

## CONTENTS

Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing .....	261
Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs .....	284
Department of Environment and Heritage .....	309

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**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D**

Mr R. Welford

Dr L. Clark                      Mr D. Slack  
 Mr B. Littleproud              Mr J. Szczerbanik  
 Mrs M. Rose                      Mr M. Veivers  
The Committee commenced at 11.30 a.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, SPORT AND RACING****In Attendance**

Hon. R. Gibbs, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing  
 Mr David Williams, Director-General  
 Mr Mark Peters, Executive Director (Policy and Programs Division)  
 Mr Peter Phair, Executive Director (Regional and Corporate Services Division)  
 Mr Peter Richardson, Manager Financial Services Unit  
 Mr Laurie Longland, Executive Director (Regional and Corporate Services Division)  
 Dr Bob Mason, Director (Racing Services)  
 Mr Ken Rosebery, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee D now open. This Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill for the areas set out in the Sessional Orders. The organisational units will be examined in the following order: Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing between now and 3.30 p.m., or such of that period as is necessary; followed by the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs; followed by the Minister for Environment and Heritage.

For the benefit of members of the Committee and the Minister and his staff, I should note that the time limit for questions is one minute, and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning chime will be given prior to the expiration of these time limits, and at the end of the time limit two chimes will be given. The Committee has agreed that it will seek to its best endeavours to confine questions to matters which relate to the Estimates and, in particular, the Estimates of expenditure in the Budget Papers. I will be encouraging members to confine their questions in that way.

As set out in the Sessional Order, the first 20 minutes of questions are to be from non-Government members and the second 20 minutes from Government members, and so on in rotation. At the end of the 20-minute period, three chimes will be given to indicate a change from Government to non-Government, or vice versa. For the benefit of Hansard, I would ask that departmental witnesses identify themselves before they answer a question.

Further, this Committee has sought to refine the operations of the Estimates procedure by dealing with departments in a more disciplined way both for

the efficiency of the operation of this Committee and to enable departments to plan their work for the day. For this purpose, the Committee has resolved to deal with the first department according to program areas in the following order: firstly, the Tourism program; secondly, Racing; thirdly, the Sport and Recreation program; fourthly, Liquor Licensing; fifthly, Youth; and then Corporate Services. It is understood that there is a time limit on the period for dealing with this Department, and so the Committee will work its way through the programs in that order so far as time allows. The purpose of organising the questioning in this way is to allow those departmental or agency staff from a program area which has been dealt with to be able to depart the Chamber and return to the work of their department.

We have some non-Government non-Committee members here to ask questions, and they will be invited to put their questions in the periods allowed for questioning by Opposition members at the conclusion of the questioning by Committee members of the Opposition, there being no other questions from Government members outside those on the Committee.

So I declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

I invite Mr Veivers to commence his questioning.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Does the Minister want to make any statement before we start? You do not want to do that, Minister?

**The CHAIRMAN:** If Mr Veivers is happy, I invite the Minister to make any brief introductory statement that he may wish to make.

**Mr GIBBS:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I would simply like to make a couple of points that the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing embodies the surge in growth and confidence that has placed Queensland at the forefront of this nation's economic recovery. 1993-94 was a record budgetary year for sport in Queensland, and next year's allocation is even greater—a direct result of this Government's far-sighted decision to invest poker machine profits back into the community. Sporting clubs have unprecedented resources to channel back into their community, as a result of the introduction of the machines, and this is enhanced by a sporting allocation of \$49m, which is seven times the amount when the Goss Government came to office.

Taking out administrative costs and an unrequited transfer to Treasury, this leaves \$32m to be distributed from the grassroots through to our expanded programs for elite athletes at the Queensland Academy of Sport.

The 2000 Olympics offers athletes, the tourism and the general business sectors a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, and we will harness our efforts through the Olympic Task Force that this Budget establishes. The Government has also set, and will maintain, record funding to the economic powerhouse of

Queensland, the tourist industry. A debt-free Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation will continue to foster our State's leading generator of jobs. It will do so with unprecedented cooperation from the private sector, which will contribute \$5m to cooperative advertising campaigns. The Queensland Events Corporation will make the logical progression to my Department from 1 July, allowing a closer working relationship with the QTTC.

This year, Queensland will host the World Masters Games, the Indy and the One Australia challenge, which obviously will enhance our excellent reputation as a vibrant and multifaceted tourist destination. The State's labour-intensive liquor industry will generate more than \$110m in Government revenue and employ 24 000 people. Our fledgling wine industry will be supported by innovative legislation, which will allow it to operate in a manner conducive to the expansion of its tourism potential.

Finally, my Department's Youth Bureau will continue to refine its role as the Goss Government's lead agency for youth affairs, as it oversees the implementation of the Government's first ever youth policy.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. I invite questions from Mr Veivers.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Minister, one of the focuses of the 1994-95 Tourism program is to develop a strategic plan that identifies the policy issues that the Government needs to address to ensure the strong future development of the industry. At present, there is a chronic infrastructure shortage, which has the potential to halt tourism growth in the next few years. Has funding been allocated to prepare a strategic plan within the next financial year so that these issues can be addressed?

**Mr GIBBS:** The strategic plan is a vital part of the tourism industry because it provides a framework for the development of the industry. It identifies the role of Government in this development. A number of the things at which we are looking go right across the broad spectrum of the Queensland tourist industry. Our strategy is aimed to do that. We are looking, for example, at responsibilities and matters which affect regional Queensland. We are looking at issues such as research and statistics.

I am sure that you would be aware, as the Opposition spokesman, that a lot of the research and statistics which have tended to come out in this industry over many years have probably tended, in many cases, to inflate the progressive nature or otherwise of the industry. That has been one of the problems, particularly since the recession. A number of high-flying operators within the industry crashed. That has had a detrimental effect on finance houses, banking institutions and so on, and on their support for the industry.

There is a need to improve that performance. We are looking, obviously, at questions of product development, our marketing, investment and finance. We are looking at ecologically sustainable development within the tourist industry, which is a program being put together by a number of agencies

within Government at the present time. The program will produce a full Ecotourism Strategy for Queensland. We have a responsibility to look at the social impacts that tourism has throughout the State. Cairns would be the logical place about which one could say that the social impacts of tourism have had a fairly traumatic impact on the community. We have a responsibility to look at that issue. It goes without saying that we must continue to have a broad look at programs relating to education, training, employment and industrial relations within the industry.

Industrial relations performs a vital part of the industry. The Government is well on track with enterprise bargaining within the industry at this time. Our recent plan was released at the Whitsunday conference. We are looking at the broad issue of the provision of infrastructure required in the future. Our first study was on the Cairns and Whitsunday regions. In that area, we are well on top of what we are required to do in terms of a future strategy for the industry.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The QTTC corporate plan sets criteria to measure the effectiveness of its operations. One of those is improvements in occupancy and the utilisation rates of tourism infrastructure. Will additional funding be allocated on top of the QTTC's 1994-95 grant so that infrastructure needs can be investigated and met?

**Mr GIBBS:** Infrastructure needs, as I have just pointed out to you, are an ongoing process at which the QTTC obviously looks. More importantly, the importance that Government places on the future of infrastructure is well reflected by the fact that within the recent Budget something like \$3.4 billion was set aside specifically for infrastructure throughout Queensland. It must be remembered that, when we are talking about infrastructure within the tourist industry, part of that infrastructure is reflected in the need to provide, for example, better health services in the community. We would all be aware of the impact that a lack of adequate health services has on markets. For example, in Bali, an inadequacy in infrastructure has had a disastrous effect on its market. Education performs a vital role in that area, as does health, which obviously brings in broad issues such as roadworks programs and so on.

Within my Department we have developed the Tourism Policy Bureau, whose broad charter is to look at infrastructure costs. As part of its charter, it holds discussions with international airlines and so on. So we have a budgetary amount which has been set aside for the Tourism Policy Bureau within the Department, which this year will be \$824,000. As I said, on top of that, there has been a commitment from the Government working through all agencies across the Government through all departments to look at infrastructure requirements.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Department of Tourism lists amongst its significant achievements in 1993-94 a successful involvement with the 1994 Indy on the Gold Coast, an event that it claimed had a 10 per cent higher attendance and was \$1m cheaper to stage than the 1993 event. That is on page 329 of the Program Statements, under the heading "Performance 1993-94". Bearing that success in mind,

can you explain what funding is provided in the 1994-95 Budget specifically for funding assistance to the 1995 Indy and the following years to which Government has contracted or is going to contract?

**Mr GIBBS:** There is \$5m provided in the Budget this year specifically for Indy. At this stage—and I cannot give you a commitment as to what amounts may be put aside in future years—the obvious intention of the Government is to work with all agencies who are a part of Indy to reduce costs and overheads at all times for the event.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I would presume that you are looking for sponsorships to boost this event.

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes. Obviously, we are continuing to look for sponsorship. Recently, my Director-General, Mr Williams, who is here today, and the Chairman of the Queensland Events Corporation, who is technically in charge of running the Indy event, have been in the United States to try to conclude final contractual arrangements with the Indy operators in the United States. Part of that visit—and it will be a part of a visit that I will make later this year to the United States—is to have further decisions with the CART organisation and major companies in the United States with a view to attracting them here to support this event.

It is worth while saying that in the United States the event that we now run on the Gold Coast is recognised by far and away as the most professional and the best event for Indy apart from the event on the Indianapolis track itself. That augurs well for us. I believe that this year will be favourable for us in terms of sponsorships, owing to the fact that Government made the decision early to go ahead with it in 1995, and for contractual arrangements to be finalised for a further three years beyond 1995. That in itself will have, and already is having, the effect of ensuring far better support from our sponsors.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Are we cemented into those ongoing contracts for the following years?

**Mr GIBBS:** We will be cemented in once the documentation is signed. There were a number of issues there which, when I became Minister responsible for the event, I believed needed to be reviewed. I say that with the greatest of respect for the people who made the decisions before me. In the first year of Indy, I think people had to make decisions fairly quickly. One of the things, obviously, that we are looking at there will be a new contractual arrangement in relation to the television rights. I am on the public record as having said that it is not a happy situation for me, where we have a marvellous event, to think that we should be paying \$1m to a television station for it to show the event. That is an amount which I believe will be certainly part of a new contractual arrangement. There are matters there relative to the transportation costs of the Indy cars to Australia for the event, and other matters which at this stage I think it would be not quite proper for me to mention. There are some commercial confidentialities around these until such time as the contractual arrangements and discussions are finalised. I am absolutely confident that those

contractual arrangements will be far better for Queensland than they have been in the past.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Do you believe that the Government is providing sufficient financial support in 1994-95 Budget to permit the QTTC to operate at its maximum capacity?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes, I do, most assuredly. The Budget Papers, which obviously some in the tourist industry—and I am sure you—have perused at first glance would indicate that there has been a substantial cut in Government funding to the QTTC. That is not the case. The reality is that within the Budget Papers the amount is down by \$5m. That is because in 1993-94 we had budgeted some \$10m for the Indy event. This year, we have only budgeted \$5m for Indy. With the inclusion of the Queensland Events Corporation in my portfolio, this year we have put into the Budget Papers something like \$2.15m, which increases the figure somewhat. It should not be forgotten that last year we increased the QTTC budget by \$5.7m specifically to allow the QTTC to go into a more aggressive mode of marketing, both domestically and overseas. The commitment was that the additional money allocated last year would continue for a period of three years prior to a review being undertaken.

I am confident that we have provided the QTTC with a budget that will enable it to remain ahead of every other comparable agency in Australia that is responsible for the promotion of tourism. In addition to that, as a result of other financial measures that have taken place within the QTTC, it now finds itself debt-free for the very first time since 1990. Coupled with what seems to be growing support from the QTTC for joint marketing or cooperative marketing efforts with the private sector, I am very sure that we have committed adequate resources to ensure the ongoing success of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The 1993 tourism program evaluation report by the QTTC says—

"A market analyst has been employed by the QTTC to coordinate the sourcing and communication of statistical information."

Will this service be continued in 1994-95 and, if so, at what cost?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes, the service will be continued through 1994-95. One of the major roles for that particular person will be to work cooperatively with the new agency established by Prime Minister Keating in last year's Budget to address some of those anomalies. I refer to the Tourism Research Forecasting Council, which was established by the Federal Labor Government to allow a more accurate reflection of figures and movements and other matters that go on within the industry. It is important that as a State Government we play a role in that organisation, hence the establishment of this particular position down there. Approximately \$50,000 has been allocated in the budget for the ongoing performance of that person.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I note that the Minister and the Department have proposed the establishment of the Olympic Task Force Committee at a cost of

\$287,000. Will this committee consist of present departmental or QTTC employees, or contracted consultants? Have you invited any community organisations or individuals to contribute to this committee at no cost to the Government?

**Mr GIBBS:** It is not my intention that there will be any contractual consultants drawn onto this particular committee. The committee will reflect a broad range of expertise throughout Queensland. It will reflect expertise from within the business community, people from within the tourist industry and people representing sporting organisations. As a result of my attendance yesterday at the launch of the first ever State branch of the Australian Paralympic Council, it will be imperative that we also include a representative of that very august body on the organisation. We tend to forget at times that our paralympians have as high a profile and as keen a performance edge as our able-bodied athletes do. It must be remembered that they will be a vital part of the games in Atlanta and in Sydney.

It will be a broadly representative committee. I think it is important that we have a representative of local government on the committee. I certainly admire the initiative taken by other people. Something like four committees have already been formed throughout Queensland. We have a committee in north Queensland, and the Lord Mayor of Brisbane has formed a committee. If we are to maximise the benefits that we can all gain from the 2000 Olympics, it is imperative that we have a team which has overall responsibility for coordinating those efforts. That is what the job of the 2000 Olympic Task Force will be.

**Mr VEIVERS:** And it will not be over the \$287,000?

**Mr GIBBS:** That funding has been for one year only. After we get by Atlanta and as it starts to really wind up over that final four years, if there is a need to put more resources in there, then obviously we would have to look seriously at further funding for it. The allocation of \$287,000 will provide funds for two full-time staff; promotional advertising material; secretarial support for a task force consisting of prominent Queenslanders; some travel by the Queensland task force; and general administrative costs within that particular unit.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Department's corporate plan for 1994 to 1996 says—

"A performance measure of the Department's promotion of a favourable tourism and investment climate in Queensland will be the raising of tourism funding to a level comparable to that allocated to other export earnings."

Do you believe that the \$31m funding provided to the QTTC in the 1994-95 Budget is comparable to that of other export-earning industries in Queensland?

**Mr GIBBS:** I suppose it could be argued that we would always like more funding for the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. I know that the manager of the QTTC, who is with me today, would certainly not disagree with me on that point.

However, there are financial realities that have to be faced when moneys are being allocated at Budget time.

As to the export potential and value of the tourist industry—it already ranks No. 3 in this State's economy. As the Opposition spokesman, you would be aware that by the year 2000 it is freely tipped by financial experts that the tourist industry will probably be our No. 1 export earner of dollars in Queensland, ahead of the primary sector and the mining sector. I return to a point I made earlier. One of the problems that exists—and I believe that this problem exists nationwide, regardless of whether they happen to be Labor Governments or conservative Governments—is that there has never really been a formula arrived at that allows one to put an export value or even a domestic value on the amount of marketing funds that are put aside in the Budget each year as against the earning capacity of the industry.

At present, there is a very close working relationship between QTTC and Queensland Treasury to try to come up with a methodology and a formula that will equate exactly what tourism is worth to this State in terms of dollars as compared with what we spend on marketing, particularly overseas. When we arrive at such a formula, we will have a stronger case in years to come to argue for an even better deal for the tourism industry.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Grants to our 14 regional tourist associations for promoting tourism in various regions are promised in the departmental Estimates documents at page 37. Can you advise the specific amounts that have been allocated to each of those 14 regional bodies in 1994-95?

**Mr GIBBS:** Off the top of my head, we give \$100,000 to 13 of them each year for assistance in marketing and usually some assistance in terms of a staff component. I believe we now allocate \$135,000 or \$155,000 to the Brisbane Visitors Convention Bureau. Of course, we now have a performance requirement built into those allocations.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Could you provide those specific allocations to me?

**The CHAIRMAN:** We might have to come back to that in the next 20-minute batch of questions. That concludes the first 20 minutes of questioning from Opposition members. We now turn to Government members. Dr Clark?

**Dr CLARK:** I have some questions about the marketing operations of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. Could you please comment on the effectiveness to date of the \$5m marketing campaign Live It Up in Queensland? Is it expected that this campaign will continue for the rest of this year and, if so, what allocations are provided for that? What benefits do you anticipate from that expenditure in 1994-95?

**Mr GIBBS:** I think that the Live It Up campaign has certainly been the most successful campaign that any tourism agency in Australia to date has taken up, and I think that is reflected very much in the figures which have come up to date as a result of the ongoing research through QTTC. I have some of the

figures here. For example, in February 1994 as compared to February 1993, our Sunlover sales have increased by 69 per cent and our Queensland Government Travel Centres have increased sales by 45 per cent. In March 1994, compared to March 1993, they were up 28 per cent and up 31 per cent through the Queensland Government Travel Centres. In May 1994, we had an increase of up to 32.5 per cent through our Sunlover sales and up to 29 per cent through the Queensland Government Travel Centres. I think that goes to show, without any doubt, that as long as we are out there aggressively marketing ourselves—and we have the funds there to do it—Queensland tourism will remain as No. 1 in Australia. We expect to see these results translated into statistical evidence when the final end-of-year figures come out, particularly for the domestic tourism market.

Of course, it must be remembered that domestic tourism is still the main nucleus of revenue for our tourism industry in Queensland. It can be truly said that it is the bread and butter of the Queensland tourist industry. The Holiday Intentions Monitor shows that Queensland has the highest advertising recall of any State. In fact, the advertising recall on that monitor in the latest surveys that we did based around the month of April was something like 48 per cent recall for the Live It Up campaign slogan. I think that overall, just on those few figures, you can see that it has in fact been an outstanding success.

**Dr CLARK:** Will that Live It Up campaign continue for this year?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes.

**Dr CLARK:** Or will that be superseded by a new campaign later this financial year?

**Mr GIBBS:** Every campaign and every slogan, regardless of whether it is in the tourist industry or whatever facet of the advertising industry we may be dealing with, has a limited lifetime. Basically, it is up to the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation to make a decision as to the useful life of the Live It Up campaign. Last year, of course, we had a quite famous campaign which caught people's imagination, but it outlived its usefulness after some nine months. As I said, this has a limited life, but it will depend on what our market surveys are showing as to how long that campaign should continue.

**Dr CLARK:** I also have some questions about regional tourism. I think there is no doubt that regional Queensland does offer a wide diversity of tourist experiences. Can you indicate how much of the direct grants to that Live It Up campaign are indeed spent on regional Queensland and what benefits regional Queensland can expect to get from that expenditure?

**Mr GIBBS:** Regional Queensland can expect to benefit quite handsomely from the Live It Up campaign. I might make a point here that one of the problems that we identified early in the days of our Government was that it seemed to me that those areas which geographically, through no fault of their own, happened to be located between the Gold Coast or Cairns seemed to miss out on a lot of focus

from QTTC. The attention given to Cairns and the Gold Coast at some stage was probably proper because they were the two biggest markets in Queensland, but as a result of a significant increase and better product development—a broader range of product to be able to choose from in the Queensland tourist industry—it has been pretty important that we play a more vital role in regional Queensland.

What we have done in conjunction with the Live It Up campaign is to try and encourage various regions of the State either to use Live It Up or to come in and use some totally generic theme relative to their own particular area. For example, on the Gold Coast they have chosen the theme, "Everything under the Sun". Something like \$460,000 has been spent by QTTC on that campaign. The Sunshine Coast has used the slogan, "Take Your Time"—a cost of \$520,000. The Brisbane area slogan has been, "Sunshine City"—\$400,000. Central Queensland has used the Live It Up slogan at a cost of \$180,000. Townsville has used the slogan, "Have the Time of Your Life", which has cost \$233,000. I think you can see from that that there has been a very broad commitment from the Government and certainly from the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation to ensure that all of Queensland is receiving its fair share of funding.

**Dr CLARK:** A major activity of the new Tourism Policy Bureau, which is highlighted on page 41 of your departmental Estimates document, is the enhancement of aviation services to Queensland to support the ongoing development of the tourist industry. The experience in Cairns demonstrates clearly that the provision of adequate international and domestic air transport services is essential for the growth of the tourist industry in Queensland. Can you indicate what resources are being put into ensuring that Queensland is well represented in any decision-making on future airline services?

**Mr GIBBS:** The policy bureau, which has been recently established in my Department, now has responsibility for governmental activity in relation to discussions and involvement and bilateral agreements with other Governments. Of course, there will come a time when that will come down to a Government-to-Government basis, but certainly they are continuing the very excellent work that the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation had previously had responsibility for.

It is worth while noting that, again, when we came into office in 1989, for the first full year that we were there, there were something like 4 760 international flights into Queensland each year. By the end of this year, that will be close to 8 000 international flights into Queensland on a yearly basis. It goes without saying, I think, that there is a need for us to be out there constantly, actively encouraging, but at the present time the Department provides a Queensland view into a number of very important forums, and they include the Tourism Aviation Group, which is comprised of Federal and State tourism bodies. We have the International Air Services Commission, which is responsible for the allocation of various international air service rights to Australian airlines and, of course, the Commonwealth

Department of Transport during the development, as I have said, of a national position on bilateral agreements and discussions with other countries.

We have received the very excellent news of only recent times, for example, with the opening of the new Kansai International Airport in Japan, of a daily service which will be provided by Qantas—that is, seven services a week directly from Kansai into Brisbane. Four flights have been announced by Ansett Airlines and three by Air New Zealand. In addition to that, I am confident that in the not-too-distant future we can probably expect some announcement from Japan Airlines as well. Those things do not just happen. You must be out there, actively pursuing those operators, talking to them, showing what you have to offer and proving to them that these services can in fact be profitable to their airline. That is just a very brief outline of what we are doing.

**Mrs ROSE:** I have a further question on the Tourism Policy Bureau. One of the principal tasks of the bureau, as highlighted on page 41 of the Department's Estimates document, is the development of a Queensland Tourism Strategy. You spoke about the strategy before, but I would again ask: what are the areas to be addressed, what is the funding allocation and what is the overall purpose of the strategy?

**Mr GIBBS:** The strategy is to ensure that we maintain our role as the No. 1 destination both domestically and internationally in what is a very competitive area in Australia in the tourist industry. QTTC—and I must say even prior to this Government coming into office—has an excellent reputation as being to the fore of both our international and domestic promotions. That is something which we have deemed very necessary that we keep going, hence the need for a look at the QTTC some years ago.

The strategic plan has evolved as part of some restructuring of the QTTC. I mentioned before that part of that strategic plan is to look at issues such as product development marketing, regional issues and the social impacts of tourism. By doing those things, we believe that we still maintain a pretty good edge on our opponents interstate. These were issues which were identified by the Department in conjunction with the tourism industry representatives and confirmed by independent consultants which, from time to time, are utilised by the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. I think that the use of independent consultants at times has the value of being able to get away from what perhaps can be seen as a closed shop situation, or a closed mentality perhaps, and to be able to broaden the visions of the industry itself.

The strategy development allows all participants in the industry to critically analyse their role and goals and to ensure that our industry achieves its full potential for the benefit of Queensland. Within the Budget Papers you will find that we have set aside \$320,000 this financial year for the ongoing role of the tourism strategy. That will be completed approximately by December 1994—the full strategy itself.

**Mrs ROSE:** I have a question about the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. The bulk of the Government's Tourism Program funding of \$28.5m is allocated to the QTTC. You have already described the marketing program in some detail. How else will the Budget allocation to the QTTC benefit the industry?

**Mr GIBBS:** The industry in Queensland is estimated to be worth something like \$6 billion a year to our State's economy. I think more important is the fact that Queensland is increasing its share of the holiday market. Basically, holiday travel is purely discretionary—unlike people who travel on business and visit friends and relatives. I guess that an indicator of the effectiveness of our marketing programs can be reflected in the fact that interstate business to Queensland grew by 16 per cent in 1993. Queensland's share of our interstate holiday market grew two per cent to 27.4 per cent in 1993 at the expense of other States.

I think it is worth while quoting some of the figures here. As I said, we increased our market share by 2 per cent. If you look at Victoria—their's was down 2.3 per cent; ACT was down 1.3 per cent; New South Wales was up 0.6 per cent; South Australia was up 0.8 per cent; and Tasmania was up 0.9 per cent. Now, 63 per cent of all international holiday makers who come to Australia visit Queensland.

Holiday spending by interstate and overseas tourists reached something like \$2.6 billion in 1992-93 in this State. I guess I repeat myself here, but it constantly shows that here in Queensland we are doing it better than the rest of them. Our allocation in the Budget to the QTTC reflects, I think, the successfulness of our ongoing campaign and our commitment to the tourist industry.

As to our hotel occupancy—I remember that the member for Southport raised some concern about this in the Parliament and publicly recently. To the December quarter of 1993, Cairns averaged 80 per cent hotel occupancy; the Gold Coast, 76 per cent; Noosa Shire, 75.4 per cent; and Brisbane, 73 per cent. It is a fact that, at the moment, Queensland is leading Australia in what has been a huge resurgence in hotel occupancies.

**Dr CLARK:** I think you are quite aware of my interest in environmental matters. I wonder whether you might like to elaborate a little on the State Ecotourism Strategy. I think you are very much aware of the need to protect our environmental assets. I believe you visited far-north Queensland and have seen at first-hand just how important it is.

**Mr GIBBS:** The Ecotourism Strategy is an ongoing process. We have not yet finalised that strategy. Cabinet made a decision on this matter some eight months ago, I believe it was. In conjunction with my colleague the Minister for Environment, we are now working on this strategy. In fact, it goes back longer. We made that decision in Cabinet in November 1992. My Department became responsible for it in the latter part of 1993. The anticipated completion date is in December 1994.

I think this shows that we have a very important area to protect. Ecotourism is becoming an emerging

market throughout the world. I suspect that it has tended to become a bit of a buzz word. After all, for years people have been coming to Queensland to see the wonderful things that we have—ecologically speaking—things such as the Barrier Reef, the rainforests and the unique flora and fauna that we have in this State. It is important that programs that we put together and a strategy plan ensure that planning for the future protects those very valuable assets of our tourist industry. That will be done. We are speaking to a broad number of agencies and to people within the tourist industry who are all having an input into it. It has a high educational component which can assist the wider understanding and adoption of environmental awareness and conservation values. In the Budget this year, we have allocated \$100,000, of which \$65,000 has been carried forward from 1993-94 for the ongoing preparation of that strategy.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There are no further questions at this stage. We have nearly completed the 20-minute period. We will return to Opposition members. I invite Mr Healy to ask questions relating to tourism.

**Mr HEALY:** The 1994-95 Budget Program Statements refer to the increase in Sunlover Holiday sales in the 1993-94 financial year. Do you expect the strengthening of Sunlover sales to continue in 1994-95? What are the strategic plans to expand the Sunlover program to international markets? Is it possible that we can obtain a copy of that plan?

**Mr GIBBS:** The latter part of your question I will seek some advice on. Yes, I believe that it is highly probable—not just probable, but I would confidently predict that the ongoing success of Sunlover will continue into the next financial year, particularly as a result of the expansion of Sunlover.

As you are probably aware, we have taken Sunlover offshore into new markets such as New Zealand, Singapore and Hong Kong. I might add that that has not been without some pain. There are some questions being asked within the industry at the moment about the need to expand that market. They are matters which will be considered by the full board of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation in the not-too-distant future. I believe we have every reason to be optimistic about the ongoing growth. In terms of the provision of the plan, are we able to provide a copy of that to the member?

**Mr ROSEBERY:** There are two parts to your question; is that right?

**Mr HEALY:** Yes. What are the strategic plans to expand the program to international markets, and is it possible to get a copy of a strategic plan, if it is available?

**Mr ROSEBERY:** My name is Ken Rosebery. I am the Chief Executive Officer of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation. The plan at this stage—and this is how it reads in our corporate plan, which is freely available—in addition to other strategies, is to develop wholesale programs for selected international markets in order to expose greater depth and variety of Queensland product

and, where practicable, distribute through the ATLAS computer reservation system. This is to be undertaken in consultation with the Queensland tourist industry. In short, it is a new venture to expand our Sunlover operation offshore. Consistent with that, it is being done in a measured way. We have entered the New Zealand market, the Singapore market, Hong Kong and Malaysia. I think we will see how that performs over the next 12 to 18 months before we would consider any further growth beyond that.

**Mr HEALY:** I refer you back to the Olympic Task Force Committee and the estimated cost of that at \$287,000. You have given us a breakdown of exactly which areas that is going to, but is it possible to get a detailed breakdown of exactly where that money is going to be spent in relation to those areas that you mentioned earlier? Can that be provided to the Committee at all?

**Mr GIBBS:** I doubt if that is possible. I gave you the overall Budget, which was in fact \$287,000. That is going to be used for the employment of two full-time staff for promotional and advertising material, secretarial support for a task force consisting of prominent Queenslanders, travel within Queensland for the task force, support of business tourism events and sporting seminars associated with the Olympics, and general administration costs, such as postage, telephones, office equipment and accommodation charges. I would not think that at this stage it would be possible to give you a breakdown of exactly every part of that. There is a settling in process required. If you wish to come back to me in six months, either through a question in the House or a letter to me, I would certainly be willing and able at that stage to provide you with information of how the costs were developing in the general areas.

**Mr HEALY:** That is fine. I would have thought that to that get to that figure of \$287,000 there would have had to have been some sort of breakdown available.

**Mr GIBBS:** If you are referring in some way to a breakdown per region in Queensland, I think that it would be impossible to do that—as it will be impossible to provide representation on the task force from every area of the State. Otherwise we would finish up with a group that is the size of a Portuguese army. We do not want that; we want an effective group that can operation professionally.

**Mr HEALY:** In relation to this subprogram, I refer to Budget Paper No. 3, page 328 of the Program Statements. In the 1993-94 Budget, allocation was made for six full-time employees in the Tourism program. The 1994-95 Budget Papers reveal that there are only four full-time employees in this program. I note that the Government intends to raise that number to six over the next financial year. Why did the Government budget for \$280,000 to be spent on salaries, wages and related payments for six employees over the coming year, when \$358,000 was estimated for the same six employees in the 1993-94 Budget?

**Mr GIBBS:** Certainly. I might ask Mr Peter



Richardson, the financial expert from the Department, to respond to that.

**Mr RICHARDSON:** I am Peter Richardson, the Manager of Finance from the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. I cannot really explain the full details of the initial allocation of that \$380,000, that I think you said it was. I know that it was put together very quickly at a very late stage when the Policy Bureau actually transferred from the QTTC to the department itself. I think that at that stage there were some consultants who were going to be taken on board and some funding was put into the salaries area—incorrectly—at that point in time to fund those consultants. That has been rectified now.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Getting back to that Sunlover Program, what will the cost be to go into international markets? How will you be able to evaluate the cost of that? Do you consider it fair to domestic and international agents to have the QTTC package selling in competition to them? Is not this opposition really unfair when the Government-sponsored package could be exempt from taxes and levies imposed on private operators?

**Mr GIBBS:** The evaluation process obviously would have to be made on a cost-income comparative basis. That is, the cost of having people involved in running the program in those international markets; although primarily they are being run through existing travel agents, anyway. I guess that the cost component can simply be measured on what business those people are, in fact, bringing into Queensland.

The latter part of your question I touched on slightly before. I am aware, and obviously from your question you are aware, that there has been concern expressed to me by a large number of agencies. I shall not go into the specifics of who they are. There have been a large number of agencies that make the point that you have made—should the Government be out there competing in this market against private enterprise? You will get two points of view about that in the tourist industry. If you speak to the thousands of small operators, who really probably are the backbone of the industry throughout the State, they will aggressively say to you that yes, we should be. If you speak to some of the larger operators, obviously they will take an alternative point of view and say: no. That is a matter which I think is a policy decision and one which I have formulated a view on, but it is a matter which I understand the full board of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, which after all has the charter and the responsibility for running this industry in Queensland, are to address shortly in a special board meeting.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The total program funding for the Tourist Program last year was \$34m. Under the 1994-95 Budget, only \$31m is allocated. That money has to cover the same expenditure items as last year, plus the newly acquired Queensland Events Corporation for \$2.15m and the new Olympic Task Force for \$2.17m. If we subtract the funding allocated to these new initiatives, we are left with funding of only \$29.351m, which is really a 14 per cent reduction in real terms on tourism expenditure. I

ask: could you explain why there appears to be this 14 per cent reduction in expenditure while sustaining and expanding the growth in this important industry?

**Mr GIBBS:** I guess it is easy. I suppose that were I in your position I would be trying to give that sleight of hand appearance that there has in fact been a reduction. But you know as well as I do that there has been no reduction. I have already explained to you the fact that we have reduced the Budget allocation for funding for the Indy event from \$10m down to \$5m. In addition, we then added to that the funding for the operation of the Queensland Events Corporation, which is being transferred to my portfolio, of \$2.15m. It must be remembered that the Queensland Events Corporation plays an integral role in Queensland's tourism industry.

I would have thought that this initiative would have brought high praise from the Opposition, in that the Queensland Events Corporation, which is responsible for not just events like the Indy which handsomely benefits the very region that you represent in Queensland—that is, the Gold Coast and the seat of Southport—but also they are responsible for the Gold Coast International Marathon organisation. They are responsible for the One Australia Challenge, which currently is under way or beginning to warm up on the Gold Coast. They are responsible for the bringing to Queensland of the World Masters Games, which again are going to have a financial benefit not just for the Brisbane area but also for the Gold Coast. It must be remembered that people who go to World Masters Games tend to be the big spenders who have money. Undoubtedly, a lot of those people will go to the Gold Coast to see the wonderful features and attractions that you have down there, of which you are one, of course, Mr Veivers.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I hope they are taking a video of this, Minister.

**Mr GIBBS:** I would imagine that in the broad context of the tourist industry you would have seen this as the wonderful initiative that it is.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I turn to ministerial and departmental expenses. As the Minister responsible for the portfolios of Tourism, Sport and Racing, you made overseas trips during the 1993-94 financial year. I ask: can you detail the number of staff who travel with you and the total cost of that overseas travel for yourself, the ministerial staff and Government members of Parliament who have been paid for by the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing?

**Mr GIBBS:** I can certainly detail for you—with a little thought; I cannot recall each one of my trips in the particular financial year—but overseas travel in 1992-93 approximated \$33,000, which entailed a visit from 22 June to 5 July 1992 to Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore; in 1993, approximately \$60,000 on overseas travel, which entailed visits from 24 May to 29 May 1993 to New Zealand for the Youth Ministers Council and licensing matters; 7 July to 10 July 1993 to Singapore to launch the Sunlover Holidays program and discussions with international airlines; 8 September to 10 September 1993, to New Zealand

for the launch of Sunlover again. My latest trip was on 15 October to 1 November 1993, which was to Hong Kong, Vietnam and China—obviously, particularly in areas such as Vietnam and China—to explore the opportunities for Queensland of new markets in those areas.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Does that include ministerial staff who travel with you?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes, that does include the ministerial staff who accompany me. I would point out that, as I recollect, apart from one journey overseas, I think, in 1990, I make it a rule of practice that only one member from my staff ever accompanies me on overseas travel.

**Mr VEIVERS:** You have not taken members of Parliament, Government members of Parliament?

**Mr GIBBS:** No, I have never taken any member of Parliament, as I recall, on any overseas trip with me. I am always, of course, accompanied by my Director-General on overseas travel and, in most places, of course, I am usually linked up with those overseas representatives whom we have in our various international offices of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation.

**Mr VEIVERS:** You have plans for travelling in the upcoming financial year, and I accept this. Where is the allocation made for that proposed expenditure? Does it come out of the Department?

**Mr GIBBS:** That allocation, again, as I understand, was part of our departmental allocation. I have a proposal for, at this stage, one overseas trip over the next financial year, and the budget for that will be \$30,000, and the possibility of another trip which, at this stage, certainly has not been confirmed in any shape or form. That money does, in fact, come out of my departmental budget—I am sorry, out of the Ministerial Services Branch, where that allocation is made.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Can you provide a list of the consultants and the purposes of their engagements last year, which was paid? What is the amount allocated to your Department's advertising in the 1994-95 budget? What amount is outlaid for corporate staff seminars and training?

**Mr GIBBS:** For all agencies within my Department, including Tourism, the amount paid to consultants was \$588,993.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Right. That concludes the Tourism part of it. I was wondering if I could turn to Racing now? Is that convenient?

**Mr GIBBS:** If you could give me one moment to go to my racing section? Certainly.

**Mr VEIVERS:** In 1992-93, \$8m of the \$23.6m appropriated under the Racing Development Fund for funding to various clubs lapsed. The reason given in the annual report was lower levels of approvals of advances to racing organisations. In 1993-94, \$2m that was budgeted for the RDF was not spent. What has caused that shortfall, Minister?

**Mr GIBBS:** This financial year, I have been very wary about some of the applications made by some of the racing clubs throughout Queensland, primarily because of the drought situation throughout

the State. It became obvious to me 12 months ago that, in a number of our major regional racing centres in particular, if the drought were to continue without any relief rain, obviously in order to keep racing active and going in those areas we would have to look at providing some financial assistance to them. Probably the best example would be Toowoomba, where in the latter months of the drought it was costing the turf club quite a small fortune to cart and provide water for track-related purposes. For us not to have stepped in and given that club some financial assistance, you face the distinct possibility where racing may have closed down in that centre due to the unsafe state of the track. If that had happened—my memory seems to recall that you are looking at full-time jobs for something like 520 people in Toowoomba directly related to the racing industry.

It would have been foolhardy of myself as the Minister and certainly irresponsible, I think, to be making allocations for funding in other areas of Queensland. Some of the applications are for photo-finish equipment at places such as the Birdsville racetrack, and toilet facilities at a track where they might race for three hours once a year. You are going to be spending huge amounts of money on toilet blocks, etc. It has been a matter of making some priority decisions.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Minister, despite your outspoken criticism of the extent of doping in the racing industry that the budgetary allocation—

**Mr GIBBS:** I am having difficulty hearing you.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I beg your pardon. I did not think that anyone would have trouble hearing me. Why is it that, despite your outspoken criticism of the extent of doping in the racing industry, the budgetary allocation to the Racing Codes Advisory Board, which oversees the Racing Science Centre's Doping Control Program and reports to you as Minister on drug control for three racing codes, has dropped from \$31,000 in 1993-94 to only \$8,000 in the 1994-95 budget? Considering the importance of this Board, can you justify a decrease of almost 78 per cent in that area?

**Mr GIBBS:** Certainly. The Racing Code Advisory Board is, in fact, becoming, I guess, an obsolete body within the industry. The main responsibility now for advice to me in terms of methodologies which may be required in the three parts of the racing industry, that is the greyhound racing, the thoroughbred racing and the harness racing industry, now comes from the drug laboratory located at Albion Park. The drug laboratory, of course, is responsible for the carrying out of testing on animals within the three industries. I understand that there has, in fact, been an increase in the number of samples taken from animals, again in those three industries. It should not be interpreted that the Racing Codes Advisory Board, in being wound down, does in fact mean any less efficiency within the industry.

There have been, in fact, as a result of the reorganisation within my portfolio, new scientific methods developed and brought into routine practices to improve testing. There were 8 909

samples received in 1993-94 and 6 664 analysed, and there were two new mass spectrometers purchased at a cost of \$150,000 each. The spectrometers, of course, being very sophisticated state-of-the-art equipment, are used now to identify and to break down the various drugs which may be used when those people who, without some integrity, are trying to drug an animal within the industry. What should never be lost sight of is that this is an ongoing battle, and whilst some in the industry are critical, at times, of the amount of money that is used at the drug testing laboratory at Albion Park, without integrity in this industry we simply do not have an industry. For example, people will not punt on an animal at either the TAB or the track if they do not believe that it is performing on its own ability—not being given some assistance. This has been happening in other States of Australia, something which was highlighted in recent trials.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That completes the time allocated for questions by Opposition members for the time being. I now invite questions from Government members.

**Mrs ROSE:** The Auditor-General's report on the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing identified \$897,000 in unpaid fines, 93 per cent of which were deemed non-collectable. What action has been taken to combat unlawful bookmaking and to collect outstanding fines?

**Mr GIBBS:** We inherited the outstanding fines issue when we came into office in 1989. Under the previous legislation, it was impossible to collect debts from people found guilty of SP bookmaking or other illegal bookmaking activities. At that stage, quite a deal of money was outstanding. Recently, in the accounts of the Department we recorded unsatisfied debts as at 30 June 1993 totalling \$897,691. We have taken on the services of a professional debt collection agency to try to collect some of those debts. I have some doubts as to the effectiveness of that, but we are obliged to attempt to collect those fines. If this is not successful, the Department will have no other choice than to wipe out the debts.

In order to ensure that that does not happen in the future, I introduced legislation that now makes it a most serious offence to indulge in starting price bookmaking. Heavy fines have been included in the legislation. For non-payment of the fines, a reasonably heavy gaol sentence will be applied.

**Mrs ROSE:** In the Department's statements provided to this Committee, the Racing Science Centre is shown to have estimated actual expenditure for 1993-94 of \$1.34m, with a projected budget for 1994-95 of approximately the same amount. I understand that the contribution of the racing industry to the economy of Queensland was the subject of an exhaustive study undertaken by consultants ACIL Australia Pty Ltd in 1992. It estimated that the industry contributed \$407.2m to the gross State product. This is equivalent to about 0.7 per cent of GSP. It also estimated the number of full-time employee equivalents to be about 5 760. The Budget Papers estimate that receipts from totalisator and betting tax amounted to \$70m in

1993-94, and that these are forecast to grow by 4.3 per cent in 1994-95 to approximately \$73m. Could the Minister please inform this Committee of the role that the Racing Science Centre plays in industry integrity?

**Mr GIBBS:** As I appointed out before, the Racing Science Centre is—and you used correct word—vital to the integrity of the racing industry in Queensland. Without that integrity, we simply do not have an industry. It is worth while making the point that the Racing Science Centre in Queensland is now recognised worldwide as being one of the most professional bodies anywhere in the world in terms of its technology. At present, it employs some 17 people—15 scientists, chemists, technicians and veterinarians, and two administrative staff.

For those who may not be aware of the background of the centre, I point out that it was set up after the catastrophic incident some years ago when false caffeine positives were reported by the laboratory previously run by the Queensland Turf Club. It is independent of the control of any of the major bodies or peak councils within the racing industry, which means that its staff cannot be influenced by clubs or participants in the industry. It has the responsibility for carrying out pre-race and post-race testing of racing animals. It has that responsibility in all codes for the whole State, including regional Queensland.

As I said before, it uses modern technology and has a highly skilled staff. At times, some of the staff and equipment are available at the centre 24 hours a day. The litmus test of the success of the Racing Science Centre has been the fact that both on-course and off-course betting have increased significantly in Queensland over the past four years. Betting with bookmakers has increased significantly. The incidence of drugs being used in racing animals has dropped fairly dramatically. But, again, I emphasise the point that that is a reflection of the efficiency of the Racing Science Centre.

**Mrs ROSE:** The Budget Papers show that in 1993-94 actual expenditure on grants from the Racing Development Fund will be \$11.66m and that a grants allocation of \$12m is projected for 1994-95. Further, an amount of \$8.944m is shown as expenditure in servicing the racing industry debt. Could you please indicate the rationale for making grants, and what are some of the major grants made in 1993-94 and anticipated in 1994-95?

**Mr GIBBS:** It is hard to anticipate the money that will go out in 1994-95. Certainly, the question is a fair one. But that will depend on applications which come in and the importance that my Department places on those applications. Certainly, this year we provided some \$300,000 from the Racing Development Fund for the marketing of the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival. Again, the wisdom of that is reflected in the fact that on-course and off-course betting and crowd attendances at the Winter Racing Carnival thus far have exceeded the records established last year.

There is \$1.5m set aside each year for the Racing Incentive Scheme. Later this year, as of 1 October, that will become known as the Queensland

Racing Incentive Scheme. There is \$5m in 1993-94 for the first year of funding for the developmental race clubs throughout Queensland. The developmental race clubs are those which we deem to be the smaller clubs throughout Queensland. These clubs have welcomed this innovation. We are now able to make payments to them up front. This has obviated the need for them to borrow from banks, and has helped to keep overheads and borrowings for those smaller clubs down to a bare minimum. That scheme has been well received.

Also, the Racing Development Fund has been responsible for the funding of the various race clubs throughout the State. I have a list here, which will give you an idea of the clubs involved. At times there have been very blatant attempts by some people to suggest that there has been some bias in the granting of advances from the Racing Development Fund throughout Queensland.

The list of trustees includes Albion Park, Mount Isa, the Capalaba Greyhound Racing Club, Rockhampton, Beaudesert, Clifford Park, the Rocklea Pacing Club, the Queensland Harness Racing Control Board, the Greyhound Racing Control Board, the Gold Coast Turf Club, the Widgee Shire Council, the Lockyer Race Club, the Dalby and Northern Downs Jockey Club, Toowoomba, Nanango, the Sunshine Coast Turf Club, and the Mareeba Turf Club. The list goes on. For those who wish to make the comment that there is some bias in funding, I can assure them that such criticism is poorly placed.

**Mrs ROSE:** Turning to the Queensland Principal Club—the Auditor-General in his second report on audits performed for the financial year ended 30 June 1993, at pages 24 to 28, reported extensively on audits of the Queensland Principal Club. The audit identified certain broad financial management issues which needed to be addressed by the QPC and noted that, for the year ended 30 June 1993, the QPC reported an operating deficit of \$742,087 before an extraordinary item. Would you please explain to the Committee how much assistance the QPC received from the Racing Development Fund?

**Mr GIBBS:** A grant of \$450,000 was made to the Queensland Principal Club as a result of the quite disastrous loss of moneys by the QPC in its first year of operation. If we had not taken those steps to provide that money from the Racing Development Fund, it simply would have meant that those losses would have been passed on directly to race clubs, to licensees and to owners, all of whom would have had to pay additional fees to the QPC to meet overheads and to meet operational costs. I do not wish to go into the personality issues, but simply say that matters were referred to me by the Auditor-General in respect of the QPC's conformity with the provisions of the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

Although there was insufficient evidence to proceed with a criminal investigation, the Auditor-General's office did express concern at the gravity of the incidents involving the role of a particular stipendiary steward in the handing over of

moneys to the Queensland Principal Club. That gentleman subsequently resigned for health reasons. There was a change in the chairmanship of the Queensland Principal Club and of the chief executive as a result of the Auditor-General's report. I shall not comment on a number of those matters, because they are the subject of legal action at present. Suffice to say, though, that since then the Auditor-General has given a glowing report on the operation of the QPC in relation to the methods and the action that was taken by the new committee of the QPC in putting in place more stringent financial controls and ensuring that a process was in place of proper and full consultation with the full committee of the Queensland Principal Club.

**The CHAIRMAN:** No further questions? We will take one further question before we break for lunch, and I invite Mr Veivers to ask that question. We are still on racing.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The 1992-93 interim audit of the Queensland Principal Club disclosed a \$742,000 deficit attributable to a complete lack of budgetary and financial controls within the Queensland Principal Club. You have covered that. We were assured that budgetary decisions had been revised to ensure a surplus this financial year. On 26 November 1991, on page 3 189 of *Hansard*, you stated that all assets held by the existing five principal clubs would remain with the new principal club. It is noted in the department's annual report 1992-93 under "Notes to departmental statements", item 10, property plant and equipment, that \$25,638,000 worth of assets were excluded from the Queensland Principal Club balance sheet and fiscal bodies. I comment that if these assets were brought to account at the takeover date, the cost of depreciation outlined in the Queensland Principal Club income and expenditure statement would be increased dramatically. Therefore, I ask: what provision will you make to adjust the deficit, before the extraordinary item of \$742,087, to include the extra cost of depreciation in the 1993-94 financial accounts? Will the funding of this extra deficit impede upon the ability of the Queensland Principal Club to manage its activities? I ask that question because provision for depreciation has to be a cash expense from consolidated revenue payable to trust funds to provide and replace assets at the termination of their life. That is a common commercial method that takes the pain away from the taxpayer on a regular annual basis. Would you provide the information on that, please?

**Mr GIBBS:** I will answer it to a small degree and I will ask Dr Mason, who is with me, to expand on it a little further. Suffice to say that, as a result of some of the ill-informed and very deliberate political grandstanding that took place during the time of the introduction of some reforms in the racing industry in Queensland, when the QPC came into being, it probably should have done so with considerably more assets than it inherited at that time. In the couple of months prior to the formation of the QPC, certain forces within the racing industry got around the State and made sure that they divested themselves both of some properties and of some moneys that were in accounts which were never

transferred to the QPC. That was an unfortunate situation, because it may have got off to a better financial start had that not occurred. However, I will ask Dr Mason to expand a little more on the question that you have asked. If the answer provided by him is not totally what you require, I would be happy to take it on notice and provide you with further information.

**Mr VEIVERS:** I am happy with that, Minister.

**Dr MASON:** Bob Mason, Director of Racing Division, Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. I think the matter that you are referring to appeared in the second report of the Auditor-General on audits performed for the financial year ended 30 June 1993.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Yes, it did, under "Operating deficit surplus", before the extraordinary item.

**Dr MASON:** Yes. On page 29 of that report, you will notice there is a section titled "Status of matters raised in previous reports". It states that one of the problems with the audit of the Queensland Principal Club at that stage was that—

"Information was not available to substantiate the cost of certain non-current assets and it was necessary to issue a qualified audit opinion on the accounts for the period from the Club's inception on 1 March 1992 to 30 June 1992, to the extent that—

certain non-current assets were brought to account at written-down values; and

depreciation changes were based on asset values which included a land component, contrary to Australian Accounting Standard"——

**Mr VEIVERS:** I understand that, but there was——

**Dr MASON:** The answer to your question, I think, lies in the fact that there was an error in the manner in which the QPC did its accounts at that stage, which the Auditor commented upon. They brought the valuation of their land and their building—which they had acquired for \$600,000—to account in an erroneous manner.

**Mr VEIVERS:** There are non-current assets in the Queensland Principal Club's balance sheet as at 30 June 1993 of \$1,806,834. The operating deficit is \$742,000. It seems that they are not there and they have not been depreciated at all.

**Dr MASON:** Undoubtedly the Auditor-General will be checking on that again in his audit of this year's financial matters, but I am prepared to provide further information to you if you wish.

**Mr VEIVERS:** If you could put that in writing and send it to me, I would be only too pleased.

**Mr GIBBS:** I take it that you will provide us with a copy of the question that you have asked.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Yes, I would be only too happy to. I am the most easygoing Opposition member.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If there are no further questions from Mr Veivers, that concludes the questioning on the Racing Program. I thank Dr Mason and also the staff from the Tourism Program. Those two matters are now completed. We will now

break for lunch and return at 2 p.m. to commence the investigation of the Program Estimates in relation to Sport and Recreation.

The Committee adjourned at 12.54 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 2.02 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will resume these hearings of Estimates Committee D. We are currently considering the expenditure of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. I understand that the Minister has a correction in relation to an answer given previously. I invite him to make that correction now.

**Mr GIBBS:** This morning, I did say that we funded the Brisbane Visitors and Convention Bureau to the tune of \$135,000 a year. The correction is that that is actually \$235,000 a year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We now return to the balance of the 20-minute question period available to the Opposition spokesperson. I invite Mr Veivers to continue with his questioning. We are now into the program area of sport and recreation.

**Mr VEIVERS:** An auditor's report of assessment management practices of the Lang Park Trust in 1992-93 found that the asset register was inadequately maintained, giving a false financial picture. Have you ensured that such accounting anomalies have been corrected as we enter the 1994-95 financial year?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes, I have. The understatement, as I recall, was in fact with reference to a property which the Lang Park Trust owns immediately adjacent to Lang Park itself. From memory, in their annual report, I think they valued the property at something like \$33,000. They showed a valuation of \$19,000. I am sorry. The building and the land is in fact worth in the vicinity of \$800,000 to \$850,000. In addition to that, they own the land towards the northern end of Lang Park. The land immediately behind there is also owned by the trust. In addition to that, there is another small block of land, I believe, at the southern end of Lang Park which is also owned by the trust, but, yes, the assets will be reflected at their correct value in their next report.

**Mr VEIVERS:** On the same subject, has provision been made for the Lang Park Trust to include the land value in the 1994-95 Estimates? You have just supplied me with the valuation of land. I am talking about the total area.

**Mr GIBBS:** As I understand it, the total assets owned by the Lang Park Trust are approximately \$3.1m.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Department's 1992-93 annual report asserted that the World Masters Games to be held in October 1994 would be fully supported by the Department. What does "fully supported" mean and what financial implications will it have for your Department?

**Mr GIBBS:** "Fully supported"—as the Department responsible for sport and recreation, and also tourism, we have worked closely with Queensland Events Corporation in terms of ensuring the maximum participation by Queensland Masters sportsmen and women in the event in terms of a

financial contribution from my Department. We have put in approximately \$230,000, which went to the employment of a number of sports liaison officers. The responsibility of the sports liaison officers is to be working Statewide, talking to various and numerous sporting organisations with a view not only to promoting the benefits of the World Masters Games and the economic benefit that they can bring to Queensland but also ensuring that we get the maximum participation of people in the event itself, remembering of course the comment that I made earlier this morning, that is, not taking away from the role of the Queensland Events Corporation in its promotional role and its responsibilities overseas to be liaising with international sporting bodies.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Just going back to the Lang Park subject again, seeing it is State of Origin week next week, can you advise me of the cost of write-offs of the old grandstand and the capital costs of the new grandstand? What rate will be depreciated and over what period? I ask that question because I notice in a letter to you from the Chairman of the Lang Park Trust, Mr Hatcher, on 30 July 1993, relating to the financial statements, he said—

"Additional revenue was received through interests on investments and increased rental from the Queensland Rugby League and Ferncave Pty Ltd which has developed a building on the trust property in Castlemaine Street."

I do not know this company Ferncave and I am not sure what building on the trust property the chairman was referring to. Who is Ferncave Pty Ltd and who do they represent? What is this building on the trust property and who owns it?

**Mr GIBBS:** I think, to the best of my knowledge, that would be the name of the company that currently occupies the building which is owned by the trust adjacent to Lang Park—the building that is in Castlemaine Street. I believe that would be the name of the people who currently lease the premises from the Lang Park Trust. I stand to be corrected on that, but I shall make sure of that fact and convey that to you.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Estimates of receipts and expenditure for the Sports and Recreation Benefit Fund show that estimated receipts for 1994-95 total \$34.596m and expenditure is expected to be more than \$43m, which is almost a \$9m difference. In other words, we will have to either decrease proposed sports expenditure by 20.8 per cent or raise the amount of the sport and recreational benefit levy already imposed on the hotel and club industry to create an extra 26 per cent in tax revenue, unless you utilise previous years' funding not spent. Can you guarantee that the recreational benefit levy will not be increased to fund your aims?

**Mr GIBBS:** As I understand it, to a large degree, you are referring there to carryovers. What you see reflected in the Budget—

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Budget Overview, page 152.

**Mr GIBBS:** What you see reflected in there would be a carryover of approximately \$11m from

the previous year of moneys which have not yet been spent. A large amount of that obviously would be due to the fact that there was a fairly protracted period of wet weather where projects to which funds had been allocated could not be started. Obviously, those moneys will be taken up later in the year by those organisations that have had to defer a start on a number of those projects because of wet weather. There can be other reasons as to why they do not start, but primarily that would be the reason for that carryover.

**Mr VEIVERS:** In 1992-93, expenditure of \$1.3m exceeded Budget allocation for grants from the Sport and Recreation Benefit Fund. The annual report says that this excess expenditure was offset by subsidies not claimed by other sporting bodies. Can you advise whether this is a usual practice for uncollected approved grants to be used to pay off excess expenditure?

**Mr GIBBS:** I might ask Peter Richardson to respond to that.

**Mr RICHARDSON:** Basically, what occurred in that year was that we were given approval mid-year for additional expenditure for the Brisbane Cricket Ground and, I think, Ballymore. The normal procedure in those cases is for us to go to Treasury for unforeseen expenditure. However, as we had unused expenditure in that year as well because of these unclaimed grants, Treasury allowed us to offset that additional expenditure against the unclaimed grants. In the following year, Treasury gave us the additional approval to increase our allocation by \$1.9m, which was the amount that we had used to offset the grants in the prior year. So Treasury gave us the additional money the next year to fund those grants that had not been claimed.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Can you assure us that any unclaimed grants in the 1994-95 year will be redistributed to some of the many clubs or groups whose applications were not approved in the first round of funding offers, rather than being used to balance the books?

**Mr GIBBS:** No, I cannot give you an absolute assurance on that, the reason being that it must be understood that people are not knocked back for funding simply because we think it is nice to knock them back. We would love to be out there giving every community organisation that applies for funding some financial assistance. There are criteria that we have to apply on a Statewide basis to ensure that people are receiving their fair share of revenue. On a regional basis throughout the State, money is distributed as equitably as we possibly can. If there is a further question later about that equity, I will be happy to respond to it.

The basis on which we make the decision about funding has to do with population breakdowns into male and female in the various regions throughout the State; the population of older adults, that is, people over 60; young people aged 12 to 25; Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people; people from non-English speaking backgrounds; unemployed; and youth unemployed.

We try to put together a very broad picture to determine how that funding should be allocated to various sporting organisations. If a club or organisation has missed out, it may well be that, through our regional office, we could have a request to have some reconsideration of that application, if that happens, and certainly we would do that.

**Mr VEIVERS:** In the 1993-94 financial year, the \$10m set aside for major facilities development grants was allocated before it was even offered to local clubs and sporting bodies. I think we all remember this. To which specific facility projects was this \$10m allocated, and can the Minister assure us that this will not be repeated in the 1994-95 program?

**Mr GIBBS:** There are two programs here, of course. The fact is that the major facilities program stands aside from the other programs within the Department. There were decisions made in terms of commitments to future years; for example, in relation to the funding—the improvements to the Brisbane Cricket Ground. It would be unreasonable to expect that any contribution from the Sport and Recreation Benefit Fund would simply happen in one year, when we would suddenly grab a huge amount of money out of that and not leave moneys in there to be able to spread around to other areas of the State.

The major facilities program of the Queensland Facilities Development Scheme for the 1993-94 financial year includes \$3m to the redevelopment of the Gabba; half a million dollars to Ballymore for the development of the eastern grandstand; \$5m to Lang Park; a debt repayment for the McAuliffe Stand of \$1.3m; the Community Use of Schools Project—the pilot project, which I have implemented in my Department, which will come to \$870,000; the Willows Sports Complex in Townsville, half a million dollars; Perry Park, half a million dollars; and Sports House, which will be \$2m.

It is the intent, of course, to make sure—as I have said before—that we spread that as far and wide as we can. I believe that with the introduction of the Community Use of Schools Project—of which four are under way currently in Queensland—as we are able to evaluate the worthiness of those programs, I am very confident that they will be a worthy pilot project which will ensure that probably in the not-too-distant future we will be able to look at implementing similar schemes in other areas of the State to ensure a broader spreading of that major facilities development program money.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I invite Mrs Gamin to ask a question on sport and recreation.

**Mrs GAMIN:** The 1994-95 Budget allocates \$1.7m to minor capital works projects at the Department's 12 recreation camps in Queensland. This averages out at about \$142,000 for each camp. Yet last year, you said that Tallebudgera Recreation Camp is in line for a \$13m facelift. You recently wrote to me and advised me that you expect a full report on that camp's requirements by the end of this month. As public expectation is running high in respect of Tallebudgera, I ask when positive action will be taken to refurbish and rebuild particularly Tallebudgera and other recreation camps in

Queensland and how that is shown in this current Budget?

**Mr GIBBS:** There is nothing shown in the Budget currently for improvements to Tallebudgera simply because we have not allocated money in this year's Budget for improvements to Tallebudgera.

In spite of repeated assurances from me, it is an extremely distasteful practice to read from the Opposition at times in the paper of this ongoing campaign to try to convince the public or others that there is some intention by the Government to shut Tallebudgera. I reiterate—I hope in finality—that the Tallebudgera Recreation Camp plays an important role in the recreation facilities of my Department and of this Government. Once again, I give the public an assurance that it will remain open.

Notwithstanding that statement, obviously there is a need for us to look at Tallebudgera. It is being looked at at the moment in the context of a report which is being prepared for me as to the effective future use of recreation camps throughout Queensland. The reality is that, when we came to office in 1989, the state of the recreation camps in Queensland was quite appalling. There have been a large number of them which, but for the good grace of a number of local authorities throughout the State, could well have been condemned. There were holes in the floor, inadequacies in terms of ventilation in the accommodation quarters, and some of the kitchens in these places were a disgrace to say the least. As a result of that, the fact is that there will be a number of them which in my opinion—and I state at this stage that it is my opinion—quite frankly, we will have to consider the future. The money to which you have referred is an ongoing expenditure to ensure that they are kept up to some minimal standard while the assessment is under way.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Opposition question time has expired. There will be another opportunity after Government members have a turn. I invite the member for Albert, Mr Szczerbanik, to commence his questions on matters relating to sport and recreation.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Improving the access to and equity in sport and recreation for all Queenslanders is highlighted in your departmental Estimates. As you said previously, the Paralympics for the disabled are being funded by your Department. What other groups are presently being targeted and what funding is provided for programs being put in place for these groups?

**Mr GIBBS:** There are a number of groups which we are looking at in the community in terms of giving assistance to them. You have rightly referred to the paralympians—the people in the community who have disabilities who wish to participate in sport—whether it be at the competitive or non-competitive level. It was with a great deal of personal pride that I launched the Queensland Council of the Paralympics yesterday. It was acknowledged at that ceremony that Queensland out of all States in Australia leads the way in terms of our encouragement that we give both financially and physically to our disabled sportsmen and women in the community.

We established within my Department the Equity Unit, which, obviously, looks at the inequities that still exist, unfortunately, in terms of proper funding for sport for women in our community. The role of the Equity Unit has been to ensure that throughout the State we have a program in place so that when sporting organisations apply to us for funding, unless the assurance is given in their three-year forward planning program, which they are required to give to us, that there will be equity in terms of money for sportswomen, then we look seriously as to whether we should fund them. I am pleased to say that that has been a great success.

We have been looking at programs. The ATSIC program is a brand-new program partly funded by the Commonwealth Government for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, through which we encourage the people from ATSIC to be out there in the Aboriginal and Islander communities showing people how they can apply for funding and encouraging them to set up programs that will qualify for funding through the Department.

Of course, sport for elderly people in the community plays a major role in the area of preventive medicine. We are currently ensuring that programs are being put together to ensure that the elderly people in the community are looked after in a proper professional manner to allow them to participate in sport as well.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** With the announcement of the 2000 Olympics being hosted by Sydney—and I place on the record my appreciation to the New South Wales Government for that—the role of the Queensland Academy of Sport takes on even more importance in the future. As there is an increase in funding to the QAS, could you please provide an update on the development of the QAS and its new Budget allocation?

**Mr GIBBS:** The Queensland Academy of Sport, which this Government established, has been an outstanding success in the short three or four years that it has been in operation. It is now recognised as the most professional of its type in Australia. It draws that recognition from comparative agencies in other States and also from the Australian Sports Commission. The concept of the QAS is that it now offers support through squad programs and individual scholarships to a large number of athletes in this State. We have developed an elite strength and training facility within the academy to assist athletes maintain and improve their performance. The academy has held a number of seminars throughout Queensland explaining its role and in having people out there looking for talented athletes to become part of the various programs that we offer.

We have had something like 48 Queensland athletes and coaches who have been chosen in their various fields of expertise for the 1994 Commonwealth Games. To have 48 of the athletes and coaches who are going to the Commonwealth Games selected from Queensland is a great indicator of the professional performance of the Academy of Sport. The true measure of success is in what the public see in terms of medals that come home from the Games. We have more athletes than ever before

selected in the Commonwealth Games swimming squad. We have more than held our own in terms of those who have been chosen for the athletics team. I will mention two things that are perhaps not known publicly. Queensland can boast the fact that we have the fastest white man over 100 metres residing in Queensland today—perhaps the fastest person in the world—as a result of the excellence of the quality of coaching at the QAS. We currently have a young woman living in Townsville—she is 14 years of age—who as a result of the excellent coaching programs of the QAS is only one centimetre short of qualifying for Olympic high jump selection. Of course, by the year 2000 this young woman will probably be one of the most exciting athletes that Queensland will produce.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** My question relates to an area that I am interested in and that is the finalisation of the Sports Insurance and Safety Strategy, as is obvious from the numerous reports in the newspapers. What processes have been into place to develop this strategy, and what is the cost involved?

**Mr GIBBS:** The paper which addresses this very important issue only arrived on my desk some three days ago. Obviously the Government has a great need to look at the whole question of sports insurance and safety within the sporting community. This is highlighted, I guess, every season when we see quite horrific injuries occur to athletes, whether it be on the athletic track or in the games of Rugby League, Rugby Union, or in the sport that perhaps is not recognised as having an extremely high injury rate—in fact, I believe that it has that highest injury rate in sport in Australia—that is, women's netball, which is notorious for its injuries to young woman in particular. There have been a number of issues highlighted by the report which has come to my office. There is a concern over the technical and legal style in which a number of interpretations within the sporting community are made, or the way in which sports administrators have to interpret reports which come before them.

We need to look at the establishment of a minimum level of insurance cover for all people involved in sport. There are a number of ways in which the Government will have to address that. We are putting into place strategies that will cover the fact that there has been a general lack of understanding and ignorance of the issues related to sports safety and insurance, but, more specifically, to look at proper risk management policies, that is, ensuring that the people who are responsible for turning our sportsmen and woman out onto the various fields of participation each weekend or midweek—the sporting administrators and coaches—are aware of the risk factors involved in those areas and take proper preventive measures to as much as possible ensure the safety of our athletes.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I have no further questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We might move to Opposition members. I understand that there are only a couple of questions left on sport and



recreation before we move to liquor licensing. Mrs Gamin?

**Mrs GAMIN:** Minister, following on from our previous discussion, there seems to be insufficient funding in the 1994-95 Budget to cover any significant capital works at any of the recreation camps. The departmental Estimates on page 21 say that capital expenditure on recreational camps has increased as a result of carryover funding for approved projects in the 1993-94 year, and so I ask: how much of the \$1.7m allocated for minor works in this year's Budget is in fact already committed to 1993-94 approvals, and what is the actual amount which will be spent on recreational camp work in 1994-95?

**Mr GIBBS:** Of the \$1.7m which has been allocated in this year's Budget, \$755,000 has in fact been carryover. So in broad figures, you are looking at something like \$950,000 which will be used this year or, rather, in next year's Budget. I hark back to the answer which I gave to you before: it would be quite irresponsible of me, I believe, to go making representations during our Budget Review Committee hearings when we put forward our programs and our policies for funding until I am in receipt of the final report as to the future. See, it is not just our Department which is involved in this. You have this quite incredible situation where the Education Department has been involved in a number of these issues over the years, and as one comes to understand the workings of the bureaucracy, you would be as aware as I am, I am sure, of the rather protective approach that some people take in relation to assets held by their own departments. I see a greater need—which is currently happening—for a better working relationship between officers of my Department and the Education Department in trying to come up with a final comprehensive report where we can actually detail what the future of these recreation camps is going to be. Once we can do that, then I believe we will be in a far better position to be able to sit down and make a determination of those which perhaps might be considered to be surplus to needs and those which may be considered as deserving of quite some upgrading.

I might give you a quick example. I was recently asked to consider funding for a community hall at Seaforth in north Queensland. When I saw that come before me, it quite amazed me, because we have a wonderful recreational hall at the Seaforth camp, which my Department is responsible for, which is underutilised, and which would be an ideal community or public hall for use by the public. Yet we had an organisation wanting funding. Now, it seems to me that there is just one area that I can give you as an example of where we should be looking at much more multiuse—which has been one of my favourite hobbyhorses in the sporting area—and ensuring multiuse as much as we possibly can of a number of these existing facilities.

**Mr HEALY:** I have a question in relation to staffing levels and related wages and salaries in this particular program. I refer you to Budget Paper No. 3, page 326. Despite Budget predictions that the

number of full-time employees in the Sport and Recreation Program will remain constant at 135, in the 1994-95 Budget Estimates an additional \$555,000 is allocated in salaries, wages and related payments. I would like you, if you could, please, to explain why there is that increase and why, when the Government had budgeted for 142 full-time employees in 1993-94 to receive \$5.037m, the Government actually outlaid—and this is according to the 1994-95 Budget—\$5.386m, which is a difference of \$350,000, despite the fact that staff numbers actually declined by seven to 135?

**Mr GIBBS:** I might ask you to put that question on notice.

**Mr HEALY:** Sure.

**Mr GIBBS:** I am quite happy to answer it for you, but there is some detail involved in it. I can certainly answer parts of it for you, but I rather suspect that it would not be to your satisfaction.

**Mr HEALY:** In the Program Statements, page 327, the outlook for 1994-95, there is mention of the development of training programs for women in sports administration during 1994. Is it possible for you to supply the costing for those programs?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes.

**Mr HEALY:** Or the forecasts?

**Mr GIBBS:** We would not have here, I do not believe, the individual costings for those programs. I stand to be corrected. I am told that we have a number of them. For example, within the Equity Unit, we are undertaking a series of training programs to assist women in sport in attaining the skills needed to access decision-making positions. In 1994-95, the programs are planned to address assertiveness, conflict management, negotiation skills and career development, and the 1993-94 expenditure was \$4,000. The anticipated 1994-95 expenditure will be \$7,000. We have a publication on child-care guidelines for sport and recreation organisations, which will cost in the vicinity of \$6,000.

The unit has produced, for example, a report which refers to coaching participation, management, sports medicine and dealing with the media. That will involve an expenditure of some \$5,500. We have the international Women's Day Festival—perhaps not an international day every year, but a Women's Day Festival—where we encourage women right throughout Queensland to participate in a number of programs. That can be, for example, a fun run here in Brisbane or attending a number of seminars throughout Queensland, and the expenditure on that in 1994-95 will come to about \$12,500. We are currently working closely—and this is a very important project—with the Queensland Police Service to produce a flier on safety for women walkers and joggers to assist women who wish to be out on the streets participating particularly in sports training, that is, women who like to be jogging or training in the open field. The expenditure on that will be in the vicinity of \$7,500. There may be a number of other programs there which I have not rattled off to you, but again I say that if you wish more detail on them, I am quite happy to provide it for you.

**Mr HEALY:** Thank you, Minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Mr Veivers?

**Mr VEIVERS:** Minister, the 1993-94 Budget promised \$10.8m to the Queensland Sports Development Scheme, yet only \$8.6m was actually allocated. Will this underspending result in a \$2m carryover to 1994-95? If, as the Minister informed me in the House last week, only \$880,000 was allocated to local sporting clubs under the scheme, can you detail what the remaining \$7.8m was allocated to?

**Mr GIBBS:** I think there is a misunderstanding there.

**Mr RICHARDSON:** There is in fact a \$2m carryover this financial year in the Community Sports Development Scheme. In terms of the \$7.8m, there are two parts to that scheme. Part of it is the Community Sports Development Scheme which is, I think, \$1m, and the other part is the Statewide Sports Scheme, which is \$7m. So the balance of the allocations in that are basically the grants in the Statewide schemes.

**Mr VEIVERS:** If that \$2m was appropriated but not spent, as you say occurred last year, why does the Tourism Program Statement say that 1993-94 commitments are to be included in the \$10m allocated to the QSDS grants for 1994-95?

**Mr RICHARDSON:** This financial year, the allocation for the Statewide scheme is \$7m. There is \$1m for the community, and \$2m in carryovers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the questions on the Sport and Recreation Program. I thank departmental officers who have made themselves available for questioning on that program area. We now move to the Liquor Licensing Program. I invite Mr Veivers to continue his questioning for the balance of this 20-minute period.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Almost half a million dollars in unforeseen expenditure was taken from the Consolidated Fund and the Liquor Act Fund in 1992-93 to meet compensation payouts of \$1.02m under the Hotel Rationalisation Program and the Education and Health Programs, totalling \$1.84m. In 1993-94, a special \$1m allocation was granted to fund the shortfall in the Liquor Act Trust Fund because of a reduction in premiums received for the granting of new licences. That was in departmental Estimates document No. 8. Why were these allocations necessary when the Liquor Act Fund was established in 1992 with some \$9m to be used for these specific purposes?

**Mr GIBBS:** When your party was in office, liquor licensing fees were increased from 8 to 10 per cent. I think Premier Ahern made the statement that 1 per cent of the revenue gathered in the first 12 months would be put into a special fund specifically for that purpose. That never ever happened. There was never, ever a particular fund within Treasury, or anywhere else, for that 1 per cent to be paid into. As a consequence of that, we had to go back to Treasury—

**Mr VEIVERS:** Was there not a trust fund?

**Mr GIBBS:** No. Based on the anticipated

number of hoteliers who may have gone into the rationalisation program, we had to ask for that \$1m to be put into our Budget.

**Mr VEIVERS:** No allocation has been provided in 1994-95. Is this as a consequence of abolishing the Hotel Rationalisation Scheme a few months ago to prevent further expenditure blow-outs?

**Mr GIBBS:** Primarily, it is. A number of these licences are still under some discussion. Currently, there are 12 applications outstanding. These are in varying stages of finalisation. Three applications were withdrawn from the total of 12. Six appeals have been lodged—that is, appeals against what the Department has determined the licences to be worth. Three applications are still pending. They are the only ones eligible for a payout under the rationalisation scheme. Currently, we have sufficient funding available within the Department to satisfy the needs of those people.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Evidently, there has been an increasing decline in the amount being received in premiums for the granting of new licenses since the Government introduced its new system of licensing. Obviously, there are problems with your licensing system, particularly for hotels. As to licensing fees—the top three hotels are reportedly all in the hands of receivers. Have you decided to increase premiums or change the licensing system in the 1994-95 financial year in order to protect this diminishing source of Government revenue?

**Mr GIBBS:** No. As you would be aware, if there was a determination to decrease licensing fees, we would have announced that in the last Budget. We have not done that. I believe that the industry is satisfied. We have been in Government for five years and there has been no further increase in liquor licensing fees. I have heard comments that this has been much appreciated by the industry.

The downturn in the number of licences emanates from the fact that over the years a number of licence holders have actively indulged in bottom-of-the-barrel, cut-price warfare. In past years, that has been done very deliberately by a number of licensees. Prior to their licensing fees being due, they have sold at any cost. Then, upon having the money as a result of those sales, they have been able to pay their licensing fees. Of course, a couple of months later they realise that they are in deep trouble. Last year the banking institutions financed a number of hotels to a large degree to pay their liquor licensing fees. This year, I expect that, when they see that a number of these premises are no longer viable, a number of others will not continue to be players.

As you would recall, the whole idea of the rationalisation scheme was to give those operators who for one reason or another were in a business that was not viable an opportunity to leave the industry. Problems arose in places such as Childers, which has about seven hotels. All the hoteliers believed that the scheme was marvellous. But when you asked people to volunteer to hand in their licences, they said, "No, not me. It should be the fellow down the road." We have bent over

backwards to assist them. If there is a further cleansing within the industry, it will be controlled by market forces—supply and demand—and not by the Government.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Can the Minister advise us why the 1994-95 Estimates of Receipts and Expenditure shows no opening cash balance for the Liquor Act Fund. As I asked before, is this a trust fund?

**Mr GIBBS:** No. The trust fund is a reference to the money set aside for the rationalisation program. But it also refers to the moneys used each year to pay for a number of programs in the other departments. We give money to the Transport Department, the Education Department and the Health Department. As I recall, the program in the Health Department is for patron care. We paid \$294,272 to the Health Department, \$286,523 to the Transport Department, and \$276,810 to the Education Department. Those three departments use those funds for conducting various programs for educating drinkers, such as patron care. Transport uses the money for a campaign to discourage drink-driving.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Now that the hotel rationalisation scheme has been abolished—prematurely, I might add—what will the \$1.4m estimated to be received and expended under that Liquor Act Fund in 1994-95 be spent on?

**Mr GIBBS:** For example, if the appeals by the six people who disagree with the amount of the money we believe their licences to be worth are upheld, obviously we will have to pay out money to them. The other three licensees would have to be paid out. I am advised that the average payment on the surrendering of the licenses has been \$95,000. If you multiply that by nine—and add two, based on the figures that I gave to you before; that is, for the moneys to go to the three various Departments—you will probably find that that should pan out pretty equally.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes this bracket of questioning from Opposition members. We now go to questions from Government members. I invite Dr Clark, the member for Barron River, to ask her questions.

**Dr CLARK:** I refer to you Budget Paper No. 3 at page 323. Under "achievements" in 1993-94, I note that there was the implementation of an after-hours on-call service for complaint resolution. Could you please give me some information about the assessment of this service and indicate the cost involved in the service for 1993-94? What are the plans this year in relation to that program, and what might its costs be?

**Mr GIBBS:** Prior to November 1992, no on-call service existed. In other words, investigations about noise complaints were usually conducted at a time when the noise and other problems perhaps were not at the level that they were when the initial complaint was made. There was simply no service for immediate response to those problems out of hours. We established the on-line service so that those who felt aggrieved by noise complaints could virtually be

serviced immediately, or certainly within an hour or so of the complaint being made.

It has been a highly successful program thus far. The 1993-94 budget for the on-call allowance was \$6,768. Overtime for servicing those calls was \$9,161. Interestingly enough, we had 75 callouts for complaints. We had 14 calls on diminished orders; two cease orders were put forward; there were three show causes; and there were four prosecutions, two not proceeded with and 20 non-substantiated. The interesting point is that on 25 occasions we were able to negotiate with the responsible parties—whether it be a nightclub or a hotel operating into the early hours of the morning—to ensure that the disputes were settled in a proper manner.

Our licensing investigators are currently issued with a pager, so that they are on call virtually 24 hours a day. The number of the relevant pager is given to our regular complainants, of whom there are a few. After being called, it is up to the relevant investigator to take appropriate action and, if needs be, he will inform the Executive Director of the Liquor Licensing Division, Mr Longland—who is beside me today—on the basis that he may need to authorise further immediate action. To date, the service has been well received in the community.

**Dr CLARK:** Is that service provided Statewide?

**Mr GIBBS:** It mostly applies in the south-east corner, but I am advised that my department is currently looking at the possibility of extending that service.

**Dr CLARK:** That would be excellent. The other issue on page 323 that interests me is the question of the educational awareness programs. You touched on that earlier. Could you elaborate on that, and in particular how you are focusing your programs on young people? I think we are all aware of the problems associated with young people and drinking, particularly under-age drinking, which has been a significant issue. Could you outline the success of the programs to date, what you are planning to do in the future and the cost of those programs?

**Mr GIBBS:** The education processes conducted by the Liquor Licensing Division have been very important. We are all aware that this problem is experienced Australia-wide and not just in Queensland. There have been increased instances of people, as a result of intoxication, not living up to their responsibility. We are adopting a number of measures to attempt to address that problem. We have introduced Card 18+, which is a program for the identification of young people—primarily those between the ages of 18 and 25—who want to enter licensed premises. As a result of the introduction of the Card 18+ and the very comprehensive education program that was undertaken, a person whose age is in question would find it very difficult to gain entry to a club or a hotel anywhere in Queensland without the production of a Card 18+ or a drivers' licence.

We now have a program in place titled Cut-out Crimestoppers. Under that program, figurines of police officers are placed in the drive-in departments

of bottle shops to drive home the message—particularly to parents and other groups in the community that do not seem to accept their social responsibility—that adults have a responsibility not to provide alcohol to people under 18 years of age. In many cases, parents are utilising drive-in bottle shops and other facilities to purchase drinks for young people to consume at home. That has been a problem during Schoolies Week in particular, but it is one that we have been able to clamp down on fairly successfully.

A "Know Your Rights" brochure will be distributed throughout Queensland so that people are aware of their rights under the current Liquor Act. An MLA kit has been put together for all members of Parliament to ensure that they have relevant material available to assist constituents who require information on the Liquor Act. We will be spending approximately \$5,000 on that. Of course, there are also our annual programs which are aimed at targeting some of the problems that have been encountered in the past during Schoolies Week. I believe that those programs have had very positive outcomes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have some questions in relation to liquor licensing. On page 8 of the departmental Estimates document under the heading "Investigations and complaints", there is a note that in 1993-94 in excess of 300 complaints were resolved across the State and there were in excess of 1 700 financial and compliance investigations. Could you please outline the extent of these investigations in the last year, the costs incurred in those investigations and whether any particular allocation has been made for the forthcoming year, including overtime?

**Mr GIBBS:** The past financial year gives an indicator of the broad requirements of the Liquor Licensing Division. A total of 2 665 investigations have been undertaken by the division across the State. Of those, there have been 667 routine investigations; 576 complaint investigations; 1 347 after-hours investigations; and 75 callouts through the on-call service. For the south-east corner of the State—and bearing in mind that I made the comment earlier that the on-call service is primarily a south-east corner service at the moment—an amount of \$45,500 has been expended in overtime for after-hours investigations. In regional centres, \$9,500 has been expended in looking at a number of these complaints.

It should be remembered that other staff such as regional managers, managers in the Liquor Licensing Division in Brisbane and the Executive Director of the Liquor Licensing Division have performed out-of-hours duties at no cost. I think that fact should be placed on the record. Those people commit a lot of their personal time to ensuring that the department is performing in a professional and proper manner.

It is expected that, in the coming financial year, there will be more investigations mounted in regional areas as we place staff in places such as Toowoomba—and I know that there are a number of problems there—Maroochydore, Maryborough and

Mackay. The regional services that we will be providing for those sorts of complaint investigations will be boosted by a further \$400,000 allocation in the budget.

**The CHAIRMAN:** On page 323 of the Budget Papers in respect of the 1994-95 outlook, initiatives are outlined for training investigators and educating the industry, in particular, with a focus in the forthcoming financial year on monitoring licensed premises. What is the cost of giving this training to investigators and what results have been achieved in terms of disciplining licensees who are in breach?

**Mr GIBBS:** We conducted a training seminar for some 20 officers from the Department earlier this year at the Griffith University for a total cost of \$26,321. This was done specifically so that our investigators could be more well-attuned to some of the problems within the industry. Numerous warnings have been given, for example, to licensees throughout Queensland by our investigators. In the licence fee area, protracted warnings and cautions were given. I might point out that there were large amounts of outstanding licence fees when this Government came to office. The fact that we have been able to have our investigators better trained and better informed and out there explaining to publicans or to licensees their responsibilities—I think last financial year something like 99 per cent of licence fees were in fact paid on time.

I might point out that prior to the introduction of the Liquor Licensing Division, it was rare that the previous Licensing Commission would close any premises in Queensland; it was rare that a prosecution took place. That sort of culture has now changed dramatically as a result of more professional training programs that we have been involved in and a new management structure in the liquor licensing area. It has resulted in 172 prosecutions in the last two financial years against licensees and members of the public who have not abided by the Liquor Act, and in the past two years in excess of \$45,000 worth of fines have been levied through these actions.

As a result of a number of complaints from honourable members and from councils throughout Queensland, I can only say to you that the diligence of the division is more committed than ever, and it is my expectation that they will be out there in even more conspicuous force than we have seen in the past. Currently, something like 53 prosecutions and five further show-causes are pending.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As well as training investigators, of course, an important focus is actually training licensees to be aware of their responsibilities under the Act. I note on page 8 of the Department's Estimates documents reference to a training needs analysis of some 3 900 licensees. What programs have already been put in place in the 1993-94 year and what are the outcomes of those programs and their costs in terms of whether the community is getting value for money in those training programs? What is contemplated in the forthcoming financial year to train licensees?

**Mr GIBBS:** As we mentioned to you before, we have introduced what is known as the Industry Development Unit within the Liquor Licensing

Division. There has also been a high degree of training and awareness that has been undertaken within the industry. Training has been aimed primarily at licensees, their staff, club management and hospitality training institutions. I cannot emphasise enough the importance of those courses at the hospitality training institutions where young people coming into the tourism industry in its broader sense are aware of the responsibilities that they have in ensuring that there is proper patron behaviour and, indeed, patron care exercised on licensed premises. In 1993-94, over 50 training sessions were conducted involving more than 2 000 participants throughout Queensland, and that has been a first for the Liquor Licensing Division. Most of the costs there have been minimal, but they are included in the promotional budget of some \$31,000, which has been allocated in the Budget.

In addition, the Industry Development Unit has conducted a training-needs analysis of licensees throughout the State and is currently formalising a formal training program to be accessible by licensees and staff throughout Queensland, particularly in rural areas, during 1994 and 1995. There had been specific problems in rural Queensland, and I am sure that members would be aware of that. In fact, through the Department, we do provide quite a deal of information to a number of trade journals throughout Queensland, specifically the *QHA Review*, *Club News* and the *Queensland Bowler*. Without bias, these publications get a very broad percentage of readers from "club land" throughout the State. Again, it makes a pretty important contribution to the knowledge of those club members and of club management of their requirements under the Act.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I refer to page 8 of the Department's Estimates document and note that a study is to be undertaken under the heading "Major Program Issues". That states—

"A study is to be undertaken to determine base level of data on the economic value of the liquor industry to the Queensland economy and to determine the number of people the industry employs."

Could you give some indication of the nature of that study, what it is anticipated to cost and how it might be useful in future planning?

**Mr GIBBS:** The booklet which has been put out called *The 1992-93 Year in Review*, which is an examination of the Queensland liquor industry and which has been put out by the Liquor Licensing Division of my Department, has in fact cost in the vicinity of some \$2,000. The booklet is one which covers a very broad range of issues and is meant to be distributed to the industry as an indicator of, again, for example, such things as the goals of the Liquor Licensing Division, the structure of the division and how the Investigation and Complaints Unit works. Through this publication, we advise the industry of the expectations of the industry. I might just hand over to Mr Longland to expand on that a little for me.

**Mr LONGLAND:** Laurie Longland, Executive Director, Liquor Licensing Division. The *Year in*

*Review* document is only the beginning in the study of statistical analysis of the liquor industry in Queensland. We are looking towards base level data on which we may start to commence and base a strategic plan for the liquor industry into the future. That plan, which would start later on in this financial year, would give some sort of idea of the number of people employed in the industry, the sorts of turnover in the industry, the importance of the industry generally in the economic development of Queensland, and would therefore give an indication into policy development and directions in which Government may go in the future.

**Dr CLARK:** I have just one further question to ask. On page 8 of your Departmental Estimates document you have some information about licensing administration. You indicated that last year the process of applications had increased from 2 510 to over 4 500 and you have implemented a computerised monitoring of all applications. Clearly, there is considerable growth occurring there. What kind of growth are you anticipating and planning for in the year ahead? Have you any idea of what would be the expected time for the processing of applications? I realise they probably vary depending on objections, but what would be the sort of time lines you are working to to actually process applications at the present time?

**Mr GIBBS:** You have correctly identified the fact that there have been, I guess, almost a record number of applications. During the 1992-93 financial year, there were in fact 260 new licence applications and 2 250 other applications. This has come about broadly as a result of the flexibility of the new Act and, I guess, some upturning in the economy both Queensland and Australiawide where there is more confidence coming back into the market. We have introduced a system of computerised monitoring of each application. That computerised monitoring has meant that we have been able to dramatically reduce the amount of time that it has taken in the past to process applications, particularly now that we have a Statewide computerised network through our regional offices which is able to do that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes questions from the Committee on the program area of Liquor Licensing. I thank staff from that division for their assistance. We now move to questions from Opposition members of the Committee on the program area of Youth. This will be the final bracket of questioning of this Department. I invite questions on Youth and Corporate Services from Mr Veivers, the member for Southport.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The 1992-93 report of the Department explains that \$135,000 of the youth funding allocated was unspent and lapsed because of delays in the approval and distribution of youth grants. Have grant approval procedures now been reviewed so that Youth Programs do not miss out on the much-needed funding which is apparently allocated in the 1994-95 Budget?

**Mr GIBBS:** I might ask Peter Phair to answer that.

**Mr PHAIR:** Peter Phair, Executive Director, Regional Corporate Services. The lapsed

appropriation of \$135,000—I will give you some facts to explain that. The Department actually had an approved allocation of \$4.4m. In the interim, revenue retention was approved for the Department in 1992-93, meaning that the Department could expend any revenues. One part of the Youth Program is the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, which had receipts of \$135,000 for that particular year. Therefore, as the Department had already received full funding for the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme and subsequent approval to spend any receipts—in this case that was \$135,000—the funds had to be basically paid back. So in effect, the \$4.4m allocation should have been \$4.265m, which is the \$4.4m minus the receipts of \$135,000 which came in through revenue retention. Therefore, the Department was basically required to lapse the amount of \$135,000, which was offset against revenue. So there was no actual decrease in funding to the Youth Program.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Grants under the Youth Program have continued to decline from \$2.8m in 1992-93 to \$2.4m this year. Only \$2.1m was allocated in the 1994-95 Budget. The Program Statement appears on page 324. How does this trend correlate to the Youth Program goal of supporting youth participation in society?

**Mr GIBBS:** Your statement there does not match the figures that we have here. If you would like to give that to me on notice, I will make sure you get the correct information.

**Mr VEIVERS:** No trouble. The Youth Bureau was given \$3.1m in 1993-94, an amount inflated by \$530,000 carried over from the preceding year for committed youth grants. Does the \$2.6m allocated to the Bureau in 1994-95 include an amount carried over for grants promised but not paid in the 1993-94 financial year?

**Mr GIBBS:** It includes a carryover amount of \$230,000 in that Budget allocation.

**Mr VEIVERS:** In 1993-94, the Department established a Youth Advisory Forum, supposedly to bring young people's advice to the Government. Will these forums be continued in 1994-95, and at what cost to the Government if they are?

**Mr GIBBS:** The Advisory Forums will be continued in 1994-95. The youth policy, which the Government has put together, has, as you have probably become aware through the Budget Papers, given my Department lead agency status in terms of being responsible for the coordination of youth services right through all Departments. That is to say that there are issues of youth effective on all Departments.

There was a problem there in making sure that we were able to bring a number of those programs together. My Department has lead agency responsibility for that. As part of putting together the document on youth affairs, we have introduced the Youth Advisory Forums. These have been held in a number of areas throughout Queensland, particularly throughout rural Queensland, to ensure that the voice of youth is being heard. They have been very productive forums to date.

I believe that next month the major youth conference—the State Forum—which will be representative of young people from all those advisory forums over the State, will meet here in Brisbane. They will sit down with me. We will obviously discuss the issues that are of concern to young people and take advice from those young people on programs that they believe we should be looking at and should be considering implementing. That will form part of a report that I will take to Cabinet to ascertain those areas that we should be acting on. The amount of money spent in holding those Youth Advisory Forums has been \$150,000. That will continue in the coming years.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Does this amount come out of the \$2.053m provided for youth grants and subsidies?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes. That is in the special Budget allocation youth policy of \$250,000.

**Mr VEIVERS:** How are the young people involved in these forums selected? How do you get in touch with youth? I mean, there is youth all around Queensland. How are they selected, and how do you get in touch with them?

**Mr GIBBS:** They are basically selected by our youth development officers who go throughout the various regions of Queensland talking to youth organisations—to young people in the community. I emphasise the point that none of them is selected on a political basis. It simply would not be productive—if these forums are going to work—to be stacking them with young people with a particularly biased political point of view. It is done on a basis of fairness and equity with young men and young women, bringing them together in those forums to make a contribution. It is worth while noting that there have been something like 500 to 700 young people who have participated across the State in these Youth Advisory Forums, and 60 per cent of those youth forums have been held in rural Queensland.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Where are they held? Are they held in police clubs? Are they rural youth? What are they?

**Mr GIBBS:** Broadly speaking, they have been held in different locations. It has been up to young people themselves in the areas where we have decided to hold the forums to select the venue.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Are they advertised in the paper?

**Mr GIBBS:** Yes, they have been. I will ask Mark Peters, who has been coordinating the program, to give you a little more detail on that.

**Mr PETERS:** Mark Peters, Executive Director, Policy and Programs. The way the forums are set up in the regions is to work through our youth development officers who are in our regional offices, and other departmental youth workers from Family Services, Education, etc., who are working all the time with local community groups. They are able to identify particular needs of young people in particular regions and to set up the forums. They are obviously held in venues and places that are conducive to young people being able to discuss

their thoughts. There is no set formula as to where they will be held; it is up to the young people in consultation with those youth workers in the system.

**Mr VEIVERS:** What I was asking is: where do these young people come from? I have had young people asking me, "Where is it? What is on?" I am just asking you to explain this to me so that I can tell them where to go to get into these forums. It was announced in the *Bulletin* the other day that there were six or so chosen from down there to come to Brisbane for the competition or whatever they are having up here. Young people said to me, "I have not seen any of this. What is this for?" I was not nasty; I did not say that they were just an ALP youth funding recruitment drive.

**Mr GIBBS:** I did not think for one moment that you were implying that.

**Mr VEIVERS:** It only crossed my mind for a minute. I thought I would ask how you go about it, because there are people who have not been involved and want to be involved. Is it people from broken homes, or is it everybody? It is a pretty rounded question, I know, but if you could explain where to go and what to do for those young people, I would appreciate it.

**Mr PETERS:** If any of those young people contact our youth development officers or regional managers in our regional offices and also through the regional networks of Family Services, they will be able to find out more about the forums outside of when we are actually advertising in the community. In relation to the example that you used of a number of people being selected to come to Brisbane, 800 or more people were involved in consultations and obviously to bring them all to Brisbane for that State forum would be a little unwieldy. So during the forums that are held throughout the regions a number of people are asked if they are willing to participate in a State forum and, at this stage, we will have something like 35 to 40 young people involved in that State forum bringing the ideas of young people from those regions.

**Mr HEALY:** I notice in the 1994 Budget Estimates that there will be no capital outlays, and I refer specifically to page 324 of Budget Paper No. 3. Can you explain why that is when some \$260,000 was spent over the past two financial years on capital outlays? Can we anticipate another unexpected amount of capital outlays comparable to the last two years? What is the reason for no capital outlays estimated for 1994-95?

**Mr GIBBS:** There is a good financial reason for that. I will ask Peter Phair to fill you in on that.

**Mr PHAIR:** For efficiency purposes, we have now amalgamated the capital works program that operates for the Sport and Recreation Program. It has been amalgamated with the Youth Program. It is a lot easier to administer regionally and it is a lot more accessible for the community groups that want to access that funding. It has been moved into that area with no reduction in funding.

**Mr HEALY:** In relation to the Youth Services Information System, which is available now to some 350 locations throughout the State and listing over

1 500 youth organisations and services, could I ask if there are figures available as to how much that cost to establish? Are there funds available in the 1994-95 Budget for any updates of that particular system?

**Mr GIBBS:** Our cost in 1994-95 will be approximately \$10,000. The Commonwealth Government put a fair sum of money into this program and if you want me to be able to give you an absolutely correct answer on it, put it on notice and I will give you the breakdown not only of State funding for the program but also of the Commonwealth contribution.

**Mr HEALY:** The other area that I would like you to explain is the performances in 1993-94 of the delivery of youth sector training programs to several hundred workers with young people in Brisbane and regional centres. I ask again: is there money set aside in the 1994-95 Budget for more of those training programs and, if so, how much?

**Mr GIBBS:** There were three programs that were run in 1993-94 with approximately 50 youth workers who were involved in that training. The budget for 1993-94 was \$128,000, which includes a \$20,000 carryover.

**Mr WELFORD:** That completes questions on the Youth Division. There are just a couple of final questions from Mr Veivers in relation to Corporate Services.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The average annual salaries of staff in the Corporate Services sector of the Department have risen by \$8,000—or 20 per cent—over the past two Budgets. Considering that one of the focuses for 1994-95 is the establishment of systems and guidelines for enterprise bargaining, can we expect a further rise in the average salary in the upcoming financial year?

**Mr GIBBS:** The Budget Paper that was given to the Estimates committee was, we believe, grossly inflated in terms of the salary situation. The figure that you have before you relates to Corporate Services?

**Mr VEIVERS:** Yes, for Corporate Services.

**Mr GIBBS:** For Corporate Services you would have the figure of \$45,702. The reality is that the basic salary there, or the average salary, is \$38,023. We have included in our departmental figures allowances for overtime, meal allowances, cash equivalent of recreation leave and all other allowances. I understand that in the report that you were given, it is fair to say that those were the additions. They allowed in those figures that you were given, for example, for payroll tax, FBT, cash equivalent of long service leave, eligible termination payments, superannuation payments, workers' compensation payments and members fees. So it did tend to grossly inflate the amount that those people receive. I add that that applies throughout all sections of my Department.

**Mr VEIVERS:** That is fair enough. You should find out who sent those inflated figures, Minister. A focus of the program for 1994-95 is the—

"Rationalisation of outstanding licence fee

debts and SP betting fines in line with the Auditor-General's findings."

That comes from the Program Statements at page 331. What is the exact amount of outstanding debts and fines that will be written off, and will capital outlays of the Corporate Services Program be affected by this loss of revenues? If not, which program will be affected, because the Auditor-General said about \$840,000 is about 93 per cent of the total outstandings?

**Mr GIBBS:** I am trying to get the figures for you. I think I gave you the amount of moneys that were outstanding from SP fines before. If I recall correctly, it is in the vicinity of \$893,000 or something of that nature. SP fines outstanding as at 31 March 1994 are higher than that amount that I gave you. As at 31 March 1994, they totalled \$908,163.64. I gave you the answer in terms of measures that have been taken to try to recoup that money. I would be anything less than truthful if I were to say to you that I would be not too confident of recouping that money. No, there will be no cutback on services as a result of not being able to recoup those moneys.

**Mr VEIVERS:** The Program Statements for 1994-95 states that the focus will be on the establishment of an executive information system, expanding the access by E-mail and office utilities by all regional offices and the conversion of department files to the Recfind system by the end of 1994. How much will it cost to fund these objectives? Have such funds been allocated in the 1994-95 Budget to cater for them?

**Mr GIBBS:** I will ask Peter Phair to respond to that one for me.

**Mr PHAIR:** The executive information system will be developed to provide key corporate information to managers to assist us in decision making and planning. Typically it will extract key information from the organisation's computerised information systems and present the data in a graphical and spreadsheet format to enable quick analysis of the key data. The information actually provided will be financial status information, human resource information, status of performance measurement, key statistical information—looking at current licensing statistics and grants scheme statistics—and also information regarding the departmental utilities. The total estimated cost of the executive information system trial is to be \$43,500, which will cover developmental costs, software licence costs, training—

**Mr VEIVERS:** That is the trial period, you are saying?

**Mr PHAIR:** We will be putting that in place. We would expect that to be fully implemented after that trial, assuming it is successful.

**Mr VEIVERS:** Have the funds been allocated in 1994-95 after the trial to go into the finished product?

**Mr PHAIR:** It would be unfair at this stage to actually commit funding past the trial period in case the system does need some modification, but certainly our expectation would be that it will extend

beyond that period, and that is certainly in line with Treasury's financial management strategies.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the time allotted for consideration—

**Mr GIBBS:** Mr Chairman, may I make a statement relating to the question that I was asked earlier in regard to the company named Ferncave Investments Pty Ltd? I have had it confirmed that they are in fact the tenant of the property in Castlemaine Street owned by the Lang Park Trust.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As I said, that completes the time allotted for consideration of the Estimates of the Ministry of Tourism, Sport and Racing. I thank the Minister and his portfolio officers for their attendance and assistance here today. I now close this meeting of the Estimates Committee. We will take a five-minute break before we resume with the next department.

The Committee adjourned at 3.31 p.m.



The Committee resumed at 3.38 p.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY SERVICES AND  
ABORIGINAL AND ISLANDER AFFAIRS**

**In Attendance**

- Hon. A. Warner, Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs
- Ms Ruth Matchett, Director-General
- Mr Tony Stevenson, Office of the Director-General
- Mr Jim Wauchope, Acting Divisional Head, Aboriginal and Islander Affairs
- Ms Jan Williams, Divisional Head, Community Services Development
- Mr Tim Gleeson, Assistant Divisional Head, Planning and Policy Co-ordination Branch, Community Services Development
- Mr Russell Loos, Financial Co-ordinator, Community Services Development
- Mr Jeff Whalan, Divisional Head, Intellectual Disability Services
- Mr John Parisi, Resource Management Co-ordinator, Intellectual Disability Services
- Ms Helen Twohill, Divisional Head, Protective Services and Juvenile Justice
- Ms Majella Ryan, A/Assistant Divisional Head, Juvenile Justice, Protective Services and Juvenile Justice
- Ms Carol Peltola, Assistant Divisional Head, Protective Services, Protective Services and Juvenile Justice
- Mr Gary Clarke, Director Finance and Organisational Services
- Ms Di Platz, A/Manager, Budget Section, Finance Branch, Finance and Organisational Services
- Ms Carmel Finn, Director, Information Services
- Mr Uri Themal, Director, Bureau of Ethnic Affairs

**The CHAIRMAN:** I reopen this meeting of Estimates Committee D. The next portfolio to be dealt with by this Committee relates to the Ministry of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. For the benefit of members of the Committee and the Minister and her staff, there is a time limit on questions of one minute, being questions from the Committee. Questions are to be answered within three minutes. Fifteen seconds prior to the end of any one-minute or three-minute period you will hear a single chime, and at the end of the time limit you will hear a double chime.

As set out in the Sessional Order governing Estimates Committee examinations, the first 20 minutes of questions are to be from non-Government members of the Committee, and the second 20 minutes from Government members of the Committee, and so on in rotation. For the benefit of Hansard, I would ask that departmental witnesses identify themselves before giving their answer.

As I indicated at the start of today's hearing, this Committee has sought to refine the Estimates process somewhat by organising its scheduling of the questions in a way which provides not only for the efficient conduct of this hearing but also for the efficient use of departmental time, and for that purpose we will be dealing with different program areas of the department in turn. I simply indicate at the outset the order in which we will be dealing with each of the program areas within this Department. Firstly, we will deal with Aboriginal and Islander Affairs; secondly, we will deal with Community Services Development; thirdly, Ethnic Affairs; fourthly, Protective Services and Juvenile Justice; fifthly, Intellectual Disability Services; and lastly, Corporate Services, in that order, depending on the time available. We will work through the program areas of the Department in that order.

Material prepared by the research directorate of the Committee has been made available to the Minister. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Ministry for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

At the outset, I invite the Minister to make any brief introductory statement she may wish to make.

**Ms WARNER:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Firstly, let me say that I am pleased to take part in this Estimates Committee hearing. I believe that over time these hearings will have a most beneficial effect as they will enable members and the public generally to gain a greater appreciation of the estimated expenditure of Government departments and instrumentalities. I hope that through this process Committee members will gain a better understanding of the diverse range of services and programs provided by my department.

Over the last four and a half years there have been significant reforms and enhancements in the services provided by my department. I will not list them all, but it is worth recalling the reforms in child care and domestic violence prevention, the overhaul of the juvenile justice system, the Aboriginal Land Act, the enhanced disability services, the Seniors Card and the forward plan on ageing. Many of these initiatives have been developed and implemented in partnership with the non-Government sector and many church and community groups that provide services to individuals and families within our communities. This partnership has meant that the combined resources of the Government and the community can be more effectively harnessed to address pressing problems such as homelessness, family breakdown, the effects of the drought on rural communities, and so on.

In this year's Budget, funds have been committed for a comprehensive overhaul of the Youth Detention Centres that have simply outlived their usefulness. New facilities and upgraded programs will be provided. The needs of rural families will be further addressed through a package of measures suited to rural communities. Services for people with an intellectual disability will be enhanced

through the progressive relocation of clients from Challinor and the upgrading of services to clients in other residential settings. Many of the social issues that fall within my portfolio have no immediate solutions—no simple answers. I believe that through the various program areas of my Department real progress has been made over the past years that advantages the most disadvantaged members of our community who are getting a better deal as a result.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I invite the first questions from Mr Littleproud.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Could I say at the outset, Minister, I congratulate you and your departmental officers on the preparation of the material that I have before me. It has made it much easier for me to get a better understanding of where your priorities lie. Those congratulations go to you, Mr Ahern and Miss Reilly, for the assistance that you have given the Committee as well. Could I say also, Minister, that with regard to some of the developments of policy on Aboriginal and Islander affairs, I support those where you are handing over the responsibility of housing to the Department of Housing, and health to Health. I support those. There are some issues, though, that I would like to get some explanations upon. I will be working mostly from the prepared document, page 5, the Estimates Statements. You are talking about the major variations at the bottom of page 5, and a carryover of unspent money of \$2.491m for response to Aboriginal deaths in custody funding. Could you just tell me why that was not spent last year and what it will be spent on in the future?

**Ms WARNER:** The short answer to it is very simple, and that is that we made an allocation for diversionary centres to be built—I think it was four diversionary centres; one in Mount Isa, one in Cairns, one in Rockhampton and one in Townsville—and that allocation was made in response to the Deaths in Custody Commission, which suggested that we should be diverting people from watch-houses into what is broadly called diversionary centres. It was a policy that was actually started under your Government.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** That is right—Bob Katter.

**Ms WARNER:** With that specific response, one of the difficulties that we have had, and are still having, with that is that in a number of the areas where we have been looking for locations for the diversionary centres there has been some difficulty, as you can imagine, in persuading local people that these are a good idea. We are indeed in a bit of a cleft stick in respect of these things because the general public complains bitterly if people are in a public place in a drunken—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** A bit like toxic dumps.

**Ms WARNER:** It is a little bit like that, yes, but I think that is a fairly unfortunate analogy in some ways.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** No, in terms of people not wanting it in their backyards, I mean.

**Ms WARNER:** I am afraid that most of the toxicity that these people are involved in is mainly brought upon themselves. It is a catch-22 and it is

something that we find right across our Department. People want us to provide the facilities but they have the NIMBY syndrome—"Not in my backyard".

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** You have listed them this year. I think that you have got the sites chosen?

**Ms WARNER:** No, we are having some difficulty, and I would appreciate some support from your side of politics, in fact, in terms of trying to persuade people that this is actually a good measure, that we should be trying to find locations that are appropriate, and all putting our shoulders to the wheel. I have generally made the statement that I do not want to inflict services in areas where they are not welcome, because it is our experience that those services do not flourish. We actually do need a degree of community support to make them work and to advance them. One of the major problems I am having at the moment is in Rockhampton, where the city council is basically saying that it does not want any diversionary centre in any part of Rockhampton. I have approached the council for a meeting to try to iron out those difficulties and say where we can find some place which will be convenient to everybody. The other thing that you have got to remember is that you cannot put them too far outside of the city, because it would require too much of police time, effort and energy to transport them there, and that would pose a problem. So that is the reason for the carry over of the money, and that is basically the issue in that respect.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Thank you. In the same area, there is additional funding for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander infrastructure of \$1.052m. Can you give us some more detail on that, please?

**Ms WARNER:** This program has been established to provide infrastructure and support services in remote and rural Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It is a Queensland Government response to the endorsement of out-stations support. It was a decision taken by Cabinet in May 1992. I can explain further about the out-stations if the member wants?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I know what you are on about.

**Ms WARNER:** The specific carryover issue is in relation to specific capital works projects, and it is in relation to the provision of water resources. I think the particular program—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** At those out-stations or further than that?

**Ms WARNER:** Yes. That carryover relates to the Palm Island Dam project, which is a joint Commonwealth and State funded program. You may be aware that Palm Island has suffered considerable water shortages, or fear of water shortages, because of the inadequacy of its existing system. For a long time, a process has been under way to either get that new dam or, alternatively, other water resources for Palm Island.

From your time in Government, you would probably be aware that, in conducting joint projects with other arms of Government—and in this case with ATSIC—you experience some delays in the implementation of policy. The money is there. We

have also provided extra money for the upgrading of the sewerage system and general infrastructure which has been in disrepair for some time. It will be a long time, obviously, before we get the infrastructure arrangements for Aboriginal communities up to date. So that is what that carryover is in respect of.

The other issue that is part of the capital project money that we had left over from last year is the development of the policy on out-stations, which is giving Aboriginal people the facility to be able to get basic services in the more remote parts of their areas. This is an attempt to prevent the concentration of people in townships, where social problems become quite difficult to deal with. We are dealing with that problem by encouraging people to go back to the parts of the country with which they have specific identity. This is what the out-station movement does. It will take us some time to develop that policy in Queensland, because right up until we got into Government the policy had been going in the other direction.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** It is part of the correction system, too, I understand.

**Ms WARNER:** That is one aspect of it. I will talk about this further, if given an opportunity. It is an important part of the change in policy from the policy of containment, which occurred over many years, to a policy of allowing people to follow their own instincts and interests in using their own lands for their own benefit. In terms of corrections, it has a very useful function. Also, in terms of alcohol control, it has a very useful function.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** On page 6, there is a heading "Support for Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal Communities". The material prepared for me by the Committee listed an incident at Woorabinda where the Department ran a Commonwealth Bank agency. It was found that there was a cash shortage there in the past of \$26,822. I am informed that the bank has been paid out by the Department. There was an indication that the police were investigating the matter. Could you inform me whether any charges have been laid and whether any restitution has been made?

**Ms WARNER:** The short answer to that is that there have been no charges laid in respect of that incident. In November 1992, the departmental internal auditor identified a shortage of \$26,000 in banking operations at the Woorabinda bank agency. The internal report identified that the breakdown of control and supervision by management over the operation of the agency brought about by the withdrawal of departmental officers from Woorabinda was a major contributing factor in that area. You would be aware that there is a policy in place to try to remove departmental controls from communities. People have to operate on a policy of self-management.

Indeed, your former Government followed the same broad policy direction and was moving in the same way. In fact, as I came into Government, it was in the process of winding up the banking facilities in the Torres Strait. There was a deal of work to be done there. So that was not a new policy development but simply a continuation of policy that

had existed in the Department for many years. The shortage that was found was referred to the Blackwater CIB for investigation in November 1992. But I understand that they have not been able to get the evidence. This is not a new occurrence. We know that a crime has been committed, but we cannot find an individual—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** It is an example of a syndrome.

**Ms WARNER:**—to charge. This does not only happen in Aboriginal communities; it happens in the general community as well. It is called "unsolved crime". The CIB requested that an independent audit be carried out to verify audit findings before the CIB investigated the matter. Evans, Edwards and Associates, Chartered Accountants of Rockhampton, undertook an audit. The auditor's report of 20 August concluded that they could not reveal any conclusive evidence as to the reasons for the cash deficiencies. The report was forwarded to the CIB on 20 September 1993, and CIB investigations are ongoing.

The regional office at Rockhampton is regularly in contact with the CIB regarding these investigations. The Department has reimbursed the Commonwealth Bank for the shortages. As of 6 September 1992, the Department divested itself of its responsibility for the agency. The bank agency is now privately operated by the Duaringa postal agent. The issue of banking services on Aboriginal communities is not just a problem at Woorabinda, which is actually a relatively non-remote community. As you can imagine, places like Kowanyama—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** They had a similar problem, did they not?

**Ms WARNER:**—have very similar problems. But you can see the dangers of leaving banking agencies with large amounts of cash in those remote places. The further away that you get from cities and police forces, the greater is the opportunity for money to go missing. Of course, one of the struggles we have is to provide services for people, but to provide them in a way that is secure and safe for them. It is not easy to do that in a State as decentralised as Queensland. Though, I would go so far as to say that it is not a problem that would be unique to Queensland or unique to Aboriginal communities. It is a problem felt by all people who live in remote areas. It is not normal practice for Government departments to move in and provide those sorts of banking agencies for people.

There is a fairly flourishing commercial trade in banking, as I understand it, in this State. I do believe that the banking industry itself has to take some responsibilities for a better distribution of services to people across this State. It is not necessarily a function of Government.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The Budget Papers mention a Financial Administrative Training Scheme to be launched in the latter half of 1994. Is this to give training to the community councils? In my mind, I remember an assurance that you gave towards the end of last year that training for the councils would start in February 1994 after the Auditor-General's

report highlighted all of the deficiencies in the management of those councils. I draw your attention to the fact that the Auditor-General first signalled that there would be problems in these council as far back as 1991.

**Ms WARNER:** It was a bit further back than that.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I refer to the report that you tabled in Parliament the other day—that is, your report to the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts. You informed us that you would be amending the Community Services Act in future to tighten up management methods. The first suggestions arose in 1991. In April last year, the Auditor-General pointed out deficiencies in the management of these councils. You said that you were going to start the program in February. Now you are saying that it will be launched in the latter half of 1994. Is that all part of the same process about which you are talking?

**Ms WARNER:** For some time we have been looking at the development of training packages and processes for councils. A number of schemes have operated over a number of years in relation to the training of those councils. Specifically for council clerks, there has been a very strong effort to make sure that the issue could be addressed. One of the problems that we face in respect of councils is that people say, "If people were trained better, we would solve the problem." That is probably true. But if you put all your eggs in the basket of training, I do not think that you will get results quickly enough to affect audits in the near future. However, we have allocated money for training. We had hoped that the council clerks' course would be starting at the beginning of this year—in February, in fact. That was the TAFE course. I am reliably informed that that will definitely be starting in July this year. The amount of \$373,000 has also been allocated to that training package. We were going to do that through the Department; but in consultation with the ACC and the ICC, more recently we have thought that a better way to have that money targeted would be to give it to those bodies, because they can attract funding for training from other sources, such as ATSIC, and they can use that money in a package amount to provide training facilities for councils.

Training is one aspect of what we should do in order to deal with councils' inability or incapacity to provide unqualified audits. The other elements are outlined in the response to the PAC report, which I tabled in Parliament last year.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Last week.

**Ms WARNER:** Sorry, last week. A week is a long time in politics!

I will talk about it later, and I would appreciate a further question on this, but there is an allocation of \$1.5m which you will not see in the Budget Papers now, but it was part of the Treasury advance to which the Premier referred in his response to similar questions during the examination of his Estimates. I would be happy to give the Committee a breakdown of that money and how it will be spent. That is a fairly

comprehensive program which has been developed in full consultation with the councils.

For the first time, we have managed to attract everybody's attention to this issue. People are beginning to understand that the question of accountability is not only a question of accountability to the State Government but it is also a question of accountability to their own constituents, the people who elect them. There is a great need for the development of understanding there—an understanding which is taking time to put in place, but I think that we are beginning to win the battle. You may have heard that of recent times I was fairly strong in my statements to the councils.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I must press you further on that question, bearing in mind the severity of the maladministration highlighted by the Auditor-General in April last year. The crux of my question was with regard to how much time it is taking to put this initiative in place. You gave an assurance in the House that it would be put in place by February this year; now you are saying that it will not be started until July this year. The report that you tabled in Parliament the other day states that the development of the legislation to amend the Community Services Act may not be presented until next year. I must tell you that there is public concern with regard to accountability. Are you satisfied with the current rate at which this problem is being dealt with?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would intervene there and ask the member to keep his questions related to the Estimates procedure.

**Ms WARNER:** I am happy to answer the question. In broad terms, it relates to the forward Estimates of the department.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** It does, yes.

**Ms WARNER:** It does take a long time. One of the lessons that I think Governments learn slowly and painfully in the area of Aboriginal affairs is that, if they do not have the consent of Aboriginal people in terms of the development of policy direction, it does not matter what policy direction they have; it will not be implemented unless everybody is moving in the same direction. That requires a lot of talking and a lot of consultation. It also requires a capacity to integrate and ensure that Government programs are based on what is practically possible in communities not only in terms of the logistics of distance, travelling time, services and those sorts of issues but also in terms of the sorts of issues that people are prepared to address and deal with.

I think that there is a view—which is quite a wrong one—that Governments by themselves can solve the audit problems of Aboriginal communities. That is not a view that I hold; nor do I think it is a very tenable view. After all, we are talking about Aboriginal people's own capacity to run their financial and administrative affairs, which is something that we have to work towards in a very educative and consultative manner. You may recall the history in this area. Over very many years, significant numbers of Governments—both conservative and Labor—went in the other direction, which was taking power and control from Aboriginal people. We

realised that that was a wrong-headed strategy perhaps a little bit late in the day. Now, there is an attempt to turn that around and to try to ensure that Aboriginal people are adequately resourced to pick up the responsibility for their own affairs.

What we are actually living through at the moment is the rather mixed message that society gives to Aboriginal people. On the one hand, society says, "We want you to stand on your own two feet and we want you to do it for yourselves; but at the same time, if you do not do it for yourselves, we will do it for you." I do not believe that that is a very useful policy direction to follow. In developing responses to complicated problems—and I have mentioned this in the House and I will mention it again—we must move deliberately and effectively towards resourcing and empowering Aboriginal people to deal with these problems. We cannot do it by simply passing a piece of legislation in the House. We actually have to go out there and do the work on the ground with Aboriginal people. We are in the process of doing that. Yes, it is long; yes, it is slow; yes, it is painful, but it is worth doing if we actually want to solve the problem rather than just passing legislation in the House for political purposes and rather than actually dealing with the issues on the ground.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the first bracket of questioning from Opposition members of the Committee. I now invite Government members of the Committee to put some questions to the Minister and her department, commencing with the member for Barron River, Dr Clark.

**Dr CLARK:** I would like to pursue the question of accountability because, as has been indicated today, it is a very important one. You have already given the Committee some indication of the nature of assistance that your department will be providing to councils in the area of financial accountability. Could you please clarify the issue that you raised with the Committee of the additional allocation of \$1.5m in response to the Auditor-General's report, which I understand is a further package of measures that will be of value? Perhaps you might also indicate to the Committee the role that the visit of the Auditor-General himself has played. This year, he visited Thursday Island for the first time and confronted the problems about which he has been writing and reporting to this Parliament.

**Ms WARNER:** Thank you for that question, because it allows me to continue where I left off with the last answer. There have been a series of meetings and discussions over the last year. In actual fact, they have been occurring for longer than that. The discussions have been ongoing. Perhaps one of the most significant recent meetings was held on 24 May with the Island Coordinating Council. The meeting was called to address the issues of financial accountability of the Torres Strait Island councils. I had previously spoken to the ICC about these matters. I basically said, "There are a number of issues that we have to deal with. This is a really serious matter. We must concentrate our minds." I pointed out to them that if I found that there were reports of councils—not councils that were unable to

do it because of incapacity—that were flouting directions that were given to them either by the ICC or by the department, those councils would be brought to task for that.

The meeting on 24 May was attended by the Auditor-General, the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of Public Accounts, Mr Ray Hollis, and senior officers from ATSIC, including the State manager and senior departmental staff. Many issues were discussed which related directly to financial accountability. There was unanimous acceptance from councillors that they were responsible for accountability and that increased efforts would be made to address accountability issues.

I commend the Auditor-General for the time that he took to go to that meeting and for his willingness to consult in this very difficult area. I believe that many chairpersons of councils were also encouraged to be able to meet face-to-face with the Auditor-General, who of course had been so critical of a number of their performances, and they were able to have an exchange about what the difficulties were and what the problems were. I am sure that that meeting will go a long way to changing attitudes on a number of sides, that is, island councils will understand what the requirements are and the Auditor-General will further understand what the difficulties are in respect of these matters.

I think that there is an attitudinal change developing all round as a result of those meetings which can only lead to improved accountability performance in the long run, but I will say now, and it has been said before, that you are not going to get a 100 per cent report at the end of these processes, but what you will have is a process that is in train and that is improving developmentally. With all those discussions, we have managed to come up with a series of supports to give to councils and to the ACC and to the ICC an amount of \$1.5m.

**Dr CLARK:** Could you go on and elaborate then on that particular page?

**Ms WARNER:** That is your second question? Thank you for assisting me to do that. The amount of \$1.5m is available for several key initiatives which are related to accountability. It has been decided to allocate \$500,000 for the appointment of key finance personnel in Aboriginal councils, so that could be money that will be made available to them. We have provided \$400,000 to be targeted towards the provision of internal audits, because one of the issues is that when the Auditor-General's report comes out, the problem could be as much as 18 months old before it is brought to the council's attention. A process of internal audits will allow them to get on top of problems as they emerge rather than waiting until the problem is really old and then it is too late to deal with it and to fix it. So that process of internal audits and related accounting support services to Aboriginal councils is to be coordinated by the ACC. A further \$600,000 will be made available in the Torres Strait for the ICC, which is also part of that new regional authority up there which is taking much more control in self-management terms and in terms of self-

determinations. So, that is the broad process that we are going through.

Any grants that we make in this area will have very tight conditions for expenditure so that we are sure that the money goes to the provision of that professional advice and support which Aboriginal communities lack so much. Of course, it is obvious to see that those communities like Cherbourg, Woorabinda and Yarrabah, which are near to urban centres and can attract that professional support, do not have qualified audits, but it is in those communities in the Torres Strait, where it takes days to get there and where no professional person really wants to live over a long period of time, that you have the difficulties. It is not difficult to work out why these things occur. I will just point out that the \$1.5m does not appear in this Budget, but it will be part of the allocation of expenditure for this Department next year, and that is because it was a late allocation as a result of the Cabinet process that had to be gone through.

**Dr CLARK:** You have mentioned previously the TAFE community management course that will be starting in July. How do you see that course linking with the measures you have just described? Presumably, there is some way of making sure that the staff involved in those internal audits that you are referring to would also be able to work with these people as they come off training?

**Ms WARNER:** The TAFE course is also related to the development of the Council Clerks Association. The TAFE course is to be able to train people to be council clerks so that hopefully, with the development of the association and the greater interest that the ACC and the ICC are taking in this area, there will be a development of a pool of people trained specifically in this area that will be available for councils to recruit their office staff from. People will have a piece of paper from the TAFE course so that councils will then know that they have some qualifications in this area, and this is a first; it has not been available before. It provides a career structure and it provides a way forward in terms of training for Aboriginal people and for career opportunities for Aboriginal people and for Aboriginal communities to be able to acquire the skills to be able to conduct their own affairs. The way it is linked in is that it becomes the passport, if you like, for the interview that takes place by the council of prospective employees.

**Dr CLARK:** If I could move on to another area which has been touched on this afternoon, that of out-stations. I understand there is some \$524,000 in the Budget—this appears on page 14 of your departmental Estimates. Could you clarify how it is intended to spend that money on the development of out-stations and the benefits of that program both for the Aboriginal communities that will reside there and also for the Government?

**Ms WARNER:** As I mentioned before, the development of the out-stations policy is, I think, intrinsic if we are to address a lot of the entrenched social problems that exist on Aboriginal communities. Basically, what the allocation of expenditure is for is basic provision of services. There are a number of

examples of out-stations which exist already within the State, out-stations where Aboriginal people quite often voluntarily take themselves to—they are areas of particular significance to them—and set up some kind of camp site.

We are now hoping to be able to use the capital expenditure to make sure that they have an adequate water supply there, that there is an adequate sewerage system—and we are talking fairly small family groupings here—that there is basic shelter, that there is somewhere to store food, somewhere to lock up, that there is some radio communication so that there is access for medical emergency, that there is basic power and that there are some tools and equipment just to enable and empower people to live in that more traditional manner but not in terms of the building of whole houses. Basically, what you need is a cyclone-proof shelter, a good fresh water supply, decent sanitation and communications with the outside world—that is, a radio which works.

Of course, one of the things that is happening in Aurukun at the moment, which I hope will move to other centres in Cape York, is the development within the Education Department of sending teachers to out-stations to where the kids are. You may have known that the attendance at school in Aurukun was very poor until the Department varied its teaching program and now there is, I think, a much increased attendance.

**Dr CLARK:** They have separated the clan groups out.

**Ms WARNER:** That is right, so that people could live in a more traditional manner which was suited to them and which avoided this hothouse experience that they have within the settlements and the communities. It is a long and involved policy area and issue, but we have allocated some money to further that out-station movement. It is supported by ATSIC and I hope to be developing protocols with ATSIC which will make sure that we do not overlap and that moneys are complementary in terms of providing those basic structures that people need to be able to take advantage of living on their traditional land, which of course also gives them back that sense of identity that they felt they lost when they were forcibly removed from those traditional lands. So, in all, it is a way of responding to a lot of the criticism that Aboriginal people have had of Government policies over a long period of time where they have been forced to live in suburban settings, albeit in the remotest parts of the State, and then being expected to behave like suburban residents in those settings, which of course has been quite incongruous and why there has been significant difficulty in getting that to occur. So, the out-station movement is going to take a long time to develop; it is going to take a long time for it to take effect. Also, not all Aboriginal people will want to avail themselves of it, but for those who do, I think it is a very healthy direction and, hopefully, it will be one measure that we can take to overcome the overcrowding that exists within the townships and the social conflicts that exist within the townships, the alcohol problems that exist there and the fact that people do not like it.

**Dr CLARK:** I assume, too, that you would be looking to the Health Department and also to the Education Department to supplement funding that you are providing for the out-station movement because it is not something you will be able to solve yourself in your own Department?

**\*\* Ms WARNER:** I have mentioned the Aurukun experience. But also in terms of Housing and Local Government—they are looking at ways in which their provision of accommodation can be dovetailed into the needs on out-stations. As I said, ATSIC obviously has a significant role to play in this area, and plays it in the Northern Territory.

Also, Water Resources is looking at alternative ways of making sure that you have clean water supplies and basic alternative measures for sanitation. In Alice Springs, there is a centre for alternate technology, which has all manner of new and innovative ideas which are quite different from the kerb and channelling, bitumen and heavy sewerage supports, which are very expensive and would be quite out of place in the sorts of remote locations that we are talking about. So that understanding of out-stations and the sorts of alternative technology and structures that are needed there has to go across all Government departments. Believe me, that is going to be a slow but worthwhile process.

**Dr CLARK:** My third question relates to the Diversion from Custody Program. I note that there are funds allocated in the 1994 Budget for a Diversion from Custody Program as part of that \$6.68m program which is the response to the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody listed on page six of your departmental Estimates. Could the Minister please explain what funding is actually allocated to the Diversion from Custody Program? What are the objectives of this program? To what extent has this program been implemented to date? What difficulties, if any, have been experienced in implementing the program? You have touched on some problems already. I am just trying to find an acceptable location within the community. Perhaps you might expand if there are other kinds of problems. How successful do you believe that program has been in meeting its objectives?

**Ms WARNER:** The sum of \$3.65m has been allocated to the Diversion from Custody Program in 1994-95. The normal base of the program is \$2m. Program funds have been augmented by carryover of \$1.65m in capital and operational funding from the 1993-94 financial year. I have explained why that is the case.

The objective of the Diversion from Custody Program is to reduce the incidence of death in police watch-houses and to provide an alternative custodial option for people who are inebriated. The specific objectives are that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are at risk to themselves or others as a consequence of their inebriated state have access to diversionary centres providing sobering-up support and related information and referral services.

We must be careful that people do not get that diversionary function from watch-houses confused

with rehabilitation programs. Quite often, people will say, "If you are providing the diversion, you should go ahead and provide the rehabilitation." It is not always appropriate that people who require diversion from custody be immediately forced into a rehabilitation program, because they might not be ready to accept that and, therefore, it will necessarily fail.

The Department of Health is primarily responsible for the development of drug and alcohol rehabilitation programs. We are working to try to coordinate the activities of diversionary centres with the development of drug and alcohol rehabilitation from the Health Department to make sure that when the diversionary centres do have an individual who is willing to take part in an ongoing and structured program, there is a referral place where we can send them.

I have already indicated to the Committee that the regional centres also have a Watch-house Cell Visitors Scheme, which is important in terms of monitoring the conditions of people in watch-houses, and this exists in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Mount Isa and Cairns. Three are currently operating, that is, the ones in Brisbane, Cairns and Mount Isa. You are probably familiar with the one in Cairns. We have some problems with the location of the ones in Rockhampton and Townsville, but we are working on it. It is worth while doing that.

There are a number of Aboriginal organisations which are picking up responsibility for the location of individuals who have been arrested because of drunkenness. They are the Murri Watch in Brisbane; the Juwarki Kapu-Lug in Rockhampton; the Gurindal Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation in Townsville; the Balma Healing Centre in Cairns; Families and Prisoners Support in Cairns; and the Arthur Petersen Special Care Centre in Mount Isa, which is a diversionary centre.

So there is a fair degree of work that is being done developing services, developing programs and getting Aboriginal organisations targeting these areas through the response to the deaths in custody money that has come through.

**Dr CLARK:** Could I ask you specifically about the Cairns situation, because obviously that is a particular concern of mine? I was wondering whether there has been any time to do an assessment of the De Balma Healing Centre, which is the Cairns diversionary centre. What other plans do we have to deal with the issue of public drunkenness and, as you said, looking to that next stage and trying to get people ready to actually benefit from a rehabilitation program, and providing alternative accommodation for people?

**Ms WARNER:** Again, there are two confusing issues here. One is that people believe that if you build a diversionary centre you will never see another drunk on the street. Of course, that is not going to be the case. The diversionary centres are diversions from custody, not diversions from the street necessarily. There is a problem in terms of what people think is the function of diversionary centres.

In Cairns, the old Alluna Hostel, which used to be used for patients coming down from the cape and spending a short amount of time there, has been rejigged to meet the needs of the Balma Healing Centre which runs that diversionary centre and which has received support from this Department of about \$300,000. It is difficult to get an evaluation.

The other issue that is a problem in respect of that location, which is the Alluna Hostel, is that that Alluna Hostel land is indeed old Aboriginal reserve land which is going to be available for claim by traditional groups of Aboriginal people. It is by the grace of those people who currently believe themselves to be that group that this service is running from that place. Obviously, in those places like Townsville and Rockhampton, where we did not have that original assistance, it has been hard to get the service going.

The other aspect of the problem in Cairns is not only the diversion from the watch-house to the diversionary centre but the diversion from Cairns itself of those people who may want to go back and live on out-stations. My Department is doing some significant work—

**Dr CLARK:** That has been a problem. You might like to elaborate on what plans we have there. We have run out of time.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That completes the bracket of questions from Government members. We now return to Mr Littleproud, the member for Western Downs, who will continue questions in relation to the Aboriginal Affairs program area.

**Mr WAUCHOPE:** Could I just make a minor point of clarification for the record? It does not really change things. The figure that the Minister quoted in relation to the Woorabinda bank shortage was actually the figure supplied through your research papers. The actual figure identified by the internal audit was \$23,104.38. The other figure was actually the amount calculated by the second investigation by the firm of chartered accountants.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you for that clarification. Mr Littleproud?

**Ms WARNER:** Are we still on Aboriginal Affairs?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Yes, the Land Program now. I notice that the budget allocation this year is down from \$3.113m to \$2.757m.

**Ms WARNER:** What page are you on?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Page 10.

**Ms WARNER:** Of the departmental documents?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Yes. Page six lists the actual amount. Page 10 talks about the Land Program and the objective for 1994-95. I think I read somewhere that something like 19 claims were treated in the last year. Do you have some ballpark figure of how much money it costs per claim that you help resource and prepare?\*

**Ms WARNER:** They vary considerably

depending upon the size of the claim and the number of people who are involved in the claim and, basically, the complexity of the issues.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** How many are expected for next year?

**Ms WARNER:** Pardon?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** So there is no real pattern that you can follow. How many are expected next year?

**Ms WARNER:** No, it is really dependent upon what is actually happening on the ground in terms of the number of descendants of the traditional people, the number of—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** How do you budget this year, then?

**Ms WARNER:** It is a very arbitrary allocation of money, which is related to the amount of money that is available from the Government for those grants. When that runs out, it runs out. There is assistance available under the Aboriginal Land Act. The Budget was \$2,599,000, which includes a grant of \$824,000 for claims and transfers. There are two kinds of processes that can occur. One is that people make a claim on land that is gazetted for claim, and the other is that there can be transfers of title from the deed of grant in trust areas or from Aboriginal reserve land to the traditional owners or the historical owners. Forty-four grants have been processed in 1993-94 to date, but a lot of those claims would not be finished yet. That would just be the allocation of the number of claims that we have been resourcing, which is a pretty ongoing matter. The cost of the claims and transfer vary considerably. I have just been told that that ranges from \$60,000 to \$300,000 for claims, and \$5,000 to \$70,000 for transfers.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Would you think about putting some ceiling on it if there is that big a variation?

**Ms WARNER:** No, you cannot really, because you are dealing with varying sizes of groups of people—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Sets of circumstances?

**Ms WARNER:** Yes, sets of circumstances. It really has to be adjudicated on the basis of the numbers of people involved, the complexity of the claim, whether or not there is another party involved in a counterclaim, and the amount of information that can be brought to bear. These matters are actually very complicated and quite difficult to pin down sufficiently for successful claims to take place.

The initial estimates of claims have proven to be grossly under-represented because what happens in the process of the claim is that more and more information comes to light about more and more individuals who may have some access or should have some access to claim because of their historical antecedents. In many cases they have been moved from the land and have been encouraged over many years to forget the country from which they come and, of course, Aboriginal people are rediscovering their roots and rediscovering their identities. More and more Aboriginal people are involved in that process, which is a healthy and healing process after



the disruption that they suffered from being taken away from the land. I do not know if you have read very much from the anecdotes of individuals who have done that.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I would rather go on to another question. I appreciate your sincerity. I would like to ask another question now.

**Ms WARNER:** The reason why you cannot put an arbitrary amount on it is that you are dealing with very complex relationships between Aboriginal people and the land from which they have been severed.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The next thing is not to do with land claims but it is a land matter. All the land handed over to date has been group titles. Recently it came to my attention that on Badu Island, where there are new employment opportunities because of the lobster industry, there is a tremendous shortage of housing. It has been put to me that some of these people would probably be able to fund their own housing if they could get access to funds from the Housing Department through Mr Mackenroth, but the limitation is that there is no freehold land available that they can own as individuals. Has any pressure been put on you to address that sort of problem? You cannot get enough money through your housing program. These people could probably access Housing Department funds through Mr Mackenroth.

**Ms WARNER:** I will ask Mr Wauchope to answer that question.

**Mr WAUCHOPE:** My name is Jim Wauchope, Acting Divisional Head of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. It is a very complicated question that you have raised. As you might recall, your Government actually issued deeds of grant in trust. One of the principal reasons for doing it that particular way was to make it so that the land could not be lost to the people who had the land. That will also continue to be the situation with the application of the Torres Strait Islander Land Act. The issue that you are raising is that if people had freehold land they would be able to raise money against that land and borrow. Although a lot of people have spent a lot of time thinking how they might do that, nobody has actually been able to work out a means of doing it and at the same time protecting the interests of the community in terms of not losing the land in the process.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** But do you think it has merit? It is something you could probably look at more closely.

**Mr WAUCHOPE:** It would be very difficult to resolve. People have been looking at it, obviously not just in Queensland but also elsewhere, and nobody has yet been able to find a solution.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Perhaps the other way would be for the Housing Minister to make a more generous allocation of housing—

**Ms WARNER:** I do not think it is a question of funding. It is a question of policy in respect of what the nature of the title of the land is. Your Government decided that it should be a communal deed of grant in trust held in title of the council. Our Government has decided that it should be inalienable

freehold title, which means that it is freehold in that people have possession of it, but it is inalienable in that they cannot sell it. We do that so that the land is protected for future generations; so that it cannot be mortgaged out to other rich individuals within the community who want to buy prime spots of real estate for tourism purposes or any other purposes, because that provides for a further alienation of the land from its traditional ownership. Once we have made those sorts of policy decisions, it does not matter how much money you throw at the problem; you are not going to be able to provide mortgages for people. But what you can do is provide housing, which is what the Department of Housing and Local Government does, as does ATSIC as well.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** There is a special need at Badu that needs some sort of attention and that was one way that you could approach it. The other way would be through group funding.

Reading in the objectives on page 10, it states that the Department will contribute to the Government's consideration of the implication of native title legislation. Bearing in mind that your divisional head resigned with the protest that he was in fact engaged to develop policy and give advice and that was not the case, can you give an assurance that it will be different in the year ahead—that advice and policy will be coming from the divisional head?

**Ms WARNER:** As in all departments, when the divisional head is not available—and he has not resigned, but he is certainly not available at the moment—one appoints an acting divisional head, whom you see here beside me at the moment giving me quite adequate policy advice.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** So it will come through there. On page 14 there is a notation which talks about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs trading activities. There is an amount there of \$14m and it goes down this year to \$6m. Can you give me some more detail on that, please?

**Ms WARNER:** The situation there is that the trading activities through the Department will reduce significantly over the next year, because the policy direction is to transfer the retail stores—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** There are about seven left, I think.

**Ms WARNER:** Yes. There has been a process of going down this track for some years and this is the final step in that direction to transfer the stores by January, I think it is, next year. There are seven Aboriginal stores at the moment; you are correct. But it is proposed to hand those over to Aboriginal community control in 1994-95. The Department received supplementary funding of \$0.297m for equipment stock and demolition in 1993-94 and \$0.493m will be provided because of the losses in respect of the Woorabinda fire.

The hand-over process to Aboriginal control involves a discussion paper and brochures on the proposed transfer that have been widely circulated to Aboriginal communities, consultation with Aboriginal people affected by the transfer, and further consultation will also occur. There will be the upgrading of store buildings—of course, we will not

need do that in Woorabinda; we will be replacing it—to repair those buildings prior to transfer, otherwise you just give a whole load of liabilities instead of a usable asset. A business plan will be developed for each store, and training will provide staff with the skills to undertake a greater responsible in the area of retail stores.

The Department will be suggesting to Aboriginal people that it is in their best interests to keep the stores together in some form of cooperative arrangement so that they get benefits from bulk purchases, and also to get some kind of cross-subsidy between the most remote stores and the other stores. But as you can imagine, that is a very contentious issue. If it is a rich store operating somewhere at like Palm Island, it is a bit hard to get them to share with more remote communities such as Wujal Wujal, Kowanyama or Weipa, where the costs of transportation, and therefore the costs of the items, are so much greater. That is an issue that has yet to be resolved. In terms of the best benefit for all the stores, but it is better that they are a larger cooperative rather than operating as individual stores.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** There is no item in the Budget Papers, but you would be aware that a report came down on the old Aboriginal Welfare Funds and there was an assurance given by you during the last 12 months that if those people could come forward and provide the necessary documentation, you would seriously look at paying them out. In fact, I received a deputation from three Aboriginal people, about whom I wrote to you, and you have been in contact with them yourself. Could you tell the Committee: have any claims been made and how many of those have been made by people who could provide documentation to prove that they in fact had funds held in the old Welfare Fund?

**Ms WARNER:** The Department is currently working on about 20 to 30 people who have claims. The difficulty in this area has been to try and substantiate the legitimacy of those claims. What we normally find—and probably what my predecessor found in this portfolio—is that you can see the legitimacy and there is no reason to disbelieve individuals who say certain things have happened to them. The difficulty has been—and I made mention of this in a report to Parliament in 1990—that the records in the department are very, very sketchy. They were not really big on keeping departmental records in this area. A lot of them would be scattered throughout the State in police stations under the old Native Protection Scheme. Also, many of the files from the department have not been computerised and have never been regularised. It has been an absolute nightmare trying to get them together. We had a consultancy—which I assume is going to be one of your future questions—into trying to find out what information was available, only to find huge gaps—and I cannot remember the exact years—throughout the 1940s. You cannot get any information because the files are not in the department.

You have got no reason to doubt the sincerity or the trustworthiness of the individuals who are

making the claim. I would be only too pleased to be able to pay out immediately those individuals who have legitimate claims because, quite frankly, we are spending more money trying to trace enough evidence for the claims than we would be if we paid them out what they were asking. However, you cannot do that under Government policy in terms of an equitable policy direction. It would be simpler to be able to do that. It would be much easier on the individuals who are making the claims, but the problem is that you could, inadvertently, even with the best of intentions, create a huge injustice.

We are in the process of consulting with Aboriginal people to find a way of distributing the moneys—\$5.6m—which are frozen. That is why you will see in the Budget papers no mention of the Welfare Fund. There is this \$5.6m which is gaining interest—so the money is not eroding—until such time as we can find a way which is mutually agreeable between Aboriginal people and the Government to dispose of those funds to try to recompense Aboriginal people for the gross injustices that were done to them in the name of the Welfare Fund over many years.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Page 14 refers to special purpose Commonwealth funding. My recollection is that in the Budget papers in the past the Commonwealth gave funding through the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, and some of that was earmarked for housing. There is no mention of it now. Am I to take it that that funding now goes straight to the Department of Housing?

**Ms WARNER:** Yes.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Page 6 refers to support for Aboriginal communities. I refer to an answer you gave in Parliament yesterday to a question from the member for Barambah when he was talking about the butcher shop at Kowanyama and you said that an arrangement had been reached with the LMAQ with regard to what was going to happen. When did you first become aware that this facility was not meeting the standards acceptable to the community or, more importantly, to the LMAQ, and how do you think that some of the private-practice people out there would feel when they think the department can make an arrangement when they have the heavy hand of the LMAQ on them?

**Ms WARNER:** It was in February of this year that we became concerned about the operation and we actually asked the LMAQ to look at the situation. I understand that an arrangement was made with the Livestock and Meat Authority of Queensland by your Government to allow Kowanyama to operate without a licence. We became concerned about that and we thought that the facility ought to be brought up to general standards.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Is that both a slaughtering facility and a retailing facility, or is it only a retailing outlet?

**Mr WAUCHOPE:** It is an actual butcher shop and it is supported by a livestock operation, so they have a slaughterhouse. The butcher shop is adjacent to the retailing facility and the meat is processed through there.

**Mrs ROSE:** Minister, I would like to ask a question about Aboriginal retail stores. I understand that the Woorabinda store burnt down earlier this year and note that you are planning to hand over stores to community control during the course of 1994-95 and that Woorabinda will obviously need a new store before it can be handed over. What arrangements have been made by your department to establish an emergent retail facility as well as a replacement building for the residents of Woorabinda, and what improvements are being made in retailing in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities?

**Ms WARNER:** After the fire at Woorabinda, a temporary store was established within two working days. The fire occurred at 12.30 a.m. on Saturday, 12 February this year, and completely destroyed the complex, which included the supermarket, the butcher shop and the bulk storage area. A temporary supermarket was established on the ground floor of the community hall and commenced trading on Wednesday the 16th. Replacement plant and equipment, including refrigerated display units, cash register, customer trolleys, etc., had to be transported from Brisbane direct to Woorabinda. That arrived on the Tuesday evening. Departmental orders were placed with Queensland Independent Wholesalers in Rockhampton for replacement food stocks. The Woorabinda Aboriginal Council constructed at departmental cost the checkout counter and display shelving. Departmental staff and the council deserve congratulations over the speed of the recovery operation.

The total value of trading stock and plant and equipment losses as well as the cost incurred by my Department for demolition is estimated to be \$0.297m. The Department recovered this amount from Queensland Treasury. The depreciated value of the building at \$492,000 was also recovered from Queensland Treasury. The Woorabinda council has developed architectural drawings for a new shopping complex, which will meet the service requirements of the community, and the construction cost is estimated to be \$1.2m. The project should commence in July, and it is expected to be completed by December 1994. The Department will grant the Woorabinda council an amount of \$600,000 towards the cost of constructing a new shopping complex, and this complex is expected also to be completed by December of this year. The balance of the construction costs, which is \$1.2m, will be provided by ATSIC. The retail store manager positions are substantially filled with appointees who have considerable private sector experience at managerial level, and usually with one of the major food stores such as Coles.

The Department is subsidising fruit and vegetables supplied to Aboriginal communities from the stores trading surplus to ensure that the commodities are easily accessible to lower-income earners, because that is a really essential ingredient for a proper and nutritious diet to be obtained. A mark-up of 20 per cent plus freight applies to all the stores compared with mark-ups of 60 per cent to 75 per cent in the private sector supermarkets. So there are some benefits in the stores. All the retail stores

are, with the exception of Cherbourg, economically viable, and that is probably because Cherbourg is so close to Murgon that people can access goods there. A point of scanning equipment—

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** One further question from Dr Clark?

**Dr CLARK:** As I recall it, one of the recommendations of the first Public Accounts Committee that investigated the financial affairs of Aboriginal communities was a suggestion that perhaps alternative local government structures needed to be considered in those communities. I notice that page 12 of the departmental Estimates document talks about there having been guidelines for the Alternative Governing Structures Program that has been developed, and submissions from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities around Queensland are currently being assessed. I just wonder, in this financial year, what are the plans to continue with that program, and are there any funds allocated for that? What kind of outcomes are you hoping for?

**Ms WARNER:** We have actually allocated \$450,000 for assistance to Aboriginal communities to develop alternative governing structures. Basically, what the first Public Accounts Committee found in its first report into auditing issues in Aboriginal communities in, I think, 1990, was that one of the reasons why councils suffered in terms of their general status and authority in communities was that people did not necessarily recognise elected councils, which is very much a European democratic structure. They were thought not to apply so significantly to Aboriginal communities and, indeed, people complained bitterly that the Community Services Act, which says that all councils should be elected by the community, cuts across family relationships and those sorts of ties which have more authority and more status than do elected councils. So the councils are actually finding it difficult to be taken seriously in their own communities.

The first PAC said that if people are to look after money on behalf of the whole community, then they ought to be part of existing and appropriate authority structures that are accepted by the community and that those authority structures may be very different in different communities. What they suggested that we do was to try, through a process of consultation that Aboriginal communities take among themselves, to develop different structures to replace councils as their authoritative governing bodies so that those people would be in a much better position to assert the natural authority that elected councils, and/or State Governments, or anybody, has to assert in terms of making by-laws, regulations and then allocation of funds. It is very difficult to do that if you have not got the consent of the people. So we tailored that recommendation from the PAC on governing structures into the thinking behind the development of the Aboriginal Land Act in respect of the divvying up of the title of DOGITs in transfers back to traditional land title groups.

In most Aboriginal communities, people know who they are. They know which family groups they

relate to. They know what the power structures are, but those structures have been buried by successive Europeanisation of those communities. So it is in an effort to recover those old ties, which are still informally respected and appreciated by Aboriginal people, but have no outside recognition. We thought that if we could deliver to Aboriginal people the expectation that if they tell us what they are, and regularise them, that we would resource them to try to retrace those historical routes to be able to provide a more appropriate form of government that would be more accountable to Aboriginal people themselves.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the questioning in relation to the program area of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I thank the ministerial staff who have been available for that period of questioning. We might just take a two-minute break and then commence in the area of Community Services.

The Committee adjourned at 4.56 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 4.57 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will resume. We now move to the program of Community Services, and I invite questions from Mr Littleproud.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Minister, page 16—you probably will not need to refer to the book—is to do with the International Year of the Family. In last year's Budget Papers, you mentioned \$600,000m being expended over two years for the participation in the International Year of the Family. You then later indicated that \$100,000 of that will be made available to community organisations to help with their own promotions for this dedicated year. Could you at a later date supply me with a detailed account of those groups that have received grants, and also a breakdown of the amount of money that has been expended by the Department for the various promotions that you are undertaking?

**Ms WARNER:** We are very pleased to be coordinating the activities during the International Year of the Family. There has been a huge response from members of the community who have displayed a significant commitment to supporting, promoting and celebrating family life.

The high level of involvement has been demonstrated by the overwhelming response by communities to the grants program. A total of 366 applications, seeking \$1.8m, have been received. But, as is always the case in this Department, we receive many more applications. But that is a healthy sign. It shows that there is a degree of interest out there.

As well as celebratory activities for the International Year of the Family, there were also some submissions relating to the problems that face families, such as violence and abuse. The issues of elder abuse and the protecting and valuing of children has been made a theme for this year. It is an important activity because it creates community awareness, which can assist us to move ahead.

As to the allocation of grants—those will be published in the annual report later in the year. The information will be available then.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I now refer to page 17 and your major program issues. The first major program issue is the further development of accountability of church and community services with regard to both financial assistance and service provision. I refer to the comments in last year's Auditor-General's report. He was not very complimentary about the Department's administration—namely, those people responsible for sending out grants and looking over the audited accounts of organisations. What steps have you taken since that report came down to improve the situation? Have these groups who did not supply the audited accounts at that stage now done so? If they have not, will they still receive grants?

I know that for purposes of convenience, for both the Department and some of these community organisations, you allocate grants every three months as part of the ongoing funding of these organisations. Are you satisfied that this system has enough built-in accountability factors?

**Ms WARNER:** You have raised a number of significant and quite complex areas. As to the Auditor-General's report—I am advised that the current position is very much improved. There are no services still in receipt of funding that have not complied with their financial accountability obligations for the 1991-92 financial year. In other words, the 28 per cent non-compliance rate referred to in the Auditor-General's report is now down to zero. In respect of the 1992-93 financial year—and we have not reached the end of 1993-94—the financial accountability requirements remain outstanding for only 1 per cent of the funds that were allocated.

The departmental staff are working with the few services involved. There are reasonable explanations in many of the cases—for example, that a member of a committee was ill, and so on. Where reasonable explanations have not been provided, funding advances have either been withheld or reduced.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I also asked about quarterly payments. Are you satisfied that they meet the accountability requirements?

**Ms WARNER:** People are required to put in a quarterly income and expenditure statement.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** They are complying?

**Ms WARNER:** Yes. If they do not comply with that, they do not get their next allocation of funding advance until they do so. There is a very strong incentive for them to comply with those accountability requirements.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The other aspect of my question related to service provision. On occasions, people have made contact with me concerning the sort of service being provided by people in receipt of funds from the Government. What sorts of practices have you put in place to evaluate the quality of services being provided by those people who are successful in getting grants?

**Ms WARNER:** We have taken a significant initiative in the Community Services Development Division. You may be aware that when we came into Government there was very little in the way of

structured processes for grants to be administered. We now have very significant structures. The cornerstone of that is our capacity for resource officers from each part of the Community Services Division to negotiate with services something called "a service agreement". Basically, they say to a service, "We will provide you with a grant for \$X. You will be expected to provide these sorts of services." For example, they will ask how many beds a service can provide.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Are you satisfied with the level of resourcing that they have now?

**Ms WARNER:** It is a very long and complicated process. I would prefer to dwell on the issue for a moment, because it is important. We are telling the non-Government sector that there needs to be a fairly structured relationship between the Government and non-Government sector. We need to know what we can expect of them, and they need to know what they can expect of us. We need to be able to say, "This is a bargain." This is a contractual relationship in many ways, but we expect them to deliver services. That really is the most important aspect of accountability.

We pay them money to deliver specific services to the citizens of Queensland. We want to be sure that they are delivering those services. So we want feedback on the service agreement about whether those services are being provided and whether they are spending the money that the Government provides on appropriate services for the client group that they say they are paying attention to. It is an important part of accountability. We have now managed to negotiate with 90 per cent of the services that exist in this State. I think we fund about 1 400 separate organisations. Some 90 per cent of those have service agreements and have entered into this relationship with the Government.

It is a huge step forward in the development of a coherent and rational non-Government sector providing services to the people of Queensland utilising significant amounts of money. We have moved away from the Department providing the direct services to this model. There needs to be a structured and rational approach. One of the most important aspects of this is the support, advice and community development work done by this division, which is appropriately called the Community Services Development Division. These things do not just happen by themselves. That has also been a very significant part of the beginning of the introduction of services to country areas for the first time.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will move on to the area of disability services, page 19. I note that the allocation has risen from \$53.614m to \$56.857m. There has been a substantial increase. No doubt you are very pleased about that. I will quote from two letters that I received. The first one is from Soroptimist International Toowoomba. It makes comments with regard to the Commonwealth-State Disability Service Agreement of 1991. It states—

"The Commonwealth funding was to be provided for five years and indexed for cost of living changes.

...

Now, almost two years later, the small budget available for disability services has made it impossible to bring about any real expansion of existing services, despite a very real and growing need. For example, in the last twelve months, new applications were made to the Office of Disabilities of the Department of Family Services for funding and accommodation support for 372 people. An organisation applying for support funds for 200 people was given funding for two; another which applied for funding support for 91 people was given funding for half a person."

The letter continues. I will table it. I ask: in light of the increased funding, why should these organisations that receive your grants make those sorts of comments about funds not being available, particularly when you have had an increase in funding this year?

**Ms WARNER:** This year's funding has not been allocated yet, so I cannot answer that now.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** We are talking about last year.

**Ms WARNER:** We fund about 300 services in the disability services area, so it is not possible for us to find the specific information about that particular service right now. I hope you are aware of the scope and scale of the services that we fund. Therefore, you realise that it would be impossible for us to have that data with us right now. We would have to import a small library.

In the area of disability services, there is significantly more demand than there are dollars to fund the level of need in the community. It is regrettable that that is the case. It has always been the case. Queensland has historically spent less per head of the population on disability services than has any other State. We entered into a Commonwealth/State disability agreement in—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** 1991.

**Ms WARNER:** Yes. In 1993-94, \$30m was applied for in terms of applications, and we were able to provide \$3.3m of new services.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Would you give me those figures again, please?

**Ms WARNER:** In 1993-94, \$30m worth of applications was applied for. We provided \$3.3m, which is a substantial increase in itself. An amount of \$3.3m was spent on extra services in 1993-94 in the area of disability. I can guarantee you that the demand for disability services is substantial. You can see from those figures alone that the answer to your question is simply that we have to allocate those funds on the basis of priorities across the State, which is done on the basis of need. We look at the spread of existing services; we look at broad population figures; we look at the capacity of the organisation to deliver the service that it is offering to deliver; and we focus on accommodation support for people with the most urgent and critical need. The funds give priority to people who otherwise would require social admission to hospital or

institutionalisation. Those are the priority areas that we considered when we were distributing that \$3.3m. That is the simple answer to the question. Because of the time limit, I am not able to explain to you the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement, but perhaps I can do that later.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The next question refers to page 20 and developments at the Challinor centre. I note from the Budget Papers that during 1993-94 the Sandgate centre was closed. You have mentioned previously that the Challinor centre is to be closed down over three years. I ask: how many people were moved out of that centre in 1993-94, and what specific services did you offer to those people by way of support through the community?

**Ms WARNER:** I think that this issue comes under intellectual disability rather than disability. It is a direct service that you are talking about with Challinor and Sandgate. You could ask that question later.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is mentioned in the Estimates statement in the disability section, but Mr Littleproud is happy to raise it when we discuss the intellectual disability section.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I turn to domestic violence. Last year, you opened about five or six services across the State. At the centre at Ipswich, there were three professionals and only one car available to them. I ask: have the resources for the domestic violence services been increased in this Budget?

**Ms WARNER:** No, there has not been any growth funding in this Budget for the domestic violence services. There are two types of domestic violence services operating two programs. One is called the Domestic Violence Initiatives Program, and it has a budget of approximately \$3.463m in 1994-95. That funds 64 services. Forty-five services or 70 per cent of those services are based in non-metropolitan areas of Queensland. That is because people living in metropolitan areas have access to advice, support and counselling through hospitals and social workers which people living in rural areas do not have. We also fund a 24-hour domestic violence telephone counselling and information referral service, which was an initiative of last year's Budget. That is now up and running, and it is receiving an average of 2 300 calls per month. We have a Statewide network of 11 domestic violence services linked to that 008 number.

The other area of domestic violence services is supported accommodation, which provides shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence. The budget for that is \$8m. As you know, it is a joint Commonwealth/State funded program. It is part of the general Supported Accommodation Assistance Program. Huge advances have been made in terms of servicing the needs of people who are the victims of domestic violence. The legislation which we strengthened and reinforced the year before last has greatly improved the situation. We are always looking to improve those services and to improve the level of funding to them.

Cars are a very expensive single item within any of those services. We struggle to get one car into every community service that needs one. That is what we try to do rather than provide extra ones for particular services. We try to achieve an equitable distribution of resources across all the services. Queensland is a large, decentralised State, and domestic violence is a problem that is probably most hidden in country areas. That is the most compelling reason to have support services available in those areas.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** My next question relates to page 15 and family community support services. I refer to a group named Youth and Family Services Logan City Incorporated. I table a document written by a man named Gordon Whitfield. He states that he has sent letters to that organisation, to you, to the State Ombudsman, to the Premier and to Mary Crawford, the Federal member. Mr Whitfield is the caretaker of some premises run by the group named Youth and Family Services Logan City Incorporated. I ask: how much money was given to that organisation last year?

**Ms WARNER:** It would be funded under a number of programs. The group apparently employs about 35 staff in programs which include the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, for which it received \$272,733 in 1993-94; the Domestic Violence Initiatives Program, to which I just referred, for which it received \$136,384 in 1993-94; and the Youth and Community Combined Action Program, for which the group received \$136,756 in the same year. The organisation also offers a youth legal service, which employs a solicitor and youth worker, and a youth health service, which is not funded through my Department but through other agencies. It also provides a weekly clinic. This particular organisation is a key component in Logan City's network of community support services. The organisation has established clear policies and procedures in relation to its budget and its range of specialist youth services. The organisation's auditor has just completed his quarterly review of the budget of the organisation. All funds have been appropriately accounted for. Was there some other aspect to the question?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** You said that all funds have been accounted for. It is my understanding that an investigation of the organisation is under way, and you became aware of it after receiving this letter. Are you satisfied now that the accounts of the organisation are in order?

**Ms WARNER:** The organisation's auditor has completed the quarterly review, and all funds have been fully and appropriately accounted for. In the last 48 hours, staff of my Department have spoken to the Logan police and to the director of the organisation, and both have stated that there is no basis to any rumour of misappropriation of funds within the organisation. That is the information I have to date on that, but perhaps you can communicate with me later about it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes that bracket of questioning from Opposition members of the Committee in relation to this program area. We have

some questions on this program area from Government members of the Committee. I invite Mr SZCZERBANIK to ask his questions.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** A significant amount of money is allocated for people who are homeless or escaping domestic violence. I note from page 24 of your Estimates that more than 2 200 homeless people are accommodated each night in Queensland. However, we continue to hear about those numbers of people who have difficulty in finding crisis accommodation. Would you advise this Committee how you are addressing that problem?

**Ms WARNER:** The Supported Accommodation Assistance Program, which I referred to in the context of the domestic violence services, is joint Commonwealth/State program established in 1985. It replaced a number of different services which were brought together under the same umbrella, that is, homelessness among men, families, young people and women. For those people who are in the know, it is the old GSAP and FISP services all brought together under this heading. SAAP assistance for this target group generally involves just providing a bed for the night. What they were trying to move away from was just this idea of the old dosshouse approach to homelessness to try to intervene to support people to find accommodation or to provide them with the skills to fill their accommodation needs, which of course is a different thing than just providing a bed for the night.

One of the things that the services that have been operating in this area have found is that for some individuals and families it can become a chronic problem that simply means that they move around from one shelter to another and that there is never any breaking of what is a very damaging and difficult cycle. We are talking to the Commonwealth; we have had a review of the whole program. The national evaluation basically led to a whole series of changes in the future program, but that is yet to be negotiated. Basically, it is to try to resolve that vicious cycle from recurring by introducing a case management plan approach to supported accommodation rather than it being focused on beds or bricks and mortar. The major focus of the program will be on support and assistance, because you can put people up in hotels. You actually do not need to build specific purpose-built shelters for people to be able to provide that sort of support. It will be much more about providing the support to people and encouraging people to break that cycle rather than having your emphasis on the infrastructure and the bricks and mortar.

The program has to be renegotiated with the Commonwealth Government and with other States and we are hoping that we have between January of next year and July of next year to finalise that new program with the Commonwealth. As I say, SAAP has been a very successful program to date in terms of making sure that both the Commonwealth and the State honour their commitments in the tragic area of homelessness, and I hope for another good program to be following from next year.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** My second question is to do with the Child Care Act of 1991. Your Department

has issued over 900 licences since that Act has come in. I believe that we do have the best Act here, but under that Act we have put more standards onto these facilities. Could you relate costs in other States to these programs and indicate how we are heading in relation to moneys?

**Ms WARNER:** There has been a lot of reform in the area of child care since we have been in Government. What we tried to do with the introduction of new child care legislation, which brought all child-care services under the umbrella of the State Government in one Act, was to strike a balance between an assured quality of service that we provided, and affordability. I think that we have been relatively successful in managing to do that because there has been a huge increase in the number of child-care places available over the last four and a half years. I will get the figures in a moment, but they are certainly increasing massively.

We have had the extension of the Commonwealth/State agreement in respect to the provision of child care, which goes for four years, and we are into the second year of that. The number of places that is provided not just by the Government but also the number of places in child care provided by the private sector is just in a boom situation. That is probably because of the Commonwealth's decision to introduce subsidies for the private sector as well as the existing subsidies for the community sector. For example, in the 1993 census of children's services undertaken by the Commonwealth, community-sponsored child-care fees in Queensland averaged \$108 per week, which were easily the lowest in Australia and well under the average of \$126 for community-sponsored centres. By comparison, the Victorian average fee was \$132, the Tasmanian fee was \$140 and the South Australia fee was \$145. As far as private child care fees are concerned, they average \$122. We have the second lowest fees in the nation behind the Northern Territory, and we are below the Australian average of \$125 per week for private centres. So, we have actually managed to introduce improved standards, we have upgraded the regulations and we have maintained what we set out to do, which was to provide affordability and some peace of mind for parents that there is a licensing system that is reliable—a uniform licensing system—that operates across the State and at the same time is comparatively cheap in terms of the cost to individual families.

**Dr CLARK:** I refer to Budget Paper No. 2, which provides an outline of the Government's Rural Family Support Package, which is a significant component of our Rural Communities Policy Package. Under this initiative, your Department will be receiving \$6m over three years to help people in rural areas. Could you clarify just how much has been allocated for the Rural Family Support Package in 1994-95 and what will be the scope of those services offered under the Rural Family Support Package? I particularly would like you to provide me with details about the new program to be set up on the Atherton Tableland because, as you would be aware, there are still people suffering the effects of the drought, and the decline of the tobacco industry is of great

concern, particularly to the people in the Mareeba area. I would also like to know how your Department involves local people in setting up those services.

**Ms WARNER:** I am happy to answer that question. There has been a total of \$2m provided in the package for 1994-95. The package aims to improve access for people in rural communities—access for those people to the same sorts of community services which are taken for granted in the metropolitan areas. The package will provide funds to extend the duration of the eight existing rural and social support services which came about as a result of the drought relief measures that have been undertaken over the last few years. The people in rural areas are very enthusiastic about the provision of these services which, for the first time, go to the social issues that people confront in areas where, as a result of the drought, their economic livelihood and further sustainability in those areas comes under threat. These people are very much in need of support and counselling, and this program provides that.

The services which currently operate from Charters Towers, Moranbah, Middlemount, Charleville, Roma, St George, Goondiwindi and Dalby will remain, and the new services, whose location has yet to be determined, will be located in areas of high need. Another feature of the package will be an extension of the Department's cross program initiative, which is basically to do developmental work with the existing local communities. Rather than saying, "We will put a domestic violence service there", we will be talking to those people about what service it is that they wish to have in their area, and maybe it will be a bit of this and a bit of that. So they will be very much developed for the local needs.

In respect of the Atherton Tableland, they will receive \$42,000 for the rest of this year—\$60,000 for the full year—and I understand that the Mareeba Shire Council has offered to sponsor the service and is willing to provide office accommodation and administrative support. An adviser will work with Government agencies, community groups, training organisations and industry bodies to coordinate existing services, provide information on relevant services and entitlements, assist in the development of new services and help people with retraining and in seeking alternative employment. The Department has worked closely with regional staff from the Department of Primary Industries to ensure that producer organisations are involved in the development and operation of the service. A position description has been prepared for the social adjustment adviser position and it is hoped that the Mareeba Shire Council will soon be able to advertise the position.

There is an existing initiative which will help local people build a positive future in the Atherton Tableland, and the success of the rural social support workers in the cross-programs initiative is absolutely dependent upon the involvement of local people and their commitment to make sure that they direct the services that are needed within their own

communities; and we provide the financial support and advice.

**Dr CLARK:** I think the Mareeba Shire will work with the Mareeba Community Support Centre there, which has a very good reputation.

**Mrs ROSE:** I note from page 15 of your Department's Estimates statements that, in the CSD program, \$81.03m has been allocated to seniors' interests. How much will assist independent retirees not receiving any form of pension, and how is this money allocated?

**Ms WARNER:** The sum of \$81.03m has been allocated to seniors' interests. That is basically the concessions which are provided for under the Seniors Card, which include the electricity rebate and other concessions—and you can find a list in this document, I think—and also the cost of the Office of the Ageing. There is also the administrative work around the Seniors Card. Since the introduction of the Seniors Card in December 1990, an estimated 40 000 independent retirees over the age of 70 have gained access, for the first time, to Government concessions. So there is support for the over-70s in that independent retirees package.

We have also allocated \$850,000 for the extension of the Seniors Card for next year. A total of 18 500 retirees aged between 60 and 69 will comprise over half of this group and will become eligible for the Seniors Card and obtain concessions and access to private business discounts for the first time. A total of 58 500 independent retirees are now eligible for a Seniors Card and can access the valuable concessions in the area of ambulance, electricity, health, and so on.

The approximate cost of Government concessions available through the Seniors Card for the 58 500 independent retirees is \$6m. So it is a substantial amount of money. The major proportion of \$78m of the \$81m covers moneys for rail, electricity and rates. Those are the most expensive concessions that we provide to that group. It is difficult to include all independent retirees in the catch of the Seniors Card. There have been extensions on next year's allocation to other eligible groups, but the independent retirees between the ages of 60 and 69 have not been included because we do wish to target the most needy pensioners. But once people reach that magic age of 70, everybody is entitled to support through the Seniors Card.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have one final question in this area. On page 16 of the Department's Estimates statement, it refers to the allocation of financial and developmental assistance for community services provided by community organisations, such as churches, charitable and community-based organisations. You mentioned the difficulties of allocating \$3.3m in the disability program amongst \$30m of applications. I am interested to know how, across the Department, you prioritise how you will spend your money. How do you make decisions about which organisations will be funded and which will not? How does that guarantee value for money in terms of the community's expenditure of taxpayers' money?



**Ms WARNER:** For a start, I can tell you that it is not done on a whiteboard in my office. The main priority in the distribution of funds is fairness. The term that is generally used for that is "equity". We are trying to make sure that there is a fair and equitable distribution on the basis of need. Need is the criterion that we are looking at here. So we have moved away from a position that I think was operating in the Department when we got into Government, which was that it was submission based; if you put in a good submission—and there was the development of a fairly good industry in professional submission writers out there in the local community—then you would get funding. We have moved away from that and tried to locate areas of need based on demographic research, client groups and existing services. We pool all that information together and then say, "Whether or not the particular local group in this area is good at writing submissions, the fact is that the people who live in this area need this service." That is why one of the jobs of our Department is to go out and help those community groups develop to the point where they can deliver the service; so that across the State you will get an equitable distribution of services.

In the past, you would get a concentration of services in a particular area, because services sort of breed services. You would get the submission writers, so you would have them all located and bunched up together. The Department puts out a State plan talking about the priorities on the basis of need. It tells people which programs have got some growth funds this year, where the priorities are in terms of the development of the programs, and how much money in the quantum is available. It then invites applications—rather than submissions—for that process. So there is an attempt to try to get it distributed across the State. The State plan gives the community some idea of the way to go. The community itself also feeds back to the Department about what are the needs that they see on the ground in terms of the direction of future and new services, so that we can begin to fill the gaps between the service programs that we have currently operating.

One of the biggest areas that I am really pleased about is that some of the smallest communities in our State are getting services for the first time. In terms of geography, people would say, "You are miles away from getting any service." Now we say, "Even though you might not have a huge population or even a very vigorous community group, nevertheless you need one." So we go out there and do the developmental work that is necessary to provide the service in that community. There is a further part of that process—if you would like to continue the question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We might leave it at that. That concludes the questions from the Committee on the Community Services Development area. We thank departmental officers for being available from that area. We now move back to questions from Opposition members in relation to Ethnic Affairs. I understand that Mr Littleproud has only a couple of questions on that area and will move straight into Protective Services and Juvenile Justice.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Because of the time factor, I will try to encompass all this into one question to deal with Ethnic Affairs. Knowing that you were going to appear before this Estimates Committee, the Refugee Week Committee saw fit to write to me. They made a few statements, and then they posed a couple of questions. They made the point that they claim that the PSMC report declared that, in the case of the DFS, it was one of the worst-funded Government departments and, of that, Ethnic Affairs was definitely the worst funded. So they are making their point. Whether or not it is right, I do not know. They also go on to say that the translation services are desperately deficient in that, in some cases, hospital cleaners and cooks are called upon to interpret for the medical staff and patients. They say also that, in New South Wales, it is not uncommon for grants to community organisations to be as much as, say, \$10,000. They say that the grants to community organisations in Queensland under Ethnic Affairs have been \$3,000 for quite some time. They want to know: can you see a need to increase the size of the grant to community organisations, and what part of your \$2.114m Budget allocation will go to translation services?

**Ms WARNER:** We have a referral service, but we do not directly do any translation services.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Are there organisations out there that do translation services?

**Ms WARNER:** Yes, there are organisations out there that do them.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Do you have a breakdown in your budget relating to how much money you are going to give to that?

**Ms WARNER:** We do not provide the money for translation services. They get money from the Commonwealth.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** What about the organisation that is claiming that the maximum grant is \$3,000 per organisation?

**Ms WARNER:** That is for the modest grants that are provided under this area. I do not know that it is actually the province of the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs to provide for all the needs in terms of services to the migrant community. It is very similar to Aboriginal Affairs in that you have a whole-of-Government approach. For instance, interpreters in the health area would be paid for by the Health Department and so on and so forth, rather than by a central agency within the Government.

Basically, the grants are provided on a small assistance basis for maintenance of multicultural organisations that exist in this State for their promotion and development, rather than for them to deliver services. For those organisations to which we do deliver service, such as the domestic violence initiatives for the Vietnamese community, those services are funded through the Community Services Development section of the Department. There is a developing cultural sensitivity to the fact that services need to be provided in culturally appropriate ways for the different communities. But those services are not paid for out of this budget. These are, I suppose, for the maintenance of identity

and culture and to promote and encourage the multicultural nature of our society, and for communications for them with their member groups.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** We pass on now to Protective Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes Ethnic Affairs. We move now to the area of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Page 44 refers to the care of children under State guardianship. I will relate an incident and then I will finish with a question. It has been put to me that people sometimes voluntarily ask for their child to be taken into the care and control of the Department if there is some sort of dysfunction within the family. The concern was put to me that when the parents believe it is time for the child to come back—

**Ms WARNER:** I am sorry, can you repeat that last bit.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The parents go voluntarily to the Department asking to have their child taken into care and protection because the child is dysfunctional in some way and then the parents and the child feel that they would like to become reunited. There is a court order giving you the care and control of the child.

**Ms WARNER:** You are talking about care and protection, not care and control.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Care and protection, right. Is it correct that the power rests solely with the Department to go back to the Children's Court to have that court order reversed?

**Ms WARNER:** The Director-General might like to answer this question.

**Ms MATCHETT:** I am Ruth Matchett, Director-General. The Children's Services Act enables a parent to go back to a Children's Court to ask for an order to be substituted or revoked. It also enables the Department to go back to the court.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** To revoke it if they want to.

**Ms MATCHETT:** That is right. In the circumstances that you are referring to, it would obviously be the parent who would go back to the Children's Court, and the provision is there to do that. I might add that when an application is made to the Children's Court for a child to be admitted to the care and protection of the Director-General, parents can have legal representation and they can put before the court information that they wish to have considered by the court as to why the child should not be taken into care and protection. Of course, it is the court that determines whether or not a child is in need of care and protection—not officers of the Department. It is a decision of the court.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** But the parent can go back and protest?

**Ms MATCHETT:** Most certainly they can.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I turn to page 44 again. We are referring now to care providers and foster-parenting. Firstly, has there been an increase in the allowance paid to foster parents and,

secondly, is it correct that the travel allowance paid to foster-parents when they have to take a child under their protection backwards and forwards for compulsory meetings has been reduced?

**Ms WARNER:** There is no increase in the base allowance for foster-parents provided for in the Budget. There were some additional moneys involved for exceptional costs provided in the 1993-94 Budget—1.5—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Is that \$1.5m?

**Ms WARNER:** What did I say?

**The CHAIRMAN:** 1.5.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** With regard to travel allowances given to those parents to take the children backwards and forwards to compulsory meetings—

**Ms WARNER:** It is a standard rate. The allowance is provided on a sliding scale according to the age of the child.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Travelling allowance?

**Ms WARNER:** Travelling allowance? My Director-General would like to answer this one.

**Ms MATCHETT:** Foster-parents can be reimbursed for costs associated with taking a child to a particular appointment. They are reimbursed according to the actual costs involved. Say, for example, if a foster parent has to come down from Rockhampton by train and has to have overnight accommodation to take a child to a specialist appointment, they would be reimbursed on the basis of those expenses. As the Minister mentioned, last year there was a boost to the allocation for what we call the exceptional costs associated with care of children. There was a boost in that area from what was previously \$750,000 up to a total of \$1.5m. That has enabled the Department to respond to those exceptional costs associated with the care of a foster child. I am sure you would appreciate that there cannot be flat rates because the needs for each individual foster-child and the family caring for them are different. They might be coming from Cairns down to a particular appointment, or coming from Rockhampton. Of course, the costs vary.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** What about the commonality, say, in the case of people using motor cars? Could you not use a criterion something like the public service rate?

**Ms MATCHETT:** That is the rate that we use, in fact, for the cost of motor vehicle travel—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Horsepower and that sort of thing.

**Ms MATCHETT:** That is right. We use the same rate that is applied to departmental officers.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Page 45 refers to juvenile corrections and the number of officers working on supervision of work orders. Can you tell me the average size of the workload of these officers? Is it correct that there is a burn-out factor and that very often some of these people do not last too long in the service?

**Ms WARNER:** Ms Matchett would like to answer this question.

**Ms MATCHETT:** The issue of burn-out amongst our officers is one that has been raised for many years. The point I would make is that being a family service officer is a very stressful and demanding job. We have 250 family service officers throughout our 39 area offices and our various specialist units. There have been times when there has been a fairly high turnover rate within the Department. It would be my feeling that the turnover rate of family service officers has reduced somewhat.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Can you put that into percentage terms?

**Ms MATCHETT:** It is very difficult to put it in percentage terms. I do not think that we would actually have that information available. What I can tell you is some of the other myths about family services officers. A lot of people tend to think that they are very young people. I think you need to make people aware that 55 per cent of our family services officers are 30-plus. We have a proportion of male and female staff—80 per cent of our staff are female, but 20 per cent are male. We are pleased to see that sort of balance.

The workload, we believe, has been reduced because of the increased allocation that has been made, particularly to implement the community-based orders as a result of the amendments to the Juvenile Justice Act. As you would be aware, there would be some significant enhancements in that area of total allocation of \$4m a full year to support implementation of the juvenile justice legislation.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will continue in that vein. I want to relate to you an instance with regard to welfare officers and Juvenile Aid Bureau police in their operations under the Juvenile Justice Act. A 15-year-old boy ran away from home. Within the space of seven days, he appeared before the police on three occasions for cautioning—the first time related to the illegal use of a car, the next time related to stealing and the next time he was in possession of stolen goods and was selling stolen goods. The impertinent part is that two police officers spent four hours on the first cautioning, they spent five hours of overtime on the second cautioning, and two police spent another five hours and a welfare officer spent four hours on the third cautioning. The word was that the boy would have to go home and live with his parents again if his parents were willing to have him home. The boy ran away from the steps of the police station and now he is a missing person living without lawful means of support. The impact on police is that they spent an enormous amount of time in the Juvenile Aid Bureau getting this fellow up before the court to be cautioned. Where is the incentive under this new system to go out and catch him again?

**Ms WARNER:** I think that the whole issue hinges upon the fact that it is entirely up to the police to make the decision about when they wish to caution a child and how much time and effort they want to put into that particular practice. That process of cautioning, of course, has been one that police have used for some time, but we have recently legislated to recognise it as a formal sentencing option. It was actually one of the better reforms

introduced by Terry Lewis. It is actually very much a police matter about how much time and effort they spend, and it is according to their discretion and their sense of judgment whether or not a caution is going to work in any particular individual case. But the reality is that approximately 85 per cent of children who are cautioned never reappear within the system again. So obviously it is a measure that is useful in terms of diverting children away from becoming further involved with offending behaviour. Basically, it scares them enough for them to realise the seriousness of what they may have thought was a prank or whatever, because a lot of juvenile crime is opportunistic.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** You can break the pattern.

**Ms WARNER:** It is not even a pattern at that stage.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** You made mention before of an allocation of money for the training of the police to be better aware of the Juvenile Justice Act and how to implement it. Could I suggest that in part of that training you might reinforce the point of view that it is up to them to determine how much cautioning they give on a case-by-case basis. At a public meeting I attended, a superintendent of police said that one of the problems the police force was having was coming to terms with a full understanding of the Act and how police could apply it. It would seem that there is some room for improvement there.

**Ms WARNER:** There has been significant effort made, not only initially to introduce them to the concepts and principles and philosophy of the Juvenile Justice Act but also after there was a significant amount of complaint by individual police around the State that they did not understand what was going on. As a result we went out and trained them again. I suppose if there are still some police who have not yet understood, we might even have to do it again.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** He said that progress was being made, but more certainly needed to be done.

**Ms WARNER:** The other thing, of course, is that the police themselves do have a duty to place themselves under the pieces of legislation that they are a part of administering.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I would not want to disappoint you, so I am going to talk about detentions now. I see that you have allocated money for a new detention centre. You are going to take some inmates from Westbrook to the John Oxley Centre. In fact, some are already down there. That is a centre built to hold girls and boys from 10 to 15 years of age. Earlier this week, I spoke in Parliament about the repeated escape through the same window that was always replaced by the same sort of glass. What has been done to train the staff in taking on what are potentially more dangerous inmates, and what has been done to date with regard to the upgrading of security at the John Oxley Centre?

**Ms WARNER:** Helen Twohill, who is the divisional head of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice, will take that question.

**Ms TWOHILL:** There has been a range of activities the department has undertaken in preparation for the transfer of all of the young people from Westbrook. In fact, in our other existing centres we already have some of the boys who were formerly at Westbrook. We have undertaken a number of enhancements to security to ensure that young people in detention are kept safe and secure. Many of those adjustments and enhancements to security have occurred at John Oxley as they have occurred at our other centres.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** What sorts of things?

**Ms WARNER:** It is quite difficult for us to explain in public in detail the security arrangements in particular detention centres because you just alert your client group to what the layout is to absconding techniques.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Could I say, Minister, that some of your staff are having difficulty identifying the changes, too, so it is really top secret.

**Ms WARNER:** I am sorry, are we talking about the plan of John Oxley?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** We are talking about John Oxley, yes. The report that has come to me is that people were saying as late as Monday of last week that there have been no changes whatsoever and I am still chasing real answers.

I turn now to Westbrook. Bearing in mind that you have spent an enormous amount of money repairing the place after the riot and upgrading security, as you have stated in Parliament, you then made a statement the other day to a delegation from Toowoomba that in fact the centre could well be used by another Government department. Have you and Cabinet discussed at departmental level what other departments would be likely to use secure dormitory blocks to any great advantage?

**Ms WARNER:** Let me set your mind at rest. The amount of money that was spent on the repairs to Westbrook—I will say it once—is \$326,753.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** From Admin Services?

**Ms WARNER:** From Admin Services. It was spent on refurbishing at Westbrook. Got the figure? You know why the repairs were necessary; it is still an ongoing facility.

In terms of the further use of the centre, it is possible—but I could not say exactly whether or not it will happen—that Corrective Services could want to use it as, I think it is called, their western work camp base which would use that kind of facility. There are also other possibilities in the area of training. I have also spoken to the Chamber of Commerce from Toowoomba and to the Mayor and to a number of citizens who came and saw me recently at a meeting about other training, sports activities, conferencing facilities, and all those sorts of things that might be looked at down the track. If Government departments, who have the first option on the facility, do not wish to avail themselves of that option we can look at servicing the areas in another way. But it is not for us as a department to say what exactly will happen with the disposal of that facility. Our job is to run a detention centre. When we close

Westbrook, that job will be over. The question of the appropriate disposal of Government buildings and land is with the Department of Administrative Services, not with my department. Our job will then be transferred elsewhere.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the bracket of questioning from Opposition members. We now turn to Government members. We have a couple of remaining questions on the Protective Services and Juvenile Justice Program areas. I invite a question from the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose.

**Mrs ROSE:** Minister, there is a lot of concern in the community about child abuse. We have all read about horrific cases where parents have bashed a young child to death. On page 44 of the departmental Estimates statement there is mention of a child protection strategy. I am aware that your department has been consulting widely on proposals for change to child protection legislation. How much is earmarked for this child protection strategy?

**Ms WARNER:** My department has allocated \$450,000 in 1994-95 to further develop the child protection strategy. We have undertaken extensive consultation throughout the State as part of the review of the whole area of child protection policy and legislation, and the development of the consultation process was approved by the Government in 1993.

Agencies, Government departments, community members and a significant number of people have wholeheartedly endorsed our proposals for reform in this area to update the child protection services. We have in place a solid system of service delivery to families that have problems. However, increasing knowledge, experience, research and development in other States and overseas emphasise the need to constantly review and update practices to better meet the needs of children.

Therefore, we have allocated \$200,000 towards updating information technology—something that we have been doing progressively over a period of time across the Department—improving the information systems, and \$250,000 towards a project to examine the current service provided to ensure that the current funds are used effectively, to explore in depth the needs of children who have been abused or neglected, their families and the services required to meet these needs.

It is anticipated that for a period of about six months, a worker will be employed by the Department and also in the non-Government sector in three locations. The project will examine what child abuse preventive services are required to assist families with parenting, what types of therapeutic services are needed to assist children overcome the trauma of abuse and neglect, to look closely at children and their families currently receiving assistance from the Department—including the reasons for my Department's involvement—what their detailed needs are, the services currently being provided to meet those needs, the areas of needs which may not be being met at the moment and the type of service required. So we will be getting that information. We will also be examining the current service being provided to ensure that existing

resources of the Department and those within the community are being effectively utilised. We will be looking at this in terms of what is happening in three specific locations in Queensland. I do not know where those locations are, but that is so we get an across-the-State view of the needs in this area.

This is as a precursor to the introduction of new legislation in the area of child protection, which I do not think has been comprehensively reviewed since 1965. So after we have done that, we will have reformed every base piece of legislation within the Department since we have been in Government, which will, I think, be a significant achievement in a very difficult area of operation.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. I have a couple of general questions, Minister. I refer you to page 46 of your departmental Estimates statement and, in particular, to the last paragraph on that page relating to training in the new juvenile justice laws for magistrates and for police. A matter of some comment in the community has been of police expressing concern about the inadequacy, or reported inadequacy, of the new juvenile justice laws. Of course, that receives some media exposure. Could you perhaps please indicate what, in fact, has been done to train police and magistrates? Has there been a cost involved? Can you identify the cost? How effective do you think that has been?

**Ms WARNER:** I think Helen Twohill would like to answer this question.

**Ms TWOHILL:** The provision of very high-quality training has really been recognised by the Division as a significant issue, and there has been rigorous training at a range of levels. Your specific question is in relation to police and magistrates. In relation to magistrates—there has been some extensive work done with key magistrates who have then taken those issues back to magistrates forums. On an ongoing basis, our senior resource officers in our regions provide ongoing liaison and support to local magistrates and consult with them. That was a significant strategy in that we had to ensure that we had widespread understanding of the legislation, particularly when it became operative.

In relation to training concerning the police—we have had a senior officer recently participate in the Police Training Program, which has been run throughout the whole State. The police had already organised their police training officers to conduct intensive training in relation to the Juvenile Justice Act to their own officers. Our officer accompanied that team, and participated fully. That was a very large commitment on behalf of the Department, and no additional funds were provided for that purpose.

**The CHAIRMAN:** So the cost of that service was not separately budgeted for? It was just planned as part of the work of officers of that section?

**Ms TWOHILL:** Yes, it was undertaken as part of the usual work that we would undertake.

**The CHAIRMAN:** On page 47, in the objectives for 1994-95, halfway down it talks about monitoring the laws and, in the second part of that paragraph, increasing the availability of accurate

information in the community. Could you just clarify what information is being collected, and how it might be useful and whether there is any cost involved in collecting that information?

**Ms WARNER:** We have been upgrading our information technology systems to be able to provide more accurate data on a whole range of issues that have not previously been available. One of the problems that I think we do suffer from in this area is that people have a lot of anecdotal and impressionistic information about what the real situation of juvenile crime is. For a start, if it is an unsolved crime, it is very difficult to know whether it was committed by a juvenile or an adult. Yet it does seem that there has been a propensity for a large number of people to assume that all break and enters, for instance, are done by children, which is certainly not the case. There are adults actually out there doing that sort of thing, too. So there has been that kind of impressionistic view that has been very much promoted in the media. One of the things that we would hope to be able to do over a period of time is to get down to a real debate about what is really happening rather than a debate which is fuelled by fear, innuendo, fabrication, wishful thinking, and all the other things that have characterised the debate so far, certainly in terms of both the prevalence of the incidence of crime and also in terms of the possible cures or preventions that might be implemented for stopping that crime in the future.

So on both of those counts, I would hope that the Department would be in a better position, utilising the knowledge and data that we have, to be able to make available to the community the real facts—the areas that we can substantiate with quantitative and qualitative data that we can collect rather than leaving the debate in free fall. One of the issues, of course, Mr Chairman, that you must be aware of is that people quite often want to believe their own opinion rather than the established data.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes questioning on this program area of the Department. I thank Ms Twohill and officers of the Protective Services and Juvenile Justice Program for their assistance. Government members are still within their questioning period, and we now move to the Intellectual Disability Services section of the Department. I invite questions from, firstly, Mr Szczerbanik, the member for Albert.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. My concern, and the concern of many electorates around this State, is the unmet need for supported accommodation for people with intellectual disabilities and, in particular, the ageing parents who still have their son or daughter at home. Could you explain the amount of accommodation places that will be offered in the 1994-95 year for those people?

**Ms WARNER:** I am afraid that the answer is negative, that there will be no additional accommodation places made available through this program in 1994-95. The reason for this is simple: the accommodation services for people in this State have been run down over a long period of time. We inherited a situation that was simply unacceptable. It

was certainly brought out in the resources review that was done by the PSMC into the Department.

We recognise that the demand is greater than the number of places available. I think that is something I referred to earlier in relation to the Community Services Development Disability Program. But there is simply no point in offering more accommodation if it is not of an acceptable standard. If we are to be able to hold our head up, we really have to move to improve standards and the quality of care in this area. We have a very grave responsibility to properly accommodate people with an intellectual disability. So the focus of the Department's activity has been to bring existing services up to scratch.

We have made available 9.5 additional resources, which have flowed to the area over the last three Budgets. An injection of funding has benefited accommodation services, enabling the appointment of 39 additional direct care residential staff. The funds have also enabled the appointment of 53 additional specialist staff who work with both community and residential clients. Again, in this Budget we have provided substantial additional funding to increase the quality of care for people. It is worth noting that, prior to the first injection of funds in the 1992-93 Budget, the number of accommodation places has begun to fall from about 860 to 840. That figure has begun to rise again and presently stands at 847. The fall can be attributed in part to the long-term neglect in this area which left insufficient resources to maintain the number of places.

For the first time, service standards will be introduced progressively in this program from July this year. For the first time, both consumers and the Government will be able to monitor the standards of service rather than just accepting the proposition that what was being provided was adequate. As part of the quality care initiative in this year's Budget—a costing of \$2.2m in the full year—additional resources are being committed in the area of staff training, which is very essential. Direct care staff will be able to access training that they were formerly denied because there were insufficient funds in the past.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I know that the Challinor Centre has been in existence for a long time. Many years ago, it used to be called Sandy Gallop. So that is how long ago I knew about it. It is operated as a resident service for people all over Queensland. I note in Budget Paper No. 2 that the cost of the Challinor Centre reform plan over the next three years will be \$26.9m. Can you elaborate more on that plan?

**Ms WARNER:** We are very pleased to be able to take the opportunity that has been provided to us through the Building Better Cities Program initiated by the Commonwealth Government to provide for deinstitutionalisation. The Commonwealth funding in this area will be \$10.5m. The funding from my Department will be \$8.9m, and there will be \$7.5m from the Department of Housing, Local Government and planning. A figure of \$26.9m will be provided

over three years. But over the next five years, there will be \$60m in State funding allocated to this reform.

The initiative represents a major milestone in the lives of the 172 people who currently live at the Challinor Centre. The reform plan enables them to move from behind the fences of an institution and into the community of which they are part. For far too long, these people have been regarded as second-class citizens. The services have been provided to them in groups, rather than looking at their needs as individuals. In other words, individuals have been expected to meet the criteria and needs of the institution, rather than the institution or the service being tailored to meet the needs of the individual. Historically, this has meant that clients have been expected to perform at the lowest common denominator, rather than to explore their full potential as individuals.

For years there have been stories about the benefits to individuals of deinstitutionalisation. The improvements in their quality of life and in their personal capacities as a result of them being treated as individuals rather than as a group of patients in an institution are significant. Those are the reasons why we are committing significant resources. But we are not only bringing people out of institutions. It used to be the practice of the last Government to bring them out of institutions and then spend the money in the local community. But it actually costs more. This is not an economy drive. This is about providing a quality of life for individuals, and it is about their rights as citizens. It is not about cost-cutting measures.

When we move people out into the local community, we will be spending more on their support than is spent currently. For instance, we now spend \$8.1m on their support in Challinor. When this whole process is finished after the three-year period, we will be spending \$13.5m on those same 172 residents.

**Dr CLARK:** I think it has been recognised that historically intellectual disability services have been located primarily in the south-east corner of the State. Although I recognise that it will take a long time to reverse that situation, could you outline what funds have been allocated to far-north Queensland for the provision of services to people who have an intellectual disability? How does this compare with last year? Has the Department carried out any studies to identify the unmet demands that exist there? Certainly, I receive many inquiries at my electorate office about that issue.

**Ms WARNER:** The honourable member is right. There has been a propensity in the past to concentrate intellectual disability services in the south-east corner—namely, the institutions at Ipswich and Wacol. Also, when we started deinstitutionalising clients from those areas, the other services were placed also in the south-east corner. So there was a movement of people who were in need of direct services from the north to the south. For individuals, that means that they lose what links they have with family, friends and community. That in itself is a penalty and an imposition upon them. We really do need to try to move the range of services

back to where people are living. There are two ways by which we are trying to do this.

Firstly, we have allocated \$1.4m for the provision of a range of services for people with intellectual disabilities who live in far-north Queensland—that is, in Cairns and areas north of Cairns. This allocation was used flexibly to fund a number of service options through a variety of means, including both direct service provision by the Department and financial support to community agencies to enable them to deliver services. In 1993-94 the disability program administered by the Department distributed a total of \$1.34m to 18 community organisations, delivering accommodation support, respite care, community linking and participation services for people with a disability in far-north Queensland.

While these organisations are funded to provide services to people with a range of disabilities, the majority of people receiving the services are people with intellectual disabilities. A further \$106,000 was provided to fund direct support services for people and their families through the Intellectual Disabilities Service Program in Cairns. I am pleased to inform the honourable member that Cairns is a priority area for the development of services for people with an intellectual disability and that a multidisciplinary resource team will be established in Cairns during the next year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the time period allocated for Government questions. We now move back to questions from members of the Opposition. We are still in the area of intellectual disability. There is only 15 minutes remaining, and that will be for Mr Littleproud.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I also want to discuss Corporate Services. Firstly, I take the Minister back to her answer to Mr Szczerbanik. You prefaced your comment by saying that, just as in other areas of disability services, there are not enough places for people with intellectual disabilities. It would follow that that was because there was not enough money. In your answer you said that putting people with intellectual disabilities out into the community would cost more money per person. Are you not being a bit fanciful by saying that you are really going to cater for these people when it is going to cost more money per person and there is a shortage of money already?

**Ms WARNER:** It depends on what you want to do. Do you want to pretend to provide services by providing inferior services, or do you want to provide real services that cost real money? You have to acknowledge that it costs a lot of money to provide services for people with incredibly high support needs. Those are the sorts of residents that we have at Challinor. They have enormously high support needs. We can approach that with a cost-cutting mentality, which is what has happened in this area over many years and which has not led to an enhancement of life for those individuals and, indeed, has led to a degree of community concern about the previous processes of deinstitutionalisation. That is a trap that we do not want to fall into.

If we are going to take people out of institutions to improve their quality of life, then that is what we do. We take them out to improve their quality of life, not to further underresource a program outside of the institution that does not end up improving their quality of life, does not give them the sort of support that they need and does not change their situation at all. That is reform in name only. Unfortunately, in this area, we have to do two things at once. We have to try to improve the number of places and services that are available for people in the way of support, therapy, accommodation and respite, and we also have to improve the quality of service that is provided to them.

The reality is that in 1994 the public is very conscious of individuals' rights, and rightly so. There is a growth of advocacy bodies in this area. We can no longer get away with the policy of the past, which was to put society's problems behind closed doors and pretend that they did not exist, underfund them and treat them as second-class citizens. That is the old mentality. We must move on from there. It will cost us money to do that. We are honest and up front in saying, "Yes, it is going to cost us money." As a society, we need to redirect our resources into these much-neglected social areas. We have had 32 years of the sort of mentality that says, "We will provide a service—any service—and we will cut the costs to fit the money that we have rather than looking at the service that we are providing."

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I note that the same process was established in Victoria, and I understand that the reality has not lived up to the ideal. I want to discuss another matter with regard to intellectual disability services. I understand that some people take in a number of adults with intellectual disabilities, but there is no licensing of those premises. Have you considered that licensing of such premises may be necessary? There is a requirement that child-care centres operating under similar conditions must be licensed.

**Ms WARNER:** Are you are talking about the hostel situation?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Homes or hostels—as I understand it, there are different sorts of establishments. A number of them are operating on the Gold Coast, as I understand it.

**Ms WARNER:** Are you talking about the alternate living service?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** No. These people are setting up a service without any program, and people with intellectual disabilities go and live with them. There are concerns about the influence that such people may have over the intellectually disabled people who pay to stay with them.

**Ms WARNER:** You seem to be suggesting an arrangement with which we are not familiar—that there is some sort of syndrome of individuals taking four or five intellectually disabled people into their own houses.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** That is correct.

**Ms WARNER:** If those people were purporting to run a service for people with intellectual disabilities, we would have concerns about that. As I

understand it, we know of very few examples of that situation.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** One or two cases is enough to warrant concern, though, is it not?

**Ms WARNER:** People with intellectual disabilities have rights to have relationships with other individuals in the community. If they choose to live with them in their own houses, I do not know that that is a matter for State intervention. On the other hand, if you are talking about some sort of arrangement which is undertaken for profit or commercial gain, that is another situation, but it does not sound like that is what you are talking about.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I think I should provide you with some details later.

**Ms WARNER:** Perhaps you ought speak to me afterwards if you have evidence of any widespread activity of that nature.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I can pass on such information. I turn now to the Legal Friend. The annual report of the Intellectually Disabled Citizens Council of Queensland shows an alarming escalation in the number of applications for assistance from the Legal Friend, rising from 192 in 1987 to 1 785 for last year. That is an enormous escalation. It is claimed that in 1991-92 the Legal Friend had a budget of \$58,000 and that that was reduced to \$50,000 in 1992-93. I imagine part of that allocation would go to the Volunteer Friends Program, as well. The same annual report indicates that the number of referrals to the Volunteer Friends Program has diminished. In the 12 months from 1991-92 to 1992-93, the number of referrals decreased by 25 per cent. Do you think that the allocation of funds to those two programs is correct, when one has a huge increase in referrals yet the Volunteer Friends Program has experienced a lesser demand?

**Ms WARNER:** Sorry, say that last bit again?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** The number of referrals to the Volunteer Friends Program is declining, but the number of people seeking help from the Legal Friend is increasing at an enormous rate. Do you think the budgetary allocations are correct?

**Ms WARNER:** I am not quite sure of the figures that you are quoting, but the figures are that the current budget for the council is \$946,000.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Can you break it down a bit more than that?

**Ms WARNER:** It has 24 staff, 13 council members—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** What about the allocation for the Legal friend? What is the budget for that?

**Ms WARNER:** Without the salary component, the administrative costs for the Legal Friend are \$58,000; then he receives his salary on top of that. The costs for the volunteer friend system, not including salaries, are \$70,000. We have increased the costs in the area of the activities of the Legal Friend because the number of people who are involved in assisted decision making within the community is growing. That is because when your Government framed this particular piece of legislation, it was meant to catch only people with an

intellectual disability, but it was framed in such a way that it included anybody who was unable, for whatever reason of mental incapacity, to make decisions for themselves. The IDCCQ—the Intellectually Disabled Citizens Council of Queensland—has been dealing with a huge explosion of work in the area of Alzheimer's disease and in a considerable number of other areas as people seek to utilise the services of the Legal Friend more.

One of the problems that has created a bit of a policy hiatus in this area for us is that we are waiting on the Law Reform Commission's report into the whole area of assisted decision making so that we can either reform the legislation or improve the level of services available in this area. We really have been waiting for that report. I am just about getting to the stage where I do not think that we will be able to wait much longer, because we have waited too long. We must do something about the fact that a large number of people with Alzheimer's disease are utilising these services, which were never designed in practical terms to deal with that quantity of work. We must look at people in the Health Department supplying these sorts of services for what are basically their clients rather than ours.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** While you are on that subject, may I suggest that you have a close look at the role of the Public Trustee in the handling of financial matters and where he fits in with the Legal Friend?

**Ms WARNER:** That is incorporated in what the Law Reform Commission is doing. It is having a global look at a cross-Government approach to the whole area of assisted decision making and the appropriate social response. We are eagerly awaiting its recommendations so that we can implement some much-needed reforms in this area.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** So there is a need to look at the relationship between the Legal Friend and the Public Trustee.

**Ms WARNER:** Yes.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I have run out of questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes your questions? I thank the Minister—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I have not asked any questions about Corporate Services, have I?

**The CHAIRMAN:** You have five minutes in which to do so.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will move on to Corporate Services. The Auditor-General, of course, was once again to the fore there when he identified some problems with administration in Corporate Services. Salary overpayments and their recoupment and also unacquitted travel advances—in both instances, pretty substantial amounts of money have been identified. There has been some action taken to redress the situation, but in your documents you are indicating some sort of changes to the administrative set-ups. Can you give an assurance to the Committee that in fact you have practices in place



now where salary overpayments and travel advances will be under control?

**Ms WARNER:** What was the last bit of the question?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Can you give an assurance that you have an administrative system in place now where these unacquitted travel advances that stood at \$270,000—

**Ms WARNER:** Hang on, you are talking about—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Unacquitted travel advances of—

**Ms WARNER:** Or the salary overpayments, which bit do you want me to answer first?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Both parts.

**Ms WARNER:** Well, it is very difficult to do that, so I will take the salary overpayments first. The issue here is that the human resource management system does not match the shift workers' site roster that we have within our Department. That is what has created the basic problem for salary overpayments, and that is something that we are—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Why should that matter?

**Ms WARNER:** That is something that we are looking at dealing with. The unrecovered overpayments as of 25 June 1993 were \$59,000-odd, as reported by the Auditor-General. This amount of \$59,454 has been reduced to \$13,832 by recovery action to date, with the remaining balance being repaid regularly by the employees and former employees who are concerned. As I say, the reason why this has occurred is because the system that was put in place as a result of the advice from the PSMC is not consistent with a shift work roster cycle. We will be looking at the recovery process. At the moment, the whole system is the subject of a whole-of-Government review—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Everything is going to be hunky-dory.

**Ms WARNER:**—with the PSMC and the Department of Employment, Training and Industrial Relations.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** What, have you told the PSMC where to get off? Have you said that your system would have been better?

**Ms WARNER:** I am explaining to you what the reasons are for the overpayments which occurred and I have explained to you the measures—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** You have not guaranteed that it is going to be right in the future.

**Ms WARNER:** No. I have explained to you the measures that we have taken to recover the money and I have also explained to you what the Government is doing about fixing that particular problem.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** But you have not given a guarantee that it will be right.

**Ms WARNER:** No.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I will note that. Now can

we deal with the unacquitted travel advances—\$270,404?

**Ms WARNER:** The outstanding travel acquittals as of 30 June 1993 were \$270,750, and all of those have been finalised and have all been acquitted, okay?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** But it still happens, it is like the nail in the wall, is it not, the mud is still there?

**Ms WARNER:** You will always have a small proportion of accounts which are not acquitted. At the moment, we have \$29,636 which have not—

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** That is a lot less than \$270,000.

**Ms WARNER:** Apparently, the system again was changed from being given 90 per cent of the advance, so there was a bit of an incentive for employees to give you the acquittal so they could get the other 10 per cent. That practice was changed to giving the 100 per cent advance and, of course, the incentive is not as great then to do the paperwork.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Time has expired for questions. That concludes the investigation of Estimates for the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I thank the Minister and her departmental officers for their cooperation and assistance here today. I also thank members of the Committee for their contribution to this examination of the Estimates and close the hearing until 7.30.

The Committee adjourned at 6.35 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 7.30 p.m.

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE**

**In Attendance**

Hon. M. Robson, Minister for Environment and Heritage  
 Ms Liz Bourne, Ministerial Policy Adviser  
 Mr Damian McGreevy, Senior Ministerial Policy Adviser  
 Mr Barton Green, Ministerial Media Adviser  
 Dr Craig Emerson, Director-General  
 Mr Tom Tolhurst, Deputy Director-General  
 Mr Graham Inglis, Cabinet Legislation and Liaison Officer  
 Mr Rod Arnott, Director of Corporate Services  
 Mr Paul Rafter, Executive Manager, Financial Services Branch  
 Mr Davis Robertson, Management Accountant  
 Dr Ian Wilson, Director, Environment Planning Branch  
 Mr David Miles, Director, Waste Management Branch  
 Mr Les Barkla, Acting Manager (Administration), Division of Environment  
 Dr Peter Nimmo, Director, Pollution Management Branch  
 Mr John Gilmour, Executive Director (Environment)  
 Mr Jon Womersley, Director, Cultural Heritage Branch  
 Mr Bruce Gall, Director, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service  
 Mr Chris Pattearson, Director, Coastal Management Branch  
 Mr Paul Sattler, Acting Director, Conservation Strategy Branch  
 Mr Bill Dixon, Manager, Work and Labour Market Program Unit  
 Mr Clive Hughes, Manager (Administration), Division of Conservation  
 Mr Ross Rolfe, Executive Director (Conservation)  
 Mr Des Boyland, Regional Director (Southeastern)

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare open the resumed hearings of Estimates Committee D. The Committee has previously dealt with two Departments today, that is, the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing and the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Estimates Committee D now proceeds to conduct its investigation of the Estimates of the Ministry of Environment and Heritage.

Just for the information of members, the Minister and her departmental staff, I point out that questions from the Committee will be limited to one minute, and answers are limited to three minutes.

Fifteen seconds before the end of any such time period, you will hear a single chime from our timekeeper and a double chime at the expiry of the time limit allowed.

In accordance with the Sessional Orders governing the Estimates process, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members of the Committee on my left, the second 20 minutes from Government members on my right, and so on in rotation.

As I mentioned at the commencement of the previous departmental Estimates today, for the efficiency of these proceedings and for the benefit of departmental staff, this Committee has resolved to refine the Estimates process somewhat compared to previous days' Estimates hearings to try to deal with program areas of each Department in turn. This evening, we will deal with the program area of Conservation first, followed by Environment, and then other matters such as Corporate Services. Although there will be some overlap in some of the questioning, members of the Committee have agreed, so far as possible, to separate their questions into those program areas.

We have had no notice of questions from members of Parliament who are not members of the Committee, so the only questions will be from the members present this evening. As I said, there have been no questions on notice, but any questions which the Minister seeks to take on notice we will provide to you as soon as possible so that a response can be furnished to the Committee, hopefully by the end of tomorrow.

So I declare the proposed expenditure for the Ministry of Environment and Heritage open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Material prepared by the research staff of the Committee has been furnished to the Minister and the Department. I now invite the Minister to make a brief opening statement.

**Ms ROBSON:** Thank you. I welcome the opportunity to debate the Estimates for the Department of Environment and Heritage with members of the Estimates committee. As we all know, this is a major reform of the Goss Government which is designed to further increase the accountability of all Government portfolios.

Since becoming the Minister for Environment and Heritage, I have sought to extend portfolio activities gradually towards the "brown" issues of pollution control and, in particular, improved air and water quality and better waste management while maintaining the focus on the conservation of our natural resources. A clear manifestation of this shift is the huge amount of effort that is devoted to finalising this legislation, which will modernise environmental management in Queensland while at the same time streamlining the approval processes. In this Budget, the Government has provided up to \$4.8m to implement the Environmental Protection Act.

In the area of waste management—members of the Committee will be aware that the Government

has released a draft Waste Management Strategy for public consultation. The Government has allocated \$1.1m to implement the Waste Management Strategy in 1994-95. This increased emphasis on pollution control and waste management does not mean that the Government is lessening its commitment to the Conservation Program; quite to the contrary. The Government has approved major new initiatives in the Conservation Program, and an amount of \$4m has been provided to the Department of Environment and Heritage for the establishment of a Regional Open Space System in south-east Queensland as part of the Government's response to the SEQ 2001 planning exercise.

The Regional Open Space System is designed to ensure that south-east Queensland will remain one of the best places in Australia in which to live and, in the process, avoiding the prospect of a Los Angeles-style urban conurbation. Funding of \$4.25m for the acquisition of the former Starcke Pastoral Holdings has been provided in this Budget. In total, more than \$136m has been provided in 1994-95, including new initiative funding of around about \$13m. I welcome questions on these Estimates from members of the Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Questioning will be opened by Mr Slack.

**Mr SLACK:** I note that this year's Budget allocation to Conservation is \$115.3m, down \$11.5m on last year's expenditure of \$126.8m. It also represents a fall of \$15.2m on last year's Budget figure of \$130.5m. Could you please explain this drop, when other Departments have received increases?

**Ms ROBSON:** I think that members will understand that the nature of our Conservation Budget and, in fact, all the Budget of the Department of Environment and Heritage is not perhaps in the same way comparable with the way that other Budgets have run, simply because we run a lot of programs which may run for one, two or three years.

In the case of this particular Budget, there are a variety of reasons for change. I can go through them, if you wish. There is quite a lot of detail, but the net result you have talked about is the winding up of the Fraser Island package and the Wet Tropics package, which is obviously in the same position.

**Mr SLACK:** Could you indicate the figure that is involved?

**Ms ROBSON:** I can give you all the amounts. There is a difference of \$30,967,000, which is a reduction because of programs winding up or in some way diminishing. There is also an addition of \$20,000,864, which gives you the net effect that you are talking about. That is fundamentally the way that DEH has actually costed its projects. I can give you more details of these.

**Mr SLACK:** There is a carryover from the last Budget. The allocation for the last Budget was not spent. There was a drop. In the previous Budget, the Treasurer allowed you to carry money forward. Why did that not occur this time?

**Ms ROBSON:** Mr Emerson might like to address that particular issue.

**Dr EMERSON:** The carryovers have been allowed to be taken forward. In fact, we have not lost money. You referred firstly to money that was allowed to be carried forward from '93. There is no indication in the subsequent paragraph with respect to the carry forward from last year to this year. The main reason for that is that we are still not at the end of the financial year. All you can do is estimate what the amount of carryover might be. We will be in a lot better position, as all departments would be, by the end of the financial year to say what the actual carryover or underspend is. On that basis, we have no reason to believe that we will not be allowed to carry that over—quite the contrary.

**Mr SLACK:** In respect to moneys, if they were surplus in a particular program, did you have the opportunity to transfer those moneys to another program?

**Ms ROBSON:** I think you would have to probably be a bit more specific about which particular program you are talking about. If it is within—

**Mr SLACK:** I am just going on the Budget figures.

**Ms ROBSON:**—the same department—

**Mr SLACK:** You have not used the full amount..

**Ms ROBSON:** That happens for a variety of reasons. Again, we would have to be a bit more specific in terms of which particular moneys you are talking about, for example, Jobs for the Environment or for the Youth Conservation Corps. There might be a carryover because all of the positions have not been filled which may be because of a lack of supply in terms of the Commonwealth Employment Service supplying us with the personnel that we are looking for or the correct personnel being supplied.

**Mr SLACK:** The Director-General would know areas where a specific program may not have been completed or have used the full allocation within the last Budget. Are there any of those situations?

**Ms ROBSON:** I think that he has indicated to you that we are not at the end of the financial year, so at this point we do not have those final figures to work off. I think that is the most accurate answer that we can give you.

**Mr SLACK:** In the Estimates you referred to moneys to come from a national park visit fee. It has been flagged for quite some time. You have talked about it on air. At one stage you talked about which particular parks may be involved. In respect to a charge, have you determined that fee as yet? If so, what will it be?

**Ms ROBSON:** What we have done is look at a methodology that is workable. A lot of interesting issues were raised when we floated the idea of user pays—issues such as how it would be collected, what parks would be appropriate, whether we have to put barriers up or whether it is a low-key or high-key initiative in terms of putting a lot of infrastructure in place. We explored a couple of models. My Department is currently working up a model which we have agreed would probably be the most

workable model in terms of practicality and reality in collecting fees. It is still intended that it will be trialled on a limited number of parks.

**Mr SLACK:** With due respect, we were looking at this when we were in Government. I am sure that the Department was looking at models at that stage. We have been talking about it for some time. When do you expect that this will be announced? The public are asking me. You flagged it in the Budget as an income item for this particular calendar year.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is right. We have flagged it for this financial year. Our intention is that we will start collecting it at some time during this financial year when we have determined the model that we believe will work best. We are hoping that that will be sooner rather than later. The other thing that you have to be aware of is that it is no good our putting a model in place which in the long term will not work.

**Mr SLACK:** Have you done any estimates on the cost of collecting the fee?

**Ms ROBSON:** That is what I have said. We are currently working up that proposal based on the final model that we have decided upon which we believe will be workable and which we have looked at operating in other States.

**Mr SLACK:** Can you give me the current area in hectares in national parks within each region? I do not mind if you take that on notice.

**Ms ROBSON:** Within each region?

**Mr SLACK:** Within each regional area of the Department—the current area of national parks.

**Ms ROBSON:** I understood the question. I do not have that information in my head. I will wait for Mr Rolfe to produce it. Mr Rolfe has just informed me that we have only the global figures.

**Mr SLACK:** And the number of national parks, if you could include those.

**Ms ROBSON:** We have actually got it by geographic regions, of which there are 13. Is that a suitable response for you—by geographic regions?

**Mr SLACK:** If that is all that you can supply.

**Ms ROBSON:** We do not normally have them available in regions.

**Mr SLACK:** I will accept that. If you could put the other question on notice in respect to the actual regions?

**Ms ROBSON:** If you want it broken down into the five regions around the State, that is fine. The total that we are talking about here is—

**Mr SLACK:** I suggest that the question be placed on notice.

**Ms ROBSON:** I think that might be better and then we can put it into the form in which you want it.

**Mr SLACK:** I turn to the management of national parks. I note that there is an allocation of \$2.7m provided for capital works in this year's Budget compared with \$5.6m in 1993. Could you explain what the \$2.7m includes and the reason for the fall this year in comparison with last year?

**Ms ROBSON:** The \$2.7m, as you said, has been provided for national park capital works. \$2.234m will be expended on the redevelopment of management infrastructure—that is, fencing, firebreaks, staff accommodation, workshed and support facilities—and on national parks and other classes of protected areas throughout the State. New national parks acquired during this present Government's term are included in this figure. \$390,000 is to be expended on upgrading recreational facilities in national parks and related reserves which are in need of repair or replacement. This will be primarily south-eastern Queensland, including Fleay's Fauna Reserve. Capital works funding to protect cultural resources on protected area estates involves \$35,000 to continue preservation works at St Helena, and \$55,000 for restoration of the beacon on Raine Island. Summary of capital works expenditure in national parks, as I have just detailed to you, is \$2.234m on infrastructure. Recreation infrastructure is \$0.39m and cultural resource protection on national park is \$0.35m and \$0.55m, which is a total of \$2.719m. In terms of the difference between the existing Budget and the previous year's Budget, we have a figure of \$5.6m.

**Mr ROLFE:** The additional money that we got from national park management in last year's Budget, which is a different thing to the capital works program.

**Mr SLACK:** What would concern me, if I am allowed to comment on it, is that you have a decreasing amount, because the figure the year before was higher than the \$5.6m, and there are increasing demands on national parks. Could I get a break-up of that \$2.7m per region?

**Ms ROBSON:** This is the estimated expenditure. There is a land acquisition budget of \$7.7m and a separate SEQ 2001 land acquisition of \$4m. The national parks development works—the regions are far northern—

**Mr SLACK:** No, no, I think you misunderstand me. The \$2.7m that I am referring to—

**Ms ROBSON:** Can you just give me a reference page in your papers?

**Mr SLACK:** The \$2.7m is on every—

**Ms ROBSON:** Give me a reference and then I will follow that reference and we can take it from there.

**Mr SLACK:** It is mentioned in these papers as a \$2.7m allocation.

**Ms ROBSON:** Right, but which page are you referring to so that we are both working off the same figures?

**Mr SLACK:** What I am getting at is that an overall \$2.7m that you referred to a moment ago is put down for management and capital works. It is not in these papers that I have, but what I am looking for is a break-up of that \$2.7m per region.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is what I am about to give you. I was just about to read you that.

**Mr SLACK:** But you were talking about \$4m; I am talking about \$2.7m.

**Ms ROBSON:** I just said that that is a separate one—SEQ. I will give you the breakdown of the \$2.7m. It is national park development works and it is as follows: the far northern region, \$495,000; the northern region, \$495,000; the central region, \$495,000; the south-eastern region, \$525,000; the south-western region, \$555,000; and the head office is \$154,000. That makes up the total that you are talking about.

**Mr SLACK:** What is the estimated overall operating cost of each region this year?

**Ms ROBSON:** For what?

**Mr SLACK:** The budget for each region.

**Ms ROBSON:** For each regional office?

**Mr SLACK:** Yes.

**Ms ROBSON:** We will have to put that one on notice.

**Mr SLACK:** Put that one on notice. Can you give me the cost for last year?

**Ms ROBSON:** Last year's documentation is available. It has been published and it is available through the normal procedures.

**Mr SLACK:** Would you be able to also give me the breakup between wages and the component of each region and the other costs?

**Ms ROBSON:** The projected costs for 1994-95?

**Mr SLACK:** In each region.

**Ms ROBSON:** We will have a look. We will produce what we can in relation to the regional costs.

**Mr SLACK:** And the same applies to the breakup between administrative costs and direct operational costs of national parks within each region. Is there a figure available for that?

**Ms ROBSON:** It is very difficult to estimate direct operational costs. Do you want each national park or each region?

**Mr SLACK:** For national parks within each region. The whole of the national parks would have a budget for operational costs, I would imagine.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is right. That is the problem. The regional offices operate on an overall budget. There are estimated projections for what it will cost for a year. We can give you those figures. We will give you as much of a breakdown of that as we can.

**Mr SLACK:** What I am looking at are figures that should be within that cost structure for national parks, for argument's sake, for erosion control. That is one. Feral animal control is another. What will be budgeted in each region for feral animal control within the national parks in that area? What has been allocated for weed control in national parks?

**Ms ROBSON:** What I am probably saying to you is that there are programs that may be designed for pest and weed control which will have a program figure allocated to it. I think you have to accept that we have a multi-skilling approach to our operators, and whilst that program money may be allocated, it is

pretty difficult to determine exactly. The sorts of subprogram headings that I can provide you with will give you an indication of what I am talking about. For example, in the far northern region there is subprogram funding for parks and wildlife, for conservation strategy, the cultural heritage programs and the coastal management strategy. Those are the sorts of figures that are submitted to the Treasurer for approval without the finer breakdowns that you are talking about.

**Mr SLACK:** But within each region there should be some allocation, for argument's sake, for fire prevention and fire control. There has been the situation with fires in New South Wales; it should be a priority of national parks to ensure that there is provision of adequate fire control and prevention.

**Ms ROBSON:** Sure.

**Mr SLACK:** Within the budget of a region, surely it is not unrealistic to expect that there will be an allocation there for fire prevention and control. If I am doing the budget for my property or whatever, the same would apply as far as a budget for erosion control or feral animal control. That is what I am seeking.

**Ms ROBSON:** I think that is what I just said I will give you. I will give you that. I have said that twice.

**Mr SLACK:** It is just an overall program that involves so many things, you are not really giving me that figure.

**Ms ROBSON:** I will give you what figures we have available to address that question. I think that is all I can offer you at the moment.

**Mr SLACK:** Is it possible to give me the allocation for new plant and equipment in each region?

**Ms ROBSON:** I will attempt to do that.

**Mr SLACK:** And the same as far as roads are concerned.

**Ms ROBSON:** We will give you the total budget, which will include all those components.

**Mr SLACK:** No, that is not what I am asking.

**Ms ROBSON:** There is no additional component for them. There is a regional budget for each of the five regions within which there are various components making up that total. We will give you that detail.

**Mr SLACK:** And surely within that there are breakups for these items that I mentioned?

**Ms ROBSON:** That is what we will give you. We will give you the program funding figures.

**Mr SLACK:** Is it the same for roads and road maintenance in national parks in each region? Surely those people within that region, if they are not there, can give us the figures.

**Ms ROBSON:** Mr Slack, I have repeated that we will give you those figures within the program allocations.

**Mr SLACK:** I note that you have a provision to employ 30 additional national park rangers. How many national park rangers are employed in each

region now and how many of those 30 additional rangers will be employed in each region? There is a reference on page 10 in the papers that I have.

**Ms ROBSON:** So you want it broken down again at a regional level?

**Mr SLACK:** Yes. What number of rangers is in each region?

**Ms ROBSON:** We do not have that here, apparently, but we can supply that to you.

**Mr SLACK:** I did mention to the Estimates committee in one of our meetings that I would be looking for breakups in regions.

**Ms ROBSON:** I do not know that that was mentioned to me. That message did not get to us, unfortunately.

**Mr SLACK:** You referred to 512 rangers increasing to 542 rangers. Do these figures include cadet rangers, and if so, how many are classed as cadet rangers?

**Ms ROBSON:** Do you want to know what training program they are going through, too?

**Mr SLACK:** Of course. Are they fully qualified? How long have they been in service? Are some of those people newly appointed?

**Ms ROBSON:** May I suggest that these are projections for training programs which have to be subjected to the Treasury process before we even get to the consideration of what their name, rank and serial number will be. I am informed that that increase from 512 to 542 rangers will occur across the State and will involve temporary officers, some of whom will be employed in coastal management areas, for example, Moreton Bay and Trinity Inlet. Others will be employed on specific project work, for example, capital works Statewide.

**Mr SLACK:** The temporary officers, they will be a contract-type arrangement? They will not be permanent employees, I take it?

**Dr EMERSON:** A temporary employee does not in fact have a formal contract, it is a standard arrangement that is entered into with the Department of Environment and Heritage. Temporary employees are just that. If you get new initiative funding, one consequence of that can be that you can put on temporary rangers, or temporary employees.

**Mr SLACK:** How many of the 542 that you are referring to in the projection for this budget figure will be temporary?

**Ms ROBSON:** Of that, it is estimated that 59 will be directly employed in relation to the coastal management subprogram, as I alluded to before. They could be temporary for a variety of reasons. One of them could be that the program may only run for 12 months or two years. It may be an implementation program. For example, it may be the implementation of the coastal protection legislation, and it is estimated that they will only be required for that period of time. That does not mean to say that when those temporary appointments are completed there will not be others to take their place for a new project, and that would be future planning for another year. This number does not include new

initiative coastal rangers to be employed in 1994-95. The number in that particular subprogram is actually five. I think again it is a reflection, in terms of some of these temporary people, that they will in fact, as I have said, be employed for a year, two years, and they are not taken on under the terms that we would take on, say, full-time professional staff or rangers, or whatever. There is a variety of categories that we actually put these people into. I mean, Dr Emerson has just said to me that some of those 542 are permanent but may just be filling a position on a temporary basis, as I have just explained to you. Again, it is the nature of the sort of program work that we run.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the first bracket of questioning from Opposition members. We now turn to questioning from Government members. I invite questions from, firstly, Dr Clark, the member for Barron River.

**Dr CLARK:** My first couple of questions relate to coastal management issues. If I can just refer to page 13 in the departmental Estimates, I would like to ask some questions about management of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. This particular table on page 13 refers to the Commonwealth funding for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park and the estimate for this year is \$7.216m. I have not been able to find anywhere where our State contribution to funding is itemised. I was wondering if you would be able to provide that for me. The decrease in Commonwealth funding in this table from \$8.378m down to \$7.216m—I was just wondering what might be the implications of that decrease in Commonwealth funding?

**Ms ROBSON:** Again, as I referred to before, it is one of those issues where, as the funding package moves on, it sometimes decreases. In this case, the Commonwealth funding that you refer to in that \$7.216m—\$3.658m is Commonwealth and \$3.558m is State. It is split that way. There is marginally more from the Commonwealth because of a standing arrangement with them. The further breakdown for 1994-95 of their marine park budget is as follows: the State Treasury contribution is \$3.058m; the Department of Environment and Heritage contribution is \$200,000; user-pays fees will generate \$110,000; and asset sales and fines and receipts, \$190,000. That gives our total of \$3.558m. The Commonwealth contribution there is \$3.468m, plus another assets or fines income receipts of \$190,000, giving you the grand total that you talked about. As you have accurately said, that represents a drop in the marine park funding from 1993-94 to 1994-95. That is because the 1993-94 budget included funding of \$1.466m for the purchase and upgrading of vessels. Obviously, that is a fairly vital component of their operations. So that figure for asset sales reflects that change of vessels. The 1994-95 budget will only include \$500,000 in the vessel replacement program and does not involve major initial capital funding for the acquisition of new vessels. So clearly, what has happened is that we have reached the point where there is not a requirement and there has not been an allocation requested from that authority for any additional funding.

**Dr CLARK:** My second question on the coastal management issues was in Budget Related Paper No. 3, an amount of \$150,000 was indicated as having been provided for departmental activities associated with the new State marine parks for Wonga Beach, Marlin Coast and Trinity Inlet in far-north Queensland. I was hoping, Minister, that perhaps you could explain actually how this money will be spent this year and give us a timetable for the gazettal of these new marine park areas.

**Ms ROBSON:** As you are very familiar, Dr Clark, we have been trying to accommodate this in our budget for the last year or so, and we are very pleased that we have been able to accommodate this \$150,000 for these proposed new marine parks for the Marlin Coast and the Trinity Coast in far-north Queensland. The activities associated with the proposed park will be indicated in the following expenditure: first of all, there will be an allocation in support of the Trinity Inlet Management Program, and the Department will contribute 25 per cent of costs of running the TIMP office and staff for six months—it is salary and program coordinator and secretary plus office expenses—and it is proposed that the Cairns Port Authority and two local government agencies will contribute the balance of the funds for a further six months. There will be the employment of two temporary planning staff for nine months to assist in the resource assessment and community consultation process that is required in the preparation of zoning plans for those two new marine parks. There will be the purchase of a vehicle and office equipment to service those staff, and an operating fund to cover vehicle running costs, printing distribution and the usual costs—community consultation and education, and general office costs.

The anticipated timetable is: close of submissions on the issues document by the end of this month, June 1994; submission of a draft zoning plan to Cabinet should happen by late September 1994; public release of the draft zoning plan, late October 1994; close of public submissions, mid-December 1994; and submission of the final plan to Cabinet, late April 1995. The final release in the gazettal, I would say, late May 1995. That is the program that we have planned.

**Dr CLARK:** Thank you. As a supplementary to that—would it be the Department's intention that these State marine parks would just form one component of a coastal management plan for the Cairns area once we get the new legislation in place?

**Ms ROBSON:** Yes. Indeed, all of our marine parks form part of our total coastal management strategy. The intention is that we have standards which are as uniform as possible, given the diversity and the nature of our coastal areas and the marine parks that we will be zoning in the future. So yes, it is part of that particular approach that we have taken. The coastal protection legislation will, of course, reinforce that. It will, as you are aware, collapse various procedures and existing legislation into one comprehensive Act, which will, we hope, give more than adequate protection into the future for all of our coastal areas.

**Dr CLARK:** Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I now invite the member for Currumbin, Ms Rose, to ask questions.

**Mrs ROSE:** Thank you. Minister, I am very pleased to be able to ask you about funding which has been allocated for the Tweed River Sand Bypass System. There has been \$1.5m provided as a first instalment of a three-year commitment to the Tweed River Sand Bypass System. How will this money be spent? Can you please tell me how much the whole project will eventually cost?

**Ms ROBSON:** The Tweed River entrance sand bypassing project is the result of an agreement between the Premiers of New South Wales and Queensland, which has culminated in their signing an agreement on 31 March 1994. This particular project, which is very complex, involves the design, construction and operation of a permanent sand bypassing system at the Tweed River entrance together with the initial dredging of the entrance and nourishment of the southern Gold Coast beaches. The project is estimated to cost \$53.4m in total—sorry, in net present value terms, in 1990 dollars, which is the estimation, with a projected cost of \$25.5m over the three years, 1994-1995 to 1996-1997. The New South Wales Government has agreed to meet 75 per cent of the initial capital costs of \$23.5m, 50 per cent of the recurrent operation and maintenance costs of \$1.96m per annum and 50 per cent of replacement costs estimated at \$8.45m every 25 years. Queensland will finance the remainder, which the Queensland Government and the Gold Coast City Council will share on a fifty-fifty basis. The State Government's commitment over the three years, 1994-1995 to 1996-1997 is, therefore, estimated at \$2.94m for capital costs and \$0.49m for recurrent costs in 1996-1997 and thereafter, plus project support costs of \$0.25m per annum.

In 1994-95, \$1.25m is estimated to be paid by the Queensland Government as its part of the capital cost of the initial dredging and nourishment. This initial version of the project budget is based on initial nourishment in 1994-95, bypassing system construction in 1995-96, and ongoing bypassing system operation in, and from, 1996-97. Obviously, the budget will be subject to review in consultation with New South Wales as we move through the program. Under the terms of the head of agreement, all parties, including the Queensland Government, will be required to provide their share of actual project costs as they occur.

**Mrs ROSE:** I would also like to address the southern Gold Coast beaches nourishment project. Budget Related Paper No. 3 refers to \$267,000 to continue monitoring the southern Gold Coast beach nourishment project. Can you please explain where in the Budget Papers or Budget Estimates these funds are provided? Could you tell us how these funds will be spent in the Budget year?

**Ms ROBSON:** The funds appear in the Budget Papers as a Treasury "special", which is not to be confused with a Woolworths special. The southern Gold Coast beach nourishment project was commenced in 1989 as a result of the Cabinet decision to restore beaches in the area. As the member for Currumbin knows, that has been

something that the council has been pushing for a long time. At the time, this was the largest beach nourishment program in Queensland. It involved the use of new and innovative technology in a complex physical environment, and therefore warranted close monitoring to ensure its success.

The project involved the dredging of 3.6 million cubic metres of sand from offshore and placing it on, or near, the southern Gold Coast beaches. As part of the project, there were to be beach stabilisation works and project monitoring works. The total project cost to the end of 1994-95 will be \$16m. It has been jointly funded, with 75 per cent from the Queensland Government and the remaining 25 per cent from the Gold Coast City Council. The project is due to be completed in 1994-95. The monitoring program for 1994-95 will include sand level surveys, both of the dredge-borrow area and the nourished beaches, measurement of wave and current conditions, and aerial photography.

The data is interpreted to assess the beach nourishment technique used to improve the accuracy of estimates of sand movements in the area, a very vital component of that program. Further work will be undertaken in conjunction with the Tweed River Sand Bypass Project, which we have just talked about. Obviously, as I have said, this is a joint Queensland/New South Wales Government initiative.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** We have heard so much about the Cape Melville National Park. Can you outline what measures you have taken in this budget to improve management in that area?

**Ms ROBSON:** Obviously, we are all familiar with the problems at Cape Melville. They are not recent; they have been going on since the early eighties. In consideration of the recent Government action to acquire the Starcke aggregation, which will effectively extend the existing Cape Melville National Park, a decision has been made to dedicate a senior officer for a minimum of 12 months to develop, in conjunction with any board of management constituted under the Aboriginal Land Act 1991, some planning strategies that will consider the long-term management and protection of natural and cultural resources within the area.

This planning strategy will include consideration of specific management requirements for the foxtail palms. On-ground management is to be enhanced through the recent establishment of a Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service district office in Cooktown, with one AO4 district ranger and one R4 park ranger based at that location. An additional park ranger position has been allocated to the Cape Melville National Park. This core group of three staff will have responsibility for the day-to-day management of parks north of Cooktown, including Cape Melville. There is provision in this budget for two vehicles.

The region has also created the position of senior investigations officer, AO5, who is responsible to the regional director for all enforcement coordination in the region. The position will give the region the capacity for effective and professional surveillance in enforcement situations such as in Cape Melville. Base funding will be

redistributed in the region to meet operational expenses associated with the positions, with Cape Melville National Park sharing in the formulation of the Starcke aggregation and park plan. The budget is \$156,000—\$126,000 for wages and \$30,000 for operational expenses.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Can you outline in this budget how you intend to improve the management of national parks in the far northern region? Can you give me a breakdown of how many rangers you will be appointing in that region. I know you have appointed 542 Statewide. Can you give me a breakdown for that region?

**Ms ROBSON:** Taking your last point first—in 1993-94, an additional 13 field-based ranger staff were appointed to national parks throughout the region. This new funding initiative is to become an addition to base in the 1994-95 financial year, and positions will become part of the regional work force. The Wet Tropics Management Authority will also continue to fund an additional 16 field-based rangers that have come on stream during the 1993-94 year throughout parks in the Wet Tropics district.

The regional focus is on the management processes that threaten the integrity of the natural systems in the areas. It is essential to concentrate on species in communities that are threatened in their capacity to sustain viable populations. In that regard, decisions are continually reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate allocations are made at all times.

User-pays allocations will be directed to improving visitor infrastructure on a number of national parks, and capital works funds will contribute to both that process and the construction of stock-proof fences, in line with joint agreements reached with our park neighbours.

The budget for 1994-95 from Consolidated Revenue is as follows: salaries, wages and labour, including the 13 new staff, \$1.824m; operating costs, \$341,000; capital works on national parks, \$495,000; the Wet Tropics Fund, salaries and wages and operating project-based costs, \$1.7m; revenue retention, \$220,000; and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander land interests has a special allocation of \$450,000. That will all be spent in that area.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I know that you cannot break down the figure by regions, but can you give me a total sum that you will be spending on bushfire prevention and controlled burning Statewide? That could depend on whether it rains. Those problems can occur.

**Ms ROBSON:** Yes. It is a bit hard to burn when it rains. In Queensland, we have always undertaken a very rigorous campaign of prescribed burns. Clearly, that has been the reason that we have not had the sorts of bushfire problems that Sydney experienced recently over the Christmas holiday break. I will outline to you a bit of our program.

We did a fairly comprehensive analysis of the situation in Sydney, in as much as you can relate it to our situation. The result of that was that the majority of those fires, we found, originated outside national parks and travelled into those areas. DEH officers recently inspected some of the major fire sites near



Sydney and undertook detailed discussions with the New South Wales National Parks and Wildlife Service staff on fire management, and attended a course on occupational health and safety relevant to bushfire fighting. Again, this is the sort of training that we like to offer our staff that is relevant to the current problems in this State.

Prescribed burning to both reduce fuel as a fire hazard and to meet necessary ecological consideration of the natural communities in parks is carried out extensively in Cape York, the Central Highlands and many coastal parks, particularly in heath areas. As staff and resources are placed in newly acquired western parks, prescribed burning regimes for these areas will be undertaken. Approximately \$1.5m—which is salaries, wages and operating costs—is expended on fire management annually. This figure encompasses operations on parks such as prescribed burns and wildfires, purchase of fire equipment, training of staff in fire management—and that is fire behaviour and firefighting, fire control, etc.—development of wildfire response procedures and liaison with fire management authorities and park neighbours on fire management issues. Approximately \$0.5m was expended on upgrading fences and firebreaks. The source of these particular funds is through capital works programs.

The Conservation Division's training office has conducted several fire schools over the last three years, providing training for over half of the current ranger staff. 1994-95 will see similar figures—\$1.5m operational and maintenance and \$0.5m fences and firebreaks—for further upgrading. The Queensland bushfire strategy report undertaken by an interdepartmental audit team and to be resubmitted to Cabinet in late June has addressed many of the issues central to fire management in our natural areas.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes questioning from Government members. We now return to a further bracket of questioning from Mr Slack.

**Mr SLACK:** You seemed to be much more specific in your answers to the member for Albert. Could I follow on from some of the questions that he raised in respect to national parks and the employment of rangers? I have several questions here—a couple of which I have asked you—in respect to the break-up of the rangers employed in each region. I also referred to the number of rangers who were on renewable contract, to which you referred in your last answer before the Government members of the Committee asked you questions. Of the 512 rangers who were employed last year, I referred to cadet rangers. Could you indicate to me whether included in that figure were people who were employed under the funding provided for the Youth Conservation Corps or the Jobs for the Environment Program, or were those 512 rangers all experienced rangers?

**Ms ROBSON:** No, they are not part of the YCC or the Jobs for the Environment program; a totally separate set of figures covers those two programs. They are not included in my mainstream budget.

**Mr SLACK:** But you did refer to programs that rangers—

**Ms ROBSON:** Yes, of course. That is what I was trying to indicate to you. My budget is inflated and deflated according to one, two, three or four-year programs that roll past. The YCC and the Jobs for the Environment programs are a typical example of the sorts of programs to which I am referring, but I do not include those costs in terms of what we were talking about before; nor are those people part of my permanent ranger structure. It may be that, having been through those programs and having been trained under those particular programs—both of which are excellent training programs—people end up applying for and obtaining full-time jobs in some part of my structure. However, they are not included in the figures that I gave you.

**Mr SLACK:** To simplify that, if I place a question on notice to you, could you give me a break-up of those rangers who have been employed for over three years within the department?

**Ms ROBSON:** Again, could I suggest to you—

**Mr SLACK:** In each region.

**Ms ROBSON:** If we are talking about forward Estimates, and we are talking about the current—

**Mr SLACK:** Your department can come up with that.

**Ms ROBSON:** Let me finish my response. I understood that we were debating forward Estimates. Somebody may have progressed through the ranks from a junior officer cadet to a senior officer. However, I am not prepared to give you an historical breakdown of each individual category. I am certainly prepared to give you future projections for the categories—for example, AO4 or whatever it may be, or the ranger categories under which we are currently employing people—but I am not prepared to provide an historical accounting of how long a particular member of my staff has been on the staff and what they have been doing during that period.

**Mr SLACK:** Could you give me a break-up of those rangers who have been employed by the Department of Environment and Heritage for more than three years?

**Ms ROBSON:** I will answer your question again. Perhaps I can do this more simply or differently.

**Mr SLACK:** No, you do not need to. Either you will or you will not.

**Ms ROBSON:** I am trying to debate with you the forward Estimates for 1994-95—what we are doing now and what our planning for future staff will be. I have given you those figures, and some questions on notice will indicate the answers to some questions, but I will not undertake an historical analysis of 500-odd staff for you.

**Mr SLACK:** Could you indicate how many permanent rangers you have in respect to the number of national parks in each region? In other words, how many national parks have permanent rangers on them in each region?

**Ms ROBSON:** We can provide you with those figures, but I will not give you an employment history of each one of them.

**Mr SLACK:** Referring now to Starcke—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! Using the information that departmental staff have, is the Minister able to answer that question now?

**Ms ROBSON:** Mr Slack wants the number of permanent rangers. We have a variety of categories. It is really difficult to say how many permanent rangers we have, because they come in different grades and different categories.

**Mr SLACK:** I want to know the number of permanent rangers, not the number of rangers who are just visiting.

**Ms ROBSON:** So you want the number of permanent rangers as compared with the number of temporary rangers?

**Mr SLACK:** Can you give me a break-up of those national parks that have permanent rangers on them?

**Ms ROBSON:** But compared with what? That is what I am trying to ascertain. Do you want them compared with the number of temporary rangers, as we referred to with our initiative programs? The categorisation is not as simple as saying—

**Mr SLACK:** Yes, where have you a ranger on all the time—a permanent ranger.

**Ms ROBSON:** You want full-time rangers in permanent placement?

**Mr SLACK:** I want a break-up of those national parks within each region that have full-time rangers.

**Ms ROBSON:** I can give you some figures that may answer your question. The answer is that the resources necessary for the management of each park are those which are necessary for basic operations; essential resource management such as fire management, weed control and feral animal control; rehabilitation works; maintenance of visitor facilities; and park interpretation and planning facilities.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Mr Chairman—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Let the Minister continue.

**Ms ROBSON:** There is an average of 3.9 positions per base across the State when all positions are filled. Currently, there are approximately 3.7 positions per base, as at least 25 vacancies are currently unfilled. The majority of park bases would have either 1.5 or 2 wages positions, which are rangers. The term "base" is used to refer to a range of management units. Bases vary considerably and may be an individual park, a management unit centre—and that can be an office in town—a district centre, a regional centre or a head office. Therefore, deriving an average figure for a management unit does not reflect the nature of management operations for the protected area estate. Some park officers comprise half a position, regional officers up to 10, and there are 11 permanent staff based in head office. In total, the National Parks and Wildlife Subprogram employs 542 rangers, as we have indicated, including those

rangers who are now employed on island parks. Some positions dedicated to park management have cross-program responsibilities—for example, regional and district managers, who cover both Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service and the Conservation Strategy Branch. That is an indication of why it is so difficult: we multiskill our people. However, we can offer you that advice.

**Mr SLACK:** I turn to Starcke. The member for Albert asked a question in respect to that purchase. It has been indicated that \$4.25m will be expended on the purchase of Starcke. I note from the Budget figures that half of that amount—\$2.125m or whatever—is to come from the Commonwealth, so it is not all State money. Earlier, you answered a question in respect to the management of Starcke. The budget for the management of Starcke will be incorporated with the budget for the management of the Cape Melville National Park. I ask: is the Cape Melville National Park ranger to be stationed on Starcke and operate from Starcke, or will he or she operate from Cape Melville itself?

**Ms ROBSON:** I mentioned earlier in the answer to the member for Albert that the three rangers who are currently there are based at Cooktown, but it is very feasible that when Starcke does come on-line, that we will probably facilitate them there. That decision has not been made and that decision is not necessarily in this year's Budget forward planning.

**Mr SLACK:** I have a specific reason for asking that question because the homestead where I would assume you would base them, if you were to base them on Starcke, would be probably 14-hours' drive from Cape Melville over a pretty horrific road stretch, so in actual fact their operational capacity from the Starcke homestead—at the bottom of Starcke—would be very difficult.

**Ms ROBSON:** I would suggest that is probably why we have not taken a decision yet as to where we will base them, and that is one of the reasons why we have not had a permanent base in Cape Melville—well, it is one of the many reasons why we have not, but, certainly, it is a very difficult area to access and it is a very dangerous area for a variety of reasons to place people in there on a permanent basis.

**Mr SLACK:** Minister, as you will appreciate, I am aware of some of the conditions at Cape Melville. However, I am also aware that Customs' estimate of the foxtail palm seeds that went out of Cape Melville last year is about 700 000, which is quite a significant figure in terms of their value—and that was for the summer. I have been told that is conservative. It would seem to me that it would be a reasonable proposition to have a ranger there, even if only because of the cost recovery factor. Maybe consideration could go to some harvesting of the seeds to get some recovery for the cost of stationing a ranger there, then that would ensure that you have some seeds regenerating within that park, rather than the situation at present, where it is open slather.

**Ms ROBSON:** I think I have probably answered your question by saying that there are

three rangers based at Cooktown. I am not prepared to discuss your estimate or anyone else's estimate of how many seeds have been removed from the park in the context of an Estimates debate.

**Mr SLACK:** Because not all of Starcke is going to be used for environment and heritage purposes, in other words it will be used for national park, is there any likelihood of a contribution from other sources towards the purchase of that particular property, apart from the Commonwealth? A certain amount of it is being used for other purposes.

**Ms ROBSON:** I think the details that have been presented by the Premier in terms of who is contributing to the purchasing fund for the Starcke property have been fairly specific and that decision is the decision that we have taken for the time being. Part of that funding that came through the Commonwealth was from ATSIC, and that was also announced by the Premier at the time and, quite clearly, there was a great willingness by the ATSIC people to negotiate in terms of contributing to the purchase of that property because it is seen by the Aboriginal people to be of great significance to them. I would reiterate the fact that it is a joint package and it will be jointly managed in part. It is not just a simple tenure, as you would be aware.

**Mr SLACK:** In respect to the Starcke purchase, there is 380 000 hectares of land for national parks this year. Is the Starcke land included in that? I understand it is not included in the \$7.7m that is allocated for national park acquisition.

**Ms ROBSON:** No, it is not my understanding that it is, no. It is a separate acquisition.

**Mr SLACK:** Could I just get clarification, because some people have drawn that interpretation?

**Ms ROBSON:** Well, I have presented two separate figures to you and one of them is the Starcke figure and one of them is the national park acquisition, and that indicates also that the hectares that we are talking about are two separate figures.

**Mr SLACK:** They are two separate figures, and the \$4m is not included in the \$7.7m?

**Ms ROBSON:** I am informed that the Starcke acquisition is 135 000 hectares.

**Mr SLACK:** So that is not included in the——

**Ms ROBSON:** I just said that.

**Mr SLACK:** Is there any contribution from private enterprise towards the employment of rangers or the provision of facilities to environment and heritage in any of the regions and, if so, in what form and where and by whom?

**Ms ROBSON:** It would be lovely if there was, Mr Slack. I am not aware of any contribution that private enterprise would make to that sort of management, and I would probably think it was not appropriate that they should.

**Mr SLACK:** Well, it has been put to me that, for argument's sake, there has been an arrangement with Lindeman Island.

**Ms ROBSON:** If you could give me some sort of evidence or indication of who has put it to you

and in what terms, that would be useful to me, because I am not aware of it. I would love to have a supplementation to my Budget from private enterprise.

**Mr SLACK:** Within the Budget allocation there is a heading, "Specific Purpose Commonwealth Funding". The Budget for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority was \$8.7m in 1993-94; it has dropped to \$7.126m for 1994-95. Why was this reduced when there was increasing pressure on the reef and I understand from a Senate Estimates committee that the people from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority were unhappy with the amount of funding that was coming from the Commonwealth? Why was it reduced in those circumstances?

**Ms ROBSON:** Mr Chairman, I have already answered this for the member for Barron River, but I will answer it again, if you like.

**Mr SLACK:** Why was it reduced?

**Ms ROBSON:** It was reduced because the 1993-94 Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority Budget included funding of \$1.466m for the purchase and upgrade of its vessels, and the 1994-95 Budget will include only \$500,000 for that purpose.

**Mr SLACK:** But do other pressures within that Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority as far as demands are concerned——

**Ms ROBSON:** Could you tell me what they are?

**Mr SLACK:** They came out of that Senate hearing. There are specific instances of the extra costs to GBRMPA now where it requires extra money while some of those programs may be reduced. It needs more money, but you still have extra demands for increasing tourism, you have extra demands from litigation as far as Aboriginal claims under Mabo and all of these sorts of things. They were looking for extra funding rather than a reduction in funding.

**Ms ROBSON:** I explained to you what that reduction was. Apart from that, the actual funding is not being reduced and their Budget is being sustained and maintained at that level. I do not know where you get your information from, but they apparently believe that funding to be substantial.

**Mr SLACK:** Are you aware, from argument's sake, that the marine observatory in Townsville is having financial problems?

**Ms ROBSON:** I am aware of the financial situation. I would not put it in terms of it having financial problems. There are management considerations going on about how it should be and where it should be, etc., but I again reiterate that the basic maintenance funding for that body has not been reduced and there is no intention to cut it down at this stage.

**Mr EMERSON:** Perhaps if I can just add on that because I am a member of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority. Are you referring to the aquarium at Townsville?

**Mr SLACK:** Yes.

**Dr EMERSON:** We have had a good look at that in terms of comparing it with other like institutions around Australia and the level of cost recovery for that is far and away greater than for any other similar institution—for example, the Maritime Museum in Sydney—and, yes, there is a shortfall that needs topping up from general consolidated revenue, but comparatively its performance in terms of cost recovery is very good.

**Mr SLACK:** The National Trust received funding last year. Is it the intention of the Government to provide the same type of funding this year to the National Trust?

**Ms ROBSON:** Obviously, the level of funding to the National Trust has changed and there is an agreement with the National Trust that because they were doing a lot of the work that our Heritage Council is now doing for us and for the people of Queensland, that their level of funding was higher and this year it was reduced. Dr Emerson was just saying to me that we dropped it last year to \$50,000. It will be maintained at that level, and that is fundamentally because we now have a Heritage Council in place which is doing, as I said, a lot of that work of identifying and acting upon the preservation of heritage places. I have spoken to them about it; they understand the situation. Quite clearly, they would like to maintain a higher level of funding, but they also understand that the additional cost to the Queensland people of running the Heritage Council and its activities is going to have some impact on their level of funding. However, I would add to that by saying that we place a very high value on the work of the National Trust around this State. It has been invaluable historically and we will certainly continue to support them into the future.

**Mr SLACK:** That figure of \$50,000—are you sure of that figure? I thought it was higher than that.

**Ms ROBSON:** It was dropped in 1993-94, and it has been maintained at that level. They had their first reduced grant this year.

**Mr SLACK:** When would they expect to get that?

**Ms ROBSON:** They got it in recent months. I cannot give you an exact date. It comes around at a regular time every year when the grants go out.

**Mr SLACK:** I understand that, last year, it did not come at the same time as they always expected it; that it arrived in December.

**Ms ROBSON:** It could have been a bit later or a bit earlier; it depends on the processing. We actually had quite a record number of requests for grants through the National Estate Program. There was quite a prolonged process of sorting through them. It is always very hard to make decisions about who gets the money and how much they get. It could have been that that program was held up for a period. I am advised that they will get their money soon after the beginning of this financial year.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** Mr Chairman, I would like to raise a point of order in relation to the questions from the member for Burnett to the Minister. He asked for specific information with regard to the employment records of members of the Department.

The Minister made the comment that she was not prepared to give the information. I would be confident that somewhere within the Department there is information about the employment history of all the employees. We are a Committee of the Parliament. It was a fair question; he asked on notice that this sort of information be made available. Is it right that the Minister should say that she is not prepared to provide that information to a Committee of this Parliament?

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Committee, while it is a Committee of the Parliament, is also a Committee of the Budget Estimates. It is not a Committee with a roving brief to inquire into each and every element of information in the Department. As I have indicated to members previously, questions need to be related to current year or prospective Budget Estimates. So it might be appropriate, for example, to ask questions about how many staff are employed, what categories of employment are involved and what the costs are.

I assume that the Minister is saying that it is not that she refuses to give information but that she does not regard it as a valid question within the Sessional Orders of this Committee. I am inclined to accept that view, that the private employment records of members of staff are not matters that go to the question of Budget Estimates.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** It was not a matter of information about the private matters of an employee. It was a question framed to know how many of the staff in fact had so many years' experience. Earlier today, when I was asking questions of the Minister for Family Services, the Director-General very quickly offered me information with regard to the length of service and age of many people tied up with Corrective Services and Protective Services within the Family Services Department. We are not asking for information about private individuals. We are asking about numbers and percentages of employees of the Department and the length of service they have within National Parks. I think we are having information withheld from this Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Let me consider that for a moment. The Committee may have to adjourn to consider this matter in private. Before doing so, I offer the Minister the opportunity to consider whether she may wish to take on notice a question which simply asks what number of park rangers have been employed for three years or more, and whether that information can be obtained conveniently.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is probably a question that, given that I have 542 of them, would consume an inordinate amount of my staff's very valuable time. This is the reason that I hesitated to offer it. I would suggest that it is a question that is more properly put on notice in question time in the Parliament, at which time I would be happy to provide it.

**Mr SLACK:** That is an amazing answer.

**Ms ROBSON:** No, it is not. We are talking about Estimates. I have a very clear definition in my mind—and I do not know about you. I am now talking to this debate on Estimates for 1994-95. The convolution of how the history of the rangers on my

staff is relevant to that debate you have not made clear to me. I do not accept your point that it is relevant. But I am happy, as I have said, if you put it on notice in question time, and we will look into it.

**Mr SLACK:** With respect, the reason I asked the question is because it is a budgetary item for an increase in the number of rangers. I am trying to establish the experience of those rangers you are employing. That is a legitimate question, I would have thought.

**Ms ROBSON:** If you want to talk about the differential between the currently employed rangers and the increment that is proposed, that is relevant, in my view. However, I do not find it relevant to answer your question which you originally put about the employment history of 540-plus rangers. That is the point that I would insist upon in terms of this particular debate. The debate should be held in the Parliament where it is more relevant.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** This is Parliament.

**Ms ROBSON:** This is not the Parliament. This is an Estimates Committee debate of the Parliament.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will hear one further submission from Mr Littleproud or Mr Slack before I rule. Do you have anything further to say?

**Mr SLACK:** I just think that it is a legitimate question in respect of the rangers who are employed—if we are going to look to what their experience is to do their job, and in respect to the regions and the numbers that are there. They are employed in national parks. You will appreciate that there have been many questions asked in the community about the management of national parks. There have been many questions about the length of service of rangers. It has been a current topic. It is not a debate on the issue; it is purely a seeking of information for this Committee.

**Ms ROBSON:** Which I believe I have provided, where it is relevant, to the 1994-95 Estimates debate.

**Mr SLACK:** That is your opinion.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am going to rule that the question, so far as it relates to past employees, is out of order. But the question would be in order if the question was seeking to obtain information about the level of experience which would be required of the new employees to be employed to make up the additional employees, which will lift the number to 542. To that extent, the question would be in order, and I would ask that it be taken on notice. If the question is to extend beyond that, then I rule that it is not in order—relating to an Estimate of the Budget.

**Mr SLACK:** In respect of your ruling, Mr Chairman, I would point out that, if you are talking about 30 new rangers, it would not be expected that they would be departmental employees of three years' standing. I would assume they are going to be appointed from training programs or whatever; so the question then becomes relevant.

**Ms ROBSON:** They may not be. They may be taken from a variety of pools. There may be promotions inside the current departmental structure. I do not know that. We determine the range of

positions and the categories that they will be slotted into and paid and trained for. But where they come from is not predetermined and will be determined when applications are called for the particular positions.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I recall the Premier's comments in Parliament last week when he was talking about the goodwill of this new Committee. I do not believe that the question asked by the member for Burnett was unreasonable. He was trying to ascertain what level of experience was out there in the staff who service the national parks of Queensland. The refusal of the Minister—

**The CHAIRMAN:** I understand your point. I have made a ruling. The basis of the ruling is twofold. Firstly, the question of years of experience does not automatically go to the question of Budget allocations. It does not ask how much has been allocated in the past year's Budget or in the prospective Budget for people at various levels. In particular, the reason I do not regard it as a reasonable question for this Budget Estimate is that it imposes on the Department an unreasonable request to determine information across more than 500 staff, which information is not readily available. If it was readily collated or there was already some information collated to indicate how many staff in the various categories there were, then it might be regarded as a reasonable request. However, that information would have to be obtained by going item by item to each of the employment records of over 500 staff. In those circumstances, I do not regard it as a reasonable question.

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I would dissent from your ruling. From my background in the Department of Education, in which there were 25 000 teachers and 35 000 employees, my understanding of that Department was that it was pretty easy to ascertain the history of the employment of those people. You have made your ruling, but I dissent from it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Do you move a motion of dissent?

**Mr LITTLEPROUD:** I do, yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will adjourn and consider the matter in camera.

The Committee adjourned at 8.52 p.m.

The Committee resumed at 9.01 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I call the resumption of the meeting of Estimates Committee D in relation to the Estimates of the Ministry of Environment and Heritage. The Committee adjourned to consider the dissent from my ruling by the member for Western Downs, Mr Littleproud. The Committee deliberated on my ruling and Mr Littleproud proceeded to put his motion of dissent from my ruling. The motion was put and was resolved in the negative, four votes to three. We proceed with questioning, and it is now the turn of the Government members to ask questions. I invite Dr Clark to proceed with her questions. We continue in the program area of Conservation.

**Dr CLARK:** I would like to refer to Budget Related Paper No. 3 and ask some questions about

the Youth Conservation Corps scheme. Has an evaluation of this project been carried out—it has now been in operation for two years—and if there has been an evaluation, what does that indicate? Secondly, how much of the \$8.7m set aside for that scheme is coming from the State Budget and how much from the Commonwealth? Finally, if this is the last year of that Federal funding, will the Youth Conservation Corps program be scaled down or actually phased out at the end of this financial year?

**Ms ROBSON:** I thank you for the question. The Youth Conservation Corps has been a uniquely successful program, I believe, which was established in May 1992 as a joint initiative of my department and the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations. It is a program that is designed to provide employment and training for young people aged between 15 and 20 years, with a view in our case to developing work skills in ecotourism in related areas whilst still maintaining their eligibility for Commonwealth benefits. It is jointly funded by the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training under the LEAP program—the Land Care and Environment Action Program.

The State Government's commitment to the program was approved by Cabinet on 27 April 1992 and was to provide 1 500 places over a three-year period at a total cost of \$12m. In the period July 1992 to June 1994, the Youth Conservation Corps has provided 1 040 places for trainees in 80 projects around the State and it has involved young unemployed people in accredited training through TAFE and project work on the State's national park and State forestry estate. Three months after completion of the programs, some 65 per cent of participants had found work or further education and training; 58 per cent are in employment and 7 per cent are undertaking further training, which is an extremely high figure to be achieved compared with the statistics of the rest of Australia.

Project work that they have done is estimated to be valued at some \$3m, and that would be costed at commercial rates for the same jobs. As I said, it has been completed on the State's national park and forestry estate. Those figures are relative to the end of March 1994. In 1994-95, the program will provide an additional 460 places in 35 projects, which is completing the Government's commitment to achieve 1 500 places over three years.

To answer the other part of your question—the total State expenditure on the three-year program is \$10.64m. In 1992-93, it was \$2.88m; in 1993-94, it was \$4.212m; and in 1994-95, it was \$3.64m. The Commonwealth expenditure on the three-year program is \$10.93m, which is comprised over those same three years of \$1.879m, \$4.02m and \$5.042m. There are 72 staff employed at regional level and two staff at head office to deliver and administer the program. An independent evaluation of the program will be conducted in the first quarter of 1994-95, the current year, to make a recommendation on the future of the program.

**Dr CLARK:** My next question relates to the Wet Tropics Management Agency. I am a little bit

confused about some of the figures that the Committee has had before it. In Budget Related Paper No. 3 a figure of \$10.2m appears as being the allocation from the State and Commonwealth Governments. In your departmental budget Estimates papers on page 4, an amount of \$12.846m is set down as being available. Could you first of all clarify which of those figures is the accurate one and if there is an explanation of the difference, please provide it? Once again, if you have the figures available, could you give the breakdown of the State and Commonwealth contributions, and if you are aware, could you perhaps identify some of the key programs for the Wet Tropics Management Agency that they have planned for the 1994-95 year?

**Ms ROBSON:** The budget for the Wet Tropics Management Agency as presented in the paper you referred to is made up of Commonwealth funding of \$5.855m and State funding of \$2.891m plus in-kind funding by the State Government of \$1.481m, which is a total of \$10.2m. This in-kind funding, which is the confusion, is the calculation of the provision of services to the Wet Tropics by members of the Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service, and it was part of the original agreement that we made that existing staff and services that were being provided throughout our department would be provided additionally to that authority. So an in-kind calculation was made.

The Budget Estimates papers include Commonwealth funding of \$5.855m, State funding of \$2.891m and the Commonwealth Government's \$4.1m for the Daintree rescue package, a total of \$12.846m. The Commonwealth Government's \$4.1m commitment to the Daintree rescue package is not included in Budget Related Paper No. 3 under the "Wet Tropics" heading, it is included under the "Acquisitions" heading. What I am illustrating to you is that both figures are essentially correct. There is a difference in the figures in terms of the way they have been presented which has caused some confusion. The principal activities to be undertaken during 1994-95 include the finalisation of the Wet Tropics Management Plan, extension of the research and inventory program, and establishment of several regional visitor centres. In 1994-95, particular attention will be given to involving Aboriginal people in the management of the area with the appointment, hopefully, of several Aboriginal liaison officers.

**Dr CLARK:** Right. Perhaps I could just seek a clarification about the Daintree rescue package because there has been, I think, some confusion about that when the Treasurer indicated that it had appeared too late to be included in the Budget Estimates. I know that some people have interpreted that—rather cynically, I thought—to mean that they should have less confidence in the commitment of the State Government in relation to that because it had not been put into the Budget. From what you have just told the Committee now, it appears that it is definitely in your departmental Budget Estimates. So there should be no doubt that that money is available at all?

**Ms ROBSON:** There is no doubt, Dr Clark, that the money is available. The problem occurred

because of the Federal Government's announcement of their allocation, their part of that funding on a dollar-for-dollar basis with the State Government, before they had actually notified us that they had taken that Budget decision. We were quite delighted, obviously, that that decision had been taken. It is obviously an issue of great concern to us that land in the Daintree had been allowed to be broken up and sold as freehold. We had been working through the Wet Tropics Management Agency and they had in fact prepared a paper for Ministerial Council and presented it, I believe, last December—December 1993—and put up some proposals for land acquisition.

The Federal Government, as I said, made that decision and announced it prior to any formal negotiation with the State Government. At the time of that announcement, which was only a couple of weeks before we announced our Budget, we had already locked our Budget in place. So we responded by saying that we were delighted, but that it was not locked into our Budget; however, we would attempt to find the money over a period of time, agreed with the Federal Government. Subsequently, I will be having discussions with Senator Faulkner, the Federal Minister for the Environment, to negotiate those terms and conditions and a time frame within which we will both agree, hopefully, to proceed with the land acquisitions as presented in recommendations by the agency.

In terms of the amount, the Treasurer has given an indication that he will accommodate, where possible, the time frame that we agreed. So I am saying that those negotiations are currently under way, and I am sure that we will achieve it starting, hopefully, this financial year.

**Dr CLARK:** Thank you, Minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I now invite questions from the member for Albert, Mr Szczerbanik.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** Recently, you announced \$170,000 in grants to conservation organisations, yet there is no reference to these in the Budget Papers. Is this another one of those red-spot specials? Where is the money provided from, and who is determined as eligible for these grants?

**Ms ROBSON:** No, it is not a red-spot special; it is part of the Department's base funding, which is why it is not indicated separately. That is the Consolidated Fund, and it operates specifically within the Executive Support Unit of the Conservation Program. It is not itemised for those reasons.

It is certainly proposed to continue this grant program, and an amount of \$170,000 has been allocated for this purpose. The procedure is that advertisements are placed—late September/early October 1994 this year—and application forms will be sent direct to the State's peak conservation groups so they can advise their affiliated organisations of the existence of the current grant program. Then completed applications are assessed in-house by a panel which is established specifically for this purpose. I am not on that panel, I might add

at this point. I distanced myself quite clearly from any selection.

The criteria which are used when assessing eligible applications are briefly as follows: does the organisation have the ability to self-fund its proposals; does it have access to other grant programs or corporate sponsorship; does the project have a conservation merit; does the project complement the activities of the Department of Environment and Heritage; and does the group have the expertise to undertake the project that it is proposing. This project has now operated for four years—1994-95 will be the fifth year—and, generally, around 60 to 70 applications are received, of which approximately half are successful. The average grant is around the \$2,000 to \$3,000 mark.

**The CHAIRMAN:** No further questions?

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** No further questions.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I ask for any further questions from the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose.

**Mrs ROSE:** Minister, I make reference to the RAMSAR conference. Eighty-one thousand dollars has been provided to coordinate the 1996 RAMSAR convention conference in Brisbane. Can you please explain what the RAMSAR conference is, where it will be held, how it will benefit Queensland and why this State Government is expending funds on it?

**Ms ROBSON:** Yes. It is a good question, because this particular convention is, I consider, something which will be quite a landmark for Queensland in 1996 if in fact we do get to host it, which we are very confident we will. The RAMSAR convention, or the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, Especially as Waterfowl habitats, as it is formally known, is an intergovernmental treaty which provides the framework for international cooperation for the conservation of wetland habitats. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, or UNESCO, serves as depository for the convention. The secretariat or bureau, as it is called, is an independent body administered by the World Conservation Union, or IUCN, whose headquarters are located in Gland in Switzerland. Over 80 countries throughout the world have signed a convention and more are expected by 1996. Conferences are in fact held every three years.

The theme of the 1996 conference is coastal wetlands. At the fifth RAMSAR convention conference held in Japan in June 1993, the Australian Government successfully bid to host the sixth meeting of contracting parties in March 1996. The 1996 conference is, in fact, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the convention, and it will be the first held in the southern hemisphere.

The meetings of the conventions' contracting parties provide a focus for assessing progress on conserving the world's internationally important wetlands and an opportunity for up to 1 200 delegates worldwide to meet. Three other cities—Newcastle, Adelaide and Perth—have also expressed an interest, but an important factor which is taken into account by the Federal Government when selecting the host venue is the capacity of

each city to provide the complex facilities required by such an intergovernmental conference. Another factor was the willingness of the host city and the State Government to enter into a cost-sharing partnership with the Federal Government. The proximity of a RAMSAR-listed site to a major city capable of hosting the conference was also an important consideration for the selection team. As you would be aware, Moreton Bay has recently been added to the list of wetlands of international importance covered by the RAMSAR convention, along with Bowling Green Bay in Townsville.

Recent conventions have been widened to include the wide-use concept, which takes into account the appreciable assemblage of rare or vulnerable species, such as turtles and dugongs, which inhabit the bay. In March, when the conference is scheduled, Moreton Bay is an important area for migratory shore bird species, seven of international importance and nine of national importance.

Just to give you a bit of a background as to why we have bid to have it—I think certainly the City of Brisbane and the new South Bank Convention Centre will well fulfil the organisational requirements of that committee. As we all know, the bay is an ideal venue for people to explore their interest areas. The RAMSAR meeting in 1996 will provide an opportunity for showing off the day-to-day operations at first-hand. So we are very eager and very hopeful that that will, in fact, be held in Brisbane in 1996.

**Mrs ROSE:** Thank you, Minister.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are there any further questions from Government members? Mrs Rose, do you have another question?

**Mrs ROSE:** I have a question on the Fraser Implementation Unit. Budget Related Paper No. 3 provides only \$637,000 for the Fraser Implementation Unit. What happened to the Great Sandy rescue package that the Government provided after it shut down the Fraser Island logging industry?

**Ms ROBSON:** The amount of \$637,000 to which you referred is the special funding provided to finalise the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Conservation, Management and Use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region and to meet the running costs of the Fraser Implementation Unit in Brisbane and the Fraser Implementation Centre in Maryborough. These funds will assist the Fraser Implementation Unit with the development of the Great Sandy Region Management Bill, which will give legislative support to the Great Sandy Region Management Plan. The funding is additional to the funding of \$38m provided to the Great Sandy Region through the growth and development package.

In addition to the \$38m package, the Commonwealth Government has provided funding of \$9m to meet taxation assessments on business compensation paid by the Queensland Government, giving a total package commitment by State and Commonwealth Governments of \$47m. Funding of \$7.88m will be available to the Great Sandy Region in

1994-95 from the growth and development package total commitment of \$47m. Projects and commitments to be funded in that year from the amount of \$7.88m include worker redundancy management, Maryborough heritage projects, park management projects, thinning of pine plantation projects, miscellaneous employment creation and regional business promotion, business compensation and compensation to meet taxation assessments on business compensation.

So the 1994-95 Estimate is based on the carryover from 1993-94, which may vary prior to June 30, as we indicated earlier. The total estimate of expenditure from the growth and development package is—and this is the figure for the 1991-92 actuals—\$12,239,932. In 1992-93, actuals were \$18,819,383. And the Estimates for 1993-94—given that we do not have those figures as yet—are \$9.5m. Funding available for 1994-95, as we have just said, is \$7.88m. It is a total, therefore, of \$48,439,315. Estimated overexpenditure will be offset by recoupment in relation to the development at Orchid Beach of \$1m; recoupment from sale of assets from compensated businesses, \$730,000; and the sale of Boral's Urangan mill site, \$600,000.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes this bracket of questioning from Government members and the questions on the Conservation Program. I thank those members of the Department who have made themselves available. I would ask that they remain available because, although we will now move into the substantive area of the Environment Program, at the end of this section the member for Burnett has indicated that there may be some questions which overlap both program areas. So we now move to the Environment Program.

**Mr SLACK:** On page 3 of the documents supplied to us there is an item for the Environment Trust Fund—namely, \$3.781m, which is itemised as being transferred to consolidated revenue. What is the story behind that?

**Mr GILMOUR:** My understanding is that you are asking about the \$3.781m. The true expenditure for the Environment Program in 1993-94 is estimated to be \$16.336m. This figure is represented by program outlays of \$15.769m, plus unrequited transfers of \$0.597m. The remaining required transfer of \$3.781m is a payment out of the State Environment Trust Fund to reimburse the Consolidated Fund for payments made during the year. This payment is a one-off payment to the Consolidated Fund from the State Environment Trust Fund. It does not represent new or additional expenditure. In previous years, the expenditure was paid directly out of the State Environment Trust Fund.

This year it was decided, due to the anticipated closure of the State Environment Trust Fund, to pay all expenditure out of that Consolidated Fund, with the reimbursement to the Consolidated Fund from the State Environment Trust Fund at the end of year. This reimbursement will not reduce the expenditure charged to the Consolidated Fund. Thus the estimated actual expenditure for total outlays in 1993-94 of \$20.147m includes an amount of \$3.781m,



which is counted twice—firstly, when the original expenditure was incurred out of the Consolidated Fund and, secondly, when the State Environment Trust Fund reimbursed the Consolidated Fund from that expenditure.

**Mr SLACK:** I take it that that closes that fund?

**Mr GILMOUR:** Yes.

**Mr SLACK:** And what was the purpose of that fund originally?

**Mr GILMOUR:** The purpose of that fund originally was to take moneys collected from the Clean Air Act, the Noise Abatement Act and the Clean Waters Act for licence fees. Because those funds are generally collected in the fourth quarter of the financial year, that created problems in the management of our Budget. The funds came into the State Environment Trust Fund in the last part of the financial year. It was decided, essentially by the Treasury Department, that it would advance us funds out of the Consolidated Fund and we would reimburse it from the State Environment Trust Fund.

**Mr SLACK:** As to the dollar per person environment levy being flagged by the Government—I understand that it is to be collected by shire councils, and I also note that shire councils have raised some objections to collecting it. Is that provided for within the \$4.2m estimated income, as outlined on page 25—licence fees and so on—to offset the EPA introduction of the \$4.8m?

**Mr GILMOUR:** Your question was about revenue generated—

**Mr SLACK:** You have \$4.8m allocated for measures associated with the environmental protection legislation. On page 25, there is a reference to just under \$4.2m being raised in licence fees and so on. I take it that that would be offset against the \$4.8m for the environmental protection legislation. Is that \$1 fee being flagged as included in that \$4.2m?

**Ms ROBSON:** No, it is not. I would like to state at this point that that proposal is just that at the moment. As you would be aware, the Waste Management Strategy is being floated in draft form for comment. One of the suggestions for revenue raising for user-pays or polluter-pays principles was that we would put that charge on. As you have quite rightly said, there has been a reaction from the community, from both local governments and individuals, to the notion of paying \$1 per household, or \$1 per person, or whatever is finally decided. But the reality is that it is a draft strategy.

The user-pays principle, in terms of our forward-thinking pollution policies, is one of the best tools for educating the community at large about minimising waste—and you would know about our programs of re-use, reduction and recycling, which have been very successful. This is a way to heighten awareness by saying that rubbish costs people money. It costs the State Government and local government an inordinate amount of money to run landfill and waste refuse facilities. It is being floated under that notion.

To us, it seems to be a very viable tool for revenue raising for both levels of Government and also for awareness raising for the community at large that there is a cost attached to rubbish. It has not been included as part of that projected revenue income simply because it is still in draft form. We have no certainty as to whether it will be accepted and whether Cabinet will accept it.

**Mr SLACK:** So there still could be a figure there, but it may not be \$1; it could be a higher fee.

**Ms ROBSON:** Absolutely. It is all out there for suggestion. The strategy outlines various ways of running a waste management program, and that is one of the revenue-raising ideas that we have floated. There will be a reaction to that, and with that we will receive some good alternative ideas on how we can educate the public in waste management issues.

**Mr SLACK:** Before you announced it, did you make any inquiries as to what it was likely to cost to collect?

**Ms ROBSON:** Of course we did. We referred earlier to user pays in national parks and the fact that we sought the best, most viable method of collecting revenue. Quite clearly, we looked at the cost implications of collecting it—for example, the \$1 that we are talking about through rates revenue, because that is already a facility that goes out to every householder or house-owner in Queensland—and then an arrangement for the sharing with local government of the proceeds of that revenue collecting. Contrary to what many people are saying, there has been a very large amount of consultation in the formulation of that waste management strategy. The relevant players in local government certainly have been inputting into that process.

**Mr SLACK:** It just strikes me that, apart from any other arguments that may be put forward, \$1 would not cover the cost of collection.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is the cost that was estimated for disposal of rubbish. I would suggest to you that, if you look at the number of households in this State, it will create a significant amount of revenue to deal with the waste management problems that we have.

**Mr SLACK:** I will take your word for it, but I noted that in answer to a question this morning, one department indicated that there was a charge of \$18 for writing a letter. Therefore, I was very surprised that you said—

**Ms ROBSON:** I do not think that is a fair comparison. I think that is comparing apples with carrots.

**Mr SLACK:** You refer to \$500,000 in grants to assist local authorities with licensing environmental monitoring and pollution activities. Is that the total amount to be paid—

**Ms ROBSON:** What are you referring to?

**Mr SLACK:** The environmental strategy document.

**Ms ROBSON:** Page?

**Mr SLACK:** Page 5. It says—

"Waste and pollution management. \$2m is being provided to continue funding for initiatives announced in the last budget, including \$500,000 in grants to assist local authorities with licensing environmental monitoring and pollution activities."

**Ms ROBSON:** Sorry, what was the question?

**Mr SLACK:** Will that cover the total cost of local authorities? Have they acknowledged acceptance of that?

**Ms ROBSON:** We undertook a process of devolution to local government to encourage a realistic approach to the on-the-ground management of the problems associated with monitoring various forms of pollution. The local government response to that clearly has had mixed elements. Because they are already undertaking these activities, some local councils are very happy to take some money, and I have been handing out funding to them for a variety of causes around the State. As I said, in 1993-94 we provided \$500,000 to local government to cover their initial costs. Obviously, with noise monitoring, they have to buy noise monitoring equipment. We believed that we could go half and half in some cases, or whatever arrangement was made. We offered this to councils right around the State. Many of them have taken it up.

At present, I think there are 130 local council structures. With amalgamations occurring, one loses track of them. However, it is probably fair to say that there has been an element of resistance from some local government authorities. I have been working with the Local Government Association and with individual councils to formulate how this can be implemented. The reality of life is that local councils are on the ground dealing with these problems and taking phone calls, particularly relating to noise and air pollution problems. The State Government, of course, is the regulating body that sets the standards and provides an inspectorial service. Compliance monitoring programs are in place, and they are being increased in the coming Budget. However, in real terms, local government is the hands-on, grassroots Government that deals with irate ratepayers when something goes wrong in their backyard.

The other part of that philosophy is that local governments determine the zonings of the various areas where these activities take place, so there is a logic in linking the outcomes of their decision making to what their responsibilities will be. They will be able to retain all of the revenue that they raise from environmental licence fees on industries for which they are responsible under this devolution program. On the best estimate of each devolved industry, we predict that more than \$2.5m will be available each year for the ongoing management of these activities.

**Mr SLACK:** With respect to the costs associated with the Environmental Protection Act, is there a figure for what will be paid to the Brisbane City Council for its part?

**Ms ROBSON:** For what specific role?

**Mr SLACK:** In the \$4.8m allocated for the implementation of the Environmental Protection Act, city councils and shire councils will receive money

for the part that they may play. Is the Brisbane City Council—

**Ms ROBSON:** I might leave that to John Gilmour to answer in detail.

**Mr GILMOUR:** Under the \$4.786m initiative for the environmental protection legislation, there is no specific funding for any local government. There is a range of funding within that to provide a whole range of assistance to local governments throughout the State, which would include the Brisbane City Council, but I would suggest that the Brisbane City Council is not the one that needs the help; it is the range of smaller local governments throughout Queensland that need help. In addition, there is an ongoing initiative which has been mentioned by the Minister previously. Since 1992-93, we have been setting up local government in Queensland to undertake this devolution. In 1992-93, \$215,000 worth of equipment was provided; in this financial year, 1993-94, half a million dollars was provided to set up administrative structures to manage the environment; and, in the coming financial year, a further half a million dollars will be provided to local governments to assist in establishing their data licensing and management information systems to undertake the environmental protection legislation initiative. Ongoing funding is also provided in the year after that.

**Mr SLACK:** Minister, through you to Mr Gilmour—I refer again to the general reimbursement of costs to local government. I have referred to the \$500,000 that was flagged in this environment and planning booklet. What are the payments and what would be the total reimbursement provided this year to city and local authorities?

**Mr GILMOUR:** As I just said—I am not quite sure whether I was clear—half a million dollars is the specific funding that will be provided to local government in the coming financial year to assist—

**Mr SLACK:** That is not the total amount?

**Mr GILMOUR:** That is the total amount.

**Ms ROBSON:** Half a million. It is based on a scale which was set up in terms of the population of the shire or the council, and it ranged from \$500 to \$40,000 in the form of those grants.

**Mr SLACK:** From E and H, that will be the total amount for all programs?

**Ms ROBSON:** Sure; half a million dollars for that particular program.

**Mr SLACK:** How much will go to local authorities from the E and H budget for all programs involving local authorities?

**Ms ROBSON:** For what, devolution?

**Mr SLACK:** Yes, from E and H.

**Ms ROBSON:** A half a million dollars.

**Dr EMERSON:** Perhaps I can add to that. The devolution program is to equip local authorities with initial equipment and training in order to set them up for the Environmental Protection Act so that they might be able to effectively administer the compliance, monitoring and enforcement of those activities which are very much a localised activity. So

there is this \$500,000 which has now been provided in each of a couple of years. To go back to the point that you raised earlier—last year, in 1993-94, the Brisbane City Council received \$40,000 of that funding. That is one source of funding, but the other source of funding—which will be quite substantially larger than that—is the ability of those local authorities to apply licence fees themselves. That will not be a direct transfer from the Department of Environment and Heritage budget, but a capacity on their part to generate revenue from those licence fees.

**Mr SLACK:** What you are saying is that there is the \$500,000 plus the other incidental amounts, and that is the sum total, but they have a major benefit in that they can take the licence fees from licences that they may—

**Dr EMERSON:** That is correct. I think the devolution program needs to be seen as a set-up program. As Mr Gilmour and the Minister said, some of these councils are not in a position to provide the initial capital to buy monitoring equipment and so on. That is the initial set-up process, and that is what the devolution program involves, in addition to some training. Then there is the ongoing contribution to their budgets made available through the licence fees.

**Mr SLACK:** I will follow with another question in respect to fees that may be charged to international parks or the dollar fee that you are referring to. If you use your logic, you will automatically expect to have a diminishing amount coming from the Consolidated Fund to the Department of Environment and Heritage because you have other means of income out of the system through your introduction of user-pays.

**Ms ROBSON:** I do not know that I would extrapolate that.

**Mr SLACK:** There have been discussions with Treasury—

**Ms ROBSON:** I have heard the media discussing it and I have heard people surmising.

**Mr SLACK:** It is the logic of it.

**Ms ROBSON:** Well, it might be some people's logic. I do not necessarily know that it is so because what you have not put in there is a variable—an increasing demand. You referred earlier to the increasing demand for management funds for national parks, which if you recall the original debate, was the reason that I raised the user-pays issue initially. As soon as I did that, it was automatically extrapolated that I was doing that to offset Consolidated Revenue funding, or our normal funding base. I cannot draw that extrapolation, because we have consistently argued, and been successful in arguing that, as we acquire additional national park and protected area estate, we require additional funding. Now, the Treasurer put it to us this way: Treasury was happy to support that philosophy but we also had to help support the usage of those parks, and that user-pays was the way other States had gone. I totally agree. However, I think to extrapolate it out to the fact that, as we increase our revenue from other sources, there will

be a withdrawal of support funding from the State coffers is not necessarily accurate. No evidence of that has been indicated to me by Treasury, or anyone else, and I take Treasury's word for it because it is the one I have to fight with for the funding.

**Mr SLACK:** You say that it is not necessarily so. Have you had any assurances from Treasury that that will not be the case? You can expect to get a commitment from the Consolidated Fund of a CPI figure on what is being given now and you will not have a situation where you will raise \$Xm from fees and then Treasury will say, "Thank you very much, you can look after yourselves"?

**Ms ROBSON:** No, we have not had that assurance. We have also not had it indicated to us that that will be the outcome. I am not that much of a pessimist and I can assure you that Treasury has increasingly, as has been indicated by our increased Budget—which I think is something like three times more than when we came to Government—

**Dr EMERSON:** Give or take a dollar.

**Ms ROBSON:** Give or take a dollar—that there is a requirement for sufficient funding to manage the State and to manage its programs.

**Mr SLACK:** You must have more faith in Treasury than I have.

**Ms ROBSON:** I do. I have an absolutely incredible amount of faith in the Treasurer, and if I keep saying nice things about him, I will be sure of getting the funding.

**Mr SLACK:** Has there been an overall allocation of advertising, publicity, public relations and public awareness programs by your Department and, if so, how much?

**Ms ROBSON:** We have a Corporate Services question here. I might flick that to Rod Arnott.

**Mr ARNOTT:** Could I seek your clarification, Mr Slack? Are you talking about advertising as such—for instance, the Department advertises for jobs and that sort of thing—or are you talking about education and information programs?

**Mr SLACK:** Has there been a collation of all the advertising costs of the Department—publicity, awareness programs?

**Mr ARNOTT:** The advertising expenses for 1993-94 were \$300,632. That was for all advertising.

**Mr SLACK:** That is including your publicity, public relations and public awareness programs?

**Mr ARNOTT:** No, that does not include public awareness programs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes this bracket of questioning from the Opposition. We now go to questions on the Conservation Program area from members of the Government. I invite questions from the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose.

**Mrs ROSE:** Reference has already been made to the \$4.8m which has been provided to implement the new Environmental Protection Act, and Mr Gilmour indicated that half a million dollars of that was to be directed towards local government. Could you clarify what the total \$4.8m will be used for?

**Ms ROBSON:** It is a very important allocation in our Budget. Obviously, it is a major initiative and it is geared to significantly increase the protection of the environment in Queensland to meet the expectations of the Government, the community and industry at large. The funding will enable the provision of adequate resources for the implementation of the environmental protection legislation, which will shortly be introduced into the Parliament and which provides the framework for environmental management within the State. The initiative will also allow for the appropriate licensing of premises in Queensland, including those which were not previously required to be licensed by existing legislation.

Major activity will be to work with industry to ensure that they have the ability to meet the environmental protection policies brought in under the legislation through the development of environmental management plans. This initiative will enable final development of air, water, noise and waste policies and industry guidelines, support for any enforcement action which may be required, development of a comprehensive Statewide licensing data base linked to local government, provision of an advisory service to local government, industry and the community, improved after-hours complaint investigations service, compliance monitoring of all licence holders, staff training and development, provision of essential environmental monitoring and office equipment, publication of monitoring results and administrative and library support. It is a fairly comprehensive program. That is more or less just the bare bones of that initiative.

I can read out very briefly a list which illustrates the significant segments of the implementation plan for which that funding has been allocated. Under pollution management, which is obviously a major thrust of that legislation, it will cover issues like prosecutions, appeals, warrants, support, environmental protection orders, on-the-spot fines, new licences, existing licences, environmental management plans, licensing data base, polluter-pays policy, environmentally relevant activities, devolution and delegation of support, noise monitoring, program auditing, etc. Under environmental planning it will cover regulations, review of legislation, preparations of the EPPs, local government support, devolution training, liaison, administrative support, and the Best Practice Environmental Management Advisory Service. Under an infrastructure heading it will provide for training and development, recruitment and selection, human resource management issues, support, library support, telephone/fax charges, and a geographic information system, which is an extremely important component of that legislation. So, it is fairly broad-based.

**Mrs ROSE:** As a follow-up question, does it provide any money for extra staff and, if so, how many staff and what would they be doing?

**Ms ROBSON:** Yes, it certainly does. I think Budget Paper NP3 indicates that the initiative funding will provide for an extra 61.5 full-time equivalent employees with salaries and on-costs estimated at \$1.968m. As staff will be appointed over

the 1994-95 financial year, actual numbers of new staff funded by the initiative will be over 80 actual people. Of these, some 50 staff, or over 60 per cent, will be allocated between the five departmental regions to undertake licensing, monitoring, inspection enforcement and complaint handling activities. Other staff appointed will undertake policy and guideline development, training and development, licensed data base development and management, legal officers and an auditing and quality assurance program. So, you can see that what we have ahead of us is fairly comprehensive. I have a list of those positions and their levels here attached to this, but it is a very thorough approach to the additional staffing use.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** In reading the document, \$6.86m has been provided to establish a Regional Open Space Scheme in south-east Queensland and \$1.07m for the SEQ 2001 related activities, which I am most in favour of. Your Estimates paper refers to \$4m for land acquisition and \$400,000 for planning and water management. I would like to know where the rest of the money is coming from and how these funds will be spent.

**Ms ROBSON:** The \$6.86m that you quoted from Budget Paper No. 3 is made up of \$4m for the Department of Environment and Heritage and \$2.86m for the Department of Lands. The \$4m to DEH has been allocated for land acquisition under the Regional Open Space Scheme—or ROSS—and that concept emerged from the SEQ 2001 project outcomes, which recommended a world-class open space system with recreational, conservation, cultural, social and economic benefits for residents and visitors.

The ROSS program is a selection of parcels of open space land or water which is special in some respect and which, separately or collectively, are of regional significance. The network of the parcels forms a system of non-urban land that is subject to a centrally coordinated, cooperative form of planning and development, and the core of ROSS will comprise predominantly public land—whether open or closed to public access.

Budget Paper No. 3 further says that \$1.07m has been set aside for regional water quality monitoring and regional planning initiatives, including the identification of good quality agricultural land for sustainable use, regional environmental planning, development of strategies for the protection of regionally significant industrial land, and regional transport planning. My Department will receive \$400,000 of this, and the remainder of the moneys will be shared between a number of other Departments, including Transport, Primary Industries and Business, Industry and Regional Development.

This particular funding will allow DEH to more effectively participate in the development of subregional structure plans covering nature conservation, heritage and coastal protection, and environmental management. A total of \$200,000 of this will further the Department's involvement in water quality management in the region to ensure that development is sustainable and that appropriate water quality monitoring is implemented.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** You have already mentioned water monitoring. I know that the member for Currumbin and I are most concerned about this. What level of licensed discharge compliance monitoring was achieved in south-east Queensland in 1993-94, and what level of funding and staff will be directed to this area in the coming year?

**Ms ROBSON:** The level of monitoring licensed premises in south-east Queensland for 1993-94 included some 100 premises. Of these, over half involved premises with a licence under the Clean Waters Act. It should be noted that, of the other licensed premises, particularly those licensed under the Clean Air Act, the majority have a waste water component and some controls for preventing discharge to waters of the State. For the 1994-95 year, the level of staffing proposed for the total monitoring function increased from 6 to 18. This means that staff allocated to compliance monitoring for the year will be increased threefold.

The total number of current licences issued under the Clean Waters Act is just over one-third of the total licences on the records. It is envisaged that, under the new legislation, the licensing process will include not only an increased number of premises to be licensed but also many more premises with the need for waste water and run-off control issues, which will be covered by the licence. The proposed level of expenditure for the financial year for the licensed monitoring function in the south-eastern region is \$1.15m. It is estimated that, by the end of the financial year, with full establishment on board, the rate of expenditure will be \$1.7m per year.

The number of complaints recorded in the south-eastern region for 1993-94 was 1 284. Of these, 47 per cent related to air, 17 per cent to water and 36 per cent to noise.

Discharge licence compliance monitoring is part of the environment program's strategy of environmental management, and the objectives for planned visits to premises include: to reduce waste water and air, water and noise pollution; heighten public awareness of environmental and conservation issues and the Department's role in addressing them; promote the use of cleaner production practices in manufacturing industries; and assist in monitoring the state of the environment reporting capabilities.

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** I ask this question because I represent an area of rapid urbanisation. Your Department has assumed the responsibility for rubbish tip approvals. Do you have adequate finances to take on these responsibilities and the staff to do it?

**Ms ROBSON:** I think that sufficient funds have been allocated in the first year to commence implementation of those responsibilities. The sum of \$500,000 has been allocated for the second year. At this stage, funds for subsequent years will be sourced through licence fees and the introduction of a waste disposal levy—as we discussed earlier—of approximately \$1 per tonne. As these responsibilities are new for the Department, existing staff within the Waste Management Branch with line responsibilities for contaminated land and waste minimisation will oversee the initial implementation phase.

A total of 16 staff members will be employed during the first year, with approximately half in head office, and the remainder will be stationed in regional offices. The initial task of regional staff will be to undertake an audit of all operational landfills in their area to identify operational maintenance and monitoring practices and provide advisory services. Until staff are appointed to permanent positions, temporary staff and short-term consultancies will be utilised to ensure a smooth transition from the Department of Health and the development of operational procedures, guidelines and protocols.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I invite questions from Dr Clark.

**Dr CLARK:** The Department now is responsible for the administration of the Contaminated Land Act. I have had a first-hand experience of just what sort of resources can be tied up in the Department when you are dealing with a particular case. This one was illegal oil dumping. I know that a lot of officer time was taken up with collecting samples and preparing reports. Then there was legal advice that had to be sought. A whole lot of time and effort had to go into that. That was just one case. I was wondering what additional resources have been made available this coming year to deal with matters in the contaminated land section. Will those resources be devoted to increased staff or legal challenges again? How will that money be spent?

**Ms ROBSON:** Again, the funding for contaminated land activities will be comprised of these sources: the existing base funding of \$536,000, which allows for the employment of six permanent staff and a new initiative allocation of \$311,000. This will be used to fund an additional seven permanent staff; and a supplementary allocation of \$150,000. This allocation is fundamentally revenue dependent.

The variable nature of this supplementary fund to which I have just referred reflects the need to appoint additional temporary staff to cater for the increased number of searches or site contamination reports, or to reduce staff numbers if the number of searches actually decreases. You would be aware that, given that we have only recently inherited this, we have been trying to produce a database. That is a fairly labour intensive, first-off initiative. Once that is in place, it will be a maintenance function. That is where our staff variations will come into it.

Other costs, for example, postage and telephone calls are also variables depending upon revenue. A revenue retention arrangement has been reached with Treasury whereby additional revenue over \$1.3m can be retained by the Department of Environment and Heritage up to the value of \$1.8m. In 1993-94, \$222,000 was allocated for this purpose under a similar arrangement, and the net extra revenue figure of \$461,000 combines both the new initiative funding and the supplementary fund. The money for extra staff will significantly reduce the time to assess contaminated site reports, deal with land potentially affected by unexploded ordnance, and implement a system to allow for registration of small

contaminated sites on otherwise uncontaminated land such as agricultural land.

**Dr CLARK:** Is it possible to give a breakdown of the regional distribution of those additional officers, or will that again depend on where the workload will be?

**Ms ROBSON:** Mr Gilmour might like to answer that.

**Mr GILMOUR:** Contaminated land administration is a central function at this time. It is a fairly small unit and, for viability reasons, it is sited at head office. Staff do work in the regions as required. Given that contaminated land administration is very much about the administration of a register of contaminated land, which is a computer-based system, that system is being expanded through our network throughout the State. To avoid contaminated land administration is one of the reasons for the initiative of the environmental protection legislation, because that will help to avoid environmental contamination in the first place.

**Dr CLARK:** I was trying to anticipate a situation in which the regional staff might have a couple of cases that they are dealing with and that could be tying up their resources and they are not able to carry out the normal monitoring or licensing inspections. I am wondering whether you have anticipated a situation that might arise in which there is a greater need for resources during a period. You might be able to send someone from head office to assist the staff when that situation arises.

**Ms ROBSON:** That flexibility is always available. One of the problems with trying to allocate funding for exacting tasks which are not necessarily predetermined—for example, we have had to spend an inordinate amount of our resources on determining the cause of a fish kill in Paynter Creek. Hopefully, we have done that, but it took an inordinate amount of time—in fact, many weeks. It is very difficult to assess how accidental happenings and events will affect your resources. We have a contingency for that, which we build in. We are learning as we inherit this new legislation, such as the Contaminated Lands Act, to adjust that contingency. The reality is that there are many instances whereby staff time is, if you will, wasted on issues that are raised either for political purposes or where there is an accident or whatever. I can have weeks of my staff's time—people who have been allocated to specific projects and initiatives—wasted on following up and undertaking these activities. It is a little difficult to anticipate and we do, as I said, have a contingency to try to cover that. You are quite right, you can find that one event will waste weeks and weeks of a staff member's time when that person should be able to get on with his or her set programs. It is very difficult to anticipate that.

**Dr CLARK:** I appreciate that answer. I understand that there is an amount of \$150,000 allocated for a State of the Environment Reporting System in Queensland. Would you clarify for us the purpose that that will serve and how it will benefit in better managing our natural resources?

**Ms ROBSON:** In my view, it is a very important initiative because all of the programs that we put in place need to be assessed. We need to assess them in terms of their value in the big environmental picture. I see the State of the Environment Reporting System as being an integral part of that. That refers to a system of specifically collecting, interpreting and reporting data and information relating to the condition of the environment. The ongoing monitoring of the condition of the environment is used to identify changes and long-term trends in the status or condition of the particular variables that are being monitored. A trend of progressively deteriorating air quality, for example, provides valuable information for policy makers and decision-makers in determining future programs.

The types of environmental attributes or variables monitored probably would include, in our view, areas of land under forest, areas of land subject to degradation, concentration of air pollutants, concentrations of water pollutants, per capita consumption of energy, per capita waste generation, status of endangered species, areas under national park and status of fisheries stocks. The purpose of monitoring the status of natural resource stocks, resource consumption patterns and pollutant concentrations is to detect patterns of change. If change is detected, there may be either cause for concern or the change may indicate an improvement in conditions. Either way, by detecting the early signs of change, the effectiveness of current policy or management practices can be evaluated and policies adjusted and amended, if required, to address what could be a potential problem. State of the environment reporting is, therefore, aimed at providing the Government and policy makers in the Government and the community with information relevant to managing natural resources and the quality of the environment.

**Dr CLARK:** How often is it proposed to produce those?

**Ms ROBSON:** Once every four years is what we are proposing currently.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That completes the questioning from members of the Government. We now go into the final period of questions from the Opposition.

**Mr SLACK:** Earlier in reference to a question from the member for Albert, reference was made to consultancies. Could you provide a list of consultants, the purpose for which they were engaged and the amount for each that has been paid?

**Ms ROBSON:** Is this for the projections for 1994-95?

**Mr SLACK:** Can you provide a projection and what consultants were engaged last year and how much they were paid—who they were, what they were and what they were paid.

**Ms ROBSON:** I think that I will get Mr Arnett to speak to this.

**Mr ARNOTT:** Last year the consultancies totalled \$1.177m and they were spread over the

following categories: information technology, management, financial, scientific and technical, human resources, and communications. If the members would like them, I can give the individual amounts for those categories.

**Mr SLACK:** If I put it on notice, can you give me the people to whom the consultancies were awarded?

**Ms ROBSON:** Last year? Mr Chairman, again, I do not think that that is appropriate. That information is published in a certain form. I am happy to provide the figures for the future projections.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If it is readily available and convenient to be read out, well, read it all out.

**Ms ROBSON:** I do not particularly want to read it all out. It is a very detailed piece of information. I would suggest that the member for Burnett put that request on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The question is on notice.

**Mr SLACK:** Will the Minister provide the financial details of all travel undertaken by herself, ministerial staff and Government members of Parliament which has been paid for by Environment and Heritage?

**Dr EMERSON:** Zero.

**Ms ROBSON:** Paid for by what, I am sorry?

**Mr SLACK:** By Environment and Heritage.

**Ms ROBSON:** No, it is not paid for by Environment and Heritage.

**Mr SLACK:** There is nothing at all out of Environment and Heritage, or by the Minister's office?

**Dr EMERSON:** I will defer to the Director of Corporate Services, but ministerial expenses are paid for by Treasury.

**Mr SLACK:** That question was put earlier to the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing and he provided details.

**Ms ROBSON:** You asked for the expenses paid for by the department. Do you want ministerial expenses? They are paid for by Treasury through the Ministerial Expenses Unit.

**Mr SLACK:** Yes, the ministerial travel expenses. My wording may not have been correct.

**Ms ROBSON:** As you would be aware—and I am sure that the other Ministers, having been asked the same questions, would probably have given the same response—we have very clear guidelines as to how costs for official activities are to be handled, both in Australia and overseas. The expenses fall into three areas—those which are portfolio related, those which are departmentally related and those which are related to the Government. I will briefly give you an understanding of what those are.

**The CHAIRMAN:** To save you some time, I think that the question was simply asking the extent to which there were travel related expenses incurred by you and staff. Can you separate it out?

**Ms ROBSON:** I would suggest to you that these are historical documents. They are not related

to forward estimates. I am quite prepared to provide to the member the forward estimate for 1994-95.

I think there is a published document which has been tabled in the Parliament which gives you all the other detail that you want under the categories I was just about to outline. The expenditure for, if you wish, 1992-93 for myself as the Minister was a total of \$24,331. That is a document that has been, I understand, tabled in the Parliament. I did not actually take any overseas trips in that particular financial year.

**Mr SLACK:** Will the Minister provide details of all grants and subsidies paid to the various bodies that received funding from Environment and Heritage?

**Ms ROBSON:** Do you want me to read that out to you?

**Mr SLACK:** When I talked about the National Trust before—all this funding.

**Ms ROBSON:** It is a very long list. Do you want me to provide that to you separately?

**Mr SLACK:** If you could provide it to me—

**Ms ROBSON:** If you want to put it on notice, could you let me know?

**Mr SLACK:** I will put that on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That question is on notice.

**Mr SLACK:** Could I also ask: in respect to grants and subsidies to various organisations, in the Estimates for this year have there been any organisations deleted from the list that you are proposing to give?

**Ms ROBSON:** For which grants?

**Mr SLACK:** Any grants and subsidies. Have there been any dropped off the list?

**Ms ROBSON:** I explained to you when I talked about, for example, the Conservation Grants Program that we call for applications for funding at a given time every year. We receive those applications and we process them, and the processing is done by a panel. I am not on that panel, as I said. The results of the panel's deliberations are shown to me when they have determined what they will be, and that is for my information and record purposes only. I do not know if any organisations have been added on or dropped off. I do not do a comparison on a year-to-year basis because fundamentally we rely on those organisations which apply. We get a list. The list actually shows me what organisations have applied, how much they applied for and how much they were allocated according to our total budget for that area. They are conservation grants, and that applies also to the heritage program grants as well.

**Mr SLACK:** You satisfied the question in respect of the National Trust before. My question was: are there any like that that you know are not going to be funded?

**Ms ROBSON:** There has been nothing brought to my attention, and I certainly do not give instruction on these things, nor does any other person outside that panel. The panel determines, under the guidelines that they have set, how those grants will be allocated. I think it is done very fairly. It

is done according to those variables that I read out to you—whether they have complementary work programs and so forth.

**Mr SLACK:** Have you made any provision within your budget for prosecutions and litigation—that sort of thing?

**Ms ROBSON:** Yes.

**Mr SLACK:** Obviously you are introducing a new Act.

**Ms ROBSON:** That is right. There have been provisions made. Mr Gilmour can talk about that.

**Mr GILMOUR:** In respect to the environmental protection legislation initiative, there is a range of statutory action that can take place ranging from prosecutions to on-the-spot fines. We have allocated this year for prosecutions a nominal figure of \$170,000 to assist in the legal work in that area. If we have appeals against notices we serve on people, there is some \$26,000 made available; to assist in serving warrants, some \$3,000; in the serving of environmental protection orders, \$12,000; and to obtain evidence and document breaches of the legislation subject to prosecution by on-the-spot fines, a further \$26,000. That is just for the environmental protection legislation.

**Mr SLACK:** Turning to the 2001 program that was referred to by the member for Albert—you referred to a figure of \$4m being spent for land acquisition.

**Ms ROBSON:** This is the ROSS scheme you are talking about?

**Mr SLACK:** Yes. Have you got any idea what sort of area you expect to be able to acquire under that program?

**Ms ROBSON:** Are you talking about hectares?

**Mr SLACK:** Hectares, yes.

**Ms ROBSON:** Land and water?

**Mr SLACK:** You can divide them up if you like.

**Ms ROBSON:** I do not know how to measure hectares of water yet. I do not think that we have got to the point of actually determining all of the parcels of land that would comprise that figure you are looking for. Given that Lands has fundamentally been driving this and part of that allocation has come to me, I am not clear at the moment as to how many hectares. I do not know whether we have actually determined that.

**Dr EMERSON:** The reason for that is the question of the valuation of the land. You can acquire large areas of land that is not very valuable, or there may be critical habitats or very important recreation areas that may even amount to one or two hectares that are very expensive. It would be premature, really, to start making estimates of how much would be acquired under the ROSS.

As you may be aware, in addition to acquisition the intention is to set aside as large as possible areas of land through other mechanisms. Agricultural land remains open space, but it can still be used for agricultural purposes. The other mechanism under the Nature Conservation Act, of course, is voluntary nature refuge agreements and those sorts of things

which in a sense can be a very effective way of achieving an open space strategy because you do not have to buy it, you can enter into an agreement with a landholder to preserve that area.

**Mr SLACK:** So there has not been an in-depth evaluation of the program. The land that is to go into this program has been referred to in percentages; that is why I asked the question.

**Ms ROBSON:** There has been a lot of preliminary work done. That amount of funding has been committed on the basis of a projected cost, but you asked me how many hectares and I am telling you that I do not know.

**Mr SLACK:** Roughly.

**Ms ROBSON:** No, I do not even know roughly. I think Dr Emerson has just explained to you that there is a variety of tenures involved.

**Mr SLACK:** If there is Government-owned land within the region, what will be the situation with that? Will it be possible under that program that you could acquire land from other departments?

**Ms ROBSON:** I suggest that is a possibility. We do that. We acquire land from Forestry, for example, to add to our national park estate.

**Mr SLACK:** Part of the \$4m could be paid to another department as such; it will not all necessarily go to private land?

**Dr EMERSON:** That would be a transfer within Government. The \$4m has been allocated out of consolidated revenue, so it would be shuffling money around from department to department. I think the reality of what you are concerned about is that that \$4m would be overwhelmingly devoted to the acquisition of land from private landholders and obviously it would be focused on voluntary sales.

**Mr SLACK:** There was reference to water monitoring before, and one of the complaints from the Esk people in respect to the radioactive dump there is monitoring of underground water. Is that a correct situation? If not, what was spent on the monitoring of the underground system last year and is there provision to monitor the underground system around that area in this particular Budget allocation.

**Mr GILMOUR:** The responsibility for the Esk radioactive waste disposal is with the Department of Health and not with the Environment and Heritage portfolio.

**Mr SLACK:** There has been an ongoing transfer of responsibility from Health to Environment and Heritage, and while it may rest with the Health Department I would assume that it would have some concerns for Environment and Heritage. I gather that as you have, for argument's sake, taken over the responsibility of the treatment of hazardous waste at Willawong—

**Ms ROBSON:** There is a program, as you would probably be aware, as a result of the PSMC review of departments, to transfer the responsibility for all waste to our department. That is part of the reason why we have the Waste Management Strategy out for comment at the moment. That obviously will then be our responsibility in terms of Esk. We have Gurulmundi, which we have inherited. I



might say that it is working extremely well. We are very happy with the results of testing out there. At the moment we do not have Esk, as Mr Gilmour has actually said. When we do get it, we will certainly be performing our duties.

**Mr SLACK:** In respect of Gurulmundi and Willawong, is there an allocation specifically for those areas for your monitoring programs?

**Dr EMERSON:** Could I just seek clarification? You are talking about the Willawong liquid waste disposal facility?

**Ms ROBSON:** Which is run by the Brisbane City Council.

**Mr SLACK:** No, there has been considerable controversy, as you would appreciate, in respect of the hospital business disposal facility at Willawong.

**Ms ROBSON:** You are talking about Ace Waste?

**Mr SLACK:** Ace Waste.

**Ms ROBSON:** Not Willawong?

**Mr SLACK:** I understand that there is a monitoring program going on. You have assured the residents of that. Is there an allocation for that?

**Ms ROBSON:** I will get Mr Gilmour to answer Gurulmundi and then we will do Ace Waste.

**Mr GILMOUR:** If I can just answer on Gurulmundi—there is a figure of \$20,000 available to assist in the environmental management of that operation. However, because the waste originates from the Brisbane City Council operation—as you are aware, the wastes are fixed, encapsulated at the Willawong facility and transported to Gurulmundi—the Brisbane City Council is the operator of that facility and undertakes the monitoring and provides that to the Landfill Management Committee at Gurulmundi.

**Ms ROBSON:** Have you finished?

**Mr SLACK:** Is there anything further that anybody wants to add?

**Ms ROBSON:** I do not want to add to that, except to say that Gurulmundi is going extremely well. I will talk about Ace Waste. We are all aware of the problems that we had out at that facility in recent months and the outcome, as you would be aware, historically, has been that we have insisted upon the operator of that facility stopping the use of the existing stacks that he had there and putting in a new incinerator facility, which has been commissioned, and which he is working through in terms of some problems that have developed with the machinery. We have had compliance monitoring going on out there ever since. I think it was mid- December last year that it was actually commissioned. We have certainly allocated extra staff and resources. They are provided for in the 1994-95 Budget, and we have dedicated a senior environment inspector to that facility.

We are obviously very conscious of the fact that there has been an agreement that hospital waste will be burned in a facility of that nature and not at individual hospitals, as was the case previously, which caused an enormous amount of problems. We

have regular contact at Dr Emerson's level, the regional director's level, the senior environmental inspector's level and my level with the operator of that particular facility to ensure that he understands the concerns of the community and our Department. He has been very cooperative and he certainly is trying to ensure that he complies with the emissions standards that we have placed upon him. I am comfortable that he is making that effort currently.

So under the new environmental protection legislation, as I said before, an additional 61 and a half people—full-time equivalent employees—will be engaged in the new financial year, and additional staff will have a focus on facilities such as Ace Waste. There has been an additional increase, of course, in monitoring that particular region, the south-east region, from 6 to 18 staff, which is quite significant and one officer, as I said, is totally dedicated to the Ace Waste facility.

**Mr SLACK:** Minister, my time is running out. I will put this on notice—unless you can give me the figure—have you got a total figure for the amount of money that you expect to get to the E and H Department through the various programs from the Commonwealth Government?

**Ms ROBSON:** A compiled figure?

**Mr SLACK:** A compiled figure of all funding.

**Ms ROBSON:** Wet Tropics, Fraser Island?

**Mr SLACK:** Wet Tropics, Fraser Island, the Starcke acquisition—all of these—

**Ms ROBSON:** Anything is possible, Mr Slack. Commonwealth programs—Wet Tropics/Daintree rescue package, GBRMPA, rainforest conservation, Commonwealth grants, National Estate, Youth Conservation Corps and job skills—\$24,929,000 is the figure that I have here.

**Mr SLACK:** That is the total amount within the E and H budget, which will come from—

**Mr SZCZERBANIK:** No cents?

**Ms ROBSON:** No cents, I am sorry. I am sure there is 64 cents somewhere.

**Mr SLACK:** Commonwealth sources?

**Ms ROBSON:** That is Commonwealth program funding.

**Mr SLACK:** I refer to the Daintree again—

**The CHAIRMAN:** That concludes the Opposition members' bracket of questions. There are only four minutes left in the time allocated. I am happy to allow the member for Burnett one more penetrating question to complete the day's proceedings.

**Mr SLACK:** I do not know about the tone in which you said that, Mr Chairman.

**Ms ROBSON:** Very pure.

**Mr SLACK:** The Fauna Squad—obviously, you have got proposals for increasing the size of the Fauna Squad. Could you give a breakdown of what will be the representation from that squad in each of the regions? Are you going to have people stationed in each of the regions, or how many will be in Brisbane?

**Ms ROBSON:** There will not be a dispersion of Fauna Squad personnel around the State. They are based at Moggill, and that is their operational base. Clearly, they are a shared resource. I do not encourage my rangers to be police or cowboys. The Fauna Squad are people who are trained to undertake activities which are outside the necessary skills of my rangers. So that is the structure at present. Two people based at Moggill is what we have in our current Budget Estimates.

**Mr SLACK:** That is going to be the total Fauna Squad?

**Ms ROBSON:** At this point in time, that is what is proposed.

**Mr SLACK:** To date?

**Ms ROBSON:** Based at Moggill, yes.

**Mr SLACK:** So you are not going to have any based in north Queensland?

**Ms ROBSON:** There is no real need to have them permanently based in north Queensland. I mean, from Moggill they work all over the State. They do not go around looking for trouble. They actually follow up very quietly and efficiently on information that is fed through to them, and they are very mobile. They are based in Moggill and they move around the State.

**Mr SLACK:** That is my question.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. That concludes the investigation by Estimates Committee D into the Estimates of the Ministry of Environment and Heritage. I thank the Minister and all departmental staff for their cooperation and assistance in responding to inquiries. There are a number of questions on notice, the written form of which we will get to the Department as soon as practicable first thing tomorrow morning. This Committee now needs to deliberate on the Estimates of all three Departments considered today, and report to the Parliament within the next couple of weeks. It would be appreciated if departmental staff could respond to questions on notice promptly. The rules require a response within 24 hours, effectively, of tonight. The Committee wishes to commence its deliberations tomorrow, so we would ask that you make every effort to get responses to us by the close of business tomorrow so that we can report to the Parliament in due course.

**Ms ROBSON:** We will endeavour to comply, Mr Chairman. Thank you for your very fair mediation.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. Thank you members of the Committee. That concludes this hearing of Estimates Committee D.

The Committee adjourned at 10.29 p.m.