Association and with the Queensland Teachers Union, is that smaller schools pool their time to employ a teacher and maybe that employed teacher for non-contact time goes out a couple of times a term, or something, and gives some days off to the teaching principal—that sort of thing. We will have to have a creative solution for it. It will not be easy. The commitment is there, yes, but a lot of negotiation has to go on yet.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions by the Government members has expired. We will return to the non-Government members.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned before that you thought 2.2 days per teacher for TRS has been adequate this year. What was the figure in last year's Budget?

Mr COMBEN: Approximately the same as it is this year.

Mr QUINN: TRS days only come into play when relief teachers or cluster relief teachers are not available?

Mr COMBEN: When all the other systems are not there.

Mr QUINN: When all the other systems are not there, including specialist teachers taking classes and classroom teachers taking—

Mr COMBEN: To some extent, yes.

Mr QUINN: What was the availability of relief teachers this year? Was it the same as the previous year?

Mr COMBEN: I am not sure what you mean by—

Mr QUINN: For instance, in primary staffing in 1994, there seem to be approximately 207 teachers there because of long-term illness—we call them CRTs. In the previous year, that same allocation within the primary school sector was 266. There seems to be a reduction of some 60 teachers for long-term illness relief within schools. With an increased number of teachers, you have reduced the number of teachers available for long-term illness relief within classrooms within primary schools and yet kept TRS days at the same limit.

Mr COMBEN: Last year, quite openly and honestly we sought to make some efficiencies, some savings, within the Department, and I would expect somewhere over the next couple of hours that

someone will be raising the question of what efficiencies we have managed to achieve in the Department for good management to maintain as many teachers in the classroom as we possibly can so that that change is really a change to the allocative model. Can I remind the Committee that we are the only State not to have sacked teachers and closed schools holus-bolus. I think that you are pointing to one of the areas where we have saved some money by an improved formula and that will then benefit the number of teachers that we have regularly in front of a classroom.

Mr QUINN: Would you term it "saving money" if teachers double up, if specialist teachers have to take classes out of their timetable? Have you had any feedback from the regions as to the adequacy of these staffing levels?

Mr COMBEN: We have had general feedback, and the adequacy seems to be there for most regions. Where some of the regions have an older work force, there seem to be some problems and some challenges for us. We are trying to get on top of those at the present time to see whether or not it is a problem with the model or whether there are other causes, but I would have thought that most people would expect a school—take a major high school which could have 120 teachers in there—to be able to provide some relief within its own system to some extent and not have an open-ended system which could potentially be open to less than rigorous perceptions. In those terms, I think that what we have done so far has been adequate and appropriate, and I will stick by it until we see further information which may prove otherwise for those regions with an older work force.

Mr PEACH: My recollection of the TRS changes a year ago—and we can come back to you later on in the day with the absolutely accurate description—was that the model was changed because of the debate between regional administrations about the allocation of long service leave versus teacher relief time—DRT—so the model was changed to the benefit of some regions and to the disadvantage of others, or you can say it the other way round, but the model shifted resources across regions as a result of extensive debate in the human resource management forum.

That does not necessarily mean that, because the model and the allocation under certain nominal categories was changed, the actual use of those teacher numbers has to follow that model. Regional administrations have discretion in using the teacher numbers in school for long service leave, for DRTs and LRTs, and they do tend to vary that from the allocative model. So there are a number of factors that follow the actual allocation of those numbers.

However, a couple of other things happened as well in the last 12 months. There was an increase in TRS money available. That will happen again this year in the four bigger regions in the south-east corner. Schools can access the school grant to buy TRS, and that grant has increased quite dramatically in the last couple of years.

Mr QUINN: There is a regional flyer put out by

the South Coast education region headquarters in Southport.

Mr COMBEN: They have a nice headquarters there. They have a nice view.

Mr QUINN: Yes. I will ask about the rental later. In the TRS column, it states that "2.2 days per teacher is insufficient in this region. Funds have been transferred from teaching salaries to cover shortfalls previously, and a further transfer may be required prior to 30 June 1994". Getting back to your comment about the Budget control limits in teacher numbers not being accurately reflected in schools—here is a situation in which one region has not got teachers on the ground and is required to take money from teacher salaries in order to fund TRS days. That would seem to be inadequate in the level that has been provided.

Mr COMBEN: There are 11 regions, of course. The advice from something like seven of those regions is that there is sufficient; advice from two regions is "tight"; and advice from two is "inappropriate". We are currently having that debate to work out what we can do, but we cannot have an open-ended system. There must be discipline within the system. Otherwise, that piece of paper might say that today we are taking them from teacher numbers to put there; but what you would do is change it centrally and just take them out automatically before you even start. We have to have some rigour in the system, and we will be seeking that. I acknowledge the difficulty which the South Coast is having.

Mr QUINN: I move to capital works. Within the Budget Papers themselves, this year there are a number of schools which were mentioned in the program last year. I think something in the order of 10 schools had projects in last year's Budget, and in one case it did not even get off the drawing board by the look of it—a Budget allocation of some \$290,000, but nothing was spent. They again appear in this year's Budget allocation.

Mr COMBEN: Where was this?

Mr QUINN: Emerald State High School, Performing Arts and Music. I am wondering if you can provide the Committee with a list of projects which appeared in the previous Budget and again appear in this one, and the reason they were not completed within the Budget required time.

Mr COMBEN: We could certainly provide that.

Mr QUINN: I can provide you with the names of the schools, if you wish. For instance, Oakey State School—Admin. Block; Gin Gin—Special Education Unit; Mount Gravatt West Special School—Hydrotherapy Pool, Change Room and Toilet; Mount Ommaney Special School—Replacement School Stage 2; Aspley State High—Home Economics; Ipswich—Replacement Block E; Clontarf Beach State High—Home Economics Upgrade; Emerald State High School—Performing Arts and Music; Emerald State High—Home Economics; Gin Gin—Manual Arts; Mount Isa State High—Senior Manual Arts Workshop and Construction Court. There is something in the order of about \$4m which was unspent within this particular Capital Works Program.

Mr COMBEN: It is always difficult in a year when it rains to spend all your money. That has a major impact on us.

Mr QUINN: It must have been pouring in Emerald.

Mr COMBEN: Emerald has had two major building programs. I would not be surprised if they are both the same. Of course, some projects are over two years. The Budget will say \$50,000 this year for planning and \$300,000 next year. We would like to take that list and have a look and comment back to you in writing. We have had major works with some of those. I wonder if they are the same works, or whether they are two projects going on because of the historic underfunding by the previous Government.

Mr QUINN: Trust me, they are not different. I turn to page 114 of Budget Paper No. 3 in relation to the preschool subprogram. I seek some clarification. In relation to the capital outlays, the Budget Speech mentioned seven new preschools; Budget-related paper No. 5 refers to six new preschool units; and the Capital Works Program refers to four new preschool units plus extensions at three others. What is going on here?

Mr COMBEN: To the best of my understanding, there are seven new preschools there. It is part of the general policy that when we build a new State primary school we put a preschool there. Six preschools and one early education centre is the figure.

Mr QUINN: Also on page 114—the estimated full-time equivalent employees for 1993-94 is 1 711, and in 1994-95 you have an estimate of 1 808, representing an increase of 97 within this particular subprogram. Can you tell me where these people are being employed?

Mr COMBEN: Across the preschool system. We now have approximately 400 preschools. They would be employed with increased enrolments. I would just look at the enrolments, which have gone up, but have gone up inconsistently; so that will require some changes. We will find you enrolment numbers. The full-time equivalent is as the Budget Papers say.

Mr QUINN: So there are 97 extra staff within the subprogram?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: Ninety-seven extra bodies, we might call them?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: I refer to page 116 in relation to the primary schools subprogram. If you look at the estimated full-time equivalent employees, you will notice that, this time, the jump is 703. In the Budget, there was provision for only an extra 260 teachers. You have 93 in preschool and 700 in primary school, and we have not even got to the secondaries yet.

Mr COMBEN: You have a 700 increase there. The numbers which that would cover in primaries is: non-contact time, 53; facilities growth, 9; and enrolment growth, 176. The change in the BCL to

actuals is 224, and curriculum coordination adjustment is 210, which comes to some 670-odd.

Mr QUINN: So what you are saying is that you cannot equate the extra number of teachers mentioned in the Budget Papers with the estimated full-time equivalent employees in every department?

Mr COMBEN: The full-time equivalent employees to which you refer would include teacher aides, janitors and grounds people.

Mr QUINN: There are 1 000 hours per week there, are there not?

Mr COMBEN: I cannot give it to you in hours. We have four new primary schools alone, and we have an increase in enrolments in the primary sector; so those would take quite a number of the places.

Mr QUINN: I am trying to reconcile what you say is the actual increase in teacher numbers with what is appearing in the documents. We have had this business before where they did not match up. I am trying to match them up now, if it is possible.

Mr COMBEN: It would be very difficult, because different programs would take them at different times. We would go back to the comments that we made earlier. To do it, you would have to say at 12 o'clock on 30 June, "This is where we will take it." If you have some programs going over a calendar year, others going over a financial year, it is very difficult to reconcile it. We could give you a breakdown of those numbers. Can I be honest with you and say that as we prepared for this Estimates Committee we all acknowledged how difficult it would be, because the variety of different programs, reporting to the Federal Government, the Treasury Estimates of our numbers as compared with warm bodies, BCLs against warm bodies—it is extremely difficult. A 24-hour difference in the census makes a huge difference at times.

Mr QUINN: I turn to the subprogram for Primary Schools again—

Mr COMBEN: We are told that we can reconcile that figure, so we will try again. You are saying that there is a discrepancy of 702?

Mr QUINN: I am just saying that the Budget mentions 260 extra teachers and you go then to the actual estimated full-time equivalent employees and try to work it out from that and it simply does not balance. The numbers are astronomical in those categories.

Mr COMBEN: We can give you those. In relation to the 703, which you have as a difference, I point out straightaway that it is going to be a rounded figure—to 702.7 full-time equivalents. That makes a difference when you have 27 000 teachers. For teachers: full time, 572; for LOTE, 80; for public servants—the Administrative Assistance Enhancement Program, 21.9; teacher aides, 20.8. For wages: full-time janitors, groundspeople and cleaners—that would be basically to new schools—that adds up to 702.7.

Mr QUINN: I will come back to that after I have digested it all.

Mr PEACH: The difference is between 262 additional teachers and changes to employment at a

point in time. It is the changes to employment that are causing a little difficulty.

Mr QUINN: I will take your word for that. Back again to the primary schools subprogram. The actual estimated 1993-94 total is \$966m and the Budget in the previous year only provided for an estimated expenditure of some \$956m. There appears to be a \$10m overrun in the Department. Could we have a brief explanation, please?

Mr COMBEN: On that program there would have been—largely due to our extra labour costs, both teacher and non-teacher. That is why late last year we made the changes that were necessary to be made—so that, at the end of the day, our overall estimation of our actuals is basically on-line for the first time ever.

Mr QUINN: In the Budget Estimates statement, page 10, on the line "Utilities", the estimated actual for 1993-94 and the budgeted figure for 1994-95 is actually the same. Is this part of the devolution of responsibilities to schools where they are now expected to come in line on an estimated expense for these two—telephones and electricity?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, it is, based on the historic data and the savings that we think we can make in the schools. Where we have piloted the projects there has been a clear saving available to schools. We have taken 15 per cent—10 per cent?

Mr PEACH: The allocation is the same, but we've got to make a 10 per cent saving.

Mr COMBEN: We took 15 per cent off each individual school. The trial that was conducted at places such as Stafford State School showed that there is a saving bigger than that that could be obtained. We believe that most schools will actually make a bigger saving and will keep the rest. That is why that figure is the same. There are a few anomalies around the State, such as Weipa State High School where effectively it is a private company—one of the Comalco group of companies—that is building the school. Of course, we have had the difficulties of the Rochedale school where we were paying the electricity account at the Rochedale Caravan Park on the school account. There have been a number of those. Overall, there is a considerable saving to the system.

In the past, we have seen \$20,000 spent needlessly when the automatic flushing of the boys' toilets was left on over Christmas. That was only one school, and it cost something like \$20,000. We have had mains water burst under a school oval, and that cost a large amount of money over goodness knows how many years. We are now getting on top of all of those problems. The savings in the system that can be put into putting a teacher in front of students is considerable. We think we have sorted out most of the individual problems. We still have a couple places out there which are saying, "We can't do it." Of course, we have the difficulty with the places which might have been very involved, if—

The CHAIRMAN: Have you finished your answer?

Mr COMBEN: The timekeeper cut me off in the middle of "if".

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for questions by non-Government members has expired. It is now the turn of the Government members.

Ms SPENCE: A follow-up question on the utilities issue—although you are not giving more money to the schools to be spent on utilities, do you accept the argument that has been put to me frequently by principals and other people teaching in schools that in fact their telephone usage is likely to increase in the future just because of the nature of education these days, because we are asking schools to communicate with the general public more and we are asking parents and citizens' bodies to communicate more at school, and basically because telephones are going to be used more in the future rather than less?

Mr COMBEN: If they can show us that that is occurring—that is the role of the QCPCA, all the Principals Associations, the Independent Parents Association, the Isolated Parents Association—we will take that on board. They are the sort of arguments that we have to deal with each day on every Budget item. We have to work out whether or not that is a legitimate expense or whether it is one that can still be maintained in a rigorous way. We would believe at the present time that the allocation is perfectly correct and that schools will be making a profit out of it. If it expands in the future, yes, we will look at funding it as we have to, because we have to fund public education.

Ms SPENCE: So you are suggesting that schools will make a profit out of the utilities allocation if they budget wisely?

Mr COMBEN: Many schools will. Some schools will make a considerable profit.

Ms SPENCE: Which they will then be able to keep?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, they will be able to keep it. If you take the full range of potential savings which are there—about different tariffs which people can be on, lighting timing switches, whether or not the tuckshop turns its refrigerators off over Christmas, all of those sorts of things—sure, they are not big ones, but the tariff can be, and it is our belief that many schools will make a considerable saving.

Ms SPENCE: Does that then reward schools that have been frivolous in the past with their utilities?

Mr COMBEN: That is a difficulty that we face. We face the same problem with the Back to Basics kit. If a school has been very good at raising funds and has a wonderful set of equipment, how do we justify giving only a certain amount of money to that school? So the P & C which has skimped and saved and flogged itself at the fetes does not get anything extra for it. The same applies with schools with the utilities. If they have done the right thing in the past—they could be a totally green school that has done everything perfectly—there is no profit for them there. That is one of the costs of a large system. We would like some method of rewarding them, but we have not been able to find an appropriate system.

Ms SPENCE: Back to the preschool issue again. I think Mr Quinn pointed out that it appears in many respects that the total preschool program has increased. Indeed, it is increasing. We are building more preschools, yet enrolments are steadily decreasing. Why are we expanding the preschool program with decreasing enrolments likely in the future?

Mr COMBEN: Can I just refer back to utilities? As to the rationalisation of the utilities and why we do such things—it is to save money for children in classrooms so that even in a school that does not have everything, or at present does have something so that it does not get a reward, that money is still going into students' education and not into other things.

On the preschools—the number of students is slightly on the increase. What we are facing is a challenge from the private providers of day care, which is often more parent-friendly and geared to parents than preschools, especially the half-day preschools, etc. So we are making some changes and doing more full-day preschools, etc. The numbers are increasing overall, but there has been a fall in preschool enrolments on the Sunshine Coast and in the south coast regions, particularly, and that is demonstrably attributed to private sector child-care facilities. The introduction of the Commonwealth child-care cash rebate of \$30 in 1994 may impact on State preschool enrolments in those two areas again. A policy on the management of preschools and early education classes will be developed. We are doing the best that we can at the present time, but it is a major problem.

Ms SPENCE: Is there a cost associated with changing these half-day preschools to full day care?

Mr COMBEN: I would think not. It would be broadly the same because we would still have the same staff numbers, yes.

Mr MACDONALD: There will be some minor costs to schools because changing from half day to full day involves the provision of appropriate rest facilities in schools. Schools have to consider the demands on their resources in terms of the desirability of otherwise of the change. There is also a cost in terms of providing adequate supervision during the lunch hour.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Just following that along, we can gather categorically that there is no intention other than to persevere with the provision of preschool facilities within our State school system?

Mr COMBEN: No, you cannot gather that.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I understand. That will do.

Mr COMBEN: Well, I was waiting for a supplementary. I think that we have a major challenge out there and I have only just recently started discussing this with the senior officers of the Department that if we are going to have Federal Government funded child-care centres providing a service which parents are saying, "We will accept", then we have got to be saying to ourselves, "What is it that we are providing?" The easy days of saying,

"Well, we provide an educational facility within preschool because there is an educational program there, but that child-care mob, they are just like things out of Dickens where you put 40 kids in a room and they do not learn anything", are gone. Many child-care facilities now have trained teachers. They may not have the same quality program that we would give in educational terms, but they are gearing up for it. The cost to the parent can often be less to go to a child-care than it can be to a preschool these days. We have to look at what we are doing, what we are providing and what parents want. So I will give no categorical commitment to preschools as we know them. It would be our intention to maintain them as they are, but let us find out what is going on out there in the market.

I have recently had discussions with Alan Fazldeen from the Creche and Kindergarten Association and both they and the Department are thinking about what questions we should be asking at the present time about precompulsory years schooling provision—the provision of care and education for precompulsory years. We would expect to get back together over the next month or so. The Creche and Kindergarten Association is facing the same challenge in some areas. They were at pains to point out that, in some areas, they are expanding. You will note in the Estimates documents that the amount of money provided last year for capital works for creche and kindergartens was not used, or only about half of it used, because the demand was not there. So it is one of those areas where there has to be a robust public debate and we look forward to that debate to work out the best for the students involved. Maybe we could do better to spend our money on educational programs within day-care centres, etc. We do not know, but I think the debate has to be had.

Ms SPENCE: Just on to a different topic, Minister, can you outline how the \$20m on the curriculum review implementation will be spent?

Mr COMBEN: No. I do not think anyone can. Well, no-one can at this moment; that is quite clear. We have allocated money because it has been the intention of the Government as a whole and the Department and myself to start implementing Wiltshire early next year. Precisely what that means is still out for public consultation. There is clearly a general community commitment to a number of the things in the Wiltshire report—the Year 2 diagnostic net, the Year 6 review to see that literacy and numeracy are there, that we can give full information to parents—there is a commitment to P-12 continuous, seamless core curriculum and a number of other incentives; the values, etc.—in the Wiltshire review. So some of those things we think we can start to do early next year, but precisely what and how, particularly the structures—it is no secret that the structures proposed by Wiltshire are going to cost a lot of money; so we are concerned about that—and how quickly we could do them are unknown, so we will focus on the outcomes. The outcomes that Wiltshire suggests that the public will support and all the professional bodies will support will be the first things that will receive Government funding and then gradually, after that, we will do the

harder things, the more difficult things—examine the structures, etc. So the money is there for whatever areas we want to put into place early next year.

Ms SPENCE: So how was the figure of \$20m arrived at, then?

Mr COMBEN: That is a very good question. It was appropriate in all the circumstances. I think that we negotiated with Treasury as to what we could reasonably receive for the curriculum review, and what could realistically be spent in this first 10 months of the financial year, and then we will look at getting more next year. But Treasury was fairly hard on us. They said to us that we could not suddenly start doing all the syllabus changes that were necessary, that we would not be spending \$50m. It would be true to say that we started at a higher figure, Treasury started at a lower figure and \$20m is what has been allocated. I give no guarantee that all of it will be spent or that more than that will not be spent, if we can find it internally. If, when the public consultation period is over by the middle of this month, it has gone to Cabinet, and we have made our decisions about which directions we want to take, then we will start spending the money in real terms. So \$20m is appropriate to that.

Ms SPENCE: So the bulk of the money will be spent next year? You see that further down the line?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, most of the money will be spent from the beginning of next year.

Ms SPENCE: Yes.

Mr COMBEN: I would assume that if we do things such as the Year 2 and Year 6 testing, which many parents are saying they want very quickly, that some of that money will be spent on teacher training this year—getting into place some sort of key teachers who could implement our policy. So some of it will be spent this year. There would not, in those cases, be much that would be spent next year because it is basically what is going on in class. I mean, those extra teachers would be on top of it. But if we were to start saying, "Well, next year we want to have a new syllabus in maths/science or a new syllabus in social studies", then we could spend some of that money. Those questions are undecided and unresolved at the present time.

Mr BRISKEY: If I can just change the subject to guidance officers and their training? How much money has been allocated in this Budget to the training of guidance officers? Next year, how many additional guidance officers will be there out there working in our schools?

Mr COMBEN: I do not know. We have got a figure for the training of guidance officers. We have got just under 400 guidance officers in the State system at the present time. We want to increase that to about 419. Presently, guidance officers cost us about \$16m. That is up about half a million dollars on last year. Last year, full-time equivalent guidance officers were 399.4. This year, our aim is to have 415.4, so that is a reasonable increase. Our biggest challenge with guidance officers is their training. At present, there is training at Griffith University, but only a limited number of people go there.

But there is a new scheme. This year, for the first time we will have guidance officers trained through distance education. The hope is that, with that distance education mode and with the group that we put through Griffith each year, more of them will stay in the system. We have not had great success with guidance officers staying in the system. They are fairly expensive to train. Quite regularly, they come back to us, give us notice and then move on to other tasks straightaway. We have a lot of difficulty with that.

We have some difficulties also with the number of guidance officers put into different regions. A number of areas, particularly in the south-east corner, have more guidance officers than have been "formulaly" driven for their entitlement. But other regions, particularly those that would be perceived as being unattractive—the north-west, north, Capricornia and the south-west—are undersupplied with guidance officers.

Mr BRISKEY: So you are saying that remote areas have limited access to guidance officers?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, because we have difficulty attracting them. That would apply not only to guidance officers but also to speech pathologists, speech therapists and physiotherapists.

The CHAIRMAN: Has thought been given to providing these specialist services on a fly-in basis to remote areas?

Mr PEACH: The change to the training system that the Minister mentioned is intended to allow people who reside in those areas to train to be guidance officers, as opposed to the previous system under which people had to be in either Brisbane or Townsville to be trained as guidance officers. Very few people were prepared to leave their families for 12 months to be trained, with the result that we were training more people for the south-east corner where we did not need them and were not attracting people to train in the other areas.

Recently, the Director of Human Resources has sent a document to regions suggesting exactly the notion that you, Madam Chair, put forward—that is, where there is an excess over the formula in the number of guidance officers, such a region will organise with some of the regions in short of guidance officers to fly them in for blocks of two and three weeks to try to overcome the problem in that way in the short term.

Another series of strategies are being used as well, including advertising interstate, and taking guidance from people from Low Incidence Support Centres as well.

Mr COMBEN: As a supplement to our answer about Griffith University, I point out that all of the training for guidance is now done through the Human Resources Directorate of the Department of Education, not through Griffith University, in an attempt to try to keep the guidance officers.

Mr BRISKEY: Minister, I would like to draw your attention to the controversy last year about the Year 5 five social studies units. How much money has been spent on rewriting those units?

Mr COMBEN: You are referring to the politically correct word "settlement", as opposed to "invasion". We certainly would not have a Budget allocation for that. Basically, one page was rewritten. That would have involved a staff officer for a few days. If you want me to give you a figure, I will give you a figure of \$2,000. But there was no huge cost involved. There was no pulping of documentation or anything like that. The figure is \$1,000 for postage. The material does not even list labour costs. There were some labour costs involved in answering ministerial inquiries, and in school visits in metropolitan and non-metropolitan regions. It was about \$2,000 or \$3,000 at the most.

Mr BRISKEY: So it cost very little?

Mr COMBEN: It was insignificant. It was really part of an officer's normal, day-to-day tasks.

Ms SPENCE: I would like to ask about the school enhancement project. I know the Government has committed \$400,000 to it this financial year, as it did last financial year. It is a project that I totally support. It is very difficult to find mention of it in the Budget Papers. Could you or any of your officers outline how that money is being spent and how the effectiveness of that project is being judged?

Mr COMBEN: I will let Robin Sullivan answer that question. That program deals with Inala and other areas. It is a program to which we are highly committed.

Ms SULLIVAN: Last year, money was allocated for which the schools would have to bid, as it were. They had to get the school communities together to come up with a proposal for an interdepartmental committee to approve. The same thing will happen to the moneys for this year and next year. The first evaluation reports for the first 12 months of the program are now in. Like you, I am very happy with the results. I am happy to submit those to any members of the Committee.

What was significant about those evaluations is that we insisted on base level data for literacy and numeracy to start with. So we have the base level data against which we can measure the improvement of those students through a concentrated effort on literacy and numeracy in those clusters. The other interesting thing is that it is school-cluster based. We have a P-12 approach, with preschools, primary schools, special schools and high schools all working together towards the same end of improving student outcomes. There will be no increase in the clusters this year but, as you said, there will be double the money. So I am happy to provide that documentation, if people wish to see it.

Ms SPENCE: I would very much like to read something about that program.

Mr COMBEN: The money was doubled because this year will be a full year. Whereas, we only started at the beginning of the year. Last year, it was half a year—six months. This year, it is a full year.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of time allotted for the examination of the Budget Estimates for the Department of Education has now expired. We will break for lunch about five minutes early. I will

ask you all to return at 1.40, rather than 1.45 p.m., to continue examining of the Budget Estimates for the Department of the Education.

The Committee adjourned at 12.56 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 1.43 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The hearings of Estimates Committee C are now resumed. The examination of the Budget Estimates for the Department of Education will recommence. I remind the Minister and his departmental officers that the time allotted for the Department of Education will expire at 3.55 p.m., or earlier if we run out of questions for the Minister. I would ask advisers to the Minister who are coming forward, other than those at the front table, to identify themselves for the benefit of *Hansard*. The next period of questions will now commence with questions from non-Government members.

Mr QUINN: At the beginning of this year, there was a change in policy for teacher aid relief within schools relating to instances when a principal could call in a relieving teacher aide if one was away for one or two days. Is it the intention of the department that that policy will continue into 1994-95?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. Again, this was one of those areas where we had to check that the benefits we were receiving were appropriate to the educational outcomes. It had been an open-ended system. It had cost us considerable amounts money. There were some anecdotal suggestions around that some people seemed to be sick on a regular basis and that that seemed to coincide with when acquaintances of theirs seemed to be available for undertalking those duties. There was no correlation between a principal saying, "I need teacher aide relief," and who had to pay the budget, which was central office. We have sent the system back whereby the local schools now know who spends the money and how much is to be spent at any one time. I think that we will maintain that sort of system. Eighty per cent of teacher aide absences were fewer than two days. There is a considerable saving to the system that can be spent on educational outcomes from that change.

Mr QUINN: This business of teacher aide relief and TRS days raises another question, that is, what systems has the department put in place to take action against teachers and teacher aides whom you know through anecdotal evidence use their position for their own time off—in other words, take it on a regular basis?

Mr COMBEN: That is a general industrial question, not specifically limited to teachers or teacher aides. If we are aware of it, we would take appropriate action, but it would be very difficult to be aware of it. For absences of more than two days, of course, we require a doctor's certificate. Absences of fewer than two days generally would not be investigated.

Mr QUINN: You have put the onus on the school principal to enforce that sort of policy, yet you have given him no power to take any action.

Mr COMBEN: The principal stands in locus standi of the department. If the principal is aware of a difficulty, that would be passed to regional office,

and all the powers and responsibilities of the department would be present in the principal.

Mr QUINN: I will pursue another matter. I refer you to page 117 of the program statements, "School Operations—Primary". It mentions in general in the Budget Papers that last year there was an allocation of \$5.3m for numeracy and literacy programs, and this year that has been cut to \$2.3m. In the light of what Wiltshire had to say about numeracy and literacy standards and the way that the department provides help for students in this area, how do you justify cutting this particular program?

Mr COMBEN: Since 1989 or 1990, we have spent some \$18m on literacy and numeracy. Initially, it was provided in the form of a cash allocation to schools, so that the schools could do what they wanted to do with it. The \$8.48m over the first three years was targeted at resources to support literacy and numeracy in primary schools and the professional development of teachers. So we had the system out there, and that is what we were funding. In 1993-94, the focus then went on providing resources and material to support teachers who had been skilled in implementing student performance standards, and the funds were allocated to a professional development program for teachers, developing a video and brochures to explain the concept of standards-based assessment and reporting to parents and, finally, support materials for languages across the curriculum and maths programs for the students in Years 1 to 7. Therefore, although schools did not receive cash allocations in 1993-94, they all received a considerable package of resources dedicated to the improvement of literacy and numeracy standards in schools.

We will continue that level of funding, some \$2.5m, and the funds will this year be targeted at the development of a numeracy intervention program, focusing on the early years of schooling; regional trials for literacy intervention strategies; further information support materials for parents relating to the assessment and reporting of students' performances, which is being sought by parents; and literacy and numeracy issues arising from the Government's adoption of recommendations contained in the Wiltshire report.

I think the outcome of the literacy and numeracy initiatives has been very good, in that there has been a slight but significant improvement in the performance of students since 1990. For example, the percentage of students achieving at the top two levels of reading, levels 4 and 5, increased from 12 per cent in 1990 to 23 per cent in 1992 for Year 5 and from 22 per cent in 1990 to 32 per cent in 1992 for Year 7. I have other figures there.

Mr QUINN: Despite the amount of money that has been spent—and I have no doubt that it has been spent, and you and I have had our differences over the student performance standards—in the latest examination of what is going on in schools, Wiltshire is quite clear. He is almost an independent arbiter, if you like, of what is going on in schools. He says—

"Evidence indicates there are insufficient provisions available to ensure that proficiency

levels are maintained as high as possible. Too many students are in need of assistance and not receiving this, and supportive interventions are too long delayed."

Here you have a report that says that the standards of numeracy and literacy need to be attended to. In this budget, a provision of \$20m has been made for the implementation of certain recommendations of the Wiltshire report—when you finally make up your mind which ones will be adopted—and yet you are cutting back in an area that seems central to the whole report.

Mr COMBEN: We would not see ourselves as cutting back. We would see ourselves as providing an excellent standard of support for many teachers. If you were to read other parts of the Wiltshire report, you would discover the extensive debate and discussion on functional literacy contained in it. You would discover that today students do not require the old definition of literacy, which when I was at school was that, if you could write your own name and you could write two 3-syllable words, you were literate. Today, functional literacy is about using computers; it is about communicating in all aspects of life; it is about being able to go behind the front counter of an office if you are leaving school at 18 and becoming a receptionist and immediately going into the word-processing mode on the computer; it is about telephone skills—it is about numeracy in a range of areas. The change has been about functional literacy and numeracy.

We will as a major push of the Government—and this is before the consultation period has finished—see literacy and numeracy continue to be the basis of all learning. Whether it has to be the rote learning that you and I grew up with, whether it has to be in other forms or whether it is the functional literacy of computer skills has yet to be debated properly, but I think it will be. We will continue to spend the money. Certainly, a large part of the \$20m allocated for implementing the recommendations of Wiltshire will be devoted to literacy and numeracy.

Mr QUINN: Can I move on and ask a question about the employment of teachers? How many teachers are employed on a contract basis by the department—say, six months or longer?

Mr COMBEN: I do not think that we would have a figure for that, because some of that would be done on a regional basis, but can I pre-empt what I would suspect will be a supplementary question and say that we are using extensive resources at present to diminish the number. I personally think it is inappropriate in many situations to have contract teachers. In the situation of a teacher in a one-teacher school in the far west where there is no-one else to go in, if that teacher goes off sick and obtains a doctor's certificate for six months—for maternity leave, or something like that—it is appropriate to put someone on a contract for that period. Today, with tight management and tight budgets, we do not want to put someone extra on and then find that we have to continue to employ that person when he or she has no other job to go to.

In some situations—and I believe the union would support me on this—contract teachers are appropriate. However, there are many situations in which it is not supported by the department's central office. We have a very tight policy on contract teachers. On a recent trip with Ian Mackie, we came across a number of situations in which it was quite inappropriate that a contract teacher be employed, and we have rectified those. The union is bringing them to our attention constantly. The number is diminishing. If you want the exact figures, we can apparently provide them this afternoon.

Mr QUINN: Thank you. I would appreciate that. What is the department's policy in regard to employing new graduate teachers? Are they excluded from contracts, or are they put in with everyone else and eligible to undertake a contract?

Mr COMBEN: I will start and then I will ask Mr Peach to finish or to add to whatever I say. You asked two questions: one, what is the policy as to new graduates; two, do they go in for contracts the same as everybody else? The anti-discrimination legislation, both State and Federal, means that they stand on the same starting line as everyone else. We then go through a process of interviewing and a process of assessment of their CVs, etc., to, at the end of the day, get the best possible teachers out there. The figures are approximately 68 per cent new graduates as compared with experienced teachers. Those experienced teachers generally would be either returning from a job outside or quite often are women returning to work after raising a family, etc. So there is no single policy and it would be illegal to have a policy which said, "We will employ new graduates." They are there with everybody else. We certainly willingly accept new graduates with no difficulty at all, but we cannot give a guarantee. Of course, you would be aware that the days when you trained at the Kelvin Grove Teachers Training College, I would think—

Mr QUINN: You have done your homework.

Mr COMBEN: —that was run by the Department and we could say, "We need 200 teachers next year", so there were 205 students at the beginning of the year—we had control. As the teaching profession has sought more professionalism, the old teachers' training college, which my wife went to at about the same time as you, Mr Quinn, has been upgraded to a Brisbane College of Advanced Education and then up to the Kelvin Grove Campus of the Queensland University of Technology and the professionalism has been added. But that has taken control out of the hands of the Department. No longer is it appropriate for students to say, "We got accepted into teaching, therefore you will employ." Firstly, we employ only two-thirds of the teachers in this State, and that number is diminishing as more students go towards the independent sector and, secondly, it is a decision of the independent tertiary institutions. I might let Frank Peach add anything he might want to add to that.

Mr PEACH: The process is that anyone wishing to be employed needs to make a written application. Where people apply for jobs and there is

a possibility of employment, they are short-listed and graduates or others can gain a contract for up to three months on the basis of the rating they receive from the short-listing process. If the contract is to be longer than three months or if the position is to be a permanent one, they must be interviewed as well, and the basis of employment for more than three months or for permanency is on the basis of the interview.

Mr QUINN: Newly graduating teachers—what percentage of those employed by the Department would find themselves out of the south-east corner of Queensland?

Mr COMBEN: A very high percentage, because as part of the transfer policy which was the subject of the union strife last year, we had vacancies in south-east Queensland where we brought teachers who had been in remote and isolated areas back to the south-east corner to fill those vacancies. Then, we generally would have put the newer graduates into those western, remote, isolated areas.

Mr QUINN: When we are talking about a high percentage, what are we talking about, 70 per cent, 80 per cent?

Mr COMBEN: I would think 70 per cent.

Mr QUINN: So 70 per cent of the new graduates employed by the Department would find themselves in country schools?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, country and provincial.

Mr QUINN: Out of south-east corner?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, out of south-east Queensland.

Mr QUINN: Is the Department concerned about the accumulation of inexperienced teachers in country and rural schools?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. We will always have to be concerned to make sure that we get the best possible teacher in a school. Every so often, something goes really wrong where you have a difficulty with an individual teacher in a single teacher school, but most of the time we find that the graduates today are very well educated, they fit in very well with new teaching methods and they do the internal assessment to see that they are actually creating a learning environment. It is one thing to put a teacher in front of a student, it is another thing to make the student learn, but at the end of the day, a lot of those teachers are in fairly large high schools. Somewhere like Charleville is a remote and isolated consideration in terms of the discussion that we are having at the present time. We think that we can do a lot more to support teachers yet, especially those in their first years out, and one of the recommendations in the Wiltshire report is that we allow them to use the distance education materials. We want to do a number of things to help those young students, but when you look at the standards, it is not as simple as saying, "We want an older, grey haired teacher with massive experience as compared to this young whipper-snapper that is wet behind the ears." Some of those new graduates are brilliant teachers and do a great job of teaching learning to students. I do not

know whether senior officers want to add anything to that.

Mr PEACH: The proportion of more experienced teachers outside of the south-east corner is also growing. Even in isolated places such as Quilpie, Surat and Roma, it is becoming difficult to get graduate teachers employed because of the number of people who have settled there and who are living permanently in those places. The more difficult problem for us is the lack of graduates in the south-east corner rather than too many of them outside.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Minister and his assistant for that answer, but I just remind Mr Quinn that he is straying a little bit off the Estimates. Perhaps we could come back to them, although the discretion is with the Minister as to whether he wishes to answer questions.

Mr COMBEN: We are comfortable to answer questions.

Mr QUINN: I move to the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, which is mentioned in the Budget. Do you keep any figures that would indicate over the past 12 months how many teachers actually have applied to be transferred to these areas? In other words, I am trying to discern whether or not it is a remote area incentive scheme or a remote area locality scheme that you have here.

Mr COMBEN: The figures that I know for the peninsula region—the areas covered by the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, which obviously would not be Cairns but would be Cooktown, Weipa and Thursday Island—last year are that we had something like 70 applications for transfer to the remote area, which includes Kowanyama, Edward River, Lockhart River, Coen, those sorts of places. Out of that number, only two of them want to go anywhere except Cooktown, Thursday Island or Weipa, so that we do not get a high number wanting to go to the places which could be seen as genuinely remote and isolated, that is, they do not have facilities and are a long way from other areas of social infrastructure.

Mr MACDONALD: What we are seeing, though, is a greater number of teachers staying on into their third year. The demand for the cash subsidy to assist with the study if they are there for two years has increased so that it would appear to be a scheme that is having an impact on teachers' decisions as to the length of time they will serve in those centres, and that was certainly one of the intentions of the scheme.

Mr QUINN: There is a new teacher transfer policy out, is there not? Has it been publicised yet? What is its progress?

Mr COMBEN: This week's edition of *Education Views*—we can put you on the mailing list, if you like, Mr Quinn.

Mr QUINN: I am already on the mailing list, thank you, Minister.

Mr COMBEN: I thought that you would be.

The CHAIRMAN: We will move now to the Government members.

Ms SPENCE: I would like to know what resources are being provided for discipline in schools leading up to the abolition of the cane.

Mr COMBEN: There is a range of support mechanisms. Obviously, the Behaviour Management Strategy and the Support of School Environment Strategy have taken considerable resources. We have had one of our most experienced principals on that to prepare it. In this Budget, there is some \$294,000 towards the strategy that compares last year with \$382,000. We do see behaviour management as a partnership between school and school staff, families, the communities and students. I have been very vocal in saying, "Do not keep on blaming the schools for behaviour management problems." It is something which is affecting our society. I keep saying, "We will do everything we can, but do not blame the schools for swearing which is going on in individual households."

A total of 66 staff have been allocated to the advisory visiting teachers, behaviour, teachers of specialist units and guidance officers working on specific behaviour management programs. Also, we have guidance officers constantly working in the field of behaviour management. That is part and parcel of their task. It is a fairly hard question for us to answer—how much to behaviour management. It is part of the normal day-to-day running of schools, the classroom teachers, etc. Last year, we had a new policy, which will be implemented in July 1994, and a resource document and a reader were developed to help schools. We will be fronting behaviour management on several other fronts, including sexual harassment policy, anti-racism policy, human relationships education, gender and violence project, and initiatives for students with severe behaviour problems.

Ms SPENCE: I have not seen this in the Budget documents. Do you actually calculate how much you spend on gender equity as a unit?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. The Gender Equity Unit at present has one senior officer and two support officers. This year, it will be one senior and four junior officers. I am now chairing the actual Ministerial Advisory Committee on Gender Equity, and I also chair the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Religious Education. I was approached by two members of the committee to do so. I hope that we will be ranging over a number of new initiatives. For 1994, we will be having \$248,000 on human resources and non-labour. Last year, there was one principal officer and two senior policy officers. This year, it is one principal officer and four senior policy officers. A doubling of the support staff would indicate the commitment that we have to gender equity.

Ms SPENCE: Is that a doubling on last year's?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. Last year we had three people working on it; this year we have five—under Lyn Martinez, a very capable officer.

Ms SPENCE: Those five people are working in the central office, are they?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. They would then coordinate with regional offices, and we have

produced the Gender Equity Kit. I do not know whether Robyn Sullivan would like to say anything to it.

Ms SULLIVAN: There are also regional people, and there is quite a strong network across regions with the central office unit. There are some education advisers who have, as their special brief, gender equity, but more often there is a general social justice education adviser who also takes responsibility for gender equity issues. We produce a magazine for students called *RAZZ*, which some of you may be familiar with, which deals with gender equity units as such. I think what is interesting to note is that we have always called it gender equity rather than education for girls. To that extent, we have taken up some of the debate that has been occurring in recent times about the issue of education for boys as well as education for girls.

Ms SPENCE: How do you assess that the money spent on gender equity is well spent? How do you assess the outcomes of the unit? You do not call it a unit, do you?

Ms SULLIVAN: No. There is a national strategy for the education of girls, and it has a set of performance indicators. We also have developed a strategic plan that flows from that national plan. So you are obviously looking at things like retention rates, academic results of students and student behaviour management issues—for example, how many girls get suspended vis-a-vis how many boys get suspended. There is a range of performance indicators there.

Ms SPENCE: I have a question about the Overseas Education Unit. This unit is supposed to be a self-supporting commercial operation. What source of funding is provided for the unit, and what is its financial position at present?

Mr COMBEN: The Department provides the Overseas Education Unit with some \$180,000 in two Votes to give it support basically for its community service obligations, where it supports private schools in terms of their need to obtain overseas students. It also raises money from the sale of various materials. An officer from there accompanied me recently to Indonesia, where we were attempting to sell distance education materials. Last year, they were responsible for selling about \$234,000 worth of material overseas; so they would get some of that and the \$180,000 that we give them.

They have also been responsible for selling some of our syllabus material. The Grade 3 syllabus material has been sold to Western Australia, and there is every indication that they will be buying more of that; so in round figures, \$400,000. Its surplus in the last three months—hot off the press—is \$197,079.04. So we will obviously shortly be funding the entire Department from the Overseas Education Unit.

Ms SPENCE: When do you envisage that this unit will become self-funding then? It is close to that, is it?

Mr COMBEN: It has been given the date of the end of 1995. I think it will get there. We have had some difficulties at times about giving it an

appropriate level of resourcing to allow it to go off and do the task it wants to do. You have to put some seed funding in there. I think we have overcome that. We have saved some money by changing their place of abode to central office. If they can continue to develop a surplus like this, I think they will be meeting their targets before the end of 1995. That seemed to be a reasonable time in which we could expect them to become self-funding.

We have a very good message to tell out there to other jurisdictions. Our Studies Unit, producing curriculum materials for years, has been extremely efficient. Our distance education material is second to none, probably in the world. So if we cannot sell that sort of material today in the modern competitive market, we do not deserve to be in the business of education.

Ms SPENCE: As the operation of this unit is not necessarily the core business of the Education Department, do you envisage that the unit will remain within the Education Department in future years?

Mr COMBEN: I do not think that, as a Department, we are too concerned about whether it is within the Department, and then whether it is within the Education portfolio, or whether it is outside somewhere—within the Premier's Trade Unit or somewhere. I am very content with it being there. Especially when it is producing that sort of surplus, I think it should stay in the Department for some time to come. Its task is well led, and I think we will be content to leave it as it is. There is no plan to move it. There was some discussion and debate with the PSMC at the time of the review of the Education Department. No, I think it is sitting quite content at the present time—but it is not core business.

Ms SPENCE: Can you outline how much money was spent on overseas travel by members of your Department in the last year?

Mr COMBEN: Apparently I can. I have a series of figures. The total for overseas airways—I have \$30,627. For coach, taxi and rail—within the countries overseas, there is then another \$50,000; so that would give a total of \$81,000. Accommodation overseas is \$54,000. Incidental costs overseas is \$36,000. The total is \$195,000. If you want some indication—

Ms SPENCE: It does not sound a very large figure.

Mr COMBEN: We do not junket.

Ms SPENCE: Obviously not. How many people would be travelling on that kind of money, and what would be the purpose of their trips?

Mr COMBEN: Some of these—Jan Hannant, \$400; she went to a conference in New Zealand. Laurie Topping went to Singapore to examine high-density educational facilities.

Ms SPENCE: This would not include the travel done by the officers in the Overseas Education Unit, then, would it?

Mr COMBEN: They fund their own.

Ms SPENCE: They do a bit of travel, do they not?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Ms SPENCE: So these are just incidental trips?

Mr COMBEN: Generally for conferences and seminars, that type of thing. Generally we would be asking them to be presenting something on our behalf. The rule of thumb that we generally use is that there be a clear potential benefit to Queensland education, that they must come back with something and be able to say, "This is what we can use." It includes a curriculum-of-use trips overseas. I think "the" trip overseas was with me to New Zealand. That was a major trip.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Minister, I would like to ask some questions on distance education. I can refer you to page 112 of Budget Paper No. 3 or page 5 of the Budget Related Papers. They show a figure of \$22.5m in round terms for the coming 12 months for distance education. I am aware that that figure was closer to \$36.7m in 1992-93 in actual figures. Could you explain why this drop of over 30 per cent has occurred in a fairly important area of education?

Mr COMBEN: Basically because over the last four years we have been rewriting the entire syllabus for distance education. We have rewritten the syllabuses and that has, in other Votes that you may cast your mind to, created a saving now that we have finished that program and we are no longer rewriting that. The major item in the Vote that you have drawn our attention to is the non-capital works funding. We have produced seven schools of distance education: at Cairns, Mount Isa, Longreach, Charleville, Charters Towers, Brisbane and Capricornia. Two of those were being produced two or three years ago when you referred to \$36m. They would have been Capricornia and Cairns. Now that that capital works has been removed, that money is no longer there. It is one of those cases where the allocation should be steady, but capital works puts it up and then it comes back down.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: On distance education again, the two documents I referred you to—page 112 of Budget Paper No. 3 and page 5 of Budget Related Paper No. 5—show the amount of \$22.5m to be spent on distance education. However, the departmental Estimates statement gives us only \$19.3m. There is a difference there of \$3.2m. Are you able to explain that to us?

Mr COMBEN: The \$3.2m is the Open Access Network which now has 40 sites across Queensland. I am told that corporate services is no longer included in there as compared with last year; it is a change in program.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: That \$3.2m is the removal of corporate services from the Distance Education Program into a Corporate Services Program?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr KEILY: The difference in the figures represents the allocation of corporate services costs which is apportioned across all subprograms and programs in the department structure. So in one document, Budget Related Paper No. 5, the higher figure of \$22.5m includes that corporate services

allocation, whereas the departmental estimates statement does not include that figure, so it is the lower figure of \$19.3m.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: To change the subject again—in an earlier answer to Ms Spence you mentioned the number of school cleaners we employ. This year there has been a resolution negotiated with the relevant union on the longstanding issue of wage inequality between those employed for 30 hours and those employed for 38 hours. Can you indicate to us if there has been a cost to the department of the resolution of that matter—an additional cost, wages wise?

Mr COMBEN: Can you ask the question again?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: The resolution of the difficulty that occurred in relation to wage inequality between cleaners employed for 30 hours and cleaners employed for 38 hours was negotiated with the union. Has there been an additional cost to the department as a result of that resolution?

Mr COMBEN: There has been a cost to the department of over \$1m. It does not refer just to cleaners, of which there are 5 540, it refers also to teacher aides, who also had some anomalies, and there are 6 844 teacher aides.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: That \$1m includes teacher aides and cleaners?

Mr COMBEN: It includes all the ancillary staff, which includes staff such as janitors, groundsmen, cleaners and teacher aides. I would also point out that I do not believe that all of the anomalies are yet addressed; we are still negotiating some of those and we would expect further costs.

Mr BRISKEY: If I could follow up an earlier question by Mr Quinn regarding teacher aide relief—what funds have been allocated to fund teacher aide relief this financial year, 1994-95?

Mr COMBEN: We do not have a specific item for relief. The cost of teacher aides to us is some \$40m, and in actual fact it would be a bit higher than that. It is \$67m for teacher aides' salaries, and relief is part of that program.

Mr BRISKEY: Why do schools have to wait two days until a replacement is provided?

Mr COMBEN: It is part of the rigour of tight management and keeping the money in front of students. When you have 80 per cent of the teacher aide time being two days or less, it should be appropriate for the school to look at its individuals who are taking time off for sickness and to be making sure that those people are making decisions based on medical grounds and not just because they know that someone will cover behind them. It is part of the management.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer to the instrumental music program. What funds have been allocated to that program in schools to help alleviate shortages of instrumental music teachers and for the provision of instruments in schools beginning the program?

Mr COMBEN: There are no specific allocations for increasing instrumental music staffing. Regions have discretion in allocating additional staff

from their pool of flexible numbers. Regions are expected to respond to locally expressed needs, and \$80,000 has been allocated to the provision of instruments to schools beginning the program in this Budget. This represents a reduction in the foundation kit issued to schools entering the instrumental music program. There is now no second stage where additional instruments are issued in the second year.

Mr QUINN: Could I revisit the Queensland Education overseas unit. You stated that there is a surplus of \$197,000 this year—at this moment, I believe. How was that surplus derived? Has there been an increase in sales or has there been a reduction in costs?

Mr COMBEN: I would ask Rod Gilbert to join us at the table.

Mr GILBERT: We have in fact had a reduction in costs. We have reduced our commitment to overseas travel because we have passed the initial consolidation stage of moving into some of these overseas countries. We have also kept the staff of the unit at the same size, increased the number of students in our program, increased the number of study tours that we are conducting and increased the volume of curriculum material for sale. So, in fact, our sales have increased and our staff have remained the same.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned a reduction in overseas air fares and accommodation. Can you give us some idea of what the present figures are, please?

Mr GILBERT: Overseas air fares and general expenses, that includes accommodation, to December 1993—for this financial year—was \$54,300. That included one officer, Hong Kong; two officers, Indonesia; three officers, Malaysia—incidentally, this is not at the same time—one officer, Singapore; one officer, Taiwan; one officer, Thailand. The predictions for the remainder of this year's program will include another \$39,400 and will include Indonesia, New Zealand, Japan, Taiwan, Papua New Guinea and Malaysia. Those costs, incidentally, do not come out of a Government allocation of contingency funding, those costs are met through the fees and the revenue generated from the programs. They are also offset by export market development grants that are paid through the Commonwealth Government through Austrade.

Mr QUINN: Can I ask you what the level of those grants is, please? Last year, I think you got about \$67,000.

Mr GILBERT: Yes, that is right. It is on a reducing basis. It was that amount last year; it will be less this year and continue to reduce for the next two years until it becomes non-existent. The purpose of the export market development grant is to assist businesses become profitable, which we have already had indicated is happening in this case. So that export market development grant, as we become profitable, will cease to exist unless, of course, we decide to enter new markets or open new businesses when, in fact, we can start to make a claim on that funding again.

Mr QUINN: General running costs—what are they running at this year? They seem to be increasing in the last couple of years. Have they increased again this year?

Mr GILBERT: When you say "general running costs", we run business in two different areas. One is the community service obligation, which is where the Department funds us to carry out certain responsibilities where the Department itself is the client and these activities are not revenue generating. There has been an increase in our running costs in that area because of the internationalisation of our education program and greater demands across-the-board not just for our Department but for all institutions participating in international education. Our running costs in the commercial area have reduced simply because we are over the initial establishment phase. We have consolidated and are able now to conduct our business more efficiently.

Mr QUINN: Can I turn, Mr Minister, back to the Department Estimates statement? On page 13, talking about the subprogram primary schools, under the heading "Objective Performance Criteria" there is an entry here "Percentage of schools which have implemented student performance standards in mathematics by the end of 1994". Given that the QTU has placed some bans on the implementation of these student performance standards and given that the Principals Association is supporting these bans, how confident are you that these SPS will be implemented by the end of 1994?

Mr COMBEN: I think I will have to say that the best guess is fifty-fifty. As part of the enterprise bargaining framework, we will be discussing with the union this week what is going to happen with its bans on these. There have been some bans on inservice training, which have been lifted recently as part of the preliminary discussions and as part of negotiating non-contact time. We are, of course, having a very good relationship—or a reasonable relationship—with the Queensland Teachers Union at the present time where a lot more of these things are being discussed across the table and not on the front page of the *Courier-Mail*. I would still be aiming to see some form of implementation—some of this, of course, is dependent on what we do with the Wiltshire recommendations; there is a certain overlap, so I think that it is a bit premature to be able to give you an answer better than fifty-fifty as to what exactly the format will be—but in terms of having to have some system whereby we can report to parents, that will be implemented.

Mr QUINN: The next criterion below that says that the number and percentage of students with disabilities in Levels 4, 5 and 6 have been ascertained and are receiving an appropriate level of support. Are you able to tell us how many students have been ascertained, and what percentage of the student population falls within this category?

Mr COMBEN: Across-the-board, the percentage of students in this category varies between 6 per cent and 25 per cent, depending on where you are. There have been some 1 700 ascertainment undertakings to date, in 1994, and we

expect to be up to about 2 500 by the end of the year. There are, across-the-board, some 6 000-odd students with—what could be, in lay person's terms as I would use—severe disabilities and where we are considering what support we can give them.

Mr QUINN: So you are halfway through the process? Well, less than halfway through at the present time?

Mr COMBEN: We are 80 per cent of the way through the severe situations where we still have to work out exactly what resources we have there because there would be a number of these cases where they are already in a school and being adequately supported. The ascertainment there is less essential to us than it is in some other cases where we do not know what the present situation is. I would say 80 per cent.

Mr QUINN: Of those students who have been ascertained, what percentage of them would be receiving support at the level they have been ascertained as needing?

Mr COMBEN: All.

Mr QUINN: All? No further comments?

Mr COMBEN: Well, it is about some interpretation by some people as to what "ascertainment" means. Ascertainment is about saying, "This is the level of impairment which this student has." It is not about saying, "This is the level of support which is required." So, in actual fact, the way the question was phrased is misleading but we are, in all situations, giving support at an appropriate level and I think that I would like to leave it at that.

Mr QUINN: I mean, if you are going through an ascertainment process to determine the level of impairment surely, then, what follows is that this level of impairment needs a set amount of support and the question really is: are those students who have been ascertained receiving the appropriate, necessary level of support?

Mr COMBEN: Well, we would state that, on the basis of educational needs, yes, they are. We are in the business of giving education. We are not ascertaining to find a student's entire needs outside of education. In educational needs, we believe that we are doing that.

Mr MACDONALD: There are two stages in this process, and one is to do with the ascertainment of level of educational need. Then, quite separate from the ascertainment process, is a process which determines the level of support or the appropriate placement. Quite often, the choice of outplacement is made at that second stage. There may well be differing levels of support available in the range of sites that the Department is committed to providing services for students with educational needs.

Mr QUINN: So if a parent decides, against departmental advice, to take a child from one school to another school, there may not necessarily be the same level of support at the second option that there would be available at the first?

Mr COMBEN: There may well not be. We have had cases where someone has said "No" to an option that we have given them. In one case I can think of,

having said "Yes" to that option, it cost us \$60,000 for certain changes. That is what has to be negotiated, and that is why we quite regularly have differing views on what is occurring. We would simply ask all parents to be reasonable in terms of what we can supply within the system for their individual student, the resources necessary at one school, and what we may be doing by taking those resources away from another school. But, at the end of the day, we supply educational needs support.

Mr QUINN: I will move on to LOTE. There has been a large increase in funding for this initiative over the past couple of years. I understand now that most students in Years 6, 7 and, indeed, probably Year 8 as well, undertake LOTE courses. Has the department done any studies that would indicate what percentage of those students who go through LOTE at Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 would elect to study LOTE in the following years in high school? Is there any transference from the compulsory LOTE program into the elective LOTE program?

Mr COMBEN: We do not have any direct correlations. Anna Van Hoof from the LOTE program may be able to give us some correlations. The aim of the LOTE program is to help us to be part of the economic drive into Asia and to prepare us culturally so that we are no longer the ugly Australians. By the year 2000, we would aim to have 20 to 25 per cent our students studying a language other than English at Year 12 level. We are closely cooperating with the Federal Government's program to give priority to Asian languages.

Ms VAN HOOF: This is the first year that we have had students in Year 9 who would have followed that program through. The statistics from the schools have not been available to us yet to see whether there has been an increase, but they could be made available. I guess the question at this point is whether there has been an improvement in the participation rates at Year 9 level. Some of the anecdotal evidence from our regional people would suggest that there has been a most definite increase in some areas.

Mr QUINN: Would it be possible to supply some statistics later on?

Mr COMBEN: I will give you an undertaking to supply them later. But, as we do not have them at present, they cannot be a part of these Estimates. As soon as we have them, we will supply them to you.

Mr QUINN: I turn to the subprogram for special schools, page 120 in the Program Statements and page 22 in the DES. There has been some concern in regional Queensland—and, I suppose, in the city areas as well—about the lack of specialist teachers within this program, in particular speech therapists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists. What is the current employment rate of these specialists within this program area? Do you have any figures as to the number of speech therapists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists across the State?

Mr COMBEN: For speech/language pathologists, formerly known as speech therapists—which they did not have in my day at

school—there are currently 98 speech/language pathologists positions in regions funded through the State Budget. Some additional time, 0.9 of a full-time equivalent position, is funded through the Commonwealth Special Education Program. The breakdown of figures are as follows: Metropolitan East, 20; Metropolitan West, 15.6; Sunshine Coast, 10.6; South Coast, 11; Darling Downs, 6.8; and then variously single figures, except for Northern, which is 16.4. Over the last few years, the establishment has increased by 13 positions.

The formula for distribution of State-funded positions to regions considers the following factors: enrolment numbers, numbers of students with disabilities, ministerial agreements at specified special school locations, and distance. They are attached to school support centres or, in some case in the metropolitan regions, a special school. While all students at State facilities are eligible to access a speech/language pathologist, they do not always achieve this. Services to students not attending State educational facilities are provided in the context of these priorities.

There are a small number of other providers of speech pathology services, either direct or support and advisory. These include the Queensland Spastic Welfare League, the Autistic Centre, the Microcomputer and Communications Aid Society, the Bush Children's Association, the Queensland Society for Crippled Children, speech pathologists and private practice.

For occupational therapy and physiotherapy services, \$1.056m will be spent this year. Sixteen positions are funded through the State Budget. Twelve are funded through the Commonwealth Special Education Program. Many positions are occupied by part-time staff. Broadly, the figures for the number of positions in physiotherapy are 7.5 in Metropolitan West, which would reflect the higher density of special schools there; Metropolitan East, 4; the Sunshine Coast, 2; the South Coast, 1; the Darling Downs, half a position; Wide Bay, half a position; Capricornia, 1; and Northern, 1.

Mr QUINN: Has there been any increase in employment for these people within the Department over the past two years?

Mr COMBEN: There is a planned increase at the present time for two State-funded positions. That would be for physiotherapy to cover enrolment growth. As part of the change in the program management, these specialists are now included in the forward Estimates. So we now get extra growth in those numbers as we get extra students. In the past, if we got extra students we got extra teacher numbers, but we did not get the support services.

There has been an increase in the number of speech/language pathologists by 13 positions over the last few years. There is a planned increase of two State-funded positions. So there will be two physios and two State speech pathologists positions created in this Budget.

Mr QUINN: Previously, when people have raised their concerns about the number of speech therapists, they have been told by the Department

that there is a public service ceiling on these positions. I take it from what you have said that that is no longer the case and that you can determine your own ceilings?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. If they have been included in the ongoing rolling funds, we will get those automatically.

Mr QUINN: Do I take it from that also that the Department recognises that there is a need for more of these specialists and is making endeavours to supply them?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: What about children in isolated and rural areas. They seem to have particular problems.

Mr COMBEN: They do.

Mr QUINN: What is the Department doing to address their particular needs?

Mr COMBEN: I think I foreshadowed that to some extent when I spoke about guidance officers earlier. At places such as Longreach, we have advertised twice Australiawide and still have not been able to attract a speech therapist to that area. We are now trying to head hunt. We are trying to see whether we can go into a joint venture with private practice as a further inducement for that individual officer. It is very hard. People will not be attracted very easily to some of those areas.

The CHAIRMAN: We will move to Government members for their questioning period.

Ms SPENCE: I have a question that I am sure members of Parliament would be interested in. What is the Government doing with regard to school security in this financial year? How much are we spending on school security? What is the plan for future expenditure on school security?

Mr COMBEN: We are spending about \$1m this year. We have a whole range of programs designed to improve school security. Schoolwatch was one of the ones released earlier this year. Last year, we spent \$853,000. This year we will spend \$1,050,000. There are some 5 000 to 6 000 incidents reported each year. In this past 12 months, we have apprehended 100 people on school facilities who were inappropriately there. They are not all vandals, but certainly a number of them were. The systems that we have in place have allowed three major fires to be curtailed before they did real damage, because of the prompt response. In this financial year, we will be distributing a school security handbook, which cost us \$50,000. That was from the School Refurbishment Program. There will be an extended trial whereby protected schools responsible for costs associated with responses to avoidable false alarms will increase the use of security contractors to respond to protected schools in areas where police resources are not easily available. When you add to that the early warning security systems, over the last five years we have spent just under \$5m, and we are keeping in check the cost to the department.

Last year, vandalism cost us about \$6m, and we

have held that for about the last three years. As well, this year the School Watch Program will receive \$110,000. That will also help.

Ms SPENCE: Did you say you were going to distribute a school security handbook?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Ms SPENCE: Is there not one in existence already?

Mr COMBEN: No. People know to phone the assets and facilities branch to receive advice. But in terms of having a document that can be distributed at a staff meeting or at a P & C meeting to say, "These are things which we can be doing", no such document is yet available.

Ms SPENCE: So this is a new initiative?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. Thank you for pointing that out. We think it is a great new initiative.

Ms SPENCE: Have schools used private companies in the past?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. We use them in at least half a dozen situations already. That is very expensive. Because of the cost involved, we would look for other alternatives to ongoing security firm patrols. We would rather set up a school that we know is as vandalproof as it can be—with early warning systems, security, etc.—rather than having someone go there, having the village troublemaker watching until the car has driven over the horizon and then nipping in there anyway. There are ways that that can be prevented, but it is pretty hard.

Ms SPENCE: You said that vandalism last year cost the department \$6m.

Mr COMBEN: About that, yes.

Ms SPENCE: Why does the department not insure its school buildings and equipment?

Mr COMBEN: Because we choose to self-insure. We have \$6 billion worth of assets. The cost for an insurance company to pick up that risk for us would be far in excess of the \$6m which we presently spend on repairing vandalism, theft and destruction. It is as simple as that. It is a mathematical equation. It is about risk analysis. We have some great work being done in the department on risk management, both in terms of our personnel and our buildings. I think it is one of those areas in which we are creating efficiencies and doing it very well.

Ms SPENCE: I am sure you have said this, but could you outline again the cost of the damage compared with the money you are spending on security?

Mr COMBEN: We identify about \$1m—\$830,000 last year; \$1.05m this year—on security. The damage done is about \$6m. People may ask, "Why do you not spend money to save that \$6m?" The difficulty is that we have 1 327 sites out there. If we knew where the vandals were going to hit every time, we could save our money, but increasingly the damage that we are having to repair occurs in schools that do not have a history of vandalism, violence or destruction. Therefore, it is very difficult to target all of them, and we cannot do

it. To target all of them would cost us \$20m or \$30m a year. We will build up to that, but at the present time we target high-risk schools. We are doing that very well, and we are maintaining a reasonable level. If you were to compare our schools with any other school system or with any other public buildings that are not occupied for long periods, we would be seen to be coming up very well.

Ms SPENCE: Moving on to another issue—consultancies. Can you outline how much the Department of Education spent this financial year on consultancies, and to whom was this money paid?

Mr COMBEN: I can give you the figures for the last three years. In 1991-92, we spent \$924,000; in 1992-93, we spent \$378,000 on consultants; for 1993-94, we do not have the official amount because obviously it is not the end of the financial year, but we believe it will be in the order of 23 projects at \$339,559. I have here three pages that outline the types of projects involved. I will not read them all, but I will give you a sample.

Ms SPENCE: If you can, yes.

Mr COMBEN: One was on behalf of the Human Resources Directorate; the consultants were Christine Flynn and Anne Barclay. The project was to develop strategies and operational planning and team building for management. The cost was \$694. Dr W. W. Cope did some consultancy work for the Studies Directorate to develop cultural understanding as a key competency, which was a major initiative of both the department and this Government in terms of planning for the seven other key competencies being projected across Australia. The cost of that was \$85,000. We obtained Commonwealth funding for that project. Timothy Hills undertook interactive music and dance classes for Human Resource Management at the Eight Mile Plains Special School at a cost of \$1,440. Jill Morris—the author of the *Natural History* books, in fact—undertook writing workshops at the Berrinba East State School for Human Resource Management at a cost of \$840. On behalf of the Asset Management Branch, Ian Ferguson and Associates Pty Ltd examined security measures and provided a strategy to enhance school security at a cost of \$22,000. On behalf of the Valley School Support Centre, R. Matwiejczyk trained trainers in ESL mainstream course at a cost of \$2,577. At the Gold Coast North School Support Centre, Dr Francis Mangubhai conducted error analysis workshops at a cost of \$1,500. A leadership skills program was conducted at a cost of \$4,000. Those are the types of projects and the amounts involved.

Ms SPENCE: Thank you. That is all on consultancies. Schools have had to wait for subsidy assistance for school improvement projects. How many schools would still be waiting this financial year for their school improvement project subsidy?

Mr COMBEN: I think I should point out that last year we put extra money into the School Subsidy Scheme to remove much of the backlog. It was reaching the stage where some schools requesting reasonably small amounts were having to wait for three or four years. Last year, we put in an extra \$1.5m, and the total commitment was \$6.65m.

This year, because we have removed most of the backlog for smaller projects, we are allocating \$5.37m. It is provided on a dollar-for-dollar basis with a maximum limit. I will outline the sorts of projects, and I think that most members of Parliament would be aware of them. For the large projects, we have the assembly activity/multi-purpose buildings or swimming pools and pool complexes. The smaller projects include playground facilities, courts, wickets and sporting facilities, tuckshop equipment, landscaping and groundwork. Certainly, that \$1.8m extra last year helped to clear the backlog, and we are intending to review the scheme.

Ms SPENCE: That was going to be my next question. I understand that a number of papers are going around suggesting changes to the School Subsidy Scheme. When might the department be considering the review?

Mr COMBEN: We are undertaking the review; it is not a question of considering the review. Our difficulty is that a number of very large schools can pull out very large sums of money, yet the smaller schools in less advantaged areas are unable to find even a small amount of money for landscaping improvements around the school or for an extra piece of equipment for the tuckshop. How does one marry the two? It is easy to say that one school has worked its butt off to get a large amount of money for the new assembly hall for the primary school, which is not a given piece of equipment, but how do you then justify the small school up the road that has nothing? It is not an easy question that we face. We have to find some way of perhaps putting a maximum on this—perhaps getting some sort of needs-based component. We have not got an answer at the present time. If anyone has any answers as to how to get social justice out there, we would be interested in hearing them, because sometimes that big school that claims to have done all this work for a big hall, which could be \$19,000 worth of work, may in actual fact in real terms have put less effort in than another community that has raised \$5,000.

Ms SPENCE: Can you outline the cost of the changes to the Department in complying with the workplace health and safety implementation requirements on the playground equipment?

Mr COMBEN: Costs are approximately \$6m to \$7m. Because we have not finalised the scheme, we cannot give you a totally accurate figure. The workplace health and safety requirements were fairly severe. I think it is well known that we found it a little perplexing at first when we were told that workplace health and safety would be looking at certain equipment, and then across the State we found that playground equipment was being condemned and being removed. We have a two-year program to start to redress the playground equipment, especially in preschools, because in the preschools there is an educational function to playground equipment—it is part of the learning of coordination and such which we all need to have. We would expect to be spending about \$6m to \$7m this year and partially into next year, but we will be speeding up the scheme when we receive extra money for it.

Ms SPENCE: You are spending \$6m to \$7m this year and then next year—

Mr COMBEN: No, over the two years.

Ms SPENCE: Do you envisage the job will be completed by then?

Mr COMBEN: We would hope so. We are examining ways in which we could do it in a financially viable and cheaper way. One of those ways may be a contract to do the lot right across the State. There would be some efficiencies and economies there. We think that will go fairly close to it. We are not expecting to go beyond there.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I want to refer to your Capital Works Program. I want to ask a question which is of some significance in the region that I come from. How is the Department responding to the demands of population growth and its effect upon school enrolments?

Mr COMBEN: It is a huge challenge for us. As we all know, 1 000 people a week are coming to Queensland. In round figures, that means 200 to 300 new students each week. They are going into areas where the schools are not historically already placed. For the benefit of the Chairman of the Committee, if they all came to the Ithacas or the Windsors, where the school is not full, we could deal with those extra students with no difficulty. They are not going there. In your own area there is the new Tullawong Primary School; the new high school has just been opened as well. I think Mr Quinn has areas of great growth behind the Sunshine Coast not far from where he is.

Mr QUINN: Gold Coast.

Mr COMBEN: Gold Coast. There are a few in Redlands as well. If we had someone from Cairns, they would be saying it and if we had someone from Hervey Bay, they would be saying it as well. They are the areas which are hot spots. We need to be doing as much as we can to put new schools in there. The challenge for us is how we manage the diminishing enrolments in those areas that I started talking about, the Windsors and the Ithacas, the Salisburys and the Acacia Ridges. If we could manage a diminution of numbers there and use those resources to go elsewhere, we would have no difficulty, but the reality of our capital works at present is that we are spending money in these new areas but we are not able to get rid of some of the older capital works elsewhere. Banyo is an example of that. As to the school at Banyo—we are just in the process of selling a piece of land which the school has not needed for a number of years because student enrolments have gone down and probably will not increase. If we can sell that land and give the school something for that land—because the school is looking for a new activities block there to encourage more students—we will get some money for that and we can then put that money towards the Capital Works Program in areas such as your own. It is the biggest single assets and facilities challenge that we face. This year, Treasury has given us \$1m for a needs analysis. In recent years, we have tended to be meeting the needs which are there but not doing anything to really step back and say, "Hang on, what about the big picture? Are all our classrooms

now appropriate?" It is one thing for metropolitan east to say that Coorparoo State School has 15 classrooms, but when you see them in those big, old, brick places with yard thick walls—and they are fairly small classrooms—is that any longer an appropriate level of educational provision? We suspect that it is probably not, so we are going to spend close to \$1m on analysing all our needs for education and educational facilities this year.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: If I can turn now to a specific element of the program that is offered in schools—how much money is the Department allocating to drug and alcohol education in the next financial year?

Mr COMBEN: We are allocating about \$450,000, which is from two programs, and we would also have that as part of the general human relationships education inside schools. The Liquor Act Trust Fund will give us \$277,000 and the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse will give us \$150,000; that totals about \$427,000. We will give a range of grants to regions; we will produce an anti-smoking pamphlet; school development in health education guidelines will be issued; guidelines will be issued for action on student drug abuse; and we will continue with the Woorabinda Alcohol Project. We will continue this year with the student drug use survey. We want to find out exactly what is going on out there. We want no more of the malicious generalisations which occurred in the *Courier-Mail* last week where a teacher said certain things which were patently untrue which have hurt the entire school in that situation. We want to do further work as well against the further use of marijuana. That is an outline of the sorts of things which we will be doing.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I just wonder about funding from the Department to outside organisations who are also involved in drug education. There seems to be a little reluctance in the Departmental scheme of things there.

Mr COMBEN: I think you have to ask, "What is the core business of the Department?" The core business of the Department is education of students: academic, vocational, life skills. It is part of life skills, so we do some, but drugs and young people is a problem for society. Drugs in schools is a problem for us. I do not think that I would want to see us spending a huge amount of money out there. We are not responsible for the welfare of children; we are responsible for their education, so there is a reluctance to fund outside organisations. We have a corporate plan; we have the Corporate Mission Statement, which I read at the beginning—

" . . . provide quality education appropriate to the needs of our students and of society."

The comeback will be that quality education is life skills and it should be a part of that—it probably is, but to what extent. I do not believe it is core business.

The CHAIRMAN: We will move now again to the non-Government members for their next questioning period.

Mr QUINN: I would like to visit the Emerald campus of the School of Distance Education—

Mr COMBEN: Any time you would like to, you are quite welcome to go there, Mr Quinn. Next question?

Mr QUINN: Does it work, is my next question. What is the status of the technical capability of the campus at the present time? Are parents still experiencing trouble with the equipment there or has the matter finally been resolved?

Mr COMBEN: We understand that they are still experiencing some difficulties. At present, as a matter of urgency, we are drawing up some guidelines for the employment of a technician, which is one of the options the parents gave to us three or four weeks ago—and I think you were involved in some of that publicity and coverage on that. As you know, we did have a whole range of people, from the suppliers of the antennae to the actual radio equipment, people from the Civil Aviation Authority and our own people, up there examining every piece of equipment to see what could be the problem. All of that occurred during May. It may be that the technical problems could be associated with the microwave links connecting the Rockhampton school campus with the transmitters and receiver sites. You referred to Emerald, which is, of course, the split campus between Rockhampton and Emerald. It is being felt right across there. We will now employ the technician to be there. It is our belief that a technician on site might be able to make the adjustments a bit better than an untrained teacher not knowing what to do with the equipment and when the equipment has to be adjusted.

Mr QUINN: Why did it take the Department so long to respond to the concerns of parents? As I understand it, initially departmental officials were saying, "Not our problem. Go and see Admin. Services." Finally—I think it may have been at your instigation—the Department accepted responsibility. Why was there almost like a log jam of responsibility; that no-one wanted to take responsibility for it initially?

Mr COMBEN: I think I would put our accepting responsibility in a different way. We will always be responsible for the sound education of students. Initially, I do not think that we all realised how bad the problem was, and whether it was as bad as it now is. Some people are saying there was a two-year problem. I said on one radio broadcast, when I was talking to one of the parents, "I opened this facility about this time last year. No-one said anything." I was told, "Well, we did, because in the speeches, you will remember, it was in the driving rain. None of us could hear what you said and you couldn't hear what we said. So it was a bit difficult for that message to get through." Whether it has been as bad as it now is has to be a question mark.

Secondly, we contracted for the supply of certain services—good communication to the kids in a range of places. The person who supplied us with the antennae, the broadcasting equipment and the technical equipment involved is responsible. When you spend the sort of money that we have—and there is \$1m worth of equipment there—you expect them to fix it first. The day that we move in and spend our money to do what was their job is

abrogating our responsibility. There was some concern about Admin. Services and who was responsible between them and us. At the end of the day, we did not accept responsibility; we just said, "Come on. We have to do it for the kids." So we moved in.

Mr QUINN: When the problems first became apparent, there must have been a report back from the principal of the school to the Department to say, "There are problems with this equipment. It is not working satisfactorily." Even if there were only 10 per cent of children who could not participate in lessons being broadcast, surely that must have been of concern to the Department at the time. Why did it take so long to respond to what was, in the end, an absolute shambles? I was there one day, speaking to all the parents in their isolated areas. You could hardly hear what was going on. I can understand the frustration being experienced by the parents when they finally went public. This had been building up for a long period. It seemed to me that the Department's response was totally inadequate at all phases.

Mr COMBEN: I can also understand the parents' frustration building up. At the end of the day, you had the situation such as the one that occurred only a couple of months ago when Mike Maher, the Regional Executive Director there, went on radio. I think he was inducting school captains, or some such thing. There was perfect reception right across the whole area.

Mr QUINN: If it was not so hard to fix, why did it take six months?

Mr COMBEN: That was during the period. It is not every day. I think that has been part of it. I really do not think it was as bad initially as it is now. You would send someone out. First of all, you would phone up the antennae people and say, "Go and have a look at it." They could come back and say, "No great problems. We did an adjustment. She's right." You would then send someone out for the broadcasting equipment. We have a couple of extra dishes going in there now for the microwaves. I do not know exactly when they are going in, but it is this microwave drop. You also at times say to the region, "You have a problem. Go out and do something." Then you get Mike Maher, who is a great regional director, going out there. He gets perfect clarity, and thinks, "I am not quite sure about the complaint we got from the local principal. We had better think about this one." It was all delaying stuff—not intentional. But, at the end of the day, it has taken us some time to realise the size of what I think is an exacerbating problem.

Mr QUINN: You are confident you can get it under control?

Mr COMBEN: We have to. That is my response, and that has been my response for the last two months. It is a technical problem. There is no lack of money. It is not as if someone is telling us, "Hey, if you spend this money, this will fix it." It is a technical problem. I do not know who is putting in these two dishes.

Mr MACDONALD: There is a consultant who has just been appointed to put the dishes in.

Mr COMBEN: That will not be cheap; but I cannot answer the technical question: is this going to solve it?

Mr QUINN: If it is a technical problem, how strict or stringent was the overview of the contract initially?

Mr COMBEN: Absolute.

Mr QUINN: Yet you are running into technical problems. One would have thought that, if the contract was supervised properly in the first place, the last thing that should happen would be a technical problem.

Mr COMBEN: We would agree with you. I have said on the public record that if the thing does not get fixed we will be seeking our normal civil remedies against the suppliers of equipment, because we have contracted for a supply of services, not for that equipment. We did not go and buy X piece of equipment. We said to our agent, CITEC, which is under Admin. Services, "We want the broadcast to X number of places where the students are." The response from there has been to now get this independent contractor. We are just as frustrated as you are. What appeared at first to be a minor occasional glitch in atmospheric is now a major technical problem. We have the money to rectify it, but we will certainly be seeking some remedies from elsewhere.

Mr QUINN: Who originally drew up the design criteria and approved the contract? Is that the responsibility of the Department of Education or another Government agency?

Mr COMBEN: Obviously, we are not certain of who, individually; but it would have been done jointly between the Department of Education and the Administrative Services Department with proper advice. We do not go into those things lightly. Today, we pride ourselves on being professional, and we would have sought the best advice that we can get. If it was purely my decision, in my private capacity outside, I would already have the writs out for specific performance on that contract, and damages. I think we will be looking at those remedies.

Mr QUINN: Will it be up to you to issue those contracts, or another Government agency?

Mr COMBEN: CITEC would have done the actual contracts.

Mr QUINN: I move to Corporate Services within the statements. I am wondering if you can provide us with an idea of this year's Budget allocation for the Public and Media Relations Branch within your Department. How many staff are employed? Does this section of your Department employ or contract out a media monitoring service?

Mr COMBEN: The answer to the second question is, "Yes." I would not have known that they actually did that. The people employed are 10, which includes one Admin. assistant, one support officer and one support coordinator—all at fairly basic levels. The manager is an AO7. The 2IC is Greg

Jackson, an AO6, the Editor of *Education Views*. As to the rough sort of employment that they undertake—the manager oversees everything, but the AO6 is the Editor of *Education Views*—articles and advertising; media liaison; and media training, which is fairly important. I have removed from the regions the 11 media officers who were out there—as part of the changes last year for efficiencies. Another AO6 provides stories for *Education Views*; speech and letter writing for departmental heads, for example, the Minister—although he believes I never use his speeches; Director-General of Education, etc.; media liaison; media training; and the annual report. The third AO6 officer provides stories for *Education Views*; *Education Week*; coordinates the RNA show; Sunsmart Kits; public relations management and liaison; media liaison; and media training.

As to lower level officers—there is the Information Officer, who handles the calendar of special events; general public relations events and tasks; media liaison; coordination of the *Education Office Gazette* and *Noticeboard*; and *Statement of Affairs*. The other two there would be general journalists. Out of that total of about 10 officers, I would put a Budget there for staff of about \$300,000—in that sort of order. We also, of course, produce *Education Views*. We produce 20 copies a year, and the cost per issue is about \$30,000. No, I think that it is about \$15,000. It is 49c per edition. We produce about 42 000 copies. So it would be \$400,000 for *Education Views*, which is the communication arm of the Department. It is a total Budget of about \$700,000.

Mr QUINN: For this particular branch?

Mr COMBEN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: I draw your attention to this little document I have here. It came out last year. Are you planning to put out a similar one this year for the Budget?

Mr COMBEN: No.

Mr QUINN: What did it cost to produce last year?

Mr COMBEN: I have not got a figure for that.

The CHAIRMAN: I note that we are discussing the Estimates for 1994-95 and that that is in the Budget for 1993-94. It is up to the Minister whether he wishes to provide an answer for that.

Mr COMBEN: Sorry, did you rule my answer out of order?

The CHAIRMAN: No.

Mr COMBEN: I am quite happy to answer that. I do not know what the figure was for that, but it would be part of general—

Mr QUINN: Just in general. I am after how much it cost and how many were produced. I understand that they were sold also to members of Parliament if they wished to send them out to their schools.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, you did not buy any.

Mr QUINN: You noticed! What money was recouped through the sales of that?

Mr COMBEN: I would have to take that on notice.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned before rationalisation of assets. In relation to the last financial year and also this financial year, do you have any idea in terms of money what has been earmarked for sale this year? How much did you receive last year? What do you expect to receive this year?

Mr COMBEN: This year, we have earmarked \$31.5m. That is what we would like to receive. We expect realistically that we will not receive that. I think that the figure was about \$5m for last year. We also have for sale some 64 teacher houses in south-east Queensland and some of the provincial cities. I do not think they are in the \$5m which we got this year or for next year. I have the figures now: it is \$6.5m for last year and \$31m for this year. Primarily the land that we are looking at is vacant Education Department land, held by the Corporation of the Minister for Education. We obviously have some big items in there, which includes the Bardon Professional Development Centre. But we are still subject to further negotiations with Treasury as to the sale of the houses. We would like to see that go into teacher housing, but that is being debated at the present time and the money is generally to further capital works. Ten million dollars of it will be spent on SIMS—the computer enhancement program called the School Information Management System.

Mr QUINN: That will come from capital works?

Mr COMBEN: From the \$31m, yes. It is seen as a capital item. When I went to school, capital was simply bricks and mortar. Today, capital is also your information system. That is why it is being allocated from there.

Mr QUINN: That raises the point—are you depending on assets sales in order to fund other asset acquisitions within the Department? In other words, if you were not able to sell any assets the SIMS project would not go ahead. Am I reading it right?

Mr COMBEN: No. There are two ways we could go. We could either find other internal efficiencies to pay for SIMS or we go straight to Treasury and say, "We want \$10m for SIMS." Treasury is being equitable in terms of saying, "You have some assets over here. You can sell them, but here is a Statewide priority and initiative which we think should have a first call on some of those assets." SIMS would have to be done. It is essential for proper management in the future.

Mr QUINN: Transportation of students—

Mr COMBEN: Transportation? Where to?

Mr QUINN: School transport. You have already indicated that you are looking at a system or policy approach to the reform of bus transport throughout the State. In fact, the Government has mentioned that it will be looking to put in place a safety net provision as well. Does that mean that there are going to be user-pays charges for students travelling by bus, when in the past they may have received free transport?

Mr COMBEN: I would not assume that at all. We do not know what will finally come out of any review of school bus transport. I would make a distinction between the commercial bus operators run by bodies such as the Brisbane City Council and those which are the school bus services in the rural areas of the State. I cannot conceive of user-pays charges on those rural area bus systems. I think that we have to wait to see what negotiations with all the other systems and parents will yield in terms of the Brisbane-based buses.

Mr QUINN: On the subject of assistance to tertiary institutions on page 129 of the Program Statements there is a list of campuses which have received both capital funding and funding for provision of site services. I do not see the Gold Coast university campus there. I ask: since the Government is providing additional moneys for sites to allow universities to expand their campuses to other geographical locations, why is the Government not prepared to allocate the necessary money to allow the Gold Coast university campus to do what is, in fact, the same thing?

Mr COMBEN: Because it is not the same thing. The Gold Coast has Griffith University placed there. Griffith is domiciled at Nathan and it has a satellite campus in the northern part of the Gold Coast. No other university which has already received the normal State allocation of support for a new university, which is a site with facilities to the value of that site, receives money where you already have a facility. If you wanted to expand the argument and say that the Gold Coast has a need for further university places and a fairly clear need for a new university, I think that would be a different argument and that is one that we are looking at in terms of our State priorities.

At present, the State priorities from the growth funds are some \$35m available in the next triennium from the Federal Government. Those growth funds are being looked at with a view to the need for a new university facility in the Ipswich corridor somewhere. At present, we are looking at three sites there for the University of Queensland, the Gold Coast area in general, or, if Griffith chooses to expand down there, maybe that Gold Coast area will come back to Logan/Albert—somewhere there where the new growth is. That debate is yet to be had. There is also a call for a university facility at Wide Bay. All of those are new sites where we will have to supply land services to the site. At present, Griffith and the Gold Coast have a site which was provided. It is different. But there are further consultations going on about options and alternatives with Griffith University, particularly with Professor Michael Irvine, who is doing a great job as an advocate.

The CHAIRMAN: It is now time to move to Government members for further questions.

Ms SPENCE: I will ask a supplementary question on SIMS. You talked about the fact that we are spending \$10m on it and how you expect to fund the SIMS technology. Could you explain what this project is going to achieve?

Mr COMBEN: What it will achieve is that each school will have a management system on a

computer. The sort of information will be the names of students, including their results and all their other information. I am not computer literate, so you either type in or you use the mouse and you get, "Pat Comben—very good student—HDs all the way and a charm to be with in the classroom." Do you have some sort of problem with that, Mr Macdonald?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Merit selection.

Mr COMBEN: Merit selection. Student profiles would be there and policy development, monitoring and compliance. We have a number of departmental policies which are across all systems and there are outcomes which we want to see implemented constantly, so we would have those in place on there as well. Personnel details would be on there. At a major school these days, a school with the enrolment of Brisbane State High School would have 120 to 125 teachers plus more than 20 ancillaries.

There are all those sorts of records to be kept. There are also the general resources of the school. For a school like that, the school grant would be \$400,000 to \$500,000. All of the money going into the school would be close to \$500,000. You have to manage the text book allowance. You have the finances and the curriculum and what is happening in relation to them. So you would have one system for the first time that anyone could tap into. They can go from school to school and know that SIMS is there—"Let's find out something about the school." There are a whole lot of demographics and profiling and making comparisons with other schools that can be done. The \$10m would comprise some \$200,000 for the salaries to get the system up and working. There is the network upgrade, which I understand is the hardware. Most schools have a computer. The school administration system comprises the individual computers and the software in the schools. It costs \$5.5m to develop and buy that. I assume that the finance system is software.

Mr PEACH: SIMS has a number of components, and this is only the first phase in the introduction of it. It is not a one-computer system—a central computer system—but rather the capacity to link the department's strategic systems, which will be the school-based school administration system, our human resource management system, our finance system and our assets management system. The first stage is to get those working compatibly, and the second stage by 1997 is to integrate them so that information can be exchanged electronically.

Ms SPENCE: Just to clarify this a bit more—can someone sitting in head office or in a regional office tap into a Schools Information Monitoring System and pull out a student profile or information on personnel?

Mr PEACH: That will be technically possible by the end of 1997, but there are a whole lot of ethical considerations that need to be debated between now and then.

Ms SPENCE: Before you have that capability?

Mr PEACH: The capability will be there, but the protocols are another matter, and security issues will need to be built into the system.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: If I could take a supplementary question also to Mr Quinn's question on the school transport program—I notice from the Program Statements in Budget Paper No. 3 that there is an increase of some \$4.5m over last year's cost of school transport. I wonder whether you can advise us or me what that increase represents and what has been the trend in the cost of school transport over recent years. If you are able, can we have an idea of what might have been the cost of an option that I understand was not taken, that is, free transport?

Mr COMBEN: The costs last year were about \$84m. The costs this year are about \$89m. Some of that is just the general increase in student enrolments, in the primary sector particularly. Some of it is the increase in costs within the system. It just costs us more this year. It is the CPI cost, if you want to put it that way. I think we would have had two difficulties. One was free transport. No-one could come up with a finite figure for what free transport was because we would not know how far parents would move their students. They might be paying to go to schools down the line at present and paying some extra to get there. But if there was absolutely free transport, they could quite conceivably go to the other side of town. At present, some students go on a daily basis from Beenleigh to Nambour on the train. It is unbelievable to me, but they exist. Therefore, we could not get an accurate figure. However, it was a massive increase.

New South Wales has gone from a budget for school transport of something like \$150m to \$300m over a very short period since free transport was introduced, and that State is now backing off that system fairly rapidly. It is an area fraught with difficulties. A whole range of other States have tried to rationalise the transport system. The only thing that took the Gulf war off the Hobart *Mercury's* front page in the entire Gulf war was when they changed the school transport system.

May I remind my opposite number on the Committee that the Honourable Sir William Knox came into politics 33 years ago with the intention of changing school transport in the first year that he was here, and at one of my first engagements after becoming Minister for Education, I stood up and said, "We will do something about school transport", and Bill Knox stood up and said, "I wanted to do it 33 years ago, Pat, and I wish you luck." I think we are fortunate that we have got as far as we have, and I pay tribute publicly to Bob Lenahan and the individuals from Transport who have managed to bring out the system. What it would have cost us if we had not made it free but continued the old system but had a railway line to Robina and to the Gold Coast is something like \$25m extra.

Mr LENAHAN: We do not have an exact figure on that, but it would certainly have cost us a good deal more to continue the rail program as it stood once the new railway lines opened. I suppose the unfortunate thing about it is that we would have students travelling both southwards and northwards on the same railway line.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Have the changes to the rail transport portion of school transport in fact led to some fairly substantial savings?

Mr COMBEN: No, it has led to a holding. There may be a marginal saving. If there is a marginal saving, I am talking about hundreds of thousands of dollars, not millions. We would be looking to put that into the transport of students with special needs. One thing which it does for us is help us to manage our assets, which are schools, more properly, so that people will tend to go to their local schools rather than going three schools down the line where you have suddenly got to spend another \$1m for classrooms, when you have eight empty classrooms at the other schools. To give free transport would have meant that we would have suddenly had these perceived good schools—and it is all public perception—such as Brisbane State High, although it has an enrolment policy. Certainly, some schools would be expanding—and there would be a huge public cost in that—while other schools were not being used, and the handful of parents and students left there would not let us sell or get rid of that school.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I do not blame you for missing out on this, Minister, because it was a question in many parts—what has been the trend in the total cost of school transport over recent years?

Mr COMBEN: In recent years it has been a curve which was beginning to go up towards an exponential increase, but which will now, we believe, flatten off fairly well.

Mr BRISKEY: I want to talk about school grants. What has been the pattern of increase in school grants over the last two years?

Mr COMBEN: The last two years? The last five years might be better.

Mr BRISKEY: The last five years.

Mr COMBEN: Five years ago, the school grants were about \$39m—virtually nothing, in fact. Now they have more than doubled through the generosity of this Government and the allocation of money. I said \$39m. I am sorry, I am being overgenerous; it was \$36.21m. In contrast, since 1990-91 they went up by some \$13m, which would have included a component for training, and then to \$53m and \$54m, now \$55m. This year it will be about \$55m again. We have on top of that been helping the P & Cs with basics, which is an extra \$9.4m. It excludes payments to schools of distance education, which is another \$2.5m. It excludes the Computers in Schools Program, a payment of \$9.2m. That adds up to another \$20m, making a total of \$75m, and there is an increase of \$4m for this year.

Mr BRISKEY: When schools are allocated their grants, how are the grants worked out? Are detailed costings done before a grant is given to a school?

Mr COMBEN: It is formula driven. Different amounts are given for different age group students. There is a difference between the primary sector and the secondary. There are also some changes for the freight rates so that a school in Cairns would get a different amount from a school of the same size in

Brisbane. We are looking to see whether we can get a bit more needs-based funding into that sort of thing, but I doubt it. I think the school grant is something which is fairly well understood, and there is no need to alter it. Does that answer your question?

Mr BRISKEY: Down in my electorate of Cleveland, one of my high schools, Wellington Point State High School, has been involved with the Bayside Community College with the ABC training system. I just ask: how much State funds are going to the ABC training system and how many students are benefiting from the pilot projects? It is a very worthwhile project.

Mr COMBEN: Yes, we would certainly support the Australian Vocational Training system. I do not know that we have a figure directly for that because so much of the figures are school based, anyway. It would be difficult for us, centrally, to say, about Cleveland, "This is how much is spent—how much of each teacher." I think we spend about \$5m on vocational training. That would not necessarily be ABC, because it could be that a local school is doing a local project somewhere, but it would be vocational training. What was the second part of your question again?

Mr BRISKEY: How many students are benefiting from the pilot program, the ABC training system?

Mr COMBEN: We should know the figures for that—ABC. The number of schools is 40 to 50, or have been involved in some way with the ABC pilot projects and, in 1993, over 700 trainees were recorded by the DEET trainee records and payments system being part of the ABC institution-based pilot project in Queensland. Early figures for new pilots coming on line in 1994 indicate at least 500 more trainees will be involved with these pilot projects. Therefore, at least 1 200 trainees will have benefited from the ABC pilot projects. I think I should balance that—it is my understanding we have about 9 000 students in Years 11 and 12 doing some sort of TAFE-related courses as well. There are, for the whole of 1994, either 4 500 enrolments in full vocational courses and 95 000 enrolments in components of vocational courses. Many of them are in national industry training modules. Of those 95 000, there could be multiple enrolments there because one student could be doing four. Although I am still not given the figure of 9 000, my memory says something about 9 000 being about the figure—4 500 total.

Mr BRISKEY: How much money is allocated to human relationships education in the 1994-95 budget?

Mr COMBEN: Again, it is difficult to pull out a figure because we have 90 per cent of schools now being involved in human relationship education. Professor Arthur Brownley's group—they are the advisory committee—spend about \$85,000 a year. They do not get paid for it. They have produced a couple of videos. They travel the State to seek compliance with school reviews, etc, but the people involved is a senior policy officer, \$45,000. The initial allocation last year was \$26,000. That was a total of

about \$45,000 used directly for that that we could identify, but there is that 80 per cent of schools using HRE in some form that would often have an allocated teacher who would be spending time on that. The amount of time spent by parents, etc, would be fairly difficult for us to extract.

Mr BRISKEY: Is there any evidence to suggest that HRE has any effect on the academic results of students?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. Most people think of HRE as being simply sex, or how you do it, or how you do not do it, or how you do it safely—whatever it is—but there are massive benefits for actual learning, and they are about, in its crudest form, the stopping of bullying, the stopping of sexual harassment. It is about raising self-esteem, teaching values and ethics and sexuality from the supportive school environment, etc. If you can get a student who is happy at school and happy at home, that student will do far better academically. If you have a student who is coming from a home which gives no support, a student who is going to school and being petrified of being bullied or harassed in some form, then obviously academic achievement will suffer. There were many people who, in my day at school, were called "late achievers" who suffered from that sort of thing and we would hope that HRE is a major component of making sure that all students could reach something approaching their full potential as early in their school life as possible and without the needless hindrances of bullying, harassment, etc, and have full self-esteem and be able to go on to be a full participant in our society.

Mr BRISKEY: The education of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children has been in the media lately. Can you advise the Committee what is in this Budget to further their education?

Mr COMBEN: Yes, but again, there is the distinction between what is in the Budget and what we are actually spending. There will be no allocation for ATSI education in the Budget Papers, but we obviously run Thursday Island school. We run 14 Torres Strait Islander schools, or schools in the Torres Strait islands. We run all the community schools—those things are not in there. The sort of things which are in the Budget and which are covered by about \$1.1m are the Education Support Centre at Townsville, which is the school support centre for the entire State, the work done by QATSIC to some extent—although I think that is actually Federally funded—and our own Aboriginal Studies Directorate run by Penny Tipperly, and that sort of money is \$1.1m, but that is really supplementation to education which we are doing in other areas, and which is just part of the general allocation for good education.

Mr BRISKEY: I have only one further question, and that is: how many public servants are employed in the central and regional offices compared with those in schools?

Mr COMBEN: There are some 350 employed in the central office. Can I defer that for a moment and refer back to a couple of questions asked of me by Mr Quinn? The *Top Marks* brochure came from

not a departmental budget but from the ministerial office budget. So it has been paid by my own office.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, could I suggest that you do that in non-Government time?

Mr BRISKEY: Do it now.

The CHAIRMAN: Before you start, can I just say that there are 14 minutes now remaining in the current time allocation and, under Sessional Orders, this will be divided equally between Government and non-Government members, giving each team seven minutes.

Mr COMBEN: Would you like to know how many public servants there are, Mr Quinn?

Mr QUINN: No, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: We will take that answer on notice, thank you.

Mr QUINN: Is the Department aware of the costs associated with the new selection and appointment process for principals; and, if it is, how does it compare with the old one?

Mr COMBEN: I do not think—

Mr QUINN: Cannot comparisons be drawn?

Mr COMBEN: It would be difficult. I do not think that a comparison could be drawn. I think that would have to be your first starting point. The actual costs involved—we could identify some costs, such as the cost of travelling in some cases. We could identify when we have principals moving from one job in north Queensland applying for a higher band down here. We have tried to cut those costs a bit by using telecommunications, interactive video conferencing, to reduce some of our costs there. We no longer interview every applicant, which we used to do. So we have reduced those costs quite considerably.

Mr PEACH: At the moment, we budget for about \$1,000 per vacancy for a selection process.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned that you have cut down costs by not interviewing every applicant; in other words, you short list. I understand that the handbook says that you rigorously short list. As I understand, that has been one of the reasons why, on at least one occasion, an appointment has been overturned by the PSMC.

Mr COMBEN: Are you referring to Dalby?

Mr QUINN: Yes. Is the Department going to amend the handbook so that instances such as this do not occur again? Or what other action do you propose? The Dalby State High School was without a permanent principal for some eight months. A principal was appointed twice. His previous position was filled. If his appointment had been overturned, he would have been out in the cold. Is the Department taking any action to rectify this situation?

Mr COMBEN: Yes. Recently, we held a symposium on the selection, promotion and relocation of principals. A number of issues came up. I do not think we could say that we are going to change the guidelines because of that one incident, but there are a number of things that we intend to do, including addressing the problem of principal promotion.

Mr PEACH: A number of issues came out of that symposium a couple of weeks ago. I can read them, if you wish. This matter is one of the items listed for discussion as part of enterprise bargaining. Concerted efforts will be made to streamline the system to make it appropriate to education and to avoid some of the difficulties that have occurred, particularly in non-metropolitan areas, in relation to appointing principals more quickly.

Mr QUINN: I cite the instance of a school in a remote area that fails to attract any qualified candidates at all. How would the Department plan to fill such a position if you do not receive a suitable reply to an advertisement?

Mr COMBEN: We would use the same system that we have used since time immemorial. We would ask Statewide across the Department. Every officer can be expected to serve, if they are not subject to appeal and to various other factors in the transfer policy. They could be expected to be sent somewhere. That does not often happen, simply because there is always a chance of promotion, and most people will jump at that chance. They may not stay there long, but they will generally jump at the chance of going.

Mr QUINN: How many schools would fall into the category of not being able to attract a principal?

Mr COMBEN: I am not aware of there being a category of schools that are not able to attract a principal. If you are asking me how many small, remote schools we have, I can tell you that it is in the order of 250. These are Band 4 schools.

Mr QUINN: Of those 200-odd schools, how many at the moment would not have a principal for, say, six months?

Mr COMBEN: Very few. That is not a major part of the vacancies that we presently have. It would be fairly unusual and it would be the subject of some comment at the Executive Management Committee and with me if we had a school which attracted no-one. We have had one recently. But, no, it would be a very small number. Our vacancy rate is caused by someone choosing to go elsewhere and the consequential—

Mr QUINN: I am aware of that. How many schools in remote and rural areas of Queensland have not had a principal for six months or longer?

Mr COMBEN: Very few. If we were serious about finding a principal for these schools—and the remote area schools are generally Band 4, one-teacher schools—they would be staffed earlier this year by graduates, if nothing else.

Mr QUINN: Do you still hold back a number of schools and not advertise positions in them for a time, almost to keep them up your sleeve, in case something unusual happens and you need to appoint a permanent principal there?

Mr COMBEN: No. We would occasionally do that for positions outside of schools, but not generally within schools. Mr Peach has just drawn to my attention that there are 23 Band 4 schools at present with acting principals, and there are 24 Band 5 schools, which are two-teacher schools, basically,

in remote areas. Next week, we are going to fill some 30-odd schools, which is about half the present number of vacancies.

Mr QUINN: Is that 30 of those—

Mr COMBEN: No, that is 30 out of the total. At present, we have 73 vacancies. About 70 will be filled next week. About half of those will be filled. We generally do not have a problem.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questions—

Mr COMBEN: We have four questions here that we could answer which have not been answered previously.

The CHAIRMAN: We might take written answers for those questions.

Mr COMBEN: They are not written. I could respond to them.

The CHAIRMAN: We will have to ask you to put them in a written form for acceptance later, if you would not mind. I think they are all answers to questions by Opposition members. I am sure they would be happy to receive those in a written form.

Mr QUINN: Most definitely.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questioning, that concludes the examination of the Estimates for the Department of Education. I thank the Minister and his officers for their forbearance and their attendance here today.

The next item for consideration is the Department of Health. The time allotted for that Department will be three hours and 40 minutes. We will start the hearings for the Department of Health at 3.55 p.m.

The Committee adjourned at 3.51 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 3.55 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

In Attendance

Hon. K. Hayward, Minister for Health
 Mr Peter Read, Acting Director-General
 Ms Susan Porter, Executive Director,
 Corporate Services
 Mr Alan Davis, Director, Finance
 Mr David Butt, Acting Executive Director,
 Policy and Planning
 Mr Michael Moodie, Director, Capital Works
 Mr Peter Morero, Acting Deputy Director,
 Health Financing Policy Unit
 Dr Diana Lange, Executive Director, Public
 Health Services and Chief Health Officer
 Dr Gerry Murphy, Director, Public Health
 Dr Harvey Whiteford, Director, Mental Health
 Dr Bernie Homan, Director, Oral Health
 Dr Bryan Campbell, Regional Director, Brisbane
 North Regional Health Authority
 Mr Tony Mungavin, Principal Finance Officer

The CHAIRMAN: For the information of new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and the 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 from Government members, and so on in rotation. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. 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 shall be shared equally. 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 Department of Health to be open for examination. The question before this Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

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

Mr HAYWARD: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. I will make a short introductory statement. It is my great pleasure to speak to the Estimates hearing for the 1994-95 budget for the Health portfolio. This is the fifth Health budget to be delivered under this Government, and there is a clear signal that the Government places a high priority on social justice and bringing the services that people need to the growing population of Queensland.

Queensland Health's budget for 1994-95, as can be seen from the Budget Papers, will be \$2.438

billion, which is an increase of \$153m or about 6.7 per cent over the estimated actual expenditure for the previous financial year. There is an additional \$43.2m of so-called growth funds to support enhanced services and new initiatives to meet that growing population. Of course, 1994-95 is also the second year of the Government's \$1.5 billion, 10-year Hospital Rebuilding Program, and funds of \$153.7m have been allocated this financial year for new capital works.

I want to take the opportunity to introduce the people who are here with me so that Committee members know who they are. On my right is Peter Read, who is the Acting Director-General of Queensland Health. On my left is Susan Porter, who is the Director of Corporate Services. Next to her is Alan Davis, who is the Director of Finance. Behind me are Dr Gerry Murphy, who is the Director of Public Health, and Michael Moodie, who is the Director of Capital Works. Tony Mungavin is also sitting at the table with us, and he is the Principal Finance Officer.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members. I ask Mr Horan to begin.

Mr HORAN: My first question refers to the capital works programs, which this year are listed in Budget Paper No. 4 on page 60 and which in the previous year were listed in Budget Paper No. 6 on page 58. Of the 21 hospital projects detailed in 1993-94, which total some \$48m, nine of them are shown in the 1994-95 figures as having had little spent on them, with two projects having had nothing spent on them, that is, the Barcaldine Hospital and the Gold Coast Hospital airconditioning/renovation. Those nine hospital projects had \$18.8m allocated to them in 1993-94, and the 1994-95 figures show that only \$2.8m was spent.

On notice, I ask the Minister to provide the details of all capital works spending on a project-by-project basis for the 1993-94 year, including planning, minor works, equipment and hotel services, and including the estimates for this current month so that we can see how the \$150m allocated last year has finally been spent. Without notice, I ask the Minister to explain what happened to the unspent amounts of money from last year, where more than one-third was not spent?

Mr HAYWARD: Of course, you would realise that this year has not finished yet, but the target is to spend \$150m. I could probably tell you right now whether or not we are on target to do that. I am advised that we are on target to do that. It must be understood very clearly about this process that it is not just a matter of spending money; it is a matter of ensuring that capital works proposals meet the proper criteria. I am determined to ensure that those criteria are met.

You used a couple of examples, one of them being the Barcaldine Hospital. I think you said the original funding was \$2.7m. To explain what that is about—the project provided for construction of a new ward block and an operating theatre. When that went out to Q-Build Project Services, they provided a revised estimate of \$3.425m to obtain the full

scope of the proposed redevelopment with, from what they said, an unacceptable downsizing of services. I must be sure that we do not simply spend money. We must ensure that we are able to meet very clearly the budget allocation and obtain value for money. Did you use another example, just so that I am clear on that?

Mr HORAN: I used the example of the Gold Coast Hospital airconditioning/renovation.

Mr HAYWARD: Let me think about that.

Mr HORAN: There was nothing spent on either of those.

Mr HAYWARD: Again, it is around a similar process; it is about ensuring that we are able to get value for money and that we are able to use that money as efficiently as possible. That is the basic fundamental issue in this.

Mr HORAN: Can you explain the complete process of planning and approval of projects starting right from the point of economic analysis through to eventual Cabinet approval and then, from there, the process of supervision and management that takes place throughout the construction and project management phase?

Mr HAYWARD: Better than that, I can get Michael Moodie to do it.

Mr MOODIE: My name is Michael Moodie. I am the Director of Capital Works for Queensland Health. I understand the question to be to explain the capital works process of planning and implementation that has recently been approved by—

Mr HORAN: And the supervision of management.

Mr MOODIE: Essentially, the process is one based on the planning framework where the Queensland Health corporate plan is used as an overarching document to guide capital works expenditure. That is supplemented by the Statewide Health Services Strategy, which also provides a framework to the way funds should be spent and, within that context, regions prepare regional services plans. From those regional services plans, capital works proposals are developed which include what we call the functional plan and an economic evaluation, which is a project feasibility study, in essence. That functional planning and economic evaluation comes into the Queensland Health central office, it is evaluated by the policy and planning branch of central office and it also goes to Administrative Services in terms of the original costs estimates. That material then goes to the Capital Works Planning Committee, which comprises Queensland Health staff, Treasury, Office of the Cabinet and Administrative Services. They look at the proposal and the evaluations that are prepared. If the committee recommends it, it goes to the Minister, the Minister then submits it to Cabinet for final approval and it is approved in principle to go onto the three-year capital works rolling program. When that is approved, a document called a Project Definition Plan is completed, which is a detailed design and drawings of the projects.

From the construction perspective, Administrative Services are then commissioned to build that facility, given the budget and time frames that are agreed. The supervision and compliance with the Project Definition Plan is an issue for Administrative Services, and they do that on a contractual basis, for which we pay a fee, and they hand it back to us in terms of practical completion. As a concurrent activity, regions have a responsibility to ensure that the non-construction elements of projects are completed, and that includes things like engaging staff, commissioning the facilities, equipment purchases, etc., and it comes together at a general commissioning phase which is the responsibility of Health.

Mr HORAN: Minister, you may wish to refer this question also. I take it then that Queensland Health does make good use of the services that are available from Q-Build right through the entire process?

Mr HAYWARD: Exactly right. Part of the deal is that it is locked in to provide that service. Michael can expand on that.

Mr MOODIE: We have a very good relationship with Q-Build Project Services. Our view is that our core business is health and not in construction and that Q-Build Project Services are engaged to implement project definition plans as agreed by the Capital Works Planning Committee.

Mr HORAN: And certification of all work, be it by the private consultants or Q-Build, is undertaken by the capital works branch of Queensland Health?

Mr MOODIE: What do you mean by "certification"?

Mr HORAN: Certification of the number of hours done or the particular work done and certification for that work and payment for that work.

Mr MOODIE: Administrative Services conducts that. They take our Project Definition Plan, which is approved by the Capital Works Planning Committee, they engage consultants, they certify the work and they bring that project in on budget. If they require further approvals to the change in the scope or the change in the budget or the change in time frame, that has to then come back to the Director-General of Health—that is, the chair of the Capital Works Planning Committee.

Mr HORAN: Would you be able to tell this Committee today what would be the approximate fee percentage that would be paid to a private consultant in a typical project and what would be the approximate fee percentage paid to Q-Build? In the order of 10 per cent each?

Mr HAYWARD: Michael will tell you exactly.

Mr MOODIE: The fee that we currently pay Q-Build is in the order of 2.5 per cent of all construction-related costs.

Mr HORAN: On notice, would you be able to provide the details of all consultant fees paid in this past financial year of 1993-94 to private consultants and also to Q-Build?

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, apparently so.

Mr HORAN: I wish to ask you a question regarding Q-Fleet. How many cars does Queensland Health lease from Q-Fleet and what does the average annual lease cost?

Mr HAYWARD: I will get that detail for you. Susan Porter will drag it up.

Ms PORTER: Susan Porter, Executive Director, Corporate Services. The motor vehicle fleet for the central office of Queensland Health has in fact a total of 77 vehicles which are leased from Q-Fleet. Those vehicles cover all of the central office positions, including five positions which are Commonwealth funded. In terms of the details of the costs—

Mr HORAN: Actually, I meant the total number of vehicles leased for Queensland Health in its entirety. That was the central office only, was it, the 77?

Ms PORTER: That is central office only. The regional health authorities actually maintain the control over their own vehicles. What I can tell you is that a total of 1 056 vehicles are actually under the control of the regional health authorities. The arrangements for those with respect to leasing versus purchase I do not have the details of because the individual authorities keep those.

Mr HORAN: But they do normally lease them from Q-Fleet?

Ms PORTER: Yes, they are encouraged to. I am not saying that they would all be leased. Some of them may in fact be purchased, particularly if there is Commonwealth-funding program money available.

Mr HORAN: I would like to ask you a question regarding the productivity dividend. You confirmed in an answer in Parliament that a productivity dividend of one per cent of the non-labour component of the Health budget is paid to Queensland Treasury. Where is this productivity dividend shown in the Budget Papers, and when is the money actually collected by Treasury or paid over to Treasury?

Mr HAYWARD: The amount is deducted before it comes to us. But as to where it is shown in the Budget Papers—I am looking at Alan Davis for the answer.

Mr DAVIS: Alan Davis, Director of Finance. As the Minister said, the productivity dividend is taken off the top before we receive it from Treasury, and it is allocated to non-service delivery areas throughout Queensland Health. Specifically, the full one per cent is taken off central office, and there is a smaller component that is provided to the regions so far as a percentage. It generally comes down to about 0.25 of a per cent of the total regional budgets.

Mr HORAN: I understand that the formula is actually one per cent of the non-labour component of the regional budgets; is that correct?

Mr DAVIS: Treasury apportion Queensland Health 75 per cent/25 per cent service delivery.

Mr HORAN: What do you mean by the fact that it comes off the top and then it is given to non-service areas?

Mr DAVIS: It comes off the top, in that the money is deducted from our budget before we receive that from Treasury.

Mr HORAN: What does Treasury do with it?

Mr DAVIS: That would be a question to ask the Treasurer.

Mr HORAN: So there is in fact an amount of money each year that is part of your gross Health budget that you never receive? Is that correct?

Mr DAVIS: It would have been in our original build-up of the budget, but then it is deducted by Treasury.

Mr HORAN: And this amount would be around \$5m a year?

Mr DAVIS: Yes, a little bit less than that—\$4.487m.

Mr HORAN: If I could go back—

Mr HAYWARD: So we are clear on that—there is some logic to that. In effect, what happened—

Mr HORAN: I have not asked a question.

Mr HAYWARD: I am just going to clear up the answer so you get a proper answer.

Mr HORAN: I am satisfied with the answer that was given. Going back to capital works—you mentioned that Q-Build are paid 2.5 per cent of the total project cost. In the past year, have there been any variations to that? Were there particular projects where they were paid more than that?

Mr MOODIE: They are paid 2.5 per cent in their role as principal for all the capital works projects and as risk manager. Q-Build would also receive payment if they actually undertook the construction work concerned. For example, one of the projects they did was some refurbishment work at the QEII Hospital, where they actually undertook the job. So they are paid direct fees for that purpose.

Mr HORAN: On a project where they are involved in going through the various aspects of economic analysis, project development plans, selection of principal consultants and so forth, before it gets to the Cabinet stage where Cabinet approves it, how much are they paid on that particular area? When it moves into the next stage at which tenders are called and quality surveyor estimates are taken, and where the actual on-site construction occurs, where Q-Build provides on-site managers, risk managers, the Clerk of Works and so on, can you explain that right through? I think you were saying that the 2.5 per cent applies to one part of that. I want to know what the total fees are in all the areas where Q-Build can charge and can be paid for work.

Mr MOODIE: If we can come back to the compilation of the functional plan and the economic evaluation, which is a capital works proposal that comes into the Department—the regions can elect to use private consultancy or Q-Build Project Services to provide them with advice about construction-related issues, for example, soil testing. That is an option the regions have. There is no set percentage fee for those services. They are charged at the

agreed Admin. Services rates for services, as they would for any other Department.

Mr HORAN: Is that certified by the Capital Works Committee of Health?

Mr MOODIE: At that stage, what the region is doing is preparing a proposal. Those fees are paid for by the capital works branch, and they are certified as being accurate and correct. When the proposal comes in, Q-Build corporately, or Admin. Services here within Brisbane—a separate group of people review those proposals primarily to see that the capital costings and the capital implications have all been addressed adequately, and they are paid a fee to review that work as well on a fee-for-service basis.

When the proposal goes to the Capital Works Planning Committee and, subsequently, through the Minister to Cabinet and is approved, the region then can engage further consultancy or Q-Build to prepare the Project Definition Plan. That is a more detailed project proposal of the preferred option, that is, construction—if that is the particular case. That is on a fee-for-service basis as well. When the Project Definition Plan is approved by the Capital Works Planning Committee and it is formally handed over to Q-Build Project Services, they are then paid a fixed fee of 2.5 per cent for the total construction costs only. Then they go off and engage quantity surveyors, architects, contractors and whatever, and that is their responsibility in the context of the budget.

Mr HORAN: That 2.5 per cent covers the actual on-site management of providing the project manager on site, the Clerk of Works, and so on? The 2.5 per cent covers that?

Mr MOODIE: We call that being principal for all contracts, and being the risk manager.

Mr HORAN: So they have that plus previous up-front fees which would have been charged for work they did in the documentation analyses and so on?

Mr MOODIE: Their use at the regional level is on a competitive basis with other builders. That is an issue for the regions. We have an obligation to send them the proposals as part of the process. That comes from capital works centrally. We pay a fee for that.

Mr HORAN: As a result of having Q-Build involved in the process, are you paying a less than normal commercial rate to the principal private consultants? For example, if you have an architect on a site and that architect is responsible for hydraulics engineers, the various builders and so forth, are you paying a lesser fee to that principal consultant because of the fact that Q-Build is involved in this on-site management?

Mr MOODIE: That would be difficult to determine, because Q-Build have the responsibility to go to the market on a competitive basis and select consultants for that particular project on our behalf. They undertake that as the Government builder. So it is difficult to determine whether we pay a lesser fee or a higher fee. It is what the market rate is as

determined through a competitive process of selection.

Mr HORAN: I asked previously could I be provided with the details of all costs paid to Q-Build and consultants for capital works throughout 1993-94. On notice, could I have the estimate of costs for 1994-95 in those same categories for those projects that are listed in capital works?

Mr HAYWARD: They would be very strictly estimates.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for questions by non-Government members has expired. I shall ask Mr Sullivan to ask the first question.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I refer to Budget Paper No. 2, in particular chart 4.2 on page 60, table 4.2 on page 61, and departmental Estimates statement on page five.

Mr HAYWARD: I am sorry, I cannot hear you.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I refer to the departmental Estimates statement, page five. The departmental overview of the Budget Estimates in the Program Statements identifies over \$2.4 billion for 1994-95 to be spent delivering the services in your three program areas. How does that compare with the previous year's expenditure? In particular, what has been the trend in expenditure, and how has this funding been able to match the growing population in Queensland?

Mr HAYWARD: Total health funding for this year will increase by 6.7 per cent or thereabouts on the 1993-94 budget allocation. The 1994-95 original budget is, as you said, \$2.428 billion. It represents an increase of \$773.8m over the 1989-90 original budget. What it really is saying is that this is the fifth record Health budget that the Government has been able to produce. It is an increase of 37.6 per cent.

I missed the second part of the question again. I am having trouble hearing.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I am looking for how it compared with the previous year, what the trend has been in the last few years, and how this is going to match population growth in Queensland.

Mr HAYWARD: Over the five years, the Government has been able to increase it every year. As I said, that represents a \$773.8m increase since the 1989-90 original budget. It is clear when you look at it and you go into some detail—and I have some more detail here—that it has gone into services and staffing increases. I think what has to be emphasised in the case of Queensland is that we have a growing population and we have an ageing population. We also have to deal with the issues of the growth in technology and the cost of that technology. So the money has gone towards increased staff numbers and increased staff remuneration.

I think the most obvious one, of course, was the introduction of the new award payments for nurses, which ensured that they were retained within the Queensland public hospital system and able to provide a higher quality clinical bedside service. Of course, other significant increases have been enhanced remuneration for full-time medical

specialists and new payments for visiting medical officer sessions.

I can give some detail here of some of the increases that have occurred as far as treating people. Basically, I can show that in some regional areas, such as the Sunshine Coast—over the period we have been able to increase the number of patients treated by 50 per cent; on the Gold Coast, by the same number. It makes pretty interesting reading as to how we have been able to do that. Of course, this year we will treat a record number of public patients—over 500 000.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Carrying on from your last point, I notice from Budget Related Paper No. 7 that we are looking at 589 780 public patient admissions in 1993-94. That is an estimated figure. Given that the year is not over, I think that that is a fair estimation. Do you have any idea what the projection for 1994-95 is going to be for public hospital admissions?

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, I do. Just let me get hold of them in the booklet that I have here. In relation to the figures that we were talking about before—you have talked about both public and private patients with that particular figure. That shows an increase of about 11.4 per cent for this year over admissions from last year. Over the five-year period, as I said before, in places such as the Sunshine Coast, that shows a percentage change over that period of 50 per cent. Another example, as I said before, was the south coast, 50.88; the peninsula, 37.19; the Brisbane South Region—interestingly enough—47.56. They are the percentage increases.

If we look at our admissions this year or budgeted for next year, we are looking at an estimated—and I again emphasise "estimated"—increase next year of 4 per cent.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: In your answer to my first question you mentioned nursing salaries. For your information, you could refer to the Inpatient Care Medicine subprogram on page 36 of the departmental Estimates statements. I think we are all aware of the efforts that have been made in that area and congratulate you. I would like you to advise the Committee, if you could, of the measures that have been instituted recently and that you intend to pursue to ensure that the contribution of the nursing work force is properly recognised and to similarly ensure that Queensland taxpayers receive good value for their nursing dollars.

Mr HAYWARD: I think basically what you are referring to is the issue of the nurses' career structure that was introduced in 1991. I think it is important to understand about that. In the last 12 months there has been a fair bit of discussion about that issue. It was always going to be subject to scrutiny to examine whether staffing profiles which were initially approved could be justified in operational terms. Very clearly, let me make the statement that Government continues to be supportive of a career structure for nurses—a career structure that allows nurses to have access to a path which does provide flexibility, incentive and, I think, importantly, wage justice.

As I said, the issue of the career structure was never set in concrete; it was to be reviewed. The particular areas that we have been looking at have been nurses who were not working at the bedside level 4 and level 3. If you look at national indicative benchmarks, and that is what you have to do, in Queensland we have been oversupplied in that particular area. What we have been able to do in consultation with the Queensland Nurses Union is proceed to gather all of the data that we can on the nurses' career structure and analyse that data. Negotiations are proceeding on agreed, appropriate staffing structures. Let me say that we have chosen 49 hospitals to be selected for the initial review, and that is where negotiations commenced.

At the beginning of June—and I think it is important to emphasise this—all except 20 hospitals had agreed to the revised nursing career structure. I understand the reason why the other 20 had not agreed at that stage is that it was subject to further discussion between the Queensland Nurses Union State branch and local branch consultation. So we would hope to get a final agreement on that. That will go to the Industrial Relations Commission some time in June, and we should be able to then resolve the issue of those level 3 and level 4 nurses.

I think it is important to also emphasise that not only has the Government been able to give what I consider wage justice to nurses in Queensland—we have been able to increase the salary for enrolled nurses, as I said before—but also we have increased the number of nurses working in public hospitals in Queensland by more than 2 000. I think it was identified clearly this morning—

The CHAIRMAN: The time for the answering of that question has expired.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: My next question is: would you finish the answer, please?

Mr HAYWARD: I noticed in the *Courier-Mail* this morning that there was an article talking about nursing employment in Australia. It singled out nursing to be, generally, a pretty flat spot—except in Queensland. It made the point very clearly there independently—and I emphasise what I have been saying and what generally everyone knows—that we are in the business of employing more nurses and we are determined to ensure that those nurses are working with patients at the bedside.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I refer you to page 50 of the departmental Estimates. I want to look at the arrangements for the Pool B Medicare funding. That funding became available from July 1993, after the Medicare Agreement was signed. The agreement allows for additional funding to be allocated to the State where public hospital activity targets are increased, and I understand that is measured by occupied bed days. I ask: how is Queensland proposing to spend the Pool B funding allocation this financial year, and are our activity targets on track?

Mr HAYWARD: I will answer it in two parts. Firstly, I will give a broad outline of what the issue is about and then I will suggest that Peter Read, who

knows a lot about the Medicare Agreement in particular, might like to talk a bit about it.

We received an amount of \$27m in Pool B funding. So that everybody understands what Pool B is about, the Medicare Agreement broadly is divided into three or four areas, but there is a specific funding grant, Pool A, which funds each State on the basis of its existing public occupied bed days—and Queensland has the highest percentage in Australia—and Pool B, which rewards each State then on its ability to be able to increase its level of occupied bed days. As I said, we received \$27m on the basis of that. That money was then apportioned to various regional health authorities based on their budget and their willingness and ability to be able to demonstrate that they would be able to increase their share of public occupied bed days. Our target was a 1 per cent increase, and we have certainly been able to achieve that.

But let me sound a note of warning with all of that. Given that it is a fixed pool, our percentage increase is then relative to whatever increases occur in other States. For instance, if Victoria or New South Wales—or all of the other States—increased their public bed share—and understand this, it should be easier for them to do it because they come off a much smaller level than we do—it could have the effect of reducing our Pool B funding. In simple terms, our target was clear and we have been able to meet that. Peter might explain quickly how we are progressing for next year.

Mr READ: When we got the \$27m, we negotiated with every regional health authority specific targets on the basis of bed days, admissions and, importantly, length of stay, because the Medicare calculations assume that the length of stay in Queensland will reduce at the same rate as the national length of stay is reducing. So there were three clear targets that we set for each region when we negotiated the budgets with them. With, I think, one or two minor exceptions, we were able to deliver all the targets in terms of bed days, we exceeded admissions and we exceeded our reduction in the length of stay target, so we feel we have done as much as we can and certainly got good value for the \$27m that we received from the Commonwealth.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Minister, I note from page 50 of your departmental Estimates statements, still on the same issue of Medicare Pool B, that you do sound a note of caution because of the complexities of the Medicare funding arrangements, indicating the \$27.8m that we have been hearing about. Perhaps you might be able to indicate to us why, on page 33 of Budget Paper No. 2, the Budget Overview, it is being indicated that the current estimate for Pool B for this year is \$31.3m, which is a \$3.5m variance. I accept that it is not going to be written in stone one way or the other.

Mr READ: We are currently in negotiations with the Commonwealth over exactly what our share of the Pool B pool will be this year. The original advice we had was that because of the delays in the Commonwealth analysing the information from each of the States they would not be in a position to do

anything other than give each State the same amount for 1994-95 as they got last year. The figure that we gave to Treasury initially was based on our assumption that we would get the same \$27m, indexed slightly. That was the \$27.8m. Subsequent advice from the Commonwealth and in discussions between Treasuries has indicated a higher percentage figure coming to Queensland. Since then, we understand—and I do not have this confirmed—that New South Wales' performance in terms of occupied bed days last year exceeded its expectations quite considerably and that there may in fact be a redistribution of those Pool B funds to the point where we in fact get less than \$27m. It is important to realise that once we know exactly how much money it is, we then go out to the regions and negotiate with them on the basis of the actual amount we have got. It is not as though they can expect amounts in excess of what we will receive because we are not going out to the regions to negotiate bed day targets, admission targets or length of stay targets until we know exactly how much we have got from the Commonwealth. The final figure is still pretty much up in the air.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: The only certainty is the uncertainty.

Mr HAYWARD: Let me follow up on that. Also, the figures presented by New South Wales need to be audited. I do not know how the progress is going there.

Mr READ: If New South Wales' figures for admissions and bed days are what they say they are, they have shown an extraordinary increase over the 12-month period to the point where we have some concerns about whether they are counting things that are appropriate or not appropriate, or perhaps counting things that they should not be. I have specifically put on notice to the Commonwealth that we are quite happy to have our data audited, and we expect all States to have their data audited before finalisation of the allocations is decided, because there are large amounts of money that can switch between States on the basis of the number of admissions, particularly, because they impact substantially on the length of stay, which is a variable which is most at stake in this. The length of stay variable is most important to us.

Mr HAYWARD: I hope we are making very clear to you the competition between States for this money and what can or might happen in order to get it.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: And how enthusiastic New South Wales is to get some of it.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for questions by Government members has now expired. We will now go to the non-Government members.

Mr HORAN: Minister, I would like to place on notice a question relating to those cars. Could you provide this Committee with the average lease costs per vehicle of a typical six-cylinder sedan from Q-Fleet and what is provided for that particular fee? I now ask you: in view of the comments by Mr Peter Read, Assistant Director-General of Health, to the

Senate Standing Committee on Community Affairs in December 1992 that your department was turning its attention to developing waiting lists, what data on waiting lists can you provide to this Committee?

Mr HAYWARD: Peter is sitting right here so he can probably tell you where we are at with a lot of those issues.

Mr READ: The issue of waiting lists has been addressed in the Medicare Incentives Program, in particular under the Hospital Access Program, and an amount of money has been made available within that program, part of which has been allocated to Prince Charles Hospital for direct service delivery to increase the rate of throughput of cardiac surgery.

A second part of it has been reserved for establishing reliable and meaningful waiting list accounting methodology here in Queensland. You would be aware, obviously, that Queensland has not in the past counted waiting lists except in very much an anecdotal fashion. One or two hospitals currently do collect some meaningful data, and Prince Charles on cardiac is one of them.

By and large, across Queensland, there is not any systematic or meaningful collection of waiting list data. We have now employed a clinician and some people under that Commonwealth program in which we will be developing with the colleges here in Queensland proper waiting list protocols so that we can be assured that the numbers we collect are clinically meaningful and, in particular, we can get some assessment about waiting times, which we believe to be the major issue here. Now, I would have to confess that this has taken somewhat longer than I would have liked to get up and running, but we have the infrastructure in place now and, indeed, as late as last week, I chaired a committee looking at theatre utilisation, which is a major aspect of the waiting list and access issues. So the thing is now under way but, in terms of a Statewide response to waiting times and numbers on waiting lists, we do not have that systematically across all the hospitals.

Mr HORAN: What is the waiting list for each category of service provided at the Prince Charles Cardiac Unit? What is the current quota of angioplasties per week and the current quota of open-heart cardiac procedures per week?

Mr READ: I do not have all those numbers with me just at the moment, but that is a relatively straightforward number to get for you.

Mr HORAN: If we can have that on notice? I am happy for those quotas and the waiting list details to be put on notice, because I understand that Prince Charles does keep waiting lists.

Mr READ: Can I just make sure that I have all of those? Angioplasties, open hearts; were there others? Was there anything else?

Mr HORAN: No, just the angioplasties and open-heart procedures per week. Minister, I refer to the various inpatient programs, and I ask: how many beds have been taken out of service at the Royal Brisbane Hospital and the Princess Alexandra Hospital this financial year, and are any reductions in bed numbers for those two hospitals planned in the 1994-95 financial year?

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, I can give you the detail of that. I have got some figures here which, as I said, detail overall issues with regard to bed numbers. I am always very cautious about using bed numbers as a measure because, in many ways, it is quite artificial, given the changes in technology that have occurred. I mean, the principal reasons now about how you are able to treat people are simply on the basis of how many operating theatres you have got, because their length of stay is dropping. But let us use the example that I have got here. Which hospital are you talking about? The Royal Brisbane?

Mr HORAN: The Royal Brisbane and the Princess Alexandra.

Mr HAYWARD: Okay. The Royal Brisbane has 928 available beds, and the Princess Alexandra has 934. I can actually tell you in terms of Brisbane North, which takes in everywhere, over the last 12 months—well, available beds as at March 1994, which is the most up-to-date information I have got. There has been a decrease of 84 in the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority area. I think that is important to think about because if you look at Brisbane North between, say, 1989-90 and 1993-94, they have been able to increase their public acute patient activity by 24.92 per cent. But recognising those changes that I am talking about in technology and availability of specialists for Brisbane North, as far as occupied bed days over that period—as I have said, we have had an increase of 24.92. Occupied bed days, however, have only increased by 3.21 per cent. So, as I said, it is not necessarily a relevant measure of how much you can treat sick people just by simply saying or being concerned about the number of beds.

Mr HORAN: Of the \$11m allocated by the Commonwealth over three years to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery, how much was spent by Queensland Health in 1993-94 and at which hospitals? How much is budgeted for 1994-95 and at which hospitals?

Mr READ: The majority of that money was spent at Prince Charles and will be again next year. There was—

Mr HORAN: I understand that money was only for private hospitals.

Mr READ: I am sorry.

Mr HAYWARD: I am sorry, you will have to ask the question again.

Mr HORAN: Of the \$11m allocated by the Commonwealth over three years to reduce waiting lists for elective surgery, how much was spent by Queensland Health in 1993-94 and at which hospitals?

Mr HAYWARD: Let me answer that. At this stage, none has been spent. We have written to every private hospital in Queensland and told them that this money is available, that in certain provincial areas waiting times are long, or they need to be addressed. The Commonwealth has made available, as I said, an amount of \$11.4m, if I recall rightly, over four years to do this. So far, in general, our response from the private sector has been lukewarm, except for the John Flynn Hospital on the Gold Coast,

which has indicated that it would be interested in contracting for cardiac patients and also for patients with cancer. We are now negotiating with them for those two particular procedures.

I have actually found it quite disappointing that we continually hear complaints and whingeing about waiting lists or waiting times, yet when the Commonwealth makes money available, that is \$11.4m, to actually address the problem directly, as part of the last Federal election—I think nationally it was an amount of about \$60m; I stand to be corrected there—we find organisations such as the Australian Medical Association running around and finding all the excuses in the world as to why they cannot do it. For instance, we talked about cardiac surgery before. You asked a question about waiting lists. In an edition of his organisation's magazine, a former AMA State President, Dr Michael Cohn, stated—

"If the purpose of the money is to reduce waiting lists then how can the State Government be permitted to contract services that are not"—

he said—

"a major part of the waiting list problem here in Queensland. With the current service being provided at Prince Charles Hospital . . ."

He then goes on talking about everything else. He is basically finding all the excuses in the world as to why the contractual arrangements should not be with the John Flynn Hospital. We have written to every private hospital in Queensland. We have told them that the Commonwealth has the money available.

Mr HORAN: Do you have any flexibility within the scheme to spend that money on our own public hospitals rather than a private hospital?

Mr HAYWARD: No.

Mr HORAN: It must go to a private hospital?

Mr HAYWARD: That is the deal. The Commonwealth's view—I am only guessing how they would have thought—would have been, I think, during the last Federal election, when the Australian Medical Association and every other odd bod was running around Australia saying that waiting lists were terrible—their response to that was to say, "Okay, we have got money available. We are going to target that money to actually treat people who are waiting for surgical procedures." The response, as I said—I understand nationally—has been pretty poor. In Queensland, we have pursued it with vigour. I have explained to the various heads of colleges, some of whom have found all the excuses in the world as to why they cannot do it as well, that it gives us the opportunity, I think, by being able to use this money directly from the Commonwealth, to potentially free up some of our resources within Queensland so that we can provide them with some support for their particular pet projects. As I said, I noted your initial support for the idea and that later changed to opposition to it.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the Budget announcement of \$850,000 for a clinical geneticist. Would the Minister provide a detailed breakdown on

what this amount is to be spent on and the planned timetable of spending?

Mr HAYWARD: Firstly, I will explain what we are talking about. For public and private health professionals, the proposed service will provide a comprehensive program on the identification, reduction and treatment of genetic disorders of all types. That is important, because modern genetic services emphasise health promotion—that is, relating to hereditary disorders—health surveillance, professional and community education and population and family screening.

In year 1, we are proposing to have one director, one clinical geneticist, six genetic councillors, one coordinator, one secretary, one education officer, 0.5 of a data entry clerk, one registrar, one molecular geneticist, and two SITO genetic technicians. That gives a total staffing requirement of 15.5, rising through to a staffing requirement of 33 in year 6. So that deals with that issue.

Mr HORAN: Is there a timetable associated with that?

Mr HAYWARD: It is roughly as follows: in year 1, 15.5; in year 2, 19.5; in year 3, 22.5; in year 4, 26; in year 5, 29; and in year 6, which is the year 1999, 33. It has some suggestions also about some capital items that would need to be purchased, such as PCs, office furniture, and some items such as that.

Mr Horan, you asked me about the cost. The wage cost in the first year would be about \$819,115, rising to \$1,943,078 in year six in 1999. That takes in the total labour-related costs. Capital items will cost \$74,000 this year. There will be no capital items in 1999, because we have to purchase them only once. There are some recurrent costs involved. There is \$250,734 in year 1, rising to \$587,923 in year 6. That probably sounds like great and extreme detail. As I have learnt, things can change along the way.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the Budget announcement of \$630,000 in additional funding for the immunisation program. Can you provide a breakdown of this amount, the specific activities that will be funded, and the timetable for the spending of these amounts?

Mr HAYWARD: Before I talk about this, I should note that people may have read in the paper on Sunday that there has been a recent announcement by the Commonwealth. That announcement may have some impact—I could only think positively—on the provision of immunisation services in Queensland. I can give you some detailed figures now, but in a sense some of those figures might get better.

Mr HORAN: I just want the timetable for how that money will be spent in the coming financial year.

Mr HAYWARD: There is a proposal for resources to be spent over three years. Peter might have to explain how they are broken up. In general terms, this is an ongoing program, as you would realise.

Mr HORAN: But there is a new amount for this year. I want to know what that money is specifically

for. It is in addition to what may have been allocated previously.

Mr HAYWARD: Essentially, one of the areas on which it could be spent is the personal health record, which has been jointly developed with parents to assist them to manage children's health screenings and developmental checks and immunisation. That has been out in the community—

Mr HORAN: That is not new. I am talking about this new allocation for the next financial year. The Budget Papers mentioned that it was additional funding.

Mr HAYWARD: Sure, but there is a full-year cost involved in these programs. For instance, the second part of that is the system of direct distributions of vaccines from suppliers to service providers. That system has been implemented.

Dr MURPHY: The money for this year is, firstly, an up-front sum of around \$300,000 to finance a computer system to be installed around the State to track the distribution of vaccines and also to track the children who have received the vaccines, in order ultimately to provide a service to parents and service providers and to maintain a detailed record of where the money being provided for vaccines is going. The other part of the money in the first year—that is, the \$630,000—is currently intended to be put towards establishing a network of immunisation coordinators around the State, so that the vaccination system is well coordinated between the Commonwealth, the State, the regions, the local authorities and the private medical practitioners.

The Commonwealth announcement that the Minister has referred to may have some influence on that. We are still to be advised how the Commonwealth funds will be distributed. The funding for the out years of, I think, \$360,000 and \$260,000 is simply to maintain the immunisation coordination in subsequent years.

Mr HORAN: I have two questions that I will put on notice. I would appreciate it if you could get this information to the Committee. I refer to the ambulatory and in-patient care programs. I ask you for the details of the shortages of specialists, both staff and visiting, by professional groupings within the Queensland public health system.

Mr HAYWARD: We might be able to tell you that straightaway.

Mr HORAN: Secondly, I ask the same question with respect to shortages of specialists by region, and for each individual hospital. Certainly, that question will have to be taken on notice.

Mr HAYWARD: As I said, we might be able to give you the answer to that question.

The CHAIRMAN: I suggest that you provide a written response, because the time for non-Government questions has expired. It is time now for Government members questioning.

As a supplementary to Mr Horan's question about the genetics service, can the Minister outline why a clinical genetics service is a priority? Is the

Minister sure that the funding provided will attract the necessary expertise?

Mr HAYWARD: There are a few issues here. Queensland is the only State that does not have a formal clinical genetic service. I will describe how that came about. A report was completed in December 1993. That report, as we described to Mr Horan before, provided a model for the future for the development of a service in Queensland. As I said—and as we all know now—that was a new initiative for this year. I missed the second part of your question.

The CHAIRMAN: Is the funding sufficient to attract the relevant expertise?

Mr HAYWARD: Dr Murphy is probably the person who could inform me best about those sorts of issues. I might ask him to contribute. But, from what I understand, it is extremely difficult to attract a geneticist, anyway. I do not know how many are available in Australia. There is no guarantee, despite having the money. As happens a lot, although we can have the funds available to do this, as we inevitably do, it could be difficult. But we are determined to do that.

As I said, we have no clinical genetic service at present. I am sure that it would present a pretty good opportunity for somebody in Australia or overseas to seize the moment and become the director of a service established in Queensland. I hope that someone will have that enthusiasm. From the monetary perspective—my understanding is that what we are offering is comparable and adequate.

It is important to say this about the service: an implementation committee is being established by Queensland Health to coordinate the recruitment of a director and also to define the scope of the service. In a way, that is a new committee. A makeshift committee has been established for a while. There is a fairly good, singular determination to ensure that we are able to get that program up and running.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer you to page 3 of the departmental Estimates statement, which identifies priority groups that are in need of specific health programs. Included there are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, young people, older people and rural people. The statement says—

"We will pay particular attention to the effects on the health of the economically disadvantaged."

Could you outline for the Committee some of the important performance targets for health services for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?

Mr HAYWARD: Floating around the place is a 1991 health status record. That measured Queensland from the point of view of death rates. Generally, when compared with other States, that statistic was fairly good, but the distribution of that health status—and I think this is the issue when it comes to these priority areas—by ethnicity, socioeconomic status and sex was certainly less than optimal. We have established performance targets for those groups of health consumers recognised as requiring priority attention to ensure

that the simple issues such as access, equity, quality of care and quality for their health status are addressed. An Aboriginal man of 40 years of age is 10 times more likely to be dead than someone in the general community. I am sure that I am right when I say that an Aboriginal woman of the age of 40 is 13 times more likely to be dead than someone in the general community. Those are horrific figures. We need to ensure that we address the issue of indigenous health. That is why we have chosen that as one of our priorities.

I believe that we must have an integrated response to indigenous health issues. To guide our future in that area, we are currently developing an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy. I think that is important. That document should be available later this year. It will mean that, for the first time in this State, we will have a policy document in relation to the health of Aboriginal and Islander people. I am determined not to allow that policy document to sit in a drawer and gather dust. In that context, in this budget we have allocated \$12.5m in new moneys in anticipation of being able to address the issues raised in that policy document. There has been wide consultation on that issue, and I am hoping that we can formulate a sound policy document out of that process.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer you to page 19 of the departmental Estimates statement. Under program 17, reference is made to the total estimated cost and budget for community health centres and primary health-care centres. I refer you also to the Capital Works document at page 52 under "Community Health Centres", where I note that 10 centres are to be built, including one in my own electorate, the Cleveland community health centre, which will be finished this year. I congratulate you and your department on that. It appears to me that the capital works commitment to community health centres and primary health-care centres is a priority of Queensland Health. Could you indicate to the Committee why that is the case?

Mr HAYWARD: The longer I am Minister for Health, the more I am convinced that we need to have a primary health care approach. To that extent, we have developed a primary health care policy and now have a primary health care plan. Basically, primary health care is about two levels. The first level is the sort of service that can be supplied by general practitioners, child health nurses and community health nurses—the health professionals with whom people have the first level of contact. We must ensure that people use the services that are available in that respect. People tend to postpone seeking medical treatment and eventually discover that they require more acute services and more acute care, which has two effects. Firstly, people are reluctant to do that because it means that they have to go to hospital and spend time there. Secondly, from the budgetary perspective, the cost becomes enormous. It fits with the old proverb "a stitch in time saves nine". To me, primary health care illustrates that clearly.

The second level of primary health care involves the issues of illness prevention and health

promotion. We must ensure that we have strategies that mean that people do not get sick or, if they do get sick, they identify themselves and are managed before they reach the acute stage. The purpose of developing that infrastructure is principally to deal with a number of the issues that were raised earlier such as waiting times. It is about ensuring that people can be treated early. The system just cannot roll on where people are becoming sicker and sicker and sicker and ending up in a hospital bed. I do not believe that is a sustainable strategy both for the person and, given our population growth, for the budget. We simply must prevent people from becoming sick in the first place.

The \$1.5 billion Hospital Rebuilding Program is about rebuilding and re-equipping Queensland's public hospitals. An important component of that is the issue of primary health care. As you have clearly identified, in the first year and the second year of the program, we have been able to build a number of community health centres and primary health-care centres in communities around Queensland, particularly focusing on fast-growing areas such as your own. We have begun to redress the decades of neglect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in the cape and in the Island communities. Anyone who has visited those communities will acknowledge that the health facilities there are in a disgraceful condition.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I want to refer to an answer to Mr Horan that you were prevented by time from completing earlier. It is an answer in which I have a considerable interest, and it relates to the shortage of specialists. You would be aware that the commissioning of a new service is about to commence at the hospital in my area, but there has been a delay because of specialist shortages. I would be interested in having information on the particular points in which Mr Horan expressed interest, that is, the shortages by specialty and the shortages by region. I have a further question. Could you give me some information as to what the department may be able to do—and I stress "may" be able to do—to encourage the colleges to train more specialists?

Mr HAYWARD: I will answer the second part, but, please, let Susan Porter just deal with the first part as to the relative supply and availability.

Ms PORTER: To answer your question, we have some summaries and then the summaries are further broken down by region and by profession, so we can actually tell you across the State the number of full-time positions, the number of full-time vacancies, the number of visiting medical officers and the number of vacancies for those visiting medical officers. Perhaps as the list is extremely lengthy, I might just go through and single out those which have large numbers of vacancies, starting with the most significant, which is anaesthetics. We have 65 full-time positions filled and 21 vacancies, 114 VMOs—that is the visiting medical officers—and 16 vacancies in that area; cardiology, seven full-time, 16 VMOs, one full-time vacancy and two VMO vacancies; emergency medicine, 35 full-time and 12 VMOs with eight full-time vacancies in that area. In

general medicine, we have 31 full-time, 85 VMOs but only one vacancy. In terms of vacancy numbers—radiology, we have 17 full-time positions, 46 VMOs, with nine full-time vacancies in that area and seven in the VMOs. A couple that are often used as examples—in psychiatry, we have 38 full-time positions, 15 VMOs; we currently have nine full-time vacancies in psychiatry and five VMO vacancies.

To answer the subsequent part of your question by region—Brisbane north region has in the anaesthetics area 11 full-time positions, 25 VMOs—they currently have five full-time vacancies and five VMO vacancies; Brisbane south, the other major region in anaesthetics, 16 full-time, 36 VMOs, four full-time vacancies and eight VMO vacancies; psychiatry, which is the other problem area for us, in Brisbane north they have six full-time positions and nine VMOs. They currently do not have any vacancies. Brisbane south has 12 and 17 respectively with one full-time vacancy, but in the regions, for example, in the Darling Downs, we have three full-time and eight VMOs; we currently have five full-time vacancies and two VMOs that we are trying to fill in that area. Sunshine Coast for psychiatry, we have two full-time positions and three VMO vacancies.

Mr HAYWARD: I think that has been covered pretty well, but can I make the point that what seems to come out of these figures is that many of these specialty shortages in some ways seem to be concentrated in a few specialties.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated has expired. I will ask you a supplementary question on that, which might give you some more time.

Mr HAYWARD: If that is appropriate.

The CHAIRMAN: Firstly, are the shortages due to lack of funds, lack of qualified personnel, or are they artificially caused by specialist college limitations?

Mr HAYWARD: I will cover some of the issues that have come out of the Budget with regard to the issue of medical specialists and what we have been able to do to put together a package in that area in pretty simple terms, but I think Peter should have the opportunity to talk about the work he has been doing with the colleges. As I said, I think I have signalled that a lot of these shortages occur in a few specialties—and pretty important ones, too—such as anaesthetics and stuff like that. I think maybe Peter should talk first about what has been going on with the various colleges with regard to these issues and then I can finish up talking about some of the packages we have put together.

Mr READ: Over the past six months, I have met with a range of colleges, including the Faculty of Anaesthetics, and if I could just concentrate on the Faculty of Anaesthetics first, because it is really the most limiting factor in terms of surgical throughput through our hospital system at the moment. There is an issue about remuneration in the public sector compared to the private sector and it is the very strong view of all State health authorities and Territory health authorities that we should not be in the business of trying to match the remuneration of

the Medicare benefits schedule; it would simply send us all broke overnight, it simply cannot be done. We are not looking to try and increase remuneration rates in the public sector to astronomical levels and, indeed, when you talk to the college, or in the case of the anaesthetists, the Faculty of Anaesthetists, money is not principally what they are about. They are interested in research opportunities and they are interested in teaching opportunities and they are interested, in some cases, particularly in radiology, in using some equipment which might be available in the private sector that is not available in the public sector. In relation to anaesthetics—certainly there are some issues about equipment that need to be addressed and we are addressing those through the Capital Works Program and through regional budgets.

But an important issue, and one which I do not think has received probably enough attention, is that at the moment most anaesthetic positions in Queensland require the anaesthetist to work 10 full-time sessions in the operating theatre. There is nothing much rewarding about going to work every day and sitting in an operating theatre delivering anaesthetic time after time with no sessions off for teaching, research or other activities. To free up a couple of sessions for these people to pursue interests outside of clinical delivery I think is really the way we need to go. There are other issues, of course, about whether they can convert salary into some sort of packaging arrangement so that they can get a car park or they can get a car. There are some technical issues about dealing with that through the regional health authority award and through the Public Sector Management Commission, but I guess the point about it is that there are a range of issues. It is not just about money and it is also not just about restriction of supply of the colleges as well.

Mr HAYWARD: Simply, the Budget provides a package of about \$11.2m.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has expired.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Very quickly, on page 47 of your Departmental Estimates statement you refer to the resource allocation formula, or RAF, which is a formula to distribute the total pool of funding across the 13 regions according to population in those regions. Can you outline for us what progress there has been towards more equitable funding across the regions and whether regions with rapidly growing populations have been given the funding they need to provide health services?

Mr HAYWARD: It is a pretty important issue, actually, the matter of the regional allocation formula, because basically it is a long-term strategic planning model that provides a framework for the distribution of resources at a Statewide level. One thing you learn about health, as soon as you start distributing resources at a Statewide level based on factors such as population growth—for example, distributing money towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people—immediately the potential exists there for winners and losers and, boy, can the losers scream. What the region allocation formula simply does is to determine a target share of funding within each

program area and that is based, as I have said before, on the population of each area. What we have been moving to do is to get that—

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for that answer has expired. Minister, I think we will continue with that important area at the next Government time for questioning. It is now time to move to the non-Government members.

Mr HORAN: With reference to the various line items for staff salaries, wages and related payments, what is the amount provided for the introduction of the nursing 38-hour week?

Mr HAYWARD: As you know, the various trials that were occurring with regard to the 38-hour week on whether or not there should be a 19-day month, whether or not there should be reduced working hours each day or—

Mr HORAN: I was really interested in the amount of money provided towards it.

Mr HAYWARD: Basically, the amount we are talking about is about \$9.5m. That is what we are looking at in that area.

Mr HORAN: Where is that? Where do you get that from?

Mr HAYWARD: That will come from Treasury supplementation. I do not think that would be shown in this Budget Paper. Treasury would supplement us for things—

Mr HORAN: How confident are you that they would give it to you? It is not in the Budget.

Ms PORTER: It is actually shown as a special allocation for the introduction of the 38-hour week for the sum of \$9.5m.

Mr HORAN: Where?

Ms PORTER: It has been spread across the residential care and the in-patient care programs.

Mr HAYWARD: Treasury basically provides supplementation for things such as that—various wage increases and things that occur during the year and, in this case, for the 38-hour week as well.

Mr HORAN: So it is definitely there? It is \$9.5m?

Ms PORTER: Yes, it is.

Mr HAYWARD: If you do not believe me, believe Susan.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the review of the nurses career structure under the in-patient care program and the instruction from the Industrial Relations Commission to settle on this matter by the end of May, to which an extension was granted. Can you tell this Committee what positions will be eliminated and at what hospitals? What will be the saving by those eliminated positions in 1994-95?

Mr HAYWARD: My recollection is that there are 49 hospitals under review. Basically, this is done in consultation and agreement with the Queensland Nurses Union. As I said, I would hope that by the end of June we will be able to have hammered out an agreement, and that agreement will occur at the sites, that is, the hospitals as well as with the Queensland Nurses Union. As to the exact numbers of what I call

administrative positions that will not be there—I am not sure.

Ms PORTER: We actually provided a benchmark model to each of the regions broken down to facility level. We are now conducting on a facility-by-facility basis, in conjunction with the Queensland Nurses Union, a review of those numbers to see whether there is any particular issue with them at a facility level, given that it was a global model that was applied. So we are going through and negotiating the individual facilities' outcomes in terms of work force numbers at present. They are being confirmed as they go along; but in terms of the global picture, that is still to be confirmed.

Mr HORAN: You are not able to indicate what savings you will make or exactly how many positions will be eliminated at this stage?

Mr HAYWARD: I am not sure of the actual relevance of the numbers because, in the end, it will be based on national indicative benchmark figures.

Mr HORAN: Has any funding been provided to overcome the serious shortage of allied health workers, particularly occupational health workers—

Mr HAYWARD: I am sorry. Just let me finish this question off. The amount that should be able to be freed up because of this would be an amount of about \$8m.

Mr HORAN: Has any funding been provided to overcome the serious shortage of allied health workers, particularly occupational health workers in north Queensland?

Mr HAYWARD: North Queensland is a little bit specific, but for some reason I am able to tell you that there is a total of 12 full-time equivalent occupational therapists in the region. Just so you are clear on that—they are either Commonwealth funded through the Geriatric Services Unit or State funded. The majority of these therapists are based in Cairns. Currently, there are specialist occupational therapists working in multidisciplinary specialist teams under specific programs, such as paediatrics, aged care and mental health. In addition, general occupational therapists work in both community and hospital settings with acute in-patients; so that explains a bit about the background of just what is there.

I think it is fair to say that there is a need for all disciplines of allied health to provide more outreach services to the more remote areas of the region. From the \$750,000 which was allocated for the Outreach Allied Health Services Program in 1993-94, 19 new services were funded in eight regional health authorities. That was important, because they had to have a major rural focus.

Recurrent expenditure—which fits in with the second part of your question, I think—for 1994-95 for the new services is anticipated to be about \$1m for those new services that were established. Also, it is expected that some new services may also be able to be funded. I think it would be acknowledged that funding for the program has significantly increased allied health services in rural areas.

Of course, you would also be aware that we have been able to establish some bonded positions

for allied health professionals, too, through the various universities. Those positions will find their way into the system as they graduate through the university.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the Corporate Services Program and the current outlays. How many staff are employed at central office? How many of these staff constitute your executive support? Because six months have now elapsed since the resignation of the previous Director-General, could you advise the likely date for an appointment of Director-General?

Mr HAYWARD: Quite clearly, the position of Director-General is important—probably no more important to anyone than the man sitting beside me. If by your question you are concerned about the length of the time—I was not sure whether you were concerned about that. I think it has to be put into context—

Mr HORAN: I am just concerned that there is not a Director-General.

Mr HAYWARD: There is. Peter Read is the Acting Director-General of Queensland Health; so there is a Director-General. History has shown that these are important positions. The job has been advertised extensively nationally and, on the basis of that, internationally. There was a substantial field of national and international applicants who applied. There has been an extensive culling process to arrive at a manageable number. We are now in a position where final interviews have been held. In the future, I would be expecting that I would be able to take a recommendation to Cabinet.

Activities of Queensland Health are being directed, I believe, very well by Peter Read, as the Acting Director-General. In New South Wales, it was something like over nine months before the appointment was able to be made there. In the ACT, it is getting on for around 12 months, and they still have not made an appointment there. These are very significant jobs. You are dealing with people who operate in pretty much a world-type environment, so they are pretty competitive as well. The situation is as I have summed it up.

Mr HORAN: Applications closed on about 20 February.

Mr HAYWARD: I cannot recall the date, but let us say that you are right with that. I was determined to ensure that all the available applicants—people in the market—had the opportunity to submit an application. We have now been able to cull that list down, and final interviews have now been held. As I said before, I would expect to be taking that recommendation to Cabinet. There is a second part to your question, but I think we are going to run out of time.

Mr HORAN: I would be satisfied to put that on notice. I ask you if on notice you could provide two items: the waiting list details for every public dentist facility in Queensland, and the shortage of dentists on a region-by-region basis. I ask you without notice: what are the expanded eligible groups that you will be required to provide service to under the Commonwealth Dental General Program to be

introduced in July this year. How many additional dentists will you require to meet these obligations?

Mr HAYWARD: In relation to the first part of the question that you put on notice, we can supply that information now if you want it. It may help with the answer to the second part of the question. I have been informed that that has a fair bit of volume, so we will put that on notice.

The second issue relates to the Commonwealth Dental Health Program that commenced on February—

Mr HORAN: No, I was referring to the general one that starts on 13 July, and the expanded eligible groups within that program. Could you advise us what are the expanded eligible groups and how many additional dentists you will need to meet those additional obligations?

Mr HAYWARD: On the information that I have here, I make the point that I am not sure what you mean by expanded eligible groups. I am advised that we will be treating an additional 80 000 patients in 1994-95 in a mix of emergency and general patients, based on a 40:60 ratio. It is important to understand that there is no substitution involved in that—they will be additional people who will be treated under this scheme. The program will be based, of course, on the number of health care card holders and their adult dependents and senior health card holders.

Mr HORAN: That is the expansion—the seniors are new to those you treat now.

Mr HAYWARD: On that basis Queensland should receive approximately \$11m in 1994-95 and approximately \$18m dollars in 1995-96 and 1996-97. I want to stress that this is not a substitution for the State fund; this is complementary to the State dental health program.

Mr HORAN: With the expanded eligible groups—particularly all seniors over 60 who are not treated now; at the moment you only treat health care card holders—how many additional dentists has your department determined that you will need to service these new obligations.

Mr HAYWARD: I will obtain details about the additional number of dentists and supply that to you.

Mr HORAN: Regarding the program outlays and funding sources on page 202 of Budget Paper No. 3, which includes responsibility for professional registration boards, are you satisfied with respect to the Dental Prosthetists Board that the board and its assessment committee is professionally accountable with respect to fair assessment of dental technicians, whether they are members of their association or not, and in the provision of any pre-exam material to the association or to non-members of the association. I would like you to comment, in looking at the accountability of the board and the assessment committee that the board puts in place, on the fact that it is normal practice to deny patients the dentures which have been the subject of a failed practical exam, yet we have allegations that, despite particular dental technicians being failed on the practical exam, patients have been allowed to keep the piece.

Mr HAYWARD: As I said, I think what you are dealing with is television hype and the historical determination by a couple of people to not go through the assessment procedure. On the basis of that, they have made a number of assertions—principally alleging, I think, to use their terms, corruption—

Mr HORAN: I did not use that term.

Mr HAYWARD:—to use their terms, corruption, to which I, through my officers, suggested that they should raise those issues with the Criminal Justice Commission.

Mr HORAN: You are satisfied that it is accountable professionally and financially to this Committee.

Mr HAYWARD: I am sorry?

Mr HORAN: You are satisfied that the assessment committee is accountable both professionally and financially to this Committee.

Mr HAYWARD: I am sorry. I missed the question.

Mr HORAN: You are satisfied with the performance of the assessment committee of which this Committee has to be satisfied about the accountability financially.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes I am. In simple terms, over 76 applicants have gained registration—that is the most recent figure that I can supply—through this process. Of those who have failed—and I cannot tell you how many have failed—there have been only two people who have complained about failing. I am looking at Mr Quinn. I think that he was a teacher for a long period. It can happen—some people who fail exams get on with the work and pass the exam; other people tend to complain. I can go into more detail about it if you want me to.

Mr HORAN: I am satisfied with that.

Mr HAYWARD: I understand that the complainants have taken that allegation to the Ombudsman and that the Ombudsman has made initial inquiries to the board on the issue. I would expect that, if the Ombudsman thinks that there is a problem, the Ombudsman will conduct a full and thorough investigation into this matter. If the Ombudsman does draw the conclusion that there is no problem, it will be interesting to see whether we ever hear anything about it.

Mr HORAN: Are all the public dental units and school dental units now equipped with autoclaves and handpieces capable of being autoclaved after being used after each patient?

Mr HAYWARD: I will have to get that put on notice. Dr Murphy said he cannot tell us. He does not know.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions by non-Government members has expired. It is now time for Government members to question the Minister. I will start off. Referring back the RAF funding, does this process also make allowances for differing needs across the regions—for example, the numbers of aged, young families, ATSI groups or other ethnic groups that have high priority needs?

Mr HAYWARD: I think that that is an important question. I will ask Peter to give a very full explanation of how the resource allocation formula works and how it does take into account these issues.

Mr READ: The resource allocation formula as a model for distribution of the health fund has been around for quite a long time—back to the mid-seventies in England. More recently in New South Wales, they have developed a resource allocation formula. Essentially, it is about trying to get equity in health funding to regions, principally based on population, but that population is weighted for a number of factors which reflect health need. The major weightings that we have in the resource allocation formula reflect the age-sex composition of the population by region. The ATSI population is weighted 3:1, reflecting their more serious health needs. We have a rural loading as well, for distant areas, that recognises the additional costs. There are two other important factors that are built into the resource allocation formula. One is the recognition of the tertiary level of services being provided—

The CHAIRMAN: That was my next question.

Mr READ:—and that the funding that will flow to the Brisbane North and the Brisbane South regions under the resource allocation formula actually reflects the level of tertiary services that they provide. So when you hear that 40 per cent of patients at Royal Brisbane Hospital come from outside of the region, then to the extent that they are seeking tertiary services, that amount is already built into the Brisbane North resource allocation formula.

In addition, we have another element built into the formula which recognises what we call secondary flows. These are secondary-level services in which patients move from one region to another for particular services. Historically, there have been a lot of people, for example, who live in the South Coast Region—particularly in Beenleigh—who access services in the Brisbane South Region at the Logan Hospital. We expect that to continue, so rather than give all the money to the south coast, we build the money automatically into the resource allocation formula. These two very important elements are part of the formula; that is, the tertiary-level services are provided for and the secondary flows, where we can get a good understanding of the nature of those flows and the volume and value of them, are built in as well.

The only other part that I think is important is that there are one or two Statewide services that are funded discretely. A facility like Wolston Park, for example, which is a Statewide service is funded historically and is not built into the resource allocation formula. Similarly, the QRI, and funding for things such as the QIMR—the Queensland Institute of Medical Research—are also funded separately. That is essentially what it is about. It is simply a process by which we can more equitably allocate the resources, largely built on population—so that in the future more and more funds will be going to the south coast and to the Sunshine Coast.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer you to page 36 of the departmental Estimates statement, in

particular to the in-patient care program. On that page you refer to capital works expenditures in Queensland hospitals. I think we are all aware of and admire the special capital works program to rebuild and re-equip our hospital system. However, I think it is important that capital works expenditure is focused evenly throughout this State on priority areas of need. I would like to know just how much of that capital works funding will be expended on hospitals in communities outside of the south-east Queensland section.

Mr HAYWARD: You just said hospitals, or did you say total capital works expenditure?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: The In-patient Care Medicine Program on page 36. I suppose it gets a bit beyond hospitals because you have a limited service. How much of it is outside of south-east Queensland?

Mr HAYWARD: Are you looking for a precise figure? My understanding was that about 60 per cent of the funding was outside south-east Queensland, that is, outside the Sunshine Coast, Gold Coast and Brisbane areas. I thought you were looking for more precise numbers.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: That will do. Given that answer, I refer then to the commissioning of new services, referred to on page 47 of your departmental Estimates statement. There is a tremendous population growth in the Gold Coast and Sunshine Coast regions, and that has meant a substantial increase in demand for a range of services, including health services. There are new facilities being commissioned. What I am asking you to outline is whether the Government will be constructing hospitals where people live, or where they will be living, based on the current projections for rapid population growth in the Gold and Sunshine Coast regions.

Mr HAYWARD: I am sorry, I said before that the amount was 60 per cent outside of south-east Queensland. What I should have said was that more than 40 per cent of the allocated capital works funding in this budget is for projects outside the south-east corner of the State. I had the 60 per cent and the 40 per cent reversed. You are now asking me about the new capital works projects that have occurred in the—

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: New facilities are being commissioned at the moment, but I am basically asking you about the construction of new hospitals where people are living and where we know they are going to be living, and that is the Sunshine and the Gold Coasts.

Mr HAYWARD: Just about every MP is.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: How about Stage 2, in other words?

Mr HAYWARD: Let me make the point—and I think it is important to consider this—that we had a study done of bed planning in south-east Queensland to the year 2000. It was known as the McKay report. I think the McKay report set in focus recognising the growth in the population and the level of services needed in Queensland by the year 2000. What that then sought to do was ensure that

we were able to have a proper basis on which to put in plans where hospitals should be constructed so that we did not adopt an ad hoc process. Two very important areas are those growth areas on the Sunshine Coast and, of course, on the Gold Coast as well.

In the 1994-95 budget, an amount of \$9.9m is available for completion of a fit-out of Block 6 of the Nambour Hospital, and there is also, I understand, \$556,000 for the completion of a new day surgery unit at Nambour, and both of those projects are scheduled to be completed during the next financial year. The budget also contains funding for \$179,000 for the completion of what will be about a \$1.5m community health centre in the Noosa/Tewantin area. This addresses what I think is the growth that is occurring in places such as the Sunshine Coast. I think it is important that we improve health infrastructure and provide services where people live, and that is the central theme of what I am about and also the central theme of what the McKay report is about. I think they are the expectations that are held by the people whom we represent. If you took a look at the admissions in the Sunshine Coast region over the last five years you would find that there has been an increase of about 50 per cent over that period of time, with an increase in occupied bed days of slightly over 26 per cent. So there has been strong growth in the area and we are recognising that.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Page 32 of your departmental Estimates statement details expenditure in the in-patient care surgery subprogram. I note that over \$20m is to be spent on improving surgery stock at several Queensland hospitals. I also note that a day surgery facility will be established at the Logan Hospital. I understand that a significant number of surgery procedures can be done on a day-only basis, and I ask: could you outline what day surgery facilities operate in Queensland and why they are important to enhance health services provided by the Government?

Mr HAYWARD: At a world level—and in the end that is what you have to compare yourself with—Australia has a very low level of day surgery, and Queensland has a pretty low level compared with the rest of Australia. It is interesting to think about the issues involved in day surgery because nothing is brought home quicker, I think, than the changes in technology that enable people to be able to be treated, sometimes with pretty complicated procedures, and be out in the same day. It really does represent a dynamic phase of what is occurring in health care into the twenty-first century, and we need to plan for it and we need to be available. One of the things that springs to my mind now is that previously under the Health Act there was no provision for a private day hospital. People may recall that about a year or a year and a half ago we had to go to Parliament to insert in the Act the term "private day hospital" because when the Act was originally constructed no-one envisaged what could be termed a day hospital, and certainly no-one had thought about a private one. So we had to change the Act to ensure that a number of people who

wanted to establish them were given the opportunity to be able to do that.

Last year in Queensland we were able to increase day surgery procedures by about 12 per cent and similar increases are expected to continue. That is a good guess, I think, more than anything else because technological changes are going to keep driving us along. In Queensland we now have day surgery facilities provided at 36 acute general hospitals. I do not know whether you want a list of those hospitals, but some of the more significant ones are the Royal Brisbane, the Royal Children's, the Royal Women's and the Mater Children's, QE II; and in provincial Queensland at Cairns, Townsville, Caloundra, Caboolture, Redcliffe, Bundaberg and Rockhampton. They are also at other places such as Charleville, Ayr, Tara and Miles. And importantly, Logan as well.

Ms SPENCE: I was just wondering if you could outline how you were going to spend the \$12m on the Gold Coast Hospital. Is this an upgrade or is it an addition to the hospital? I notice that in the Budget papers.

Mr HAYWARD: Again, Gold Coast is one of those areas that we were talking about before where we have experienced growth. Let us have a look at it. Over the last five years, there has been a 50 per cent increase in acute public patient activity. Also, we have been able to have an increase in occupied bed days of 17 per cent. So it recognises, as I keep saying, those changes that are occurring in technology and the issues that we have to deal with. I think what has got to be understood also about the Gold Coast is that it is in a unique position because, in many ways, it is a service provider for a lot of people in northern New South Wales as well who tend to find their way into the Gold Coast Hospital. As we all know, we are talking about a rapidly growing population and, in this year, we are talking about just over \$5m, which will be spent in the airconditioning of floors—these are the sorts of issues that we are talking about.

Ms SPENCE: As you would be aware, I am greatly interested in the public works spending on public health.

Mr HAYWARD: The issue of airconditioning the floors in the main block, Floors 1 to 9—I think that it is interesting to consider its history. When the hospital was originally built—and I guess this goes to show you the inadequacies of previous capital works processes—there was no thought about the actual person who might happen to be a patient in the hospital. So what happened was, of course, there was never any money spent on airconditioning. Consequently, every summer we get a deluge of complaints from people about how hot it is in the hospital. The emphasis is on why you need a strong planning process. The only trouble is that at the time when the building came to be built the Department, I would imagine—I do not really know why; maybe you would know more than I would about this—probably to save money, decided to turn the building around so that it missed out on all the sea breezes as well. It just struck me as a very odd way

of actually constructing a facility, so airconditioning has become a priority.

The piping for medical gasses will need to be replaced throughout the whole hospital as well. There are problems there with the poor quality of construction in the first place. So you can spend a little bit less money, but it will end up costing you a lot down the track. There is also \$7m planned to refurbish the Obstetrics Unit, the Accident and Emergency Department and the Paediatric Unit at the Gold Coast Hospital as well.

Ms SPENCE: That is \$7m, is it? Did you say \$7m for refurbishment?

Mr HAYWARD: So we should have, in the end, a state of the art facility so that we can deal with people from Queensland as well as people from northern New South Wales.

Ms SPENCE: I have finished with capital works. My next question is on the immunisation issue again. Before, I think Dr Gerry Murphy outlined how the Government intended spending the money on immunisation this year. I think that I must have misread some of that answer. It seemed that Dr Murphy talked about keeping records and the bureaucratic efficiencies that could be made in the immunisation program. I am sure that is the case, but I just wonder whether you could outline what else Queensland Health will actually do to increase the immunisation rates among young Queenslanders?

Mr HAYWARD: I will get Dr Murphy to continue his comments.

Dr MURPHY: To a certain extent, we are waiting on the Commonwealth to tell us exactly what they are going to be doing with the money that was announced. You might be aware that in the Budget, the Commonwealth Minister for Health announced an amount of \$9.5m nationally, two-thirds of which was to be spent on community education. Since then, there has been some sort of change of heart in Canberra and the Commonwealth Minister, at least in the press, is quoted as saying that she will be writing to her State counterparts to outline just how much money is involved and what it is going to be used for.

The Commonwealth has traditionally had the role of providing certain childhood vaccines under section 100 and section 9 (b) of the national Health Act, and that is continuing to be seen by them as being a responsibility. We are hopeful that the Commonwealth will actually expand their vaccine funding to pay for all childhood vaccines so that there is no cost upon us. We are also talking about an education program, but that is in abeyance, depending on what the Commonwealth has to say. We have a multipronged effort in the immunisation area to upgrade the supply of vaccines, upgrade the distribution system and the accountabilities for vaccine usage, to provide information services to service providers, the personal health records, as the Minister announced earlier, and a range of issues like that which are being funded through existing State programs. What I was talking about before was an initiative next year, which is, firstly, designed to get a new computer information system going around the

State to help our information transfers in all directions, and also to put in place a system of coordination so that it all works much better as a more accountable entity.

Ms SPENCE: Through you, Minister, I wonder if Dr Murphy might also respond to Carmen Lawrence's statement on the weekend that money had been given to the States in the past for immunisation programs, which she believes was not necessarily spent on those programs?

Dr MURPHY: I am sorry, I did not quite get the first part of your question.

Ms SPENCE: I heard Dr Lawrence say on the weekend that she believes that the Commonwealth had given the States money for immunisation programs in the past, and that money was not necessarily spent on those programs.

Mr HAYWARD: I will let Gerry answer that. That is interesting, because she was a Premier of Western Australia.

Ms SPENCE: Maybe she is speaking about Western Australia.

Dr MURPHY: Every cent that the Commonwealth has given this State for immunisation programs in the past has been spent on immunisation programs. Whether or not that amount of money has been adequate to provide the degree of coverage that would be considered to be ideal is another issue, which I believe the Commonwealth is currently addressing.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from Government members has expired. We will move over to the non-Government members.

Mr HORAN: Minister, how much has been paid this financial year to the three consultancies engaged in the Brisbane North region capital works planning and how much will these three consultancies be paid in the next financial year? In the case of the Booze-Allen Hamilton consultancy, would you be able to break that up into how much they were paid for the consultancy that they did on the capital works and the consultancy they did on the administration? With this question, you might also advise this Committee if the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority has funding in this Budget for 1994-95 and ministerial approval to pursue the matter of regional operational management of Brisbane North hospitals?

Mr HAYWARD: The contracts for Booze-Allen Hamilton were \$408,000. That was the cost of their consultancy. Darryl Jackson and Associates was \$358,000 and Silver Thomas Hanley was \$252,000.

Mr HORAN: Was the Booze-Allen Hamilton contract broken into two payments—one for the consultancy on capital works and one for the consultancy on the administration system to go with those capital works?

Mr READ: No, the original tendering for the consultancies was only released as three consultancies. So whoever did the organisational review was also doing the Health Services planning. So there was not a separate price in the Booze-Allen Hamilton one for organisational services and services planning. That is not to say they may not have

costed it, and the detail might not be available later, but certainly the original selection process did not involve the separation of those two elements.

Mr HORAN: My final question is about the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority. Does it have funding in this Budget and ministerial approval to pursue the matter of regional operational management of the Brisbane North hospitals?

Mr HAYWARD: The consultancies are actually funded through the central office, not through the region. This is part of the—

Mr HORAN: I was referring to the region itself. At the moment, the region is undergoing a very detailed process of pursuing regional operational management. Through Brisbane North, there are about 30 committees looking at a system of having five assistant regional directors managing the four Brisbane North hospitals. Is there specific funding for the Brisbane North Health Authority to do that work, and does it have ministerial authority for that?

Mr READ: There is no additional funding built into the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority budget beyond that which it already has. In other words, we are not allocating a separate amount to supplement it for this activity. At the end of the day, when it comes forward with its recommendations it is expected that we will see a reduction in the overall administration budget of Brisbane North. That is principally what the exercise is about.

Mr HAYWARD: The issue is about reducing the size of the bureaucracy. It would be unfair of me to not say anything else—it would be a bit naughty of me, actually. As to the Booze-Allen Hamilton report—funding for this consultancy, an amount of \$340,000, has been provided by the Commonwealth pursuant to the strategic capital planning and hospital infrastructure component of the Commonwealth Medicare incentives package. The focus of that is to improve public patient access and to promote what we are talking about here—that is, structural and, importantly, micro-economic reform within the hospital system.

For one to assume that what a hospital does in 1994 will be right for the next 30 years is to kid oneself. We have to move on the issues of micro-economic reform. That is what this process provides the opportunity to do. As I said, as part of the Medicare agreement and the incentives package, we are able to be reimbursed by an amount of \$340,000.

Mr HORAN: With respect to the money spent on the Booze-Allen Hamilton consultancy, why have the recommendations of this costly report not been fully considered by the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority? It has decided to take an option not recommended from that consultancy. That option concerned the transfer of the Prince Charles Cardiac Unit from Chermside to the Royal Brisbane Hospital. Also, what is the program for this recommendation by the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority for any further consideration by the Cabinet?

The CHAIRMAN: I point out to the Minister that I think this is outside the Department's Estimates.

So it is totally up to you. I understand also that the matter is before Cabinet. It is totally up to you whether you respond to this question.

Mr HAYWARD: Can I just say this—because I want to be fair to everybody—we are in the process of receiving the recommendation made by the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority. We will assess that recommendation in the context of the provision and overall metropolitan hospital services plan for the Brisbane North and Brisbane South regions.

We want to be sure of a few things. Firstly, we do not want to have unnecessary duplication. Also—and I know this is astounding—we do not want to miss out a specialty. That is unlikely, but we want to make sure that that does not happen. On that basis, we are now evaluating that recommendation by the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority.

As to your question—I think you could expect that there would be certain vested interests no matter what decision you make. Those with such vested interests would find any decision upsetting to them, particularly if it upset whatever comfortable circumstances they had. My view is that, in the end, we have to make decisions to deliver a health system in this State for the twenty-first century, for the years 2020 and 2030. As I said before, we really have to come outside the square and think about where we are heading in 1994, as opposed to saying, "No, we cannot do this or that." In the end, we have to be able to ensure that we develop a system that treats people who are sick.

From my time as part of the establishment, and from seeing the system in operation, I have learnt two things about the whole capital works process—and I have learnt them well. Firstly, previous Governments never ever gave an opportunity to put aside a chunk of money that enabled us to redevelop the big tertiary teaching hospitals. Secondly, whenever they thought about doing something about them, it became clear that vested interests were so powerful and so pervading that it appeared simpler to use the money to build a new wing on, say, the Bundaberg Hospital, where the money would be appreciated. We have to ensure that we change the system to provide services.

Mr HORAN: Can you provide this Committee with the number of medical superintendent positions that are vacant or acting outside the Brisbane metropolitan area and how many medical positions—that is, non-specialist positions—are vacant in Queensland hospitals outside the Brisbane metropolitan area? I would be happy for you to take that question on notice, if you wish.

Mr HAYWARD: I do not think we need to do that. My recollection is that there are five vacant medical superintendent positions outside Brisbane. None of them have been vacant, if you consider them in total, for a period of six months. The other issue you were talking about was nurses, or something like that.

Mr HORAN: I was talking about non-specialist medical positions in Queensland hospitals outside the metropolitan area.

Mr HAYWARD: We have positions where the funding is available, but we have not filled them.

Mr HORAN: I am satisfied for you to take that question on notice.

Mr HAYWARD: The figures are as follows: Gold Coast, four; Mackay, one; Peninsula, three; Sunshine Coast, seven; and Wide Bay, one. That is in the anaesthetic specialty.

Mr HORAN: No. I specifically asked about non-specialist positions. I meant medical positions—ordinary junior doctors and junior staff officers. That is why I said I would be happy to take the answer on notice in writing.

The CHAIRMAN: Are you happy to provide that at a later date?

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, we can provide that.

Mr HORAN: What is the contribution of the Queensland Government to the Royal Flying Doctor Service for 1993-94 and for 1994-95? What funding is provided for the Flying Obstetrician and the Flying Surgeon for 1993-94 and for 1994-95?

Mr HAYWARD: The 1993-94 amount was \$3.123m, which was allocated to the Royal Flying Doctor Service as Queensland Health's contribution towards the State/Commonwealth Royal Flying Doctor Service grant. That funding was disbursed on a quarterly basis for the provision of aero-medical services to remote and rural communities in Queensland.

Ms PORTER: The second part of your question related to the Flying Obstetrician?

Mr HORAN: That was 1993-94. What is the figure for 1994-95? The second part of my question was about the Flying Obstetrician.

Ms PORTER: The allocation for the Royal Flying Doctor Service for 1994-95 is \$3.060m.

Mr HORAN: So it has gone down?

Mr HAYWARD: You would need to examine what happened in 1993-94.

Mr HORAN: The second part was: what funding is provided for the Flying Obstetrician and the Flying Surgeon?

Mr HAYWARD: I think you are comparing apples with oranges. You are comparing actual with budgeted, and that is a dangerous thing to do.

Ms PORTER: Additionally, there was some one-off funding to the Royal Flying Doctor Service in 1993-94 that was not carried through into the budget for 1994-95. The second part of your question relating to the Flying Obstetrician Service is in the regional allocations, so it is not specifically identified in the central budget figures.

Mr HORAN: How many regions is it supplied to, because it covers a number of regions?

Ms PORTER: To two regions, south-west and central.

Mr HAYWARD: Central west.

Mr HORAN: It is not a specific allocation as such within those regions?

Ms PORTER: Those regions might have it as a specific line item in their own budgets.

Mr HORAN: Can you advise this Committee whether specific funding is provided to the regions for the current program under way by Queensland Health for the assessment of credentials and delineation of clinical privileges and the appointment of all medical practitioners utilising facilities provided by Queensland Health? How much funding is provided for that particular program?

Mr READ: The short answer to your question is that there is no additional funding being provided to Queensland regions for the role delineation or the credentialling or privileges committee activities. They are activities we would expect in the normal course of events regions would undertake in terms of ensuring the quality and safety of the activities and surgical procedures they undertake. What we have simply done is to try to put some structure around those decisions and some more formalised guidelines, but we would have expected that there would always be a process in place—probably not as formal as the one that we are now going to. There is no additional funding; it is expected to be met out of regional-based funding.

Mr HORAN: With the program of credentials, delineation of clinical privileges and appointment of medical practitioners, are you satisfied that there are no serious conflicts between some regional directors and individuals or groups of doctors that could undermine the correct spending of public moneys on this program?

Mr HAYWARD: You might have to expand on what you mean by that.

Mr HORAN: I note in the guidelines for the credential and clinical privileges committees that it says that the governing body is the regional health authority, except in the case of the Mater Public Hospital, where the Mater board has that authority and, in the case of the Darling Downs Regional Health Authority, this responsibility has been devolved to the regional director.

Mr HAYWARD: What is the point of the question?

Mr HORAN: The point is that there are some areas in Queensland where there has been some public conflict between individual doctors or groups of doctors and regional directors. If the regional director is the governing authority in making decisions on credentials and privileges, are you concerned about that?

Mr READ: I can only answer that we do not see any conflicts and I have not been made aware of any in relation to the more formalised guidelines that we have released.

Mr HAYWARD: I think the short answer is probably, "No."

Mr READ: Okay. The short answer is, "No."

Mr HORAN: Has funding been provided for the Small Country Hospitals Program, and does this program have any links with the program for credentials, clinical privileges and appointments for medical practitioners?

Mr READ: The small country hospitals issue is one into which we have put—and I say "we" in the sense of Queensland Health and also the Commonwealth—a lot of effort, particularly in relation to the multipurpose services program. We have been identifying those areas which would be most suitable for converting from a pure hospital role to multipurpose services. In doing that, we have ensured that all of the country hospitals involved understand that this is not about closing any services or not about reducing the level of services or funding to any particular hospital, but more about changing the role, if that is appropriate. We would see that the clinical privileges and particularly the role delineation guidelines would be used in that process to ensure that, whatever final role is decided on between the regional health authority, the community and the hospital, the levels and standards are appropriate to that role that they have decided on.

Mr HAYWARD: Can I just clear this up? The issue fundamentally is about the introduction of case-mix funding. That is what it is all about in the end. We do not want to see happen in Queensland what has happened in Victoria. We need to ensure that those country hospitals are quarantined separately. I do not want to see a situation in Queensland like that which has occurred in Victoria, where a rationalist approach to case-mix funding has meant that a number of small country hospitals simply cannot compete with big tertiary teaching hospitals. People have then had to travel many, many, many miles in order to have in some cases some quite uncomplicated surgical procedures performed. We must ensure that we are able to quarantine them out so that that does not occur.

Mr HORAN: But within this system of credentialling and the Small Country Hospitals Program and the system of role delineation which is under way with these two programs, will role delineation be used in any way to say what services a small country hospital may or may not provide?

Mr HAYWARD: If we went down the Victorian path, the market would decide. Quite simply, hospitals would not receive any funding because they would not be able to perform any procedures. Quite simply, the money would be provided according to who was able to do it cheapest. As I said, we want to quarantine those hospitals to ensure that they are able to provide essential services to local people. I am determined to ensure that we do not go down the Victorian path. We need to quarantine them out. In a sense, that will be done at some cost. If you look at it from an efficiency perspective, it will cost more to treat people there than it would at the Royal Brisbane. That will be an issue that we need to address.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. The first period of time allotted for the examination of the budget Estimates for the Department of Health has now expired. The Committee's hearings are now suspended for dinner.

Mr HAYWARD: Madam Chair, is it against the rules to keep going until I finish it off?

The CHAIRMAN: It would mean that we would not get a break at all. We have been here for a long time. We have allowed only a 40-minute or 45-minute break for dinner. I would ask you to resume at 7.05—we have gone five minutes over— so that we can fit in our 20-minute period.

The Committee adjourned at 6.18 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 7.06 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The hearings of Estimates Committee C are now resumed. The examination of the Budget Estimates of the Department of Health will recommence. I remind the Minister and his departmental officers that the time allotted for the Department of Health will expire at 8.20 p.m. The next period of questions will be from the Government side.

Ms SPENCE: I refer to page 16 of the Queensland Health Department Estimates statement and note the increases to breast and cervical cancer screening programs. I would like to ask: firstly, how will these programs be implemented in Queensland; secondly, what will be done to ensure the funds are spent efficiently and effectively; and, thirdly, what progress will be made to increase the access to women's health services and women's health workers in each region?

Mr HAYWARD: I think we need to talk a little bit about the background. I believe it is a pretty important issue. Based on the actual number of women screened from July 1991 to February 1994 and the estimated numbers of women to be screened, it is anticipated that the Queensland Breast Cancer Screening Program will have screened 130 118 women by the end of June 1994. Relating to the second part of your question about the future, that represents about 45 per cent of the target number of women to be screened by 1996. That target number is 298 000 women, and that does not include women who were screened before July 1991 by the Royal Women's Hospital which had a service which was established in December 1985. In the financial year 1994-95, the number of women expected to be screened is 115 969, and that will represent a 33 per cent increase over the previous year. I think what is important to note about this is that the Queensland Breast Cancer Screening Program has achieved substantially higher screening rates than the two other large States, that is, New South Wales and Victoria. I think it is one of the important issues that have been able to be delivered in Queensland. It is certainly one for which I get a very strong response from members of Parliament, who are always concerned about the various fixed and mobile services and what is happening there, and from community organisations, for example, CWAs which are always concerned.

Currently, we have eight fixed screening and assessment services available throughout the State and three mobile services which operate out of Brisbane North, Townsville and Toowoomba. I think it is important to understand that plans are well advanced now for a fixed screening and assessment facility in the Wide Bay region and a facility is under construction in the Mackay region. At this stage, the West Moreton and Mackay Screening Assessment

Services are scheduled to come on line next financial year, and planned for operation by the end of 1994 is a mobile mammography unit for Central and the Central West region. So, according to the plan, with the implementation of all screening services to be in place by 1996, we should be right and we will be able to screen 150 000 women per year.

Ms SPENCE: That is the number you will screen for breast cancer in the next financial year; is that correct, that figure of 115 969?

Mr HAYWARD: We would expect to screen 115 969 women in the 1994-95 financial year, and that will represent a 33 per cent increase over the previous year.

Ms SPENCE: But that represents, does it, about 50 per cent of the women who should have the screening?

Mr HAYWARD: It represents about 40 per cent of the target number of women to be screened by 1996. That target number is 298 000, so that represents about 40 per cent of that target number.

Ms SPENCE: Is 298 000 the number of women who should have breast screening every year? Is that the number of women out there who should be regularly screened, is it?

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, but it is not suggested that they should be screened every year. It represents women over 50 and screening every two years. Those are the figures that we are talking about in this case. However, as I said, by 1996, according to the State plan, it is proposed that we will be screening steadily 150 000 women per year, so on that basis, that will be roughly 48.6 per cent of our target market on an annual basis.

Ms SPENCE: So we are quite close to that, really, on an annual basis?

Mr HAYWARD: As I said, it should be in place by 1996. We have eight fixed screening facilities now. We have three mobile facilities. The mobile facilities can be complex and difficult because, obviously, you are talking about pretty focused technology, so it does not need a lot of rough riding for them to break down. The technology is continually being developed and upgraded to ensure that the service is able to be provided. We have three mobile units, and by the end of 1994 we will have units in Central and the Central West region. It is worth noting that the capital cost of the unit in the Central region will be met by the Queensland Cancer Fund and the recurrent costs will be met by us through the Queensland Breast Cancer Screening Program.

Ms SPENCE: All the figures that we have talked about relate to breast cancer screening. Do you have the figures on cervical cancer screening?

Mr HAYWARD: Yes, I should have them. The specific Commonwealth funding that will come for cervical cancer screening in the 1994-95 year will be an amount of \$1.356m. The funding for that program this year will be a total amount of \$2.4m. That will comprise both State and Commonwealth funding. Would you ask that question again so that I am clear on what you said?

Ms SPENCE: I was asking about the numbers. Do you have clear numbers of women who present for cervical cancer screening? Given that, obviously, a lot of it is done by private practitioners, how do you get those figures?

Mr HAYWARD: The problem is that a lot of that is done through general practitioners. We certainly do not have records available to us that would show that. That makes it difficult for us to be able to produce accurate numbers. I asked Dr Murphy before whether he had any idea of what the numbers might be. He was unable to enlighten me on that. Much of the work that is done in that area is carried out by general practitioners.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a follow-up question on breast screening. I noticed that the top paragraph on page 189 of Budget Paper No. 3 indicates that there is an increase of 73 per cent in women over 40 years of age participating in breast cancer screening. Does that mean that there has been a change in focus from women over 50 to women over 40, and is there any indication that that has a clinical cost benefit in it?

Mr HAYWARD: As I said before, the target population is women over 50, with women over 40 years eligible for screening. That appears to demonstrate that women over 40 are using the service and taking it on board. That is demonstrated by the figures that I showed before in answering a question from Ms Spence.

The CHAIRMAN: But we have not changed the focus to those women?

Mr HAYWARD: No.

Mr READ: We have not specifically changed the focus. The funding from the Commonwealth was on the basis of a target group above 40. The general view of most of the States is that 50 and above is the more appropriate group, and we have concentrated on that. The increase in numbers of people between 40 and 50 is simply those who are presenting. We are not absolutely targeting them, but we certainly do not refuse those who present. The issue is really about trying to focus on women above 50 years of age, but not refusing those between 40 and 50. I guess that, because of a range of other external factors, they are now becoming more aware and accessing the services more regularly.

Mr HAYWARD: It is important to note that in Cairns we are developing a partnership between the private and the public sector at the Calvary Hospital. Earlier in the day, I think we talked about matters of contracting of services with private providers. Here, I think, we have a very clear and sensible example of where we have been able to contract with the Calvary Hospital in Cairns to ensure that there is public breast-screening occurring there. The arrangement is a financial arrangement. But there is also the provision of staff from Queensland Health who actually work in that unit based at the Calvary Hospital.

As I think I signalled earlier, I am interested in ensuring that we are able to develop innovative ways whereby we are able to share facilities and resources between private and public sector providers. I think

that, in the end, that is what is going to happen as the cost of technology continues to rise and there is that growth in technology. I think that in this breast-screening example—and using the Cairns example—we have a very clear example of where it works.

Mr BRISKEY: If I could take you to page 41 of the departmental Estimates statement wherein it lists new initiatives—there are two new treatment programs. Firstly, as to the Mobile Intensive Treatment Teams—the sum of \$1.5m has been allocated to that. As to the Young People at Risk Treatment Program—a further \$1.5m has been allocated. From reading the brief outline of them, they appear to be wonderful programs. I would like to applaud you and your Department on initiating these programs. Could you tell the Committee what will be involved in these two new treatment initiatives and what plans there are to build on these services in the future?

Mr HAYWARD: The Mobile Intensive Treatment Teams—if people have had the opportunity to read the Burdekin report—were a specific recommendation made by Commissioner Burdekin. There is a brief outline on page 41 of what we are talking about. I think what the Mobile Intensive Treatment Teams are about is to try to target adults who have had frequent admissions to in-patient psychiatric care over the past few years and those who are at risk of further multiple admissions. From what I have read, one of the things that seems to happen is that we have a revolving door approach. If people are discharged into the community, or people are just out there, what happens is that they tend to find themselves being readmitted through hospital casualty sections.

What the Mobile Intensive Treatment Teams are about—as you recognised—is a new initiative. Their purpose is that they be just that—highly mobile, employing five specialist staff members and providing a range of treatment and support to clients and their families so that we are able to ensure that people are kept out of what is frequently expensive hospitalisation. It is not just that; it is also about improving the quality of life of people who are suffering mental health problems. It seems that, if you compare interstate—and I know that can be dangerous, but just to be realistic about it—there has been a pilot project, I am informed, that was trialled interstate. That found that, over 12 months, they had a 74 per cent drop in readmission rates for people who were suffering mental illness.

Apart from all that—and as Burdekin said—it is about having a policy direction which is about reorienting service delivery from within those institutions into the community. So in that sense, it fits in with the key directions and principles of the national mental health policy and plan and the State mental health policy.

You raised the issue of young people at risk. There is no doubt about that. There is a terrible and disturbing trend in youth suicide, which is a cause of major concern, I think, not only to the Government and myself as Health Minister but also to the general population in Queensland. It is not just in

Queensland, but Australia now has the highest rate of teenage suicide in the industrialised world.

Mr BRISKEY: With respect to youth suicide, it is a great problem. I think it would help the Committee if you could outline further what the Young People at Risk Treatment Program will do.

Mr HAYWARD: It is a proposed service. What the proposed service is about is trying to address early assessment and action by increasing community awareness of the issues for young people and increasing and strengthening, I think, community support so that more people are able to reach out to young people who can be identified as being at risk before a crisis situation develops.

I know that suicide and road crashes are the two most significant causes of death in the 15 to 24-year-old age group. I know that the high rate of suicide among Aboriginal people in our society is of major concern. It also seems that young men, unfortunately, are better at it than young women. There is a lot of argument as to why that is—particularly in rural communities. It is suggested that the availability of firearms and easy access to firearms are of particular concern.

We need to ensure that this Young People at Risk Treatment Program is able to address early assessment and action by increasing community awareness and giving people an understanding of the issues that young people face.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for questions from the Government side has expired. I turn to non-Government members.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the expenditure of \$20m in the 1993-94 Capital Works Program, a further \$20m in 1994-95 program and a further \$10m for the post-1994-95 Budget for service delivery information systems, and I ask: what has been the total cost, that is, moneys expended before this triennium for the HBCIS Information System and the Regional Information Systems Unit? I ask you to tell this Committee if you are completely satisfied with all arrangements under the head contract between McDonnell Douglas and Queensland Health for the HBCIS system and if you are satisfied with the performance and results of the equipment and the performance of McDonnell Douglas with respect to that head contract?

Mr HAYWARD: You are referring to the contract that was negotiated by the previous Government?

Mr HORAN: That is right.

Mr HAYWARD: HBCIS—that is what it is known as—is a range of hospital patient management information systems. It is being implemented in Queensland public hospitals. HBCIS finance and supply information support systems are also being piloted. There is a plan, as you have said, to spend \$50m in capital works information support over the next triennium as part of the \$1.5 billion, 10-year Hospital Rebuilding Program.

I think it is important to understand why we need to have this information there. We need to have this investment in technology so that we are able to

keep up to date and to address the growing population in Queensland, the ageing of that population, the changes that are occurring in technology, and the growth in technology. I think it is important to do this because historically in Queensland we have not taken much notice of the need to develop information technology. You are right; there is an amount of \$50m which is set aside for the next three years. Peter will talk about the progress that has been made.

Mr READ: The expenditure to date, which relates to the initial question that you asked, has been in the order of \$30m since the contract was first formulated. We expect that the original contract suggested an expenditure of \$80m to put the HBCIS suite of software into 14 major hospitals in Queensland. We expect that that \$80m will be the total amount that we spend over the period to the end of this triennium. We will have it in every hospital above 150 beds in Queensland. In terms of your more general question about satisfaction—I believe that Queensland Health and the Queensland Government have got very good value for money out of the HBCIS system across the whole of the State.

Mr HORAN: In referring to the Corporate Services Program, I ask: in relation to the Auditor-General's finding last year on matters such as the Private Practice Scheme suffering from deficiencies in debtor control, that scheme suffering a shortfall of \$1.5m, the serious deficiencies in payroll systems throughout the State, no reconciliation of staff numbers with the pay system at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, and no formal system of recovering expenditure at the South Coast and Torres Strait Regional Health Authorities, resulting in unrecovered amounts of \$135,357 and \$28,910 respectively, can you tell this Committee if procedures have been put in place to cover all the shortfalls identified by the Auditor-General?

Mr HAYWARD: A number of matters—I do not think they are as dramatic as you make them out to be—were raised as a result of audits conducted last year by the Queensland Audit Office on the central office of Queensland Health and the 13 Regional Health Authorities. The issue that you firstly identified was the matter to do with Option A and Option B for medical specialists. From my recollection, I think what the Auditor-General highlighted was a deficiency in the Option A arrangement. When it was introduced it was understood that it would be cost neutral. What it involves is a medical specialist choosing not to bill private patients, but nevertheless handing over their provider number to Queensland Health, and if a patient chooses to be a private patient they then bill that particular patient.

As I said, the issue is a policy issue. What you are really saying is that there was a deficiency in the amount of money. What happened, in fact, was that the number of specialists who chose to use Option A did not or could not treat an appropriate number of private patients to enable us to cancel out what it costs to put specialists on the Option A agreement. I do not think there is much argument about the

success or otherwise of the Option A and Option B agreements as they affect medical specialists. From my discussions with the Auditor-General, I think what he was highlighting was a policy issue which simply said that such arrangement should be cost neutral. What happened was that that did not occur. The issue relating to—did you say Princess Alexandra hospital?

Mr HORAN: A serious deficiency in payroll systems throughout the State.

Mr HAYWARD: Susan can talk about that issue.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr HAYWARD: Why do we not just answer it?

Ms PORTER: One of the deficiencies that was recognised was our ability to report on our staffing establishment, and we have implemented a system that will now allow us to do that in all of the regions and in central office down to any level of detail—that is, by classification, type, number, professional status, etc. We are now able to report very fully on the staffing establishment and the actual staff on the payroll in all of the Regional Health Authorities and their facilities and central office.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to take on notice the final part of that question about recovery of expenditure.

Mr HAYWARD: We will answer it.

Ms PORTER: We have been in contact with the Queensland Audit Office as part of the follow-up process and the Auditor-General has indicated that they are very happy with all of the responses that they have received to date and with the actions that the Department has taken. To our knowledge, it is their view that there are no outstanding items of any significance that they are interested in pursuing at this time.

Mr HORAN: I refer to Budget Paper No. 2, page 33, table 3.3 where \$931m is the estimated actual for 1993-94 compared with the budgeted \$962.5m. Why did Queensland Health receive less than budgeted for in every one of the six categories of grants? Does this mean that Queensland Health has been unable to make 100 per cent use of available Commonwealth funds? Whilst referring to that table, I point out that the Senate standing committee in December 1992 had been told that the bottom line of the Medicare agreement would be a funding increase of approximately 7 per cent over the base hospital funding grants, on top of indexation for cost increases and population growth. Can you tell us why there seems to be such a small increase in the Medicare base grant for 1993-94 to 1994-95?

The CHAIRMAN: Can I point out again that we do seem to be straying from the 1994-95 Estimates. I think that the Minister is prepared to answer questions on those Estimates and not on last year's Estimates. Is that right, Mr Minister?

Mr HAYWARD: Well, that is what we are here for.

Mr HORAN: In the second part of my question, I am referring to why there is such a small

increase budgeted for 1994-95. It is based on the base grants for the previous years. You have to take that into account in the calculations.

Mr HAYWARD: Can you repeat the page number? I would not be game to ask you to repeat the question.

Mr HORAN: It was page 33, table 3.3.

Mr READ: I advise the Committee that there is a typographical error in the Budget Papers.

Mr HORAN: I have allowed for that \$100m.

Mr READ: In relation to the impact of Medicare on Queensland Health—the construction of a new Medicare agreement on 1 July last year resulted in a range of changes which impacted not only on the hospital funding base grants but also on the Medicare incentive pools A and B, which we have talked about, and also on the financial assistance grants. In order to get a full view on the impact of Queensland's finances overall you need to take into account a range of issues, not just the base grant. I will read out the numbers to you: in 1992-93 the base grant was \$655.9m, which went down to \$611m. There were some incentive moneys which stayed pretty much the same. In 1992-93 there was no bonus pool arrangement in place, but in 1993-94 there was \$163m in bonus pool moneys that flowed to Queensland.

The net result of the hospital funding grants, that is, the base grant, the incentives, the bonus pools and a few other bits and pieces, made the change in health funding from 1992-93 to 1993-94 go from \$638m to \$804m. Some of that was offset by an adjustment to the financial assistance grants and some of it was also offset by a guarantee that the Commonwealth gave to New South Wales and Victoria, which was funded by what are called the smaller States. So Queensland had to fund some of that as well. The net result was indeed an increase and it is mainly in the bonus pool figures rather than in the base grant.

Mr HAYWARD: The issue concerning the financial assistance grants is that previously financial assistance grants contained the health relativities. The new Medicare Agreement removed those health relativities from the financial assistance grants and placed them within the context of the Medicare Agreement. From Queensland's point of view, that gave us some advantage.

Mr HORAN: Minister, I refer you to the in-patient care programs and the fact that hotel services of food, hotel and laundry were cut by \$5m in 1993-1994 and by \$10m in this current budget, 1994-1995, and \$15m is programmed as a cut in 1995-96, and I ask: why has information such as this been withheld from the Budget papers? Would you advise this Committee of any other cutbacks that are planned but are not detailed in the Budget documents?

Mr HAYWARD: I do not think it is correct or right to say that they are withheld. I think it is pretty general public knowledge. Anyone who is aware of what is going on would have known that I have had a pretty singular determination to ensure that hotel services in Queensland should be run efficiently and indirectly any moneys that are able to be saved in the

provision of hotel services would then come back to Queensland Health, of course, in the form of new initiatives so we can actually use the money to do what we are supposed to do, that is, deal with the growing population of Queensland.

As you said, the first year is \$5m; the second year is \$10m and the third year is \$15m. That process is proceeding with consultation between the relevant unions, principally the Miscellaneous Workers Union and the Australian Workers Union. Through the provision of the \$1.5 billion hospital rebuilding program, we are endeavouring to make sure that, for instance, in the Wide Bay area a regional laundry service is installed. The purpose of that regional laundry service is to ensure that laundry services in that region are delivered as effectively and efficiently as possible. That is done by negotiation with the representatives of those workers.

It is important to understand also that the amounts of \$5m, \$10m and \$15m are taken from the Budget before the moneys are received by Queensland Health. It is incumbent upon us, and certainly has my support, to find these efficiencies. We have to run an efficient health system.

Mr HORAN: What was the budget for the Red Cross for 1993-94, and what are they receiving in this budget, 1994-95? Does the budget for the Red Cross for 1994-95 include any additional funding for services needed to cope with AIDS and Hepatitis C testing?

Mr HAYWARD: What you are asking for, are you, is a comparison between 1994-95 and 1993-94?

Mr HORAN: How much is in the Budget this year and how much was in it last year, and if it includes additional amounts for the special testing of Hepatitis C?

Mr HAYWARD: The grand total of the State and Commonwealth contributions in 1993-94 was \$17.72m. The grand total of the contribution to the Red Cross for 1994-95 is \$18.714m. So there is an increase in that amount over that of the previous year. The Red Cross contribution, I see, is \$95,000.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for questioning by non-Government members has expired and we return now to the Government members. I ask Mr Briskey to lead off.

Mr BRISKEY: Over the last four and a half years I have had the necessity that I am sure many others have had to refer constituents to the Health Rights Commission. Firstly, I would like to commend you and your department for this reform in this area. I have found that when constituents have concerns over the standard of health care from both private and public sectors or providers that the commission has dealt with these problems in a very friendly and humane manner. Will the Health Rights Commission receive an increase in this budget?

Mr HAYWARD: The budget this year will see an increase for the Health Rights Commission of \$479,000. The purpose of that is to expand the commission's ability—"capacity" is probably a better word—to respond to community need and continue its work in improving, as you have clearly recognised, the standard of health care available to

people in Queensland. That will give it a full budget for 1994-95 of \$1.797m, and that represents an increase of 36 per cent on last year's budget. That total Budget represents a significant increase for a unit that operates on the conciliation model of dispute resolution. The body with similar responsibilities in Victoria, for instance, receives about two-thirds of the funding which is directed towards the Health Rights Commission in Queensland.

You talked before about the constituent support—an inquiry you have received there. In the year ended 30 June—I should have some figures on that, actually—for this year, I do not have figures, but I am informed for the year ended 30 June 1993, the Commission handled close to 4 000 inquiries and about 1 700 complaints. So it has certainly served a pretty big service in Queensland. I think it is something that people had been looking for the opportunity to do, as you realise. The role of the Commission is to oversee, review and improve health care in Queensland. I think what is important about it is that it handles users' complaints not just about the public health system but also about private health-care providers, and it provides education and advice to users and providers about health rights and the resolution of complaints.

Mr BRISKEY: Other than the Health Rights Commission, what other initiatives have been taken to support the interests of consumers?

Mr HAYWARD: One of the other areas which is important is the Health Consumers Advocacy Network, and funding of \$250,000 has been set aside to assist in its work. That will increase the Budget this year to \$400,000 for the 1994-95 financial year. Initial funds have been provided to the Queensland Council of Social Services pending the establishment and incorporation of an independent consumer-based organisation. The purpose of that—and I think it was recognised—was to ensure that that was an organisation that had strong credibility in the community and an interest in this area. The funds are directed towards establishing an independent community-based network of consumers to advocate consumer interests in all aspects of health policy and program development, service planning, management review and evaluation.

The consumer-based Interim Management Committee was initiated by QCOSS and it has been established to manage the implementation of the advocacy network. To date, it has focused on establishing contact with major national and State-based consumer groups including, importantly, people who are of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent. It has been involved in liaison with consumer representatives in the health system and securing representation on advisory committees and, I have been informed, it has been involved in the development of a draft constitution. Staff have been appointed to positions, and I have been informed that temporary premises have been secured. So I think, as you have recognised, this is a major strategy identified in the Primary Health Care Implementation Plan and its purpose is to provide resources for consumers and consumer

organisations to participate in health decision making. It is expected out of that that the network will provide training. The network will provide support, research and policy development from a consumer perspective.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: If I can just talk about the Health Rights Commission for a moment? I am aware of some expressed disquiet about the service delivery from the Health Rights Commission from within, at least, sections of the health consumers area, I suppose is how I would put it at this stage. Are you satisfied that increased funding for the Health Rights Commission is going to be able to address the types of concern that are being expressed?

Mr HAYWARD: You would have to go into some more detail, I think, about the concerns that you are saying have been expressed.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: From the top of my head, the concern, for example, that complaints are not being addressed as fully as consumers might like them to be.

Mr HAYWARD: Yes. Look, a lot of this stuff is new in Queensland. People have not spent much time in this State focusing on the needs or the interests of consumers. What I propose to do through both organisations and groups that we talked about before was to ensure that consumers do have rights and do have the opportunity to be able to complain. That ability to be able to complain and to be able to enunciate your complaint, I think, deserves recognition. That is why the Health Rights Commission was established. As I have said before, it was to provide the opportunity to deal with complaints about public and private health-care providers.

I think what you do find is that people can have expectations about an organisation and that they have a point of view about an issue. Look, it happens all the time in our life. If they have a point of view about an issue, sometimes nothing that you can do can dissuade them from that point of view. But the Health Rights Commission, I think, has to be seen in the context, as I said before, of an organisation that has been able to handle 4 000 inquiries and 1 700 complaints.

So some people may say that they never got the resolution of the complaint that they expected, or they never got the inquiry that they expected. I have not heard much in that direction, but I just say that it would not surprise me, in an organisation as new as this, with that pent-up expectation that people have, that it is going to be able to address their particular problem, or issue, or a particular item that is concerning them—that they are going to have all of their problem dealt with to their satisfaction. I think overall, the fact that 4 000 inquiries and 1 700 complaints have been dealt with is evidence that it has been successful.

The CHAIRMAN: There are a couple of quick points of clarification that I would like to ask you about. On page 16 of the Department's Estimates statements, the first one I note is that funding for the Australian Bone Marrow Donor Register has gone

from \$89,000 to \$178,000—virtually doubled. I just wondered if there was a reason for that?

Mr HAYWARD: Doctor Murphy would be happy to talk about that.

The CHAIRMAN: Fine. You might like the next one, too.

Dr MURPHY: The funding program for the Bone Marrow Donor Register is a joint Commonwealth/State program funded fifty-fifty. \$89,000 was the State's contribution. The total funding is twice that of \$178,000.

The CHAIRMAN: This was comparing 1993-94 with 1994-95?

Dr MURPHY: In 1994-95, the Commonwealth has increased its offer to approximately \$109,000, and the State will probably match that.

The CHAIRMAN: Does that relate to an expansion in bone marrow transplants in this State, or does it relate to the register?

Dr MURPHY: No, it is an expansion of the activities of the register. There was an overwhelming response on the part of the public to become donors on the registry. It overwhelmed the resources being put into it at the time. There has been a small expansion of that.

The CHAIRMAN: I notice that funding for the AZT trials has gone from \$20,000 down to zilch. Does that mean that those trials have been ceased?

Dr MURPHY: The drug AZT has been around long enough now for there to be no longer any need to have any trials. It has been established that AZT can play a limited role on its own and in combination with other drugs. So there is no need for any further trials.

The CHAIRMAN: So the drug is not being removed from clinical use? It is just that the trial has stopped?

Dr MURPHY: No, absolutely not. AZT funding has been moved into a separate program, the high-cost drugs program, which does feature in the Budget Papers.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I refer you to page 19 of your departmental Estimates statement. I note the significant increase in the Ambulatory Care Program budget. In relation to oral health care, particularly for young children—what has been done in your Department to ensure that young Queenslanders have access to high quality dental care?

Mr HAYWARD: You referred to page 19. Page 17 gives a clear summary of the vastness of the dental clinic services in all regions of Queensland. We are talking about 250 school and 127 hospital dental clinic services. Queensland is remarkably unique in this regard compared with other States in Australia.

What is important is the extension of the school dental services to high school students. That commenced on 14 December 1993. Services at schools this year will reach 300 000 students. That will be increased by 30 000 per year through secondary school extension. Of course, as we all realise, it is anticipated that, as primary school

numbers increase because of our population growth, those children will have to be treated as well. The base budget for the school dental program will be \$24.6m this year. That is an increase of \$1.9m. It includes an increase of \$1.4m in funding for the continued extension for Years 8, 9 and 10 in Queensland. This year, the service will extend to Year 9 students by June 1995 and to Year 10 students by June 1996. This is an important initiative for students in the 12 to 15 year age group. It was a pre-election commitment of the Government in 1989. The opportunity is there now to complete that election commitment. It needs to be seen in its context. The indications are that only a small proportion of students in Queensland—that is, in the 13 to 15 year age group—receive regular oral health care. Most of us would recognise that this is also a period in adolescents' lives when they are querying all sorts of values, including oral health care, that were probably accepted by their parents when they were younger. The extension to Years 8, 9 and 10 is a very important part of the school dental service.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: In the increases in funding that you mentioned, is there any scope for the expansion of orthodontics within that school health system?

Mr HAYWARD: As to orthodontics and so on—the patients who require those specialist services can be referred by dental officers, but only if parents are prepared to pay for that service. The general treatment service is offered to all children irrespective of means, and that service is provided without cost to the individual on site at both Government and non-Government schools.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I turn to page 8 of your departmental Estimates. I note that funding for the Home and Community Care Program has increased by around \$11m in this year's Budget. Could you tell us about the HACC Program and how this increase in funding is anticipated to be spent?

Mr HAYWARD: It has been increased by a little more than \$11m; it has been increased by \$11.5m. I would not want to undersell this program, because it is a pretty important program. It provides funds to non-Government community-based organisations. Probably everyone here has had some contact with the Home and Community Care Program in their role as MPs to assist frail aged and younger people with moderate to severe disabilities and, importantly, their carers, so that they can access appropriate services and avoid being institutionalised and remain in the community. That is principally what the focus of that scheme is about. It is a cost-shared program between the State and the Commonwealth Governments.

In 1993, the Commonwealth contributed a matching ratio of a bit over 64 per cent to 35 per cent, with a bit over 35 per cent being taken up by the State. The program funds something like 350 non-Government organisations. Approximately 500 individual projects are sponsored through the program by non-Government community-based organisations, local government and regional health authorities. In 1993-94, 66 new projects received an

allocation of \$2.346m, and 270 existing projects received increases totalling \$6.535m.

The CHAIRMAN: We have run out of time. There are 14 minutes now remaining in the current time allocation. Under the Sessional Orders, this will be divided equally between Government and non-Government members. There is seven minutes for each side.

Mr HORAN: I would like to introduce two backbench members who wish to ask questions—firstly, the member for Burleigh, Mrs Judy Gamin and, secondly, the member for Mooloolah, Mr Bruce Laming.

Mrs GAMIN: Apart from a glancing reference on page 189 of the Program Statements, the Budget Papers make no specific mention of treatment, rehabilitation or preventive programs for alcohol abuse, and particularly drug abuse. These problems are no more marked than in the south-east region. Non-Government community-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres have a proven record of success in the fields of detoxification and rehabilitation of adults. Yet, for example, Mirikai, at West Burleigh, which is operated by the Gold Coast Drug Council, has to make application each year for funds. In 1993-94, almost half of its operating costs came from fees and donations. Funding also came from the Liquor Trust, community corrections, Federal alcohol and drug funding, and a paltry \$46,500 from Queensland Health. I ask the Minister: what provision will be made in future to ensure that such organisations are financially supported, particularly in the south-east region, in recognition of their operational expertise and achievements?

Mr HAYWARD: Mirikai is important; it is something that is certainly recognised by me. I have had the opportunity to visit the set-up there. You are talking about one individual service in the whole of the State, but I have had an opportunity to visit that service and, at first hand, see the sort of activities that are engaged in there. I am unclear from your question as to whether you were making a comment about how budgeting should occur for the provision of services generally in the drug and alcohol area or just in Mirikai.

Mrs GAMIN: In the Budget papers, apart from a passing comment, there is no mention of treatment, rehabilitation or preventive programs, no mention of budget or funding or amounts of money provided for such purposes. I asked what provision will be made to ensure that non-Government community-based drug and alcohol rehabilitation centres are financially supported, particularly in the south-east region where the problem of alcohol and, most particularly, drug dependency is most acute.

Mr HAYWARD: I am not clear as to the specific amount of detail that we can provide. Under the Ambulatory Care Program in the National Drug Strategy—that is the NCADA money—the amount is \$6.532m. Under the National Drug Strategy, the National Campaign Against Drug Abuse, there is an amount available of \$6.532m.

Mrs GAMIN: Can you be more specific for the south-east region?

Mr HAYWARD: These are based on budgeted figures for the whole of the State and not specifically on a regional basis.

Mrs GAMIN: I did specifically ask what funding would be available in the south-east region for drug and alcohol rehabilitation. Perhaps we could put that on notice?

Mr HAYWARD: I do not think that I could supply you with an answer to that because that would depend upon the individual discussions with each region in the build-up of their budget. You are asking me a question to which, in the space of 24 hours or whatever time I am required to produce the answer, I would simply be unable to give you the correct answer. I certainly would not want to do that. However, I can assure you of this, that when eventually the argument and the discussions are sorted out with the region and the people from Mirikai, I will be the first to inform you of it. I do not think that I can be fairer than that.

Mr LAMING: I seek leave to ask a question. My question refers to the 1994 Budget Related Paper No. 7, Health, on page 8 under "Home and Community Care", which reads—

"Queensland funding in 1994-95 for the joint State/Commonwealth Home and Community Care Program has increased by \$3.8m and the total funding available for the HACC Programs will be \$94.5m."

With the time constraints, I might need to put this on notice for you. Can you tell me what the State's contribution to that program was in 1993-94 and can you tell me whether those funds will be fully expended by 30 June this year. If they will not be, can you tell me why this is so? Was there any delay in Queensland Health receiving Commonwealth funding and, if there was such a delay, will the Minister endeavour to avoid this delay in 1994-95?

Mr READ: Perhaps I could answer the last bit of it first. In relation to the issue about the delay last year—the Commonwealth makes available growth funds up to 20 per cent a year. How much we are able to match here in Queensland depends on how much the other States take up. We had prolonged discussions with the Commonwealth last year because we wanted to match the full 20 per cent, but it was unclear whether some of the other States would take up their share or not. It was an extended period of negotiation, but eventually towards the end of the year the Commonwealth finally conceded that we could match up to 20 per cent. That was the specific delay last year. We anticipate a much earlier resolution of the issue this year. The figure we are looking for this year is 13 per cent, which again is the maximum that the Commonwealth will allow us to match.

Mr HAYWARD: That is the maximum amount that we are able to take up and we are endeavouring, as you would have seen in the Budget papers, to take up that amount. You asked the question before—

The CHAIRMAN: Time has expired for questions from non-Government members. The only remaining time for questions to the Health Minister

has been allotted to Government members. As Government members have indicated that they have no further questions, I declare this hearing into the Health Estimates concluded. I thank the Minister and his staff for their attendance. The Committee will take a short break and we will resume to start the Estimates of DEVETIR at 8.20 p.m.

The Committee adjourned at 8.17 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 8.20 p.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL
EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL
RELATIONS**

In Attendance

- Hon. M. Foley, Minister for Employment,
Training and Industrial Relations
- Mr Bob Marshman, Director-General
- Mr Bernie Carlon, Acting General Manager,
Vocational Education, Training and
Employment Commission
- Mr Stan Sielaff, Executive Director, TAFE
Queensland
- Mr Ian Affleck, Manager, Budget Section
- Mr John Hastie, General Manager, Workers
Compensation Board
- Mr Rob Seljak, Acting Executive Director,
Employment and Training Initiatives
- Mr Charles Henderson, Director, Planning and
Resource Allocation, Vocational
Education, Training and Employment
Commission
- Mr Peter Henneken, Acting Executive Director,
Labour Market Reform
- Mr Chris Hooper, Executive Director,
Corporate Services
- Mr Brian McGuinness, Manager, Building and
Construction Industry (Portable Long
Service Leave) Board
- Mr John Hodges, Executive Director,
Workplace Health and Safety
- Mr Max Callen, Industrial Registrar, Queensland
Industrial Relations Commission

The CHAIRMAN: The next item for consideration is the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations or DEVETIR. The time allotted is three hours and 40 minutes. For the information of new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will be given to indicate 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 end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. 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. 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 Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, is it your wish to make a short introductory statement in relation to the elements within your portfolio, or do you wish to proceed directly to questioning? If you wish to make a statement, we would ask that you limit it to two minutes.

Mr FOLEY: I would like to make a statement, Madam Chair.

Centuries ago, Parliament wrested the power of the purse from the Crown through years of bloody civil war. In modern times, Parliament needs to develop and change to remain relevant. This Estimates Committee of the Parliament has a vital function to ensure the accountability of the Executive to the Legislature. Accordingly, I welcome the Committee's role as an important step in the development of representative and responsible Government in Queensland.

For the Committee's information, I will outline some program restructuring within my Department which will explain variations between the 1993-94 estimated actual expenditure and the 1994-95 budget. The Technical and Further Education Program comprises the former programs of Foundation Education, Vocational Education and Training and Delivery Services. The apparent decrease in funding is attributable to the transfer of two major activities—rural training schools to the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission and competitive tendering and employment and training functions to the Skills Development and Recognition Program and the Employment Services Program. The latter two programs—Skills Development and Recognition and Employment Services—previously were subprograms of the Employment and Training Initiatives Program. The transfer of functions therefore produces major increases within Skills Development and Recognition, Employment Services and VETEC, the latter of which has also gained increased Commonwealth growth funds. The other major variation is within Human Resource Management, formerly a subprogram of the Labour Market Reform Program. The variation is chiefly due to the non-renewal of development funding.

The major expenditure area within my Department is the provision of vocational education and training to thousands of Queenslanders. Funding for vocational education and training in Queensland has increased by almost 90 per cent from \$239m in 1988-89 to \$452.4m. By 1996-97, student contact hours are on target to reach 57 million—more than double since the election of this Government in 1989.

The CHAIRMAN: We might have to stop you there, thank you, Minister. The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members. I call on Mr Santoro.

Mr SANTORO: Staffing establishments across the Department are detailed as full-time equivalents, which I think in some cases does not necessarily equate with actual positions. Could you provide to

this Committee tonight—or, if you wish, on notice—the actual employment levels across the Department, both the estimated levels for 1993-94 and the estimated actuals for 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: The level of permanent public service and educational positions remained constant at 5 630 between 30 June 1993 and 30 June 1994. There was an increase of 77 college educational assistant positions in permanent wages positions as part of TAFE's commitment to providing enhanced support to service delivery. The increase in supernumerary positions is a result of increased demand for client services due to population increases and structural organisational adjustments requiring the need for new skills and expertise. Program-dependent positions were established primarily in the TAFE and the employment and training initiatives area of the Department that they then required for nationally funded vocational, education training and employment initiatives such as competency-based training and recognition of prior learning, commercial activities and work force demographic change, and the Jobs Plan and social justice community education initiatives.

The staffing levels by way of full-time equivalents throughout the Department may be summarised as follows: 38 in the human resource management system area—these are estimated actuals as at 30 June 1994—in labour market reform 194; 80 in the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission; 36 in the Industrial Commission; 639 workers' compensation; 7 139 in TAFE; 284 in workplace health and safety; 43 in building long service leave; 203 in employment services—this is within the area of employment and training initiatives; 192 in skills development and recognition; and 347 in corporate services. That sets out the estimated actual equivalents of staffing levels and each of the programs within the Department as at 30 June.

Mr SANTORO: Do you have a total for estimated actuals for 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: That is likely to vary throughout the year depending upon, for example, the number of supernumeraries who may be required having regard to the engagement of temporary staff in TAFE, for example, which depends in turn on their success at gaining competitive funding bids through the training market which is increasingly based on competitive tenders.

Mr SANTORO: I wish to turn your attention now to the area of workers' compensation. I note on page 17 of the Estimates that the QIC has been asked to adopt a more conservative approach to investing the workers' compensation fund because of the relatively reduced free reserves currently held. Can you tell us what is the projected level for free reserves as at 30 June this year and the estimated size of the fund, which I understand from the 1992-93 annual report stood at \$714m as at 30 June 1993? Also, could you give this Committee those figures going back to 1991? Also, can you give to the Committee your Department's forecast as at the end of June 1995? I am happy for any of those questions to be taken on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: I would point out first of all, Minister, that we are debating tonight the Estimates for 1994-95. I think 1991 is going back in history a little bit too much to expect the Minister to know. It is up to you entirely how you wish to answer that.

Mr FOLEY: As set out at page 17 of the DEVETIR Estimates statement, there has been an advice given to the QIC to change the investment asset allocation to reflect a more conservative investment profile for the fund balance. That was done in order to ensure the prudent approach to the maintenance of the board's assets and, accordingly, the position now reflects a lower exposure to equities and fixed interest with the balance being invested in cash securities. I will ask Mr Hastie, the General Manager of the Workers Compensation Board, if he can assist the Committee with some further details in that area.

Mr HASTIE: The board's asset allocation, as the Minister indicated, was altered in light of the relatively reduced level of free reserves shown on the balance sheet as at 30 June 1993—the total equity at that time was \$56.3m, a reduction of some \$43m—to pay for the merit bonus for this year. Based on our current information to hand, our underwriting position and the estimate of our investment return for this year, we expect a total surplus approaching around \$101m. We also expect to appropriate around \$95m for payment of the merit bonus in 1994-95, so we expect some \$6m to \$7m to be added to free reserves in the balance sheet as at 30 June 1994.

Mr SANTORO: Can you tell me then at what level the free reserves will be as at 30 June this year?

Mr HASTIE: At 30 June this year we expect our free reserve level to have risen to around \$63m.

Mr FOLEY: That reflects a growth in the free reserves and it is a consequence of some of the difficult decisions that had to be taken last year that involved an annual rise of workers' compensation premiums in the order of 13 and a half per cent. They do remain, however, the lowest of any of the Australian States. But it was considered important to ensure that the financial viability of the board and its fund be fully protected because the liabilities of the Workers' Compensation Fund are fully funded, as well as maintaining the lowest premium rate in Australia. So, as a result of the premium rate increase last year, as well as a result of a number of other remedial measures that were taken, we see a growth there in the free reserves in order to ensure that the viability of the fund is maintained into the future.

Mr SANTORO: I will ask the question again. If you cannot answer it tonight, I am happy for you to take it on notice. In your estimation, how much will the QIC be managing as part of its total portfolio? In 1993, the QIC managed \$714m pertaining to the Workers Compensation Fund. The question that I have asked several times now is: what is the estimated amount as at 30 June this year and how much will it be, according to your estimations, in June 1995? They are the questions I have been asking. As I said, I am happy to place them on notice if that assists you.

Mr FOLEY: I think, with respect, the general manager of the board has addressed himself to those questions. If one sees, for example, the financing transactions here at page 134 of Budget Paper No. 3, one sees the sum there of \$111,550,000 by way of financing transactions, estimated actuals for 1993-94, and \$116,821,000 estimated for 1994-95. I will ask Mr Hastie to see if he can take that matter any further and be of any further assistance to the Committee on that point.

Mr HASTIE: The question, as I understand it, actually relates to the total funds which will be on investment with QIC at the end of June 1994?

Mr SANTORO: That is correct.

Mr HASTIE: As indicated by the Minister, there should be financing transactions of around \$111m, which is our targeted Budget figure at this stage, which will be transferred to QIC, added to around \$640m shown on our balance sheet as at last year. That should leave funds of the order of \$760m invested with QIC on 30 June 1994.

Mr SANTORO: And your estimate for 1995?

Mr FOLEY: Budget Paper No. 3 indicates a sum against financing transactions in the order of \$116,821,000 estimated in 1994-95. Perhaps Mr Hastie can take that further.

Mr HASTIE: Yes, that is so. Our Budget Estimate as at 30 June 1995 then would be of the order of \$875m. The majority of that \$116m to which the Minister referred is our estimate of the additional outstanding claims provision which we will have to make next financial year as part of our operations.

Mr SANTORO: Still on page 17 of the Estimates, I note the potential for a further increase in premiums for 1994-95, which will mark the first full-year impact of the 13.5 per cent increase resulting from the triennial review. I note the move towards an annual review of premiums carries the possibility of another increase also having an impact this year. The recovery is pretty fragile. Are you satisfied that another rise is appropriate?

Mr FOLEY: The rise that was contemplated at the time of writing of that Budget Paper has in fact now occurred, that is, the rise of three per cent on average that was announced a week or so ago. That factor has been taken into account in making the assessment that appears at page 135 of the Budget Papers, namely, that premium income is expected to increase by seven per cent. No-one, of course, likes to have to increase premium rates but, as I indicated to the Committee before, it remains the lowest rate of any of the Australian States. It is essential to maintain a fully funded workers' compensation scheme.

There has been an increase in claims costs. That resulted in an underwriting surplus of approximately \$1m for the 1993-94 year. This means that the Workers Compensation Board results for the year will reflect only a little better than a break-even position. It is axiomatic, of course, that employers pay premium rates which are equal to the claims costs incurred in their particular industry, and premium rates are adjusted upwards or downwards in accordance with each industry's claims experience.

We are seeking to address those issues, not simply through the increase of premium funds but through other ranges of measures, including the promotion of workplace rehabilitation; the review of the merit bonus and ambulance discount system; the review of the Act itself in order to achieve a greater balance in the management of statutory claims; through administrative and procedural improvements in common law proceedings designed to achieve cost savings; and a marketing program, which is soon to appear, in order to encourage employers to embrace workplace rehabilitation programs and to encourage doctors in the usefulness of workplace rehabilitation programs for injured workers—these measures having proved successful in other jurisdictions. In order to ensure the financial viability of the fund, we have looked not only to the issue of premium levels but also to other measures to ensure that the fund is kept stable.

Mr SANTORO: I note on page 19 of your Estimates that the ambulance discount, which was worth \$5.5m to businesses in 1992-93, is to be discontinued and the amount absorbed in the revamped merit bonus arrangements. Do you have a figure for the value of the discount to businesses for 1993-94 and for the size of the contributions to the merit bonus pool of the new arrangements for 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: With respect, that is a misreading of page 19 by the honourable member for Clayfield. That has not yet been determined. What page 19 of the document says is that the board's tripartite committee recommended that ambulance discounts should be discontinued and equivalent funding directed towards the bonus pool. It is, however, a very interesting suggestion which has been made and which is part of the overall package. I will invite Mr Hastie to give us the figures on that ambulance discount.

That tripartite committee, including people such as Mr Clive Bubb of the Queensland Confederation of Industry as well as representatives of the trade union movement, has made some very interesting suggestions in order to put incentive back into the merit bonus scheme, in short to encourage those employers with good workplace health and safety records through better returns to them and to discourage those employers with poor workplace health and safety records.

The ambulance discount is strangely called, because it is in fact to make provision for first aid. The proposal that that committee has made, which does have considerable merit, relates to a performance measurement rather than rewarding people simply for having first aid on site. Mr Hastie may be able to assist us with the figure in regard to the ambulance discount.

Mr HASTIE: I do not have the precise figure here with me tonight. There are only something like 900 employers in Queensland which take advantage of the ambulance discount by virtue of their size or the nature of their industry. I would not expect the ambulance discount to be too much higher than \$5.5m. It is probably of the order of \$7m or \$8m for

this current financial year, that is, the 1993-94 assessing year.

Mr FOLEY: I should add that an essential feature of the package of those recommendations is that they be revenue neutral. It is not proposed by that committee that this should be a device for knocking off the ambulance discount and thereby enlarging the fund. It is a proposal to make better, as it were, merit bonuses to those employers with good safety records and disincentives to employers with poor workplace health and safety records. In that regard, it is intended to be revenue neutral rather than being an acquisition of revenue. But it is part of those items which are set out in the second paragraph of that page.

Mr SANTORO: I note that your Director-General forecast a growth of premium income of five per cent for 1993-94; yet according to the Estimates statement, growth came in at more than five times that, at around 26 per cent. Notwithstanding the difficulties because of the move to annual reappraisal of premiums, and taking into account the fact that we had stronger overall growth than was forecast in the Budget, which would have helped compound Mr Marshman's forecast, could we have an estimate of the growth in premiums—both gross and net—for 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: Just to clarify the 1993-94 position—the premium income as set out on page 135 of Budget Paper No. 3 is expected to be 26 per cent higher than the previous year and 12 per cent higher than Budget Estimates. What is expected in 1994-95 is set out a little further down that page, namely, that premium income is expected to increase by seven per cent due to the effects of the premium rate increase and the three per cent increase announced recently.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for questions by non-Government members has expired. We now turn to Government members.

Mr BRISKEY: Within the Budget Related Papers there is a reference to expenditure on the promotion and facilitation of enterprise bargaining. What is this allocation, and how is it being used?

Mr FOLEY: The Budget allocation makes provision for the fostering of enterprise bargaining. Let me deal firstly with the private sector. The Workplace Reform Unit was established in September 1993 to encourage and promote widespread acceptance and understanding of enterprise bargaining by the private sector and to facilitate its implementation. That unit, which is within the Labour Market Reform Division of the Department, provides advice to enterprises on workplace reform. It produces some excellent literature on enterprise bargaining in the private sector, conducts information seminars and visits workplaces, provides grants to peak employer organisations, industry associations and unions to promote enterprise bargaining, and provides advice and financial assistance to firms to improve efficiency and to achieve best practice through the Improvement Through People Program, which is a subprogram through the National Industry Extension Service.

The outcome of these matters has been somewhat encouraging, namely, that there are some 266 enterprise bargain agreements approved under State legislation covering in excess of 55 300 Queensland workers. Of course, there has also been an allocation of some \$521,000 to continue implementation of enterprise bargaining within the Queensland public sector. The Cabinet decision in August of last year gave DEVETIR the responsibility to promote, coordinate and implement enterprise bargaining within the Queensland public sector. The need to do this results from the need to enhance labour flexibility and productivity—and that is as important in the public sector as it is in the private sector—the commitment of the Government to encourage enterprise bargaining, and the need for the Government to realise economic gains from productivity initiatives and workplace reform in exchange for wage increases. In short, the Budget allocation has been used in order to help make this fundamental change from what was a previously centralised method of wage fixation to a more decentralised enterprise-based form of bargaining.

Mr BRISKEY: You mentioned some of the results of promotion and facilitation of enterprise bargaining. Have there been any other tangible results of promotion and facilitation of enterprise bargaining in the business sector?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. In that regard, Queensland has performed substantially better than a number of non-Labor States. For example, New South Wales, which has had enterprise bargaining legislation much longer, has only 45 000 workers covered under enterprise agreements; Victoria has only 231 collective agreements; and Tasmania has only 48. Western Australia and South Australia have more recently amended legislation. In this respect, Queensland is well in front. In that regard, the rate of take up of enterprise agreements appears to be accelerating. It took more than a year for the first 100 agreements, four months to establish the second hundred, and a little over two months for the next 66 agreements.

The target of 100 000 workers covered by enterprise bargaining agreements has been set for the coming months. It is important that this occur not just in the private sector but also in the public sector. For example, we have seen the Queensland Electricity Commission enterprise bargaining agreement approved and it is currently renegotiating a second agreement. We have seen the Queensland Rail enterprise bargaining agreement approved and it is currently renegotiating a second agreement. With core Government departments a draft agreement was reached between the negotiating parties; however, the single bargaining unit rejected it following the vote of the State Public Service Federation of Queensland Council. An agreement has been negotiated with the marine pilots and it is awaiting certification by the Industrial Relations Commission. An interesting feature of that agreement will be a no-strike clause to ensure continuity of service.

There are a number of other enterprise bargaining processes which have been the subject of a good deal of work. For example, TAFE, the

Queensland Roads Program, Education and the Administrative Services Department business units have obtained Cabinet approval for their frameworks. Health and Police are currently finalising their frameworks for Cabinet approval. These agencies have employees of approximately 100 000 in number. There are approximately 15 statutory authorities that have sought the assistance of my Department in pursuing enterprise agreements. The TAB and the Queensland Performing Arts Trust, for example, are currently finalising their framework. There has been a good deal of result for that effort.

Mr BRISKEY: Moving onto another subject, Queensland is an extremely large State and distances provide many problems. I am interested in what resources will be committed specifically to meeting the needs of regional and rural communities in 1994-95.

Mr FOLEY: The servicing of people in rural and regional Queensland is a high priority of the Department. In the labour market reform area, for example, there are 17 Awards Management Branch district offices in regional Queensland which have provided a massive injection of effort. For example, from 1993-94, 4 494 wages disputes have been investigated by industrial inspectors in country centres involving over \$2m arrears of wages adjusted. This is assisting workers who have been underpaid to get a fair go, and nothing is more basic in terms of servicing people in rural and remote areas than that.

In a number of other areas of the Department, services such as workers' compensation, for example, are provided. There are 21 Workers Compensation Division regional Offices and there have been 10 Workers Compensation Division rehabilitation advisers located in major centres throughout the State. In the Division of Workplace Health and Safety, there are 15 regional offices. Under the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Board, it is anticipated that local authorities in regional Queensland will benefit by \$80,000 in the coming financial year.

In the area of training, the efforts of TAFE in reaching out to remote areas in Cape York through the RATEP Program—the Remote Area Teacher Education Program—have been so spectacularly successful that we have been approached by the Catholic University of Western Australia to assist in the provision of training to people in the remote areas in the Kimberleys. The work in those areas includes not just service delivery, but also the provision of training. The training, for example, in the area of industrial relations in regional centres has been undertaken with 23 industrial training courses covering employee and employer entitlements and obligations under awards and the Industrial Relations Act attracting some 213 attendees. Six enterprise bargaining courses, with 91 attendees, and nine free seminars on the Government's industrial relations reforms have been undertaken.

Mr BRISKEY: If I could take you to Budget

Paper No. 3 at page 148 and refer you to the program goal of the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, wherein it states—

"To develop a world-class vocational education, training and employment system in Queensland."

What has been done specifically to ensure that Queensland's system operates both efficiently and effectively?

Mr FOLEY: The efforts of our vocational education and training system have been significant over recent years. To achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency and to reduce overheads, staff performing operational tasks have, where possible, been assigned to institutes and colleges. In 1994-95, some 60 staff are to be relocated from State office units to institutes and colleges, thereby putting them closer to the people and closer to where the training and services are delivered. This allows institutes and colleges to employ those resources to best advantage in accordance with local needs.

As a separate initiative, TAFE Queensland is rationalising its delivery unit network from 33 colleges and 62 campuses to between 10 to 12 major institutes. Funding available to TAFE institutes and colleges in 1994-95 has been increased. There has been an overall increase in vocational education and training in the order of 4.5 per cent. However, to maximise funding, institutes and colleges will need to be competitive and to secure tenders in the public and private training markets. While initial allocations of State and Commonwealth untied funding to institutes and colleges have decreased overall by \$4m, \$10.1m is yet to be allocated, based on the State training profile requirements, or be distributed by the end of July. So that means that an additional \$6m will be available to delivery units in the coming year.

In addition, competitive tendering funding within other departmental programs of \$20m will be available on the open market, and institutes and colleges would be expected to gain a significant share of these funds. Institutes and colleges estimate that earnings from commercial activities in the public and private sectors will increase by some \$3m in the next year, and the total estimated 1994-95 receipts and brought forward balances associated with revenue retention accounts is approximately \$74m. Based on the available funding in TAFE Queensland yet to be allocated, other departmental program funding available on the open market and increased revenue from commercial operations, the actual available funding for the coming year will be greater than that for 1993-94, and we can expect to reap greater productivity for the resources invested. This reflects, amongst other things, a change to a client focus and with it the competitive aspects of tendering.

Mr BRISKEY: In the same Budget Paper at page 143, it refers to additional places in vocational courses. How many extra places will be created, and is this a long-term trend?

Mr FOLEY: Since 1989, the funding for vocational education and training has increased by

almost 90 per cent from \$239m to \$452.4m, that is throwing in the Commonwealth Government's funds. What that means is that the Budget will provide for some 51.7 million student contact hours, that being the measure of training in terms of the number of hours that students are in contact with their TAFE teachers. That represents an increase of 1.6 million student contact hours over 1993-94, which represents an additional 10 800 places in vocational courses. By 1996-97, student contact hours are on target to reach some 57 million, which is more than double what it was when the present Government was elected in 1989.

We are seeing a rising participation rate. In the old days, TAFE and vocational education and training were something of the poor cousins of our education system. But increasingly people are participating in vocational education and training. That has come about partly because the Queensland participation rate in vocational education and training has improved from being some 20 per cent below the national average in 1989 to a level comparable with that in other States.

In the coming year, provision has been made for an increase of some 11 000 full-time and part-time places within the publicly funded vocational education and training system, including adult education. As a result of overall Government funding to the TAFE sector, student contact hours are forecast to increase by more than 1.6 million in 1994-95 from just over 50 million hours to 51 727 000 hours. One sees there, I think, a long-term trend which reflects the growing need in our community to ensure that industry has vocational education and training relevant to its needs if we are to provide a sound platform for jobs growth and that citizens have proper access to it to ensure they have good career prospects.

Mr BRISKEY: You have just stated that you expect future growth. In which course areas do you expect the significant growth to be?

Mr FOLEY: One big area of growth is that of business studies. More than half of the State's enrolments last year were in this area, and since 1991 enrolments in business programs have also increased 50 per cent. But it is the humanities and social science areas that have experienced the most growth with student enrolment increasing more than fourfold from almost 10 500 in 1991 to almost 43 500 last year. This study area includes social work, library studies, communication, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander programs, welfare, crafts and fashion. TAFE fashion graduates are hotly sought after in the marketplace.

I should say that health and community service programs have also expanded noticeably during the period. Enrolments have increased some 134 per cent, rising from almost 11 000 three years ago to more than 25 000 at the end of last year. In the past three years, enrolments in TAFE's associate diploma programs have also shown a marked increase. We have seen, for example, enrolments in associate diploma programs in business increase 77 per cent from 1991 to last year. Similarly, enrolments in the associate diploma course in child care increased 86

per cent from just over 1 500 in 1991 to just over 2 800 in 1993. Enrolments in associate diplomas in the humanities and social sciences have almost doubled during this time, rising from 765 in 1991 to some 1 520 in 1993.

I am pleased to say that interest in engineering associate diploma programs has jumped even more markedly with enrolments more than trebling from 751 in 1991 to some 2 367 last year. The most dramatic growth has been in TAFE's health and community service associate diplomas, where enrolments have grown fourfold over a three-year period, rising from 444 to 1 942. Those growth areas reflect, of course, patterns of growth in the Queensland economy. It is important that in planning our courses we target them and tailor them for the needs of Queensland industry to help people get jobs. That is why we have such an extensive industry training advisory body structure.

Mr BRISKEY: You mentioned that there are 2 367 enrolled in the engineering studies. Could you tell us what percentage of those students would be women?

Mr FOLEY: I cannot tell you offhand, but I would be happy to take that question on notice and provide that information to you. I should say we have made a number of attempts to increase female participation in those courses.

The CHAIRMAN: The time period allocated for questions by Government members has expired. I turn now to the non-Government members.

Mr SANTORO: I want to pursue a theme developed by one of the Government members in relation to enterprise bargaining. Allocations have obviously been made in this year's Budget in relation to the enterprise deal for core public servants which you had obviously hoped to have finalised by the end of May, and I also note the references on page 124 of the Estimates statement that policy development has been completed for locality allowances and other issues relative to the would-be agreement. Can you indicate the current state of play and whether the gross Budget estimates for the expected increase are still valid?

Mr FOLEY: The Budget provisions for the encouragement of enterprise bargaining in the public sector and in the private sector—those figures remain valid. It is true that we had hoped to finalise the core public service enterprise bargain some time ago. There had been significant progress in that regard with discussions going on over a period of some 18 months and they had progressed to the stage where agreement had been reached between Government negotiators and the negotiators on behalf of five unions and the ACTU, Queensland branch, to include or to make provision for a draft agreement, which then has to be considered by the members of those unions for consultation and finalisation.

Part of that draft agreement made provision for productivity boosts. Indeed, the whole basis of the draft agreement on enterprise bargaining is on productivity, which included reforms to a number of areas, including meal allowances and locality

allowances, and made provision for wage increases of 8 per cent over a two-year period in three stages, with the first stage being a flat sum of \$15 per week—that being a flat sum because it was considered appropriate to seek to confer a benefit on the lower-paid workers for whom \$15 is a higher percentage of their take-home pay than it is, obviously, for the more highly paid workers.

In the context of that draft agreement, what was contemplated was three stages, with the second stage involving agreement at departmental or agency level within the core public service of various productivity arrangements being, of course, easier to identify, real productivity initiatives at the agency or departmental level than simply at the global level, and the final stage upon actual attainment of those productivity targets.

Mr SANTORO: So you are basically saying that the components of that enterprise agreement that you thought you had worked out are still valid from the perspective of your Budget Estimates? Did I read you correctly when you answered the question I just asked you?

Mr FOLEY: So far as the Budget Estimates of this Department are concerned, the provision for facilitating enterprise bargaining in the public sector remains ongoing. That makes provision for the work of the Labour Market Reform Division in seeking to facilitate that process and the components of the enterprise bargaining. It is, of course, enterprise bargaining agreements that we are talking about, so it is necessary for the parties to agree. The Government, for its part, negotiated in good faith a set of arrangements. Clearly, the unions have rejected that agreement, and ongoing negotiations are taking place in order to see if agreement can be reached, and we will seek to do our best to expedite that. I will see if Mr Henneken, who is the Executive Director of Labour Market Reform, wishes to take the matter further.

Mr HENNEKEN: I think the issue that Mr Santoro is pursuing is the extent to which budgets of core departments have been supplemented for the anticipated wage increase. Quite clearly, that issue will be determined when any new agreement is renegotiated, or finalised, and the operative date of the wage increases that result from that agreement.

Mr SANTORO: Thank you, Mr Henneken. Minister, I refer to your recent announcement that the State Government intends to appeal to the High Court against a 4 May Federal Court decision in relation to the transfer of coverage powers for Queensland employees within the entertainment industry from the AWU to the MEAA. My question to you, Minister, is: how much do you anticipate this appeal to cost, and what amount of expenditure have you allowed for in your Estimates?

Mr FOLEY: That appeal to the High Court is in a case of *McJanet v. White*. The matter of concern to the State Government, which was a party to the proceedings before the Full Court of the Federal Court, goes to the issue of State jurisdiction. The issue that fell to be determined in that case was whether or not the State branch of a Federally registered union was capable of being validly

registered and/or validly incorporated under State industrial relations law. The learned judges of the Federal Court differed from the trial judge and there were differences within the judgments given in that case.

It is a matter of concern in terms of ensuring the maintenance of a viable State system. The Queensland Government has no interest in the disputes between various unions as to who has coverage in certain areas. That is a matter for the unions and their members and, ultimately, a matter for the Industrial Commission to determine if there is a dispute. However, this case is one of some 23 cases that has the State Government involved in defence of the State jurisdiction and involving some 23 applications before the Industrial Relations Commission or the High Court. In those cases, legal expenses estimated to 30 June 1994 is \$105,000, travel expenses \$16,000 and air travel, \$65,000. Those funds are subject, of course, to any costs orders that may be made in any of those cases as to whether any of those costs will be recovered. The duty of the State Government is to defend the State jurisdiction and, in that case, as in others, we are seeking to do that by dealing with the legal and constitutional arguments that go to supporting the existence of a viable State industrial relations system.

Mr SANTORO: Minister, I thank you for providing those figures. As at the end of June this year, do you have any estimates for the financial year 1994-95, or do you think that the case will be completed by the end of this year, this financial year?

Mr FOLEY: Brevity is the soul of wit, Madam Chair, but it is not the only guiding force in the High Court.

Mr SANTORO: I am asking a question about lawyers to a lawyer.

Mr FOLEY: Yes. I thank the honourable member for the question. On the order nisi for the prerogative writ certiorari and prohibition that was issued by Chief Justice Sir Anthony Mason, he did indicate a hearing date in October. Whether that is the date upon which that matter will finally be heard or not, I do not know, but I would be very surprised if it were able to be disposed of between now and the end of this financial year.

The costs for 1994-95 are very difficult to predict. For example, it may be that the costs involved in the High Court proceeding heard over the past week—that is, the State Public Services Federation case—may clarify a number of the issues in relation to State and Federal jurisdiction. It may be that the High Court will clarify a number of those matters in the *McJanet* and *White* decision. If there is clarity as a result of the decisions of the High Court, one could expect corresponding reductions in litigation in the Federal Court and in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. But it is simply very difficult to predict the costs.

However, I should say that those costs are the costs incurred by the Queensland Government. This Government does not fund any of the other parties in

those proceedings, contrary to some suggestions that have been made.

Mr SANTORO: I thank the Minister for that answer. In relation to TAFE college directors and redundancies, has any money been allocated to pay redundancies to seven or more college directors whose contracts have just expired or are due to expire in the next three months? If so, how much has been allocated for this purpose, and how much has been allocated across the entire department for redundancy payments for 1994-95 within the area of TAFE?

Mr FOLEY: The problem of severance payments for a number of college directors has been a troubling one. The contracts which were signed with the previous Government required them to be paid out in what might be thought to be very generous terms. I will ask the Director-General to deal with those costs. The terms of those contracts required them to be paid out should there be any change in their job description. For example, when there was a change from a college to an institute structure, that problem arose.

With respect to redundancies generally, the total cost of voluntary early retirement packages to date is \$567,693.43. I will ask the Director-General to deal with that issue concerning those college directors.

Mr MARSHMAN: The college directors were not made redundant at all. It was a provision of the 1989 contract that, if the contract was not renewed in identical terms, there was to be a separation payment. And that is what it is. We are unable to renew the contracts in those terms, because their positions will obviously change over the next few years with the formation of institutes. So that is the reason for that. That is a contractual obligation, which we have met. The all-up costs of those separation payments is about \$300,000.

Mr SANTORO: Is that for the seven directors, or is that across the board?

Mr MARSHMAN: No, that is for six. And there is probably another to come, who is currently negotiating with us as to whether those contracts are renewed or not. We offered all of them a new contract at the same remuneration, terms and conditions, but we were not able to offer them a new contract with the same job description. As a consequence, they were able to exercise the option to take a separation payment, which was a provision of the 1989 contract.

Mr SANTORO: Is there any element of double dipping within those redundancy arrangements? There is provision under the first contract, or their previous contract, for termination payments. My understanding is that, under new PSMC guidelines, there may be opportunity for a further redundancy package to be afforded.

Mr MARSHMAN: The answer is "No". The assurance is a blunt "No". Plus we are putting provisions in place as to their ability to work for us during the period of the separation payment, which we are judging to be approximately a year.

Mr SANTORO: Page 66 of the Estimates statements indicates a move to full cost recovery for adult and community education. How advanced is work on full cost recovery for Stream 1000 courses, and what impact will this move have in the financial year 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: The provision of adult and community education is set out on pages 140 and 141 of Budget Paper No. 3. While there is a move towards full cost recovery, it is not fully cost recovered because of the requirement to provide for the delivery of programs in isolated and disadvantaged areas. In 1993 something over \$762,000 was forgone as a result of concessional fees for students qualifying for concessions. In 1994-95 the TAFE Queensland budget includes an amount of some \$387,000 as a subsidy for the delivery of adult and community education programs. This amount includes funding for six staff at colleges deemed to be in isolated or disadvantaged areas, and funding for the adult community education staff in the State office. I will invite the Executive Director of TAFE, Queensland, Mr Sielaff, to add any further comments that he may wish to make.

Mr SIELAFF: Of the six disadvantaged areas that have been selected, three are in the north Queensland region—Johnstone, Mount Isa and Burdekin. An allocation has been made to the central Queensland region, similarly to the Wide Bay area, and to the Darling Downs, so that areas such as Kingaroy, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg can receive some support in the delivery of those programs.

Mr SANTORO: I refer to page 153 of the annual report, which indicates the level of outstanding creditors. I am sure that the Minister would agree with me that the best way that the Government could help small businesses is to pay their bills on time to help their cash flow. If the Minister refers to that page in the annual report, he will appreciate that the outstanding amounts to creditors are quite large. I ask the Minister: what procedures does your Department have in place to generate the speedy payment of Government dues to small businesses?

Mr FOLEY: You are referring to page 153; is that so?

Mr SANTORO: That is correct. The amounts there are quite large. They will undoubtedly vary, but you are talking about amounts of \$1.5m for 30 days but not more than 60 days, and \$476,000 for more than 60 days. Those sorts of figures can impact quite significantly on small businesses. What provision have you made this year? I am happy for you to take that question on notice.

Mr FOLEY: I will take that question on notice. I note that the bulk of the current creditors—over \$4m—was in the nought to 30 days category.

Mr SANTORO: There is no disputing that—

Mr FOLEY: I will take that on notice.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allocated for questions from non-Government members has now expired. We will turn now to Government members.

Mr BRISKEY: I take you back to Budget Paper No. 3, specifically at page 147 wherein it states—

" . . . \$1.3M in the State's Aboriginal Education Program (AEP) state matching grants will be incurred in 1993-94 with 18 colleges/institutions now conducting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific courses compared to 15 in 1992-93."

I ask: what training is DEVETIR providing to prepare Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and how can DEVETIR be sure it is on the right track?

Mr FOLEY: The vocational education and training program for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people focuses not only on preparing them for employment opportunities but also on preparing them to undertake further studies within TAFE or universities. The most recent and complete set of outcome statistics for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is for 1992. Of the 735 who received awards, 55 received associate diplomas and 680 received certificates. Of those, some 165 continued study with TAFE, 61 commenced university studies, 128 gained employment, 16 continued in their employment and 128 returned to their community.

Throughout the course of last year, being the International Year of Indigenous Peoples, I made it a priority to visit Aboriginal and Islander communities in remote areas throughout the State to see how we were providing training, and I was greatly impressed by the work of a number of our TAFE colleges. However, we must do better and we must be more responsive to the needs of Aboriginal and Islander communities, in particular, to their focus on job creation.

Over the past year, I was pleased, for example, to open the TAFE college at the Cherbourg Aboriginal community. My predecessor, Ken Vaughan, opened the TAFE facility at Thursday Island. A TAFE facility is currently under construction at Normanton, which will be of great benefit to the Aboriginal people in the lower gulf area.

A number of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific courses which focus on employment opportunities are in areas such as early childhood, community teaching, welfare, the community ranger program, administration and vocational preparation. The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students access mainstream courses and courses specifically designed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander needs. In 1993, some 349 different mainstream or specific courses recorded Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander enrolments.

The CHAIRMAN: As a supplementary to that, I noted on page 37 of the department's statement and also on page 147 of Budget Paper No. 3 where that other comment came from that there is a fairly complicated list of ATSI initiatives for employment training. I wondered whether it leads or could lead to duplication of areas and possible wastage?

Mr FOLEY: We are assisted in that regard by the involvement of Aboriginal people themselves through a couple of means. There is an Aboriginal

advisory council in VETEC called Nagi Binanga, which has the job of advising VETEC, and through VETEC the Government, on the prioritising of vocational education and training needs.

In addition to that, an Aboriginal body called QATSIECC, the Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Consultative Committee, advises Minister Comben in the education area and me in the vocational education and training area. It has been very helpful. For example, at Normanton there was an issue about whether the TAFE college would be built near the airport or near the high school. That was a matter of considerable concern to the local community, and they were able through their consultative committee to advise me and officers of my department directly on that. In that respect, it was very satisfying because they were able to get some ownership of that decision and some involvement in the outcome.

In short, we do rely upon the advice of Aboriginal and Islander people both coming from the education area and also with somewhat more of an industry focus coming through VETEC with a specific advisory council. Although the matters set out there might look at first blush a little complicated, the essence of it is to assist Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to make contact with the vocational education and training system and to participate in it in ways which will produce employment and which will assist their communities. For example, the Johnstone College of TAFE at Innisfail in the justice studies area is doing some terrific work in assisting Aboriginal and Islander people to gain access to the Police Service and to a number of other areas in justice administration. In short, we look to Aboriginal and Islander people for their advice and guidance.

Ms SPENCE: I refer to the substantial Capital Works Program that will be carried out in the next year in the TAFE sector. I notice from the Budget Papers that child-care centres will be provided at the Gold Coast, Cairns and South Brisbane TAFE colleges in the next year. My question is: how are the decisions made on the placement of those child-care centres?

Mr FOLEY: In short, those decisions are made on the basis of need. We have seen, for example, the opening of child-care centres at the Cairns TAFE centre and recently at the Johnstone TAFE centre. The child-care centres are planned in cooperation with relevant State and Commonwealth bodies. For example, the Office of Child Care in Minister Warner's Department plays a key role, and that is to ensure that there is no duplication of facilities and that child care in TAFE is part of an overall child-care strategy for the Government.

It is obviously very important in terms of the participation of women in TAFE. A recent client profile showed that some 50 per cent of TAFE students are women but that only 38 per cent of students in vocational courses are women. The planning takes on board the efforts of Minister Warner's Department and the Office of Child Care. I will invite Mr Sielaff to enlarge on that if he wishes to do so.

Mr SIELAFF: Minister, I believe you have covered the issues.

Mr FOLEY: Our experience is that the provision of adequate child care is vital to ensuring that people with family responsibilities, in particular women, get a fair go. The community has been involved in the administration of child care. For example, the Johnstone TAFE college has a very active community group that administers the child-care centre. In that way, it provides support and assistance to people attending TAFE courses.

The practice is that child-care centres are established as incorporated non-profit associations. Under those arrangements, TAFE Queensland—that is, TAFE clients—have priority to 50 per cent of the available places while the remaining 50 per cent of places are available to the general public. The planning of those facilities really is part of the overall planning for child care throughout the State.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer you to Budget Paper No. 3. At page 149, it states that the funding for rural training schools is to be transferred from TAFE Queensland to VETEC in the 1994-95 budget. Could you advise the Committee what level of funding has been committed to rural training schools and to vocational education and training in general in rural and regional communities?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. The provision for rural training schools has been transferred to VETEC—that is, the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission—which was previously under the auspices of TAFE. That change made sense, because those bodies are independent bodies under their own Act, the Rural Training Schools Act, amendments to which I will be introducing in the Parliament later this year. The sum of \$11,138,000 has been transferred to VETEC accounts for funding for rural training schools, the Rural Management Development Centre and the rural community extension education service. That is by no means the end of the matter. I am reminded that, in addition to that, there is approval for \$1.8m in borrowings for the rural training schools in the capital works projects, subject to satisfactory submissions from those schools—or colleges, as they are known—over the period 1994-95. These bodies are in many ways operating commercial farms. They perform a very useful service.

Let me turn to other areas of rural and regional training. For example, in this coming year, over \$1.4m has been allocated for the development of interactive computer disk technology as a delivery system to provide high-quality automotive courses to students throughout Queensland. Some \$2.4m has been allocated for the development of flexible delivery courses for rural and regional communities. In addition to that, a video conferencing network has been set up in a number of our TAFE colleges to try to overcome the tyranny of distance with some of the new whiz-bang technology that is now available to help train people in remote locations.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer you to page 141 of the departmental Estimates statement under the program title of "Training Development Program". Could you advise the Committee how this program will operate

and what funds have been committed to it in 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. The Training Development Program is a good example of taking the training out of the institution—say a TAFE college—and bringing it right into industry in a partnership with industry. A sum of \$750,000 has been allocated this financial year. That assists places such as the Tip Top bakery, which I had the pleasure of visiting the other day. One of the important industries for Queensland is the food industry. Tip Top is working together with trade unions and management and, in participation with our vocational education and training people, it is engaged in the development of infrastructure and training for production employees. In Toowoomba at the Dixon Wet Blue Tannery—which again I had the pleasure of visiting recently—the company undertakes a skills audit and the training is provided on the job. That is an example of us in Government trying to reach out to industry and deliver the training where it is needed on the job rather than simply waiting for them to come to Government.

The Training Development Program really depends upon cooperation with industry. It involves industry making a financial and management commitment to the process. It is not simply a handout; it is, as my ministerial colleague Mr Elder sometimes says, a hand up. In these areas, it is felt that the Training Development Program can really help diversity in terms of training options for industry. It really is quite important for trainers to get out into workplaces. Recently, I visited the Bradken Foundry on the southern outskirts of Brisbane. A project is in operation there that really involves looking at redefining work. That has industrial relations implications, and that is why it is so important that it be approached in a cooperative way, including the involvement of trade unions.

Mr BRISKEY: Are there any other steps that your department is taking to encourage business and industry to develop their own on-site training capacity?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, there are a number of other areas. The industry-based initiatives of VETEC total some \$8,745,000. That includes programs apart from the Training Development Program, namely the Innovative Training Program, the Skills Centre Development Program, the industry training advisory bodies, the entry level training through the AVC or Australian Vocational Certificate training, and work force training.

Let me touch on the industry training advisory bodies, because they are very important to the successful operation of our training system. In 1994-95, we have allocated \$1,850,000 in grant money to support the State ITAB network. Those grants assist in operational funding and also enable ITABs to undertake research and development projects or other special projects that do not attract Federal funding. ITABs are recognised as the primary adviser to VETEC on training for their industry. In recent years, they have played a substantial role in the planning process for vocational education and training. In other words, this is part of an effort to ensure that training is demand-driven and

not simply supply-driven. Our training system should not operate according to the convenience and ease of TAFE colleges and other training institutions or providers; it should operate in accordance with the needs of industry, where we have realistic prospects of generating jobs and helping people upskill themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. We will now turn to the questions from non-Government members.

Mr SANTORO: Page 5 of the DEVETIR Estimates statements refers to the decline in funding for HRMS from the 1993-94 estimated actual to 1994-95 estimated spending being related mainly to the non-renewal of development funding. Since other elements of the summary refer to ongoing problems with the HRMS, and indeed on page 14 to the need for further investment in the program to bring it up to the acceptable standards, why is there no development funding in 1994-95 for this important program?

Mr FOLEY: Well, the funding of the Human Resource Management System does reflect, as I indicated in my opening remarks to the Committee, significant developmental funding that was made last year in connection with a major re-engineering project of the Human Resource Management System. That effort was made in order to respond to a number of criticisms made by the Auditor-General in his annual reports for 1991-92 and in 1992-93 and each of the issues raised in those reports has been addressed in a detailed way. I will just ask the Director-General if he wishes to take the matter further. Although, I should say that this is an area in which there has been agreement in principle for the transfer of responsibility for the policy aspects of it to the Public Sector Management Commission, with the operational aspects of it to the Administrative Services Department through CITEC.

Mr MARSHMAN: There is actually a freeze on development for a few months until we sort out the question of ownership and the other question we want to be able to sort out. There is a backlog of requests from users through the service which we also want to catch up with before we do the major re-engineering project, and that will involve another submission to Government throughout the year if funds are required to do that.

Mr SANTORO: I note that the management of the HRMS has been subject to a Cabinet approved Standing Committee. Could you tell the Committee who comprises that Committee and how often it meets?

Mr FOLEY: Are you referring to something in the Budget Papers?

Mr SANTORO: There is a Cabinet approved subcommittee that oversees the operation of the HRMS and I am just wondering whether you are able to tell us who comprises that Committee?

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps, Mr Santoro, if you could relate that to either the Departmental statement or the Budget Papers?

Mr SANTORO: I just thought that, seeing that it is something that interfaces in a very intricate way

with an area of responsibility held by the Minister, he may care to elaborate a bit further on it. It is a Cabinet approved subcommittee which interfaces with—

Mr FOLEY: I am just not clear of the question. When the honourable member says "a Cabinet approved subcommittee", is he referring to—

Mr SANTORO: The Auditor-General makes reference to that particular Committee in several of his reports.

Mr FOLEY: I see. Well, it is not a subcommittee of Cabinet.

Mr SANTORO: I did not say that.

Mr FOLEY: I understand. I will invite the Director-General to enlarge on it, but, in short, over a number of months, there have been discussions—and I assume this is the reference—between officers of this Department, officers of the PSMC and officers of the Administrative Services Department, which has an administrative responsibility for CITEC for the mechanical production of the pay slips and so on in order to plan the future of it. It arose out of the course of those discussions that there has been agreement in principle to transfer responsibility from DEVETIR to the PSMC for policy and to the Administrative Services Department for the CITEC area, but the Director-General may take that further.

Mr MARSHMAN: There is a standing Committee of officers that is chaired by the Executive Director, Corporate Services, Mr Hooper, and it meets every month to six weeks.

Mr SANTORO: Still on page 14 on your Estimates we see that there is a reference to the potential replacement of the HRMS. Does this mean that, after all of the references made to this program by the Auditor-General, we are going to see the system possibly scrapped?

Mr FOLEY: Could you take me to the passage, please?

Mr SANTORO: It is page 14 of your Estimates. It says—

"Human resources practices and procedures will be reviewed and simplified before considering replacement of HRMS."

Is this suggesting that perhaps it is for the high jump?

Mr FOLEY: I will ask the Director-General to speak to that.

Mr MARSHMAN: All that is planning for the future. That could be three, five or six years out. It is planning for the new generation of computer and technological requirements to provide the new HRMS system, if you like, for the Government of the future. It is not something that is impending but it is obviously something that we, together with the users of the system, are actively thinking of three to five years out in terms of our planning.

Mr SANTORO: So you are really talking about redeveloping the current system as opposed to scrapping it altogether?

Mr MARSHMAN: Certainly in the short to medium run, that is correct.

Mr SANTORO: I refer to page 85 of the annual report on which it is noted that industrial inspectors paid 223 934 visits to work places in the financial year 1992-93. Can you detail for the Committee how many of these visits were to State Government Departments and agency offices and can you provide me with corresponding information for 1993-94 and projections, if you have any, for this financial year?

Mr FOLEY: I will just ask Mr Henneken, the Executive Director of Labour Market Reform, to answer that question.

Mr HENNEKEN: The Awards Management Branch only takes complaints and does inspections in the private sector. Any complaints and concerns in the public sector are handled through the Human Resource Management Branches of relevant departments and agencies and where appropriate are referred to DEVETIR's Public Service Consultancy Branch.

Mr SANTORO: In relation to commercial services, I refer to overseas travel in relation to the development of commercial services opportunities. How much has been allocated for participation in each of these areas of international commercial services for 1994-95, particularly in relation to participation in exhibitions and trade fares, agency networking and participation in Austrade promotions?

Mr FOLEY: In terms of overseas travel expenditure, the honourable member is correct in referring to its importance in ensuring that the services particularly in the TAFE and training area are marketed to our region in the Asia Pacific and generally. The estimated actual expenditure on overseas trips in 1993-94 is as follows: TAFE, \$145,153.58; employment and training initiatives, \$2,734.27; labour market reform, \$10,630.56; workplace health and safety, \$1,523.46; workers' compensation, \$961.40; corporate services, \$15,939.50; VETEC \$8,027.20; a total of \$184,969.97. The majority of trips are to the Asia Pacific area and they generate revenue for TAFE through commercial activities. For example, one trip to Indonesia in 1992-93 generated net revenue of \$145,000 and, needless to say, information gained through overseas visits and conference attendances is beneficial to DEVETIR in its work here in Australia and it helps to form valuable linkages with people and organisations. I cannot give you projected figures for 1994-95, because a number of these items are demand driven, based on the demand, for example, for pursuing contracts in Hong Kong, Malaysia and so on.

Mr SANTORO: So there are not even notional allocations within your Estimates?

Mr FOLEY: They form part of the allocation within each of the programs that are set out in the Budget Papers. The general area of travel has been the subject of a number of efficiencies that have been addressed. I shall ask the Director-General to take that matter further.

Mr MARSHMAN: In the TAFE area, any proposal coming to the Minister for approval through me has to be able to show where the revenue is actually coming from. Almost 100 per cent of the trips in that area are commercially and demand driven. So in a sense, throughout the year there is no provision in the Estimates because the money is to be provided commercially as a result of seeking out commercial opportunities throughout the year.

Mr SANTORO: On page 32 of the Estimates for the Workplace Health and Safety Division, it is indicated that, as part of the review of the inspectorate of that division, there is a proposal to move to full regionalisation. Have you made a decision on that? In any event, can you indicate the impact on staff numbers and the associated costs—for example, rent and equipment—of such a move?

Mr FOLEY: I will ask the Executive Director of the Workplace Health and Safety Division, Mr Hodges, to enlarge on that. As indicated in the document, regionalisation was trialled for a period of 12 months in central Queensland and north Queensland. It was considered that a regionalised structure would provide the most appropriate base from which to service clients.

There are also some other considerations involved, though. That includes whether or not there should be a closer relationship between the Division of Workplace Health and Safety and the Division of Workers Compensation. That involves, for example, the sort of co-location of departmental officers, as has occurred in Rockhampton. I will invite Mr Hodges to enlarge on that, if he wishes.

Mr HODGES: The regionalisation proposal as such has not been finally determined. However, we already have—as the Minister has previously indicated—many district offices throughout the State. There is a need to share certain scarce resources among those district offices—specialist resources, such as medical people, engineers and the like. That would be better arranged, and the service would be closer to the clients, if district officers were grouped under a regional structure. There are, however, no increases planned or foreshadowed in the Budget in staffing numbers as a result, nor any decrease.

Mr SANTORO: Do you envisage any particular number of management positions from the head office structure to be moved from that particular structure?

Mr HODGES: As the Minister has indicated, we have already had a situation of acting regional managers in the north and in the central region. The proposal at this stage is that there may be two more regional managers.

Mr SANTORO: That would see a consequent removal of management positions from the head office?

Mr HODGES: Yes, indeed. There has been a progressive removal of tiers of management in favour of moving responsibility into the district offices, which will be accelerated—I suppose you would say—with the regional management structure.

Mr SANTORO: Particularly in relation to the inspectorate?

Mr HODGES: The inspectorate is all there is in the districts, really.

Mr FOLEY: Needless to say, the work of the Workplace Health and Safety Division in the area of standard setting and working in those tripartite committees—they are somewhat constrained in that they involve the coming together of people for the development, for example, of codes of practice. That, of necessity, is something which is a lot easier to do in a capital city, where you have representatives of the peak bodies like the trade union movement and the various industry groups. It is somewhat more difficult to contemplate the regionalisation of that structure, otherwise one would be running up substantial travel bills in order to meet the needs for policy development in that area.

The inspectorate, of course, is located throughout Queensland; but the development of codes of practice and the development of the work of the various tripartite workplace health and safety committees occurs principally here in Brisbane. They rely, of course, for secretarial assistance and general administrative assistance upon the work of the Workplace Health and Safety Division here in Brisbane.

Mr SANTORO: I refer to the Estimates on page 36 of your Estimates documents. I was trying to ascertain out of that how much you have allocated to the library facilities for TAFE colleges in Queensland. I was wondering if it was possible for you to supply me with that figure, that is, the total figure for Queensland, as well as the figure for each college, and comparative figures with last year's estimated expenditure. I appreciate that this question seeks quite a bit of information. I would be happy for you to take it on notice. Would you have a total figure for Queensland to start off with?

Mr FOLEY: The page to which the honourable member refers deals with the overall provision of technical and further education.

Mr SANTORO: You are correct; but I could not find the information I was seeking anywhere else, so I assumed that it is absorbed under headings such as "Other Non-labour and Course Materials". Perhaps it is under some other general heading.

Mr FOLEY: In a moment, I will invite Mr Sielaff, the Executive Director of TAFE, to speak. The general drift of administration in TAFE, as I indicated in response to earlier questions, is to make it more market sensitive—more sensitive to the needs of industry—and to have decisions made at the local or regional level rather than centrally. That includes decision making with respect to libraries. For example, when I became Minister, I discovered that a number of library books were being sent to Brisbane to be catalogued.

The CHAIRMAN: That is all the time for questioning from the Opposition.

Mr SANTORO: Would I be able to ask if the Minister is willing to provide that information through those questions being placed on notice? I was asking for specific allocations.

Mr FOLEY: I am not sure if that information is kept.

Mr SIELAFF: The specific allocation to libraries would not have been determined at this stage. The overall allocation, though, for libraries is able to be provided.

Mr SANTORO: Would you be able to make it available when those are determined?

Mr FOLEY: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: I now turn to Government members for their questions.

Mr BRISKEY: I have a number of questions about the Employment Services Program, specifically relating to the \$150m Jobs Plan on page 155 of Budget Paper No. 3. There is a reference to this \$150m Jobs Plan and the fact that initiatives enhanced by this exceeded expectations. Could you provide the Committee with further detail as to how they have exceeded expectations?

Mr FOLEY: The \$150m Jobs Plan has been a significant enhancement to Budget allocations over the term of this Parliament. It is, of course, funded by the Tobacco Licence Fee, or tobacco tax, that was introduced following the last election. The performance under the \$150m Jobs Plan through its supplementation of the Budget has indeed been in excess of expectations. According to latest available figures, over 60 000 unemployed people have been assisted since the implementation of the Jobs Plan. Nearly 13 400 people have been placed into employment and over 26 000 into further education or training. Some 3 943 new jobs have been created as against a target of 2 989. In addition to those jobs, 9 443 unemployed people have been placed into employment against the target of 6 724. That is a total 13 386 unemployed people who have gained employment, as against a target of 9 738. A total of fully 26 007 unemployed people have been placed into training against a target of 11 742, and 24 282 unemployed have received other assistance against the target of 9 614. In relation to all aspects of the \$150m Jobs Plan, a total of 60 455 people have been assisted against the target of 28 216.

The essential feature of the \$150m Jobs Plan is that it combines a range of long-term and short-term strategies for assisting the long-term unemployed. One has the funding through capital works projects such as the Bikeways Program, the Jobs for the Environment Program, the Youth Conservation Corps, and the School Refurbishment Program, which are administered through other departments, but one also had the funding of TAFE tutors and the funding of a Community Jobs Plan through the Employment and Training Initiatives Division to reach out to the long-term unemployed and help them to get access to jobs and training.

Mr BRISKEY: I note that under this program area demand for assistance under the Self Employment Venture Scheme was particularly strong and that to 31 March 1994 the scheme has created jobs for 450 people. What funds have been committed to the scheme for the coming year, and has the scheme been successful thus far?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, the scheme has been successful. The Self Employment Venture Scheme is a way of helping people to turn unemployment into self-employment. During 1992-93 under the Jobs Plan-enhanced Budget, over 9 500 people attended information seminars and approximately 4 300 people were assisted through business workshops. From this, 296 ventures were established, creating 464 new jobs.

In the current financial year to 1 May 1994, under the SEVS Enhance Program, 6 540 people have attended information seminars, 3 640 attended business planning workshops and 335 ventures employing 526 people were approved with a loan value of \$2.55m. These are people who have the get up and go to become self-employed. I think that they deserve a lot of encouragement and support, because the funds that are provided here are loans which are to be repaid—\$6,000 in the case of an individual; \$12,000 if you have more than one involved in the venture.

The funding for this scheme has been significantly enhanced in the current Budget. That reflects the belief that while this is not everyone's cup of tea, it is an important way to help people who are enterprising enough to help themselves. The initiative will continue through to the end of the 1994-95 financial year with a Jobs Plan Budget component of \$1.3m. The SEV Scheme has helped people in a range of initiatives from raffia hat manufacturer through to the selling of second-hand baby clothing, through to people who work as upholsterers. One lady was working to sell packaged holidays specifically targeted to the needs of people with disabilities. They tended to reach out to niche markets to create new areas of enterprise and in that respect they help people get back into the labour force.

Mr BRISKEY: I also note that in that program area to 31 March this year, training and placement projects have assisted 6 013 people—56 per cent above the estimated targets. Could you outline how this was achieved and whether this program will continue in 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, the training and placement projects are an important part of the \$150m Jobs Plan's enhancement of the Budget. That has ensured that, for example, during the 1992-93 financial year, projects assisted some 6 114 unemployed people, with 2 235 placed into training or further education. In the current financial year to 1 May, along with the existing program, projects have assisted 6 805 unemployed people with 2 526 being placed into training or further education and 3 858 into employment. I will ask Mr Carlon whether he wishes to add anything to the area of the training and placement project, as that is an area which falls within his responsibility as Executive Director of the Employment and Training Initiatives Division.

Mr CARLON: The Community Jobs and Training Program has a number of various initiatives under it. It basically funds non-profit community organisations in a range of ways. Firstly, it gives out feasibility studies grants to look at possible projects within communities that can create jobs. It actually

looks at funding employment development projects—officers employed by various community organisations and local groups—to actually look at getting community interest in various types of employment programs and employment projects. It funds a range of programs that deliver training to the most disadvantaged of our unemployed, particularly preparation for employment. It has covered a whole range of various community organisations across the State, with particular emphasis often in rural areas. The funds are called for twice a year, and the amount of funds available in the next year will be the same as it has been in previous years, with the first round of applications closing for those in the next couple of months. Departmental officers have been around various regions advertising the programs to various community groups.

Mr BRISKEY: Also within that program it is mentioned that the Youth Employment Service was enhanced through the appointment of 20 additional consultants. What have been the results of these consultants' activities and will they continue to be employed in 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, they will continue to be employed. In short, the \$150m Jobs Plan meant that we could increase the number of youth employment consultants from 40 up to 60. This service is vital in terms of reaching out to unemployed youth and giving them a personalised service. It works, of course, in cooperation with the Commonwealth Employment Service, but it focuses on the individual concerned. During the 1993-94 financial year, the 20 additional consultants along with the previous 40 have placed 2 943 young people into jobs, 2 448 people into training, and assisted 6 801 people. The \$1.2m allocated under the Jobs Plan in 1993-94 to this initiative is expected to be expended with another \$1.2m being allocated in 1994-95.

The wisdom of this approach is evidenced in the Commonwealth Government's White Paper, Working Nation, where they have seen the wisdom of moving to a case management approach, particularly for people who are long-term unemployed. For too long there has been insufficient attention given to those who are in special need such as youth who are in the long-term unemployed category. When one talks with these people and meets with them, one is struck by the courage that it requires for them to pick themselves up and to continue to have a go in the youth employment market. That is what these youth employment consultants do. They liaise with community groups such as Bridging the Gap down at the Gold Coast and with the Community Employment Network up at Toowoomba, for example, in Mr Horan's electorate.

These youth unemployment consultants are vital in terms of making the link between, on the one end, being job placement officers, and, on the other, being persons to whom an unemployed young person can come and with whom that unemployed person can discuss their problems and make plans for the future, whether it be in the area of actually getting a job or getting the training necessary to make themselves job ready.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer you to the departmental Estimates statements at page 138. There is a Torres Strait employment and career development strategy mentioned there. Could you explain to the Committee what the major outcomes of this strategy might be and what funds are being committed to it?

Mr FOLEY: The Torres Strait employment and career development strategy has been developed as an example of cooperation amongst all tiers of Government. The Commonwealth Government has been involved, as has the State Government and, most importantly of all, the Island Coordinating Council in the Torres Strait. Indeed, I had the pleasure of launching that program on Thursday Island just before Christmas last year with the Island Coordinating Council Chairman, Getano Lui.

That program aims to assist people in the northern peninsula area and the Torres Strait to get a fair go in terms of the various jobs in the public sector, because there are jobs there in Customs and in various State Government departments that traditionally have been filled by people flying up from the south, staying there for a couple of years and flying out. Many of the local people felt that there was a need to ensure that they had the access to the relevant training and job skills to be able to fill those positions. Accordingly, they set to work to bring about this consensus at the three levels of government. I was pleased that we were able to launch it during the International Year of Indigenous Peoples. I guess the proof of the pudding will be in the eating. The performance indicators that we will be looking at are the extent to which the Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people from the northern peninsula area are represented in all levels and occupational groups in the public sector and the level of participation of women in those programs. We want to see a significant increase in the number of Torres Strait Islanders and Aboriginal people gaining promotion within the public sector.

I will conclude on this point: it is not good enough simply to help people get in at the lower levels. You have to try to ensure that the system is fair and that it provides relevant and adequate and culturally sensitive training to help people get proper promotion.

Ms SPENCE: Minister, I refer you to page 60 of the departmental Estimates which talks about disadvantaged groups and target groups and their access to vocational education and training. Could you explain the composition of targeted and disadvantaged groups and provide details on how we are helping them access TAFE courses?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. The targeting of disadvantaged groups is important, particularly as one moves towards a model of training that is industry driven. It is important that we maintain our commitment to social justice and ensure that all Queenslanders, whether they are Aboriginal or non-Aboriginal, whether they are men or women, whether they live in remote areas or not, have fair and adequate access to vocational education and training.

As a result of the Government's concern in this regard, the Vocational Education, Training and

Employment Commission undertook work to identify those target groups and it identified the following groups as having been historically under-represented and disadvantaged in the vocational education, training and employment system, namely, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders, people with disabilities, women, geographically isolated persons, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, the long-term unemployed, the educationally marginalised, people in custody or detention centres, and older people. That social justice policy developed by VETEC has in fact been endorsed by the Queensland Government and provides guidance for public sector providers both in TAFE and other public sector providers, and assists them through things such as the State Aboriginal Education Matching Program, fee subsidisation and steps to assist women get better access to vocational education and training.

The Committee adjourned at 10.29 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 10.36 p.m.

Mr SANTORO: Minister, I want to refer you again to the Self Employment Venture Scheme, and particularly refer to certain comments that the Auditor-General made in a recent report in relation to accountability factors about that scheme where he said things such as, "SEV loans have no management or late payment fees attaching to them." He went on to describe the consequences of that particular lack. He also went on to say that many other weaknesses were identified and it would have come to notice earlier had the Department undertaken systems appraisal as required by the Public Finance Standards. He talked about various borrowers who reduced their monthly repayments to the levels below those agreed to in the deeds of agreement, and also talked about the computer database which, at that time, was unable to produce accurate and reliable reports detailing the loan accounts outstanding for reporting purposes as previously indicated. I ask: what provision have you made in this year's Estimates for overcoming the lacks in relation to accountability which the Auditor-General identified?

Mr FOLEY: The problems identified in the report of the Auditor-General tabled in the Parliament on 25 February related to two main areas of deficiency—control over borrowers and overdue accounts. On that day, I directed that a new accountancy package was to be developed and to be operational by 1 July; that by 4 March, the service account database was to be totally reconstructed for the financial year 1992-93; and that by 4 March, the debt recovery procedures and practices of the scheme be streamlined for greater efficiency. Those directions which I gave have been complied with.

Since its inception, the scheme has funded in excess of 1 600 new enterprises in Queensland, which has resulted directly in approximately 2 400 new employment positions being created. So those measures have been taken in order to remedy the issues identified by the Auditor-General. I will just ask Mr Carlon, the Executive Director of Employment Training Initiatives, to add anything that he wishes to add to that.

Mr CARLON: As the Minister indicated, he directed me at the time to do a number of actions. The principal among them was a reconstruction of the SEVS database. The problem basically was that we had actually banked more money in repayments than what our records showed we had actually received. What we needed to do was for the 1992-93 year to totally reconstruct that database again from scratch, which we did by 4 March, and balance it to the satisfaction of the Evaluation Strategic Audit Unit of DEVETIR. One of the problems that occurred was a breakdown in the computer package. With the growth in the scheme, the package, unfortunately, had not matched that growth. We have now installed a new accounting system, both the software and hardware, and it is due to come into operation on 1 July. We are also undertaking a complete review of the scheme's debt recovery processes, and many changes have been put in place as a result.

Mr SANTORO: Perhaps through you, Mr Minister, to Mr Carlon, have you made any provision at all for any loan defaulting for the next financial year?

Mr FOLEY: Perhaps if I could answer that and then Mr Carlon can add if he wishes? I think, with respect, that the question is based on a misunderstanding. The repayment of loans does not come as retained revenue by this Department. It is revenue which goes to Treasury. So in that sense, it is not relevant for this Department to make provision for non-payment.

Mr SANTORO: But you administer the loans scheme, though.

Mr FOLEY: I am answering the question. The question asked whether we made provision in our Budget Estimates for that. In answer to that question, I am explaining that it is not relevant for this Department to do so. I will invite Mr Carlon to add any matters that he may wish to in enlarging upon that answer.

Mr CARLON: As the Minister indicated, we do not make provision for defaulters in the Budget, because it goes directly into Consolidated Revenue. I would point out that, since the scheme's inception in 1985, less than 6 per cent of the money that has been lent has had to be converted to grants as a result of people defaulting. The scheme is largely an equity scheme as well. Therefore, we do not necessarily take in the same procedures as a normal commercial organisation would. The people we lend to, in the main, are trying to get a second chance after often long periods of unemployment. These loans are for small amounts. It is not considered that we should act like a normal financial institution in dealing with defaulters.

As a result of looking at our procedures, we have streamlined them to make sure that we actually follow up almost immediately on people who are starting to default on their loan. They are like a normal commercial organisation or bank would treat them. So they are placed under the same type of pressure in meeting their loan repayments. But, at the end of the day, given the nature of the scheme and the nature of the people whom we are trying to help,

we do not have a totally commercial operation, such as a bank would. In effect, before they come to us all these people have to show that they have failed to get credit or a loan through a normal commercial institution.

Mr FOLEY: In the Budget Estimates for this Department, at pages 154 and 155 of Budget Paper No. 3, provision has been made for an extra four persons to be employed in the administration of the Self Employment Venture Scheme, which addresses those concerns about administration and also takes on board the increased numbers that we hope to have in the coming year.

Mr SANTORO: I wish to refer to TAFE and the costs of appeals within TAFE. The latest appeal statistics for 1992-93 from the PSMC indicate that DEVETIR loses twice as many appeals as any other department. What is the total cost in terms of staff salaries for time spent preparing departmental cases, administrative travel and accommodation costs of appeals contested in the 1993-94 year? What is the average cost per appeal and how much has been allocated to contest appeals for 1994-95 for the Department? I did mention TAFE specifically, but my question relates to the Department, including TAFE.

Mr FOLEY: I do not have those figures to hand, as one might expect.

Mr SANTORO: I am happy for you to take that question on notice.

Mr FOLEY: Perhaps I should say this—and I will invite the Director-General or the Executive Director of TAFE to add anything, if they wish—one of the necessary evils of any system of public administration is an appeals system. Given that we employ over 7 000 people, it is of the utmost importance that the integrity of the appointment processes be of the highest standard and be seen to be of the highest standard. Accordingly, the money that is spent in that area is money that goes towards ensuring that the system is seen by the participants to be fair. That is important in the light of the efforts to reform the public service following the Fitzgerald Inquiry and the efforts, of course, of the Public Sector Management Commission.

Mr MARSHMAN: We have not had them historically. But we took a recent decision to cost them in the future. So we would be happy to report against that in 12 months' time. We do not have all of the figures for this year. It was only a recent decision to cost those. We would be happy to report in our annual report, or we would be quite happy to answer that question at next year's Estimates.

Mr SANTORO: Thank you, Mr Marshman. That offer is appreciated. In a recent memorandum, Mr Sielaff indicated that quality assurance will be in place throughout TAFE colleges within this financial year. In view of that statement, how much has been allocated to cover the substantial costs involved in obtaining third-party accreditation? How much has been allocated for advertising to obtain expressions of interest from professionally recognised agencies that are capable of preparing TAFE for full third-party accreditation? Through which internationally recognised accreditation body will the Department

be seeking QA accreditation, and what are that body's fees?

Mr FOLEY: I will make some general observations and then invite my officers to speak to the question. The issue of quality assurance for vocational education and training providers is becoming of increasing importance. Through the Ministerial Council of the Australian National Training Authority—ANTA—there has been increasing emphasis on the need for quality assurance. Increasingly, in our dealings with large companies—for example, in the provision of training in the mining industry—they are insisting on the obtaining of quality assurance. It is going to be absolutely essential for anyone seriously in the market of providing training to have quality assurance, if they are going to compete in what is going to be an increasingly competitive environment. The decision to go down that track is based upon the need of the system to survive and thrive in an increasingly competitive environment. I will ask the director-general to take the matter further.

Mr MARSHMAN: There is also the decision of the Government that we should be close at least to having QA certification by 1 July next year. That is throughout the whole of the Department and we are working towards that. We are also trying to do that internally. We are not seeking additional resources to do it. We are diverting priorities because it is about quality, it is about workplace reform and all those sorts of things.

A number of colleges such as Mount Gravatt, Southern Downs at Warwick, QDEC at Rockhampton, and Whitsunday, are well advanced. A lot of others we will push pretty hard over the next few months to achieve the objective of 1 July next year. We will expect them to divert the funds to achieve the objective.

Mr SANTORO: So you are saying that no costs are associated with fulfilling that requirement of the executive director—

"... that all TAFE colleges are required to obtain third party accreditation to Australian standard AS 3901 by 1995."

Are you saying that the costs of that process will be internally absorbed?

Mr MARSHMAN: That is right. We do not get any more money from Government to do that and we must divert priorities to achieve the objective.

Mr SANTORO: How will you obtain a third party accreditation if you perform that process internally?

Mr FOLEY: As I indicated before, it is a question of ensuring that TAFE survives and thrives in an increasingly competitive market environment. In the same way, if private training providers wish to be in business after the year 2000 or even indeed before then, they must factor those steps into their management if they are to achieve quality assurance and thus get access to the whole of the market. I do not know whether Mr Sielaff wants to enlarge on that.

Mr SIELAFF: The thrust for colleges to obtain quality assurance is driven by the need to improve our client service. As we move into an increasingly competitive environment, colleges are allocating resources. In the main, they are existing resources that are in the colleges in terms of people. The accreditation agencies that are selected by particular colleges are governed a little by themselves and the particular markets into which they will operate. It is expected that colleges will collaborate so that they minimise the costs associated with obtaining third party accreditation.

Mr SANTORO: I refer to matters relating to the Industrial Commission. Page 114 of the Estimates statements refers to proposed award increases for Industrial Commissioners and payment of cash equivalents for long service leave. Can you detail separately to the Committee the increased costs associated with those moves?

Mr FOLEY: The notional increase that is provided for in the Budget is a provision that is made generally throughout Budget programs in order to accommodate the possibility of award increases or enterprise bargaining increases of a general nature. The Act ties the salary of Industrial Commissioners to that of District Court Judges. The salary of District Court Judges is determined by the Judges Salaries and Remuneration Tribunal, that being an independent body. The provision for an increase is described as a proposed award increase, but more correctly or more fully it should be described as a provision in respect of whatever wage increase may flow from a decision of the independent tribunal.

Mr SANTORO: Do you then see the payment of cash equivalents for long service leave as becoming a general practice within the public service? Do you see it as an ingredient of an enterprise deal that at this point in time may be in limbo?

Mr FOLEY: I beg your pardon? What was the last question?

Mr SANTORO: Do you see it as an ingredient of a general enterprise agreement for the public service?

Mr FOLEY: I would not have thought so.

Mr HENNEKEN: For each program, an estimate is made each year as to the likely payment for long service leave based on an estimate as to the number of people who may choose to take long service leave during that period.

Mr SANTORO: Still on the Industrial Commission—page 118 refers to applications from industrial organisations to not have the Electoral Commission conduct ballots. Can you indicate, on notice if time beats us perhaps, how many such applications have been made and how many ballots have been conducted by the commission?

Mr FOLEY: The Industrial Relations Act provides that ballots are to be undertaken by the Electoral Commission, but the Act also makes provision for application to be made to the Industrial Registrar for a body to be excused from that provision if it satisfies the registrar.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Minister, would you be happy to provide the information requested on notice?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. I may be able to answer it—

The CHAIRMAN: We might ask you to come back to that question in non-Government time later on.

Mr FOLEY: Yes, very well. I have an answer to the question asked by Ms Spence earlier. Subject to your guidance, I will answer it. In regard to the percentage of students undertaking the engineering courses across the TAFE system, the latest available figures are for 1993. Those figures indicate that a total of 34 105 students were undertaking engineering courses, of whom 2 303 were female, representing 6.8 per cent of engineering enrolments.

That demonstrates the low level of participation of women in the non-traditional areas. For that reason, we are funding a number of programs such as the Tradeswomen on the Move Program. That program goes into the schools to children in Year 6. It goes into the schools with people such as a female plumber or a female carpenter in order to demonstrate to young children that there is no need for them to be bound by the stereotypes of traditional trades classifications. All of those students are encouraged to select careers that suit their own particular needs and interests rather than simply conform to a stereotype.

Ms SPENCE: That is 34 105 students in TAFE colleges doing engineering, is it?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, undertaking engineering courses across the TAFE system.

Ms SPENCE: That is an enormous number of people. While we are on the issue of equity, I note on page 159 of Budget Paper No. 3 that a working women's centre will be established as part of the Government's continuing commitment to equity in the labour market. What other departmental activities will be funded in 1994-95 to improve equity in the labour market?

Mr FOLEY: There is a range of programs. For example, in the Technical and Further Education area, there is a Domestic Violence Project worth \$20,000; a Women's Support Officer Project worth \$140,000; the Trade Training for Women Project worth in the order of \$60,000; and a New Horizons Project worth \$80,000, which is particularly targeted at people from non-English speaking backgrounds, women with disabilities, women in custody and the long-term unemployed. There are a number of other projects in that area, including the Child Care Project, with a further \$50,000 to be spent; the Tradeswomen on the Move Project, to which I referred earlier, worth \$135,000; and \$10,000 for a women in industry register to provide opportunities for female students to participate in work experience in non-traditional occupations.

In the labour market reform area, there is the Working Women's Centre, to which reference has also been made. There is an ongoing program to remove discriminatory provisions in awards. Effort is

being put into the area of women in enterprise bargaining. For example, we have produced a pamphlet which we recently launched to cover the area of women in enterprise bargaining to ensure that women are not disadvantaged in the enterprise bargaining process.

The experience in the enterprise bargaining area is that one has to be particularly careful to ensure that all workers benefit from the exercise and that there is sufficient flexibility in the system. I will cite an example. Some months ago, I visited the Nerada Tea factory at Acacia Ridge. I saw there the benefits of boosted productivity for the employer but extra flexibility for the women workers on the process line. For example, one of them was able to change her shift around and spend a bit more time with her children at home. That produced better productivity, better morale and obviously a better family outcome for her.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I would like to ask a couple of questions on apprentices and trainees. Before I do, I seek a point of clarification, if I may. I refer you to page 6 of Budget Related Paper No. 5, the section "Apprenticeship Traineeship" at the bottom of page 6, and also to page 72 of Budget Paper No. 2, the Budget Overview. The paragraph immediately after the four dot points covers the same information as covered in the section in Budget Related Paper No. 5, but the amounts are different. Could you clarify that?

Mr FOLEY: I am indebted to the honourable member's eagle eye. The honourable member has indeed alighted upon an issue where it is described more correctly in Budget Related Paper No. 5 than it is at page 72. What appears in Budget Paper No. 2 is, strictly speaking, correct. It is indeed more than \$16m, namely \$18.9m. That occurred simply in the course of preparation of that earlier document. I am advised by my officers that the more up-to-date figure of \$18.9m should have been inserted there. The "more than \$16m" is, strictly speaking, correct, but it is not as accurate as the Budget Related Paper. I will be indebted to the honourable member for reconciling the figures.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I am sure that we are all indebted to the Minister for giving us the high figures, because some of the component figures are also different. I refer you now to Budget Related Paper No. 5. It can be seen that \$18.9m has been allocated to the administration of the apprenticeship and traineeship system. Can the Minister advise the Committee how this money is to be spent?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. The budget provides for \$3.1m in apprenticeship and traineeship accommodation and travel subsidies for young people to attend college as part of their training program. For example, students, apprentices or trainees often have a block release training program, where they have to go to the relevant TAFE college or private training provider. In addition, \$8.3m is earmarked for subsidies to training providers for trainees. Previously, those subsidies were administered by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training.

In order to introduce new training initiatives under the national training reform agenda, \$3.4m will be used to develop and implement the Australian Vocational Certificate system in Queensland. That system is contemplated to be in the longer term a replacement for the traditional apprenticeships and traineeships. Let me cite an example. Recently, I visited the Cherbourg Aboriginal community. I saw there a number of young people doing excellent work building some eight houses and a motel complex. Those people are referred to by the locals as apprentices, although they are in fact engaged in the Australian Vocational Certificate system. They are doing their theory work at the TAFE college and their practical work on the job in the local community. Those pilots are being conducted throughout Queensland with a view to the implementation of the system from 1995 through to 1997.

Group training schemes will receive some \$3.7m, and some \$150,000 will be allocated to continue the Youth Jobs Plan Government Construction Contracts Initiative. What that means is that contractors on Government construction contracts in excess of \$100,000 are required to invest 10 per cent of the time on site training apprentices or trainees. In other words, if they have the benefit of a Government contract over \$100,000, then they are expected to make a contribution to the training of our young people and our mature-age people in structured training. The Government will more than triple its commitment to the highly successful Tradeswomen on the Move Program, to which I have previously referred, by providing some \$200,000 to encourage the employment of women in non-traditional trades. That is a brief outline of the way in which moneys will be spent in order to provide a boost to the apprenticeship and traineeship system in Queensland.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Will those items ensure that there will be enough skilled workers to meet industry's needs as Queensland's economy grows?

Mr FOLEY: That is a vital issue because, as the economy is growing more strongly, we need to ensure that there are skilled workers and that those needs are addressed. An area of particular concern is the Cairns area, where it has been estimated that 4 000 to 4 500 additional construction industry jobs will become vacant in the next three to four years because of the staggered nature of the work. This translates into a requirement for as many as 2 000 new construction workers. The Government has addressed that need for more trained people over the next three to five years through initiatives such as the development of the AVC training system; through a direct mail marketing campaign to employers to encourage them to employ and train more apprentices and trainees; through the Youth Jobs Plan Government Construction Contracts Initiative; and through the development of an employment and training strategy.

One of the things that is very important to get through to industry leaders is this: the training of people for the future needs of industry is not simply a problem for Government. This is a problem for the whole community and, in particular, for industry. We

do not want to go back to the bad old days of boom and bust where industry felt it could not afford to put on apprentices and trainees during the tough times and then it was difficult to obtain skilled tradespersons during the boom times. We have to have a more rational approach to it, and that involves work with industry and hence the substantial investment by Government, but also the substantial call by Government to industry to put on apprentices and trainees. Indeed, I have moved throughout the State, and officers of the Department have, conducting seminars to try to encourage that. Those strategies have shown some success, with a 23.8 per cent increase in the number of apprentices being employed this financial year compared with the same period last year. So there is sign of improvement, but there is absolutely no room for complacency. If we as a community want to get the benefit of the economic recovery and go down the path of high skill and high productivity, it is vital that industry invest heavily in apprentices and trainees, and I would respectfully urge all employers to give careful consideration to doing so.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: In your answer to my first question you mentioned a sum of \$3.7m allocated for group training schemes. I am quite supportive of those group training schemes, and I will give a plug for the one in my area, PRICAR. Could you expand on the reasons why the Government is committing \$3.7m to group training schemes in the coming year?

Mr FOLEY: I join with you in complimenting PRICAR. I have had the benefit of visiting it and I am very pleased to see the support that PRICAR receives from your local community in the Caboolture area and throughout the Pine Rivers area generally. The \$3.7m to group training schemes involves the special project funding valued at almost \$800,000, and that is awarded in the current financial year to group schemes. In 1994-95, group training schemes will have the opportunity to access up to an additional \$349,000 for special project funding. I should say that the Australian National Training Authority—ANTA—took over responsibility as part of its overall planning approach for group training schemes, and that national review that it has undertaken has been considered by Ministers.

The Queensland Government supports group training schemes. I said before that there is a real problem about the booms and the busts. One of the great things about group training schemes is that they take away the pressure on individual employers. Employers can put on an apprentice or trainee for a few months and then, when that task is finished, the apprentice goes back to the group training scheme to be placed somewhere else so that, for example, an apprentice cook might spend six months in a fish restaurant, six months in a bar and grill and six months in a French restaurant, and thereby get the benefit of diversity. It also helps the employer because he or she is able to avoid the burden of taking on a four-year commitment. Some employers feel that they are unable to do that because of economic uncertainties. So the funding to group schemes will include a base of \$2.016m plus a further \$0.549m carried over from 1993-94 to pay the first

quarter recurrent and transitional payments to the group training schemes. From 1 July 1994, the State Government will be responsible for processing Commonwealth payments of \$1.171m to group training schemes throughout Queensland.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Page 78 of your departmental Estimates statement gives a summary of the Tregillis report into the review of the administration of apprenticeships and traineeships. Could you outline what progress has been made on addressing the issues raised in the review?

Mr FOLEY: Very considerable progress has been made. In fact, this is an area where, frankly, the review highlighted red tape and delays that needed to be fixed. That is why I introduced legislation to streamline the apprenticeship and traineeship system. It is why we have moved from a centralised allocation of apprenticeship training to a local, college-based system. It is why we have got rid of the archaic provision for announcing through the *Queensland Government Industrial Gazette* the notification of apprenticeship allocations. In short, we have moved from a centralised system based on head office to a system of college-based allocation, that is, one where the local college, say at the Gold Coast in Mr Quinn's area, is able to deal with Gold Coast employers and put together a package that suits their specific needs and concerns.

The tourism and hospitality area down at the Gold Coast Institute of TAFE is a fine example of becoming more market oriented and of becoming more sensitive to the needs of employers. Those were the problems that were identified by Tregillis and those are the problems that have been identified to me in the plainest possible terms by a number of employers as I have moved about the State conducting seminars. I am very pleased at the work of departmental officers. Frankly, I do not know how some of those training consultants coped with some of the red tape and difficulties they had in past years, and I think it is a great credit to them that they did such a good job. By removing those bureaucratic and legislative requirements, we are seeking to address the problems identified by Mr Tregillis in his review of that area. One of the problems, for example, was the processing of applications. You had to fill in four different application forms, but that has been reduced to one, so the time now has been reduced from six weeks in November 1992 down to two to four weeks now. That is a change for the better.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we move on to the non-Government members for further questions, could I ask your forbearance and ask that a question put to you by Mr Santoro in the last session be answered by written response? In doing so, I would remind members of the Committee and the Minister that written response is to be used normally where the question is so detailed or the Minister has not got that information to hand, not merely to add an extra couple of questions to the list.

Mr FOLEY: Subject to your view, I am happy to try to answer Mr Santoro's question now.

Mr SANTORO: I did ask the Minister the question and he had three minutes. At that stage,

when I realised that he was running out of time, I offered him the opportunity to either provide me with the information through a question on notice or not to. If he does not wish to provide it on notice, I am very happy for that to occur, but if he pays me the courtesy of providing the information, he will not eat into the time allocated for my next set of questions. I am very happy not to receive information from a question on notice, but I did ask the question and—

Mr FOLEY: I am not aware that the three minutes had in fact elapsed.

Mr SANTORO: It had elapsed because the 20 minutes was up.

The CHAIRMAN: The 20 minutes time had elapsed for the questions from the Opposition team at that point, which was the problem, Mr Minister.

Mr SANTORO: I do not intend to ask that question; I have other questions to ask. If you wish to extend the courtesy of providing the information to a question on notice, I will be happy for it to arrive, otherwise I will start my 20 minutes.

Mr FOLEY: I am happy to provide you with the answer now, but if you prefer to embark on other areas, then I am happy to accommodate your request.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we would prefer that, Minister.

Mr SANTORO: In relation to TAFE and advertising—what is the total advertising budget for TAFE in 1994-95, and how much has been allocated to the advertising of courses? I ask the very specific question: how are these courses to be advertised? Through what means are they to be advertised?

Mr FOLEY: The TAFE commercial activities budget, set out at pages 142 and 143 of Budget Paper No. 3, gives an overall indication of the provision for marketing of TAFE services. That needs to be read, of course, with the provision of adult and community education on pages 140 and 141. Considerable advertising is done for adult and community education courses in order to let members of the public know the very vast array of courses which are available.

For 1993-94, TAFE Queensland budgeted \$1,026,230 for advertising using State funds and \$34,000 using Commonwealth funds. As at 7 June 1994, TAFE Queensland had expended \$934,392 in State funds on advertising and \$126,439 in Commonwealth funds on advertising. A further \$1,107,633 in revenue retention funds was expended on advertising fee for service and adult and community education courses. A good deal of that is spent on newspaper advertising. There has been \$168,635 spent on advertising staff vacancies in 1993-94. I invite Mr Sielaff to enlarge on that if he wishes to.

Mr SIELAFF: The need for advertising has increased with the competitive market. Also, there are analyses going on within the Department as to the effectiveness of newspaper advertising. That analysis has revealed that, in terms of the area of adult and community education, newspaper

advertising is indeed one of the most effective mechanisms. However, in some of the commercial activities where we are providing programs directly to industry, it is not the most effective advertising. We are currently analysing, through our client profile analysis and through analysis of the requirements of particular client groups, the most effective advertising techniques. There will be a change in the way in which the Department expends its advertising Vote.

Mr SANTORO: In relation to TAFE and consultancies—how much has been allocated for consultancy services in 1994-95, and how does this compare with the 1993-94 expenditure in this area?

Mr FOLEY: With respect to consultancies—the total sum for 1993-94, up to 31 May 1994, was \$2,824,000. But that is not just TAFE; that is the whole Department. I will just ask Mr Sielaff if he can take that matter any further with regard to consultancies.

I might point out that although that does not take into account the last month of the financial year, it does represent a significant reduction on the figure for 1992-93, which was \$4,553,000. That figure was up slightly on the previous year—1991-92—of \$4,398,000. So the figures overall for this financial year would appear, at least on the expenditures to 31 May, to be coming in under the sums expended in the previous financial year.

Mr SIELAFF: In terms of consultancies in 1993-94—up to 7 June, the expenditure on consultancies was \$1.1m. But by far the largest amount of that—in particular, about \$600,000—relates to the provision of training, for which we would employ a person. We recoup that money through the provision of training. The other area where we have expended money in terms of consultancies is in the area of information technology, where we have developed a significant student enrolment system.

Mr SANTORO: Would it be possible for the Committee to obtain detail on the number and type of consultancies that have been employed by TAFE in particular?

Mr FOLEY: I am not sure what your question is. The cost of those consultancies has already been given. I am not sure what your question asks.

Mr SANTORO: I just simply followed up with a supplementary question requesting more detail in relation to that question; in other words, a breakdown in relation to the consultancies.

Mr FOLEY: I can read into the record, if you would like, the consultancies for the whole of the Department. I do not have those broken down specifically for the TAFE sector. Would you like all of the consultancies?

Mr SANTORO: My interest is specifically in relation to TAFE. I am happy for you to take that question on notice, if you wish, and you can extract the information at your convenience.

Mr FOLEY: Yes, very well.

Mr SANTORO: I return to workers' compensation. I note from page 19 of the Estimates

statements in relation to the merit bonus review that common law payments are to be excluded from merit bonus calculations. Can you give us an indication of the impact of that exclusion?

Mr FOLEY: Again, that is the proposal of the tripartite Workers Compensation Committee. There are really arguments both ways on this. That is why the board and I conducted seminars with businesses throughout the State. The principal argument for excluding common law payments from the merit bonus calculation relates to the length of time between the occurrence of the injury and the payment of the common law sum of damages. Because of that delay in time, which will often be a number of years, a number of employers feel that they would rather be assessed on what they are doing now in terms of what they are going to have to pay for their workers' compensation premium. The contrary argument is that the common law payment more accurately reflects the matters over which an employer may exercise control, because the common law payments, of necessity, are based on a finding or an admission of negligence on the part of the employer.

If we were to live in a legally perfect world where one were able to bring the common law action, have it determined and have the sum paid promptly, then there is a great deal of logic behind the proposition that common law payments are a very good measure of rewarding those employers who have good workplace health and safety practices and discouraging those who have bad ones. But because of the time lag, the logic of that view tends to be dissipated because of the passage of time and the supervening events.

Accordingly, the feeling of that committee was that it should be excluded from merit-based calculations, so that the employer who has a good statutory record—a good record with respect to statutory claims over a year—gets the benefit of that and does not get saddled because a common law payment which might relate to several years previously is settled or determined by the court. So it is for that reason that the committee made that recommendation. That might be otherwise if we were able to achieve the sort of reforms to the processing of common law claims that I think we would all like to see achieved.

Mr SANTORO: Page 33 of your Estimates document refers to the proposal for a move towards professional status for positions within the workplace health and safety inspectorate, particularly in areas such as health. Can you give us an indication of the impact on outlays of that move?

Mr FOLEY: I will just ask Mr Hodges to assist the Committee on that point.

Mr HODGES: The actual impact on wages in total—as you see from the Estimates statement—is very small. What it reflects is rather a move to the professional stream of classification of officers. That, in turn, reflects the need for people with professional-type qualifications in areas such as the various health sciences, engineering and, indeed, occupational health and safety, as a tertiary field of study. So it reflects a move towards putting people

into the professional stream of classification as opposed to the administrative or technical stream, which is the reality of what the work that they do now encompasses.

Mr SANTORO: On page 47 it is indicated that the Commonwealth provided \$4.48m in specific purpose payments for accreditation training for youth in 1993-94, reducing to zero in 1994-95. Can you indicate what impact that will have on outlays by the Department in this area for 1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: This is part of the ups and downs of funding in the area of vocational education and training. As you will see there, on page 47 there are a number of programs the funding for which has gone down. But as one tap is turned off, others are turned on. Fortunately, the Commonwealth, through its White Paper, has seen the benefit of providing funding generally, or increased funding, in the area of vocational education and training. I will ask the Director-General to take the matter further.

Mr MARSHMAN: The answer to this part is that there is no provision, because the money in that area will go to tender this year from the Commonwealth. It is up to colleges to bid; so it is impossible for us to provide an estimate or a budget at the beginning of the year. But we will be out to win a big slice of the budget coming from the Commonwealth against the private providers here in Queensland.

Mr FOLEY: This is part of a general theme to which I made reference earlier, namely, that the overall funding for vocational educational and training has increased by 4.5 per cent, but the way the funds are made up is changing. There is no longer simply a pool of money that flows directly to TAFE. There are, if you like, two pools: a base pool and a competitive pool.

The base pool provides for a continuation of base funding to ensure the continued operation of TAFE as a stable structure. The competitive pool encourages TAFE and private training providers to be more responsive to the needs of industry and the needs of, in this case, youth. The days are gone when youth or other clients of the TAFE system—or industry, for that matter—simply took what was on offer and had to make the best of it. Increasingly in this area we are seeing the need for TAFE and other training providers to compete. No more spectacular example could I give than visiting Mornington Island, where we had traditionally provided vocational education and training services out of the Mount Isa College of TAFE, only to be told by the Aboriginal community there that they preferred, on balance, to use a private training provider because it better suited their needs. I think that illustrates the way the world is changing.

Mr SANTORO: Page 109 of the Estimates statements refers to the need for improved controls over the handling of cash and cheques in relation to the Youth Employment Service. I notice that a review was conducted by the Evaluation and Strategic Audit Unit of DEVETIR in relation to these problems and that certain recommendations were being made. Could you give us an idea of the severity of the problems that were identified? What

are the steps that have been put into place to overcome those problems?

Mr FOLEY: I will ask Mr Carlon to go into the detail. In short, within DEVETIR we have an Evaluation and Strategic Audit Unit. The job of that unit is to identify problems as they emerge and try to take steps to make sure that they are fixed.

In the Youth Employment Service, we are dealing with people who are disadvantaged. They have to be dealt with in a way which is flexible and sensitive to their needs. It is nonetheless important that there be financial discipline involved. That issue was identified in that review. I will ask Mr Carlon to take the matter further.

Mr CARLON: The issues here were not enormously serious. They basically boiled down mainly to lack of following laid-down procedures, sometimes through lack of training, particularly with a large number of new youth employment consultants coming on in 19 locations across Queensland and not necessarily being given the right instructions. There were some—and I cannot remember all the detail of them—procedures which needed tightening up. As it says in this statement: following the release of the report, the divisional managers endorsed the findings, and procedures have been altered and put in place.

There has been recent training. We brought all our administration officers from the Youth Employment Service to Brisbane a month ago and put them through a course conducted by our Corporate Services area to overcome those training deficiencies. The various recommendations to tighten our controls have been put in place. As to the detail of them—I cannot recall every aspect, I am afraid.

Mr FOLEY: The importance in this area is to ensure that these officers, while they must be open and flexible to do the sort of job that we ask of them, retain sufficient financial discipline to make sure that they are accountable for the expenditure of taxpayers' money. That is why these steps were put in place, to ensure that that problem was addressed.

Mr SANTORO: In relation to building long service leave—page 134 of the Estimates statements deals with the building long service leave program and highlights the fact that the levy had raised \$22.7m by 31 March, compared with anticipated income of \$18.5m. How much do you expect will be raised for 1993-94 by 30 June? What is your estimate for the corresponding period 1994-95?

The CHAIRMAN: I am afraid that the time for questions from non-Government members has expired. We turn to questions from Government members.

Mr BRISKEY: I refer you once again to Budget Paper No. 3 at page 137, wherein it mentions that there is currently a review of the Workplace Health and Safety Act and recommendations for amendments to that Act. Could you advise the Committee where the review is up to and when the results will be known?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. The review of the Workplace Health and Safety Act has been the subject of a

good deal of consultation. It started back in February 1993 under the Business Regulation Review Program. My concern during the course of the review was to ensure that it addressed not simply the issues of the regulatory burden on industry but looked a little more deeply at the relationship between workplace health and safety and workers' compensation and the financial incentives and disincentives for employers in that area. To some extent, that latter point has been addressed through the merit bonus review in workers' compensation.

That other issue about its relationship with the Workers Compensation Division needed to be addressed. At its June 1994 meeting, the Workplace Health and Safety Council, which is the statutory body under the Act set up to advise me as the Minister, considered a report from a subcommittee, the subcommittee representing the industrial partners, including the trade unions and the industry bodies, and the Workplace Health and Safety Council decided that the report be finalised and referred to me as the Minister as an interim report.

I am expecting that the review of this Act will be completed during the course of this year and brought before the Parliament. But the process in this area does involve a good deal of consultation. However, that really is the essence of what workplace health and safety is about. It is not about Government simply coming along as the policeman with the big stick, it is about changing the culture, ensuring that we get the sort of changed attitudes to workplace safety that we have achieved with regard to road safety. It is about ensuring that employees understand their duties and rights and that employers understand their duties and rights under the Act and that they see the financial benefits to be gained from sensible workplace health and safety practices.

Mr BRISKEY: Within the Workers' Compensation program it states—

"It is expected that 850 companies employing approximately 200,000 workers will have workplace-based rehabilitation programs established this year. This represents an increase in programs of 115% over the total 1992-93 figure."

What does workplace rehabilitation involve and what programs do you have in place to ensure that this expected massive increase will occur?

Mr FOLEY: Workplace rehabilitation means providing rehabilitation to an injured worker in the workplace rather than simply in the hospital or in the clinic. In that respect, it is a very sensible way to achieve our twin goals, namely, of providing a service to the injured worker and of keeping the costs of workers' compensation to a minimum. Our experience in this area is that people who, say, were off for a number of months with a back injury have been encouraged to get back into the workplace sooner if there is in place a workplace rehabilitation scheme. What that means is putting someone on light duties but with a program to help them graduate back into the workplace.

The Workers Compensation Board has developed a comprehensive marketing program

which will appear on the television and throughout other media in the near future. This is really based on a similar campaign conducted in Victoria in late 1992 which resulted in significant reductions of up to 15 per cent in the numbers and durations of new claims lodged. It is also targeted at helping medical practitioners understand the benefits of workplace rehabilitation because many medical practitioners are trained in the traditional rehabilitative services involving hospitals and clinics. But the workplace can be more therapeutic than the scalpel in some cases, and if we can achieve a sensible use of workplace rehabilitation before people become locked into an invalid lifestyle, it is good for the workers, good for their families who are dependent upon the income stream from them, and of course good for the employer by keeping the costs to a minimum. For that reason we have encouraged employers to do a series of courses in workplace rehabilitation offered through the excellent services of Mr Sielaff's TAFE colleges. The workplace rehabilitation program has so far resulted in over 840 companies implementing detailed in-house rehabilitation policies at their workplaces, and that is something we hope to encourage.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Minister, I would like to talk about the portability of building long service leave for a moment. I refer you to page 153 of Budget Paper No. 3, the Program Statements. On page 153 it states that the most significant highlight of 1993-94 for the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Board was "the substantial turnaround in the cash flow to the Board which allowed a reduction in the long service leave levy rate from 0.5% to 0.4%". Could the Minister tell us what exactly this has meant to the building and construction industry in this State?

Mr FOLEY: The reduction of the levy has meant a boost for the building and construction industry. It means in short that a construction project of, say, \$100,000 on what might be a home is reduced from \$500 down to \$400 for the ordinary person. I might say out of an abundance of desire to assist Mr Santoro in his inquiry that I am happy to answer his question in the context of answering this. So in response to Mr Santoro's question of how much will be raised in portable long service leave levies in 1993-94, the answer is an estimated \$30m, and the corresponding amount for 1994-95 is \$25.71m. What the reduction in the levy rate means is that the burden on the building and construction industry has been reduced.

I should say that it is the intention of the Government and the intention of that Board to further reduce the levy as the actuarial basis of the scheme permits. The experience in New South Wales was that a levy rate of 0.6 per cent in 1986 fell to 0.1 per cent in 1993, and has now been suspended until December 1994. Nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see that levy come down. It has been able to be reduced, I might say, because of the assistance and cooperation rendered by local government in Queensland. I pay tribute to the Local Government Association and to its President, Mr Jim Pennell, who cooperated with the Government in introducing a new scheme so that

building permits would not, or applications for building permits, would not be received until production of a receipt for payment of the levy. In that way, compliance in this area has increased substantially. What that means is that a much larger percentage of those who should be paying the levy are paying the levy. As a consequence, it would be possible to bring the levy rate down, we hope, gradually over time.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Just following on from that, I imagine that then you are able to assure the public that the scheme is not going to be become a drain on the public purse.

Mr FOLEY: I certainly can assure the public of that. When I became Minister and visited that Board, I was very concerned about the low rate of compliance and directed them to take steps to fix it, as a result of which they did take urgent interim steps to involve the Workplace Health and Safety Division in the administration of collection of the levy. That significantly increased compliance, and then we made the necessary arrangements with local government and the necessary legislative changes to do it. But this is a scheme which is self-funding, and which is going to remain self-funding. It will not become a drain on the public purse. In fact, on the contrary, this scheme is designed to achieve a gradual reduction of the levy over time. It is the hallmark of this Government that it is fiscally responsible and all the liabilities under this scheme will be fully funded from the levy which the scheme collects.

I am advised that the Board's actual levy income collected to 31 May totalled some \$27.8m, while the Board's investment income to 31 May totalled \$1.12m. The actuarial soundness of the Board enables me to give that assurance that there is no way that this scheme will become a drain on the public purse.

Ms SPENCE: Minister, I refer you to page 147 of Budget Paper No. 3 to the employment of TAFE tutors. This is a big question for nearly midnight, but could you explain the impact of these TAFE tutors on the TAFE system generally?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, and I thank the honourable member. Ms Spence is, of course, a teacher and has a considerable interest in this area. By employing tutors, we have been able to have a greater range of persons delivering TAFE services so that the teachers can be more effectively utilised in a teaching role. During the 1993 academic year, some 6 032 places, that is student places, were achieved. By using tutors, it enables the student to have the subject taught by a teacher, but the follow-up, the demonstration work and the tutorial assistance can be provided by these tutors. We were able to get some 500 tutors through the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan, which enhanced the budget provisions in this area.

In the 1994 academic year, 496 tutors or the full-time equivalent of teachers, have been placed with a request to appoint another seven, and 2 742 full-time and 5 521 part-time places have been created, and this already exceeds the targets. So it is a question of employing tutors by no means to

replace teachers but to supplement their role and to ensure that we can offer to students in the TAFE system training services at the most reasonable price and that we can have flexibility in making teaching provision through the teachers themselves and through follow-up with the tutors.

That initiative, I am pleased to say, has come notwithstanding the initial uncertainty of teachers as to how tutors were to fit into the role in the training system. Tutors, from my experience visiting TAFE colleges throughout the State, are doing a very fine job in helping deliver training services to the many students in our TAFE system.

Ms SPENCE: Just a follow-up, Minister: when you quote that number of tutors, are you counting the people who would teach those adult enrichment classes which are advertised in the paper and which people pay for?

Mr FOLEY: No, those adult community education classes are something different again. I am referring here again to the vocational education and training area.

Ms SPENCE: Right.

Mr BRISKEY: Minister, the students from Wellington Point State High School in my electorate are involved in the Australian Vocational Certificate system with the Bayside Community College. Could you explain to the Committee the impact of the AVC system on traditional entry-level training?

Mr FOLEY: The Australian Vocational Certificate, or AVC, is intended to be the replacement for traditional structured training, that is apprenticeships and traineeships, and it is, if you like, an attempt to bridge the gap between school and the workplace. It is based upon the need to ensure that people entering the work force have basic competencies and that they have flexible pathways that they can take and pursue.

In terms of implementing the AVC system—the AVC Task Force has facilitated three local industry education network projects, 12 work-based pilots, and 16 institution-based pilots. It has helped to create some 320 additional employment and training places that implement Queensland's contribution to an integrated vocational training system.

It is probably best understood if one goes back to the Carmichael report and looks at Laurie Carmichael's recommendations. There has been considerable progress, for example, in the metals industry in the development of the modules which enable persons to progress and put together various packages of modules. These enable them to have a number of different career pathways and enable the industry—in that case, the metals industry—to have the benefit of diversely skilled persons. The demands of the modern workplace are so much more diverse than the workplace of yesteryear, so we need to ensure that traditional vocational education and training is enriched and diversified to assist people who will be going into different pathways, whether they be in the traditional trade areas or in areas such as business studies, hospitality, tourism and so on.

The CHAIRMAN: There are now three minutes remaining in the current time allocation. Under Sessional Orders, this is usually divided between Government and non-Government members. However, in the interests of harmony between Committee members and as a show of goodwill, we are prepared to give Mr Santoro all of those three minutes.

Mr SANTORO: I am overwhelmed. I refer to Budget Paper No. 3, page 150. I note that there is a reduction in the number of full-time equivalent employees allocated to corporate services of 56. That represents a 16 per cent change, while the salaries and wages component is reduced by just 3 per cent. Could you explain that anomaly? If you care to take that question on notice, I will be able to ask a couple of others. That would show enormous goodwill.

Mr FOLEY: Hope does spring eternal in the human breast, Mr Santoro.

Mr SANTORO: Particularly when it applies to you, Mr Foley.

Mr FOLEY: The area of corporate services involves a nominal reduction by 56, but 35 positions were transferred from the Information Technology Branch to the Workers Compensation Program following reversion of certain information technology services to that program. The balance of estimated staffing level reductions will be achieved through the devolution of certain human resource management and financial responsibilities to delivery units—for example, the on-line Queensland Government Financial Management System processing. The ongoing devolution will occur after appropriate training, support networks and compliance audit procedures are put in place.

I cite the case of workers' compensation. Under the previous year, the delivery of information technology in that area was done through the corporate services area. Now, it is being undertaken by the Workers Compensation Division itself. That illustrates the sort of effort that is being made by corporate services. Reference has been made throughout to the agreements made between the executive director of corporate services and each of the other programs. As you will see in the Budget Papers, the program funding for corporate services has been driven into each of the other programs. The reason for doing that is to ensure that the program's real costs are there for all the world to see, including the program managers, and to ensure that they build in those costs when they are assessing the success or otherwise of the program. But that reduction in full-time equivalent employees reflects that process.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 28 April 1994. On behalf of the Committee, I wish to thank the Ministers and their staff for their assistance throughout today's hearings. I wish to thank also the Committee's secretariat for their efforts, both in the lead-up to the hearing and today. I wish to thank the Hansard staff and the parliamentary attendants and staff for their assistance. Lastly, I wish to thank all members of the Committee for their support and participation.

Mr FOLEY: With your indulgence, Madam Chair, I record my thanks to the Committee and my thanks to the officers of my Department, both in respect of the particular task they had in preparing for this Budget Estimates Committee and more generally in terms of their service to the Queensland people and the work of my Department over the past year.

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare this public hearing closed.

The Committee adjourned at 12.04 a.m.