

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C

Mrs W. Edmond (Chair)

Mr G. Fenlon	Mr R. Quinn
Mr M. Horan	Mr S. Santoro
Mr P. Pyke	Ms J. Spence

DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**In Attendance**

Hon. M. Foley, Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations

Mr Bob Marshman, Director-General

Mr Bernie Carlon, Executive Director

Mr Stan Sielaff, Executive Director, TAFE

Mr Ian Affleck, Manager, Budget Section

Mr John Hastie, General Manager, Workers Compensation Board

Mr Rob Seljak, Acting General Manager, Training and Employment

Mr Charles Henderson, Director, Resource Management

Mr Peter Henneken, Executive Director, Corporate Services

Mr Chris Hooper, Executive Director, Corporate Services

Mr Brian McGuinness, Manager, Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority

Mr John Hodges, Executive Director, Workplace Health and Safety

Mr Ray Blumson, Acting Industrial Registrar, Queensland Industrial Commission

Mr Neil Boyd, Acting Principal Policy Co-ordination Officer

Mr Rick Elliot, Director, Business Management Directorate

The CHAIRMAN: Ladies and gentlemen, I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee C open. In doing so, I again place on record my support for the Budget Estimates Committees as a further step towards increasing Government accountability. As I indicated at last year's hearing, the success of this reform will be measured not by the size of the media headlines, but rather by the continuation of improved departmental reporting and openness with regard to the decision making process. Already I believe the Estimates process has led to significant improvements in the various departments' content and presentation of Budget materials. The Portfolio Program Statements provide clear, uniform and easy-to-read budget information.

Estimates Committee C is a multi-party committee of the Parliament which brings together a diversity of experience, ideology and opinion. Last year we managed to keep these differences to a minimum, and I hope that this year the same unity

of purpose and cooperation to the scrutiny and consideration of these Estimates will prevail.

The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 1995 for the areas as set out in the Sessional Orders. The Committee has determined that the areas will be examined in the following order: The Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and again from 1.45 p.m. to 3.55 p.m.; the Department of Education from 3.55 p.m. to 8.20 p.m.; and the Department of Health from 8.20 p.m. to 12 midnight. The Committee has also agreed that it will suspend the hearing for meal breaks from 1 p.m. to 1.45 p.m., and from 6.30 p.m. to 7.15 p.m..

I remind members of the Committee and others that the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers it is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of these time limits. As set out in the Sessional Orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes will be from Government members and so on in rotation. The end of these time periods will be indicated by three chimes. The Sessional Orders also require equal time to be afforded to Government and non-Government members. Therefore, where a time period has been allotted which is less than 40 minutes, that time will be shared equally. For the benefit of *Hansard*, I ask departmental witnesses who are not identified at the table to identify themselves before they answer a question.

A resolution to grant leave to members other than Committee members has been made by the Committee in the following words: "In accordance with Sessional Orders, leave be given to non-Committee members to ask questions during the hearing." I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations open for examination. The question before the Committee is that the proposed expenditures be agreed to.

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

Mr FOLEY: The former, thank you. My department is at the hub of a revolution in the workplace akin to the sweeping social changes of the 1970s. Rapidly evolving technology is changing forever the world of work. Amidst this tide of change, the great economic and social challenge facing our generation is unemployment.

Treasury forecasts an unemployment rate of 7.7 per cent in June next year, yet Queensland continues to create new jobs. Nonetheless, there remain those within our community to whom those new jobs are elusive. The so-called disadvantaged groups include the long-term unemployed, women, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with disabilities, young people and the mature age unemployed. There are hard economic rationalists

who would leave these people to be tossed about in the storms of the so-called free marketplace. That is not the policy of the Goss Government. Our policy is that each and every Queenslander, whatever their social, economic, cultural or physical circumstances, has an equal right to a job.

It is interesting to note that last week was the 80th anniversary of the election of the Queensland Labor Government of T. J. Ryan. Our policy stands in the great tradition started by that Government. The capacity to earn a wage to support one's self and one's family is a basic plank in social justice. We pursue our policy in two ways: firstly, through sound economic management, creating an environment in which the private sector can thrive and creating sustainable job growth; and secondly, through labour market intervention—that is, programs such as the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan and the activities described in the Employment Services Program. The Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan has been reported on regularly to Parliament and has been an outstanding success in assisting more than 80,000 unemployed Queenslanders in a period during which we have seen unemployment peak at 11.2 per cent in September 1993 and fall to 8.3 per cent in April.

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

Mr SANTORO: I begin with a general question to the Minister. I put to you that the Opposition, during this Estimates Committee process, is being asked to analyse spending allocations to the end of June 1996, but the only hard data to compare this for the purposes of, say, trend analysis is to the end of June 1994. In other words, we do not have hard figures for the last year of your department's operations. That makes it a little difficult to compare apples with apples, particularly in view of the underestimation of Government spending that seems to be normal these days. Do you think that this process could be improved if this Committee could meet, say, at the end of the financial year when hard data in terms of actual spending is available?

Mr FOLEY: I am sure that there is room for improvement in every parliamentary system. I think that the availability of data to committees has improved very significantly. It has certainly improved very substantially during the time that I have been in this Parliament and I think that the committee system is a vast improvement on what we had previously. The development of the Portfolio Program Statements gives to members of the Parliament and the public a clear way of understanding the Budget Estimates far in excess of that which was the case some years ago.

Whenever that process occurs there will always be an argument for having it earlier or for having it later. I think that is in the nature of things. However, the development of program statements, and then the consolidation of those into Portfolio Program Statements, has made the whole process much more transparent. Three hundred years ago the

Parliament seized the power of the purse after the English Civil War; I think that the level of accountability that we have achieved is certainly greater than that which obtained even a few years ago. However, I have no doubt that there is always room for improvement.

Mr SANTORO: Turning to more specific questions, my first area of interest is TAFE Queensland. I refer particularly to TAFE enrolments. From information given on page 45 of the Portfolio Program Statements, it can be calculated that the total TAFE enrolments must be 1,296,262; from information given on page 50, it appears that TAFE enrolments are about 360,409. Are the figures on page 45 national or State figures?

Mr FOLEY: By way of clarification, you are comparing the figures on page 45 with the figures on which page?

Mr SANTORO: Page 50.

Mr FOLEY: I will ask Mr Sielaff, the Executive Director of Queensland TAFE, to assist the Committee on that information.

Mr SIELAFF: The information on page 45 relates to TAFE students enrolled in assessable subjects, so it refers to enrolments in particular subjects. The information provided on page 36 with regard to students actually refers to the number of students enrolled in the system.

Mr FOLEY: That is to say, one enrolment of a student may be in respect of a number of different subjects. The information set out in the second last paragraph of page 45 refers, it would seem, to the assessable subjects total, whereas that on page 50 refers to enrolments per se.

Mr SANTORO: Turning to the subject of redundancies, which is an area that is of concern to a lot of people within the system, I cannot see within the Portfolio Program Statements any evidence of allocation of funds for redundancies available. I would like to ask first of all: what is the number and the total cost of redundancy packages that have been offered this year to TAFE staff and to other DEVETIR staff?

Mr FOLEY: The use of the term "redundancy" is a little ambiguous. It is true to say that TAFE has a voluntary early retirement scheme that has been approved by both the Public Sector Management Commission and the Australian Taxation Office. Offers of voluntary early retirement are made to a number of staff including teachers, store persons, cleaning staff and other wages staff. That arises in part because from time to time the staffing needs do not match with the education training profile to be achieved by TAFE Queensland from public funding. It is imperative that the institutes of TAFE Queensland align their staff mix with the requirements of the educational profile to be delivered. Members of the committee would be familiar with the need for the development of training profiles in accordance with the provisions of the agreements setting up the Australian National Training Authority. The State training authority, VETEC, the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, participates in that

process. To date, some 39 teachers, 11 wages staff and 13 public servant temporary staff who have accepted offers of voluntary early retirement. It is not possible to say what other staff may or may not take a voluntary early retirement, because it is in the nature of them that they are voluntary.

I should say that the management of that process is done in accordance with the Public Sector Management Commission standard, namely, staffing options to manage organisational change in the Queensland public sector. As a first step, directors of TAFE institutes must consider the possibility of redesignating positions, transferring staff at level or appointing excess staff to other positions where appropriate after a closed merit selection process. Directors must determine the costs associated with retraining, the costs and likelihood of redeployment and, as a last resort, consider the appropriateness of offering voluntary early retirements. Then the director must recommend to whom an offer should be made and indicate that the process follows—

Mr SANTORO: Madam Chair, could I perhaps seek a ruling from you in relation to relevance. We are obviously debating line items and we are debating matters which are of predominantly a financial nature. I asked the Minister a very specific question in relation to what the allocations were last year. I am trying to get an idea of what the allocations are in the Estimates which I have not been able to locate. I am happy for the Minister to take the answer on notice, but I wonder what your ruling is in relation to Standing Order 70 that does require—

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr Santoro. Can you tell us the line item or the page number that you referring to and that might make it easier for the Minister to give a direct answer.

Mr SANTORO: That was my question. My question was—and I was unable to find any evidence within the Estimates—that there is a process of redundancies being offered within the department which is of a considerable scale. I wanted basically to know the total amount for redundancy pay-outs in the last year and what allocation has been made this year. I am seeking the specific assistance of the Minister and his departmental people. It is a very specific question.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, do you have the figures for that or do you want to take that on notice?

Mr FOLEY: I am trying to assist the honourable member. I have identified for the honourable member the number of teachers, wages staff and public servants who have accepted the various offers. As I have said to the Committee—

Mr SANTORO: What you have done is identified the numbers, but you have not—

The CHAIRMAN: Excuse me, Mr Santoro, the Minister is trying to answer your question.

Mr FOLEY: I have identified in response to the honourable member's question the acceptances of offers of voluntary early retirement

that have been approved by both the PSMC and the Australian Taxation Office that have been offered to those staff and who have accepted them. This is information, I might add, over and above what is in the Budget papers in order to be of assistance to the Committee.

Mr SANTORO: Where in the Budget papers is the allocation for redundancy packages for 1995-96 contained?

Mr FOLEY: I will invite the director-general to assist the committee on that point.

Mr MARSHMAN: The cost of the voluntary early retirements to date for the 63 that the Minister referred to is \$1.6m. The way in which that is budgeted for is that you try to plan those VERs as close to the end of the financial year as you are able to, because the cost to TAFE is up to a year's salary. If you are not replacing the individual in the next year and you retain the position but you leave it vacant, there is no net addition to budget. That is the way the 63 have been funded.

Mr SANTORO: I am grateful for that specific answer. That is the figure that I was after, Minister.

Mr FOLEY: We are happy to be of assistance to you.

Mr SANTORO: If we can get to the point of being of assistance, with respect, so that we can keep on asking specific questions, I think that would assist the Committee conduct itself in the spirit of openness and accountability that you often espouse, Minister. To you, Minister, or Mr Marshman, what is the nominal or the notional allocation for 1995-96? Obviously, you would be aware from what is happening in your department that there is considerable dissatisfaction. The staff is turning over and, I suppose I could put it, turning out. You would have some idea of what you would be looking at for the next 12 months.

Mr FOLEY: That really depends upon the process which I endeavoured to explain to you in some detail previously. It depends on the following process, namely, the establishment of a training profile for the whole State, which is done through VETEC and made available to ANTA, which sets out the education and training requirements which in turn determines the staffing mix that is required. What happens after that is that TAFE ensures that redeployment and retraining are put in place where possible. But there are a number of teachers for whom these options are neither viable nor appropriate, because through no fault of their own the demand for their skills has diminished. It is in those circumstances that a tightly targeted voluntary early retirement process is being used. That process then entails the directors of the institutes undertaking the steps to which I referred and recommending to whom an offer of voluntary early retirement should be made in accordance with the Public Sector Management Commission standard.

With respect to TAFE staff, the other area in which the process is being applied is where there may be reductions in staffing levels, and again, the voluntary early retirement process will only be used where retraining, transfer at level and natural

attrition are not viable options. The offers of voluntary early retirement will continue to be made to a number of staff, including teachers, store persons, cleaning staff and other wages staff.

Mr SANTORO: In the absence of a specific answer, I will just assume that no specific allocation has been made within the programs for that expenditure—

Mr FOLEY: My answer has been specific and detailed and it depends on those processes. Unlike, I might add, the voluntary employment agreements of the previous Government, the voluntary early retirements are voluntary exercises.

Mr SANTORO: There is no comparison between voluntary employment agreements and redundancy provisions—

Mr FOLEY: It depends on voluntary acceptance.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Santoro, is this counted as a question?

Mr SANTORO: No, I am asking you to insist that the Minister's answer be relevant. He is talking about voluntary employment agreements and comparing them to voluntary redundancy packages. There is no comparison. I ask you to ask the Minister to be relevant in his answers.

Mr FOLEY: That is exactly my point, Madam Chair. There is no comparison, because one is truly voluntary and the other is not voluntary at all.

Mr SANTORO: But I have not asked you—

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Santoro, it is becoming very difficult for the timekeepers to know when you are asking a question and when you are not asking a question. I ask that you make it quite clear that you are asking a question and not debating the issue.

Mr SANTORO: With respect to you and the Minister, I suggest that my questions are quite clear. I will accept the answer, but not with any satisfaction. In relation to the public sector newsletter that is appearing on the desks of many public servants—can you provide the Committee with a breakdown of the \$250,000 allocated for its production, that is, the editorial cost, printing and distribution?

Mr FOLEY: The *Sector Wide* newsletter has been brought into existence and distributed in order to ensure that, as an employer, the Government communicates effectively with its staff. As indicated by Mr Santoro, the budget for 1995-96 is \$250,000, which will allow six to eight publications of that newsletter to take place. With regard to those specific details that are sought as the breakdown of that \$250,000—I will invite Mr Henneken, the Executive Director of the Labour Market Reform Division, to set those out. I should indicate that they provide for some six to eight publications to be released.

Mr HENNEKEN: I will just explain—the final detailed budgets for 1995 for the internal allocations of \$250,000 have not been finalised. To give the Committee some idea of the order of magnitude, I

would anticipate that the majority of the costs would be with respect to printing. That would be in the order of \$180,000. Most of the rest of the costs would be involved in the employment of a journalist or an editor plus an assistant, so most of the rest of the \$70,000 relates to salaries costs.

Mr SANTORO: As departmental newsletters already cover most, if not all, of the issues listed for inclusion in a couple of the issues of *Sector Wide* that I have seen, will its cost be partly recouped by dispensing with existing departmental newsletters of which there are a great number?

Mr FOLEY: Not necessarily, because the *Sector Wide* newsletter is just that; it is an attempt to communicate across the public sector. The importance of doing that as an employer is demonstrated by the practice among a number of private sector employers. I produce for the benefit of the Committee the Optus Communications newsletter to its staff, *Billabong*; the Ansett newsletter, *HR News*; the National Australia Bank's newsletter, the *National Star*; BHP Australia Coal's newsletter, *Newsline*; and the Qantas newsletter, *Qantas News*—all of which are good examples of the need for modern management to communicate effectively with its employees.

We hear much nowadays about the desirability for better communication in the workplace, and it is important that Government, as an employer, seeks to do that. There will be matters that are specific to a particular department. There will be other matters that are of more general application across the public sector. Certainly, it was apparent to me during the course of negotiating the core enterprise agreement for the public sector that much of the information that was obtained by members of our staff in various departments was fragmented and that when there was a general sector-wide issue—such as enterprise bargaining, which involved productivity considerations—much of the information had previously simply come through the union newsletter and management had not been communicating as effectively as it should. Accordingly, a need was identified for a sector-wide publication, and the magazine for Queensland public sector employees, *Sector Wide*, was brought into existence. That has been of considerable assistance to those employees obtaining an understanding of what their employer is on about in the workplace.

The CHAIRMAN: The time period allocated for questions by non-Government members has expired. Questioning from Government members will now take place.

I refer the Minister to page 17 of the Portfolio Program Statements where there is a reference to the financial incentive provided to employers by the workers' compensation merit bonus system adopted by the Government on 1 July 1994. Why was this introduced, and how does it impact on an employer and his or her employees?

Mr FOLEY: The merit bonus come penalty scheme did come into effect on 1 July 1994 after a review of the efficiency of the existing merit bonus system by a tripartite committee, that is, a

committee involving representatives of industry, the trade union movement and Government. I pay tribute to the good work of that committee, which included people such as Mr Clive Bubb from the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

That scheme was introduced in order to have a system which would reward employers with good safety records and discourage employers with bad safety records in a more effective way. Indeed, if one looks at the report of the Industry Commission on workers' compensation one finds the observation that Queensland had one of the most muted relationships between costs incurred by way of workers' compensation claims in a particular workplace and the premium paid by that employer. It is in the nature of any insurance scheme that there is a sharing of loss and cost, but the findings of the tripartite committee indicated that there was a need for more oomph in the system to reward the employers with good safety records and to discourage bad safety practices.

The major changes to the former merit bonus system include the introduction of a demerit charge of up to 100 per cent for employers with a history of poor claims experience, the exclusion of common law payments from merit bonus calculation and the discontinuance of the previous ambulance discount. These modifications have been adopted to ensure premium equity and to strengthen the incentive for employers to improve prevention, claim management and rehabilitation strategies. The whole object of reforming the merit bonus system is to ensure that there is a link in the hip pocket between workplace health and safety and the financial operation of a firm. There are many fine employers who realise that it is in their interests to have good safety records, such as Queensland Alumina, but this system is designed to ensure that that awareness is more general and that there are financial incentives and disincentives throughout workplaces in Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: Just continuing on about the bonus system, was anything done to prepare employers for the introduction of the system?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, quite a number of things have been done to prepare employers for the introduction of this change because, firstly, we wanted to ensure that they knew what was happening and, secondly, we wanted to try to assist in this process of changing the workplace culture. During March to April 1994, as part of the consultation process prior to the implementation of the scheme on 1 July 1994, a series of public meetings was held to explain the proposed changes and to seek comment. The response to the proposals was quite supportive. During 1994-95, additional Statewide seminars have been run to explain the changes to employers. I participated in a number of those, and I think they were quite helpful because employers were able to understand the system better, they were able to focus on the unacceptably high level of workplace injuries and accidents and they discussed issues of how to avoid those injuries and accidents.

In early May of 1995, the board sent letters to 3,800 employers whose claims experience for 1994-95 indicated that they were at risk of receiving a demerit charge in their 1994-95 premium assessment. A free 1800 telephone number, connected to the board's head office and five district offices, was made available for these employers to discuss the demerit charge and to take advantage of the board's offer of free seminars to assist these employers to develop effective risk management practices. Over 1,000 inquiries have been received so far, and there has also been a good response to the offer of the additional free seminars. Officers of the board have been pleased at the support that this has received from both the trade union movement—which, of course, has an interest in ensuring that its members are not injured or suffer illness in the workplace—and employers, who have accepted that a system of merits and demerits is one which is more likely to encourage appropriate behaviour than the previous system which, as I indicated, had a somewhat muted relationship between the costs incurred and the premium paid.

The CHAIRMAN: Just following on about the premiums, were there any other activities or initiatives undertaken to reduce the workers' compensation premium costs?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, we have taken a number of measures to try to ensure that expenditure and costs generally have been contained. Of course, members of the Committee would be aware of the amendments to the Workers' Compensation Act, which went through the Parliament towards the end of last year, and which amended the definition of "injury" to require employment to be a significant contributing factor, which excluded stress-related injuries caused because of reasonable disciplinary action or failure by the worker to obtain a promotional transfer. Those amendments increased penalties for those persons attempting to defraud the board either by seeking to obtain or obtaining workers' compensation from 50 penalty units, or two months' imprisonment, to 200 penalty units, or 12 months' imprisonment—one penalty unit being the equivalent of \$60. Penalties were also introduced where employers failed to insure their workers or intentionally undeclared the amount of wages paid. Those legislative changes also authorised officers of the board to conduct investigations at the workplace to monitor compliance.

But it has not just been legislative change. A big emphasis has been placed on workplace rehabilitation, and that is based on the philosophy of encouraging injured workers to have an early return to work following workplace injury. Workplace rehabilitation is designed to minimise the costs associated with injury and direct cost savings are passed on to the employer through reduced premiums via a merit bonus. To that end, the Workers Compensation Board employs advisers across the State in a consulting role to assist employers to develop rehabilitation systems within their organisations. Four-day workplace rehabilitation courses are available throughout Queensland. In conjunction with that effort, based

on the theme "Getting back to work sooner can be the best medicine", this year some 35 employer seminars have also been conducted. There have been a number of efforts made to ensure that costs are contained.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Just moving on, I note on page 24 of the PPS that a formal review is now under way to identify areas suitable for amalgamation and rationalisation of the Workplace Health and Safety and the Workers' Compensation Programs. What benefits have been sought by this and has there been any progress to date?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, the benefits that are being sought through this process of looking at the relationship between the Workplace Health and Safety Division and the Workers Compensation Board are the commonsense benefits that flow from one hand knowing what the other is doing. At the moment, one has the situation in which a person lodges a claim for workers' compensation but, in the past, that has not necessarily triggered off a process whereby the workplace health and safety inspector checks the relevant workplace. In fact, I can say that I was prompted to look at this by some feedback from my colleagues at the Bar, who had found themselves acting for workers injured on a given piece of workplace machinery, which had injured one worker and then injured another a week later.

Clearly, in a case like that, there was a need to fix the machine so that it did not injure a further worker. So a formal review is under way into areas of activities common to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety and the Division of Workers' Compensation, which may be capable of being rationalised. The divisions are already exploring the following options: firstly, continuation of current colocation arrangements for the provision of one-stop-shop facilities for both health and safety and workers' compensation issues. Collocation has been achieved in Rockhampton, Nambour, Mount Isa, Southport, Mackay and Toowoomba. Secondly, the combination of both divisions' assessment notices to enable clients to pay both insurance premiums and workplace registration fees on a single invoice has been effected. It is another example of the Goss Government attempting to cut red tape and to produce minimal hassle for business.

Other areas of activity include the promotion of joint activities to deal with emerging health and safety and compensation issues, and promoting incentives for better health and safety management, for example, the establishment of the board's private sector occupational stress policy and advisory unit, support for the Public Sector Management Commission's public sector occupational stress policy and advisory unit, conducting stress-at-work seminars and, of course, the merit bonus, or penalty scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I think Mr Pyke had a follow-up question.

Mr PYKE: Page 15 the Portfolio Program Statements states—

"Government recently approved the inclusion of government departments and agencies into a premium-based workers' compensation scheme from 1 July 1995."

What was the rationale behind that decision?

Mr FOLEY: From 1 July 1995, Government departments and agencies will be included in a premium-based workers' compensation scheme. This move followed a detailed review by Queensland Treasury and the Workers Compensation Board, which I have to say highlighted a relatively poor claims cost history for the public sector compared with the private sector. For example, Government workers who claimed workers' compensation in 1993-94 had an average of 21.9 days off work at a cost of \$2,953, compared with private sector workers, who had 18.7 days off work at a cost of \$2,120.

In the past, Government statutory claims costs have been paid by the board and then recovered with the addition of an administration fee, and common law claims have been managed by each Government agency. However, from 1 July Government departments and agencies will be required to hold accident insurance policies with the board and pay annual premiums for cover in respect of their statutory and common law liabilities. That means that Government departments and agencies will be provided with a stronger incentive to control their claims costs and numbers and implement effective preventive and rehabilitation programs.

Specific premium rates and pools and a separate fund will be established to ensure that cross-subsidisation between the public sector and the private sector does not occur. Amendments to the Act were assented to on 11 April to allow for the inclusion of Government departments and agencies in a premium-based system and separate fund arrangements. Put simply, this means that public sector managers have to manage their workplace health and safety issues and workers' compensation claims and that departments, in making provision for the payment of premiums, have the issue drawn to their attention. This is different from the previous system, which involved the claim simply being paid by the board and recovered as an administration fee from the relevant department to the board.

This is part of a process of trying to ensure that public sector management does not marginalise issues of workplace health and safety on the basis that it is someone else's problem. We want to ensure that these issues are recognised by public sector management as part of its core business, just as we are seeking to achieve in the industrial relations area. If one wants to successfully prevent injury and illness, one has to ensure that it is well and truly identified in the core business of management.

The CHAIRMAN: What initiatives are being implemented to provide more efficient inspection and advisory services to Queensland workplaces to help reduce workplace accidents? I know that you have covered some of this area already, but there

are other important aspects that we would like you to expand on.

Mr FOLEY: There have been a number of efficiency measures by way of the restructuring of the inspectorate, which has involved the devolution of authority and resources to local area officers so that decisions on day-to-day operational activities can be made at the local level. Larger district offices operate on a team basis, with expertise in most workplace health and safety issues available within the team. Smaller district offices can tap into that expertise at the local area level. The division's recruitment team is focused on attracting applicants with a wide range of professional or technical expertise to provide a more sharply focused field service relevant to the present day complex and wide-ranging health and safety issues at work.

In helping to reduce workplace accidents, we are providing financial support for workplace health and safety officers and representatives. The Act imposes an obligation on employers who have more than 30 workers to appoint a workplace health and safety officer and to allow employees to elect a workplace health and safety representative. To help defray the cost of training those persons, the Government reimburses employers to a third of the workplace health and safety officer tuition fee, up to a maximum of \$455, and provides financial assistance to the Safe Work College of Workplace Health and Safety of \$260 for every workplace health and safety representative trained. Those amounts are adjusted in accordance with CPI increases.

To encourage that training to be available to persons residing outside the Brisbane metropolitan area, a further \$50 is reimbursed to accredited trainers for each workplace health and safety officer or representative trained outside these areas. That initiative was endorsed by the Workplace Health and Safety Council, which is the peak body formed to advise me, as Minister, on key workplace health and safety matters. That scheme has been in place since 1990 and continues to receive tripartite support, that is, it continues to receive the strong support of trade unions, employer associations and Government experts. An amount of \$800,000 has been allocated for that scheme in 1995-96.

The establishment of a cooperative climate rather than one of confrontation is pretty fundamental to the task of helping to reduce workplace accidents. It is important to ensure a change in public attitude towards a greater awareness of the need to avoid such accidents and illness.

The CHAIRMAN: I know that we have more questions, but that is the end of time for questioning from the Government side. I understand that Mr Laming wishes to ask questions.

Mr LAMING: I refer to Budget Paper No. 3, *Capital Works*, page 46, which states—

"Coolooloona Sunshine Institute of TAFE (Maroochydore campus) - This project involves the replacement of existing and inadequate

leased facilities in the Maroochydore central business district and will accommodate 330 students for computer and office skills . . ."

I refer to page 54 of the same Budget paper and the heading "Policy Area—03". For Coolooloona, the 1995-96 budgeted expenditure is \$3.18m. There is also an amount of \$5.286m, which is listed as estimated expenditure in 1994-95 for the same item, that is, purchase and refurbishment. As this item did not appear in the 1994-95 Budget, were these funds diverted from another item and, if so, which item?

Mr FOLEY: It has to do with a priority setting process which is done through the Vocational Education Training and Employment Commission, that is, VETEC. As I indicated in a previous answer to Mr Santoro, each year a State training profile is done in accordance with industry needs. I will invite Mr Sielaff, the Executive Director of Queensland TAFE, to assist the Committee on that point.

Mr SIELAFF: As to the process of setting priorities for capital works—we have undertaken a detailed resource needs analysis process so that we are now able to set those priorities in an open and objective way. That is the process that has been used in setting up that project. In the previous Budget, provision was made for Mooloolaba, Stage 3.

Mr FOLEY: I am informed by my department that it does reflect a change in priorities.

Mr LAMING: I accept that. As to that same item—are you able to tell the Committee when this was first allocated and how much was originally budgeted?

Mr FOLEY: Which item is that?

Mr LAMING: The item of the purchase of the new facilities at Maroochydore.

Mr FOLEY: I will invite Mr Rick Elliot, who is an officer of the department involved in this area, to assist the Committee.

Mr ELLIOT: The 1995 State Training Profile had an indication of a \$5.4m requirement for the Coolooloona Stage 3 purchase on the Sunshine Coast. We were initially looking at leasing alternative facilities. We had a requirement put to the Department of Administrative Services, but there were no suitable leased alternative facilities available. We then did a survey of the area and identified a range of properties, and this is one of the properties which we identified. We then negotiated a purchase price from there.

Mr LAMING: Did the Lands Department officers value and conduct negotiations on a building known as Newspaper Place, which is being refurbished from funds in the Budget papers under discussion? What was the original valuation of the building? What was the ceiling of funding approval given for this negotiation?

Mr FOLEY: I will have to take that question on notice. May I just say this, though: this issue is complicated by the fact that I am told that there is a commercial confidentiality clause in the relevant

contract. I will have to study that in some detail and inform the Committee in response to—

The CHAIRMAN: If it assists your deliberations, we could hear something like that in camera without members of the public being present at a later stage, if you indicate that that is your wish.

Mr FOLEY: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I will see whether that information can be obtained promptly. If not, then I will respond to that in due course.

Mr LAMING: That question was the one referring to the valuation?

Mr FOLEY: Yes.

Mr LAMING: You will take that on notice?

Mr FOLEY: Yes.

Mr LAMING: Were the Lands Department officers who had been handling negotiations on the purchase of Newspaper Place allowed to close that deal, or was an offer made direct from an officer of your department to the vendor or his agents? If so, what was the amount of that offer and how much was it higher than the valuation? Why was this offer made direct from your department? As Minister, were you aware of that offer and the reason for it?

Mr FOLEY: The question involves a degree of detail, and I would have to take it on notice.

Mr LAMING: I understand from newspaper reports that were published on the Sunshine Coast that the refurbishment of Newspaper Place would cost \$2.35m. Will the Minister confirm that this will bring the total cost of the purchase and the refurbishment to approximately \$8.1m?

Mr FOLEY: I invite Mr Elliot to respond to that.

Mr ELLIOT: The initial approval is for \$8.1m for the refurbishment of that particular facility, and that is what we are working to at this stage.

Mr LAMING: That will indeed reach a total of approximately \$8.1m?

Mr ELLIOT: That is correct.

Mr LAMING: Did the department directly or indirectly seek or receive other expressions of interest in providing a suitable property from agents or developers in the Maroochydore area and, if so, what were the approximate costs of those and why were they rejected?

Mr FOLEY: I will ask Mr Elliot to respond to that, too.

Mr ELLIOT: The process that was gone through was that when we did a survey through the Administrative Services Department to look for a suitable alternative facility to lease, there was an exhaustive search done of the properties that were available in that area at the time. Two properties that were identified were suitable for purchase. We initially went through a negotiation process with one of the vendors of the properties. That negotiation arrived at a price which was considerably higher than the price which we believed was reasonable for that area. We then engaged in negotiations with the owners of the property, which we subsequently

purchased, and arrived at a price which we believed was suitable at that stage and did represent best value for money for the department and the Government.

Mr LAMING: If I may follow up with another question to Mr Elliot: there were no other expressions of interest put forward by developers or agents on the Sunshine Coast for a suitable building for a TAFE campus?

The CHAIRMAN: I think that the question should go through the Minister.

Mr LAMING: I ask it through the Minister.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Elliot may respond.

Mr ELLIOT: There were no further applications to us, no.

Mr LAMING: Are you satisfied that the estimated expenditure on this project for 1995-96 is warranted and that the need for this expenditure of \$3.2m could not have been obviated altogether by a more practical building acquisition in this current financial year—1994-95?

Mr FOLEY: What more practical alternative? Could you be more specific?

Mr LAMING: I believe that there were other buildings available to be purpose-built at a much less expensive cost, which would have obviated further funds being allocated in the next financial year.

Mr FOLEY: It is a bit difficult to respond to your question without the particulars of what you described as the alternatives. I do not know whether you are in a position to give us any further or better particulars of the alternatives to which you refer.

Mr LAMING: Am I able, Madam Chair, to table a document?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes, you may table a document.

Mr LAMING: I table a document that indicates that there were other alternatives available to the department at a far less expensive cost than the eventual purchase.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like the Minister to respond at a later time after considering that document?

Mr LAMING: Yes, if that is possible.

Mr FOLEY: May I have a copy of that document?

Mr LAMING: Certainly. Those are all my questions.

The CHAIRMAN: You will provide a copy of that to the Chair and the Minister, please?

Mr LAMING: Yes.

Mr SANTORO: I would like to take up the points made by the Minister in answer to Government members' questions on workplace health and safety and workers' compensation within the public sector. I refer to the requirement for Government departments to pay workers' compensation premiums from 1 July and to the Estimate at page 19 of the Portfolio Program

Statements that claims outlays in relation to Government are projected to be \$48m in the first year of operation of this arrangement in 1995-96. This figure represents an increase in payments of \$23.5m, or 95 per cent, on the Budget Estimate for 1994-95. I ask the Minister: given that one of the core premises of the introduction of the Government scheme was to make departments more aware of their responsibilities in relation to moderating their comparatively poor record on workers' compensation, why do we see such a large increase in the payments?

Mr FOLEY: If one looks at the variance between the 1994-95 budget and the 1995-96 budget referred to by Mr Santoro, there are a couple of things to note. The actual claims costs in this category were underestimated by some 28.5 per cent in the 1994-95 budget due to the number of new statutory claims rising by some 4.1 per cent compared with last year and a 17.25 per cent increase in the average statutory claims settlement compared with last year. The 1995-96 Estimate includes a provision of \$15m for Government common law. Previously, common law claims had been managed individually by each Government agency; that is to say, they did not appear in the workers' compensation Estimates but they appeared in each respective Government agency. From 1 July 1995, Government departments and agencies will be included in the premium-based workers' compensation scheme and will be required to pay premiums to cover both their statutory and common law liabilities.

Mr SANTORO: So you are basically saying that the figures that are being provided for the 1995-96 Estimates reflect previous performance that was not conglomerated for the purposes of these Estimates? Is that what you are saying to us?

Mr FOLEY: I am advised by the Manager of the Workers Compensation Board that he agrees with that.

Mr SANTORO: If that is the case, would you be able to conglomerate them and provide them at a later date?

Mr FOLEY: Sorry?

Mr SANTORO: I want the combined various departmental figures that were not conglomerated for the purposes of Estimates last year so that we can have a look at them in total.

Mr FOLEY: I am not clear as to the nature of the question. Are you asking in respect of last year's Estimates?

Mr SANTORO: Yes, so that we can get a comparison of this year's projected figures.

Mr FOLEY: I am not quite sure how that bears on the Budget Estimates for 1995-96.

Mr SANTORO: It comes back to that point that I made at the beginning, that to a considerable extent what is not happening at the moment within these Estimates—and you acknowledged the problem—is that we are not comparing apples with apples.

Mr FOLEY: I am really just not clear about the data that you are seeking. If what you are seeking is a breakdown of information about the 1994-95 year, I do not quite see how that is relevant to the 1995-96 Budget Estimates process in which we are engaged.

Mr SANTORO: You are saying that the reason the increase is up to \$48m is because that \$48m takes into account figures—and I am just trying to remember precisely what you said—that were detailed department by department rather than in a total figure and that that is the reason you have a massive increase there. All I am asking for is the individual figures.

Mr FOLEY: Those figures for last year would be the responsibility of each respective Minister. The whole point is that we are moving to a new system and bringing it into the discipline of the workers' compensation system, and the Budget Estimate for 1995-96 seeks to do just that. To go back into the past and to—

Mr SANTORO: You brought in the past in your answer. If the Committee is to accept the rationale of your answer, the Committee should have the information that you referred to in your answer. That is a simple request.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, are you indicating that this question should be put to other Estimates committees?

Mr FOLEY: I have not quite got that far yet. I am still trying to labour with the question. It does seem that the question relates to matters that were included in other departments' Estimates on the previous year, but I am just seeing if there is a way that I can assist Mr Santoro other than to refer him to the various other Ministers.

The CHAIRMAN: We are straying off this department's Estimates.

Mr SANTORO: Madam Chair, we are dealing with a line item and the Minister has sought to explain that line item by referring to other departments. He could take it on notice and perhaps we could go on questioning in other areas.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Santoro, I think what the Minister is indicating is that it was not in his department in previous years.

Mr FOLEY: I think that the advice provided to me by the General Manager of the Workers Compensation Board will assist in resolving the matter that you are concerned about. At page 19 of the Portfolio Program Statements, in that column that you refer to, that figure of \$48m for the 1995-96 Estimate is up some \$15m, and that is because provision is made for Government common law claims, whereas previously common law claims were managed individually by each Government agency. That would bring it back to \$33m, which is the comparison with the statutory claims costs referred to earlier.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questioning by Opposition members has expired. We will now turn to questions from Government members. I want to follow on a little bit from where we were: we

were talking about workplace health and safety. Rural industry has the highest accident rate of any industry. What specific measures have been taken to improve workplace health and safety in rural workplaces and in the non-metropolitan areas of Queensland generally?

Mr FOLEY: Funding for an industry Workplace Health and Safety Coordinators Program was approved in 1992. On the advice of the Workplace Health and Safety Council, which is a tripartite body, it has continued since then. The funding of those coordinators is a very useful part of trying to consult widely across industry, including both workers and employers who may not have been part of the formal tripartite arrangements established under the Act. So in providing those advisory and consultative services across industry and in working with workplaces and industry associations to make workplaces safer and healthier, the strategic outcome of the program will assist in reducing the need for further field resources to deliver the objectives of the program.

Current funding allows two workplace health and safety coordinators to be employed by the ACTU Queensland Branch, two to be employed by the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry and three by the Queensland Farmers Federation. The 1994-95 financial commitment of the program has been \$457,500, that is, \$110,000 to the ACTUQ, \$120,000 to the QCCI and \$227,500 to the QFF. It is anticipated that the commitment to the program for 1995-96 will be similar.

In addition to that funding program, the workplace health and safety division works closely with Queensland Farmsafe and the Queensland Farmers Federation. That work is designed to: improve statistical data on rural injuries and incidents, deliver health and safety initiatives through local farm safety action groups, develop appropriate advisory standards and to deliver information and education programs. We have established a Rural Industry Workplace Health and Safety Committee to provide advice on rural health and safety throughout the council, and Queensland Farmsafe makes recommendations to the rural industry committee.

In addition to that, the Workplace Health and Safety Division has 15 offices located in regional Queensland. The division has 18 advisers and inspectors supporting rural industry health and safety initiatives, plus an information and education program which does such things as shed talks and seminars to farmers, things like the Women's Pesticide Program and school talks to children living in rural areas. We are particularly concerned about tractor accidents, particularly those involving children.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we need to clarify, at a later date, the Women's Pesticide Program. Moving on to TAFE training, I refer you to page 37 of the PPS. It notes there that in 1994-95 almost \$61m will be generated from commercial activities. What activities is TAFE involved in to generate this magnitude of revenue and why is it important that TAFE has a commercial presence?

Mr FOLEY: Commercial operations in TAFE Queensland include a variety of activities which earn revenue, either at the State office or at institute level. They include things like the sale of curriculum, the sale of learning resources, a fee-for-service activity, a course in tuition fees, encouraging overseas students and competitive tenders. Some examples of its successful performance in 1994-95 include the winning by TAFE Queensland of 38 out of the 46 contracts available under the competitive funding of providers initiative. That initiative ensures that there is a competitive training market and TAFE Queensland has been successful in winning 38 of those 46 contracts. Also, some 780 international students are undertaking courses in TAFE Queensland, providing a projected revenue of \$7.2m. International projects have been undertaken or are in the process of being undertaken in Western Samoa, Tonga, Fiji and Malaysia. The increase in commercial focus for TAFE Queensland has built some system benefits by way of enhancement of TAFE's revenue base and maintenance of TAFE's position as the premier provider of vocational education and training in Queensland. The competitive program delivery is, of course, one way of achieving the Government's competitive neutrality objectives.

One major arm of TAFE Queensland's commercial operations is TAFE Queensland International. The mission of TAFE Queensland International is to trade internationally and nationally in vocational education and training. The profits earned are ploughed back into TAFE Queensland for investment in vocational education and training for Queensland. In fact, I had the pleasure of leading a parliamentary trade delegation which visited a number of sites in Asia where there is an interest in vocational education and training. I am pleased to say that all of the members of the committee were riveted by the interest shown in vocational education and training, although one member of the committee was heard to comment that if he saw another training centre he would strangle me!

I was very pleased that we had members of both the Opposition and the Government attending the launch of the Asia-Pacific Academy for Further Education, which is a joint operation between TAFE Queensland and a Malaysian five-star hotel group. That project is designed to generate revenue to assist TAFE Queensland in its commercial operations.

The CHAIRMAN: I might add that Mr Horan and I had the pleasure of meeting some TAFE operatives when we were on such a trip in Indonesia. I understand that TAFE has been involved in a process of devolution and that these changes in the bureaucratic structure should result in cost savings. Would you tell us what changes have occurred in this process and how those savings should result?

Mr FOLEY: The whole rationale of this is to achieve better client service, to ensure the responsiveness of the institutes of TAFE and their ability to absorb functions. The devolution process is

being undertaken in close consultation with institutes to ensure that disruption is minimised and that responsibilities and resources are devolved only when those institutes are capable of assuming the responsibilities. Similarly, the devolution process is being pursued in full consultation with staff and unions.

The projected estimate of State office staffing levels by 30 December this year is 173, compared to 287 in 1994. That is a significant move out of head office and into the areas closer to the coalface. It is anticipated that the State office operating budget will decrease by approximately \$12m in 1995-96 to \$9.62m, compared to \$22.092m in 1994-95. In line with the establishment of institutes of TAFE, further operational functions of the State office are being devolved to institutes.

In 1993-94, Maintenance, Vocational Education and Training Technologies Unit, or VEAT, the Queensland Distance Education College and library information management system functions were devolved. In 1994-95, the curriculum functions were devolved and a curriculum consortia was established. During 1995-96, human resource, marketing, minor works management and student admission functions will be devolved. The number of staff transferred from the State office to institutes during 1993-94 was 264, and in 1994-95 it was 65. It is proposed that at least a further 40 will be transferred to institutes during 1995-96. I should add, relevant to Mr Santoro's earlier question, that this process of devolution does not involve staff redundancies. Whenever a particular function is devolved to an institute, the resources associated with that function are being devolved.

The major functions to be retained at head office are strategic planning, policy development, coordination and analysis, and representation with external agencies such as employment and training initiatives and VETEC, central agencies and unions. Also, monitoring standards and performance and corporate level resource management, including infrastructure planning and coordination, are functions that will be retained at head office.

Ms SPENCE: Minister, you mentioned in your opening statement that your department was very concerned to meet the needs of target groups such as women and people with disabilities. Can you explain what your department is doing to meet the needs of these groups with regard to education and training?

Mr FOLEY: In 1994-95, all institutes received funding, in the order of \$0.14m, for the Women's Support Officer Project to provide a specialised advice and support service for women in TAFE. A total of 12 officers were employed. Funding for 1995-96 will enable the continuation of this support.

TAFE Queensland undertook a promotional project by actively participating in International Women's Day, involving activities in the Queen Street Mall and in rural and regional areas. Resources are being developed for proposed community and school visits. The 1995-96 allocation of \$0.02m will allow continued promotional activities to increase awareness of the

options available to women in TAFE, both internally and externally.

Two new initiatives have been included in TAFE Queensland's budget for 1995-96 in the gender equity projects area. The Women's Policy Unit has prioritised the issue of violence against women, and therefore a project to improve women's safety and security in TAFE will be implemented. A project to target places for women with disabilities in mainstream vocational and Access programs will be developed in response to the recommendations of the Women's Consultative Council. The trade training for women project, Access, and Try a Trade courses have been allocated an increase from \$0.06m to \$0.08m in response to a Statewide demand for Try a Trade courses for girls in schools. In 1994-95, a total of 16 submissions were received, of which seven were funded.

New Horizons, conducted to provide women with the knowledge and skills necessary to enrol in further vocational education and training or to gain employment, and Stated-funded Access courses were provided with child-care facilities at a cost of \$0.05m. It is proposed to conduct 10 New Horizons courses for unemployed women with disabilities. Courses will also be provided for women from geographically isolated areas and project funding will be increased from \$0.08m to \$0.1m.

Flexible delivery in multimedia initiatives will benefit women, as well as other target and disadvantaged groups, through the provision of greater access. A good example of that is the flexible delivery at the TAFE centre at Cherbourg, originally developed for use with remote Aboriginal communities. I visited the centre and talked to a couple of women from nearby areas. One woman was from Wondai and the other woman was from another nearby town. Those women were able to use the flexible delivery services, which fitted in better with their family responsibilities. We need to ensure that attention is given to that area.

Mr PYKE: I note on page 43 of the Portfolio Program Statements that major capital works projects within TAFE Queensland for 1995-96 are estimated at a cost of \$58,473,000. That seems to be a large amount of money. Could you provide more detail as to major activities included in these works and the necessity for the expenditure?

Mr FOLEY: The capital investment is funded from the Capital Works Program as part of the State Budget which includes both State and Commonwealth or ANTA sourced funds. The capital development plan contains only those investment proposals funded from the Capital Works Program; it does not contain provision of funds for leasing of facilities, the decision about which is made at the institutes, nor mobile learning centres. The distribution of investment is across the full range of categories with new construction, refurbishment of existing facilities, and purchase and refurbishment of a new facility accounting for the largest proportions.

While there are a number of specified Capital Works Programs for 1995-96, there are a few in particular that should be considered in terms of

amount of expenditure. Firstly, at the Bremer Institute, the refurbishment of the Bundamba and Ipswich campuses is currently under way and funding of \$4.5m is required for the total refurbishment. Of that \$4.5m, it is planned to expend \$4m in 1995-96. Secondly, at the Brisbane Institute of TAFE, there will be construction of a \$10.2m information technology and amenity building at the Red Hill campus, of which approximately \$5m is to be spent in 1995-96. That will provide facilities for 830 students. Also at the Brisbane Institute, there will be the construction of a new administration and general studies building at the Gateway campus—which will be of interest to Mr Santoro—which will provide accommodation for administration, an electronic learning centre, a staff and student service and seminar room, with \$3.6m to be expended in 1995-96.

Reference has been made earlier to the Cooloola/Sunshine Institute. Also, at the Far North Institute of TAFE, the Cairns campus is to have \$4.5m expended in 1995-96 on an arts and general studies complex. Courses provided for by this facility will have a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and will include a theatre for dance and recording, as well as multi-functional spaces for arts and crafts. I might just say in passing that I was particularly interested to note that at the Cherbourg TAFE centre part of the clear message that we got from the local community in the course of consultation was that they wanted a theatre space or an open space that would enable cultural activities to be part and parcel of the vocational education and training that went on. I think it is a very good sign that those facilities are being accepted positively by that community.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer you to page 74 of the PPS where reference is made to rural training schools and resource agreements for their Government funding. What is the rationale for this and how will it affect the delivery of training?

Mr FOLEY: Each agricultural college is established under an Act of Parliament, the Agricultural Colleges Act, which was updated last year. Each college has a resource agreement through which it agrees to provide specified training in exchange for Government funding. When I say "specified", I mean training that is noted in and consistent with the Queensland State Training Profile to which I have made reference. The State Training Profile, as I indicated, is a basic planning mechanism that we use to try to ensure that the dollars being spent on training are linked to the needs of industry. We do not believe in training for training's sake; we believe in training for employment outcomes. So these resource agreements become annual targets for vocational education and training delivery and student contact hours. The rationale is that these agreements will assist agricultural colleges in planning their courses and in delivering programs that are consistent with national training reforms.

We have four such colleges: the Burdekin, Emerald, Dalby and the Longreach College, which is referred to as the Longreach Pastoral College, and

they perform very useful work. In fact, they operate in the manner of working farms, and they have a very practical focus. As such, they exemplify the sort of principles that people talk about in the National Training Reform Agenda of ensuring that training is closely linked to the workplace and closely linked to industry outcomes and employment outcomes. The focus on relevant training delivery and annual targets should result in increased relevance for the students, better performance and greater efficiencies. With regard to improved training services for them, we want to ensure that the training dollar is spent wisely, and those rural training schools have a very important function.

The CHAIRMAN: Unless anybody has any objections, as it is 12.55, I think rather than go on to the next session from the non-Government members, we will break for lunch five minutes early and resume at 1.45.

Sitting suspended from 12.55 till 1.45 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The hearings of Estimates Committee C are now resumed. The examination of the Budget Estimates of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations will recommence. I remind the Minister and departmental officers that the time allotted for the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations will expire at 3.55 p.m. or earlier if we run out of questions for the Minister. The next period of questioning will now commence with questions from non-Government members.

Mr SANTORO: How many corporate credit cards exist within the department and what type of Forward Estimates for expenditure do you have for 1995-96?

Mr FOLEY: I ask the Director-General, Mr Marshman, to assist the Committee on that point.

Mr MARSHMAN: Thirty-two corporate cards were issued to officers of the department and they were nominated by executive directors. Training sessions for card holders were conducted in October last year. There are credit limits for each officer and they range from \$1,000 to \$10,000. We have averaged, I think, about \$700-\$800 monthly expenditure on those credit cards since we have had them. A policy procedures manual exists for their use and we also have a review committee that is monitoring their use all the time. We are determined to ensure that they are restricted to purchasing areas and to people who travel frequently. We want to limit their use within the department to ensure that we are always achieving efficiencies through their use in accordance with their original intent.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned that officers can use those cards for travel. What sort of expenditures can be costed against the cards for travelling purposes?

Mr MARSHMAN: Only approved travel expenditure.

Mr QUINN: Can I have some examples, please?

Mr MARSHMAN: Accommodation and meals in accordance with the rules and entitlements for that officer to travel. They cannot record expenditures that go beyond the rules.

Mr QUINN: Is there a daily limit for an officer who is travelling?

Mr MARSHMAN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: What is that limit?

Mr MARSHMAN: I think that entitlement varies depending on the level of the officer, but I can find out that information.

Mr QUINN: Could we be given some idea of the range, please?

Mr MARSHMAN: There are two approaches to travel: you can elect to go on costs and that is reasonable costs return, or you can have a daily allowance. We can provide the details of the daily allowances. Those daily allowances do not apply only to our department; they apply across the sector as a whole.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned that the upper limit of a credit card can be \$10,000. I take it that that is for purchasing officers?

Mr MARSHMAN: That is for purchasing officers.

Mr QUINN: What sort of material would be purchased within that price range—up to \$10,000?

Mr MARSHMAN: I imagine stationary and small capital purchases. You could purchase a computer for \$2,500. A small PC—that sort of technology—could be purchased off a standing order.

Mr QUINN: What is the intent of the corporate card? Is it for flexibility or convenience? An expenditure up to \$10,000 would seem to me to be a fairly large and major item, in which case there would have to be a decision made within the department to expend that sort of money. If that is the case, why is that purchase not made through the normal process rather than giving a person a credit card with a \$10,000 limit?

Mr MARSHMAN: There is the flexibility angle to which you referred, but there is also the convenience and cheapness of not having to raise the order—the costs of actually raising the order. That may not mean that there is not a separate approval to actually purchase. It is the purchase act itself.

Mr QUINN: But the approval would be given prior to purchase?

Mr MARSHMAN: Yes, in accordance with the delegations within the department.

Mr FOLEY: I make the observation that part of this process of ensuring flexibility and devolving matters to the institute and encouraging them to be more competitive and industry-focused does involve some degree of flexibility and this is one example of it.

Mr SANTORO: At last year's committee hearings, Mr Marshman indicated that he would be

happy to report in 12 months' time on a question I put asking for a breakdown of expenditure by TAFE on PSMC appeals. I wonder whether that detailed information for 1994-95 together with an estimate of expenditure in this area for 1995-96 could be provided by Mr Marshman?

Mr FOLEY: I invite Mr Marshman to answer that question.

Mr MARSHMAN: For the financial year to date, the estimate of the cost of the appeal experience within the department is \$11,000, and the average cost of an appeal is about \$1,300. In terms of your question from last year, we have seen a major reduction this year in the number of selection exercises which have resulted in appeal action, not only in the department but also in TAFE, which was the focus of your question last year, and the costs have also fallen. Our experience compares favourably with other departments.

Mr FOLEY: To give further information, I am advised that the estimate of cost to date, that is 1994-95, for DEVETIR is in the order of \$11,000, representing the average costs per selection exercise of \$1,375. In the case of TAFE, the total cost is \$2,100, being an average cost per selection exercise of \$525. There were an unusually large number of appeals lodged in 1993-94 that related to two selection exercises where three individuals lodged 35 appeals against 25 appointments.

Mr SANTORO: Thank you. I would like to turn your attention to taxi expenditure within the TAFE system. In responding to a recent question in the House, you indicated that the TAFE taxi bill is in excess of \$300,000 per annum. I would have thought that an item as big as this should be planned and perhaps appear within departmental Budget papers. Does it appear anywhere? Have I missed it? If I have, could you provide the Committee with an idea of the estimated expenditure? I ask that question particularly in the context of other items, such as the cost of the newsletter, which I raised before, being \$250,000. That was obviously planned and indicated within the Estimates

Mr FOLEY: In a moment, I will invite Mr Sielaff, the Executive Director of TAFE, to address it, but when one looks at taxi expenditure, one needs to look also at overall vehicle costs, including Q-Fleet leasing and motor vehicle allowance. It may be that in some cases, for example, in the case of the South Bank institute to which you referred in a question in Parliament, taxi costs were higher but Q-Fleet's costs and the motor vehicle allowance were correspondingly lower. I will invite Mr Sielaff to provide some further information.

Mr SIELAFF: Thank you. The total expenditure on taxis by the institutes from the period 1 July 1994 to 30 April of this year is \$281,306. Across the institutes, there are in the order of 6,500 staff. Obviously, part of the costs are associated with—as consortia and parts of the system have been devolved—a movement between the various campuses or institutes, particularly in the metropolitan area.

Mr SANTORO: Are there any regulations that govern the use of taxis with a view to helping to contain expenditure in this area?

Mr FOLEY: There have been a number of things. I will ask Mr Sielaff to elaborate if he wishes, but a number of things have been done, for example, at the South Bank institute, to moderate the cost of taxis, including the leasing of an additional Q-Fleet vehicle, reducing the number of taxi books available for use at any time, rescheduling the institute courier runs to allow greater access by staff to internal transport and the provision of driver service to maximise the utilisation of the institute's vehicle pool. Mr Sielaff may wish to take that further.

Mr SIELAFF: In addition to that, every institute is being asked to implement administrative savings. As institutes accept greater responsibility and, obviously, greater accountability for their expenditure, they are being monitored very carefully in terms of the amounts of money spent on all forms of travel. On a regular basis, institutes are advised of the expenditure, and there are expenditures promulgated throughout the system that compare one institute to another. So from a management perspective, the management information is available to all institutes and institutes are then held accountable in terms of expenditure and the achievement of the administrative savings targets.

Mr SANTORO: Just to follow up on that question, particularly in relation to the South Bank institute, why would the expenditure on taxis at that institute be as high as was indicated in the Minister's answer to my question in the Parliament a little while back when you consider that it is an inner city, or close to an inner-city type of institute? You would expect that the demands on taxis within that institute would be much smaller than what it is currently.

Mr FOLEY: I will just make a couple of points and Mr Sielaff might like to take the matter further. The first point is that the South Bank Institute of TAFE is a very large training institution. It delivers approximately 15 per cent of the total activity by way of student contact hours of the whole Queensland TAFE system. Secondly, the overall costs by way of taxis, leasing and motor vehicle allowance for the scale of operation for the institute were comparable to the institute's scale of operation as a proportion of the whole Queensland system. In that case, taxi costs were higher but Q-Fleet costs and the motor vehicle allowance were correspondingly lower. In order to address that, the measures that I outlined before were put in place to ensure that there was a more appropriate balance between those different things. Mr Sielaff may wish to take the matter further.

Mr SIELAFF: In addition to what the Minister has said, you do need to recognise that, in terms of child-care programs that are run through the institute, a number of students travel to placements, too. In addition, the high cost of taxi fares occurred during the period the institute was coming together. The level of rationalisation, which is intended in the

formation of the institute, had not occurred, but I believe that that rationalisation is further advanced now and will be further advanced over the next 12 months. So I would expect—and, in fact, I will be monitoring closely—that the level of expenditure on taxis and travel across the institute is, in fact, curtailed.

Mr SANTORO: Thank you

Mr FOLEY: Just on that issue of the monitoring of it, the Director-General can be of some assistance.

Mr MARSHMAN: Mr Santoro, we monitor all expenditures per workplace across the department. They are not only received in the executive director's area but also we meet as a corporate group and those sorts of expenditures are monitored and they are compared across all the divisions of the departments. So, once someone starts to get out of kilter with the trend line, questions begin to be asked. So it is not as if it is totally the responsibility of the institute director. There are management information systems in place to ensure that, centrally, we know what is happening. With that devolution, if you like—as the Minister described—also goes accountability.

Mr SANTORO: I would like to turn your attention to gender discriminatory language and references within the Program Statements to its removal and replacement within awards and other documents. How much do you anticipate it will cost in the coming year to undertake the processes indicated on page 111 of the Program Statements to remove gender discriminatory language from State awards? Obviously, I am talking about the reprinting and redistribution of awards in particular.

Mr FOLEY: This project has been useful in recasting some of the rather old fashioned and, frankly, inappropriate sexist language in some of the State awards. A process was agreed whereby the Awards Management Branch of the department would liaise with unions and employer organisations to settle appropriate amendments to the awards. That process has the support of the Chief Industrial Commissioner and the Queensland Awards Management Advisory Committee. Initially, the process will concentrate on the 25 most common awards with the highest density of employees and then we will go on to the remainder of employees. The first major award that was to be reviewed was that applying to the retail industry. Discussions with the Retailers Association of Queensland revealed that the Retail Industry Award—State is currently under review by the award parties, but I will invite Mr Henneken to comment on the question of what resources are likely to be used. I think fairly moderate resources are likely to be used in the coming year.

Mr HENNEKEN: In respect of resources, I would anticipate that this exercise will be using less than half a person in my division. As to your question in respect of the additional printing costs and so on—I cannot give you an estimate for that. Based on the number of gazettals that go through each week, the number of variations to awards and the number of certified agreements and so on, I

would imagine that the 25 awards and respective changes to them would be a small proportion of the number that are printed.

Mr SANTORO: In relation to Federal award incursion, I notice that the department is planning to allocate \$400,000 in taxpayers' money to this problem. I suggest that this could be easily resolved through discussions with your Federal colleagues and the affiliated union. Does this mutual litigation between friends warrant that allocation of taxpayers' funds?

Mr FOLEY: Regrettably, it is not quite as simple as that. For the most part, the litigation is not between the Queensland Government and the Federal Government. The litigation involves constitutional legal issues. Currently, 23 applications have been made by Federal unions in the Australian Industrial Relations Commission seeking Federal award coverage for Queensland public sector employees. That entails a choice. One either responds legally to those cases or one simply allows the State jurisdiction to be eroded and industrial relations put into the Federal jurisdiction by an incremental process.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from non-Government members has expired. We will now turn to Government members. Mr Pyke had a follow-up question to ask.

Mr PYKE: I refer to the question that Madam Chairman asked you before the luncheon recess on the subject of training and its delivery. Will any of the developments that you outlined benefit disadvantaged groups, in particular people with disabilities, in the metropolitan area?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, a number of initiatives will benefit people with a disability. In part, that arises because we have a Social Justice Policy that was developed by VETEC and then approved by Cabinet which targets disadvantaged persons to ensure that all Queenslanders have proper access to vocational education and training. A number of initiatives are of assistance in addressing those areas. For example, people disadvantaged by remoteness are being assisted through the use of compact disk interactive materials. There is a joint venture between TAFE and Digital Video Productions to deliver training via interactive technology. Initially, this flexible delivery method will be used to develop automotive training.

As I mentioned in answer to an earlier question from the member for Mount Gravatt, we have found that this material, developed in the first instance for people in remote and isolated areas, is of particular importance for people who face a hassle in getting access to education. I mentioned the case of people from Wondai and surrounding towns who are getting access to the Off Campus Teacher Education Program—OCTEP—at Cherbourg. These new whiz-bang technologies are very helpful for any person who wants to progress at his own pace rather than at the pace of the class as a whole. People with a disability get particular benefit out of training methods which enable them to be self-paced. In turn, that is picked up by a general change in the training system from the old

time-based approach to the new competency-based approach. In the old days, one did an apprenticeship over four years. For example, at the Callide B Power Station, I presented some awards to a couple of mature-age apprentices who were able to use the competency-based training to get through the course in a little over two and two-third years. We have a commitment to delivering training for people with a disability and to use cutting-edge technology to do that.

The CHAIRMAN: Listed in the section on the 1995-96 planned performance for VETEC is the implementation of a five-year strategic plan to increase training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. What training is currently provided and where does this plan fit into the Government's training structure?

Mr FOLEY: The training that is currently provided is right throughout the TAFE system. One has to acknowledge that historically Aboriginal and Islander people have faced profound disadvantages in getting proper access to vocational education and training. As a Government, we have sought to adopt a range of strategies to try to respond to that. In respect of the training and employment needs of the Aboriginal and Islander community, we are trying to address that through the strategic advice given by VETEC, and in particular through a body called Nagi Binanga, which is an advisory council of VETEC consisting of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people whose job it is to provide advice to Government on those training needs.

I have been very pleased that recently we were able to launch a five-year strategic plan. That plan contains 20 priority goals that were developed by those Aboriginal and Islander people on Nagi Binanga, which is Aboriginal and Islander language for "look and listen", to ensure that there are more employment opportunities, an increased provision of literacy and numeracy programs, the use of Aboriginal education policy funds and access to adequate levels of funding. There are 34 specific Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander award courses, ranging from certificates to diplomas, including community teaching, ranger training, arts, primary health care, cultural studies, Access, welfare, community management and justice studies.

Let me give you a particularly inspiring example. When I visited Kowanyama and Aurukun, I saw how the Remote Area Teacher Education Program is helping people in their own communities to qualify as community teachers and thereby participate directly in the education of their children rather than simply having to fly in outsiders to do it.

The CHAIRMAN: Budget Paper No. 1 makes reference to an increase of 8.7 per cent in the funding for vocational education and training. What will this increased funding buy in terms of student enrolments?

Mr FOLEY: This will ensure that we have a significant boost to the number of enrolments in vocational education and training. It represents an increase of 8.7 per cent, which brings the total Government funding up to just over \$491m for

1995-96. Through both Government-funded and fee-for-service activities, the total activity should yield student contact hours in excess of 53.06 million, which is double that which applied when this Government was elected in 1989.

So by 1996, the vocational education and training system student contact hours should be in excess of 56 million. To convert these figures to student numbers means that there are projected course enrolments of 278,200 in 1995 and 281,900 in 1996 for Government-funded and fee-for-service activity. For 1995, this represents an increase of 3 million student contact hours over 1994, which translates to 26,700 additional student places in vocational courses. For 1996, this represents an increase of almost 6 million student contact hours over 1994, which translates to 30,400 additional student places.

When one refers to these numbers, it is pretty easy to get statistical fatigue, but the bottom line is that the availability of training for ordinary Queenslanders seeking vocational education and training—seeking the training necessary to get jobs—in 1995 will be double that which it was in 1989. That reflects two things: firstly, the problem that Queensland had to come off a pretty low base, in that vocational education and training was somewhat neglected; but secondly that, in looking to the future, the whole basis of employment growth really depends upon having a highly skilled work force. Unless we invest in this sort of funding for vocational education and training, we will not be able to build a strong skills base and generate jobs in the longer term.

Ms SPENCE: I refer you to the program outlays on page 49 of the Program Statements. The notation section on the bottom of that page mentions that increased funding has been given to joint ventures. What is the extent and purpose of those joint ventures, and why does TAFE need to enter into joint ventures rather than go it alone?

Mr FOLEY: Some things are better done together with industry-based bodies. For example, take the Construction Industry Skills Centre. That is a joint business venture between TAFE Queensland and the Construction Industry Training Council. One of the big messages that the National Training Reform Agenda is delivering is that we need to ensure that training is not just institution based; it has to be, as far as possible, taken to the workplace to be made relevant to the needs of industry. A joint venture which picks up on an industry-based organisation like the Construction Industry Skills Centre helps us to do just that. As the establishment of the centre has been funded by the Queensland Government and the Construction Industry Training Fund on a 50/50 basis, the joint ownership has some significant financial benefits for the Government. Once fully established, the centre will operate on a self-funding basis, but it is expected to be fully self-funding by 1997.

In addition to the Construction Industry Skills Centre, TAFE has also participated with Tourism Training Queensland and the division of ETI/VETEC—that is Mr Carlon's division—to

examine options for the establishment of a tourism training skills centre in Cairns. TAFE has contributed \$5,000 towards the conduct of the feasibility study, which was managed by ETI/VETEC, and a final decision is yet to be made regarding the future of the centre. This is part of trying to ensure that we get value for the taxpayer dollar. If we invest in a joint venture and industry is willing to come to the party and put their dollars on the table, then it has the potential to deliver better training outcomes for the taxpayer dollar. For example, the Construction Industry Skills Centre is expected to provide approximately 13,000 trainee contact days of training in 1995, growing to an estimated 84,000 trainee contact days by the year 2000 in the areas of fee-for-service and publicly funded vocational education and training.

Take the construction industry. That industry notoriously has training problems. It is said that anyone with a nail bag and a blue dog can be an expert construction worker. That is not the case. Increasingly, the demands of modern technology are requiring expertise in a whole range of areas. If we want the construction industry to grow in the longer term, we have to try to invest in joint ventures of this kind.

Ms SPENCE: May I inquire as to the location of the Construction Industry Skills Centre?

Mr FOLEY: It is at Salisbury, on the corner of Evans Road and Beaudesert Road. It is the old Evans Deakin site.

Ms SPENCE: It sounds like something that I should know about. My next question regards the employment of tutors within the TAFE system. How are tutors funded and what are the benefits to the system of employing tutors?

Mr FOLEY: This is a particularly appropriate question, coming from a teacher.

Ms SPENCE: And a former tutor at TAFE.

Mr FOLEY: As a former tutor myself, I am happy to answer it, because I take an interest in the issue. In short, tutors work in a complementary role to teachers. This helps to ensure that the training dollar is delivered as effectively as possible. The big challenge that we have in TAFE is to ensure that our training services are reasonably priced and flexible. That flexibility can be achieved through the combination of teacher and tutor. The subject might be taught by the teacher with the demonstration, follow-up and tutorial assistance provided by the tutor. This model allows for teachers to be more effectively utilised in their core teaching role. For the period 1993-94, an additional 24,491 student places were created across the TAFE Queensland system through the use of tutors.

I might say that TAFE was able to secure 500 tutors through a particularly important plan, and I refer of course to the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan, which enhanced the Budget provisions in this area. That \$150m Jobs Plan was introduced in October 1992 to try to hasten the recovery of the Queensland labour market. Putting that boost of an extra 500 tutors into the TAFE system has helped us to move with the National Training Reform

Agenda and to ensure that TAFE is able to compete effectively in an increasingly open training market. We are trying to review workplace practices to achieve increased effectiveness and efficiency in delivery, and that means looking at initiatives such as this. I have been pleased to see the involvement in that process of tutors in our TAFE colleges. They have certainly helped us to achieve some of the improvements in access to training over the last few years.

The CHAIRMAN: As another former TAFE tutor—there are a lot of us about—I draw your attention to the Youth Employment Service. According to the Portfolio Program Statements, this area has gained extra funds to maintain the level of effort generated through the \$150m Jobs Plan that you have just mentioned. What were the results of that level of effort?

Mr FOLEY: The Youth Employment Service has been boosted through the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan. That was the plan that was introduced to try to target some of these areas of need. Youth unemployment is one of the big challenges that confront us, and that is why the Government wanted to strengthen the Youth Employment Service. It provides case management support to young unemployed people. The Jobs Plan enabled us to employ an extra 20 youth employment consultants, and that has been picked up and continued in the current Budget provision. During the period of the operation of the \$150m Jobs Plan up until 31 March 1995, youth employment consultants have assisted 7,433 young people, including the placement of 3,288 into employment and 2,352 into training.

This Youth Employment Service has a particularly challenging job. After talking with some of the staff involved, I found that they are among the most committed, energetic and hard-working officers whom I have had the pleasure to meet. As a group of people, they make a real effort to reach out to unemployed youngsters and to assist them to get into the labour market. Many of the clients of the Youth Employment Service can often feel estranged; they feel alienated and pretty cheated off with life. It is a hard job to ensure that they are accessed.

We have been working together with the Commonwealth Government in tendering for case management services, through the initiative under Working Nation and, indeed, if imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, I must commend the Commonwealth for picking up on the idea of case management, pioneered as it was through the Youth Employment Service in the area of providing case-managed services to a particularly disadvantaged group of people.

So in 1992-93 those 20 additional consultants exceeded the targets that had been set to them by placing 1,040 young people into jobs and 710 into training; assisting a total of 2,369 people.

The CHAIRMAN: It is time now to pass to questions from non-Government members.

Mr SANTORO: I would like to continue discussing the Youth Employment Service. Using total outlays of \$1,278.9m, which is on page 7, and staffing levels, which is on page 11, it would seem that the average cost of service delivery per individual in the entire department amounts to about \$130,000. However, on page 92 of the Portfolio Program Statements, it states that the Government will spend \$3.9m to ensure that 20 positions in Youth Employment Services can be maintained. This means that the cost of service delivery per individual employee in this program amounts to about \$195,000. Can the Minister give this Committee a breakdown of the estimated costs of employing each of these departmental staff and a reason for the difference between the two figures?

Mr FOLEY: Could you just clarify—the difference between which two figures?

Mr SANTORO: On page 7, under the heading "Program Outlays", there is the total program outlays for 1995-96.

Mr FOLEY: The total program outlays of \$1,278.9m?

Mr SANTORO: That is it. At page 92, under the heading "Youth Employment Service", it says that \$3.9m has been allocated to the Youth Employment Service over the next three years to allow for the continued employment of the 20 additional youth employment consultants.

Mr FOLEY: That is right, yes.

Mr SANTORO: The difference there is that the average cost of the total employment is \$130,000 compared with \$195,000 under the youth employment program. Why that differential? Are there extra costs that are incurred in employing those youth employment consultants compared to the rest of the staff throughout the department?

Mr FOLEY: I would just to explain that reference on page 92. Over the past three years, those extra 20 youth employment consultants—it went from 40 to 60—were employed through the funds made available under the \$150m Jobs Plan which in turn depended upon a stream of funds from—

Mr SANTORO: I am not questioning the source of the funds, I am simply questioning the cost differential. Obviously, the department receives funds and one is interested in the efficiency of uses of funds. I am just asking why the cost differential.

Mr FOLEY: Mr Marshman will start the batting on this answer.

Mr MARSHMAN: For the resources outlays on page 7, I think you have referred to the first sentence. It is inappropriate to use that as an average cost of staff. Included in that, for example, are all the workers' compensation claims and all the capital outlays in TAFE. So I do not think that that is an appropriate average measure of the cost per staff being resourced in the department. If it is all right with the Minister, I will pass to Mr Carlon in relation to the \$3.9m.

Mr SANTORO: So, through the Minister, you are saying that the \$3.9m detailed under "Youth Employment Service" is a pure wage cost; is that what you are saying?

Mr MARSHMAN: No, I am not saying that. I am saying in relation to page 7 that the total outlays for the department includes everything we outlay in the trust funds.

Mr SANTORO: If that is the case, if the \$3.9m does not include capital outlays, workers' compensation, etc., the average cost of employing each additional youth employment consultant would be much higher.

Mr FOLEY: I think we are comparing apples with oranges here.

Mr SANTORO: That is what I am trying to determine. Why the differential?

Mr FOLEY: The total program outlays involve a pretty wide range of things, not just staff salaries.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Marshman has explained that, and I accept that explanation. What I am asking now is: what is included in the \$3.9m?

Mr FOLEY: I will ask Mr Carlon to answer that, but in short, as it is set out at page 92, it provides for employment over three years for the 20 extra consultants.

Mr MARSHMAN: It is \$1.3m per year, not \$3.9m per year.

Mr SANTORO: So that is a total allocation for three years?

Mr FOLEY: Yes, that is what it says. It says—

"\$3.9M has been allocated to the Youth Employment Services over the next three years."

Just before we go on, I will invite Mr Carlon to add something to that previous answer, if he wishes.

Mr CARLON: I was merely going to add that it was over three years. There is an apples and oranges comparison here, of course. Youth employment consultants are sometimes more expensive than are some of the other people due to the nature of their work. They are field bound. A lot of their work, because it is with the most disadvantaged people in our community, is outreach work. The people they deal with could be homeless or people like that who do not necessarily come into offices. They therefore, unlike every other officer, have a car and an amount of equipment allocated to them, and in some cases they are allocated computer services. Those who go to very remote communities have telephones and so on. So the average cost of a youth employment consultant can be higher than the average cost of a lot of other public servants because of the nature of their job. They need that extra support.

Mr SANTORO: I am satisfied with that answer. Staying with outlays of salaries, I notice on page 106 of the Portfolio Program Statements that salaries for the Industrial Commission are estimated to increase by \$365,000 for 1995-96. In comparison, on page 11 it is stated that staff

numbers are estimated to increase by one additional employee. Can the Minister advise the Committee as to the estimated cost in terms of salary of this additional employee and where the remainder of the outlays have been allocated?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. I will ask Mr Henneken to take this up in a moment. On page 106, under "Notes", it helps to explain the variation between the 1994-95 budget and the 1994-95 estimated actuals. It states—

". . . funding provided for an award increase for Industrial Commissioners' salaries and pension payments for retired Commissioners which was not approved in 1994-95."

However, one expects that that will occur in the coming year. So the variation between the 1994-95 budget and the estimated actual is partly explained by that. Mr Henneken may be able to take the matter further.

Mr HENNEKEN: I think that the Minister has pretty well covered the differences in the budget figures. The reduction between the 1994-95 budget and the 1994-95 actual is as the Minister has explained. It was essentially for an allocation for a salary increase that at this stage has not occurred and a reduction in cash equivalent of long service leave. The increase between the 1994-95 estimated actual and the 1995-96 estimate is the result of temporary funding provided as a new initiative to resource the Registry Office, funding for an enterprise bargaining increase for the staff of the Registry and the increased provision of cash equivalent of long service leave.

Mr SANTORO: Staying with the subject of salaries—how much has DEVETIR set aside to cover back pay owed to a significant number of TAFE staff who have been incorrectly designated and underpaid for an extensive period? What arrangements have been made in relation to such staff who have ceased working for the department?

Mr FOLEY: This relates to back pay owed to part-time TAFE teaching staff, does it not?

Mr SANTORO: No, it also involves people working in non-teaching positions and those who have been paid for positions for which they are not qualified. I understand that there are some cases currently before the Industrial Relations Commission which are seeking to correct the anomalies that have been evidenced over a period.

Mr FOLEY: I am not sure what cases you are referring to. There is a dispute currently before the Industrial Magistrates Court, not before the Industrial Relations Commission, which relates to a dispute about the absorption of over-award payments with the increase in the award safety net. Mr Henneken has just clarified that that case centres around an issue of whether over-award payments get absorbed during the process of reclassification. There is a case in Toowoomba involving a small number of staff; I think it is six staff. I will ask Mr Marshman to deal with the other part of your question.

Mr MARSHMAN: Apart from the Toowoomba example, there have been a number

of cases where people have claimed to have been underpaid. As far as we know, they are few and far between, and we have followed each one up; a suggestion is made, the corrections are made, if appropriate, and back pay paid. The number of such cases has not been significant on the evidence we have seen.

Mr SANTORO: You think there are six cases?

Mr MARSHMAN: There are six in Toowoomba in that dispute.

Mr FOLEY: We think the number is approximately six in Toowoomba; we cannot swear to that.

Mr MARSHMAN: There may be additional wages staff throughout this system who claim to have been classified inappropriately. I can recall two or three such cases. Every time we have had that claim we have followed it through, and if the claim has been correct we have made the necessary adjustments. To date, I have seen nothing to suggest that it is a significant problem.

Mr SANTORO: If you found that these claims were coming from people who have stopped working for the department, would they receive sympathetic consideration?

Mr FOLEY: Everyone is entitled to fair pay. If anyone has been underpaid, that will be corrected well and truly. If there are any individual cases which you or your colleagues may be aware of, we would be only too happy to have them drawn to our attention. When you talk about staff who have left the employ of the department, I do not know if you are referring to recent times or many years past. I am not aware offhand of any such employees from many years past, but if there are any of recent origin we would certainly want to ensure that they are properly and fairly dealt with.

Mr SANTORO: I have been made aware of at least two cases, and I will see if I can follow those through for you. I am sure they will be grateful for your assurance.

Turning to TAFE and mobile learning facilities—of the \$0.567m provided for mobile learning facilities, as detailed on page 48 of the Program Statements, how much is derived from savings provided through the establishment of institutes and infrastructure grants? How have the savings provided through the establishment of institutes been calculated, and have these savings been accomplished by the institute centres which will be purchasing and using mobile facilities?

Mr FOLEY: As indicated at page 48 of the Portfolio Program Statements, mobile learning facilities will be purchased to assist people in remote areas through the Thursday Island TAFE centre, the Barrier Reef and central Queensland institutes of TAFE and the Normanton TAFE campus. As I have indicated before, it is very important that people in remote parts of the State get proper access to vocational education and training, and mobile learning facilities are a part of bringing training to people in remote areas. Mr Marshman will assist further.

Mr MARSHMAN: The reference to institutes there is because we collapsed our regional offices to form the institutes. We took out a layer of management, if you like, which was the regional office structure. In doing that we made funds available. There was a perceived priority need that had existed for many years, and we made proposals to the Minister in relation to mobile learning facilities.

Mr SANTORO: In terms of answering the first part of my question—are you saying that there has been a savings through reducing the levels of staff?

Mr MARSHMAN: No, not through reducing the levels of staff but through removing the regional layer of management. We have taken that out and devolved those responsibilities to the institute level.

Mr FOLEY: Take for example the central Queensland area. There was a position of regional director, which also had a small office staff associated with it. During the process of establishing the institute, a number of colleges were grouped together, and the position of institute director was established. That effectively cut out overheads that we would otherwise have had through having a regional director's office and ensured that that was contained within the budgetary provisions for the institute itself.

Mr MARSHMAN: There have been no reductions in staff overall.

Mr FOLEY: It is a case of trying to get more efficient systems; it is not a case of trying to remove staff. We are ensuring that we use staff as efficiently as possible, which thereby enables us to use resources to deliver training, particularly, as I say, to those in remote areas who have such a great need for it.

Mr SANTORO: Looking at workers' compensation and DEVETIR, again I am unable to find any details on the amount of workers' compensation premium which DEVETIR will pay. What is DEVETIR's workers' compensation premium for 1995-96?

Mr FOLEY: We are just taking some steps to try to get that information. We may be able to get it this afternoon, otherwise we will give it to you tomorrow.

Mr SANTORO: Without labouring the point, I just thought that again that might have been included within the estimates of outlays. Based on this year's figures—

Mr FOLEY: Excuse me a moment. Premiums have been set, they have been advised, and we can get you that detail shortly—either this afternoon or tomorrow.

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

Mr PYKE: Could the Minister detail how the Young Offenders Program is expected to work and how the pilot will be assessed?

Mr FOLEY: The Young Offenders Program is basically designed to ensure that the process of combating crime takes place on a number of fronts.

It is not just a case of providing funds for Police and Corrective Services. It is also a case of trying to ensure that young offenders are given an opportunity to get out of the cycle of crime which is so often tied to unemployment. The provision of funding in this area will enable four major pilot programs to be developed. Each pilot program will have skills acquisition and employment as its primary goal.

The first pilot program will be sponsored by the Hills and Samford District Welfare Association in the northern suburbs of Brisbane and it will commence on 3 July 1995. It will be of 26 weeks' duration. There will be specific vocational training delivered by the Ithaca College of TAFE which will include workshop skills, basic science and technologies, industrial relations, occupational health and safety and two weeks' work experience. There will be a Cairns project to commence later in July specifically targeted towards Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander persons, and other projects are expected to be developed in Rockhampton and the Logan area.

The project in the Cairns area is supported by the Cairns police and will undertake recreational activities of the group. The police will not only support the project; they will also undertake recreational activities of the group as well as offering work experience to some participants in conjunction with Aboriginal police liaison officers. These have been developed, I might say, in consultation with the Aboriginal and Islander community. They represent an attempt to ensure that those young persons who do commit offences are given an opportunity to put behind them the cycle of unemployment and crime and give them a chance to become more constructive members of the community. So often that depends upon getting the skills necessary to get a job and to get back into the work force.

Ms SPENCE: The Minister has been a strong advocate of apprentice and trainee employment in the private sector. Has there been any improvement in this area? What is the Government doing as an employer itself in this regard?

Mr FOLEY: Yes. There is a great need for apprenticeships and traineeships and I do encourage the engagement of such persons. There are some 7,445 training agreements for apprenticeships processed between 1 July 1994 and 31 March 1995. This represented an increase of 27 per cent over the same period for the previous year. Some 2,101 training agreements for traineeships were processed between 1 July 1994 and 31 March 1995, and this represented, I am sad to say, a 4 per cent decrease compared to the same period. It is a small decrease for traineeships, a good result in apprenticeships. I am pleased to say it is expected that the number of traineeships will significantly increase during 1995-96, with the introduction of new NETTFORCE traineeships—that is part of the Commonwealth Government's Working Nation package—coupled with the considerable marketing function of NETTFORCE.

NETTFORCE is a new body. That very odd couple, Lindsay Fox and Bill Kelty, trooped about the country drumming up business in this area, and I commend both of them because I think they demonstrated that whether people are captains of industry or trade union leaders, we all have a common interest in encouraging this area. Some 23,651 apprentices were in training as at 31 March, and the Government continues to support the employment of apprentices and trainees in a number of ways, both directly and through the Housing Industry and Trade Training Program.

Mr PYKE: I was enlightened by your department's efforts in relation to crime prevention for young offenders. Another group of considerable interest to me is that of women, whom I regard as one of the most disadvantaged groups when it comes to accessing vocational education and training, particularly women who are trying to enter the work force after a marriage break-up, time out raising children, and women who are survivors of domestic violence. Can you tell me what is being done to improve these women's opportunities and whether there was anything specific for women survivors of domestic violence?

Mr FOLEY: Indeed, an amount of \$200,000 has been set aside for assisting the process of women re-entering the work force, because often such persons face obstacles of a systemic and structural nature. A person may have had good office skills but then taken time off for family responsibilities and found after a few years that there has been an information revolution in business offices and therefore a requirement for retraining. So this initiative will undertake a number of projects throughout Queensland to prepare women to re-enter the work force.

The projects will essentially focus on generic skills to equip women to be competitive in the labour market, to assist women re-entering the work force. In order for women to fulfil their potential and to improve their position in the labour market, it is necessary to develop and deliver programs which will identify skills development and career pathways. Suitable courses will be developed in consultation with community organisations on the basis of assessed needs of both industry and participants. The initiative will be a subset of the successful Job Training and Placement Program. It will be delivered through the provision of grants to recognise training and community organisations.

Let me give you one example. I remember last year walking along the cliffs at Hervey Bay and talking to one of the women who was able to obtain employment through the Goss Government's \$150m Jobs Plan, in particular, on a bikeways project. She had left the work force to look after her children and she found that she just could not get back into the work force. She wound up doing that job under a special labour market program, which was manual work—putting bricks in the bikeway—which was not something that she had done before, but her self-confidence and self-esteem were boosted enormously and she explained to me just how pleased she was because

she had tried and tried and tried and just could not break back into the labour force.

This is a very important example of the need for labour market programs to intervene in the labour market, because if we simply leave the labour market to act in accordance with free market forces, often such persons will face systematic barriers to returning to the work force. So the budget targets the problems facing women re-entering the work force in a way what we hope will be of some assistance.

The CHAIRMAN: One of the key recommendations of the Wiltshire review was increased convergence of general and vocational education. I have a special interest in this as experiments are taking place, as you may know, at Toowong State High School. What progress has been made within the portfolio generally?

Mr FOLEY: This area of convergence of general vocational education is one of the great achievements of the Wiltshire review. For too long parents have complained, students have complained and employers have complained that young people leave school without basic employment competencies and thereby fall into the pool of unemployed. We have had great success in recent years in getting more students to stay at school to Years 11 and 12, and really the next part of the process is to ensure that all of those students who are staying on to Years 11 and 12 receive relevant education. Often that means vocational education and not just general education. Funding is currently made available to both the State and non-State school sectors to assist with vocational education provision. \$150,000 is provided to TAFE institutes and colleges to provide quality management services for cooperative programs in State schools. That figure is matched by the Department of Education. Some \$425,000 is provided by DEVETIR to the non-State school sector.

The processes in place involve the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies acting under delegation from VETEC for the purposes of accrediting vocational subjects and it involves a major effort to bring together those two streams—the general education stream and vocational education. All of the reports—the Finn report, the Mayo report, the Carmichael report—have spoken as with one voice in this regard, namely, that we need to ensure that the world of work is not completely remote from and divorced from the school. We need to ensure that we offer to students—particularly those in the post-compulsory years of Years 11 and 12—the opportunity for a broad education which includes vocational education. I have seen a number of the efforts that are being made in this regard. At Scarborough, students are studying some hospitality training and commercial art training as well as their general education. At Cherbourg, students are undertaking Australian Vocational Training Certificate work in the construction area as well as their general studies. I think that this is one of the big challenges in the area of both general and vocational education.

The CHAIRMAN: One of the welcomed initiatives during the economic downturn was the group training companies and the programs they provided. I notice that \$2.25m is still allocated in the State funds this year, and I ask: is their role still justified now that the economy is picking up?

Mr FOLEY: The short answer is "yes", but the long answer is that group training companies in the longer term will have to become self-sufficient. That is a message that Governments all around Australia have been sending to them. I have been pleased to see that a number of group training schemes have become quite innovative. They have a key role in the training system; they are a bridge between institution-based systems like TAFE and the industry itself. Because these group training schemes operate as quasi commercial ventures, albeit not for profit, they have a degree of entrepreneurial flair about them.

I have been delighted to see the way in which the Cairns Regional Group Training Scheme is reaching out into the remote areas, for example, St Paul's Island in the Torres Strait, which I visited with the Federal Minister, Ross Free, to see a project that they are undertaking in construction training for the Torres Strait Islander people there. Funding to those 21 group training companies throughout Queensland is expected to exceed \$3.78m in 1994-95. That includes just over \$1.2m in Commonwealth Government recurrent funds during the current year and just over \$2.25m in State payments.

This enables many small businesses to participate. Often small businesses will say that they do not want to make the commitment to put on an apprentice for a long time. We need to ensure that we do all that is possible to assist those small businesses to put on apprentices. The beauty of the group training schemes is that a restaurant, say, can put on a trainee or apprentice chef for six months or three months. The apprentice remains indentured to the group training scheme and later can go to another restaurant and gains the benefit of a variety of experience. Whereas some employers are wary of making long-term commitment, the group training scheme provides that comfort zone to them to enable them to take on an apprentice or trainee in the short term and to give another person that experience.

The group training scheme at the Gold Coast is conducting an excellent project with the Palm Beach/Currumbin State High School students who spend a couple of days a week on a housing project and so many days a week at school.

The CHAIRMAN: Moving on to labour market reform, Budget Related Paper No. 1 refers at page 14 to the Government's commitment to maintaining the momentum for workplace reform. Specifically, it refers to the allocation of \$1.4m in 1995-96 aimed at further encouraging enterprise bargaining throughout the public and private sector workplaces. This estimated expenditure is a continuation of the Government's commitment to enterprise bargaining in the 1994-95 Budget, but is this money being well spent?

Mr FOLEY: Let us note that, as at 25 May, some 487 certified agreements had been approved by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, 29 enterprise bargaining agreements and eight enterprise flexibility agreements, making a total of 524 agreements covering a total of 186,839 employees. Of course, that is under the State system. The certified agreements and other enterprise bargaining agreements under the Federal system are to be added to that.

Assistance is provided to the private sector for enterprise bargaining. A Workplace Reform Unit has been established in the Labour Market Reform Division of the department to encourage and support the enterprise bargaining process. In 1994-95, some \$920,000 was allocated to the unit, and that will continue in the coming year. One hundred thousand dollars of that is dedicated to supporting the implementation of enterprise bargaining and workplace reform in the tourism and hospitality sector through the Improvement Through People Program. That enables flexibilities to be obtained in the tourism and hospitality sector.

One of the big areas of job growth for Queensland is in tourism and hospitality. To maintain that in the longer term, we need to ensure that we have flexible work practices. That is to be achieved not through a draconian process of knocking off workers' entitlements but rather through a cooperative process whereby workers and management try to achieve a win-win outcome, thereby achieving the flexibilities in that industry and others that can provide the basis for strong, long-term jobs growth.

From January 1994, assistance on enterprise bargaining and workplace reform has been provided in the form of advice and awareness and education programs to approximately 1,400 businesses and the Statewide distribution of informative literature. Seminars on enterprise bargaining and workplace reform were run in Brisbane, Cairns, Mackay, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. I have participated in a number of those, and I have been pleased to see a positive response from industry to try to achieve the flexibilities and boosted productivity that enterprise bargaining will bring.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questioning from Government members has completed. It is over to Mr Santoro.

Mr SANTORO: I was not going to ask a question on this matter because the answer is almost obvious, but in view of the previous question I ask the Minister: why has the department factored into its calculations the full-year impact of enterprise bargaining when it is by no means certain that the Minister will be able to conclude an appropriate agreement with TAFE staff in the immediate future? I refer particularly to page 9 of the Program Statements. Are you confident that you will be able to look at applying a full-year enterprise bargaining factor?

Mr FOLEY: Enterprise bargaining entails agreement from both parties: the employer and employees. We have made provision in respect of

enterprise bargaining. As you would be aware, negotiations are continuing with respect to the achievement of a TAFE enterprise bargain. Recently, there were discussions about that matter in the Industrial Relations Commission. I invite the director-general to assist the Committee further in respect of the budgetary provisions that have been made.

Mr MARSHMAN: As far as the department is concerned, that is, the part of the department implementing TAFE, there is full provision in relation to the full increases—as far as those areas that are trust funded. In the other areas of the department that receive funds from the budget, that is supplemented in the normal way, as are other departments. In relation to TAFE—there is provision in the budget for safety net increases, which have not been provided. We hope to have an agreement in the future that will absorb those.

Mr SANTORO: I have been looking at Mr Hodges, who has not been asked a question all day, and I thought that I would make him feel involved. I refer the Minister to page 26 of the Program Statements wherein it states that there was independent market research conducted on workplace health and safety programs. Can the Minister advise the Committee who conducted that research and its cost?

Mr FOLEY: Which paragraph on page 26?

Mr SANTORO: The first paragraph under "Program Performance Assessment 1994-95 Performance".

Mr FOLEY: This is the market research regarding the involvement of Queensland industry?

Mr SANTORO: That is it, yes.

Mr FOLEY: Further market research is planned for 1995-96.

Mr HODGES: A private firm was commissioned. McDonnell-Phillips undertook that work. They were the successful tenderer of three.

Mr FOLEY: Can you assist the Committee with some further details of that research?

Mr HODGES: Yes. A very important part of the program is the distribution of information to workplaces about the wide range of hazards to people's health and safety. To be effective, that material has to be in a form that is appropriate to the parties at workplaces, be they workers or small employers. It is extremely important that that arrangement be tested to make sure that it is, in fact, getting to the right people and that it is in a form that they can use to apply in their daily work processes—whether it be a hairdresser concerned perhaps about some of the substances that are being used or a metal shop where they are concerned about machine guarding, to which the Minister referred before.

Mr SANTORO: Do you have an idea of the cost of that research that was undertaken and what the estimated cost of additional research is?

Mr HODGES: Most of these cost around about \$20,000 to \$30,000 in total.

Mr SANTORO: Turning again to workers' compensation—we have a new scheme of penalties of up to 100 per cent of premiums for employers with a bad claims record, which is clearly going to vary the bonus equations, and I ask the Minister: what projections are made for the impact of these new arrangements on the net bonus outlays and, in particular, whether applied penalties will simply leave more money within the bonus pool for distribution to employers with better records or whether they will simply remain with the board to support claims or be surplus?

Mr FOLEY: I will give you those details. When we approached the merit bonus review with the assistance of Mr Bubb of the Queensland Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the trade union people—as I indicated before—we attempted to do it on a basis that was largely revenue neutral. That would ensure that it was not just on the one hand a revenue grab or on the other hand an unreasonably generous dispensation. So for the 1994-95 financial year, the additional merit bonus, which will arise owing to the deletion of the common law component, is in the order of \$14m. Set off against that—the abolition of the ambulance discount represents a saving in the order of \$7.6m and demerit charges estimated in the order of \$3.2m. So the merit bonus will actually come out a little ahead. I am advised that by the second year of demerits, that will be largely revenue neutral. The whole idea was not so much to change the overall revenue but to change the system, that is, to ensure that there was a more responsive system, a less muted system and a system where the good employers—as measured by their workplace health and safety performances and their small number of injuries—would get the benefit of the merit bonus. Conversely, the employer with a poor workplace health and safety record, as evidenced by a bad claims record, would be called upon to pay more. Even a person in that position will not be paying out the total amount of the claims costs incurred in his or her workplace. However, it will put a bit more oomph into the system to encourage good behaviour and discourage poor behaviour.

Mr SANTORO: Still on workers' compensation—I note on page 20 of the Portfolio Program Statements that in 1995-96 outlays on claims are expected to increase by \$95m, or 26 per cent, over the Budget-time estimate for 1994-95 to a total of \$452m, which indicates pretty clearly that business will face another increase in premium rates in the 1995-96 financial year. Has that increase been calculated yet, and what will it be in order to support outlays at that disturbing rate of growth? Can we expect premium increases of 26 per cent?

Mr FOLEY: I cannot indicate what the premium rates will be. One has to look both at the claims costs and the expected income from the scheme. One has to look at the total package, including investment returns, actuarial advice on outstanding claims provisions and so on. Certainly the issue of increased claims costs has been of real concern for a number of years. That is why we have undertaken a number of measures to contain the costs side. For example, I refer to the reform of the

Merit Bonus Scheme and the significant legislative change in 1994 which introduced changes and tightened up the definition of "injury"—as with the legislative change—to bring about improvements in compliance on the part of employers. I refer to the continuing review on control measures on common law claims management, the continuing very active encouragement of workplace rehabilitation and the marketing campaign aimed at improving workplace culture. These are matters of concern. We closely monitor them all the time. We do so on both sides of the equation: the revenue and expenditure sides. We do so on the basis of an assessment of the pattern as a whole, including revenue and outstanding claims.

Mr SANTORO: You indicated earlier that the rates that will apply department by department have already been set. Would you care to make those rates available to the Committee? I can ask that on notice, if necessary.

Mr FOLEY: Yes, I am happy to make those available to you. I do not know whether we can obtain the figures this afternoon, but we can give them to you tomorrow. They relate to the claims experienced in Government departments.

Mr SANTORO: So you are saying that the calculation of those premiums is much simpler by department than for industry sectors?

Mr FOLEY: Mr Hastie advises me that it is a different system. It is an experience-rating system, which is used for the bigger Government departments.

Mr SANTORO: I look forward to receiving those figures. In relation to each TAFE institution—could you indicate to the Committee the percentage for the past three years of that institution's total student contact hours for students who are enrolled in TAFE courses but who attend secondary schools or private training agencies and are taught by staff of those schools and agencies and not by TAFE staff? I would be happy to accept an aggregate figure at this time and perhaps put the rest of the question on notice, if the information is not readily available.

Mr FOLEY: Vocational education and training programs are conducted in schools. TAFE Queensland institutes cooperate with high schools and other training agencies in the provision of vocational education and training. The student contact hour outputs associated with cooperative programs are not reported as statistics to the Australian National Training Authority—ANTA—in terms of securing growth funding from the Commonwealth. Only outputs attached to untied State-based funds, untied Commonwealth funds and some tied Commonwealth funds are reported. In 1994, TAFE Queensland's outputs attached to these funds sources amounted to 36.988 million student contact hours, which fulfilled ANTA's expectations. As you know, we have an obligation to maintain effort within the terms of the agreement with the Australian National Training Authority.

Mr SANTORO: Within the annual reports and/or Portfolio Program Statements, does any

reference to student contact hours include hours actually notched up within secondary schools or private training agencies?

Mr FOLEY: It depends a bit on the context in which each publication takes place. I have indicated the basis on which statistics are reported to ANTA. With respect to Program Statements and annual reports, I will ask Mr Sielaff, the Executive Director of TAFE, to take that further.

Mr SIELAFF: The hours reported in the Portfolio Program Statements relate to hours which are conducted in and by the TAFE colleges, that is, the hours refer to students enrolled in the TAFE college. If a TAFE secondary cooperative program is run by a secondary school and a student is undertaking that program at that secondary school but is not taught by a TAFE person, those hours are not reported in the program hours.

Mr SANTORO: If not taken by a TAFE teacher?

Mr SIELAFF: That is right.

Mr SANTORO: I refer to TAFE and core subsidies. In relation to the block of eight TAFE college advertisements which appeared in the *Courier-Mail* on Saturday, 11 February—would you please explain why the department has no clear policy on whether to reveal course fees and costs in its advertising? In relation to some courses advertised, such charges are shown, but in most cases they are not. Can you explain the availability of concessional fees and why the availability is indicated in relation to only two of the advertised courses? How many more of the advertised courses are available at concessional rates to holders of health-care cards, and why is there no clear policy on the issue of indicating such concessional fees?

Mr FOLEY: Is this a reference to the adult and community education courses that are advertised, or is this a reference to the vocational education and training courses?

Mr SANTORO: No, it is in relation to associate diploma and advanced certificate courses offered at various colleges: Yeronga, Southbank and Ipswich.

Mr FOLEY: The short answer is that it just depends upon the advertisement, the amount of space and the cost as to how much information in regard to the course is advertised and how much is available upon request. Mr Marshman will assist the Committee further.

Mr MARSHMAN: If we are running the courses for another funder, such as DEET, Social Security or Immigration, where we have actually won a tender and are advertising for students—they are obviously free, because there is a certain target group that is eligible to participate in the course. If that were the case—and I do not know the specific examples—that would not be there; there would not be any mention of fees. If it is the associate diploma course, I would generally expect—and there is a policy of concessions—that that would be reflected in the ads.

Mr SANTORO: I refer you to TAFE and public sector trainees. In what capacity will public sector trainees be used in relation to the supply of case management services for unemployed people, as referred to on page 4 of the Program Statements?

Mr FOLEY: I will ask Mr Carlon to take that up; but I think, with respect, that the question is based on a misunderstanding. If one goes to page 4, the relevant passage is the third line under that section, which states—

"Revenue generated through a contract with the Commonwealth Government's Employment Services Regulatory Authority to supply case management services for unemployed people will be used to increase the number of trainees . . ."

The way it works is this: we tendered for ESRA funding of the case management services supplied by the Youth Employment Service. We estimate that \$0.71m will be available from this activity. The Commonwealth said to us that, if we get the tender to deliver those training services, they want us to maintain our effort. We say that that is fine. The most logical way of doing that is to use the money that we get from the Commonwealth, which supplements the work of the Youth Employment Service, to spend on employing more trainees in the public sector. I will ask Mr Carlon to give you further detail, but basically it is a case of being able to pick the pocket of the Commonwealth and then using whatever funds we get from that to boost our effort with respect to public sector traineeships.

Mr CARLON: That is basically it. The State Government has actually set quotas for the public sector in terms of apprenticeships and traineeships. The quota is 220 apprenticeships and 400 traineeships which Government departments must employ. Each department is given its individual quota, and we monitor that. I am pleased to say that at this stage the apprenticeship quota has been exceeded. As well, we had 388 trainees as at the end of May, so we have nearly reached the 400 quota. In a competitive tendering situation with a lot of other organisations under the Federal Government's case management arrangements, we did win a contract to do 2,700 case management places. We are going to raise about \$0.9m. Some of that money will be used for some of the costs incurred in that, but \$0.71m will be used to fund an extra 100 trainees over and above the 400 quota.

Mr SANTORO: So you are assuring the Committee that none of the trainees being employed will be used within that program to fill any sort of supervisory, advisory or counselling role?

Mr CARLON: No, they will all be over and above what would normally be there.

Mr FOLEY: I have some information in response to an earlier question which might be of assistance. I am informed by my department that the workers' compensation premium to be paid by DEVETIR in 1995-96 will be \$3,148,146.

Mr SANTORO: Thank you for that. Returning to the issue of adult and community education— why is the continuing decline in adult and community education enrolments shown on a calendar year basis on page 50 of the Portfolio Program Statements and on a financial year basis on page 52, and how will the planned performance initiatives halt or reverse this continuing decline?

Mr FOLEY: Mr Marshman will assist the Committee with that.

Mr MARSHMAN: In terms of the decline—as you know, there is a requirement in the adult and community education sector that it be a fully cost-recovered program. That is apart from some assistance that we provide to rural isolated areas for adult and community education development officers. The department does normally provide them throughout the State. However, that still leaves us with the difficulty of getting those programs out into those areas, and there has been some decline in rural areas that we are concerned about. We are addressing that in a number of ways, but particularly through the use of video conferencing, distance education and that sort of measure. For example, of a night-time there might be three adults in Ingham who join in a class in Townsville via a video conference. I have actually seen that occur. That is the sort of technique that we are trying to use to extend the service beyond the metropolitan areas into smaller centres. It is not easy, but we are working at it.

Mr FOLEY: Just the other day, I opened a new open learning facility at Clermont which is designed to do the same thing: to bring training to people in the bush so that they do not miss out.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from non-Government members has expired. There are no further questions from the Government team, so that concludes the examination of the Estimates of the Department of Employment, Vocational Education, Training and Industrial Relations. I thank the Minister and his officers for their forbearance and attendance here today. The next item for consideration is the Department of Education. The time allotted for that department is 3 hours and 40 minutes. We will commence the hearings for the Department of Education at 3.40 p.m. and adjust the timetable for further hearings accordingly.

Mr FOLEY: May I thank the Committee for the opportunity to discuss these matters? In particular, I would like to thank my departmental officers who have worked hard to provide information to be of assistance to the Committee. I assure the Committee that officers of my department, from the director-general throughout senior management and the department, have worked very hard. I am grateful for their efforts in ensuring that the Executive is accountable to the Parliament in this way.

The CHAIRMAN: So are we, Mr Foley. Thank you.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**In Attendance**

Hon. D. Hamill, Minister for Education
 Mr Frank Peach, Director-General
 Mr Frank Young, Deputy Director-General
 (Corporate Services)
 Ms Robin Sullivan, Deputy Director-General
 (Curriculum)
 Mr Peter Macdonald, Deputy Director-General
 (Schooling)
 Mr Warren Davis, Director, Executive Services
 Directorate
 Mr Mike Keily, Director, Finance
 Mr David Ham, Director, Human Resources
 Ms Leigh Tabrett, Director, Office of Higher
 Education
 Ms Lynne Hackwood, Director, Information
 Planning and Management
 Mr Bob Lenahan, Director, Facilities and
 Services
 Ms Jan Gillies, Acting Director, Quality
 Assurance and School Review
 Mr John Ford, Cabinet Legislation and Liaison
 Officer
 Mr Phil Hay, Principal Policy Officer, Executive
 Services Unit
 Mr Doug Watson, Executive Officer, Office of
 Non-State Schooling

The CHAIRMAN: I should mention that Mr Fenlon is absent because he is unwell. The next hearing is for the Department of Education, and the time allotted will be three hours and 40 minutes. For the information of the new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of these time limits. As set out in the sessional orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from Government members and so on in rotation. At the end of these time periods three chimes will ring. If the Minister has an initial statement that he would like to make, I would ask that he make it now.

Mr HAMILL: The record Budget allocation of \$2.6 billion for Education represents an increase of 52.6 per cent since 1989 when this Government first took office. One quarter of the total State Budget is allocated to Education, and this is the sixth successive increase. It stands in stark contrast to the position in other States, which are cutting back on their Education provision.

The 1995-96 Budget underlines the priorities of this Government, which has emphasised the education of our children as the most significant investment that we can make in Queensland's future. As all members of Parliament are aware, the Government has not only increased the resources available to Education, but it is also putting in place

major reforms to what is offered in our schools. The Wiltshire reforms—the most far-reaching review of curriculum in our history—are being implemented successfully.

Already, \$52m of what is a \$300m commitment has been allocated. Furthermore, as a result of special programs which were initiated by this Government, the literacy and numeracy skills of Queensland students have improved considerably over the past two years. Our record \$2.6 billion budget—\$200m more than last year—also recognises the importance of the non-State sector, with more than \$195m going to non-Government schools—again, a record amount.

Under this Budget, the number of extra teachers employed in the State will reach 3,000 since we came to office, and compared to their counterparts who were employed by the Department of Education in January 1990, teachers enjoy salaries which are now 26 per cent higher. A significant increase in funding for capital works will allow a record number of new schools to be built in the strong growth areas in south-east Queensland and around our major provincial centres. Key programs such as Languages Other Than English, Helping Parents and Citizens with the Basics and Computers in Schools are again being strongly supported.

Successful negotiations with the Federal Government for Queensland to receive its fair share of higher education places has been noted in this Budget, with an allocation of \$10m for site acquisition for new campus developments at Ipswich and in the Gold Coast corridor as well as the provision of continuing capital assistance to higher education in the State. This is a most impressive Education budget and I look forward to the Committee's examination of it.

The CHAIRMAN: For the benefit of *Hansard*, I would ask that departmental officers other than those at the table identify themselves before they answer a question. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

I will now turn to the non-Government members for questioning.

Mr QUINN: On page 6 of the Portfolio Program Statements you state your policy initiatives and strategies for 1995-96. The first initiative is the Schools Revival Program. Within that component of the initiatives there is the statement—

"It provides for the construction of new schools."

What new schools are being constructed under this particular program?

Mr HAMILL: The Schools Revival Program is in addition to our overall capital program. It represents \$140m of commitment over three years, which will enable our capital budget this year to approach, if my memory serves me correctly, about \$190m. As the member would probably be aware, generally it has been the practice of the department

to be able to commit to one or two high schools a year; that is about as far as the budget would allow.

The member would be aware that virtually in his backyard we are committed to the opening in the new year of Robina High. He will also see in the Budget papers that the Government is committed to opening the doors of four new high schools in 1997. Interestingly enough, three of those schools are actually in regional Queensland. There will be one in Kuranda, another at Deeragun, just north of Townsville, and another at Tannum Sands, just south of Gladstone. There will be one school in south-east Queensland, at Victoria Point.

In addition, a number of new primary schools are coming on-line for the new year. Mudgeeraba Creek is one of those schools, as is O'Mara Road, which is near Burpengary, to which a preschool is attached. There is also a replacement school at Hatton Vale and a new school at Noosaville. What we should see from the Schools Revival Program is, as I said, an augmentation of a capital works program, but that augmentation will allow significant work to be done in terms of establishing new school facilities and, as well as that, some very important work in modification of existing school facilities. We have, I think it is estimated, about \$6 billion worth of assets sitting out there on the grass around the State.

We have a lot of schools that were built in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. A lot of teaching spaces, which I can well remember in my primary education, had up to about 30 to 40 children in them. With modern teaching methods and the new curriculum, that is no longer suitable. So, a lot of those moneys that are contained within that Schools Revival Program will go to much needed modifications of existing school structures as well as providing that new infrastructure.

Mr QUINN: Traditionally, new schools were funded within the major body of the Capital Works Program. Why do we have a new program in which new schools are being funded? Why do we not keep the traditional method? New schools should hardly come under a revival program. My definition of "revival" is modernising and updating existing facilities.

Mr HAMILL: You are arguing about how appropriately named the additional capital allocation is. I put to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee that this was an area of real need, given our significant population growth, which has continued unabated, and given the situation that prevailed in many of our primary schools, particularly in some of the older established areas.

For example, let us look at the metropolitan-west region, where my electorate is located and a lot of other members have consistencies, such as the Chairman of the Committee. That region, which is one of the older, established areas, contains schools which, in some cases, can be over 100 years old. Other areas went through the baby boom expansion of the 1950s and 1960s. As I was pointing out in answer to your previous questions, all those schools need to be refurbished. You can

call it a revival program or a refurbishment program, or you can call it a significant bucket of money from which schools and their communities will benefit. This funding is in addition to the regular Capital Works Program, and it is a specific initiative of the Government in response to a particular need. Whilst you may not like the nomenclature, I believe the school communities will like the results of this particular initiative because it means up-to-date facilities—and more of them—in places where the needs are most apparent.

Mr QUINN: In the studies areas of the Portfolio Program Statements, the Capital Works Program last year was allocated \$149m.

Mr HAMILL: Can you refer to a page in the PPS?

Mr QUINN: I refer to the Capital Works Program, page 49 and onwards. It states that, this year, funding will be \$177m. This is a departure from last year's program format, when \$149m was allocated; the difference is \$28m. You referred to a bucket of money; yet the \$34m for the Schools Revival Program and \$10m for the School Refurbishment Program are in addition to the regular Capital Works Program. The difference is not really \$44m; the difference is \$28m. What has been happening here is that some money within the traditional Capital Works Program is being redirected into those two programs.

Mr HAMILL: I refer you to page 6 of the Portfolio Program Statements. You will see that, this year, \$34.2m has been made available under the Schools Revival Program, and \$10m has been made available under the Schools Refurbishment Program, over and above the existing capital program. If my memory serves me correctly, on the forward Estimates promulgated last year, there would have been a slight reduction in the capital program for 1995-96. What you have here, as part of the Schools Revival Program, is an additional source of funding through a new initiative, over and above that which would appear on the forward Estimates. It is quite fallacious to argue—in the way that you have—that you just look at the total from one year to the next, because capital programs vary considerably from one year to the next. The appropriate comparison here is the forward Estimates. If you look at the forward Estimates and the impact of the Schools Revival Program and the Schools Refurbishment Program, you will see a significant increase in capital funding available for schools.

Mr QUINN: Turning to page 9 of the PPS—last year, we had some difficulty trying to line up the various teacher numbers, as the previous Minister found. There were various reasons for the differences between what was in the document and what in fact was happening in the schools. This year, hopefully, the numbers will line up somewhat. I am looking at the totals of staffing as full-time equivalents. In the 1994-95 budgeted figures, we have a total staffing level of 42,963. The estimated actual has been reduced to 37,855. I am wondering what the reason is for that sudden and dramatic reduction.

Mr HAMILL: The first point you need to understand is that staffing extends across a variety of positions in addition to teaching positions. We are dealing with overall staffing and their full-time equivalents. The apparent reduction taking place in terms of full-time equivalent staffing positions comes at a time when we have record numbers of teaching positions. The fact is that, in terms of teaching positions, this budget will allow us to be in the position where we have approximately 3,000 additional teaching positions compared to when we came to office in 1989.

The disparity that appears between a statement like that and a figure here, where full-time staffing equivalents appear to be declining, is largely attributable to the fact that cleaning staff, who were previously part of the Department of Education complement, have been transferred through Q-Clean—an agency of the Department of Administrative Services—across to Administrative Services. That has a very significant impact on total staffing numbers, and we are talking about full-time equivalents. With cleaning staff alone—in the primary school sector we are looking at over 3,000 full-time equivalents, and in the case of secondary school cleaning it is over 1,700 full-time equivalents. Of course, cleaners are also involved in preschool and special schools.

On the other side of the ledger, there are additional full-time equivalent positions coming on stream in association with Shaping the Future. That is a major initiative and a major financial commitment for the Government. In the corporate sector and the studies policy and development sector there are 266 full-time equivalent positions coming on stream. When you take all of those factors into account, you have a decline; but there is certainly no decline in terms of teaching positions.

Mr QUINN: In the PPS for Administrative Services, under Q-Clean it is indicated that some 3,950 cleaning positions went across Administrative Services for administration; you have quoted figures in the order of 4,700.

Mr HAMILL: I do not have the Administrative Services PPS with me, but I know that the numbers for full-time equivalent cleaner transferees are the figures which I have already mentioned. As to what might be the case for the forward projections, which presumably are those contained in Administrative Services—and as I said, I do not have that PPS with me—all told, some 4,960 full-time equivalent positions have been removed from the Education budget as a result of that administration change. Those figures I was quoting were from June 1994 to June 1995.

Mr QUINN: The figures for the 1995-96 Estimates indicate another increase in the order of 660.

Mr HAMILL: What are you referring to?

Mr QUINN: The same table as we were looking at before. The 1995-96 Estimates for staffing total 38,523. As a rough calculation, that represents an increase of some 668 full-time equivalents. You have budgeted within the

document for an extra 180 teachers—as indicated before—and I think the breakdown was there. Why is there a discrepancy again?

Mr HAMILL: What is the discrepancy?

Mr QUINN: You are saying that you budgeted for an extra 180 teachers and you got an extra 668 staff.

Mr HAMILL: I reiterate the point I made a moment ago that staffing is more than teachers. We have a variety of people who come under the total staffing allocation in schools. We have administrative people in schools. All told, in terms of the teaching numbers, there is provision for 184 additional teachers, but we also have provision for additional ancillary staff. If you consult other parts of the Program Statements you will see additional allocations of staffing for various specialist staff and other ancillary staff in schools as well. We also have a significant increase in staffing associated with Shaping the Future, and already we have a number of people who have been engaged in terms of key teachers, learning advisers and so on. Shaping the Future plus those other initiatives like the behaviour management initiative, like the LOTE initiative and, of course, the new schools that are being brought on stream all account for the additional staff across-the-board.

Mr QUINN: Earlier this year the department said that it was employing an extra 454 new teachers as a result of Wiltshire, supposedly a growth within the system. Were those teachers employed?

Mr HAMILL: There has been extensive recruitment of teachers as a result of the Shaping the Future initiative. In fact, 110 advisers were engaged earlier this year. As well as that we have had the substantial recruitment of the key teachers. There was a first lot of 45 teachers who were coming on stream to support the introduction of student performance standards in mathematics. There is a similar 45, as I recall it, coming on in English in January. All told, as I have mentioned before in relation to your question on the aggregate difference in staffing numbers, there are some 266 positions that have been brought on as a result of Shaping the Future, with 243 in the studies policy and development area. They have been engaged.

Mr QUINN: They have been engaged or will be engaged this year?

Mr HAMILL: That is right. If you would care to further refer to the *Hansard* of yesterday you would see that I actually gave a very detailed account of all of those staffing arrangements, both those that have been entered into in the last six months and also prospectively for the next six months.

Mr QUINN: With regard to the document which I tabled in the House today, those extra teacher numbers which you have said will be employed during the year, do they take account of those reductions?

Mr HAMILL: Overall, we have additional teachers being engaged by the department this year. I understand from the document that you

tabled in the House, which I actually took the trouble to obtain a copy of, that it would have been useful had you referred to the last key paragraph on the second page of the document where it talked about the Statewide forecasts for the end of the financial year being revised based on February 1995 actual enrolments and shows a considerable drop in numbers. The last paragraph states—

"This matter will be resolved by the end of the financial year once enrolment effects and the overall funding position of the department are known with greater certainty."

We are engaging teachers in classrooms and we are also engaging teachers to support Shaping the Future. The 3,000 increase, as I have indicated, compared with the same figure six years ago, is very real. I might point out that, when we are talking about actual teacher numbers, in any one day there are all sorts of fluctuations that can occur. For example, retirements and people on permanent part-time work and so on. That is why when we are talking about our staffing we are talking about full-time equivalents, and the increase is very real.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questioning from the non-Government members has concluded and we will now pass over to Government members.

Ms SPENCE: One question that I think came out of the last group of questions from the Opposition is: when does someone get classified as a teacher when they are being employed as opposed to, say, a public servant under a new initiative like Shaping the Future?

Mr HAMILL: There are certain places, for example in the School Curriculum Office, where teachers will be recruited to those positions but they will work as public servants. So it really is a matter of the position description. But that is certainly the area where you would see that there will be an increase, for example, in public servant numbers, yet people who will be filling a large part of the increase will be teachers. It is a job description issue.

Ms SPENCE: Page 8 of the PPS shows that the expenditure on preschools will increase from \$75.635m to \$76.405m. It also shows corresponding increases in the variations for the primary and the secondary sectors. Can you explain these variations?

Mr HAMILL: I will deal with them consecutively. Take preschool education. There are a number of important issues that are facing preschools at present. Preschools are under a considerable degree of challenge, as indeed are community kindergartens, from the proliferation of child-care centres. That has had an impact on enrolments at preschools, although as you would already know, we will be opening some new preschools with new primary schools that are coming on stream next year. The most significant factor in that increase in funding for school operations in preschools is the impact of enterprise bargaining, which will cost around \$2m this financial year.

In the case of primary education, as you can see there is a very substantial increase there. That is made up in two parts: the significant increase in capital made available through our Capital Works Program and our Schools Revival Program. There is around \$31m flowing in capital to the primary school sector and around \$37m flowing to teachers and others engaged in the primary schools through enterprise bargaining. In the case of the secondary schools, the significant parts—there is \$35m there—is attributed again to enterprise bargaining. Obviously, there are capital works.

What we are finding in the secondary schools is some impact. I can put it down only to the more buoyant employment situation in the wider labour market, which has impacted somewhat on retention rates, particularly to the senior secondary schools. Retention rates have eased somewhat from the position they were at some three years ago. That is one of those factors which has influenced some of the outcomes that Mr Quinn was referring to earlier in terms of resourcing in the secondary school sector. In short, capital works and enterprise bargaining are the two factors which have played a part in explaining the difference between the two years.

Ms SPENCE: On page 35 of the PPS, there appears to be a significant variation between the 1994-95 budget figure and the 1994-95 estimated actual expenditure. Can you explain why that would be the case?

Mr HAMILL: I think you probably need to understand the nature of a budget. A budget is drawn up as an indicative document allocating expenditure across programs. We have had some internal reallocation of funds since the 1994 Budget was brought down in May. Again, the major factor involved in that has been the impact of enterprise bargaining, which has affected outlays in the order of some \$5.8m. Other issues are increments, enrolment change and non-contact time, but enterprise bargaining is the largest single component to that variation.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Ardill is with us to ask a question.

Mr ARDILL: Two-thirds of the people in my electorate are low-income earners. Primary school libraries and music education are very important issues to those people. I can see the possibility of problems in those areas. I ask: is there provision in the budget for additional emphasis on instrumental music instruction and other aspects of musical education which have stretched facilities to the limit recently due to an upsurge in interest generated within State primary schools and the enthusiasm generated by excellent teachers? An additional problem has arisen because of non-contact time reducing interaction between music teachers and classroom teachers in some schools. Will this budget overcome the present problems?

Mr HAMILL: I will take up the last point first. Certainly, this year the extension of non-contact time in the primary school sector has been carried to a substantial degree by the use of specialist teachers, whether they be instrumental music or

specialists in Languages Other Than English. Measures which I announced recently, which will provide greater substance to the administration in primary schools through the more generous arrangements for the appointment of deputies, will give primary schools a greater capacity to move their resources internally to cover the issue of non-contact time. A number of those deputies who will be appointed will have teaching loads. As a result of that initiative, some of the principals will have their teaching loads either removed or halved, and that will certainly help programs like instrumental music.

Instrumental music has been an extremely successful program and one for which there is a great demand. Yes, there has been a view held in many areas that some of the lower socio-economic areas have had less access to the instrumental music program. Currently, some 37,000 students in 440 primary schools and 153 secondary schools are involved in the instrumental music program. The 1994-95 budget expanded the program into 13 additional schools and instruments into 23 schools in addition to schools that began the program in 1994. This year, the budget will see the program expand again, importantly through the employment of 20 additional teachers. One of the problems has been staffing—the availability of people to actually take the programs, so that will certainly help.

Some 2,000 additional students will have access to the instrumental music program. We think that probably somewhere between 50 and 80 schools that currently do not have access to the program will have the program extended to them. All told, that extension of the program is worth about \$1.7m. The teachers account for the \$1m part and around \$700,000 for instruments to provide for those additional schools which will have access to the program. So, hopefully, one of those schools is in your electorate.

Ms SPENCE: Page 59 of the Portfolio Program Statements shows a significant increase in the allocation to corporate service activities. Could you explain this increase to us please?

Mr HAMILL: A number of separate matters have a bearing on this particular item. Probably the largest single item is the implications of Shaping the Future. I keep mentioning Shaping the Future, but when you are dealing with an initiative that is worth \$300m overall—and \$52m of that has already been allocated—it does have some bearing. In that corporate services area, \$13m covers the seconded teachers and the public servants to establish the Queensland School Curriculum Office. Also included is the cost of the quality assurance officers, who have all been appointed. That was another group that I mentioned in relation to Mr Quinn's earlier inquiry. Again, enterprise bargaining is a factor.

One of the Government's very specific initiatives to assist rural families and particularly those who are affected by drought is the establishment of parent liaison officers. That is a \$330,000 initiative. A little over \$0.5m is for the stress management initiative, which is outlined in the Budget papers as a measure designed—along

with a range of other initiatives—to assist in the alleviation of stress in the workplace, which I think most people recognise is an important issue in the classroom today.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you have answered half of the question that I wanted to ask. Page 60 of the Portfolio Program Statements shows an increase in the number of public servants of 53. Is that a ballooning of bureaucracy or are those the people to whom you were just referring? What will those people do?

Mr HAMILL: Again, two points need to be made. In Parliament this morning I was discussing the overall numbers of public servants and particularly the numbers of people in the head office. When Focus on Schools was brought out in early 1990, there were around 1,450 people who could be described as working in the head office and about 250 people who were in regional offices—all told, around about 1,750 people. As a result of initiatives that have resulted in positions being taken from head office and strengthening of the regional offices but overall downsizing of the bureaucracy within the department, 506 officers are in the central office and 538 are in regional offices.

On the face of it, the matter raised in the question gives the appearance that we are going back in the other direction, but I point out the two items in question. In relation to public servants, the increase of nine, which you see in the table on page 60 of the Portfolio Program Statements, relates to the initiative that I mentioned a moment ago regarding occupational stress management. They are full-time equivalent positions. The other that is clearly shown in that table is the staffing complement for the Queensland School Curriculum Office. As I have already mentioned, those 44 positions are made up of 16 public servants and 28 seconded teachers who will be working under public service conditions. You could hardly describe it as a ballooning of bureaucracy.

I will make this further point: the Queensland School Curriculum Office has a very important intersystemic role. It is there to do the hard yards, if you like, with respect to the curriculum review. It reports to me, but its chief officer—its general manager—is a member of the Queensland Curriculum Council, which is the body that has been established to advise me as Minister on curriculum matters. The Queensland Curriculum Council has recently been established. Among its number we have people who come from the Government sector and the non-Government sector—all told, 21 people. QSCO, the Queensland School Curriculum Office, is designed to sit apart from the department and fulfil its role, not only to State education but to all education in the State.

The CHAIRMAN: Those 28 seconded teachers are then counted as public servants?

Mr HAMILL: They will be working under public servant conditions; that is right.

The CHAIRMAN: And counted as public servants?

Mr HAMILL: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Pyke wanted to ask a question.

Mr PYKE: Under the preschool subprogram at pages 13 and 14 of the Portfolio Program Statements there is a difference between the estimated labour costs for 1995-96. Can you explain that, please?

Mr HAMILL: Page 13.

Mr PYKE: And 14.

Mr HAMILL: A number of matters have a bearing on this. In the subprogram outlays table on page 13, the cost of specials is included in the labour outlay figure; while if we look at that table on page 14, the cost of specials is separated from labour and non-labour activities. If you include salaries in specials, there will be a discrepancy between the two figures. You will see that in the case of the preschool program, and I suspect you will see it in most other programs as well.

The CHAIRMAN: On page 14 of the PPS, there is an indication of a decline in spending on the Government's SunSmart initiative. Is this enrolment related, or are you managing to reduce costs?

Mr HAMILL: Which line are we looking at?

The CHAIRMAN: Page 14.

Mr HAMILL: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Down the bottom.

Mr HAMILL: No. In fact, SunSmart actually had a carryover of funds in 1994-95. That was as a result of the establishment of the program and gearing it up. So it actually caused a higher than usual level of expenditure under that subprogram in that year. Now, we will see expenditures being at those base levels in 1995-96. So there is no resiling from SunSmart.

The CHAIRMAN: Good.

Mr HAMILL: In fact, if I might just comment further in relation to SunSmart, the program is actually operating across three programs, the preschool, the primary and also in the non-State sector, which I think is very important. Whilst it may have appeared that it was enrolment linked, it really is to do with the issue of that initial carryover.

Ms SPENCE: Can I draw your attention to the primary subprogram on page 21 of the PPS?

Mr HAMILL: Yes.

Ms SPENCE: It shows no outlays for current grants and subsidies in 1995-96, but the major activities table on the next page shows current grants and subsidies of \$1.3m next year. Why is there this discrepancy?

Mr HAMILL: The classification of grants and subsidies, whether they are current or capital outlays, is affected by the method by which those funds are transacted. In some cases, funds are transferred to schools by way of grant; in other cases, the directorate, or maybe the regional office will make an appropriation to a school. A case in point might be the acquisition of school tractors. One course of action is for the school to receive a

grant and actually undertake the purchase itself. Another one might be for the region to undertake to purchase on behalf of the school and incur the cost as an expense. At the end of the day, it is the same in that the item is actually acquired, but in terms of being reflected in costs, whether it is on the school's books or whether it is on the department's ledgers, when you collate that data—the two tables—the methods of doing that treat those two costs differently. Let me assure the Committee that all the expenses are fully accounted for by virtue of the balance of the two aggregated totals of the two tables in question after accounting for the allocation of corporate services in the subprogram.

Mr PYKE: On page 22 of the Portfolio Program Statements, the budget for "Other Administration Costs" in 1994-95 will be significantly underspent. Is there a problem with those figures?

Mr HAMILL: That is in that second bracket of figures—"Other Administration Costs". There are a couple of reasons for a discrepancy of this nature. Firstly, the department has adopted a program management approach to resource management, and that is required by the Public Finance Standards. That means that the allocation of funds to programs and subprograms and, indeed within subprograms, is subject to a thorough consultative process. Subprogram management groups with client representation, such as principals, are vested with the responsibility for allocating and reallocating funds to best achieve the use of resources and value for money. Funds will be reallocated through that sort of process after the printing of the Budget papers, which occurs in May each year, to allow for the pursuit of priority objectives. I expect that in this case funds have been reallocated across the program to meet other needs. It is also worth while pointing out that it is likely that, during the course of the year, a different treatment may have been adopted by Treasury for specials. I note that the budget for the Remote Area Incentive Scheme under this subprogram is nil whereas expenditure is in excess of \$2m. It is not the case that the budget for this activity was included previously in "Other Administration Costs", therefore creating further misalignment between the budget and the actual expenditure. It has bearing going back to what I was saying before; it is very difficult in May of the year to get down to the final dollar and the final cent in terms of any particular allocation. Given that people have to work within budgets, budgets are not so inflexible as to prescribe matters. You will always have that degree of fluctuation from actuals to the outlays in the first instance.

The CHAIRMAN: We will move now to the non-Government members for their next question bracket.

Mr QUINN: If we can go to the documents that you were talking about before and the fluctuations in staffing that we talked about today—

Mr HAMILL: That is the document you tabled in the House? Yes.

Mr QUINN: I understand that, given the nature of the predictions of enrolments—the fact

that they may not occur and that they go up and down—it is not unusual to have staffing adjustments at this time of the year. However, in the case of the magnitude of this adjustment, is that usual, the fact that the department will move throughout a year to reduce the staffing level by 400 teachers?

Mr HAMILL: When you say, "Is it usual"—

Mr QUINN: What has been the history? Has there been an adjustment of 100 a year?

Mr HAMILL: Let me respond to you. It might be said that it is unusual to be experiencing such population changes as we experience here in Queensland and, of course, they do not occur across-the-board. The impacts can be felt disproportionately in certain places in the State. Assessments are made from one year to the next. In fact, predictions or projections are made based on the previous year's enrolment data to try to give a guide to the staffing, which we think will be necessary for the beginning of the new year.

A whole range of factors can produce an outcome from the process of estimation which requires adjustment. I have already mentioned that external factors, such as the labour market, have an impact on enrolments in the post-compulsory sector of secondary education. For example, the impact of the availability of day care is having an impact in the preschool area which, of course, is non-compulsory. In respect of the size of the adjustment, it might be worth while to ask the author of the document that you tabled, the Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services, Frank Young, whether he would care to elaborate.

Mr YOUNG: As the Minister said, the data that we use for our predictions comes from the July 1993 census, plus demographic predictions made in 1993 for the staffing for schools in 1995. The staffing processes for the beginning of this year actually started in June 1994, when schools and regions looked at the estimates that they were getting for enrolments in schools. They felt that the estimates provided through the census data and the demographic predictions were below the numbers that they estimated would be attending their schools. We were faced with two choices. One was to look at the increases that they expected and increase the number of teachers. The other choice was to increase the student/teacher ratio, something which we felt was unacceptable. So in September we added in an extra 171 students in case the numbers reached the levels predicted by the schools. The numbers did not reach those levels. The teachers were never put into the schools, and that is why they can be withdrawn.

Mr QUINN: For calculating the reductions in teacher numbers, did you use a student/teacher ratio or a class size formula? How did you do that?

Mr YOUNG: The regional office looks at the student/teacher ratio and the sizes of the classes in schools. Student/teacher ratios will give you the number of teachers that are required within a school. However, you also need to look at the combination

of students within classes. Both of those factors are looked at when it is done.

Mr QUINN: Each year, the department does a census in about February, does it not?

Mr YOUNG: At the end of February.

Mr QUINN: From that census, I understand that statistics are compiled as to the mean average class size across the State and also the number of oversized classes across the State. Have those calculations been done yet?

Mr YOUNG: That data has been produced.

Mr HAMILL: I can give you some information in relation to class sizes, which is part of the point of your question.

Mr QUINN: I have a copy of the previous year's figures. I want an update for this year.

Mr HAMILL: I have some data for February 1995.

Mr QUINN: Could you read it out?

The CHAIRMAN: Would it be possible for the Minister to table that document?

Mr HAMILL: I will go through it. Again, this is a point that needs to be appreciated. Schools are staffed according to the appropriate staffing ratio. Individual school administrations can make decisions about whether an individual class might have a staff/student ratio which is at variance to the staffing model. There might be some very good educational reasons for that. For example, in a particular class there might be 26 students when it was aimed to have 25. That is at the discretion of a school administration. A detailed analysis has been undertaken of class sizes. This was the February 1995 figure. When we take out the examples of class sizes that varied in excess of target size by the choice of the school, we see that under 4 per cent of classes in the primary sector are above the target size for various other reasons. That was the figure in May. There has since been a follow-up. The figure in February was 5.4 per cent.

In the secondary area, a very different set of circumstances prevails. Obviously, in an endeavour to offer as wide a curriculum as possible, in particular in country high schools—and I guess the same thing applies in some of our urban centres as well—we have classes in high schools that are well below the targeted staffing numbers. It is a pretty dodgy business to get too head-up about averaging class sizes right across-the-board. I think that information demonstrates, though, that we are not doing too badly.

Mr QUINN: Are you going to table the statistics for both primary and secondary mean class sizes and the percentage of oversized classes?

Mr HAMILL: I do not have all of that information here. I am advised by my director-general that in secondary schools 0.8 per cent of class sizes are outside of the targeted size. I think that is a pretty good result.

Mr QUINN: Will we get a full copy of the document?

Mr HAMILL: No, I did not say that. I was commenting in relation to the question. I was giving you the aggregate data. I do not have a detailed breakdown of the secondary data with me.

Mr QUINN: Do you have the data for primary schools?

Mr HAMILL: I have the data for primary schools.

Mr QUINN: Are you willing to make it available?

Mr HAMILL: I will give you some figures, if you like.

Mr QUINN: Perhaps if I read out the heading, you can give me the figures.

Mr HAMILL: We have data for right across the regions. In the primary school area, based on our sampling in May, only 1.6 per cent of classes are oversized in terms of target sizes for those other reasons that I have mentioned. As I said, in the south-western region it does vary. The south coast area has 5.1 per cent. At this stage, it would be better to wait for the data. I am happy to table the information in the Parliament. One region has yet to give us its final figures—that is, the Capricornia region—for the May update. When we have that information, we can give you a full report region by region. If you care to put a question on notice in the Parliament, I will be happy to furnish you with that information. But please give us a few weeks so that we can get the information from Capricornia.

Mr QUINN: Is the February data available now?

Mr HAMILL: Yes, I am happy to provide you with the February data.

Mr QUINN: Will you be tabling it today?

Mr HAMILL: I am happy to provide that to the Committee. If you are asking that question on notice, I shall obtain the February data and we will have it here for the Committee's deliberations. I have data which includes preliminary statistics for May for one of the regions. I have already explained why I do not think it is sensible to put that out at this stage. We need to have the Capricornia figure finalised for May. I am happy to give you the February data.

Mr QUINN: According to the document that I have in front of me, the department normally releases the figures in February and July. Why have we done an update in May this time?

Mr PEACH: In previous years, the information that has been released has been raw data and has not taken account of the issues that the Minister has just raised, namely, that there are some classes above target sizes because of local decisions by schools. This year, we have taken that raw data. Our regional officers have gone back to schools and sought the reasons that the classes are over those target sizes. So the information that the Minister will be able to table in a short time will be more refined in that it will paint a truer picture because it will take account not just of the sizes of classes but also will be able to provide information that very few of those classes across the State—a

couple of hundred out of over 10,000—are above target size other than for reasons of choice by the principal and community of the school.

Mr QUINN: In other words, we are not going to get the data in the same format as we got it last time, that is, mean class sizes and then the percentage of classes exceeding the target class size. That will be the same, but with a different basis for analysis.

Mr HAMILL: What you will have is that data and a refinement of that data, recognising, as I said before, that individual schools often make decisions about allotting children into particular classes based on policy matters involved in the school. The staffing formula would enable quite a large number of those classes to be within the target size if applied strictly, but for good reasons individual schools make decisions which will result in some classes being below the target size—and that is obviously the objective in these places—and commensurately therefore some classes will be above the target size. It is worth noting that from our analysis, when we look at this issue of classes above the target size, for every case of a class being outside of the target, there are two cases where schools have made the decision for reasons best known to themselves.

Mr QUINN: Who will assemble the data and make those decisions about the various reasons why a class may very well be under the class size? Will you have an officer going around and looking at the various individual schools and making a judgment on a school-by-school basis and, if so, what criteria will that officer use?

Mr HAMILL: The director-general can explain that.

Mr PEACH: When the data was collected, principals were asked to explain the reason that certain classes were over targets and they were able to indicate whether it was because they could not timetable to reach the targets or whether it was because the school community had made a conscious decision for curriculum reasons to do that. In a small number of cases where there were classes over target where the school was staffed particularly well and it looked somewhat anomalous, regional officers talked to the principal and asked the principal what the reasons were as well. So it was a two-stage process involving all in the first instance and a small number in the second.

Mr QUINN: I return to the document I referred to before. In Attachment A of the document—

Mr HAMILL: Sorry, which document?

Mr QUINN: The document that I tabled today under the signature of Frank Young.

Mr HAMILL: The letter or the memo?

Mr QUINN: Letter, memo, document—it is all the same to me. Coming down the list of regions on the left-hand side—

Mr HAMILL: Hang on, we are talking—

Mr QUINN: Attachment A.

The CHAIRMAN: May I ask that that be made available to the rest of the Committee, please?

Mr QUINN: Yes, certainly. I am having spare copies made. This is the last question about this document, so if the Committee can just bear with me. When looking at this particular document, you would expect variations in the growth areas of the State such as the south coast and Sunshine Coast because of population growth or because the expected population has not arrived from the south, or wherever it may be coming from. But in areas where you would think that the schools would be rather stable, such as the Darling Downs, we see a rather disproportionate reduction in teacher numbers. I am wondering why that has occurred, if indeed your reassessment criterion is population.

Mr HAMILL: I will make a couple of points in relation to that table, and then I will ask the author of the document to explain the tabulation for you. In relation to Attachment A—for the information of the other Committee members, I point out that there is a breakdown there under the heading "Changes to regional budget control limits". There are several columns there—secondary, primary and community teachers. To give you a flavour of how dangerous it is to rely on this document as an indicator that staffing numbers overall are declining, I draw your attention to the third column, which is headed "Community teachers". If we were to take the honourable gentleman's comments at face value, he would have us believe that a significant reduction—that is, a reduction of 20, one of the greatest reductions of any of the figures in the columns—was applying in the peninsula region relating to teachers in Aboriginal and Islander communities.

In fact, that reduction in community teachers is something which we ought to applaud, because it actually shows the success of RATEP. People who have been community teachers have undertaken the RATEP and are being trained through the James Cook University and TAFE. As a result of that training, they are no longer community teachers but fully fledged teachers who are taking their place alongside other fully fledged teachers in our schools. I just warn you about putting too much store in some assumptions that you might draw from the table. With respect to the other part of your inquiry—again, I will ask the author of the document if he would care to comment.

Mr YOUNG: It goes back to the 171. If you look at the first two columns, they add up to that 171. It indicates the overprediction of the regions as listed. For instance, Wide Bay was one that overpredicted quite substantially, and so too did Capricornia and Sunshine Coast. They felt that their numbers of student enrolments were going to increase significantly. That did not occur, and so there was no need for those teachers, so that is the 171. The 171 relates to the students that the regions and the schools thought would come but did not actually come.

Mr HAMILL: If you are looking at Capricornia, Wide Bay and Darling Downs, it may

have been that there was a bit of anticipation in the area of an early break to the drought.

Mr QUINN: I turn to PPS page 14. In 1994-95, utilities in the preschool sector were budgeted for at over \$1m, yet they are now down to in the order of \$400,000. What is going on there?

Mr HAMILL: We are dealing with preschools. This is really reflecting a slightly different treatment of facilities. In the 1994-95 budget, provision was made for preschool utility costs, most of which are in fact met by the host primary schools. So that explains the difference between the budget allocation and the estimated actual. What we have carried forward there is the reality for the estimate, which is that which the preschools actually make allocation for in their budget.

Mr QUINN: I turn to page 22 and the primary school sector. I note that the cleaners have now been transferred across to Q-Clean. Am I right in assuming that Q-Clean now manages or supervises them?

Mr HAMILL: They are engaged by Q-Clean.

Mr QUINN: The question is: why are they being paid out of—

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Quinn might like to take up that question in the next session.

Ms SPENCE: I refer you to page 30 of the PPS, which shows that the allocation for plant and equipment will be significantly underspent. Can you explain the reason for that, please?

Mr HAMILL: As I made the point in relation to another inquiry, there is a consultative process regarding program and subprogram expenditure. The management groups are vested with responsibility for allocating and reallocating funds to achieve the best use of resources and value for money. From the point at which the Budget papers are printed to periods of 12 months later, you can imagine that there may be some variation within a particular item.

In the case of the preparation of the 1994-95 budget, the department made a substantial move to program management in 1993-94, aligning its budget to its new program structure and regionalising some \$1.8 billion of expenditure under the Schools Operation Program. At the time of framing last year's budget, the department was only three-quarters of the way through 1993-94 and was still in the process of refining its allocations to its programs. So, the budget provisions in the 1994-95 papers in many cases, such as plant and equipment—which is the subject of your question—would not have fully reflected the results of the experience of 1993-94. So, accordingly, re-allocations in May 1994 were very likely.

One final observation is that expenditures on plant and equipment had been suppressed generally for the year ending 1994-95 pending the establishment of the technology standards under what is a very important initiative, that is, the SIMS Project—the School Information Management System. These have now been published, so we will see computing purchases take place as a result of

SIMS implementation. So, again, that sort of variation is taking place within the management of the subprogram.

Ms SPENCE: So would the bulk of this plant and equipment line item be computers?

Mr HAMILL: Mike Kelly might care to answer that question.

Mr KELLY: The allocation for plant and equipment varies in its constitution. It ranges from equipment required to establish new schools. It would involve some technology acquisition as well as other ranges of plant and equipment.

Ms SPENCE: Page 30 of the Portfolio Program Statements also shows that the teachers' salaries budget has increased by some \$20m while total staffing is projected to increase by 142 teachers. This is, as you see, a secondary budget.

Mr HAMILL: That is the first line item, is it, on that table?

Ms SPENCE: Yes. However, on page 22, the commensurate figures for primary teachers show a budget increase of \$71m and an increase of 82 teachers. As a former secondary school teacher, I am a bit concerned about this discrepancy and the differential between the primary and secondary school increases, with the improvement in primary schools being considerably more generous than in secondary schools. Can you explain this difference?

Mr HAMILL: The major enhancement there to primary schools and primary school teaching is the result of that initiative that I announced last week, that is, the enhancement of primary school middle management. All told, we are getting around 80 new deputy principals. Obviously, that has an impact in relation to the total staffing costs. It is also the case that that initiative will complement the overall new initiative contained in this budget, that is, the enhancement of funding for behaviour management programs. So, at the time of finalising the budget documentation, the fine detail of that initiative, which was enhancing the middle management of primary schools, had not been concluded. Therefore, the exact number of the additional staff that were involved in that initiative was unable to be included in the documentation.

We have been consulting with a variety of groups in relation to that matter. The Teachers Union obviously has a major stake in relation to developing better behaviour management strategies. Primary principals associations and deputy principals associations were also consulted, and that has been an ongoing process. As well as that, the Director-General has been chairing a working group on behaviour management, and that recommendation to bolster middle management in primary schools—in other words, providing them with the sort of resources which secondary schools often take for granted because they have heads of department and deputy principals; they just have a larger foundation—was one of a number of key recommendations which was flowing out of the working group on behaviour management. It

seemed very appropriate that we should proceed with that.

Ms SPENCE: Do you expect the creation of these new deputy principal positions to commence at the beginning of next year?

Mr HAMILL: We will have those new deputy principals positions in place for the beginning of the 1996 school year. We will be proceeding to make appointments as soon as we can.

Ms SPENCE: Page 9 of the Portfolio Program Statements refers to staffing numbers. It shows a reduction in numbers for staffing in preschools, primary and secondary schools. Can you explain that reduction?

Mr HAMILL: Again, this is the issue which I was addressing with Mr Quinn earlier today. The biggest impact in terms of reduction in staffing numbers is not a reduction in teacher numbers because in fact we are seeing more teachers employed; it is actually the changes in the staffing complement for other staff. The transfer of cleaning staff to Q-Clean shows up as the big impact in terms of particularly primary and secondary schools. As I mentioned before, there are about 13 full-time equivalents in cleaning staff affecting the preschool numbers, but when it comes to primary and secondary schools, it is over 4,700 full-time equivalent positions. Those administrative changes are really masking the position of what I would describe as the core school-based staffing.

The Director-General has just asked if he could meet that earlier engagement which I mentioned to the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The Director-General is excused. We look forward to seeing him later. Minister, earlier you mentioned behaviour management. It is obviously a topical issue. How many teachers are currently employed in the area of behaviour management and how many additional teachers will be employed?

Mr HAMILL: The additional funding for behaviour management which is contained in the budget is, by recollection, \$2.5m. All told, there are 34 additional positions which are being funded through that initiative. As well as that, there will be a further 10 positions that are being funded internally by the department. Overall, though, I think it is important that we note that this is not the first time that there has been an emphasis on staffing directed towards development of management strategies and support for teachers and schools in dealing with the very tiny percentage, but nevertheless very noticeable percentage, of students who act out behaviours that are quite unacceptable or go quite outside the range of acceptable behaviour in schools. The boost from staffing from both the specific initiative and also the internal initiatives will see some 179.1 full-time staffing equivalents directed to behaviour management in our schools—not only in schools but also school support centres and on materials to assist teachers in relation to behaviour management.

Ms SPENCE: We have had quite a bit of discussion today regarding teacher numbers and who is classified as a teacher and who is classified as a public servant and what has happened to staffing. In his Budget speech this year, the Treasurer said quite confidently that 3,000 extra teachers had been employed by this Government since 1989. How confident are you that this is in fact the case?

Mr HAMILL: The member is asking me to doubt the word of the Treasurer. I think it is important to note that what the Treasurer said was that this Budget will facilitate the employment of teachers and that will result in 3,000 more teachers being employed or being on the payroll than was the case back in 1989. To give you an idea of the movement in teacher numbers over that period of time, in September 1989, 25,700 teachers were employed. We estimate that there will be over 29,000 teachers as at the end of June 1995. Even the Treasurer could make that more than 3,000. Of necessity that figure has to be estimated because we are dealing with full-time equivalents, and that turns on the number of supply teachers on duty at a given time and all of those sorts of things. There is bit of fat in there to ensure that the Treasurer's claim is a valid one.

Ms SPENCE: How many teachers are employed in each region? Can you give us a region-by-region breakdown of those numbers?

Mr HAMILL: The total number for teachers as at May 1995, including a load provision because it would be wrong to exclude that, all told is 28,421.1 for full-time equivalents. That is broken down as follows: central office, 193.9; Sunshine Coast, 3,769.6; met. west, 4,085; met. east, 4,413.8; Darling Downs, 1,833.3; south west; 563.6; Wide Bay, 2,356.4; Capricornia, 2,974.8; northern, 1,829.6; north west, 5,039.3; Peninsula, 2,068.7; and south coast, 3,793.5. Also, given that you have had a fair bit of discussion about teacher numbers and we were talking about estimates a moment ago, even though there were 28,421.5 as of 12 May 1995, six weeks later, on 30 June, we estimate teacher numbers will be 28,576.5. I think that demonstrates the degree of fluctuation that can occur week to week, but, as you can see, it is trending up.

The CHAIRMAN: What are the current employment prospects for teachers?

Mr HAMILL: Employment prospects for teachers are good. As you will be well aware, over recent years the department had to put in place strategies to try to enhance teacher employment prospects. In terms of teachers now being employed, about 80 per cent are graduates and scholarship holders; the remaining 20 per cent make up all other categories. Mr Ardill will be pleased to know that there are some instrumental music instructors included in that figure. With the current trend in enrolments, even given that there has been some easing in secondary enrolments, we are going to continue to recruit teachers. If labour market conditions are maintained, and given

the growth, there are very good prospects indeed for applicants, particularly in country areas.

There are some structural problems in relation to teacher recruitment. I have had reports on areas such as the Gold Coast, for example, where at times schools experience difficulties finding people to fill vacancies. It is interesting to look at the whole question of people desiring placement in schools. Many schools have horror stories about trying to find someone to cover for a teacher who is ill. They find, much to their horror, that despite having a legion of people listed on supply lists, not one of those people is available—for whatever reason—they may be otherwise employed or have other important commitments. That is a problem for schools. We certainly want universities to take note that the labour market conditions for teachers which were prevailing two or three years ago, and which probably led some institutions to reduce their intake to courses, have changed and that may well need to be addressed so that we can free up the labour market for teachers in the forthcoming years.

Mr QUINN: I have already addressed the issue of cleaners being transferred to Q-Clean. What is the reason behind that particular decision?

Mr HAMILL: That actually took place before I became Minister. I suspect that it was part of a Governmentwide decision in relation to the management of cleaning staff. We have seen the establishment of specific business groups of service providers within the Department of Administrative Services, whether it be Goprint, Q-Clean, Q-Fleet and so on. That has been a management issue that brings together cleaning staff from schools and similar people engaged by the Government for cleaning premises, and it treats them as a corporate entity rather than cleaning staff administered by a variety of different departments. There are actually some fairly good industrial issues, too, in relation to enterprise bargaining which flow from the consolidation of the administration of cleaning.

Mr QUINN: At page 23 of the PPS, under the staff and resources table, there is a subheading for AAEPs. My understanding is that that relates to casual assistants for administration within schools.

Mr HAMILL: Yes.

Mr QUINN: Looking at the employment numbers, there are almost as many casual employees, if you like, as permanent employees. I think this program has been running for a while now, and many of those people have been working in the same position doing the same hours every week for quite a number of years. Is the department considering appointing these people as permanent part-time staff, or is it going to continue with the current arrangements?

Mr HAMILL: That matter has been raised with me by the public sector union, SPSFQ. The situation with people in those positions has been an issue for a long time, as you have mentioned. Whether there will be a change of status to permanent part time or whether they go into a different status again will be subject to some industrial negotiations that the union wishes to

pursue with the department. However, there is a small increase in numbers in the budget. That is a reflection of enrolment growth and new facilities. All told, the cost of casual administrative assistants is around \$21.5m. It is worth noting that the schools have a lot of discretion as to how they allocate funding for those particular positions as opposed to staffing.

Mr QUINN: We will go back to Q-Clean again. I have just distributed the extract from the Admin Services PPS. On page 43, which is the second one, you will see where they have estimated the number of cleaners actually coming across as 3,951 in 1994-95. It looks like it will be reduced by some 400 in this financial year. Over on page 42 it gives the costs of the cleaning services. My question is: an amount of money for cleaning is also mentioned in the Department of Education Program Statements on page 22 and I am wondering what is going on. Why do we need two lots of cleaning?

Mr HAMILL: There is a cost involved in cleaning and it is a cost that is met by the Department of Education. Q-Clean is the agency which employs the cleaners who do the cleaning work for the Department of Education. You have got a payment here that is being made from Education across to the Admin Services' budget.

Mr QUINN: The other point here is that in the department's Estimates they estimate that it will be something in the order of \$62m in 1995-96, yet Q-Clean says it is \$113m.

Mr HAMILL: Where is that figure you just mentioned?

Mr QUINN: On page 22 under "Cleaners"; in 1995-96, \$62m.

Mr HAMILL: I think you need to take cognisance of the fact that that table on page 22 is only relating to the primary sector.

Mr QUINN: Sorry.

Mr HAMILL: You need to pull the others in there.

Mr QUINN: I appreciate that. Could I raise the issue of principals now? It seems to me, from reports that I get from other members of Parliament and from speaking to principals, particularly in country schools—smaller country schools—that there is quite a high turnover in the principals who are being appointed to schools. I can give a couple of instances. Springbrook primary in my electorate is up for its fourth principal in two years. Riverview, which is out your way, has had five principals in two years, and there are a number of smaller schools throughout regional and rural Queensland where parents are also expressing their concern about the rapid turnover in principals. What is the department doing to give some stability to this particular matter?

Mr HAMILL: What the department seeks to do is try to fill a vacancy as quickly as it possibly can. I might say that there are a variety of reasons why people vacate jobs as principals. One is that they may retire. Another is that they may actually apply for a position at another school or another position within the department. I think it would be an

outrageous proposition if we prevented people from applying for other positions. It would seem to me the right of any employee of the department to apply for a job if there is another job at a superior level. It does cause some consternation, obviously, to school communities when you have a change of principal. The same issue arises when you have a change in staffing in general. It has always been a problem and no doubt always will remain a problem, because you have people who are mobile.

Mr QUINN: The real problem is that some of these principals can go into a school and be there for three or six months and then apply for another position and be successful. The views that are being expressed to me are that it may be fair for the principal but it is unfair for the students. How do you balance up? There has got to be some way of balancing up.

Mr HAMILL: It sounds very much like a policy issue, but maybe when you are next talking to the Principals Association you might raise with them the suggestion that people be contracted for a particular period of time once they get appointed to a position. I do not know how the principals will react to that proposition.

Mr QUINN: If I can move into the secondary area now. On page 26 of the PPS, right down the bottom it says, "Ninety-nine per cent of Year 8 students are studying a language other than English." I understand that the department has plans to extend that right up to Year 10.

Mr HAMILL: That is right.

Mr QUINN: Within the next two years; am I right in that assumption?

Mr HAMILL: With respect to languages other than English—one of the very strong recommendations that came out of the Wiltshire review was the store that we should place on the Languages Other Than English Program. It is a major program. Indeed, I guess Queensland is leading Australia with respect to languages other than English.

There are some national goals to be met as well. I am thinking particularly of our goals with respect to Asian language study. We are committed to extending language study not only up to Year 10 but also down to Year 3. Now, that will be done progressively. Obviously, there are some issues that we need to address in relation to staffing matters, because we do not have unlimited numbers of people who are able to be brought in to handle the LOTE program. They are simply not available in sufficient numbers for all the various languages in all the places that we want. That is one of the reasons, I might say, that in consultation with the Commonwealth, in regard to those rather substantial increases in higher education places, I have actually required the universities to set aside places for language study as part of that new graduate intake. I do not know whether some people would regard that as an unreasonable impost upon the universities as well in that regard. I suggest that it is actually a very important initiative and one which enables our schools to meet the challenges of language study.

In terms of the timetable for extending LOTE up to Year 10—that will depend upon the work of the Queensland Curriculum Council and the Office of School Curriculum developing syllabuses and so on. But we are looking at a time span over the next three years. In the case of extending down to Year 3, likewise it is dependent upon the development of the strategic plan by the Curriculum Council, but we hope to start Year 3 next year, 1996.

Mr QUINN: On page 28 of the PPS, at the very top you have the percentages or the proportion of students from Years 8 to 10 enrolled in the State secondary schools. There are no figures there for Years 10 on to 12, or 11 and 12. Are the figures available? If not, why has not a similar survey been done?

Mr HAMILL: I should be able to get that for you. What you are wanting is the number of students or the proportion of students enrolled in State secondary schools up to Year 12; is that it?

Mr QUINN: You have the stats there for 8 to 10, but not 11 to 12.

Mr HAMILL: If you are looking at total numbers, I will have to get some figures together for you on that. It is not a real problem. It was not meant to be withholding any information. One thing that is probably worthwhile noting, though, in terms of the non-compulsory sector, is that we are finding an increasing number of students post-Year 10 who are drifting or going into the TAFE sector as well. That is also having an impact on the enrolments in Years 11 and 12 at State secondary schools. I will get you material on that and furnish it to the Committee following its formal hearings.

Mr QUINN: The table shows the apparent retention rates from Years 8 to 12. Those rates have fallen from 73.7 to 70 per cent. Further down, the table shows the exit statements. Would it be the case that the figures for English, mathematics, science and the arts are relatively meaningless in terms of showing an increase in student attainment given that the participation rate is falling, because those who are leaving at the end of Year 10 tend to be students of lower achievement levels? You would naturally expect the attainment rate to be rising.

Mr HAMILL: The actual figures are listed in that table and so are the targets. It is not necessarily the case that students of lower attainment are not continuing on to Year 12. As I have already made the point, the TAFE sector is drawing students as well. It is not necessarily students of lower attainment who are embarking upon TAFE courses. It is worth while to note that, although there has been an easing in retention rates to Year 12, in 1992 we pegged at 85 per cent the number of Year 8 students who would go through to Year 12. The figure now is 78.8 per cent. That is still an historically high level. In fact, it is still a very high level. That trend is consistent with Australiawide trends. I might say that, on both counts—the 1992 peak and the present figure—we are retaining more of our students through to Year 12 than the rest of the country. In relation to those subjects that are listed in the table on page 28 of

the Portfolio Program Statements, they are the subjects that we may like to style as core curriculum subjects. They are the sorts of subjects that the higher achievers at school are more likely to undertake—they are the board subjects. So, putting English to one side which, of course, is a compulsory subject, among those subjects that are the subjects that form the basis of the courses that students desiring an OP are taking, we are seeing overall increasing levels of performance by those students. That is encouraging.

Mr QUINN: Under the special education subprogram at the bottom of page 32, it is mentioned that some facilities will be closed and 120 children resident within those facilities will be transferred to special schools. Which facilities are closing?

Mr HAMILL: The students with whom we are dealing through the institutional reform initiative total 37. They will be moving from their current school venue in 1995-96. We are dealing with eight students at the Leslie Wilson Home, eight students at the Basil Stafford Centre, 15 students at the W. R. Black home, and six students at Xavier hospital. That item, costing \$600,000, is designed to ensure that the specialist services that will be required to support those students at an alternative venue are available.

Mr QUINN: So, in the first year, you are moving from those particular institutions only that number of students that you have indicated to the Committee?

Mr HAMILL: They are the actual students who are attending the school programs in those institutions. That is the total.

Mr QUINN: For this year or for three years? The Portfolio Program Statements show the figure of 120.

Mr HAMILL: Those are the residential locations where change is taking place and we have to make alternative provision. As the Portfolio Program Statements indicate, all told the Government supports 120 students at a variety of different locations. We are dealing with those 37.

Mr QUINN: You are not moving 120?

Mr HAMILL: We are still supporting those students, but that figure is specifically related to those 37.

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

Ms SPENCE: I know much discussion was had before on the \$34.2m that has been allocated for the Schools Revival Program. I know you went through briefly how the money is going to be spent. Can you tell us how much is allocated to each of those initiatives that you mentioned before?

Mr HAMILL: With respect to the Schools Revival Program, I mentioned before that \$1,450m will be made available to augment the annual Capital Works Program over the next three years. As I was explaining to Mr Quinn, that program is over and above the existing Capital Works Program. If you are saying, "Here is another \$40m, what does that allow you to do?"—

Ms SPENCE: So none of those initiatives is mentioned in Budget Paper No. 3? The initiatives included in the \$34.2m Schools Revival Program are not mentioned in that book?

Mr HAMILL: The Schools Revival Program allows us to undertake additional work that would otherwise not be able to be done. We were budgeting for new primary schools out of our base Capital Works Program. The Schools Revival Program allows us to go ahead and construct those, but also allows us to fund new secondary schools as well. I will give you a breakdown of the \$40m—\$2m to enable appropriate access to schools for students with disabilities; very importantly, \$5m for security systems for those schools that have very high or high risk exposure; and \$6m to complement the work that is occurring with curriculum reform at the senior secondary level with the convergence of vocational training and the senior secondary curriculum to provide facilities in schools to enable those Voc Ed style subjects to be delivered in the high schools.

I mentioned the four new high schools. There is also \$13m for upgrading and converting facilities in primary schools that are currently unable to support the core curriculum, as identified in Shaping the Future. That relates to the point that I was raising earlier about those older established primary schools where the teaching spaces are small by present-day standards. We can actually modify the classroom blocks—the general learning areas—to enable wet areas and so on, which were not part of the provision of schools in the 1950s and 1960s, to be available to classes that are in those classrooms today. The Schools Revival Program brings on a whole range of works which otherwise would not have been able to be afforded, given the priorities that have to be established in any year in the delivery of a capital program. So what you have in the Budget papers is a list of major capital works that are being undertaken. It certainly does not list every modification of an existing building, or every additional access point for a disabled student and so on. That is part of a much broader capital works program which is being administered by the department.

Ms SPENCE: The \$34.2m for the Schools Revival Program—I know that you just went through it all before, but it did not sound to me as though it was all capital works expenditure. You said \$13m for Shaping the Future, but that will take off capital works modifications—

Mr HAMILL: The amount of \$13m is about structural changes to allow the delivery of the curriculum in line with the recommendations in Shaping the Future. I mean, these are the sorts of things that I was talking about. We have got a lot of school buildings, a lot of fixed assets, which are fine—they are sound—but in terms of the curriculum and in terms of teaching, they do not meet present-day needs. If you visit some of the primary schools around the State, you will see the modifications that have been undertaken, for example, in classroom blocks where verandas have been enclosed, where withdrawal rooms have been

established where previously it was a classroom space—those sorts of modifications. No, there is no money from the Schools Revival Program that is going towards, if you like, the curriculum development areas of Shaping the Future or funding the staffing requirements of Shaping the Future. It is all part of the capital works program.

Also this year, of that \$34.2m, funding is made available specifically for the Sunshine Coast University College. That is a one-off item. Next year, the funding that is available for the Schools Revival Program actually jumps up, because we do not have to make that provision.

Mr YOUNG: The \$34.2m this year, plus \$5.8m for the Sunshine Coast on top of that.

Ms SPENCE: Thank you very much. I will keep that in mind when I am thinking of capital works for some of my schools.

Mr HAMILL: I thought you might.

Mr PYKE: Page 76 of the reduced Portfolio Program Statements shows that assistance to tertiary institutions has been reduced dramatically from \$23m to \$13m. Can you explain that, please?

Mr HAMILL: This is another example of when you are administering capital works programs there can be some significant fluctuations from one year to the next. The State Government has made a clear commitment to the tertiary education sector in the State. Whilst I do not intend at this point to talk about higher education places, we have certainly facilitated new campus developments in Cairns, Mackay, Bundaberg, Gladstone and Hervey Bay. We are facilitating new campus developments in Ipswich and also in the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor. We are also supporting the relocation of the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, and I suspect before too long we will be supporting the College of Art as well in its desire to relocate.

What causes the apparent reduction in capital provision for higher education in the State is, in fact, that one of the bigger items there, which we were supporting in the previous financial year, was the establishment of the Cairns James Cook campus. The part of the bargain that the State needs to fulfil when it comes to the development of new campus sites is that the State has the responsibility of determining the location and the provision, in other words, the acquisition of a site and servicing the site for a new campus development. In the case of those regional campuses that I mentioned, the State has facilitated each of those sites, and that is a charge to the State Budgets.

So when the Treasurer made his Budget Speech and indicated that there was \$10m set aside for new campus acquisitions for higher education in Queensland, and mentioned Ipswich and the Gold Coast corridor, that would be money that would be then made over to the Education budget for the year when the time came to actually settle on the site; to actually acquire the land. So even though the Estimates would indicate a reduction of the order of \$10m this year, we may well find when we are sitting around next year looking at the estimated actuals, if we have actually

settled on those two sites, it could well have climbed up again to the order of \$23m.

Mr PYKE: I have a similar query in relation to page 85 of the Portfolio Program Statements. In this case, the textbook allowance for non-State schools has increased by some \$300,000.

Mr HAMILL: Yes.

Mr PYKE: Can you explain that?

Mr HAMILL: As to why that is so?

Mr PYKE: Yes.

Mr HAMILL: The State Government provides a variety of assistance to the non-Government school sector. Mr Santoro would be particularly keen to know that this year's allocation overall for non-Government schools is in excess of \$195m, which is a record amount. We have a variety of provisions for the non-Government school sectors and for the parents of the students of those schools. In fact, the increased allowance to non-Government schools of \$285,000 reflects an increase in non-Government school secondary enrolments of almost 4,500. That increase in funding reflects not only the increased enrolments in the non-Government secondary school sector but also the allowance itself has increased in value by some 3 per cent in the rates applying in 1995.

Mr PYKE: I have a further question of a similar nature, and it is something that my constituents are particularly interested in. Page 90 shows an increase in the school transport grant. Why is that necessary?

Mr HAMILL: Why is school transport necessary or why is it necessary to increase the grant?

Mr PYKE: No, why is the grant necessary?

Mr HAMILL: The fundamental point that needs to be made is that it has always been the policy of this Government and, indeed, previous Governments of other political persuasions, that the cost of transporting students to schools is primarily a parental cost. It is also worthwhile recognising that this Government takes the view that for some families, that burden can be quite onerous, particularly in rural areas where some students travel some considerable distance to and from school. It would be a very onerous burden indeed to have those families bear the full cost of bus travel, which is often the case in those areas. We have instituted a number of reforms effective this year in relation to both rail and bus travel, which has placed a so-called safety net for those families that are less affluent, or that have a number of children travelling to and from school. That has meant an increase in the provision for school transport of something approaching \$8m.

Additionally, this year the provision contains some \$800,000, which you will see in the same table on page 90 of the PPS, for a drought initiative. Again, that was aimed at providing some financial relief, in particular with respect to the payment of conveyance allowances, to families who are affected by the very debilitating drought that has hit rural Queensland. When taken together,

those two items explain the fairly significant increase in school transport provision. Most people would agree that a provision of almost \$97m is quite considerable. We were talking earlier about enhancing capital programs in schools by \$34.2m in a year. In respect of a provision approaching \$100m per year to assist families with transporting children to and from school, most people would understand that we need to operate fair but reasonable guidelines in the administration of that scheme.

The CHAIRMAN: Throughout the Portfolio Program Statements, there are a number of references to Shaping the Future. How much of the allocation for Shaping the Future will be spent on extra bureaucrats? This is my pet question.

Mr HAMILL: One of the key recommendations of Shaping the Future was the establishment of the Queensland School Curriculum Office. I have already canvassed in detail the establishment of that office. About 40-odd people are involved. Shaping the Future is not about engaging additional bureaucrats; it is about substantially boosting the resources in schools in the delivery of curriculum and curriculum reforms. It involves the provision of key teachers and advisers. If my memory serves me correctly, about 400 teachers provide the backbone of the delivery of Shaping the Future. All told, the initiative involves the expenditure of some \$300m over six years. We are in the early stages at the moment, but there has been very substantial progress towards putting the resources into place in schools.

To date, there has been a lot of effort in engaging and training quality assurance officers and key teachers, in particular the preparation of teachers for the administration of the diagnostic net for Year 2, which will be introduced this year, and also the Year 6 test. The contract let for the Year 6 test was worth about \$800,000. As you can see, the funding for the Wiltshire implementation, although very considerable, is going into bodies who can support the delivery of educational programs in the schools. You mentioned bureaucrats. Only a handful are employed by the Queensland School Curriculum Office. Of the total of 44, 28 are seconded teachers and 16 are public servants.

The CHAIRMAN: You mentioned them before. How much of that funding will be allocated to implementing the Year 2 diagnostic net that you mentioned? Can you put a dollar figure on it?

Mr HAMILL: The total budget for the implementation of the Year 2 net for this year will be \$15m. Before you start jumping to conclusions—the funding for the administration of the diagnostic net is \$600,000. Let us understand what the net is all about. It is about focusing on literacy and numeracy. Over \$7.5m is linked to the appointment and provision of key teachers, who are working with the Year 2 teachers. Almost \$7m is allocated for education advisers, who are working with the teachers and schools. The Wiltshire reforms, including the Year 2 diagnostic net, are heavily resourced in human resources, with a very small administration component.

The CHAIRMAN: I know that teachers have been concerned that the funding is more for diagnosis than for remedial work.

Mr HAMILL: The vast part of the costs are involved in teacher salaries.

The CHAIRMAN: For remedial work, if problems are detected?

Mr HAMILL: Yes, for remedial work. The purpose of the net is to identify students—in this case young children—who have particular problems with literacy and numeracy. Support teachers have already been employed at a cost of some \$25m. They are there to provide assistance as well. With the Year 2 net and the Year 6 test, we have a very substantial commitment of human resources to support teachers and students.

The CHAIRMAN: I might ask some more questions later, but for now we will return to Mr Quinn.

Mr QUINN: As to the Year 2 net—you mentioned that 600 teachers will be trained as key teachers, who are being given time to train as key teachers. I understand that this year that will be 15 days. Will they get any out-of-classroom release time in order to work with the Year 2 teachers to help the kids who are having difficulty with numeracy and literacy?

Ms SULLIVAN: Yes, they get up to 1.5 hours.

Mr QUINN: Per week?

Ms SULLIVAN: Yes.

Mr QUINN: They get 1.5 hours per week?

Ms SULLIVAN: Per Year 2 class.

Mr QUINN: Is there one key teacher per Year 2 class, or is there one key teacher per school?

Ms SULLIVAN: The models are varied. I could ask Peter Macdonald to give you some samples. However, it depends on the location. For example, a one-teacher school could have only three Year 2 students. It might use a different model from that used by a large urban high school in which there might be five Year 2 classes.

Mr MACDONALD: The models that we have used are based on the fact that there will be 1.5 hours per Year 2 class. In a school where there were four Year 2 drafts, that might mean that there was one key teacher.

Mr QUINN: They would get six hours' release per week?

Mr MACDONALD: They would be released for six hours per week to work with that class. That six hours would involve time working with the class plus a fraction of it to prepare for the work in those various classes. And that fraction would vary depending on the demands and the type of work done in the class.

Mr QUINN: How have you provided the funding to relieve those key teachers?

Mr MACDONALD: That funding is within the initiative and is being used in a variety of ways. Temporary part-time teachers will be appointed to

relieve them. There will be permanent part-time teachers. In some areas they will be employed as TRS.

Mr QUINN: So the department is not employing any more remedial or learning support teachers or resource teachers; it is attacking this problem through the key teacher concept and the provision of educational advisers or clerks or whatever you like to call them; am I right?

Mr MACDONALD: Really, the education advisers in literacy and numeracy are becoming trained in remediation activities and will work with teachers in the early childhood area and, at times, with students in that area in supporting them in implementing programs. They will implement programs before the net; but if students who need further programs are identified in the net, that will be done through the key teachers who are being trained over the next 12 months and through education advisers.

Mr QUINN: So the education advisers are not there only to give advice; they actually go into the classroom and work with the kids as well?

Mr MACDONALD: That is quite true, and it is true of key teachers, who will be working with teachers and students in the classroom.

Mr QUINN: I turn to the issue of special needs students. Last year, it was mentioned that the department was most of its way through ascertaining those children with high levels of special needs. Is the department all the way through that process now?

Mr HAMILL: No. It is actually a very large task, as you can well imagine. Certainly, the department anticipates completing that ascertainment task this Budget year. Last year, 3,000 students were considered to have highly specialised education needs due to their disability. The department was then assessing that almost another 3,000 were identified as possibly having high support needs. There are around about 8,500 students with disabilities and high educational needs in Queensland, which represents a little under 2 per cent of the school population. It really is quite a considerable task, but we are well on the way.

Mr QUINN: Last year, reference was made to the support coming through for students with special needs and the concern amongst teachers and parents about the fact that the department, in their view, is not supplying sufficient support for those students. Contact with me seems to indicate that by and large those students are receiving, in the view of teachers and parents, approximately one-third of the support that they think they need.

Mr HAMILL: I think that the operative words are your last ones: "they think they need". There is a range of issues that need to be recognised in relation to this very sensitive area. I say that it is a sensitive area because there is a lot of emotion tied up with the provision of appropriate services to those students with special needs. There is no doubt that the desire of many parents for a more inclusive education for their children, particularly

those children with disabilities, has placed considerable demands upon the classroom and classroom teachers. We have certainly responded through the provision of teacher aides and teacher aide hours. Through the department's own good management, in this financial year a further \$1.5m worth of extra aide time will be made available to support teachers who are dealing in their classrooms with special needs children.

There is also a special initiative contained in the Budget which brings some \$4.5m of funding to assist in the provision of resources to target students with disabilities in our primary and secondary schools. There was \$4.4m—a further \$3.5m allocated on top—for the 1995 budget. That will involve supporting 126 full-time equivalent staff in teachers, therapists and teacher aides. It will always be the case that needs will exist. It is certainly the case that therapists are not abundant in all areas of the State. That is a real problem. Simply throwing money at the problem does not solve it when you have acute shortages of key skills that you would like to be brought to schools. School communities are being assisted under the Schools Renewal Program. As I mentioned to Ms Spence earlier, the funding provided there to address access issues in schools is very important.

I would like to make one final point. Contrary to some people's views, the Government does not support the closure of special schools. Special schools are a legitimate venue in their own right to deal with particular needs of particular students.

Mr QUINN: Once a student has been ascertained as having special needs, how does the department evaluate what level of support that student needs?

Mr HAMILL: I will have one of the practitioners answer that.

Ms SULLIVAN: As you would probably realise, ascertainment is the process that is used to determine the level of specialist teaching or support needed by students. There is not an automatic assumption that that support will be available. It is a matter of looking around and seeing what is available and advising the parents accordingly. So I would not like people to think that a level of ascertainment equals a certain amount of support; it is really looking at the educational need of the student and saying that, in terms of educational need, this student is ascertained as a Level 6 or a Level 5. Then it is a matter of holding a case conference and looking at what can be available and how and where. Sometimes that involves calling on voluntary associations and sometimes parent groups. So it is really a combined effort to find the support that is appropriate for that student.

Mr QUINN: But the perception of parents is that once an ascertainment has been made—for instance, that a child needs 10 hours of teacher aide time per week—then that aide time ought to be forthcoming. That is the reality out there; that is the perception of parents.

Mr HAMILL: If we are dealing with perceptions, that is one thing. If we are dealing with

the provision of available resources, that is another thing.

Mr QUINN: I am making the point that—

Mr HAMILL: I hear what you are saying.

Mr QUINN:—teachers and parents have the view that if a child comes into a class with an ascertainment at a certain level and the impression is that that child needs so much support, that support ought to be forthcoming.

Mr HAMILL: As I mentioned earlier, the director-general chaired a working group on behaviour management. On this very issue of special needs requirements of students with disabilities—an interdepartmental group is looking at the provision of services to those students. I anticipate that report being available very shortly. Whilst there are some key initiatives in this budget to provide enhanced resources for dealing with the particular needs of those students, some further initiatives may well flow from Government's consideration of that report on the whole question of provision for students with disabilities.

Mr QUINN: One of the key issues in special schools is the ability of teachers to transport their students. Does the department supply funding for minibuses, both in terms of the capital cost of the bus and then the recurrent funding for operating it?

Mr HAMILL: Yes, indeed. The department has made provision for minibuses to special schools. The department does not seek to become a major public transport operator, but there are special schools that have received funding to operate their buses. Also, of course, some communities have received support from other non-school sources to assist them in the transportation of students.

I might say that the provision for school transport for the disabled is a significant issue and there are special provisions made available for students with disabilities to make their way to cluster schools, for example. Of course, that puts them in a separate provision to those normal rules that apply to other students travelling to and from schools. I have just been advised that, in terms of the specific provision in the budget, \$150,000 has been allocated to acquire five new vehicles—modified buses—that can handle the needs of our disabled students. Also, of course, in the overall movement of disabled students, the taxi industry is a major provider of services—and we pay for those—as are other bus operators. Taxis are a very important part of that.

Mr QUINN: What criteria is used in order to allocate those new buses to the various schools? Is it on a needs basis or as the bus wears out? Do you provide the funding for the maintenance and running cost of the bus to every special school or is it on a selective basis?

Mr HAMILL: The individual school communities will make a submission for funding and, like many other submissions that come in from schools for funding for a variety of items, they are considered and allocation is made after an assessment of priority and need.

Mr QUINN: Let us go to Corporate Services, which is mentioned on page 50. I would imagine that this encompasses a lot of things that cannot be allocated to schools and so on. I just want to raise a couple of issues. First of all, what was the total cost of the recent advertising campaign on the television about the need for supporting P & Cs and how long will that campaign last?

Mr HAMILL: The specific advertising mentioned was the material inviting and actually encouraging people to join their local P & C. That campaign has been run in two sessions; it is a relatively short campaign. We have been using material which has been prepared at a total cost of around \$200,000. I might say that in terms of the support that we receive from P & Cs for fundraising and enhancing school provision, that is a very small outlay indeed. It is also important to recognise that P & Cs are currently actively engaged in responding to a discussion paper on school governance—a school council discussion paper—and we are very keen to get a very wide community view as to the appropriate structures for schools and school policy making.

All told, we spend something in the order of about \$18m in supporting parents and citizens groups—parental involvement in education—and that sort of provision is through schemes such as Helping P & Cs with the Basics, the School Improvement Assistance Scheme and funding for a variety of parent development officers, parent liaison officers, drought programs, individual support to P & C groups and so on. So it really should be seen in the context of the overall support for P & C groups. I think it is a good investment because in fact P & Cs bring a lot back to the State.

Mr QUINN: Have you had any feedback from the P & Cs as to how successful the program has been?

Mr HAMILL: I certainly have had direct contact with the QCPCA. It has actually drawn the campaign to the attention of its equivalent bodies interstate because it wants other State Governments to promote the activities of P & Cs also. The QCPCA has provided that information to its equivalent bodies. I might say also that the Parents and Friends associations have said that they, too, would like to see their respective sectors promote the activities of P & Cs within the non-Government school sector. I would hope that those campaigns that have been run here would have some flow-on benefit for them. In terms of quantifying extra people attending the meetings—we do not have that data; we would have to rely upon feedback from the QCPCA.

Mr QUINN: There certainly have not been people queuing up at schools at night-time to attend P & C meetings.

Mr HAMILL: I think that most people who have had any association with P & Cs would know that a relatively small but dedicated band carry the load for most school P & Cs. With the QCPCA's support, we would like to try to widen that base a little.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I want to take you back to Shaping the Future. Can you tell me if there are any special provisions for non-Government schools to implement these initiatives?

Mr HAMILL: There is in fact a variety of provisions for the non-Government schools to participate in Shaping the Future. I should point out at the outset that Shaping the Future was not made mandatory for the non-Government school sector. I have had discussions with school authorities from the non-Government school sector and I think it is fair to say that the Catholic system is keen to participate fully and that there are a variety of viewpoints within the independent school sector, and that really reflects, I guess, the variety of different types of schools that are members of that independent school sector.

There is a specific additional allocation in this budget of \$1.5m to non-Government schools to assist with their participation in Shaping the Future. That is in addition to over \$2m that is available in the budget as a result of the Shaping the Future initiatives. Because of the funding arrangement which exists—the basket nexus arrangement—the funds that the State are making available for the implementation of Shaping the Future will automatically flow across to the non-Government school sector as well.

I might also say that, as we have drawn attention to the impact that enterprise bargaining outcomes have had for some of the costs of preschool, primary and secondary school in terms of staffing in the State sector, that factor has also flowed across to the non-Government school sector already, even though the non-Government school sector has yet to finalise its enterprise bargaining arrangements. So whilst on the face of it there is explicitly something close to \$4m built into the budget for the non-Government school sector, there are also other funds there—that which has been made available through the flow-on effect of enterprise bargaining—which can be accessed by schools in the non-Government sector to augment their endeavours in implementing Shaping the Future or, indeed, any other initiative they might choose to implement.

The CHAIRMAN: We have talked about the Year 2 net, but how much has been allocated for implementing the concept of key learning areas, especially in maths?

Mr HAMILL: Do you mean the actual involvement of the teachers who are working with the schools?

The CHAIRMAN: I mean the money.

Mr HAMILL: Do you want the details of staffing provided for the key learning areas?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr HAMILL: All told, \$2.5m is allocated under Shaping the Future for the inservicing of teachers student performance standards implementation in mathematics. Also, \$8.5m has been allocated in this budget for education advisers in mathematics and English. Funding is provided for 90 education advisers for mathematics in 1995, and

a further 45 in 1996. The balance of that allocation is for education advisers for English, although the emphasis is on their provision in 1996, rather than in this year.

The CHAIRMAN: Has money been allocated to help P & Cs, and parents in general, understand what is going on with Shaping the Future?

Mr HAMILL: We have cooperated very closely with the QCPCA in the preparation of material which it has distributed around schools. We have sought to inform parents of the changes taking place with the curriculum in relation to literacy and numeracy through media advertising inviting parents to obtain material. A campaign was run just after the commencement of school, 1995, which was very important because the diagnostic net and the Year 6 test are being introduced during the year and there was a fair amount of inquiry from parents as to what that meant in relation to their children. I am no exception: I have a child involved with each of those. Certainly the brochures provided to schools have been very valuable in that regard.

The Queensland School Curriculum Office also intends to put together a parent information kit to disseminate information relating to the very substantive changes taking place with the school curriculum. Getting people involved in the P & Cs is also a good way of disseminating good information, not misinformation, to parents and their families regarding school curriculum reform.

Ms SPENCE: I refer you to page 4 of the PPS. It refers to the implications of information technology. How much money is allocated to providing schools with a decent system of administration that maintains pace with this technology?

Mr HAMILL: When we talk about information technology in schools, two programs spring to mind: the Computers in Schools Program and the new initiative, the Skill Information Management System. The Computers in Schools Program has an allocation this year in excess of \$11m. As I have indicated to Parliament, some 1,700 students in our schools this year have access to computers which they did not have last year. That has been a very tangible result of the Government's commitment to computing in schools. The major beneficiaries of the Government's commitment in this area have been primary schools. In fact, there was an extension of 535 schools which received funding under that program last year.

The SIMS initiative, the School Information Management System, will really come into its own this year. Of the \$18.7m in the budget this year, a significant part was a carryover from last year. However, it will not only enhance school management, but also we see it as providing an opportunity for schools to access other information technology. At a meeting of Commonwealth and State Education Ministers last week, there was considerable discussion regarding a Federal Government initiative, the Educational Network of Australia, or EDNA as it has become affectionately known. Under that initiative the Commonwealth is

seeking to connect schools, colleges and universities, etc. to an education database. What we are doing through the Computers in Schools Program and the SIMS Program places Queensland in a very good position to obtain maximum benefit out of any initiative that may occur at a national level to further enhance access to information technology for our students.

We see the extension of computing and information technology as part of the real challenge of education in the 1990s. That is as fundamental to education in the 1990s as a pad and pencil was in the 1960s and a slate and slate pencil was in the 1940s. By 1997, we aim to enhance the access of primary school students to computers so that it equals that available in the secondary schools; that is, one computer to every 10 students.

Ms SPENCE: Moving to the subject of tertiary institutions, page 3 of the PPS refers to access to higher education. How many extra university places are available to Queenslanders and what is the value of those places to the State?

Mr HAMILL: For 20 years Queenslanders have not had the same access to higher education places as people in other parts of the country. As a Government, we have given this a very high priority. In the past, we have funded higher education places because of the lack of provision by Commonwealth Governments. We have engaged in a very successful round of negotiations with the Commonwealth which produced a major funding initiative for higher education in Queensland in the recent Federal Budget. Some 4,200 additional commencing places will be made available to Queensland over the next three years. When you take into account the pipeline effect of those places, we will see in excess of 12,000 additional places in higher education in Queensland institutions by the turn of the century. That represents a recurrent investment in Queensland in excess of \$100m a year each and every year. In addition to that, there is capital rolling attached to those places which will mean that the institutions receiving those places are getting a capital contribution as well, over and above that part of the capital development pool available to Queensland to expand its higher education provision.

That is putting a lot of pressure on institutions. The universities are very happy to support the Queensland Government's endeavour to negotiate such a positive outcome. However, the onus is now on them to deliver the bricks and mortar to accommodate those students. The first draft of places in 1996 will be in the order of 1,750 places, with a further 1,500 places being made available the following year. By 1998, we are going to see more major tertiary institutions, such as Griffith University, the University of Queensland, and QUT, needing to make provision for those students. This is particularly important for the Sunshine Coast University College, for which funding is also available from State sources in this Budget.

As I have already mentioned, the strategic plan for the University of Queensland envisages expansion in the western corridor, and the strategic

plan for Griffith University envisages expansion in the Brisbane-Gold Coast corridor. I have sought to work with institutions to make absolutely certain that adequate provision is placed in areas like the Gold Coast, Cairns, Hervey Bay, and our provincial cities in the western corridor to meet unmet demand for student places which in the past has really bedevilled the opportunity for young people to obtain higher education in the State.

Ms SPENCE: You might have already answered my next question—I cannot remember. After sitting here for over seven hours my mind is going a bit numb. What is the Government's contribution to the capital expansion of these tertiary institutions?

Mr HAMILL: The Queensland Government has a responsibility where a new campus is being developed to develop a service to the site. That is what we did in the case of the James Cook expansion into Cairns. That is what we have done with the establishment of the Sunshine Coast University college at Sippi Downs. That is what we will do—and we have made provision for it—for Griffith University's expansion in the Gold Coast corridor. That is what we will do for the expansion of higher education in the western corridor. That is what we have done for the expansion of higher education at Hervey Bay for the University of Southern Queensland. That is what we have done in Bundaberg, Gladstone and Mackay. That is that we will also do at Emerald.

What it amounts to is opening up higher education to Queensland communities not only in the south-eastern corner of the State but also communities throughout the State. That has been one of the core arguments which we have used with the Commonwealth, that Queensland's provision for higher education has not just been poor in absolute terms but because of the fact of our decentralised population it is even more difficult, or has been in the past more difficult, for students from regional centres to be able to further their education in a place close to their domicile.

We have seen in the past several thousand Queensland students go interstate each year for higher education. I can only construe from that that it is a further reflection of the difficulty that they have had in finding a place in a Queensland tertiary institution. The demand has been there; the places have not been. But the State Government has been doing its bit in doing what is required of it, that is, providing the sites and the foundation for the expansion of tertiary education institutions in our State.

Mr PYKE: In relation to behaviour management, I refer you to page 4 of the Portfolio Program Statements. There appears to be an extra \$2.5m to be spent on providing assistance for teachers in the area of behaviour management. Can you elaborate on how you intend to spend this amount?

Mr HAMILL: I have already canvassed some of this before with the Committee. In short, we are looking at additional staffing resources, all told 44 positions—some of that funded internally, the bulk

of it funded out of this initiative. We are also developing a special development resource package to assist teachers. We have also announced the reforms or the enhancements of staffing very much about behaviour management in the primary schools with the additional 81 positions for primary school deputy principals—four non-teaching, 77 half-teaching positions. We are also committed to supporting alternative venues and alternative programs for students who are not amenable to the normal arrangements in schools.

We do have a difficult but very small minority in our schools whose behaviour is unacceptable—they are outside the norm. This initiative is about providing real support not only to schools and teachers in schools but also to address what is the other fundamental equity issue in relation to behaviour management, that is, the impact of students whose behaviour is unacceptable and continually unacceptable on the educational outcomes of the other students in the class. Alternative venues is also an important part of this overall initiative. In fact, it will bring the staffing resources addressed to behaviour management issues in our schools to just over 179 full-time equivalent positions, which is almost double the provision that is currently available in our schools.

The CHAIRMAN: We are just about out of time now. We will go back to Mr Quinn.

Mr QUINN: On page 17, I refer to the third-last dot point in the list about issues impacting upon the primary subprogram. It states, "Moderate and report student outcomes in each key learning area as new syllabuses are implemented." Moderation procedures in the past have been confined exclusively to high schools.

Mr HAMILL: That is right.

Mr QUINN: How do you envisage this working and will it add additional workloads to primary school teachers?

Mr HAMILL: In a matter which is so particular to school administration, I will ask the deputy director-General if she would care to elaborate on that particular point.

Ms SULLIVAN: You will appreciate that the Queensland Curriculum Council has only had its first meeting and until the QCCO office is established I cannot answer your question precisely, because it will be the role of that group to decide what future work programs will look like. They will not be able to be written until new syllabuses are written. So it is really a looking forward issue that we have identified there. As these new syllabuses come on line and as the Queensland School Curriculum Office determines what those work programs will look like, we are anticipating that there will be a need for some moderation. Shaping the Future emphasised to some extent a concern about making sure that there was equity of standards across the State both in work programs and in monitoring student performance outcomes.

Mr QUINN: Up further in that list there is an item that states, "Maintain current folios of student work samples and assessment material which

provide an individual profile for students." Just speaking with teachers, they see that as quite an onerous task at the present stage where they are only doing the three strands of maths. I understand from talking to teachers that the buzz word seems to be "justification". They have got to be able to justify the level they assess the student at. Is the department worried about the increased workload that this seems to be imposing on teachers?

Mr HAMILL: Just a couple of points in relation to that. There is no doubt that the implications of Shaping the Future are significant in the primary school sector. One of the outcomes of Shaping the Future and also the adoption of student performance standards is about comparability of reporting in the primacy school sector. That is something which has not been a feature of the primary school sector to date. I guess it chips away at the autonomy of individual schools and the way in which they report on their students within their school communities.

That change is as much a cultural change as an actual change in operation, and with any cultural change it takes sometime to bring about. In the process, it is often resisted. There has also been a considerable amount of concern from some teachers as to the implications that it has for them in terms of their workloads. I might again ask the deputy director-general if she would care to comment further in terms of the actual practicalities of what has been sought.

Ms SULLIVAN: I would like to reflect that the same thing happened in secondary schools some years ago when ROSBA was first introduced. Secondary teachers went through the same perturbation of spirit about how many things did they have to keep and for how long. I think because it is new in the primary culture it is understandable that primary teachers are expressing that concern to you.

We are working with teachers to indicate that current forms of collection and assessment are appropriate. It is just a matter of deciding what you are actually reporting on and what you are actually assessing. So it is very much a professional development exercise as well as monitoring standards, as the Minister indicated. Certainly our director-general and I have talked to teachers, and there was a discussion in enterprise bargaining about student performance standards and the concern that while we did want to have moderation and monitoring of standards, we also would monitor the workload of teachers involved, and I believe we are doing that.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned professional development. How much has been allocated in this budget for the professional development of teachers, particularly within the primary area where this Wiltshire review will impact the most?

Ms SULLIVAN: Are you referring specifically to the Shaping of the Future initiatives?

Mr QUINN: Comparing that with SBS and—

Ms SULLIVAN: We did state them earlier. There are certain days that people are given for in-

service and SPS. They are given days for in-service on the Year 2 net. They are given days for in-service on the Year 6 test. I am not sure precisely what you are asking.

Mr HAMILL: There are also some figures that we produced for the cost of in-servicing of teachers.

Mr QUINN: In dollar terms?

Mr HAMILL: I think you will find them already in the report.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period allotted for the examination of the Budget Estimates of the Department of Education has now expired. The Committee's hearings are now suspended for dinner. We look forward to seeing you at 7.15 p.m. to continue with the examination.

Sitting suspended from 6.30 to 7.17 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The examination of the Budget Estimates of the Department of Education will now recommence. I remind the Minister and his departmental officers that the time allotted for the Department of Education will conclude at 7.35 p.m. by agreement with all members of the Committee. Do you wish to make a statement, Minister?

Mr HAMILL: A request was made earlier about the percentage of enrolments in Government schools by each year. I did not have the figures immediately to hand. I have them now, and I table them for the information of the Committee.

Mr QUINN: We were talking before the recess about the P & C advertising on television. I have one final question in relation to that issue. When will the advertising finish?

Mr HAMILL: It has finished.

Mr QUINN: Is it planned to start that advertising again?

Mr HAMILL: Going from the feedback I have received from the QCPCA, I would consider that that is the sort of campaign that we should try to undertake periodically. That campaign was run at the beginning of this year. It has just concluded. I would have thought that it would be appropriate to run a similar campaign in preparation for the new school year. That is really on the basis that the QCPCA sees value in that campaign being run. It is relatively inexpensive, because the basic work has been done in the preparation of the material. For all the reasons that I outlined before, in terms of the benefits perceived and otherwise, I think there is merit in doing it again.

Mr QUINN: There has been no real evaluation of those merits—it is just anecdotal feedback from P & Cs and more particularly from the QCPCA, which says, "This is a good program. Can we keep it on, please?" Is it the intention of the department to implement a structure to quantify the effectiveness of that expenditure?

Mr HAMILL: Earlier, you asked whether it has resulted in people attending P & C meetings. I do not have that data at this stage. I am not saying that we should give an unequivocal commitment that it should go on forever. Yes, we should

evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of the campaign. Certainly, it has been very beneficial to focus on P & Cs when we have a discussion paper out on school governance that could affect fundamentally the way in which P & Cs operate, the powers that school advisory councils may have, and the involvement of parents in school administration issues. I am very happy to have the department gather data to see how effective the campaign has been. Although I said that as a matter of principle I thought that there was merit in it, if it were to show that little has been gained from it then, like any other program that does not perform in the way in which it was intended, it would be dropped, and we would look for other means of seeking to obtain our objective.

Mr QUINN: What money has been put aside this year for media and advertising? Last year, I think it was something in the order of \$700,000, if I remember correctly.

Mr HAMILL: For my clarification, does that include materials that have been provided to explain SPS and curriculum reform?

Mr QUINN: Last year, I think it included such things as *Education Views* and television and advertising—things of that nature. I suppose that we would be looking at the global picture.

Mr HAMILL: I will deal with those elements. The distribution of *Education Views* is around 49,000 copies. I understand that that is very cost effective. It is going to both the Government and non-Government school sectors. It is an important publication because it incorporates *Education Gazette*. It is very cost effective in providing a forum for information and, at the same time, providing the necessary information for teachers in terms of changes in staffing arrangements. My understanding is that the cost of that is less than 50c a copy. On that basis, *Education Views* costs around \$20,000 or \$25,000. In terms of the advertising that I have already mentioned—the advertising campaign Support P & Cs cost in the order of \$200,000. I do not know if we have a figure immediately to hand on the cost of advertising the school curriculum reforms, but I am happy to take that on notice and I will provide an answer to the Committee tomorrow.

Mr QUINN: In relation to *Education Views*—is there a written editorial policy on the content of that document?

Mr HAMILL: Is there a policy?

Mr QUINN: Yes, as to what goes on it.

Mr HAMILL: As I said, the publication performs two roles. It performs the role of the old gazette and, at the same time, provides information to teachers who are the prime recipients of *Education Views* regarding departmental initiatives and current issues. Are you wanting a column in it?

Mr QUINN: No. The reason I asked is that in the past month or two, I have noticed a marked departure from what I would consider to be educational issues in the publication. I had occasion to write to you about a certain Barry Jones, a Federal member of Parliament, who was quoted in

that publication. That article has no relationship at all to Queensland education or *Education Views*. Quite recently, there was an article about teachers marching on Labour Day. That article was put in prior to Labour day when no-one knew whether or not teachers were marching. That is why I asked whether there is an editorial policy as to what goes into that publication, or is it simply whatever the journalists feel like putting in?

Mr HAMILL: It is certainly not intended to be, nor will it become, a partisan forum. It is there to provide information that is relevant to the educational community. The point that I would raise in regard to the Labour Day procession is that at times there have been requests from teachers to draw attention to activities in which teachers are participating. So the policy of *Education Views* is not to allow it to become a document of partisan comment, and I certainly would take a dim view of any attempt to have that document move in that direction.

Mr QUINN: The headline is "Barry steals the show", and it states—

" 'The Federal election will be held late in 1996. It would be a tight battle and Labor would win narrowly', former Science Minister and game show champ Barry Jones told teachers last week."

It was not even a meeting of teachers; it was a meeting of the Griffith University Alumni Association—a breakfast attended accordingly by several teachers. What action are you going to take to make sure that this sort of thing does not happen again?

Mr HAMILL: I must admit that Barry Jones has seldom been wrong.

Mr QUINN: He may be seldom wrong, but you are talking about taxpayers' money being used for party political advertising which is going to every school in Queensland. I do not see anything quite so funny in that.

Mr HAMILL: I think that you and I have a different perception of what might be described as party political advertising. Chairperson, correct me if I am wrong, but the matter before the Estimates Committee is not one where there is to be a clash of opinion on a matter of policy; it is about what is contained within departmental Estimates. I seek your guidance in relation to that matter.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, it is totally up to you whether or not you wish to answer matters of policy. You are quite right; it is really a matter of policy.

Mr HAMILL: Then allow me to restate that, as Minister, I will not countenance *Education Views* being used as an organ of partisan political propaganda.

Mr QUINN: Can I move on to corporate cards? How many corporate cards are used by this department?

Mr HAMILL: I know that I do not have one. One of the initiatives which we as a Government took—compared to the practices of previous administrations—is that Ministers do not have

corporate cards. Our expenses cannot be charged against the department. In relation to corporate cards—the material I have before me does not indicate the number of corporate cards. I can certainly furnish that information.

Mr QUINN: I would also like to find out what the corporate cards can be used for, what range of expenses can be booked up against them and what the average and monthly account balance is on each card.

Mr HAMILL: In terms of the use of the cards—from the information I have before me, there has been a trial of cards, particularly in the metropolitan west area and in various schools, with a maximum credit of 1,000 per transaction accorded to the card. It has certainly been particularly valuable to schools for the purchase of materials, for example, in the home economics and manual arts areas. It has overcome the difficulties experienced in the past where bank drafts were required for the purchase of materials. It has also reduced significantly the schools' administration in the acquisition of materials. In May this year, there were 139 transactions totalling \$32,000. The average transaction was \$230.

Mr QUINN: That is within the schools?

Mr HAMILL: That is with those corporate cards. It is anticipated that the card use might rise to something in the order of 200 to 300 transactions a month.

Mr QUINN: You mentioned the cards in the schools. Are cards used by officers in Mary Street as well?

Mr HAMILL: I will ask our Director of Finance to respond to your question.

Mr KELLY: As part of the trial of corporate cards, it was introduced for the purchasing section within the finance directorate. Following that successful trial, it is now being extended to use across other regions within the State and permanently within the purchasing section of the finance directorate.

Mr QUINN: On page 71 of the PPS, in "Studies Policy and Development" is a table that lists by area the major activities within that particular section. Social justice had a Budget Estimate of \$8.5m last year and also this year. That \$8.5m is more than the combined money spent on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education, humanities, mathematics, science and technology, general studies, visual and performing arts, health and personal development, and even language and culture. How does the department justify spending \$8.5m, which is more than the other areas combined?

Mr HAMILL: If you understood the accounts of the department—and take, for example, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education specifically—you would realise that we spend much, much more than \$1.4m on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. These very clear items such as disability and so on are expenditures that fall within the various programs and subprograms.

The Social Justice Subprogram specifically takes up a range of areas, for example, the social justice strategy policy on cultural and language diversity and education, the policy on anti-racism, the policy on total communication, the policy and guidelines on conductive education, a policy of educational provisions for students who are deaf/blind, a policy on clean, intermittent self-catheterisation and a policy on indigenous people. As well, for this forthcoming year a range of programs have been developed, such as programs for behaviour management, a gender and violence curriculum and guidelines and support material for cultural language diversity in education. The education advisers and school support centre staff are being supported here in the Inclusive Curriculum Principles Program and the Special Schools Towards 2000 Project. So that particular item embraces a great many separate programs, all of which can be quite properly grouped under the heading "Social Justice".

Mr QUINN: It seems to me that there is a lot of policy development going on in Social Justice.

Mr HAMILL: Also, the low incidence school support centre falls within that area as well. There is a lot of policy development going on there. There are a lot of important programs that have a bearing on a whole range of programs and subprograms administered by the department. Let there be no mistake, this Government places great store in its social justice initiatives. Indeed, education is one of those major service provision departments. Its major focus is providing a greater quantum of social justice across our community, no matter what part of the community we are dealing with.

The CHAIRMAN: There being no further questioning, that concludes the examination of the Budget Estimates of the Department of Education. I thank the Minister and his staff for their attendance, their cooperation and their tolerance.

Mr HAMILL: Chairperson and members of the Committee, on behalf of myself and my staff, I thank the Committee for the very cooperative fashion in which you undertook the significant task of looking at one-quarter of the State's allocations in the Budget, and I thank you for your indulgence.

QUEENSLAND HEALTH**In Attendance**

Hon. J. Elder, Minister for Health
 Mr Dick Persson, Director-General
 Ms Susan Rankin, Executive Director, Division of Corporate Services
 Mr David Butt, Executive Director, Division of Policy and Planning
 Dr Diana Lange, Chief Health Officer & Executive Director, Division of Public Health Services
 Dr Harvey Whiteford, Director Mental Health, Division of Public Health Services
 Mr Alan Davis, Director, Finance Branch, Division of Corporate Services
 Mr Michael Moodie, Director, Capital Works Branch, Division of Policy and Planning
 Ms Judith Robson, Regional Director, Brisbane South Region
 Ms Geri Taylor, Regional Director, Brisbane North Region
 Dr Bernie Homan, Director, Public Health Branch

The CHAIRMAN: The next item for consideration is the Department of Health. The time allotted is three hours and 40 minutes. For the information of the new witnesses, I point out that the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of these time limits. As set out in the sessional orders, the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members, the next 20 minutes from the Government members and so on in rotation. At the end of these time periods, there will be three chimes. The sessional orders also require equal time to be afforded to Government and non-Government members. Therefore, where a time period has been allotted which is less than 40 minutes, that time will be shared equally.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers other than those at the table to identify themselves before they answer a question. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Department of Health to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, is it your wish to make a short introductory statement in relation to the elements within your portfolio, or do you wish to proceed directly to questioning?

Mr ELDER: I would like to make an opening statement. The 1995-96 budget for Health will provide additional assistance to meet the most important and immediate needs of our health system. When I took over as Health Minister three months ago, I spent most of my time visiting hospitals and community health centres. I spoke to a

very large number of clinicians and administrators about how the system was working. I made an early commitment to present a statement outlining my proposed responses to the key issues emerging from those discussions. I delivered my statement last month in the form of a four-point action plan titled Meeting the Immediate Need. This Budget is the vehicle for delivering on those promises, ensuring the provision of an extra \$181.1m over the next three years.

Through my visits and discussions, I have formed a very strong view that the Government has built the foundation stones for rebuilding the system over the medium term. Our longer-term plans are clearly set out in a number of key documents. These include the Metropolitan Hospitals Plan, the Selective Tertiary Referrals Services Plan and the 10-year Health Services Plan. The Government has committed funds for the capital rebuilding program through the \$1.5 billion 10-year capital works program. Growth funds are factored into the forward estimates. Master planning of our major metropolitan teaching hospitals is well under way. The foundation stones are being moved into place and the picture for the future is becoming clear.

Notwithstanding these efforts, I did identify problems which required immediate attention. The Budget provides funds for attacking the waiting lists, bringing forward the rebuilding of major hospitals, upgrading and modernising specialist equipment, and improving our ability to attract and retain key medical staff, such as specialists, country doctors and remote area nurses. I have received a great deal of very positive feedback about the Health budget and I look forward, as do my staff, to answering your questions this evening.

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

Mr HORAN: I refer to the \$270m increase in the Health budget. Could you detail to the Committee all of the components that make up that \$270m?

Mr ELDER: I will give you a brief dissection of the increases. We will go through the initiatives first. They are as follows: waiting lists, \$21.3m; a supplementation for increased activity, \$16m; medical work force, \$10m; medical health and community care, \$4m; non-Government organisations, \$1m; the extension of school dental services, \$3.8m; ATSI health initiatives—the extension of 1994-95 initiatives—\$2.5m; ATSI primary health care, \$2m; matching of Commonwealth programs, \$2.4m; and child/adolescent community health extension, \$2m. We can go through each of these individually, if you wish.

Mr HORAN: Unless you would like to table them.

Mr ELDER: No, I will not table them. I can go through them. If you want to talk about them in detail, we can do that.

Mr HORAN: No, I would like to know what all the components of the \$270m are.

Mr ELDER: I will give them to you in this way, and then we can go through the components. The initiatives continue as follows: new service initiatives, \$24,420,000; commissioning of new facilities, \$15,334,000; resource adjustments, \$4,559,000; Treasury new initiatives and hospital activity, \$50,071,000; ongoing capital works, \$38,570m; Commonwealth programs, \$23,677,000; superannuation, \$34,069,000; and awards, \$67,651,000. We have a component of "other" in there which consists of such things as escalations, awards and that type of activity. The total for that is \$2,717,779. Do you want me to continue with the breakdown?

Mr HORAN: We should go through that.

Mr ELDER: I can give you those figures— and there are pages of them—or I can give you an idea of what component that area made up of the budget. Would you like it in that form?

Mr HORAN: What you have given me is satisfactory. I was wondering what the \$270m was composed of.

Mr ELDER: The list continues as follows: ATSI primary health care, \$2m; matching of Commonwealth programs, \$2.4m; child/adolescent community health, \$2m; nursing work force development and training, \$2m; remote area nursing incentives, \$1.6m; Royal Flying Doctor Service enhancements, \$1.7m; public intoxication, \$1m; home medical aids, \$1m; vaccines for child immunisation, \$600,000; methadone program, \$700,000; and hepatitis C, \$500,000. For new services there is \$71.1m. For the commissioning of new facilities—Nambour Hospital, Logan Hospital, Townsville cardiac unit, Townsville radiation unit and Caboolture Hospital—there is \$14.8m. And there is more, if you would like to ask me about them.

Mr HORAN: The Hospital Waiting List Program involves a component of \$9m over three years to clear the backlog of people on waiting lists. Will you provide details on the backlog at which that program is targeted? If you have established a fund of \$3m a year for three years, you must know what it will do. Will you also provide details on which hospitals will receive that money, how it will be allocated and the guidelines for receipt of that money—in other words, exactly how it will be used?

Mr ELDER: Sure. Firstly, let us talk about waiting lists. When we came to Government, we inherited a system of recording and reporting that saw information stored in cardboard boxes. There was no information technology base within Health. We have implemented an information technology program to drive the implementation of new technologies and information technology systems—

Mr HORAN: What I am getting at is: do you know the nature of the backlog that you are aiming at?

Mr ELDER: You get to ask the questions; I get to answer them.

Mr HORAN: Do you know what you are actually targeting with that \$9m?

Mr ELDER: You get to ask the questions; I get to answer them. That is the way it works.

Mr HORAN: I can come in with some suggestions.

The CHAIRMAN: May I point out that every time Mr Horan asks another question, the Minister has another three minutes to answer it.

Mr ELDER: As I said, we inherited a system where records were kept in cardboard boxes. There was no effective way of targeting waiting lists. We had to put information systems in place so that we could ascertain who was waiting and the types of people who were waiting—in other words, the type of treatment required by people who were waiting for surgery—and we have set about doing that through our information technology capital works program. We still do not have the types of systems in place that I as Minister would like. I have said time and time again that it is a priority of ours to enhance that system, and we will be spending more money in this budget to do just that.

There are lists with quadruple bookings, triple bookings and double bookings. Some lists are cancelled but not removed from administrative records. Some people are actually treated but not removed from a list. The lists move on a daily basis. It is difficult to gain an appreciation of the size of the waiting lists. The AMA has a figure out in the field of 15,000. I do not accept that. The Opposition from time to time has used a figure of 14,000. I do not accept that. However, if that is compared with the figures of New South Wales and Victoria—in New South Wales, there are around 40,000 people waiting; in Victoria, there are 42,000 people waiting—one would say that it is reasonable. The problem is that we do not have those figures.

I undertook the initiative of providing that \$9m after realising that people are waiting. I have talked to people in the system. We all realise that people are waiting. The funding is designed to target that backlog and also to put in place, through other initiatives, systems by which we can identify who is waiting and get those information systems up and running. Most of the lists are held within regions; they are determined by regions; they are determined by individual hospitals. As I said before, they do move around. The \$9m will be targeted to tackle those lists head on. We will target particularly those fields in which we know that people are waiting—cardiac surgery, ear, nose and throat surgery, urology and ophthalmology. I targeted those areas earlier with an additional \$3m from the budget this year, and this \$9m will further tackle that backlog.

Mr HORAN: In relation to the Hospital Waiting List Program and the Hospital Access Pool of \$35m over three years—how will that money be used? What is the baseline? If it is being called a Hospital Access Pool, is it additional to another pool, or is it part of the case mix system?

Mr ELDER: No, it is an additional pool. It is a pool of funds that I have set aside to provide

incentives and opportunities for hospitals to deal with their emergency patients and their urgent patients and then deal with those who are waiting for elective surgery. The funding will be paid to hospitals only after they have actually provided treatment for those particular patients, and not before. The Waiting List Program is targeted to treating them up-front. This funding provides an incentive for hospitals to deal with elective patients after they have dealt with emergency and urgent patients. We will establish fairly strict criteria to guarantee the timely treatment of urgent patients and a reduction in the semi-urgent and non-urgent patients on waiting lists. Importantly, this funding will promote cost efficiency and effectiveness in priority treatment within the system. It is linked—and it is an important link—to the case mix funding in public hospitals. Susan might want to add something to that.

Ms RANKIN: You inquired as to how hospitals will access the funds in that pool. There are some fairly stringent guidelines in place to ensure that category 1 patients—the urgent patients—are treated before hospitals access moneys available through the case mix or waiting list pool to tackle level 2 and level 3 patients. Hospitals are required to sign off that they have attended to their urgent patients, and they are also required to provide a number of other safeguards before they can access those dollars. The funds are paid to the hospitals based on the activity that they produce, and it is produced in case mix terms so it provides us with what are known as the DRGs—the diagnostic-related groupings—of patients. Those are cross-checked to make sure that they fall within the category of the level 2s and level 3s so that we know that an appropriate number of those patients are being treated before the funds flow to the individual facilities. It is a retrospective payment made for work that has actually been undertaken.

Mr ELDER: There was an enhancement pool in last year's budget which has now flowed through and which is now known as the in-patient services pool, which is the pool that I have put in place. Do you understand the two?

Mr HORAN: The enhancement pool was the \$7.5m that was—

Mr ELDER: There was an enhancement pool of \$7.5m. That was dealing with it in last year's context. In the context of this budget we are talking about a three-point strategy, which is the backlog for the waiting lists, the in-patient services pool and the non in-patient services pool.

Mr HORAN: Which is the \$12m over three years?

Mr ELDER: Yes.

Mr HORAN: The third component of that program is community-based health services, for which \$20m has been allocated over three years. Will you provide details of that and how it will reduce waiting lists? What services will be paid that money?

Mr ELDER: This is the \$20m, the last component?

Mr HORAN: Yes.

Mr ELDER: Sure. The Home Support Scheme will be established to enable the development of community-based health services which support the acute hospitals. This initiative is very important, and it is an area in which we have been lacking for a long time in this State. Historically, there was a lack of commitment to community health services. That goes right back to the seventies, when the Government of the time refused to take money from the Whitlam Government where the other States did. As a result, the other States have developed very strong community-based health services. Unfortunately—and we would need to go back and check the record as to why it was not accepted—Queensland has not had a strong community health sector. This funding is targeted to support the development of that sector.

As a result of the incentives outlined above, there is likely to be further pressure on the community health sector as people stay in hospitals for shorter periods. In this day and age, there is an increasing demand for the most cost-effective patient care, and we need to provide that through the community health sector.

I hope that the initiative will help build strong community health services to support people at home and in the community. The aim is to really improve and extend the links between community-based and hospital-based services. We want to focus on providing a more integrated level of care—a quality of care—right along the line, from when a person is admitted to hospital, discharged from hospital and then integrated into the community health sector. The type of areas that we would concentrate on would include: pre-admission, early discharge services, palliative care, diabetes, asthma, maternity and a whole range of other areas. I am sure that Susan would like to add something in relation to community health.

Ms RANKIN: This is part of an important strategy in tackling the community health funding situation. Proportionately, Queensland receives by far the lowest funding in Australia. We actually have only about 50 per cent of the Australian average. The Grants Commission data actually supports that. We are looking at reversing where possible the flow of funds so that more funds are injected into the community sector, which therefore frees up the resources through better utilisation, through getting people out of the acute system quicker and getting them into the community where they can be attended to in a more appropriate environment. Ultimately, that takes some of the pressure off the acute services.

Mr ELDER: Those funds will be distributed through regional budgets. The regions themselves will determine the need and they will come back to us with submissions. We will then look at the distribution of funds from that point on.

Mr HORAN: Can you describe to the Committee how case mix has been implemented in the past four or five months? This year will be the first full year of its implementation. How much money will actually be available for case mix and to

what extent will hospital budgets be determined by the case mix system? To what extent is case mix going to be implemented into the hospitals and in how many hospitals?

Mr ELDER: One question or five?

Mr HORAN: I am asking you to describe what is happening with case mix.

Mr ELDER: If the member wants me to answer them, I will try to cover them all in one answer. He asked five questions there. I seek your indulgence, Madam Chair.

Mr HORAN: I will ask a second question if I have time.

Mr ELDER: Let me go through the key points of case mix. Hopefully, that will address many of the points that you raised in your question. We introduced case mix based management funding in January 1995 as a strategy to achieve, as you pointed out, micro-economic reform across the health sector. Whilst case mix will provide short-term improvements in resource management, it is essentially a medium to long-term strategy allowing Statewide benchmarking of hospitals. The basis behind it is to identify areas in which we can gain and areas where efficiencies can be achieved.

Importantly, under the arrangements, regions will continue to be allocated a global budget, using a population based methodology. So that will not change. Case mix will then be used as an intra-regional tool for the management of service delivery and the allocation of funds to hospitals. During phase 1, which is the period from 1 January to 30 June this year, the introduction of case mix will not lead to any changes to hospital budgets. However, over successive financial years, efficiencies in resource allocations will be achieved, enabling funds to be re-allocated within the regions themselves to address both local and Statewide priorities. So, it is based on the format of population-based methodology and then used as a tool beyond that for re-allocation of resources.

Case mix will mean that, over time, hospitals which currently operate inefficiently Statewide in terms of benchmark prices will have their processes and expenditures monitored. We will need to identify and address areas of inefficiencies. So, we see it as being a darn good benchmarking tool for hospitals across the State. However, case mix is being introduced in this State according to a comprehensive risk management strategy which involves implementation of a system in a number of phases over a number of years, so that the smaller hospitals within this State—those smaller regional hospitals—are not disadvantaged by that benchmarking. We will be recognising the role that tertiary hospitals play in this State, because their particular funding base will be similarly different to those smaller hospitals. Furthermore, a service enhancement pool—that is, the in-patients pool that we spoke about—has been established to provide an incentive to hospitals to reduce their waiting lists for semi and non-urgents. So there is an incentive built into that for them to manage their patient flow.

The CHAIRMAN: Did you want to ask another question on that, Mr Horan?

Mr HORAN: I am not quite clear on that in-patients pool. Does it include only the amount of money from the hospital access pool or does it include other moneys as well?

Mr ELDER: Only the money from that pool.

Mr HORAN: Only the hospital access pool, the \$35m?

Mr ELDER: The \$35m, yes.

Mr HORAN: How many hospitals will be involved in case mix in Queensland? Will it cover the various procedures in the hospitals, particularly mental health, etc.?

Mr ELDER: Case mix will be comprehensive in the places that it will be introduced. It will be comprehensive in terms of the areas that it addresses within the hospitals. David could probably help in terms of the number of hospitals.

Mr BUTT: We are looking at the phase 2 period of case mix as really a consolidation of phase one, so that most of the parameters that existed in phase 1 will not change. We had a limit of 750 weighted separations, and any hospitals with a limit below that were not included in the case mix funding model. That same limit would apply in this case. So, the parameters that existed in the first six months will exist in the next 12 months.

Mr HORAN: What did you mean by 750 weighted separations?

Mr BUTT: That was the level at which the line was drawn as to the number of people who are being treated. A weighted separation looks at the complexity of each diagnosis-related group and it is then weighted according to its complexity.

Mr HORAN: What I was really getting at was in what size hospital would the line be drawn where case mix would not apply?

Mr BUTT: It is the same list that is in the back of the first case mix policy, and I can get that list for you, if you like.

Mr ELDER: We can provide that later in the session.

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

Mr PYKE: Minister, will you enlighten us and explain how the operational budget for hospitals such as the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the QE II or Redlands Hospital is arrived at?

Mr ELDER: Yes, I can. That is a good question because it goes to the fundamental issue of how the health system operates under this Government's regionalised health system and how a decentralised system differs from the highly centralised system that is now being advocated by my opposite. At the moment, the Opposition cannot explain what particular policies it might want to follow when it comes to determining budgets within Queensland Health. It has a policy out in the marketplace, and that policy itself would mean a

different way of determining budgets within Queensland Health.

If the Opposition cannot decide between having all the decisions made in central office, in the heart of the Brisbane district, or if it is going to leave the control of budgets to, say, local community-based facilities—in this case, say, community-based volunteers who might be part of a broader board or council, such as is being put forward by the Opposition—then who is going to administer the \$132m budget for the peninsula and Torres Strait region? Is it going to be the volunteer, community-based council? No, it is not likely to be that council, so it has to go back to a centralised system.

This Government has tried to give the regions genuine autonomy. We have given the regions the ability to make decisions about how the money should best be spent within their region. This means that, after the total Queensland Health budget is determined, the regions are then supplied with their share of the budget—their share of the cake—and it is then the responsibility of the regions to develop their own budgets. That includes developing budgets for their major hospitals. In South Brisbane it would be the QE II or the PA or the Redlands Hospital.

In the near future, regions will actually receive their budget figures. As yet, they have not. They will then set about working up all the internal regional budgets over the next few weeks. Negotiations will then occur between the regions and central office to finally determine those regional budgets. So, we are working through it with them in an autonomous fashion. We are giving them the autonomy to develop their own budgets. They will work through it and they will come back to us and we will continue the process. As I said earlier, that is in sharp contrast to the funding and managing Health approach that is now being suggested by the Opposition. The regions are where the real decisions are made. They have the power and the autonomy to make those particular decisions, with the advantage that it is not actually being centralised here. We do not have that role; they do. Therefore, you are not taking away the legitimate role that they have to make autonomous decisions about service delivery within their particular region.

Mr PYKE: The activity targets for the emergency medicine and adult medical and surgical programs provide for a substantial increase in throughput, but there does not appear to be a matching increase in staffing levels. How can that activity be achieved?

Mr ELDER: Are you referring to the activity targets for emergency and adult medicine?

Mr PYKE: That is correct, and surgical programs.

Mr ELDER: Activity targets for various programs are used by determining a variety of data available at central level, including changes in demographics and that type of thing. These global activity targets would then be subjected to revision during the next 12 months. The regions will

obviously play a significant role in the final determination of their own activity targets, giving them autonomy. As a Government, we clearly believe that the people best able to make decisions about that service are the people who actually live in that region, whether it is Cairns, Mackay, Longreach, or Roma. The people based in the area have the best knowledge of local conditions and are in the best position to make a determination about those types of things.

It appears to me that the Opposition prefers to have decisions about providing services in locations around the State taken at central office in Brisbane. As I see it, there will be a group of token volunteers pretending to have some sort of input in representing local communities. However well meaning those volunteers may be, who makes the decision about staffing resources? Who makes the decisions about particular needs which would enable them to have any substantial input? At the end of the day, the reality is that the decision is being made by default in Brisbane and that is what the Opposition is advocating.

Individual regions work up their own budgets, as I have explained. In terms of that, individual regions will obviously look at changes within activity targets and activity levels, and will provide those activity targets and the sorts of solutions that can be developed in terms of their own decision making process. They will have the autonomy to do that and regionalisation is the vehicle for that. We can give that clear commitment by giving the real decision making power to local people in the regions, whether it be at budget or activity levels, or in terms of any other decision that needs to be made. We stand by that.

Mr PYKE: I refer you to the table on page 12 of the Portfolio Program Statements. Is the figure of 377 extra staff outlined in that table all the new operational staff to be engaged by Queensland Health next year?

Mr ELDER: Under the staffing table on page 12 of the PPS is a brief note which explains that staffing increases shown in that particular table are primarily those attributable to the new initiatives, growth funding and the Commonwealth programs in this year's budget. Those figures do not show the changes to individual regions which make up staffing levels for 1995-96 once they have worked out what their own regional budgets are. We are talking about new initiatives, Commonwealth programs and growth funding. It does not show the changes that may occur in these individual regions around the State, once they look at staffing levels and work up their own regional budgets.

The regional budgets themselves shall be finalised by the end of July. At that time it will be possible to give a very accurate estimate of the changes in staffing levels across all the programs across the State. It would be misleading for me to make any sort of guesstimate in relation to staffing levels across those regions, and it would be misleading for anyone to make the claim that staffing levels as shown in the PPS represent the likely staff outcome on profile for Queensland

Health in 1995-96. As I have said previously, the changes made in staffing profiles at a regional level will take into account a wide range of local factors when they are working up their budgets. Regional health authorities, through their normal day-to-day operations and their wide community consultations, have built up a very detailed knowledge about the needs in their particular local communities. In determining their local budgets they will put that intimate knowledge to good use in terms of deciding what is best for that region, the types of services that they would provide for that particular region and identifying the needs of the people in the region.

Of course, we are well aware that that type of local decision making is important because local people have that detailed knowledge of and power over budgeting, planning, community consultation and staffing. As I said before, that gives them autonomy and, at the end of the day, that benefits their communities. Unfortunately, my opposite number wants to take that function away from local communities and centralise it in Brisbane.

The CHAIRMAN: The Program Statements state that cancer, mental health, injury prevention and cardiovascular diseases are priorities of the national health goals and targets. What plans does the department have for 1995-96 to address these areas?

Mr ELDER: The national health goals and targets are determined jointly by Commonwealth and State Ministers of Health. All States have agreed to undertake programs to improve the health of the community in four key areas: cancer, mental health, injury prevention and cardiovascular disease. These issues contribute substantially to the burden of illness or premature death, as we all appreciate, in the community.

In the area of cancer prevention, smoking remains the major risk factor. Activities will target smoking rates among young people. In 1995-96, it is intended to conduct a Statewide education campaign to accompany the introduction of the Tobacco Products Control Bill, which will inform retailers in the community of their responsibility in reducing access of young people to cigarettes. We are still engaged in those health promotion activities. I recently launched a program that was targeted at reducing the incidence of smoking, because we have seen a slight increase in smoking among teenagers, particularly young women between the ages of 15 and 17. In this respect, we are encouraging parents of those children to talk to their children about smoking and obviously the dangers that follow. Other activities include the Quit 24 hour phone counselling and information service and the distribution of public health education material. The estimated indicative cost is around \$600,000 in that particular area.

In relation to cervical cancer screening, there are important cancer prevention strategies in place. As the PPS indicates, Queensland Health has expanded its breast screening services and improved its coverage, particularly of cervical cancer screening, as part of a cost-share program with the

Commonwealth. The cervical cancer program involved roughly \$525,000 in terms of State funds and just over \$660,000 will be provided by the Commonwealth in terms of the breast screening program, and \$1.5m will be provided for mammography services. In 1994-95, Queensland Health spent \$125,000 on skin cancer prevention activities. Most members would be aware of the Safe Sun kit. We are promoting safety among sporting clubs through developing shade creation guidelines for sporting areas and for pools. In 1995-96, it is planned to promote these guidelines and develop and promote guidelines in child-care centres in particular and further expand the program. We will continue the skin cancer awareness programs across-the-board generally.

In relation to injury prevention, a number of initiatives are planned for 1995-96. Last year, we implemented the first Statewide campaign to tackle the distressing toll of hot water burns. I recently released a campaign on that, and maybe we can talk further about that as the evening goes on.

The CHAIRMAN: On the next page you say that Queensland Health will continue to manage resources efficiently by use of post-acute early discharge options, maximum use of day only hospitalisation, rationalising the roles of each level of hospital, benchmarking regional self-sufficiency, including the role of the rural and remote services, and greater resource flexibility between home and residential care for chronic conditions. Would you like to expand on that and explain what you mean by those efficiencies and/or how they will be efficient for the hospital system?

Mr ELDER: This is on the page for the long-term strategic issues? We are talking about post-acute early discharge options. The 10-year health services plan for Queensland indicates that since 1990-91 the average length of stay in a hospital as acute patients has declined from 5.4 to 4.6 days in 1993-94. The trend will continue because of the use of new surgical techniques—the use of new technology. As a result, the patients, as I see it at the end of the day, will be treated more efficiently and they will be discharged earlier.

The 1995 health action plan that I announced allocates—as we mentioned before to the Opposition member—\$20m to the home support scheme which is your non-in patients scheme, and that will be the development of the network of community based services. That will provide support for those patients who are discharged early from hospital. If I can give you an example, QE II Hospital, which is being developed as an elective surgery facility, provides this sort of service by following up patients who are discharged early and checking that they are making a good recovery from that particular surgery. By providing these types of community services, patients who are treated in acute hospitals will be able to be discharged earlier because that is the point behind that fund. It is developing those integrated links between the hospitals themselves and the community health service that underpins them. So we do see that those who are treated in acute hospitals will be able

to be discharged earlier and this will allow more patients to be treated, as I see it, in the public hospitals in our system without the need for increasing bed numbers.

If you talk about the next one, which is day only hospitalisation or day surgery, the development of day surgery is an integral component for Queensland Health's efficient and effective delivery of health service. It allows greater throughput of surgery cases without necessarily using acute hospital beds. That is the difference. Queensland Health has set a target of 30 per cent for surgical cases across the State being undertaken on a day-by-day basis, in other words, day surgery by 1998. Rationalising the roles of each level of hospital is another important area. Rationalising the roles of the hospitals means an effective and efficient use of the available hospital resource to allow for maximum access to any sort of treatment, to the treatment service that you would get. That will be achieved by networking. It is outlined in the 10-year services plan. Networking of hospital services has been used interstate and overseas and involves quite a deal of clinical linkages between the States' major tertiary hospitals and referral hospitals. That is working across campus and across the major regional hospitals, but importantly—

The CHAIRMAN: You can finish.

Mr ELDER: I will come back to it.

The CHAIRMAN: You have already mentioned at length the Hospital Waiting List Program. Will that mean extra utilisation of theatres at the Royal Brisbane Hospital as part of that program?

Mr ELDER: It is a question that has been raised and raised regularly outside and in the media. Yes, the Waiting List Program is an important part of this year's budget. Royal Brisbane will certainly be undertaking a significant increase in procedures with funds being made available to them under that program. The money is there to actually target those people waiting for elective surgery to get them through the system, so all hospitals are going to play a role. The procedures, as I see it, would be spread across a number of specialties. They would be ENT, vascular, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, eye surgery, urology, plastic and general surgery.

As I said earlier, with the increase in procedures being undertaken there will be a need to review the operations of a hospital to make sure that the beds and the theatres are being optimally utilised, might be the best way to put it. I expect to be able to report in the next couple of weeks on that. We are looking at that right at this point. As I said to you before, there are people waiting for elective surgery. The numbers of people waiting, even as a guesstimate, would be unacceptable to us. So I am paying particular attention to those waiting for elective surgery and getting them through the system. I committed an extra \$63m to that over the next three years in that hospital plan, with the introduction of that Hospital Waiting List Program. What it will mean for Royal Brisbane is that they will be in a position to address the long

waiting lists for elective surgery. I want to get on and quickly implement that plan and that element of it which is getting those people through. We will be looking at Royal Brisbane Hospital, the operation itself, theatres and beds, and I will probably be able to report back in a couple of weeks in terms of the work we have done there.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we must be just about out of time for Government questions. We will go back to Mr Horan.

Mr HORAN: Can you tell us how much funding you have got under Medicare Pool B in this current financial year and what Medicare Pool B funding is expected for the next financial year?

Mr ELDER: Yes. The 1994-95 estimated component is \$8.3m. We estimate bonus Pool B funding for 1995-96 at around \$9.7m. As you know, the Medicare Agreement is that formal contract between ourselves and the Commonwealth and Territories by which we agreed to provide a service. The Commonwealth agreed to provide financial assistance to us to help us meet the costs of the public hospital system. Most of that financial assistance is provided by means of that base grant. The Commonwealth did introduce a bonus payment system for the period 1993 to 1998. That was in order to provide some incentives for improving access to services for public patients. As you are aware, there are the two bonus pools. We have the base provisional pool, Pool A, and it is related to the level of public provision provided by States and Territories before the commencement of the agreement, and that was at the 1990-91 levels.

In the annual adjustments, Pool B is related to the change in public provision which is provided by the States and Territories in the current year compared to public provision in 1991. So public provision is measured, as you know, by the measure of acute public bed days as a proportion of all bed days, and the Commonwealth and States have agreed to use case mix weighted separations rather than bed days from this year onwards. Pool B payments to Queensland and to Australia are set out, and I have given you those particular numbers. Do you want to add to that at all?

Ms RANKIN: We could go on and talk about the method for calculating Pool B. The method for calculating the shares means that the Pool B funding is really dependent upon a number of factors which are beyond Queensland's control. For example, funding is affected by changes in the activity levels in other States and changes in the levels of private health insurance participation in other States. The proportion of Pool B payments received by Queensland is actually below its weighted population share, which is estimated to be about 18.3 per cent. The methodology that is used to calculate the Pool B shares is recognised by the Commonwealth and States as being a bit problematical and complex, particularly in the past, as we have been using the occupied bed days as one of the criteria and are now moving to case mix to fall in line with the new funding policies.

Mr HORAN: Last year, despite the \$158m increase in the budget, quite a number of hospitals

were running over budget within the first three to six months of the financial year, and as a result they had to close beds and reduce services and so forth. What assurances can you give this Committee that the same will not happen this year?

Mr ELDER: No, I do not accept that. Budgets are moving targets; hospitals are given budgets. Those budgets are developed within the region. In relation to those budgets, you start at a base. They are not just given money one year and told to manage with that. They are given base funding and from that point onwards they manage their system. At the end of this year, it is my anticipation that, with some adjustments that we have made during the year, they will all come in on budget. No hospital has cut services because of lack of support from this Government in relation to budgets. In fact, all hospitals had an increased share in last year's budget round and all of those hospitals have been given the responsibility to manage that.

Ms RANKIN: In respect of the coming financial year, the Minister's statement about the hospitals balancing their budgets for this year is correct. They are all forecasting that position at the moment. For next year, one of the new processes that has been introduced at the Minister's instigation is a much more thorough budgeting system, which will involve the regions presenting their budget work-up in some fine detail to a budget review committee. That will happen after the regional budget allocations are done in July. Those regional budget work-ups will actually go down and address very specific issues with respect to the staffing for the region, new services, additional services, new commissionings that will be going in, any adjustments that will be made to the budget in terms of ongoing funding schemes, Commonwealth programs and the like. The regions will present to the department and the Minister their strategy for managing those budgets for the forthcoming 12 months and the funding implications. They will be endorsed at that time and then the regions will be managing those strategies. It is part of the new process that we have introduced, along with guaranteed information on budgets, such as the forward estimates process.

The regions have had for the first time in the last financial year two years of forward estimates provided to them to enable them to plan their service provision on not just a one-year basis but on a three-year basis. As you know, with the management of the health service, you are talking quite long lead times to bring on specialist staff and other staff, to open new services and to gear them up to fully productive levels. So you really need a longer planning horizon than just the 12-month period in managing for health. In the forthcoming 12 months, the regions will be presenting their strategies not just for the next budget cycle but also for the longer term implications for the two years' forward estimates that will be associated with their budgets.

Mr ELDER: If you gave the hospitals every dollar they asked for, God help you if you ever got into Government.

Mr HORAN: Can you provide us with a list of vacancies Statewide by hospitals for medical superintendents and also for staff specialists?

Mr ELDER: As you know, there are significant shortfalls. The package that I have developed—the \$42m three-year package to attract staff specialists in particular and others—is designed to meet that shortfall. One of our concerns is that currently we have 230 temporary resident overseas-trained doctors at work within our public hospital system. That helps, but we need to be working hard to attract specialists into the system. We have major shortfalls in the specialist numbers in non-metropolitan areas as well as metropolitan areas.

I can give you a snapshot of some selected specialist numbers. The best that I can give you are the figures as at September last year, which is probably the last time that we looked at this issue. For instance, anaesthetists—76 total positions, with 25 vacancies; emergency medicine—nine vacancies; obstetrics and gynaecology, approximately three; psychiatry, 10; and radiology, 13. So, out of a total of 458 specialists, we probably have around 80 or 90 vacancies. That was in September. We have come a fair way since then. We have been attracting people into the system. We have been fairly diligent in that. I do not have a total break-up of those figures, but it gives you the idea that there are specialist shortfalls.

There would be a few medical superintendents that we need to find, probably in some non-metropolitan areas. In that respect, I would not think that it would be more than four or five. I think that that would be the most medical superintendents that we would be looking for.

As a result of the discussions that I had with our specialists, medical superintendents and doctors in rural Queensland when developing that package, part of the response was designed to make us more competitive in the national marketplace so that we could start reversing the trend. There has been a trend over the past decade where our specialists were raided by other States or raided by the private sector. That is probably the best way you could describe it. That has created pressure points for us in various hospitals and in the system. That package was designed to do just that—attract them and retain them.

Mr HORAN: Can you advise the Committee how many vehicles were purchased in that package for the superintendents and staff specialists? An order was placed for 742, but I do not know if they were all for the staff specialists and the medical superintendents. I want to know how many cars have been purchased just for the staff specialists and medical superintendents under that package. I would also like—whether you can provide it tonight or by tomorrow—the breakdown of which hospitals the cars are going to.

Mr ELDER: In relation to those vehicles that will be provided under the new package, that is still being negotiated with the specialists within the regions. Those negotiations are proceeding. This money is provided in this year's budget. We are still going through the Estimates process so, at this

time, that is being dealt with within the regions. The hospitals themselves are going through and looking at the types of vehicles that will be required and whether they actually want vehicles. I assume that some doctors will not want the vehicle; they may be happy enough with their present arrangements. All those details are now being gathered. Once that is done and back with us, Q-Fleet will determine the numbers and provide those vehicles from that point onwards. As I said before in answer to an earlier question to Mr Pyke, we are in the process of developing the budgets with the regions. Part of that process is providing those vehicles. Q-fleet will make the purchases.

Ms RANKIN: We could tell you the break-up by area and by type.

Mr ELDER: That will come once that process finished. We certainly have not placed any orders yet. As I said, we are still waiting for that information to come back.

In relation to another question you asked in terms of specialists—when I said that there were about 90-odd vacancies, the figures I gave you were for September 1994. That figure is now down to around 47 on current figures. I said to you at the time that we were working on that. I have received some advice showing that we have done some pretty positive work in relation to those shortfalls.

Mr HORAN: In relation to the provision of the package and the cars, who bears the cost of the fuel, administration and repairs of the cars? Is that part of the package?

Mr ELDER: All costs are carried and that will be part of the regional budget. As I said, there is money to meet that in terms of the new incentives.

Mr HORAN: That is just for the two-year period. At the end of the two years, what is planned to happen then? This is additional money for a two-year period.

Mr ELDER: What you will see is that built into regional budgets, but part of the regional budgets, will include meeting the on costs in terms of those vehicles.

Mr HORAN: That money for those on costs for the vehicles will come out of that particular package that is buying the cars and so forth; is that right?

Mr ELDER: No, the money that is buying the cars is for the costs of the vehicles—running the cars.

Mr HORAN: It comes out of the regional budget?

Mr ELDER: That will come out of the regional budget.

Mr HORAN: With regard to enterprise bargaining, with the provision of the cars in the package being outside the enterprise bargaining process, was there any type of trade-off in developing that package—anything expected in return for it?

Mr ELDER: No. The simple fact was that, on coming into the ministry, one could see that there

was a need to provide extra support if we were to retain those specialists and if we were going to attract new specialists into the system. The Director-General and I sat down and went through a fairly long consultative process talking to various specialists across a number of hospital campuses, talking to rural doctor organisations and individual doctors themselves. We tried to build a package that was based on non-award incentives and it included a number of initiatives, for instance, the vehicles and a telecommunications package, where we could give them the option of looking at a number of pieces of telecommunications equipment. We also said that we would then work further with them and look at other areas that were of concern to them. Primarily, this was an opportunity for us to be able to provide initial support through a package that was not linked to enterprise bargaining; it was really looking at providing incentives. So in that element there were no trade-offs. It was particularly just targeted to develop an opportunity for us to build the work force, particularly our specialists and medical superintendents. As I said before, it was just aimed at making us more competitive in the marketplace and making the package more attractive so that people would stay and we would get more into the system.

Mr HORAN: With regard to the enterprise bargain that has been struck—and this will be the first full year of the bargain—

Mr ELDER: Of EB?

Mr HORAN: The first full year of the wage rises. The \$38m in cash cuts that has to be found as the unfunded portion of the enterprise bargain includes \$10m for hotel services, of which I am aware. This will be the third year of that. I want to ask you about the three other items within the \$38m of cash cuts. The \$15m for standardised clinical practice—

Mr ELDER: Do you want to do that one first?

Mr HORAN: Yes.

Mr ELDER: The \$15m standardised—

Mr HORAN: Clinical practice pattern; \$4.5m for area health management and \$3m for nursing homes. How will those cash amounts be found?

Mr ELDER: Susan can outline the \$15m in relation to standard clinical and area health.

Ms RANKIN: Standardised clinical practices really relates to a number of initiatives that are oncoming as macro strategies. We are talking there particularly about the impact and the introduction of case mix and the strategies that will accompany case mix in terms of clinical costing. Really, one of the thrusts of both of those strategies aims at taking the budget management process down to as low a level as is practical and possible—and in many cases, that is down to award level—and making sure that there are systems in place to support decision making at that local level. For example, you need to have a clinical costing system that will take the information down to a budget holder at award where the person who is making the day-to-day management decisions and managing

the funds is also aware of the costs of the services that they are providing. That is one of the strategies that has been adopted for some considerable time. Case mix overlays that strategy as a more macro strategy, which the Government is adopting, and also as the funding streams are moving towards case mix, those two are closely related.

In terms of the area health approach—that really relates to the notion that there are savings to be made from rationalising the provision of many of the services that would be referred to as the corporate-type services. That would include things like financial management, human resources and industrial relations—for example, the management of your payroll processes—those corporate services, which often times could actually be rationalised into more central service provisions rather than being spread across individual facilities having their own cells of those services. You might get economies of scale from one central service provision within a region, and we believe that there are some rationalised savings to be made in those areas. The nursing home area is one which David can speak to.

Mr ELDER: David can give you more details of that.

Mr BUTT: Nursing homes is one that is very much about benchmarking, and it is about trying to make nursing homes similarly efficient. It is looking at a State average cost of nursing homes and about bringing down the higher cost nursing homes to a State average in a benchmarking exercise.

The CHAIRMAN: I turn now to the Government members. Ms Spence you wanted to ask a question?

Ms SPENCE: On page 4 of the Portfolio Program Statements you refer to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health as a key initiative in the forthcoming year. Indeed, as the health of the ATSI groups is so poor, I would ask you to comment on the Government's commitment to the health of this particular group of our population.

Mr ELDER: Sure. The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health policy is a stance endorsed by Cabinet in October last year. It was an attempt to address the inequity in access to services and the poor health services that were experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people right throughout the State, not just within the cape where they were compounded by the tyranny of distance. In 1994-95, we gave some \$8.2m to the regions to maintain health programs which had been established under the Aboriginal Health Program. We also gave a further \$2.5m for new programs at that time. The greater proportion of the moneys went to regions to implement ATSI policy by increasing the primary health care services—that was the most important factor—through the employment of ATSI health workers and hospital liaison officers. We saw those as being extremely important and playing a vital role if we were going to make sure that we delivered at the end of the day in the area of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health.

One of the key points in the implementation of the policy has been the extension of community care services. We have had a number of centres constructed, because we saw that as the key to be able to enhance the opportunities and improve health services more rapidly than would otherwise be the case. So we moved ahead and constructed the following centres—and they are either under construction or they are being completed—Aurukun, Badu Island, Boigu Island, Horn Island, Injinoo, Kowanyama, Lockhart River, Mappoon, Napranum, Edward River, Pormpurrav and Wujal Wujal. So we have moved ahead. Some of those are finished; others are almost completed. In the PPS, you would also notice the two new policy initiatives that we will implement, namely an additional \$6m over the next three years to provide some 19 additional health workers and professional health workers in the Torres Strait Islands and 21 health workers and health professionals in the Cape York community. Further to that, in the PPS you would have seen an additional \$2.5m this year and \$7.5m over the next three years to enhance Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health initiatives. We are looking at actually getting in there and providing funds. That \$2.5m, and the \$7.5m over three years, will expand the network of culturally appropriate and relevant health services, provide education and training opportunities in a range of health disciplines by the provision of scholarships and salary replacements, expand networks of community health information and make sure that we have accurate information in relation to the delivery of the service.

Ms SPENCE: I have a supplementary question on that issue. In relation to the additional expenditure and workers that you are providing to ATSI communities, is it intended that this will assist Aboriginal women to give birth on their communities, or will that policy remain unchanged?

Mr ELDER: The important thing is, firstly, to provide the facilities and, secondly, the workers. Then we have to consult with the communities in relation to the types of services that they want provided. In areas where we have the clinical support and the commitment from those communities, we would be able to provide that type of service. Equally, the final consideration is the wellbeing of the expectant mother and her baby. Our view is that we will work and consult continually with those communities to provide the level of service that they wish us to provide. They should determine the types of services and commitments that we as a department offer. Most of the activity that I spoke about earlier is aimed at doing just that; that is, consulting with them to provide that level of services. That means providing the infrastructure, which we have done in relation to the primary health centres. That means providing support, which we have done this year through our commitment to the workers. That means working on the delivery of service.

Mr PYKE: On page 4 of the Portfolio Program Statements, you highlight an initiative titled Mental Health Community Based Clinical Staff, which deals with the enhancement of community-based mental health services. The Opposition has

stated that these types of initiatives are aimed at placing all mentally ill patients in Queensland out on the streets and leaving them without appropriate care. What is the current policy and the budget position with regard to the mentally ill in Queensland?

Mr ELDER: I am pleased that you asked that question, because it gives me an opportunity in the Estimates committee to state the facts. Burdekin's report into the mentally ill, which was released in 1983, recommended deinstitutionalisation of the mentally ill and a subsequent increase in support through community services. We have come a long way since the Ward 10B days in terms of policy development and working out long-term plans in dealing with mental illness in Queensland. We have released the Queensland Mental Health Policy and the Queensland Mental Health Plan. The policy provides a clear policy framework for the reform and development of mental health services in Queensland into the year 2000. That plan lays the foundations for a comprehensive change in the range of services in the mental health system. Importantly, it targets the major structural and the necessary attitudinal change to achieve better outcomes for people with a mental illness and particularly for their families.

As you pointed out, there has been some scaremongering about this issue. We have taken a long-term approach of carefully planning to make sure that the facilities and support are in place—for example, community health services, workers and necessary support. We are making sure that we have housing in place. All of those things needed to be in place before we moved one patient out of any of those institutions. We have to make sure that the patients have been assessed, and we are conducting patient assessment at the moment. Some of those patients will not be able to be moved. That is understood. However, they will need to be cared for in better facilities than we have at the moment. We will build better facilities. We will not be moving people until such time as we have the resources in place.

Some of those resources will be funded by the \$12m that we will be providing over the next three years. We will enhance community-based services. We will employ extra staff. Multidisciplinary teams will provide assessment and treatment. They will be there for crisis response. They will case manage those people, making sure that they are with them when they are working through rehabilitation. Mental illness is an illness just like any other. We should treat mental illness no differently from the way we treat any other illness in the health system. We should always be aware of that fact. We have long passed the days when mentally ill people were locked away in cages. I would hope that the Opposition and others would give us credit for that. I would have thought that it would have endorsed our policy approach. It is an essential part of the Government's institutional reform program that we provide adequate clinical services when those people are discharged from those services.

Mr PYKE: I ask a supplementary question on that subject. Brian Burdekin's report into the human rights of the mentally ill outlined the lack of Government support at all levels for the important community support services provided by non-Government organisations for the mentally ill. The report recommended an increase in Government support for the services provided by these important non-Government organisations. Can you tell me how much money is being provided for these organisations in this budget and what types of guidelines are in place to ensure that moneys allocated are used effectively and appropriately?

Mr ELDER: We have allocated \$1m for these organisations in 1995-96 and \$3m over the next three years. What you say is correct. Burdekin reckoned that community organisations gave invaluable support to mentally ill people and their families. Committee members would know from experience in their electorates about the type of support of which I am speaking. I have had a number of representations from those community groups since becoming Minister outlining the types of activities that they perform and the support that they give for those people. Part of this commitment is acknowledging that and providing the dollar support for it. In the past, most of these organisations have existed on shoestring budgets and volunteer workers. Honourable members would know that full well; such people are always coming to our electorate offices.

As a Government, we have been supporting their role over the past couple of years. In this year's budget, we are acknowledging that work and we are increasing allocations to them for the work that they do. The increases for them will go a long way towards enabling them to provide support in addition to that which they provide—for example, self-help, community education, advocacy and rehabilitation. They are providing the support that is necessary for those people when living in the broader community. It is my belief—and this is reinforced by a reading of Burdekin in the early days—that those services are critical to helping people in their daily lives, that is, helping them to make the transition from institutional care into the broader community. It is a tough job for them.

There is a certain degree of prejudice out there in some areas in the broader community. These people play a vital role in being able to manage these patients through that change. For them, it is a pretty dramatic change in many respects. They need that support. These organisations play a vital role. As I said, there is still a stigma associated with mental illness. It is still strong and it is still an issue. A lot of people have difficulty dealing with it. One would hope that that would change in time. I suppose as we enhance the opportunity in terms of building community services and providing support for community organisations to undertake that educational role, in the long term we will be able to show that mental illness in particular is very common and it does not mean, as I say, that we have to stop these people from achieving their

aspirations for a fulfilling life. Their role is important, and we are going to acknowledge it in this budget.

The CHAIRMAN: I wish to move to the Hospital Capital Rebuilding and Equipment Program. As you know, I have a special interest in specialist equipment. On what basis will the money be allocated? By whom and how will the decisions be made about what equipment is purchased and where it will be located?

Mr ELDER: I know that you have a special interest in specialist equipment. You have been very forceful in your representations for a number of facilities close to your electorate. I indicated in the Health Action Plan that I had a concern about the state of some of the specialist equipment in our major facilities and in regional and rural hospitals. I indicated that the metropolitan teaching hospitals would be a priority in terms of providing that specialist equipment. I also said that I would not ignore the non-metropolitan areas. I have been out there and seen the situation at first hand. I realised that we needed to make a commitment to all of those hospitals, but metropolitan hospitals in particular. The process of identifying the equipment has been undertaken now within the regions. We have done a fair amount of work in relation to that. Michael might want to contribute some comments.

Mr MOODIE: In terms of identifying the equipment for this round—we keep an ongoing list of priority purchases within central office, and those lists are supported by a system of audits that we are currently undertaking within the metropolitan hospitals. The regions essentially make bids, and those prioritisations are done at the regional level in conjunction with the medical staff association of clinicians within the various facilities. As the Minister mentioned, there is an allocation in terms of the metropolitan areas and the major provincial hospitals. The precise allocations of the moneys has not been resolved yet. Those matters should be finalised towards the end of this week or early next week, ready for expenditure early next year. But the essential element is that they are signed off by the various clinical areas within the facilities that they are priorities within the facility.

Mr ELDER: As I said we would do from day one, we are involving the clinicians, the specialists, the doctors—those people who are actually in the workplace—

The CHAIRMAN: That is a novel idea!

Mr ELDER:—in the decision-making process, and I know that that is one of the vehicles that you have been pushing. We have endeavoured to ensure that they play a role in terms of the decision, but we have not and we will not delay the process. We have the mechanisms in place. As soon as we can determine the priorities for those hospitals, we will get on and provide that equipment across the metropolitan hospitals.

Ms SPENCE: On page 5, the Program Statements refer to the acceleration of rebuilding the metropolitan hospitals. How do you hope to achieve that acceleration in the rebuilding program?

Mr ELDER: It has really been a two-phase process. We saw a need to tackle the metropolitan hospitals and ensure that we accelerated the master planning in those hospitals. We are talking about a capital works project involving \$650m, which is equal to the size of the Snowy Mountains project. This large capital program will be funded over the next seven years.

Although I knew that we could get on it and run it well within our capital works team, I also wanted independent advice and support from people who had expertise and skill, people who had knowledge and contacts within the hospital system, people who had knowledge and contacts within the broader community groups and people who had project management skills and had been involved in the construction field.

Early upon being appointed to this portfolio, I set about putting in place a Metropolitan Hospitals Rebuilding Advisory Board. I wanted that board to advise me on the implementation of our capital works strategy for metropolitan hospitals; to look at coordinating and integrating those hospital services in terms of the redevelopment in the metropolitan area, and particularly across the regional health authorities; and to move with me in progressing and completing the metropolitan health services capital works programs, particularly based on best practice, because that is the skill that those people had: they were in the private sector working in fields where best practice was actually practised. We also wanted to get them to look at strategies that would ensure very productive working relationships between authorities within the hospitals themselves. I appointed that board. I saw it as a complementary way of driving the program.

I know that there has been some criticism of those people. They are Sir Llew Edwards, Mr Trevor Reddacliff and Ms Judith Maestracci. However, it is my belief that they have very good complementary skills which will assist me and which have already assisted me in terms of driving that capital works program. I make no apologies for having people like them working with us to achieve the types of outcomes that we want. It is a large project; it involves \$650m over seven years. It will involve the rebuilding of some of the major tertiary teaching hospitals in this State, and that type of expertise is needed.

Ms SPENCE: Will you outline what rebuilding activities will be undertaken at the Princess Alexandra Hospital in the next year?

Mr ELDER: Yes. We are getting on now with master planning at the PA. We hope to have master planning complete over the next few months. That will give us a clear direction on where we will be likely to head with the PA. Once complete, that master planning will move into a process in which we consult very closely with those who work in that hospital—the clinicians, the specialists, those doctors who are there on a daily basis. They will have an input into that process. I saw the need to get on with the accelerated works part of that strategy, and the redevelopment of the

accident and emergency department of the PA was one of those measures.

Everyone who has been involved in it—that is, the committee that I put in place, our capital works branch, the Brisbane South Regional Health Authority, the clinicians, the master planners and everyone on that campus—recognised the urgency of redeveloping areas such as accident and emergency. We have made that decision. There has been a bit of controversy over it in the last couple of days, but the point is that the decision has been made. We will double the size of that particular facility; but, more importantly, we have listened to the doctors and the nurses and implemented the program based on their input.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now go back to Mr Horan.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the remote area nursing package of \$2m a year over three years. Will you provide details of that package, how it will improve the services provided to remote area nurses, and in particular how you delineate where the nurses are located—in other words, who is a remote area nurse? I am particularly concerned about the nurses from western Queensland. Are they considered to be remote area nurses along with those working in the cape region?

Mr Elder: After discussions with nurses and with the Nurses Union, we saw that there was a need to make a decision on this matter. A task force was put in place which reported to me on the issue of remote nursing. That task force came up with a group of 44 centres throughout the State—not just remote areas but also western areas—based on a set of criteria set by that independent task force—

Mr HORAN: Can we have those criteria tabled?

Mr ELDER: Yes, I can provide the criteria that were used. Those criteria were determined by that independent task force based on input from a whole range of people. We had to recognise that nurses working in remote areas had a very difficult task. They were the front-line service. We had to consider how to enhance their package to provide support for them. Once we identified the 44 remote communities, we looked at additional leave for nurses not currently on five weeks' recreational leave a year, and we provided an additional week to some nurses. We looked at the training and professional development elements. It was important that we meet the professional development needs of those nurses, so we have granted them two weeks' professional development leave.

Given the fact that they are located in remote communities, we looked at what we could do to assist them to travel back to regional centres. We now provide two return airfares for the nurse and family to the nearest coastal regional centre. We looked at improved transfer arrangements for those nurses who have met their own transfer costs to date. We also looked at what we could do to retain nurses in those centres. We have developed an

isolation bonus for nurses who do not currently receive a locality allowance. It basically involves \$3,000 after year one, \$9,000 after year 2 and \$6,000 for years thereafter to ensure that we can retain nurses in those communities.

Mr HORAN: Can you give the detail of what particular courses will be involved in the Nursing Work Force Management Program—again, that is \$6m over two years—and in what hospitals that program will take place? What other programs will be in place under this?

Mr ELDER: When we were elected in 1989, the pay conditions of Queensland nurses lagged well behind the rest of Australia. There was no 38-hour week, there was no career structure and there were inadequate levels of pay. Over the last six years, the situation has progressively improved. This year, we will be spending around \$123m more on improved award conditions for nurses than was the case at the end of the eighties. We still—and I know it is part of your question—had the problem of supplying nurses throughout the State, particularly specialist nurses. Are you talking about what we do in terms of the \$6m within that Work Force Management Program that we will introduce to develop a range of level of nursing skills in the hospital? That is what your question is based around.

Mr HORAN: What sort of courses in what hospitals?

Mr ELDER: The package will address a number of emerging issues within the nursing work force in Queensland. Those issues include: increasing the supply of specialist nurses to our largest hospitals, the re-entry of nurses into the nursing profession and the transition to work for those new graduates. It will also improve the transfer of enrolled nurse training from hospital-based courses to TAFE/tech colleges and will upgrade the skills of enrolled nurses, enabling them to take on that much more complex training nursing role that they will need. The second part of your question was how many hospitals?

Mr HORAN: No, in which hospitals would the program be run? Do you have a plan in place for which hospitals you will be running this type of course in?

Mr ELDER: Susan can probably answer that.

Ms RANKIN: We are actually still negotiating. Initially, we put together a project team that looked at the number of specialty nurses that were short in the various hospitals and what extra training needed to be provided. That team is looking at prioritising those specialty training programs based on that need and numbers. At this stage, negotiations with individual facilities have not been finalised; we are still actually in the process of developing precisely what will be offered based on that need in the next 12 months and we are obviously discussing with the major teaching hospitals who will most likely be involved in that process and the extent of their involvement in those various areas.

Mr ELDER: And the nurses of course will be involved in continuing discussions.

Ms RANKIN: The nurses and the Nurses Union have been involved in the process all the way along.

Mr HORAN: Can you give details of how the 38-hour week has been funded and the unfunded portion? What systems are in place to cover that?

Ms RANKIN: The 38-hour week for nurses?

Mr HORAN: Yes. They are the only ones who have one.

Mr ELDER: Susan can probably cover that for you in greater depth than I can.

Ms RANKIN: You might recall that the introduction of the 38-hour week for nurses was not an isolated event but was actually undertaken part and parcel with the nurses' career restructure. The nurses' career restructure itself was not only aimed at reducing the number of level 3 and level 4 nurses in the structure—that is, those more senior nurses who predominantly had an administrative focus—but also aimed at reducing those numbers with a view to increasing the number of level 1 and level 2 nurses, that is, nurses at the bedside.

As part of the union involvement in accepting the restructure, savings were to be made through that process which amounted in the initial costings to some \$8m. Some of those savings were to be offset to assist in the introduction of the 38-hour week for nurses. The process has been ongoing for approximately two years and it has been the subject of some protracted negotiations with the union and the various facilities involved. It has taken some considerable time to actually realise the departure of the more senior nurses and, subsequently, the salary savings that were to be associated with that departure and the on-funding of those dollars to the 38-hour week.

Due to that delay, there has been some shortfall identified in what was to be the original savings—that was the \$8m—in terms of the timing differences because, over a two-year period, staff leave and are not replaced and the dollars are not necessarily captured in any one particular bucket. That money just goes back into providing additional staffing. So there have been a number of considerations in that regard which has seen some shortfall in funding from those savings.

There were also some outcomes of an industrial nature in terms of the implementation of the 38-hour week. In fact, we had an arbitrated outcome on the 38-hour week which saw the introduction of a 19-day month, the costings of which differed slightly. Nonetheless, Treasury has provided us with supplementation for the arbitrated decision. At present, we are still looking at the distribution of the savings from the nurses' career structure and working out the methods for covering the shortfall of what has not been realised.

Mr HORAN: In summary, how much cash was put in and how much had to be found in kind? You have gone through the kind; how much cash did Treasury put in? The approximate cost of the 38-hour week was about \$36m or \$38m.

Ms RANKIN: The current estimate is around \$27.8m.

Mr ELDER: That is current.

Mr HORAN: I will move now to page 105 regarding Corporate Services. There is a substantial change there from last year's budget in the program outlays. In the process of changing the whole program structure, last year's budget has been reduced by about \$15m. That \$15m includes staff costs and other associated costs, but where has it gone? The 1994-95 budget shown there has the allocation of Corporate Services at \$40.266m.

Mr ELDER: Approximately \$15m was transferred.

Mr HORAN: That was \$55m in that budget. It has been changed.

Mr ELDER: As we outlined, it is a further refinement of the Corporate Services Program. Basically, the \$15m has been transferred to other programs. They mainly comprise \$13.7m for areas such as health advancement, oral health, mental health, program development, the Health Rights Commission, policy planning, associated superannuation, overhead transfers and transfer accounts—those kinds of things. Those transfers account for the remaining amount, but it has basically occurred to ensure that the costs associated with the programs are recorded under the relevant programs themselves.

Mr HORAN: So, really, some of the Corporate Services costs are not shown there, they are now being put into other programs?

Mr ELDER: Yes, they are basically there to better reflect the costs of the programs.

Ms RANKIN: If there is in fact an overhead associated with someone in a program delivery sense, those resources are charged to that program.

Mr HORAN: I just want to refer now to actual full-time equivalent staff numbers. I refer you to page 12 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which states the full-time staff equivalents estimates for this forthcoming year as 33,918. In 1991-92, there were actually 34,012 full-time equivalents. I know that figure is not in these papers, but I have added up all those figures. Why, over that period since regionalisation, would there be a reduction in the number of full-time equivalents working in Queensland Health, despite the fact that Caboolture Hospital, Logan Hospital and parts of the Nambour Hospital may have been opened?

Mr ELDER: You are going back to the 1991 figures and you said there were how many?

Mr HORAN: There were 34,012 full-time equivalents in 1991-92.

Mr ELDER: The total number of staff was around 32,000 in 1991.

Mr HORAN: The 1991-92 Budget showed 43,012 full-time actual equivalents.

Mr ELDER: That is right.

Mr HORAN: There are actually less full-time equivalents with Queensland Health in the estimate

of 1995-96, despite the fact that some hospitals have been opened.

Mr ELDER: Basically, it is student nurses. They transfer straight into the university.

Mr HORAN: Even though they have all been in the university for some three or four years now.

Ms RANKIN: They were always recorded on our payroll and they are employees. There is a large number of those and they account for the major part of the difference.

Mr ELDER: The important thing about those figures is the fact that you are talking about fewer administrators now than there were then, too.

Mr HORAN: Within the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority, why are the senior positions in Brisbane North, Brisbane South and Ipswich still acting positions?

Mr ELDER: Acting positions with the authorities themselves?

Mr HORAN: Yes.

Mr PERSSON: There is a little bit of history that predates my role in relation to Brisbane South, which was made for a 12-month period. Following the decision of the regional director, Brian Campbell, to move back into the university, I made a number of changes using the PSMC transfer at level arrangements. I have basically got a set of acting arrangements which I think suit the needs of the occasion. It gives people an opportunity to settle into situations. I do not think it is good to have large facilities like those involved in a lot of rapid management changes. It also gives me a chance, as a new chief executive, to have a look at how people are going and to identify the needs of those particular facilities at a point in time before I enter the process of filling them on a full-time basis. I expect those situations will be regularised in the near future.

Mr HORAN: With the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority, can you describe the system of management that that authority is putting into the four hospitals in that area—the Children's, the Women's, Royal Brisbane and the Prince Charles—whereby the management of corporate services and support services is being taken over by the Brisbane North Regional Health Authority?

Mr PERSSON: The previous regional director oversaw a management review which went a fair way down the track. It was not achieving widespread support in some quarters, and when the regional director decided to move back into the university and the position was vacant, I made the decision to put that implementation on hold to enable us to have another close look at it. I also believe, when we get to the point of appointing a full-time regional director, he or she ought to be involved in deciding on that management structure. Again, it gives me a chance to better understand the needs of the regional structure and how it interacts with the hospitals.

Mr HORAN: Minister, you were talking before about regionalisation. Why have you found it necessary to have a \$100,000 inquiry into bureaucracy and the regionalisation system?

Mr ELDER: That is not the case. Again, the question is based on a false premise. It is certainly not a \$100,000 inquiry. We are working through the costs of that with the consultant. It was not implemented to look at the cost of bureaucracy.

I was quite happy, coming into the portfolio, to accept that the administrative costs—the bureaucracy, as you call it—made up around 2.5 per cent of the total Health budget, that is, the administrators in central office and the administrators within regional office made up around 2.5 per cent of the total costs of administration within the department, which is about \$55m of a budget of approximately \$2.4 billion. In my view, if that is the case, that is a very lean organisation, particularly for a public service organisation, let alone a private sector organisation. From my experience of organisations prior to moving into this particular position as elected representative, the figure would be somewhere between 8 per cent and 10 per cent of the cost component in administration. It would probably be even more in the private sector.

This process will look at the costs and benchmark us nationally to prove the point. I did not accept this figure on face value; it sounded pretty good, but I was determined to make sure that, once and for all, we put to bed this argument that all the money is going into the bureaucracy and none is going into the services. This will put an end to that argument. We will compare ourselves with the other States, because we believe we have best practice models in place and we have been saying that in relation to the PPS in terms of the implementation of all of our programs.

At this stage we are still negotiating with the consultancy, but the inquiry will be no more than around \$40,000; it will not be \$100,000. It will be in that order because we are competitive. We are in the marketplace seeking the best possible price we can get for that particular tender. As I said before, ultimately it will prove me right and it will prove that the money has gone into the delivery of services because we now provide support for an extra 600,000 Queenslanders. That is where you measure it in outcomes.

The CHAIRMAN: The medical work force package, mentioned earlier and outlined on page 5 of the PPS, mentions a telemedicine project to rural hospitals for specialist services. Could you explain to the Committee what telemedicine is and how it can be used to link rural hospitals to specialist services? Is it acceptable to clinicians?

Mr ELDER: Are you talking about types of incentives as well?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr ELDER: That is part of that plan I announced when I worked through this. We had to look at how we could comprehensively provide support for medical specialists, medical managers, non-specialist senior medical officers, and the SMOs. As I said to the Opposition spokesman before, it really needed to be an outside the award look at being comprehensive.

As I outlined earlier, we had to look at ways of developing types of incentives and what we could do to enhance recruitment. They spoke to me about the need, for instance, for motor vehicles. That would be pretty important. It is seen as fairly important in the major hospitals and in the regional hospitals. They wanted a fully maintained vehicle for their particular use. What I was told, I think, showed support for the types of incentives we put in place. They said to look at simple facts. I can recall the DG and myself talking to a number of people about doctors working at home. If I am a doctor working at home and I want to look at an ECG chart, it would be so easy if I had a fax. I would not have to be called in. I could get the information I needed on the fax and make a determination about the particular patient, and it would save time.

We then looked at what we could do about providing additional training places. I have said in the Parliament on numerous occasions that we have to look at training places. We are working with the colleges in relation to that, but we have to provide funding as well, and that was built in. We had to look at what we could do for relief. Part of the project was to talk to the rural doctors about that. I am sorry that we did not touch on telemedicine.

The CHAIRMAN: They are trapped out there.

Mr ELDER: Yes, they are. We have given them some relief, but by the time they travel to wherever they might be going and then travel home, if they have been on call for a 30-day period, two days have gone. To them, it was not a large relief period. We had to look at what we could do to enhance and coordinate that.

As well, in talking to them we had to look at what we could do to enhance training opportunities for those interested in rural health. Part of that was built into the package as well. We had to look at telemedicine projects and those types of things. We can talk about them a little later if you wish. There are a whole range of mechanisms that we wanted to put in place, and this is the last resort. As I said in an answer previously, we are still negotiating and will continue to do that because we want the best outcome for those specialists.

The CHAIRMAN: There has been a lot of talk about the number of bureaucrats in the regional offices. I wondered whether you had a breakdown of bureaucrats in central office plus the number of bureaucrats in regional offices.

Mr ELDER: Yes, I have those figures. Mr Horan was talking before about the number of staff and making comparisons between 1991 and today. Let me give you some comparisons, particularly in relation to the term "bureaucrat" or the term, as I would see it, "administrator". You are talking about people who actually administer the department and the system both within central office and regional offices. The number of administrative staff in central office is around 515. The number of administrative staff in regional offices is 260. So we are talking around 775 people who are involved with administering the system. Even if you are talking

about the 515 that we have in the central office—prior to us coming to Government the figure was in excess of 1,000. Even in 1988-89, when we first came to office, we looked at moving people out of central office and into the regions and providing the regions with the level of service that they deserved. At that time, you spoke about 990-odd administrative staff within the central office in Brisbane. There are now 515, and we have moved the other administrative components into the regions.

The CHAIRMAN: The Government Aviation Project is providing extra aircraft. Could you tell us how the extra aircraft will improve the service currently provided by the Royal Flying Doctor Service and which parts of the State they will service? This is on page 5.

Mr ELDER: In December 1994, the CDRC approved the capital works funding of \$2.8m to assist the Royal Flying Doctor Service to purchase two Kingairs—B200Cs—two pretty good aircraft, basing one at Brisbane and one at Rockhampton. As I understand it, both are in Sydney being fitted for use. The Brisbane-based aircraft will provide the dedicated fixed-wing aeromedical service to the south west. It will basically support the RFDS Charleville base. It will also support the remaining QAS aircraft and a Rockhampton RFDS aircraft. The Rockhampton-based plane will provide the dedicated aeromedical fixed-wing service to the central coast and the inland beyond Rockhampton. We worked closely with Emergency Services and the Royal Flying Doctor Service in terms of looking at the areas of cover. We will be providing the recurrent funds for those particular aircraft. It is about rationalising, particularly the fixed-wing services across the State, so that you have some standardised, uniform services.

I recall that in the days of the aero-ambulance review, which I conducted in around 1990-91, there was not that type of standard uniform service; that patients were flown in some pretty precarious positions in aircraft that were just hauled in at the last moment and contracted to tender. That was the best that was available. In many cases you still have that type of response, because it is the best that is available. This represents a clear commitment to a standard, uniform, high-quality aeromedical service, and at the end of the day the patients can only benefit from it.

The CHAIRMAN: The aircraft will be fully fitted out?

Mr ELDER: They will be fully fitted, yes. I recall one being stripped at Archerfield probably no more than a few weeks ago before being transferred and having new configurations for its aeromedical use here in Queensland.

Mr PYKE: The Government has provided \$49.55m for growth funds to Queensland Health. Can you tell me how those funds will be used?

Mr ELDER: That was a big win for us, if I might say so, in terms of the Department of Health, for the Budget team that was up before the Budget review. There are a lot of people behind me who

were responsible for developing that. It was a big win. As you quite rightly point out, we got \$49.6m in growth funds, which will be used to meet the ongoing commitment to ensure that there is an equal opportunity of accessing health services across the State. There will be \$24m for service enhancements, \$4.6m to redress the inequities in access to health services and \$15m recurrent funding for new hospitals and primary health-care facilities.

If you are looking at the service enhancement element of it—the types of projects that we are talking about are: Aboriginal health, \$2.5m; the extension of school dental services; child and youth mental health services of \$2m; childhood immunisation, just over \$600,000; and effective management of nursing management in providing effective health services throughout the State. We have been funding recruitment retention to remote area nurses, whom we spoke about in that package, and the Nurse Workforce Package, which we spoke about earlier. We are looking at improved access to health services. It would be fair to say that we have suffered a long history of unequal distribution of services which has resulted in geographical inequities in the provision of health services. I think that everyone would recognise that; it is clearly insupportable. We are providing funds to address that. An amount of \$4.6m has been provided this year to address funding of health services and their provision in the peninsula area. That is consistent with this Government's commitment to social justice and being able to enhance those services in those locations.

There were growth funds for new commissionings—facilities such as the Logan Hospital, the Townsville Hospital and the Nambour Hospital. We have growth funds in Nambour, Townsville and Logan City. Some \$15m-plus will target that in terms of the new commissioning. In terms of new policy initiatives—additional to the services available for growth funds—they include \$76m for hospital waiting lists, primary health-care services for Cape York and Torres Strait, and the list goes on and on.

Mr PYKE: Previously, funding has been allocated to information technology. I see that further funding is to be provided in this Budget. How does that translate in terms of improved patient care at our public hospitals?

Mr ELDER: Mr Horan was asking questions about waiting lists. That was the guts of the information that he was looking for. The availability of accurate timing information is essential if we are going to make informed decisions. We need to be properly informed if we are going to make the right decisions. When I travel around the State, as I regularly do—and quite regularly in the first few weeks—I am amazed at the lack of information management technology that is available to the commissions and the managers. The information on waiting lists in many of the larger hospitals is still indexed on cards. We have come a long way, and we have put a lot of systems in place, but there is a long way to go.

In relation to the waiting lists—we have been developing a waiting list information management system so that we can get a more accurate picture than that available at present and provide it to commissions and the health service managers. This is important to us if we are to manage a system and manage it right in the first place. We should look at the size and service mix for clients who are waiting for elective surgery. Importantly, I think it would indicate the urgency of cases and eliminate double and triple bookings. It is important for us to get this in place—and just as important for me, as the new Minister—and to have that information to drive what I think is a very exciting program over the next 12 months.

There is a significant commitment by this Government to the Health portfolio, and this is a record Health budget. It is important for us to get those types of systems in place. It will enable us to improve our clinical costing and make the right decisions in relation to allocation of resources across the regions. I believe that the regions would appreciate that, because they are about the provision of better health services. The more information and assistance we can give them, the better. The increased use of information technology will enable us to create those links between hospitals and community health centres.

It is amazing that, even with the work that we have done—and we have done a lot of work getting that Hibiscus system up and running—there are still cases where we do not get that information across to hospitals and we certainly do not get that information from hospitals to community health centres. We need that information if we are to keep track of patients as we move into this new era of people spending less time in hospitals—in pre-admission and post-admission—and we need to be keeping track of that. We are committed to that, we have targeted resources towards it, and we have targeted a particular focus within the department to make sure that we deliver in relation to that.

Mr PYKE: The budget indicates an increase in the provision of funds for the Home Medical Aids Scheme. Could you explain to the Committee how that scheme operates, who qualifies to receive services and how the operation of the scheme fits within Queensland Health's strategic direction?

Mr ELDER: The scheme is specifically designed to achieve a basic level of independence at home for the clients. In terms of its social justice elements, it is designed to support low income earners, support the carers of the particular clients, and support and facilitate consumer, community and non-Government participation with a view to achieving Statewide equity across all groups within the target population.

It provides access to a specific range of equipment. I think that we all know what that is. As members of Parliament, we have had many representatives in relation to particular home medical aids. I can recall hearing of a very interesting case just the other day. I must say that it touched my heart as Minister in relation to the role that the families were playing, the extra costs that

they had to carry, the commitment that they were making for their children and the resources that that was soaking up. These types of schemes are so important to those people—to supplement their income and provide them with the level of support that they need, in this case, for the children they had under their care. As a result of this year's budget—and I am pleased that I was able to inform them of this—we have committed an extra \$1m or in total \$8.35m to demonstrate to the community our commitment to improving the outcomes for those people in the home medical aids area. Those people with disabilities rely on that commitment. We will provide support through the provision of equipment—wheelchairs, home oxygen equipment, calipers, surgical shoes, hoists and shower aids. I am sure that you are very much aware of the equipment that is available under that program. We have made a commitment to that program. That commitment is to making sure that we provide equity across the State—a commitment to, at the end of the day, providing the quality of life that those people deserve. Those funds are actually targeted to do that.

Mr HORAN: I refer to page 71 of the Portfolio Program Statements and the Oral Health Program. I am happy to put this question on notice. I would like a break up of the numbers of children in the School Dental Service, the number of children who are eligible for treatment in the primary school section and those in the secondary school Years 8, 9 and 10, the details of all current staff numbers and classifications—dentists and technicians—presently serving in the primary and secondary schools.

Mr ELDER: I am not sure we can give you the level of detail that you are seeking because we have worked at providing a more integrated approach. In other words, the school dental program is more integrated with the delivery of dental services within that particular region. So a number of staff provide the total dental service.

Mr HORAN: You do not have the figures of how many staff you have serving Years 8, 9 and 10?

Mr ELDER: If we can come back to that question tonight and we have the information, I will provide you with it. If not, we will give that to you on notice.

Mr HORAN: Can you provide the details for this coming financial year of the \$15m Commonwealth General Dental Program—the breakdown of how that \$15m will be spent in providing that additional service this year? Would you be able to tell us how many dentists in the private sector have been engaged to do sessional work under that program?

Mr ELDER: I can give you some of the information.

Ms RANKIN: We can let you know the level of recruitment for dental professionals engaged during that campaign. The initial material went to registered dentists who have graduated in the past six years in Australia and New Zealand. To 5 May,

59 dentists, that is, 31 Australian, 27 New Zealand and one from the United Kingdom have responded seeking information on the recruitment campaign to nominated regions. Actual applications are yet to be received under that recruitment campaign. We can give you further information.

Mr HORAN: That is under that \$15m program? That is not to cover the vacancies that existed? There were somewhere in the order of 50 vacancies for public dentists before the Commonwealth General Dental Program came into place last July, which would require additional dentists over and above the 50 vacancies that existed—because of the additional work to be done.

Ms RANKIN: In terms of the general shortages of dentists, we can report that we have 193 permanent staff, 22 temporary staff and 11 casuals employed at the moment. So there is an establishment that has 226 dentists in total employed by the regional health authorities. Generally, 160 of those are working in hospital-based clinics and approximately 60 of those are working in the School Dental Service.

Mr HORAN: You have 226; how many vacancies are there?

Mr ELDER: We will have to take that on notice, because the actual numbers were subject to fluctuations depending on a number of factors.

Mr HORAN: Of that \$15m for the General Dental Program, as I understand it, 20 per cent could be used to re-equip public dental clinics, but the balance was to be used to provide additional service over and above that which Queensland Health provided, that is, to people with Commonwealth Seniors Card and people who are outside the eligibility for normal public dental service, which would create the need for additional dentists if those services are to be provided because they are over and above what you normally provide. I am happy to place that on notice.

Mr ELDER: We will see if we can answer the question this evening. I am not sure that you are right when you say "over and above". You are talking about additional services. That service could be provided by dentists who are already in the field.

Mr HORAN: It provided expanded eligibility—some 80,000 people extra were eligible.

Mr PERSSON: Could you just clarify the question for Bernie Homan, the Director of the Oral Health Branch?

Mr HORAN: First of all, I was seeking how many vacancies there are, but then I moved on to how many extra dentists you had to get to undertake the requirements of the \$15m a year Commonwealth General Dental Program to service the increased number of people who are eligible. I understand that it was somewhere in the order of an extra 80,000 people who were eligible under the guidelines of that plan.

Dr HOMAN: Since—

Ms SPENCE: Could Bernie state his name and his position for the benefit of Hansard?

Dr HOMAN: Bernie Homan, Director of the Oral Health Branch.

The figures that were quoted earlier about staffing were from a work force survey of November 1994. Since that time, an additional 44 dentists from the private sector have come into working under contract for us. They are working part-time. In addition, 43 dentists have been appointed to the public sector, mostly to full-time positions. In addition, we have had a recruiting campaign for dentists going on, and to date 70 dentists in various parts of Australia and New Zealand have responded and expressed interest in having information about particular regions that they wish to consider. That has not translated yet into new appointments because it is in that phase of response. So it is too early to know that.

In terms of actual increased throughput—the best indicator is this March 1995 quarter, where we have actually been able to service an additional 15,300 patients over and above the baseline, which was established with the Commonwealth at the start of the program. They are all in the general dental service category, so they are people who get full service. In addition, an extra 4,282 emergency patients were seen in that same quarter.

Mr HORAN: Under the emergency funding from the Commonwealth?

Dr HOMAN: Yes, under that part of it. Where we have coped with the emergency requirements—and that is gradually reducing because emergency patients have priority and so they are seen mostly on a same day or same week basis—we then shift our effort into the general patients. So that is the better barometer of how we are going. In overall terms, we have now lifted in this period from about 13,000 completions to 23,000 completions per month. So if we extrapolate that at our present activity, we are probably looking at about a quarter of a million patients serviced over a full year, and that is our target at the moment. That does meet the Commonwealth's requirements.

Mr HORAN: The member for Maroochydore will now ask some questions.

Miss SIMPSON: I would like to ask a question of the Minister with regard to the Oral Health Program. On page 72 you refer to the population-based activities for the Oral Health Program, and you indicate that you will be broadening this. I would like to ask you whether you would consider using existing school-based dental facilities during non-school hours and school holidays to reach the not-serviced adult population? I raise as one example the Maroochydore Primary School, as Maroochydore is an area with a greater immediate need for public dental services.

Mr ELDER: Yes, we will, but Bernie might like to expand and provide a bit more detail.

Dr HOMAN: It has been necessary to have an interdepartmental meeting or committee on that because there are some concerns that the Education Department has, which relate primarily to there being adults on school campuses. Most of our fixed clinics, but not all of them, have direct street

frontages, so they can be separated. That negotiation is very close to conclusion now; it has been going on now for over three or four months. When that is concluded, we would hope to use those facilities as well.

Miss SIMPSON: So that is generally across the State, or have you been doing it region by region?

Dr HOMAN: We have been doing it Statewide, because both departments wish to include it in a policy framework so that both departments' regions could handle it locally. So it is a generic type of arrangement that will be struck between the departments.

Miss SIMPSON: You would be looking at doing that outside of school hours—school holiday periods and so on?

Dr HOMAN: Yes.

Miss SIMPSON: I have a further question of the Minister. With regard to page 75 of the Oral Health Program Statements, it refers to performance standards in oral health. I would like to know what the current waiting time is for public dental services at Nambour Hospital. When will you achieve your planned performance standard of a three-month waiting time for general dental services?

Dr HOMAN: Page 75?

Miss SIMPSON: Yes. There is a standard indicator where you refer to general dental services.

Dr HOMAN: Increasing completions, or decreased waiting times?

Miss SIMPSON: Decreasing waiting times for general dental services within three months.

Mr ELDER: If I may, a question was asked about the eligible children—preschool to Year 9, 459,581; Year 10, 44,000. In relation to Nambour—the Sunshine Coast—I am not sure that we have that level of detail. We have got it on region, but I am not sure that we can provide it in terms of—

Miss SIMPSON: Could I ask for that on notice?

Mr ELDER: We can break it down into the regions. It is difficult for us to do it beyond that. If you are talking about what we might plan to put in place to actually achieve our ultimate aim in terms of the indicators that you wanted information about, as we have been talking about before, one is extending the hours of operation of public sector clinics to treat additional patients, as Bernie outlined; another is contracting the full-time dental services of dentists and a dental prosthetist from the private sector; and another is the use of private practitioners to treat additional eligible patients in the public sector clinics. As Bernie said to you before, we have been fairly pro-active in the recruitment of dental professionals in Australia and New Zealand—explaining to them the benefits and the gains to be made by working in the public sector in Queensland, and also the upgrading of clinical equipment in the clinics. They are all part of being able to reach that outcome.

Miss SIMPSON: If I can bring you back to the question, Mr Minister—

Mr ELDER: I thought that was the question. You wanted to know how we would get there.

Miss SIMPSON: Actually, I wanted to know when you were going to get to the three-month waiting time for general dental services, and also what the current waiting time was in the Sunshine Coast region, which is mainly the Nambour Hospital. If I could have that detail on notice with regard to the waiting time for Nambour dental services—

Mr ELDER: We will take that. In relation to Nambour—

Miss SIMPSON: But also when you reach the provision of the three-month waiting time for general dental services. That is your service indicator.

Dr HOMAN: Our indication, as stated there, is at the end of 1995-96, which is where we are aiming. That is a year from now.

Miss SIMPSON: Right.

Mr HORAN: I refer to the comments earlier regarding the proposed integration of the mentally ill, and I ask: what is the overall time frame envisaged for this process? As the plan indicates the possible closures or the severe downsizing of Wolston Park, Baillie Henderson and Mosman Hall Hospitals, is it likely that any of those hospitals will be closed and, in particular, would it be Wolston Park under the Better Cities Program where there has been an indication that that area would be redeveloped for real estate?

Mr ELDER: The important thing for you to realise, which you did not get quite right a few weeks ago, is that we were not about to take 1,100 patients and pour them onto the street. This is a long-term process. In this particular year—in fact, I launched it the other day; the response to the second national report of people with a mental illness—the action plan is that we would include places across Government over the next three years, and that is a significant commitment in this budget.

This Budget contains a \$71m commitment in a three-year rolling program. We are not about to move anyone until such time as we have the available housing, the community health facilities permanently in place and the health workers necessary to underpin that. We have committed ourselves to a long-term strategy. We are not talking about next year, or two or three years' time. Over the next decade, we will be assessing patients to see whether they have the ability to integrate into the community.

Mr HORAN: Is it likely that any of those three places will be closed in that time?

Mr ELDER: The new initiatives that I have put into place will continue the implementation of our Mental Health Plan. There is an additional \$4m for community health staff, which will provide for a 16 per cent increase in staff. The staff are vital. We have to have that increase in staff, from around 500 to 580. As I said before, there will be an additional

\$1m for non-Government mental health organisations. Importantly, that will result in a 50 per cent increase in the resources that they will have available. For 1995-96, that action plan involves funds of \$1.5m, which will rise to almost \$7m in 1997-98 through Family Services, to provide support for people with psychiatric disabilities and for moving people into the community. There will be some \$3.4m worth of support through the Department of Housing. That will probably manifest itself in some 54 housing places this year. All of those measures will be put in place.

Mr HORAN: I would now like to ask you about Biala and the Wacol Rehabilitation Centre. Within this budget, are there funds to reopen Biala with its former level of services, or are there any funds to reopen the Wacol Rehabilitation Centre?

Mr ELDER: The new initiatives in respect of public drunkenness will see a much broader policy approach towards dealing with people who need detoxification or rehabilitation services. Some work will be done at Biala. Some accommodation places will be provided. That will not be at the same level that it has been previously. We are tackling the problem in a much broader way using community organisations around the State and enhancing their role. But some additional accommodation will be provided at Biala.

The rehabilitation centre has been closed. The money that we are spending on the public drunkenness initiative will be going towards managing the problem across the State. That rehabilitation centre has seen its day. We need to be taking a much broader policy approach to people who find themselves in that situation. We can do that far better using community organisations and by providing those services at that level. I think that is a far better policy approach.

Mr HORAN: I would like the detail on how many needle exchange sites there are in Queensland and where they are located. How many needles were given out and what is the percentage of returns?

The CHAIRMAN: That is the end of the time for questions from non-Government members, Mr Horan. You will be able to ask the question the next time around.

Just for something completely different—in 1994-95, funding was provided for the establishment of a Clinical Genetics Service. We debated this issue during the Estimates last year. I note in the PPS that a coordinator, two genetic counsellors, a medical clinical genetics director, a molecular geneticist and administrative support officer have been appointed. What is the direction for the future development of this service and how do the outreach services operate? This was last year's big news item.

Mr ELDER: You are right; it was a big news item, because Queensland has been behind the other States in respect of the creation of the service. It is a very important service and one which many families were in need of in this State for a number of years. I know that this was a particular

commitment of the previous Minister for Health and one that he should be acknowledged for achieving. In the future, he should be well regarded for getting the service in place.

As you know, the Clinical Genetics Service will provide a comprehensive program geared towards the identification, reduction and treatment of genetic disorders of all types. At the moment, we are providing the clinical services at the Royal Children's, the Royal Brisbane and the Mater Hospitals. As to your question about the outreach clinics—they are held at Townsville, Rockhampton and Mount Isa. By the year 2000, we are aiming to have a comprehensive clinical and molecular service for the whole of Queensland. Based on Ken's initiative, we have set ourselves a very ambitious task of building the service from a zero base.

I know that you have a keen interest in this area. It is at the cutting edge of science. One of the roles of the service is to work closely with research organisations, such as the Queensland Institute of Medical Research—QIMR—to interpret that research and new knowledge through two families and, more importantly, to keep medical practitioners up with and aware of the advances in the field and to provide that information flow which we have lacked by not having that base. As you mentioned, recruiting staff in an area such as that one can be a very big problem. However, I am happy to say that Dr John McMillan from Wales has been appointed as director of the service and will start work on 1 July. He has been a significant find for us. To fund the expansion of the services, in this year's budget we will allocate just over \$2m extra over three years. That will mean that additional genetic counsellors, laboratory staff and others will be appointed this financial year.

The CHAIRMAN: My next question is about one of my hobby-horses and something that I know you feel strongly about. One of the biggest causes of death in our community is tobacco products. I particularly wanted to know when the tobacco products control Bill will be introduced into Parliament.

Mr ELDER: You are right. As non-smokers, we do not have to walk outside during the parliamentary session. Smoking is one of the major causes of premature death in our society. It is probably also the most preventable. One of the most effective ways of combating it is by reducing smoking rates to stop young children from taking up the habit. As I said earlier, we are targeting some campaigns now to do that and to involve parents in discussing these things with children. The most recent national statistics have shown that there is an increase in smoking in people aged 15 to 17, and young girls in particular. This is partly because of peer pressure and the social acceptance that goes with that. We are trying to be pro-active in getting parents involved to discuss it with children at an early age to see whether we can stop it before it starts.

The draft Bill is currently being reviewed. There will be further consultation on the draft. It will be

undertaken in the near future by the Health Advancement Branch and the Legislative Reform Branch. That consultation will be with the Office of the Cabinet, the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs and the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. At this stage, it is proposed that I will be able to present that Bill to Cabinet this year—I hope in October—for tabling in the Parliament during the November session.

Ms SPENCE: My question concerns childhood immunisation, which has recently been receiving media attention. What is the current status of the operation of child immunisation programs in Queensland, and how is the Government countering the perceived low levels of childhood immunisation in this State?

Mr ELDER: Childhood immunisation is one of the most important public health tools that we have. We must do everything we can to utilise it fully. In the past, epidemics such as whooping cough, polio and a number of other diseases were the major cause of childhood deaths. The immunisation campaigns run over the past few decades have been successful. However, these days parents are basically becoming complacent. I believe that people are now complacent about illnesses. The fact that many of the once epidemic illnesses have now largely been eradicated has allayed the concerns of many people, and with that the level of immunisation has been decreasing. That does make our children vulnerable to many of those preventable diseases.

In this budget, we have provided initiatives to increase vaccination rates and gather information on the effectiveness of vaccinations. Improvements have already occurred through a new vaccine distribution system for Queensland. Vaccines are provided free of charge to doctors throughout the State in exchange for information about vaccination levels.

The CHAIRMAN: That includes a reminder program.

Mr ELDER: That is right, so we can get feedback. This budget commits funds to improving that reminder system—or, as we call it, the Vaccination Information and Vaccination Administration System, but your terminology rolls off the tongue a lot easier—and over the next three years we will commit just under \$2m to fully implementing that system. If we can gather information about children who have been vaccinated, we can generate reminder notices to parents. In that way, we can deal with the forgetfulness and the complacency and ensure that parents are aware of when their children's vaccinations are due. We can be pro-active in involving them in healthy outcomes for their children. I believe that that should overcome many of the problems of children being only partially vaccinated. Being the father of three children, I know how easy it is to become complacent. You have it done when they are babies——

The CHAIRMAN: You remember the first one.

Mr ELDER: That is right, and then you tend to forget about it as time rolls on. This system aims to provide that information. Eventually, we will have top-grade data. I believe that that will be a very effective preventive health measure. We will be working closely with the Commonwealth on this, and we should get back to days gone by when high numbers of children were vaccinated.

Mr PYKE: The performance standard of the Population Health Program is the establishment of five population health units with network services across 13 regions by 1998. Can you outline to the Committee the current status on the establishment of these units, explain the services delivered by them and how the units will network services across the regions?

Mr ELDER: We have established a network of super-regional population health units. There will be five units in the State. They will monitor the health of their communities and be accountable to those communities. As you are aware, the community health sector plays an important role in ensuring that strong linkages are developed with communities to facilitate access to key health information. It is envisaged that that will occur under the primary health care implementation plan. The information available will be used to help reduce health inequities for specific population groups. So the units will play a coordinating role, but they will be very much accountable to the communities in which they are active.

In Queensland, there is a critical need for the education, training and teaching of community health service providers, particularly in coordination with the tertiary education sector. Each regional authority and population health unit will develop its own priorities and linkage mechanisms for preventive programs in important areas. We have discussed some of those already, and they include alcohol and drugs, mental health, women's health and oral health. The units in the regions will also address local issues of importance but do so on a collaborative basis. Each population unit, to be successful, must have a critical mass of all the disciplines working together. If not, population health as we see it will be marginalised, fragmented and uncoordinated. For that reason, population health units must be super-regional and they must be strongly associated with local government, local universities and private service providers so that at the end of the day we can ensure that the strategies that they undertake in that super-regional form are effective.

Mr PYKE: I turn to nurse work force training. Can you tell the Committee what this initiative entails and how priorities were set?

Mr ELDER: When we were elected, we wanted to provide equity to our nurses to ensure that they were treated in the same manner as those interstate. As I said, our nurses lagged behind those in the rest of Australia in terms of pay structure and career structure. We have been working very hard as a Government over six years to see that position progressively improved. We have been spending significant sums to achieve

that. Many people ask where the money goes in Health. A large proportion of the funds went to providing pay justice—making sure that nurses in this State were rewarded for the work that they did; making sure that we redressed the inequity that our nurses suffered compared with those in other parts of Australia.

Over the last few years, we have spent a significant amount of money—around \$123m—on providing improved award conditions. But problems still exist, and we need to set priorities. We need to be looking at the supply of specialist nurses in our larger hospitals. Importantly, we need to look at how we can assist nurses to re-enter the nursing profession, because that is a challenge that we have had to accept in terms of negotiating with nurses. There is a level of interest there, and we have to provide support and funding for that measure. We must streamline the transition of graduate nurses from college into the work force. All of those issues are important, and that is part of the reason why we have committed \$6m to the Workforce Management System over the next three years. Under that system, we will attempt to arrange the level of nursing skills available in our hospitals and support those additional nurses that we will need in the system.

The CHAIRMAN: The management of public drunkenness is a major whole-of-Government initiative. Queensland Health obviously has major responsibilities in the implementation of this policy initiative. You have talked a little about Biala, but I just wondered whether you wanted to tell us more about the establishment of detoxification units and post-detoxification units—explain what they are and where the services are provided.

Mr ELDER: We started down that track with a question on Biala from Mr Horan and we ran out of time. In this year's budget—and it is a new initiative—we will be allocating \$5m over the next three years to establish detoxification units and post-detoxification units throughout Queensland. An example of the type of service we could use might be the Bama Healing Centre in Cairns, which plays a pretty important role in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community and the broader Cairns community. It provides the sort of community services that we would be hoping to utilise. Facilities of that type are for people who are, as I am sure would be understood, alcohol dependent. They are about getting alcohol out of people's systems. It takes detoxification units three or four days to do that. Services such as the one in Cairns provide those services for us.

Post-treatment rehabilitation is when people are basically counselled about alcohol dependence. It attempts to give them the skills to be able to beat their addiction. We will be looking at the role that those community systems can play. The Opposition has the view that all it needs to do is to provide the centre, lock these people away and give them coffee. However, much more is involved these days. That was the old approach to mental illness. It is much more in this day and age; it is a combination of measures. It is about using hospitals,

non-Government facilities and community services. It is about using the skills and expertise that is out there. We need to provide the funds, and we need to provide the funds to those people who can provide the service. That is the sort of mix that we need in this day and age.

We are talking about moving people through the system and using community health services. That has been trialled in other parts of Australia and it has worked well in other parts of Australia; it has worked well in New South Wales and Victoria in many respects. It will be no different for us. It is a matter of using that expertise and those facilities.

The CHAIRMAN: With juvenile crime being heavily related to drug problems, do you see detoxification units, etc., playing a role there, too?

Mr ELDER: I think the options there are limitless for us. There is a role—and a proper role—that the community can play. Building and developing those community health services, integrating it in this form and providing that mix is the only appropriate way to deal with it in this day and age. It is farcical to think that we can just lock away those problems and forget about them. That type of approach has long gone. Some of the non-Government drug and alcohol organisations include: Teen Challenge and Holyoake in Brisbane, Addiction Help in Cairns and the Gold Coast Drug Council. We provide significant support to those organisations so that they can do that good work. We have been able to play that coordinating role. We have provided that support to organisations within the community so that they can deliver the service. You are talking about committed people who have the expertise; why not use that? Why not fund them to do that?

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from Government members has finished. Mr Horan?

Mr HORAN: We will go back to that question I asked at the end of the last segment. I would like the detail of each of the sites for needle exchange, the total number of needles given out in a 12-month period and the percentage returned. I am happy to take it on notice, if that is required.

Mr ELDER: Does that involve all the private chemists who provide all that? Are you talking about sales?

Mr HORAN: No, I want the public hospital sites and the sites other than public hospitals.

Mr ELDER: We will see what we can find for you either later in the session or on notice.

Mr HORAN: Earlier in the night, you mentioned the Royal Flying Doctor Service. Does this budget provide any additional funding for the Flying Obstetrician and the Flying Surgeon services in the west of Queensland?

Mr ELDER: Have you got it in the Portfolio Program Statements?

Mr HORAN: The money is always provided through the actual regions.

Mr ELDER: I know that. It is just that it is easier for me to find it in the Portfolio Program

Statements. These fall within regional budgets. The RFDS initiative is a separate initiative. As I said, the Flying Surgeon and the Flying Obstetrician will be funded through regional budgets. There is more money in the Health budget. As I said to you earlier, there is now global funding for the regions. They are now looking at the provision of services that they provide, and their reports will be back to us in a month. Obviously, if they are in those regional budgets, they will be considered at that time.

Mr HORAN: So there is no specific allocation for it; they just have to fight and scramble from within their region for funding?

Mr ELDER: No, no-one fights and scrambles.

Mr HORAN: They do.

Ms RANKIN: They were experiencing some difficulty in the western regions. In fact, in the mid-year budget review process the additional funds that were provided to those regions went towards the Flying Surgeon and the Flying Obstetrician and Gynaecologist. We actually have an extra registrar position involved in that as well.

Mr HORAN: There is one operating out of Longreach.

Mr ELDER: Yes. They do not fight and scramble. They are seen as a major service.

Mr HORAN: They are very tight for funding and they work enormous hours. The funding really needs to be increased. I want to refer to the Patient Transit Scheme. I know that that is another issue that is allocated by the various regions so it is across a number of programs, but is there any increase in allocation regarding the Patient Transit Scheme?

Mr ELDER: I am trying to answer every question that you ask and I am trying to relate it back to the Portfolio Program Statements, which is what we are doing.

Mr HORAN: The Patient Transit Scheme goes across a number of programs.

Mr ELDER: It was like the question on needle exchange. If it is there in the PPS, then I will answer it. I will get you the information on needle exchange, but I am trying to refer it back to the PPS so that I can cross-reference it for the detail that I need.

The CHAIRMAN: Could you give a reference for that, Mr Horan?

Mr HORAN: The Patient Transit Scheme is involved in virtually all of the treatment programs.

Mr ELDER: That is right. As I said, it is within the regional budgets. Most of those regional budgets—in fact, all of them—will be sent out there next week and will then be negotiated. Susan can provide better detail on cost and projections.

Ms RANKIN: We can certainly tell you the projected expenditure by region on the Patient Transit Scheme for 1994-95, and those figures would appear as a component of the individual regional budgets. When budgets are allocated to the regions for 1995-96, which they will be next

week, the regions will be assessing the activity of the Patient Transit Scheme.

Mr HORAN: So it is an individual decision within each region as to how much they will allocate to it?

Ms RANKIN: It is, and it depends on activity.

Mr HORAN: It has been under quite extraordinary pressures in most regions.

Mr ELDER: From time to time, with all the services that we provide in a growth service like Health, we will find pressure spots; that is accepted. However, we provide those regions with a budget. We have provided increased budgets and we will be providing increased budgets. As I said earlier, the regions themselves have the autonomy to be able to design and manage that budget, and this is part of the process. At the end of the day, that gives them the opportunity to do that.

I will give you the figures of the funds that you are talking about. Published financial statements state that the 1992-93 expenditure for the decrease in funds off-pressure was \$11.38m. The projection for this year is \$15m. Importantly, the new RFDS initiatives show capital that we have spent buying the aircraft, and the recurrent that will come from this department in terms of the budget will go a long way to assisting people who need that service, particularly those in the western and rural regions.

Mr HORAN: Are you saying that the Flying Doctor Service is going to be used for patient transit as well as emergency?

Mr ELDER: It has always been used for moving patients.

Mr HORAN: The Flying Doctor Service was always used for emergency cases.

Mr ELDER: No, that is not right. It is not just emergency. The RFDS has not been used just for emergency cases, although it is primarily used for emergency cases.

Mr HORAN: But it has not been previously used in patient transit.

Mr ELDER: If there is a patient to be moved, and that is the only way to move the patient, the clinician will determine that. The clinician may say the patient has to go by air because of his or her condition. You know that the RFDS has been used.

Mr HORAN: It will be used for that purpose as well in both Brisbane and Rockhampton?

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Horan, it is very difficult for the timekeeper to know whether you are asking a question each time, in which case the Minister gets another three minutes to answer.

Mr ELDER: It is a clinical determination. You have bus, train and plane. Some patients are flown by commercial aircraft and some patients are flown by dedicated aircraft. That has always been the case in terms of patient transfer, whether or not it be an emergency.

Mr HORAN: My next question cuts across a number of programs. Can you provide details of the scholarship and bonding systems that you have in the areas of medicine, dentistry and allied health?

Mr BUTT: In relation to allied health—we have just introduced a scholarship scheme covering the areas of physiotherapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy, social work and podiatry. We are in the process of selecting people for those five scholarships. As I said, this is the first time those scholarships have been offered. This project is very much about trying to attract people to rural and remote areas. We did of course have the Outreach Allied Health Services Program previously, which provided additional allied health services in rural and remote areas. We are now trying to attack the fundamental problem of getting people trained in rural and remote areas for allied health services so that they will want to continue to work in those areas. We are offering final-year scholarships in those five disciplines, and people will then be bonded for two years to work in rural and remote areas.

Mr ELDER: In terms of scholarships and bonding—I think we can provide information to the Committee before the end of proceedings. With your indulgence, we could give you that information before we finish.

Mr HORAN: What funding is specifically provided for relief staff, particularly in rural and remote areas, in relation to nursing and medicine? Is there any specific funding for relief staff in those packages?

Mr ELDER: In the package that I have announced there is just under \$1m on top of what is provided through regional budgets. I was talking about doctors initially. If you are talking about relief for nurses—just over \$1m is provided this year, and that will increase to about \$1.2m by the third year. If you are talking about rural doctor relief—at present, that is around \$300,000, and there are funds beyond that. Those are the dollar figures.

Mr HORAN: Can you detail the structure and process that will now exist in the Capital Works Program in the metropolitan area, starting with the Metropolitan Health Advisory Board, the Implementation board and the other levels of planning and project management? Can you go through the formal structure that will now be in place before building actually commences?

Mr MOODIE: There is fundamentally no change with the metropolitan project as there has been with all other capital works projects. The Metropolitan Hospitals Building Advisory Board provides advice to the Minister about the efficiency of the program and the general direction of the metropolitan works. The processing of individual capital works projects still relies on the region completing what we call the functional plan and economic evaluation. That comes to the department for evaluation, and recommendations are made to the planning committee, which is an interdepartmental committee made up of representatives from Health, the Office of the Cabinet, Treasury and the Administrative Services Department, as well as two regional directors. They make a representation to the Minister, who then takes it to Cabinet, which approves the individual projects. That process will apply to the metropolitan project as it has with all other capital works projects.

Mr HORAN: Is Q-Build still involved?

Mr MOODIE: It performs the role as principal and risk manager for all building contracts within the Capital Works Program.

Mr ELDER: In relation to the Metropolitan Advisory Board—that is my advisory board; it does not create another layer of administration.

Mr HORAN: And you have the implementation unit, which is part of the capital works division within Queensland Health.

Mr MOODIE: Yes, it is part of the capital works branch.

Mr HORAN: Can you advise us of the time span in which the advisory board will be in place and the amount budgeted to run that board?

Mr ELDER: In terms of timing—it is entirely up to me, as it is a ministerial advisory board. As we have a seven-year program for metropolitan hospitals, it has a life expectancy—in terms of the things that I want to get out of it, and I went through them earlier so I will not repeat them now—of two or three years to enable them to provide that input to me. In terms of the cost—they are just meeting fees; there are no other costs.

Mr HORAN: Is the actual cost of that board in the capital works budget?

Mr ELDER: Yes.

Mr HORAN: Under which item?

Mr ELDER: There are a lot of items; it would be noted as an administrative cost, I would have thought.

Mr HORAN: Is it basically a fee for service for the time they are involved?

Mr ELDER: No, it is an annual fee that I pay them for providing that service, and that is based on DEVETIR scales—as with any other board. We are talking about meeting fees and some limited travel expenses; we are not talking about vast sums of money.

Mr HORAN: Where is the allocation for that board as a separate entity detailed in the budget?

Ms RANKIN: It will not be in the statements that you see to date because it only comes into being in the new financial year. It will be part of the budget that will be built up through the capital works branch within the Policy and Planning Division, and it will be identified as a separate line item with the branch that Michael Moodie controls.

Mr ELDER: I am trying to find an example; when I do, I will come back to you.

Mr HORAN: Of the \$1.5 billion allocated to Health there is approximately \$650m for the metropolitan plan and \$600m for works in regional hospitals. Why was it necessary to have an advisory board for the \$650m in the metropolitan area and not to have an advisory board for the \$650m in the regional areas?

Mr ELDER: Metropolitan hospitals were part of a targeted program. I felt that there could be significant input from some people in the private sector who could help me in terms of advice from

the sectors that we spoke about. Metropolitan hospitals are the major tertiary hospitals in this State; they are the major teaching hospitals. What we do with them determines the level of service we can provide across the State. You do not have hospitals like the RBH and the PA throughout Queensland. Therefore, what we do there is going to be vitally important to the level of service that we provide throughout Queensland. I felt that people like Sir Llew Edwards, Trevor Reddacliff and Judith Maestracci had skills that they could input into a committee of that sort. They had contacts and support that they could provide to me in terms of the type of information that I would require, such as getting advice on whether the program was meeting the objectives of clinicians. The program was meeting the objectives of the community and those within the broader health community. It was there for that purpose. I do not make any apologies for using the private sector and the skills of people in the private sector to deliver a better Health outcome for me. If their assistance can provide for us some savings through the press, then fine.

Mr HORAN: I refer to your earlier comments about the Budget being fully funded and the regions meeting their budgets. Throughout the year we had the advent of quiet weeks, quiet days, extended periods of elective surgery and cancellations, particularly around holiday periods, and various wards and theatres closed or on a rolling cancellation arrangement. We have seen that. Around about last April there was probably somewhere in the order of \$10m over-budget collectively for the Mater, the Royal Brisbane, the PA and the Royal Children's. They are being met only by reductions in particular services. How are you going to guarantee that, in providing the budgets this year for those hospitals, they are not going to run into similar problems in that the only way they can meet the budget is by actually reducing particular services.

Mr ELDER: First off, let me say that I just do not accept those rambling remarks that you made because the figures do not demonstrate that. You have made those claims time and time again in the media and in the Parliament, and each time I have proved you wrong in relation to those——

Mr HORAN: You are saying the Mater was not \$8.4m over or the Royal Brisbane?

Mr ELDER: I will give you an example. I can tell you that with activity levels the budget has been met and that there has been increased funding across all of those hospitals. Activity levels are up. Admissions, occupied bed days, whatever measure you are prepared to look at—you will find that the targets that we have in place provide, and have provided, extra support. They have provided extra outcomes that we have been looking for. There has not been the type of outcome that you have outlined. The Mater was a very good example of that. You were out there stating that they would be \$5m over the top——

Mr HORAN: Not \$5m, \$4.8m.

Mr ELDER: It is close enough. You were stating that they would be over the top at the end of

the financial year. That is wrong. I proved it to be the case and you know it to be the case because you have had discussions with those in the Mater campus. You have only to look at the Mater budget itself from 1993-94 to 1994-95 to see that there has been a significant increase in its budget. Some of the claims you have made in the last few weeks in relation to budgets and the hospital activities have been outrageous.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I take you back to the patient transit scheme for a moment. I wondered whether the expanded services in north Queensland, including the cardiac unit, the renal unit, the radio therapy unit, and now the specialist service units, have had any impact on the patient transit scheme?

Mr ELDER: What page are you working to?

The CHAIRMAN: I am not, it is a follow-up question to Mr Horan's question in relation to the patient transit scheme. Have any of those services I mentioned had any impact on the need for the patient transit scheme?

Mr ELDER: Yes, they will have an impact. Part of the provision of those services has been designed to do just that, alleviating the need—

The CHAIRMAN: To keep people in their homes?

Mr ELDER: Exactly, alleviating the need. I know that it is a keen area of David's—he might want to expand—but it is exactly providing the services within the region. So we eliminate that type of transfer on patients who most of the time are terribly sick.

Mr BUTT: What has been happening with the expansion of cardiac services etc. up in north Queensland is that we are going to be cutting down on the use of the patient transit scheme in that sense because people would obviously be getting treated in their local areas, which is obviously an overriding objective of developing those services in other places. What we are identifying is that there is a fair degree of unmet need in some of those areas. For example, in cardiac surgery, we are treating a lot more patients in north Queensland who were not apparently presenting previously for care.

The CHAIRMAN: It is not taking people off the waiting list down here?

Mr BUTT: Not as much as we would hope it would because there is a level of unmet need that we are now dealing with. There was obviously a backlog there. People were not presenting; people were not getting the treatment and were probably ending up emergency cases and having to be flown down to Brisbane for emergency treatment.

Ms SPENCE: What measures are in this year's Budget to ensure that the goals of the national program for the early detection of breast cancer are met?

Mr ELDER: Breast screening in particular?

Ms SPENCE: Yes.

Mr ELDER: One of the mobile services was out the front—if I might digress for a moment—of Queensland Health just recently, and it is a magnificent vehicle and will play a pretty vital role in the delivery of services to women in central Queensland. It is a pity we could not get the press coverage on that. It is a vital service that is going to provide for women in central Queensland. But as you know, it is a Commonwealth/State funded population screening program and we are—and this was part of that vehicle—progressively implementing it throughout each region, making sure that we have got dedicated screening and assessment services in place throughout the regions. In the initial three year agreement that commenced in 1991-92 as part of the major early detection program, those types of facilities were provided. I have just recently signed a 35-year agreement in relation to breast screening, and in this case the target population is women over 50, with women over 40 years being eligible for the screening.

You asked about some of the goals. In 1994-95 about 90,000 women will be screened, a 47 per cent increase over the previous year, which is a significant measure for us in terms of outcome. It is expected to increase to about 123,000 women this year, which again will be 37 per cent. If people are talking about preventive measures and the outcomes, they are two darn good outcomes in terms of screening and the increasing screening over those years. New screening and assessment services for 1995-96 are planned for Wide Bay, West Moreton and Mackay. There will be an expansion of services in Brisbane North and South, on the Sunshine Coast, in Wide Bay Peninsular and the south coast regions, and four mobile services are currently operating. They are in Brisbane North; where Mr Horan has an interest, on the Darling Downs; the south west; northern peninsular; and central and west areas. At present about 40 per cent of screening is occurring in rural based services. Given that more than 50 per cent of eligible women live outside the south-east area, that is a pretty significant proportion of screening. We will also be developing a role with the private sector in terms of screening and assessment, particularly in areas such as Cairns and Wide Bay where we need to expand the service.

Ms SPENCE: On page 64 you outlined a new expanded facility at the Logan Hospital to include 20 obstetric beds and eight neo-natal cots. When will this redevelopment be ready for operation?

Mr ELDER: The Logan Hospital was one of the hospitals I visited early in the piece. I know, as Mr Moodie would reinforce, that it is a pretty good campus and one that we can extend and extend pretty quickly with the new type of design that we have in place. It has seen a major expansion under this Government. It is about providing those facilities and those resources out where the population is, out in areas such as Logan and Caboolture, and as will be the case in Redlands. It has always been part of the policy of ensuring that we provide the services in those particular areas.

There is no greater need in the south-east than in the area of Logan. It is one of the fast growing areas in the State and facilities like this are long overdue. Demand for obstetric and maternity services in that area is phenomenal. From talking to the women who were in that hospital when I visited it, I know that they certainly appreciate that they no longer have to travel to Brisbane to give birth. In relation to that hospital, the work is nearly finished. We hope that it will be commissioned in July. This Budget has seen an allocation of \$3.5m for additional recurrent funding for the hospital.

Mr PYKE: On page 64 of the Portfolio Program Statements, you have identified the key policy direction to be the downsizing of the three psychiatric hospitals and the decentralising of those services. How do you plan to implement those policies? Can you tell the Committee the strategies that have been put in place to expedite this very delicate operation?

Mr ELDER: We have touched on this subject a couple of times this evening. It is an area in which the Government has done a lot of work. As I said to you earlier, the revelations of the Townsville Ward 10B report and the recommendations from Burdekin's report have called for a major reform right across Australia in terms of the delivery of mental health services. We had a limited mental health service; it was mainly through acute psychiatric hospitals, and there had been an historic under-expenditure in that particular area. I think it was outlined by Burdekin that we were coming from a pretty low base and that we were having to build and build pretty quickly.

Last year, my predecessor put in place the mental health plan that was released. That plan put in place the long-term framework, those long-term building blocks and that long-term approach that was needed and which required doing careful planning before we actually started the reform process. The move away from institutional care needs a whole-of-Government perspective, and we have delivered that in this year's Budget. It is a significant commitment to a whole-of-Government approach to meet the problem of mental illness head on. We will spend \$71m over three years to bolster both in-patient and community-based services. That is the only way to approach that particular illness.

I know that in some respects there is nervousness in the community about that process, and that is heightened by scaremongering in relation to it. I hope that, even in this day and age, people realise that they have a bigger responsibility in relation to the integration of services. People have a responsible role to play in terms of canvassing this particular issue in the broader community. Members of the Opposition might just get away with a bit of scaremongering in the short term, but it will do them no good in the long term. It will be interesting to see the policy approach of the Opposition—that is, if we ever see the policy approach of the Opposition—on mental illness. I would not be surprised if, at the end of the day, it mirrors ours very closely.

In terms of deinstitutionalisation—when we wind back those services over the next number of years, we will quarantine the funding from those big institutions to make sure that that funding follows the people into the community and that we make sure that we have the housing and community health services where they are needed. While I was answering that question, I heard Mr Santoro speak. If he wants to make a comment, I suggest he ask a question.

Mr PYKE: Home And Community Care funding appears to be increasing by about 12 per cent. Can you tell the Committee about the expansion in that program and the benefits it brings?

Mr ELDER: Do you have a page reference?

The CHAIRMAN: It is page 88.

Mr ELDER: Yes, you are right in saying that HACC funding has increased. It has increased every year since we have come to Government, and it will increase by just under \$4m—\$3.8m—to \$35.6m. As you are all aware, it is a program funded by Commonwealth, State and Territory Governments which targets services to the frail, aged and younger disabled people and their carers. This year sees an increase of about 12 per cent, which will be matched by the Commonwealth as part of a funding equalisation strategy so that we achieve equity across Australia. Historically, there had been an iniquitous situation across States. There is a commitment from the Commonwealth Government in terms of that strategy so that equity is achieved by the year 2010.

That program is pretty cost effective. For every dollar that we contribute, we are matched by the Commonwealth for \$2, so it is in our interests to expand services because the Commonwealth comes in behind that. It is vital that we continue to support that program. It comes as no surprise to people, particularly politicians, that the client group is growing because of the aging population in Queensland and because of migration. That population growth places pressures on the Government in terms of providing HACC funding, and we have to try as best we can. I believe that a commitment of this type does that by reducing the number of people who enter the more cost-acute systems—whether it be a nursing hostel or hospital based. We will be working to provide it equitably across the State, particularly targeting priority groups: people from non-English-speaking backgrounds, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, people suffering from dementia, those who are financially disadvantaged and those living in remote and isolated communities. I mentioned before the increase to \$35.6m. That pretty much covers the labour-related costs under the HACC program. If you are talking about the non-labour-related costs—we are talking in excess of \$70m.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you Minister. There are some excellent programs in there. The Queensland Health Promotion Council, which was established a little over a year ago, has a budget of \$2.5m. Would you like to indicate what have been the main activities and priorities of the council to

date and what is planned for the 1995-96 financial year? That is referred to on page 109 of the Portfolio Program Statements.

Mr ELDER: To date, the council has funded some 100 projects. Emphasis has been placed on fundamental health issues that have been consistent with our policies. At a recent council meeting, we were considering the specific emphasis to be targeted in 1995-96. I am pleased that they involved me in those discussions. The emphasis will be placed on injury and violence prevention, because that is consistent with the Commonwealth development of national goals and targets in that particular area, and the council has a role to play. Injury prevention is not only measurable but has the potential to greatly reduce the number of hospital admissions. If we can target that sector and reduce the number of hospital admissions and the overall length of stay for a range of related injuries then the benefits will follow.

The most frequently funded health issue has been nutrition, with 23 projects supported, including programs to foster breastfeeding, improved nutritional cooking skills for older people and innovative projects in the Torres Strait Islands to address poor nutrition. We are looking at dealing with that through the introduction of traditional market gardening in the Torres Strait. So they are pretty pro-active measures for people in that community.

One of the council's roles is to improve the health status of Queenslanders by increasing their access and availability of support services and information services. In those terms, they have been especially targeting rural and socially isolated people across the State. They have allocated grants across the State. They have not just concentrated on the south-east corner. I could give you some examples if you like: out of a total of 100 grants that the council has made, the northern region received 13, the peninsula region received eight, the central region received seven, and the central west received eight. So, as I say, they have been targeting those particular areas. They have also given Aboriginal and Islander health an important high priority and have funded seven projects. They were—and you will find these interesting—the prevention of asthma, eye disease, diabetes and forms of cancer and cardiovascular disease that tend to appear in Aboriginal and Islander communities.

It is important that the Committee understands just how comprehensive the role of the council is; it supports activities and the sector involvement of health care by dealing with the entire health sector—just about every project that is undertaken by councils and a whole range of private sector organisation groups.

The CHAIRMAN: That is all the questions from the Government side. There is another 10 minutes of questions from the Opposition.

Mr HORAN: At page 11 of the PPS, "Key Inputs", the note below that refers to retained revenue—an amount estimated at just over \$50m.

Mr ELDER: \$51.5m. It relates to the manufacturing dispensary and the bulk purchase of drugs. Susan can explain that for you.

Ms RANKIN: The manufacturing dispensary actually purchases on behalf of all of the hospitals the bulk supply of drugs, and manufactures from those bulk drugs. Obviously, it is needed to be reported separately because the costs of that are also reported in the individual program items as the individual program areas and hospital areas pay for those drugs. So it would be double counting, in fact, to not show it as a separate item and as a note to the account, as it is done here. The manufacturing dispensary does produce drugs on behalf of the hospitals and, of course, there are economies and efficiencies through that bulk-purchasing arrangement and bulk-storage arrangement to the individual hospitals that avail themselves of the facility.

Mr HORAN: There was a question asked regarding immunisation from the Government side, but there were no figures given. There was money put into the immunisation program this financial year to boost immunisation, and I ask: have you any figures that show any improvement or otherwise in the immunisation statistics and figures as a result of that additional funding program?

Ms RANKIN: Just a figure? You are wanting the results of the dollars that were put in for this financial year?

Mr HORAN: Yes, the money that was put in, but what has been the result of that money being put in? Are there statistics or figures to show any improvement in the immunisation levels?

Mr ELDER: Just before I go into that, in answer to the question you asked earlier about the State Service Scholarship Scheme—this was in relation to that \$1.135m—the pharmacy scholarship was \$46,000. The number of holders for 1994-95 was 107. The number estimated for 1995 is 128. I have a range of details here about immunisation and the provision of vaccines—

Mr HORAN: Sorry, just going back—in that detail there, have you got a breakdown of how many medical scholarships and dental scholarships there are? That was just a total amount. I would like to know what it is actually providing. We had that information previously regarding Allied Health—the five scholarships were detailed. For that amount of money, I would like to know how many—

Mr ELDER: We will see if we can get it to you.

Mr HORAN: I am happy to have it on notice. How many scholarships, what category, and what are the actual details of those scholarships?

Mr ELDER: In terms of immunisation, we can talk about a lot of the new provisions for vaccines. In terms of the type of information that you are looking for, it might be best for me to take that on notice. If we can provide it to you in the next few minutes, we will do it. If we cannot, we will just have to take it on notice.

Mr HORAN: Yes, that is satisfactory, as long as I can get the figures for what improvement there has been for the money spent.

Mr ELDER: Yes.

Mr HORAN: With regard to the John Oxley Hospital—and I presume that comes within the Mental Health Program—do you keep, and can you make available to this Committee, the statistics or the figures on people who have absconded from particular release orders and the categories of those breaking release orders? How many people have broken those release orders and have not been returned to the hospital?

Mr ELDER: What has that got to do with the Estimates? If you want to ask me that question, ask it to me in the House. You have had the opportunity. It has nothing to do with this year's Estimates. I will not avoid it; ask it in the House.

Mr HORAN: The reason I am asking the question is that it is the taxpayers' money we are talking about tonight, and whether that money is being used properly.

Mr ELDER: What you are talking about is a beat-up in the *Sunday Mail*. If you want to ask me the question, ask me in the House.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Horan, are you suggesting that there are efficiency savings or something by them absconding?

Mr HORAN: I think you are probably right. The money is being spent for people in the hospital, not breaking out.

The CHAIRMAN: Unless we can relate it to the budget item, I think we will have to move on.

Mr HORAN: There is no answer provided, so I will seek it by another source.

Mr ELDER: For the record, I am prepared to provide an answer in the right forum. Ask it in the right forum.

Mr HORAN: Turning to rural youth suicide, can you give details of what additional services have been provided there and, in particular, how that money will be used to actually identify those people who may be at risk, or how a service can be provided that is highly identifiable to those at risk?

Mr ELDER: Let me just talk about the key points of the program so that you have the information. As you rightly point out, it is aimed at the prevention of self-harming, suicidal and related behaviour among young people. We believe that it will be achieved through a significant consolidated health system approach, which would be the best way of putting it. It will complement the existing and developing mental health services that we have in Queensland. It will strengthen links between mainstream and community-based generic services and, more importantly, empower communities, as we see it, to develop processes for early intervention. Regional health authorities will pilot the program in the first year. The regions involved are the South West, Brisbane South, West Moreton and Wide Bay. The Sunshine Coast has also been funded to provide an interface with the Adolescent Mental Health Service.

The identification of those pilot regions will be based on a number of criteria, including socioeconomic indicators, the number of young people, the suicide rates that were evident, the cultural profile and the identification by the community of service infrastructure, which is just as important. Consultation has been an integral component in the development and implementation of it from day one; it would not work without it. South West, West Moreton and Wide Bay are ready to put into operation the program locally. Brisbane South should be operational by the end of this month. Regions will get funds for service delivery. Program staff positions will be regionally based and will have a central position overseeing them. There is funding of \$4.5m over three years. What were the other questions that you asked?

Mr HORAN: I asked about the procedures that are in place to try to identify those people who are at risk. It is all well and good to spend money, but the identification of the people who are at risk is at the heart of the problem. There have to be highly identifiable sites or personnel to whom people can turn.

Mr ELDER: As I said to you before, consultation has been an integral component. That means consultation with the groups within the community.

Mr BUTT: That is basically right. There are two approaches. One is working with the mental health services in those regions, namely, community-based mental health services that are already working with young people. The other approach is one of community development and working with organisations that deal with young people. A good example of such interaction goes on at Lifeline. A lot of the training of the people who work in those teams involves Lifeline. There is a very close liaison with groups such as Lifeline and other youth-related groups.

Mr ELDER: I wish to return to the question that you put on notice in relation to immunisation. I think you asked what value for money we got out of it this year.

Mr HORAN: I wanted to determine the value for money by looking at the statistics for the immunisation rates at the beginning of year. Additional moneys have been put into new strategies to try to lift the rates. I want to see whether the immunisation rates have increased.

Mr ELDER: I thought I answered that question pretty extensively in answer to Government members' questions in respect of the rates. I said that one of the concerns about driving the information system and getting the doctors and so on was that the rates were down.

Mr HORAN: But you did not give me any immunisation rates.

Mr ELDER: I am not sure how you get value for money.

Mr HORAN: I will determine that. I want to know the rates for immunisation at the beginning of last financial year.

Mr ELDER: You are a doctor, are you?

Mr HORAN: I am asking about the immunisation rates. It is fairly straightforward.

Mr ELDER: All right.

Mr HORAN: Surely you keep figures to monitor whether the program is working?

The CHAIRMAN: That is the end of the time for questions. If the Minister has any responses from earlier questions, he might like to raise them now.

Mr ELDER: Yes. Scholarships are continuing over a number of years. Dental scholarships run over a three or four year program. The approximate number of people currently in receipt of scholarships for 1995-96 are as follows: pharmacy, six; dental, 12; allied health, five; and medical, 105.

Mr HORAN: The other thing I asked for was the detail concerning the bonding arrangements with those scholarships. Could that be put on notice?

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 28 April 1994. I thank the Minister and his staff for their cooperation and tolerance. I would also like to thank Hansard, the attendants, the parliamentary staff and the Committee for all of the work that has gone into today. It has been a long day.

Mr ELDER: Just before we close—I thank the Committee for its indulgence at such a late hour. I know that it has been a long day for you. I appreciate the time and effort that the Committee put into these Estimates. I thank all those involved, staff included. Thank you for the manner in which the session was conducted. I thank my officers at the table for their contribution, support and the professional way in which they have handled themselves this evening. Importantly, I thank those officers behind me and others who have been involved in providing the information to the Committee. I thank all of them for their support and encouragement.

The Committee adjourned at 11.08 p.m.