

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE D

Mr R. Welford (Chair)

Dr L. Clark	Mr S. Robertson
Mr B. Littleproud	Mr D. Slack
Mrs M. Rose	Mr M. Veivers

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

Hon. R. Gibbs, Minister for Tourism, Sport and Racing

Mr David Williams, Director-General

Mr Steve Thornton, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Events Corporation

Mr Mark Peters, Executive Director, Policy and Programs

Mr G. Draffin, Chief Executive Officer, Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation

Mr Peter Richardson, Manager, Finance and Administration Unit

Mr Laurie Longland, Executive Director, Liquor Licensing and Regional Services

Dr Bob Mason, Director, Racing

Ms Melissa McMullen, A/Senior Project Officer

The CHAIRMAN: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I declare open this meeting of Estimates Committee D. This Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill for the areas and portfolios set out in the Sessional Orders in the following order: the first session will be with the Minister for Tourism Sport and Racing from now until 3.30 p.m. with a lunch break, followed by the Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs, and then this evening the Minister for Environment and Heritage. I will introduce the members of the Committee for the benefit of the Minister and staff. Firstly, on my left I have members of the Opposition: the member for Western Downs, Mr Littleproud; the member for Southport, Mr Veivers; the member for Beaudesert, Mr Lingard, who, although not a member of the Committee, is sitting in at this stage and will indicate to me beforehand if he intends to ask any questions; and the member for Burnett, Mr Slack. On my right, I have Government members: the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose; the member for Barron River, Ms Clark; and the member for Sunnybank, Mr Robertson.

For the benefit of the Minister and his staff, I point out that there is a time limit on questions of one minute, and answers should be no longer than three minutes. Fifteen seconds prior to the end of the three-minute period there will be a warning chime and at the end of the three-minute period there will be a double chime to indicate the expiry of that time. However, the person answering the question may seek leave of the Committee for an extension of time if required. The Committee has agreed to confine, to the best endeavours of the members of the Committee, questions to matters which arise out of the Budget papers and the

Estimates of expenditure for this department in the forthcoming year and expenditure in programs during this last year. In accordance with the Sessional Orders, the first period of questions will be 20 minutes from non-Government members followed by a similar period from Government members, and we will continue to take turns in that order.

As was the practice of this Committee last year, there has been agreement by the Committee that we will deal with relevant divisions of each department in turn. In other words, for today we will start with the tourism division of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing and work sequentially through the other divisions of the department, so that only one set of advisers need be with the Minister, if that is convenient, at any one time. Opposition members or Government members will notify the Minister and his staff when we are to move on to the next division of the department.

Further, to facilitate the early completion of this Committee's work, it was resolved by the Committee that any member who wished to ask a question which may involve some research was able to provide notice to the relevant Minister of those questions so that if the member wished to ask that question here today the Minister could provide the answer today rather than taking questions on notice for answer at another time. Some members have done that, but they will need to ask the question here today and the Minister may either answer the question in full during the hearing, table a written answer for incorporation or, if for some reason circumstances have not permitted the full details or data required to answer the question to be available by today, even though notice was given, then the Minister may at his discretion take the question on notice for answer next Monday.

I declare the proposed expenditure of the Minister for Tourism Sport and Racing open for examination. The question before the committee is that the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I invite the Minister to make an introductory statement if he wishes.

Mr GIBBS: I do not wish to make an introductory statement.

The CHAIRMAN: In that case, I invite the member for Southport, Mr Veivers—

Mr VEIVERS: Just before we start, regarding those questions on notice that you were talking about—and I did put in a considerable amount of questions on notice—

Mr GIBBS: Seventy-nine, to be precise, arrived yesterday afternoon.

Mr VEIVERS: Yes. I am entitled to do that, Minister. There is not any doubt about that. I have to ask those questions. I presume that they have been researched and answered, Mr Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN: That is a matter for you. My ruling is that you are not bound to ask all of them.

Mr VEIVERS: Can I ask those questions and the answers be tabled for the benefit of Hansard?

The CHAIRMAN: You can ask any questions you wish today. Those of which notice has been given, the Minister is free—

Mr VEIVERS: I will ask the Minister. Is there any chance of those questions and answers being tabled today?

Mr GIBBS: As to the Standing Orders that apply to Estimate committee hearings, my clear understanding is—in fact, my advice is—that there is no obligation to take questions on notice in the way that they were delivered yesterday, that is, 79 questions at the last moment.

Mr VEIVERS: I have to say that there was not any limit on the amount of questions that could be asked. The Minister, on a number of occasions, has suggested that I ask questions, so I thought this was a golden opportunity to ask quite a few. On Monday or Tuesday can these answers—

Mr GIBBS: I make it very clear to you from the outset, Mr Veivers, that if you wish to ask the 79 questions that you put to me yesterday, I am happy to give you replies to any one of them here today. In relation to the others, which may not get answered, for whatever reason, I am not giving you what I am sure you would like to have delivered to you and that is a double whammy, where you were going to come in here, have one chop at questions and then come back with a shopping basket full of questions to be answered next week. It is simply not on. You have had adequate time, in my opinion, to prepare for this. I intend to follow the rules.

Mr VEIVERS: The rules were not stated clearly about the numbers of questions—

Mr GIBBS: If you do not research—

Mr VEIVERS: If he does not want to answer the questions, that is fine by me.

The CHAIRMAN: I will clarify the matter promptly, and this is my ruling. As I indicated yesterday to members of the Committee, and in particular Mr Veivers, any member of the Committee was entitled to give advance notice of questions to the Minister and the department. However, questions to be asked are questions to be asked at this hearing at which time the Minister may take any of them on notice. The purpose of providing advance notice of questions was that any that would require research would be able, hopefully, to be answered here today without there being further delay. It was not the purpose of giving advance notice that those questions would be automatically questions on notice. They are questions on notice only if the Minister takes them on notice when a question is asked today. The purpose of the notice of questions in advance was simply that if any question was asked today the Minister would hopefully be in a position to answer all of them. I invite Mr Veivers to commence his questioning and ask any questions he wishes to ask.

Mr VEIVERS: May I note, Mr Chairman, that I dissent from that view but also that I do hope that we clear up this matter about questions for all Estimate committees for next year because it is a bit of a shambles, quite frankly. Time on?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr VEIVERS: Thank you. Minister, I wish to seek your advice about some matters concerning Government owned companies, GOEs, within your portfolio, particularly those companies which previously traded in partnership as the Gold Coast Motor Events Co. According to audited financial statements of Southcoast Tyre Services, Truffle, Igli Holdings, Raxmont and Papandrea no trading was conducted by those companies in the year ended 30 June 1994 as there was no cash flow. Is that correct, Minister?

Mr GIBBS: Which specific page and paragraph of the Portfolio Program Statements are you referring to?

Mr VEIVERS: It is in the report under "Financial Statements". You can go to page 51. They are in order.

Mr GIBBS: The short answer simply is that all of those companies that you have referred to are in fact part of the partnership of the Gold Coast Motor Events Co.

Mr VEIVERS: What are your criteria for appointing a director to these Government owned companies

Mr GIBBS: Specifically to the Gold Coast Motor Events corporation?

Mr VEIVERS: For any of these GOE companies.

Mr GIBBS: Can you give me a specific example, because obviously the criteria would differ depending on the expertise that I would be looking for in relation to the particular organisation to which you may be referring?

Mr VEIVERS: What do you expect from directors when they act on behalf of the Crown for dormant companies?

Mr GIBBS: If it is a dormant company, obviously it is not operating but it is part of the parent company, that is, the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation and then obviously their role would be extremely limited. The people associated with those dormant companies, as you describe them, obviously would have an overall responsibility to the directors of the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation. I have appointed the directors of the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation on the basis that they have a very broad business experience covering expertise in financial matters. I think that that is reflected in the appointment of people such as Mr Michael Pelly, the head person for Carlton United in Queensland, and Mr John Cowley from Queensland Newspapers. I sought to have expertise representative of the motor racing industry. Of course, former world champion Allan Jones fits that description admirably. I sought to have representation from the Queensland tourist industry, and that is why Mr Peter Graham was appointed. I make the point that, although I am using Mr Graham as an example, I am somewhat amused by the criticisms from not only yourself but also from other Gold Coast members who have observed in the past that there is not adequate representation on this particular board from the

Gold Coast. I think it is interesting to note that, in fact, three of the people who occupy positions on that board live on the Gold Coast.

Mr VEIVERS: Financial statements tabled in Parliament in early November indicate that the directors of those companies were Messrs R. Richards, P. Graham, and D. Spence, a director until September 1993. Is it true that Mr Spence resigned due to a conflict of interest as his firm was already being paid as a legal adviser?

Mr GIBBS: No, to my knowledge that has no foundation at all. In fact, Mr Spence was formerly on the board of the Queensland Events Corporation. As I recall, I made some adjustments to the board members of the Queensland Events Corporation for a number of reasons, again because of the varied expertise that I believed should be brought into an organisation such as the Queensland Events Corporation. Secondly, if you look at my record over the five and a half years that we have been in office, you will see that I follow a fairly stringent policy of frequently making changes—usually after serving two terms on any of those boards—of a number of directors in order to make sure that we have a fresh approach and new ideas coming in at board level on a fairly continuous basis.

Mr VEIVERS: Was Mr Spence paid any directors fees from the period July to September 1993?

Mr GIBBS: Yes, my understanding is that some amounts of money were paid. I am advised that the figure is probably around \$30,000. If you want exact dollars and cents, I am happy to supply that information to you.

Mr VEIVERS: Thank you. Is it true that Messrs Richards, Spence and Graham shared directors fees of \$178,210 from Southcoast Tyre Services, Truffle, Igli Holdings, Raxmont and Papandrea—all companies registered with the Australian Securities Commission?

Mr GIBBS: No, to my knowledge, that is not true. The members of the board of management during the financial year and remuneration paid to the members in connection with the management of the partnerships is as follows: Mr Richards—1993-94, \$15,000; Mr Spence—1993, \$8,000 and 1994, \$2,000; Judith Maestracci—1993, \$8,000 and 1994, \$2,000; Mr Garnsey—1993, \$8,000 and 1994, \$2,000; and Terry Robertson—\$8,000 in 1993 and in 1994, \$2,000. In 1994, Mr Allan Jones was paid \$6,667. The same amount was paid to Mr Cowley. The same amount was paid to Mr John Brown. Mr Kennedy was paid \$4,667 and Mr Pelly, \$6,667. Mr Shepherd was paid the same amount.

Mr VEIVERS: How have you justified your decision to pay those directors' fees for companies which did not trade during the financial year 1993-94, especially when those companies' liabilities exceeded their net assets?

Mr GIBBS: Bearing in mind that those companies as you describe may not be operative, they are still companies that exist and may play a role some time in the future. Obviously the main fee that is paid to those directors for the service—and I

certainly do not consider it to be an exorbitant amount in terms of the time and qualifications of all of those people—is primarily paid for the time given with the organisation of the Indy Car race itself.

Mr VEIVERS: Is it not true that the notes forming part of the financial statements of those companies clearly state that the Queensland Treasury Corporation provides certain administrative services to those companies free of charge?

Mr GIBBS: No, to the best of my knowledge Queensland Treasury does not supply services free of charge. That ceased when it was transferred over to my portfolio.

Mr VEIVERS: When was that?

Mr GIBBS: That occurred in 1993.

Mr VEIVERS: What do those directors actually do to earn those rewards paid for by the taxpayers of Queensland?

Mr GIBBS: Contrary to your portrayal and that of your party, I can assure you that they do not sit around and twiddle their thumbs. They work very hard. They all have a role to play in the organisation of the Indy Car race itself. Many hours are put into it. Each person obviously has some individual responsibilities in terms of the various subcommittees that he or she heads relating to catering, race day organisation and negotiations for the event itself. After the Gold Coast Motor Events Company, they are directorships of minor companies. I reiterate that they all make a major contribution.

As I have said in the past, I think that it is a great pity that your party, and particularly yourself and Mr Borbidge—being two members from the Gold Coast who are greatly affected by this event and the wonderful contribution that it makes to your electorates—did not get yourselves across a little better than you obviously have done.

Mr VEIVERS: How many directors meetings were held and can you provide me with a copy of the minutes before the end of this session of this Estimates committee is completed, please?

Mr GIBBS: No, I would not provide you with a copy of the minutes. Matters of great confidentiality are discussed by the board, particularly in relation to corporate sponsorships and negotiations with overseas corporations. I consider the question to be totally inappropriate.

Mr VEIVERS: Did your department issue a group certificate for this income derived by these directors and, if so, will you please provide me with a copy of that?

Mr GIBBS: I will ask Mr Peter Richardson from my department to answer that for you.

Mr RICHARDSON: The department itself would not issue group certificates to these directors, as they are not actually employees of the department.

Mr VEIVERS: So the answer is "No", basically? Right. What was the gross income on the group certificates, as they really are statutory documents and the Crown is the ultimate employer and you are elected to represent the Crown?

Mr GIBBS: I think the question has just been answered. There were no group certificates issued by my department. If Mr Robinson or that other fellow are going to give you these questions, they should research them a little better.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr who?

Mr GIBBS: Mr Terry Robinson, or the other fellow you used to bag who has gone—Ron Dixon. Try to get them across a bit better, Mick.

Mr VEIVERS: There appears to be a difference of fact between the financial accounts of these companies and the chairman of these companies, Mr Ron Richards, as reported in the *Sunday Mail* on 28 May 1995, where Mr Richards stated—

"If I was being paid a \$100,000 a year salary for doing this job, maybe I could expect to be the target of these kinds of political slaps."

As Mr Richards has signed the financial accounts in accordance with the resolution by the director for these companies only eight months ago, can you tell me who was actually paid the remuneration of directors as evidenced on pages 82, 97, 111, 125 and 139 of the financial accounts of the GOEs within your portfolio and also on page 153, being the financial accounts of Papandrea Pty Ltd, ACNO11028596?

Mr GIBBS: I will refer that to Steve Thornton for an answer.

Mr THORNTON: The remuneration you are referring to there is summarised on page 82. If I could draw to your attention that that is contained within the consolidated accounts for the Gold Coast Motor Events Co., which forms the partnership of six companies within that entity. The directorship fees that you relate to on the subsequent pages for each of the individual companies is then consolidated into that total fee. The Minister read to you a list of the directors before. Those directors belong to the board of management for the partnership, the Gold Coast Motor Events Co. They are not directors, with the exception of Mr Ron Richards or Mr Peter Graham, of any of the subsidiary companies of the partnership other than the Gold Coast Events Co. Pty Ltd. I would suggest to you at this point in time that the figures that you are seeing for the Southcoast Tyre Service, Igli, Papandrea, Raxmont and one of the other minor companies are then consolidated into that final figure. So there is not an aggregation in which they can get \$15,000, in the case of Mr Ron Richards, and then another \$15,000 for each of the minor companies.

Mr VEIVERS: Do you intend retaining these appointed directors on the basis of, as far as I am concerned, the fat-cat directors' fees? Are you prepared to concede that these costs are really unwarranted as no director appointed by you to represent the Crown for the very successful World Masters Games was paid any directors' fees at all?

Mr GIBBS: I think there is a huge difference between the World Masters Games and the Gold Coast Indy Car race. It sounds to me as though

someone has either made a complaint to you that they were not happy because they did not get directors' fees from the World Masters Games or somebody has simply asked you the question on a spiteful basis. I have already mentioned to you that I consider these not to be, as you described, "fat-cat directors' fees". In fact, I think that they are a very reasonable amount to be paying people, considering their expertise and the fine job they do.

Mr VEIVERS: Can you tell us why the Australian taxpayers are subsidising \$178,210 in income for these directors resulting from the Gold Coast Events Corporation Pty Ltd forgiving in full various loans to these companies?

Mr GIBBS: I will again refer that question to Mr Thornton.

Mr THORNTON: I believe the loans you are referring to were given as part of an agreement between the Queensland Treasury and the Gold Coast Motor Events Co. That also involved an assets transfer. The total loan forgiveness that was undertaken between Queensland Treasury and the Gold Coast Motor Events Co. was \$56m, of which there was a consideration of \$5.3m for the assets transfer. My advice on this is that when the funding mechanisms for the Indy Car partnership changed from one of a loan to a grant through the budgetary process, the decision was made within Queensland Treasury to rationalise the outstanding loans to the partnership.

Mr VEIVERS: Is it part of your strategy to utilise these companies to hide part of the trading losses for staging the 1995 Indy Car Grand Prix?

Mr GIBBS: No.

Mr VEIVERS: Can you explain to us why these companies have to sit on a shelf gathering dust and yet you paid these persons a total of \$178,210?

Mr THORNTON: Mr Veivers, could I ask you to specify what you mean by "\$178,000", because the annual report does not specify directors' fees totalling that amount. The annual report specifies directors' fees for 1994 of \$69,002. Are you referring to directors' fees plus all of the other operational expenses and travel?

Mr VEIVERS: No, not all of those. I am going to ask the Minister again—I am asking questions—is it necessary to maintain these companies? Would it not be better to liquidate them now before the end of 30 June 1995?

Mr GIBBS: Hold on, what about the question you just asked?

The CHAIRMAN: Do you withdraw that question, Mr Veivers—the previous one?

Mr VEIVERS: No, I am not withdrawing the question. I am asking the questions; the Minister is supposed to be giving the answers.

Mr GIBBS: You want good answers. Mr Thornton—

Mr VEIVERS: You have all of these helpers around you, yet you cannot seem to come up with an answer.

Mr GIBBS: Mr Thornton is the company secretary of the Indy Car Company. Obviously, he is well across these financial questions, and if I defer one to him, I am doing it so that he can give you a thorough answer. However, if you want answers, you are going to have to make your questions quite succinct so that we can understand them. You had a question and then you jumped off that one and onto another one.

Mr VEIVERS: That is why I am here, Minister.

Mr GIBBS: I do not think so. I think that you are here to make sure that you play by the rules, not break them.

The CHAIRMAN: I invite the member for Southport to ask his next question.

Mr VEIVERS: Have all creditors from this year's Indy Car Grand Prix been paid and, if so, can you confirm that the cheques have been mailed to the creditors?

Mr GIBBS: I am sure that all creditors have been paid with the exception of one person—that there is some legal matter outstanding at the present time.

Mr THORNTON: I believe that there are some creditors that have yet to be paid. Their invoices were presented in May. Some of the invoices were yet to be presented in June. This is a normal operation not only of the Indy Car company but also a number of companies. They wait for the reconciliation in June, especially on 30 June, before all creditors are paid. My understanding is that those creditors who have presented invoices in May could reasonably expect payment before 30 June. Any of them that are after 1 July—

Mr VEIVERS: How long have these creditors been waiting to be paid?

Mr THORNTON: My advice is that, in terms of paying creditors, the Indy Car Company works on a 30-day policy. So without having specific details of individuals who may or may not have been paid in the last 30 days, I would have to refer that to the Indy Car Company. Recent advice from the Chief Executive Officer of the Indy Car Company was that it had sufficient assets to meet all its creditors and liabilities.

Mr VEIVERS: Minister, as at 30 June 1994, the net liabilities of the Gold Coast Events Corporation Pty Ltd and its control entities were \$101,736 after declaring an operating profit before income tax of \$50.6m as declared by the directors on page 54 of the GOE's annual report. Following the net financial outcomes of the 1995 Indy Car Grand Prix, do you accept that this controlling company, in regard to which the 1994 balance sheet says the net liabilities exceed the assets, is therefore basically insolvent?

Mr GIBBS: The abnormal profit in 1994 resulted from the forgiveness of loan funds provided to the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation over the three-year period 1991 to 1993. This decision was made by Treasury and based on the following considerations: a rationalisation of debt levels held by Queensland Treasury Holdings; a desire to rationalise the commercial structure of the Gold

Coast Motor Events Corporation in the event that the company is ever sold in whole or in part to private interests; and a need to restructure the funding arrangements for the Gold Coast Motor Events Corporation as it was being transferred through Treasury to my department. Also, the 1994 event was funded by a \$9.1m grant, which is shown as income in the accounts.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the first 20-minute section of questions from Opposition members. I now ask Dr Clark to ask any questions that she wishes to ask of the Minister.

Mr GIBBS: Before we go on—I found it very hard to pick up the clarity of Mr Veivers' question. I have a slight hearing problem. I am having a problem hearing the questions clearly.

Mr VEIVERS: I cannot put the microphone any closer.

The CHAIRMAN: I will look at the matter and try to ensure that the microphones are turned up sufficiently.

Dr CLARK: I refer to page 16 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which shows that the Queensland Events Corporation has conducted major events and brought an estimated \$65m into the Queensland economy. This includes an amount of approximately \$1m for two rounds of the Grundig Mountain Bike World Cup, which were successfully held in Cairns. I note on page 24 that the QEC budget for 1995-96 is only \$1.72m. Can the Minister provide the Committee with the details of the major events organised by the QEC, such as the 1994 World Masters Games in Brisbane, the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival and this year's Waltzing Matilda centenary celebrations? If possible, can you give some indication as to what level of support the organisers of the Mountain Bike World Championship to be held in Cairns in September next year could expect from the QEC?

Mr GIBBS: I think it is fair to say that the Queensland Events Corporation has been a highly successful semi-Government body. It has an outstandingly successful record in Queensland. You mentioned the 1994 World Masters Games, the budget for which was \$7.5m. Its economic impact on Queensland was in the vicinity of \$50.6m. The games attracted 24,000 competitors, 15,000 of whom were either from interstate or overseas. The Queensland Events Corporation contributed \$1.8m to support the staging of the event and my department contributed \$220,000 for the employment of sports liaison officers. When you speak to the people of Brisbane, you find that the organisation is lauded.

As to the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival—its budget does not all come from the Queensland Events Corporation. However, its overall budget is \$1.2m and its economic impact on Brisbane is about \$1.7m. We provide \$300,000 out of the Racing Development Fund towards the promotion and marketing of that event. The Queensland Events Corporation provides about \$100,000, either in cash or in kind.

Further to the success of those events, for example, the Waltzing Matilda centenary

celebrations, which were recently held in outback Queensland, had a budget of \$1.2m. The Queensland Events Corporation contributed \$200,000 in cash or in kind to support that event, which had a major economic impact in Australia. Overseas, it portrayed Australia, particularly Queensland, as a great place to visit. Television coverage both in Australia and internationally portrayed Queensland almost as the last frontier. The population of Winton increased significantly from 600 to 14,000 people in the week in which the celebrations were held. The economic impact of the event is still being assessed. I am very sure that, when those figures are available, people will be able to see the great benefit that the expertise of the Queensland Events Corporation brings into the staging and organisation of those sorts of major events.

Dr CLARK: I refer to pages 15 and 18 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which state that the Tourism Policy Bureau is working on a tourism strategy for Queensland. Can the Minister please explain the major issues that are being addressed and at what stage this important strategy is at?

Mr GIBBS: The Queensland Tourism Strategy is vitally important to the whole of our State. Tourism is our fastest growing industry. Many would say that, by the year 2000, it will be the largest industry in Queensland. It is vitally important that the sort of hit-and-miss attitude that has applied in past years in the tourist industry—the boom and bust mentality—is put behind us. We have to make sure that our strategies and planning are professional. Importantly, the major areas addressed in the Queensland Tourism Strategy include regional issues, research and statistics. Given some of the financial disgraces that took place in the mid to late eighties—the Bonds, Skases and so on—the tourism industry is still to a large degree recovering from having something of a tarnished reputation with financial institutions. Having proper research and statistics is a very important part of ensuring that we overcome that problem.

There are other important areas, such as production, development, marketing, investment and finance, and social impacts, as you would be aware, given the area that you represent in the far north. Also important are ecologically sustainable development and infrastructure planning. Probably equally as important as all of those aspects are education, training, employment and industrial relations. We expect that a major paper will probably be ready for release in about August of this year. That will have been achieved as a result of broad consultation throughout the industry in Queensland. Every sector of the industry has made a major contribution to the preparation of the draft strategy.

We have held a significant number of seminars and meetings throughout the State to bring the industry together to guarantee its input. As I said, the strategy is being developed within the framework of the Government's economic, environmental and social policies that we believe

have set the basis for Queensland's growth, particularly across that broad base of tourism.

Dr CLARK: My next question is also related to planning. The Tourism Policy Bureau is also involved in preparing the Queensland Ecotourism Plan. That is of particular significance to far-north Queensland in so far as ecotourism is the fastest growing tourism market segment. Can you tell the Committee about the progress of the Ecotourism Plan and how it will increase Queensland's appeal as an ecotourism destination?

Mr GIBBS: We have engaged a firm by the name of Mitchell McCotter to conduct consultations with the public and interest groups. To date, about 300 people have attended a series of workshops throughout State. About six preliminary papers have been prepared addressing the issues of environmental protection, product development, infrastructure development, marketing and promotion, local community development and planning and management. It is fair to say that the key element that separates ecotourism from other forms of tourism is that it must occur in natural settings.

I think we are all aware of the types of people who have been associated with the tourism industry over time. I could probably refer back to the 1980s build-and-bust mentality. It could be said that there was very little consideration given to caring for very fragile ecological systems in areas of the State. Some areas were absolutely ruined by the development that we have seen in the past. We are determined that that will not happen under this Government. These days, whether people happen to be part of our domestic market or our international market, we are finding more and more that people want to experience as close to a natural holiday in a proper environmental setting as they can. It is vitally important that, hand in hand with the strategy for the development of the tourism industry throughout Queensland, we have an ecotourism plan to ensure that they complement each other so that we are able to zero in and, ultimately, cash in on what is becoming a very popular form of tourism throughout the world.

Dr CLARK: My next two questions refer to the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation's international promotion and marketing referred to on pages 17, 19, 20 and 22 of the Portfolio Program Statements. I am particularly interested in Korean and Japanese visitors. I am aware that the QTTC is expanding its presence in Asia by opening an office in South Korea. I would appreciate it if the Minister could give some further explanation as to its activities. When I visited Seoul, I became aware of just how quickly that tourism market is expanding. I would like some details of what the QTTC aims to achieve through the opening of the office in Korea.

Mr GIBBS: Currently, our South Korean office is serviced from our office in Taiwan. I begin on that note because people who have followed the progressive and incredible success of the office that we opened in Taiwan would be aware that we had a similar situation there when we came to office in 1989. That area was being inadequately serviced, and we targeted it as a major point for tourism

growth in Queensland. We are doing the same now with South Korea. The Tourism Forecasting Council and the Australian Tourism Commission forecast a progressive sixfold visitation increase to Australia of something like 400,000 people from Korea by the year 2000. The number of Koreans visiting Australia has increased sixfold in the past five years. It nearly doubled in 1993 to 62,000. I recall that when we came to Government in 1989 Queensland was receiving something like 8,000 visitors from Korea per year. My recollection is that in this financial year we will be up to something like 50,000 people, so there has been a huge market growth there, even though it has been from a fairly small base.

The idea of opening the office is to make sure that we can make our presence in that market felt even more. The new airlines flying into Queensland and the new Brisbane International Airport will obviously attract additional flights from Korea. We already have Qantas providing direct services from Korea. We now have Korean Air coming in directly. None of these things was happening five or six years ago. We believed that, given the growth patterns which are predicted by the Tourism Forecasting Council and the ATC, it was time that we were aggressive in that marketplace and had our own office there and people servicing that market. In dealing with that market, it is very important to have people on the ground who can be there every day of the week talking to airline companies, talking to wholesalers and talking to the people who count to ensure that, as that massive explosion out of Korea takes place, we will get our fair share.

Dr CLARK: Indeed, yes. I know that Cairns is looking forward to those direct flights coming in from Korea, and that market is looking very optimistic. In contrast, some concerns have been expressed about the number of Japanese visitors, particularly in light of the instability of the Japanese economy and the destruction caused by the Kobe earthquake. I would appreciate it if the Minister could inform the Committee whether there has been a significant decline in the Japanese market and, if so, what action the QTTC is taking to ensure that Queensland continues to benefit from Japanese visitation.

Mr GIBBS: There has been some pessimism about the Japanese market as a result of the Japanese economy, as you rightly identified. There has been some pessimism of a major downturn as a result of the very tragic earthquakes which occurred in Japan earlier this year. In relation to Queensland—there has been no decline in the Japanese tourism market. However, it is also fair to say that the growth pattern out of Japan certainly is not as high as that which we would have seen in the 1980s. In spite of that, Japan is still Queensland's largest source of visitors. It is the preferred State of stay for Japanese visitors, with just under 50 per cent of those who come from Japan each year choosing to come to Queensland for a holiday.

The Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation has identified a number of issues which we believe are significant in terms of the Japanese

market, least of all not being the airfare structure, but that is something which is out of the control of either the Government or the QTTC itself. One of the great advantages that we will always maintain over other countries in competing for the Japanese market is that the time factor is basically the same; I believe that there is only one hour's difference. Queensland is still considered to be a relatively short-haul destination for visitors from Japan.

As a result of those early patterns, we are embarking on a fairly major expansion of other markets in the South East Asian region, hence our desire to up the ante in Korea and to continue the very good work that we have already achieved in Taiwan. We are upping the ante in markets such as Indonesia and, as you would be aware, we have already been putting a lot of work into Hong Kong. We have seen significant growth out of that market. The market that we are all looking forward to after 1997—albeit we expect it to come on tap on a fairly slow basis—but obviously there will be great potential out of markets such as China in years to come, and one which will probably be even slower will be Vietnam. But we are already working in those marketplaces to ensure that, if there should be any drop-off from Japan, we pick it up from other areas.

The CHAIRMAN: There are approximately five minutes remaining in this block, and I invite Mr Robertson to ask some questions.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer to page 24 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which shows that an extra \$3.6m was allocated to the Indy Car Grand Prix, bringing our Government's total support for this year's event to \$8.6m. I refer also to criticisms of the event relating to its cost and questions raised about its benefits to the tourism industry. Given those points, will you outline to the Committee why the Government committed \$8.6m to the Indy Car Grand Prix? Will you also provide details of the benefits of this year's event—including the contribution to the Queensland economy, corporate sponsorship and total visitor nights—in comparison with last year's event?

Mr GIBBS: The 1995 event generated higher levels of revenue and increased facilities for spectators while the level of Government contribution was in fact reduced. Our current estimated investment in the event this year is \$8.7m. The event generated an economic impact in the State of \$32m. It has created the equivalent of 357 permanent jobs and generated \$15m worth of television promotional benefits. We believe that the event is a hallmark on our Queensland tourism calendar, and that is why we have persisted with it. It provided a \$25m stimulus to the Gold Coast region, primarily directed to the tourism, hospitality and service sectors. Given that point, I am at an absolute loss to understand why the Leader of the Opposition and the member for Southport constantly bag this event.

Let me make the point that, should this event ever be lost to Queensland, I can assure you that there are two States waiting in the wings that would grab it tomorrow and pick it up. One of those States is Victoria. I have no doubt that, given the loss of the F1 event in Adelaide by the current Government

of that State—which did the very things that Mr Veivers and Mr Borbidge did when in Opposition—that Government now realises its own folly. Further to the points that I have made already, I point out that the domestic television ratings—and these are significant—in 1995 showed an increase on the 1994 viewing audience. The event was a dominant ratings program in all capital cities in Australia on Sunday, 19 March, achieving higher ratings than those achieved in 1994. As well, 129 countries accepted this year's race telecast, with a potential television audience of up to 800 million people. In 1994, 120 countries received a telecast of the race.

Visitor nights at the Gold Coast had a total attendance of 150,500 in 1995 compared to 110,000 in 1994. Again, I think that reflects badly on some of the statements attributed to the two people I referred to earlier. The event also showed a modest gain in net sponsorship, and this was without a major name sponsor. In 1994, 160 companies were associated with the event as sponsors and they provided \$5.2m in cash or kind. In 1995, this number declined to 135 companies but they produced a higher level of sponsorship, that is, \$5.5m of cash or kind. The final figures for that will be due in late June.

Mr ROBERTSON: Following on from questions asked by Dr Clark about our overseas interests, can I refer you to page 14 of the Portfolio Program Statements which states—

"An aviation analyst has been employed by the Tourism Policy Bureau to be responsible for ensuring a level of air services are maintained in Queensland that will meet tourism demand."

The analyst apparently will also be responsible for strengthening the links between the Government and the aviation industry. Have air services to Queensland expanded in recent years and are discussions taking place to ensure that Queensland reaps the greatest possible benefit from tourism?

Mr GIBBS: Since 1989, there has been a massive explosion of airline services, particularly international services, in Queensland. We now have airlines such as: Eva Air, Britannia Airlines, Garuda, Korean Air, Royal Brunei, Malaysia Airlines, Air Nippon, Ansett, Kiwi Air Charters, Australia Asia Airlines, Malaysia Airlines to Cairns, Cathay Pacific to Cairns and Impulse Airlines, which is a domestic airline that Mr Veivers should probably travel on a little bit more often. That shows that the employment of Mr Ray Jeppesen to the position of aviation analyst within my department was a good thing. As a Government, we now play a greater hands-on role than perhaps happened in previous years. We are able to talk directly on a Government-to-Government basis. I think it is fair to say that the negotiation of airline services, particularly on an international basis, are now becoming more politically motivated events and certainly very sensitive, depending on political situations at given times.

I gave some figures in the House the other day which showed massive increases in seat numbers: Qantas, 54 per cent; Air New Zealand,

294 per cent; Cathay Pacific, 512 per cent; and British Airways, 67 per cent. These increases do not just happen; they come about because our Government is recognised as stable, our economy is good, and, quite frankly, we get out there and do the job.

The CHAIRMAN: I now refer to a 20-minute period of questioning from the Opposition members of the Committee. I invite Mr Veivers to recommence his questioning.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Thornton, you mentioned the Gold Coast Motor Events Co. directors' fees of \$69,002. Can you tell me how the \$34,442 directors' fees for the Southcoast Tyre Service—

The CHAIRMAN: Which page are you on?

Mr VEIVERS: I am now on page 97. Page 111 states that, for the 1994 year, Truffle company directors' fees are \$34,442; page 125 states that Igli Holdings directors' fees are \$34,442; that Raxmont's directors' fees are \$34,442 and Papandrea's are \$34,442. That is a total, as I said to you, of close to—even though I am a bit slow on my feet—\$178,210. Is that not double dipping, Mr Thornton?

Mr GIBBS: Can I just perhaps take a point of order? You are aware that the question should be directed to me, not to my departmental people, but I will certainly defer the question to Mr Thornton.

Mr THORNTON: The point I would make in response to that question is that—and I would ask you to turn to page 97—that deals with the notes to and forming part of the financial statement of Southcoast Tyre Service, which is one of five companies which control entities by the Gold Coast Motor Events Co. Pty Ltd forming part of an overall partnership. I draw your attention to paragraph 8, which says—

"In connection with the management of the company only, they drew no directors' fees."

Mr VEIVERS: But in connection with the management of the company and related parties, they drew \$34,442.

Mr THORNTON: That is correct. That shows—

Mr VEIVERS: It shows that they got a fair bit of remuneration on top of the \$69,002 you spoke about.

Mr THORNTON: It shows that, in relation to their directors' fees for the Gold Coast Motor Events Co., apportionment occurred within the minor companies of the partnership. Minister, if I could make a suggestion? Perhaps we need to get an accountant to provide a detailed explanation of what the account transaction is there. None of the directors actually derive fees from the minor companies; they are aggregated within a partnership and they are paid as the board of management of the Gold Coast Motor Events Co.

Mr VEIVERS: I will continue, Minister. I am sorry, Mr Thornton, but I am not satisfied with that answer. How many dollars will your department allocate from this year's budget and the 1995-96

estimates to substitute the deficiency to create a surplus net tangible asset? You are aware, Minister, that the directors are responsible for any deficiency to creditors caused by a company trading whilst insolvent?

Mr GIBBS: The company is simply not insolvent. It is not correct to say that the company is insolvent, but if you want a more detailed answer to that question, I will take it on notice and I will provide it for you.

Mr VEIVERS: Have you, the Government or any party, to your knowledge, underwritten, indemnified or guaranteed the directors against any future actions in respect to the deficiency or the insolvency of these companies?

Mr GIBBS: Yes, from a Government point of view we have provided an indemnity—

Mr VEIVERS: To what extent?

Mr GIBBS: —to the directors of the Gold Coast Motor Events Co., and I think it would be only fitting and fair that we should do that. These people give their time primarily, as I said, on a voluntary basis. Their directors' fees are certainly not outstanding. I hope that you will be able to at least come across the fact that the moneys I outlined to you before are a true reflection of what they are receiving and not the suggestion that you are making, that is, that exorbitant fees are being paid to them. Because of its financial structure and the way that accounts are paid and revenue is brought into the company, it is obviously not there as a company that is making squillions of dollars. In the past, directors have expressed a desire to Government to ensure that financial responsibility would not fall on them in a personal manner. I believe that that was a fair request and we have provided the indemnity required.

Mr VEIVERS: Could you provide details of any other companies, associations or other registered entity structures within your portfolio whose net liabilities exceed the assets of that entity?

Mr GIBBS: To which ones are you particularly referring?

Mr VEIVERS: Any other company, if there is any other company.

Mr GIBBS: I do not think that that is relevant to the Budget Estimates that are before the Committee today. If there is a particular section of the Portfolio Program Statements that you think is relevant to the question that you have asked, then you should identify it and I will give it consideration.

Mr VEIVERS: I asked about indemnification.

Mr GIBBS: You asked about the Gold Coast Motor Events Company, and I gave an answer.

Mr VEIVERS: Are there any other any other companies, associations or registered entities within your portfolio whose net liabilities exceed the assets?

Mr GIBBS: I do not consider that relevant to the Portfolio Program Statements.

Mr VEIVERS: Who within your department made the economic decision to negotiate with the Queensland Treasury Department to provide a loan on 10 June 1993 to the Queensland Treasury Corporation for the benefit of the Gold Coast Events Company Pty Ltd and its controlled entities at a loss of \$56.2m of taxpayers' funds, basically for a loan lasting one day as it was forgiven in full?

Mr GIBBS: These are matters which obviously are part of discussion between my departmental people and my advisers—

The CHAIRMAN: Perhaps, Mr Veivers, you could indicate where that amount appears in the statements of the companies?

Mr GIBBS: I gave an answer before, in fact, relevant to the loan forgiveness. That was made by the Queensland Treasury relevant to the transfer of the event to my portfolio responsibility in 1994. Any major issues relevant to the financial structures of the Gold Coast Motor Events Company are primarily a matter for the board, and ultimately those matters come to me for consideration and discussion.

Mr VEIVERS: At 30 June 1993, the loan owed by the Gold Coast Events Company Pty Ltd to the Queensland Treasury Corporation was repaid. It was financed by a loan from the Queensland Treasury Department. As I have just said, the next day, 1 July 1993, the Queensland Treasury Department wrote the loan off as a bad debt. A taxation benefit was obtained and financed by every Australian taxpayer. You can look at page 66 of the financial reports of Government owned companies. Are you satisfied with the integrity of the officers involved, and did you approve the method adopted forgiving this loan?

Mr GIBBS: I am certainly quite happy with the integrity of the people involved with the Gold Coast Motor Events Company. Nothing has been drawn to my attention at any time, either privately or in the Parliament, by people such as yourself who have obviously attempted to gain some cheap publicity by slugging and slurring the directors of this company.

Mr VEIVERS: Mr Chairman, I was not slugging.

Mr GIBBS: What else would you call it when you attack the honesty of people such as the directors of this board? You have not come up with anything substantial to suggest that they do not do their jobs in other than a professional and proper manner. I reiterate that if you think I am going to sit here, or in any other forum, during this ongoing attack on people's credibility without whacking you back, then you might as well forget about it.

Mr VEIVERS: It appears to me you have picked up a tax benefit along the way, Minister. It is very similar to the bottom of the harbour methods. Do you think it is fair for non-Queenslanders to share the tax burden, or do you think we have been hoodwinked a little by the Treasury people?

Mr GIBBS: I would again ask you to refer to the Portfolio Program Statements and the particular reference just made to "bottom of the harbour". If you can show me where that reference is in the

Portfolio Statements, I am happy to answer the question for you.

Mr VEIVERS: It is a nice tax benefit and it is similar to what was done in the past.

Mr GIBBS: Which area of the Portfolio Program Statements are you specifically referring to?

Mr VEIVERS: I did tell you, Minister: page 66 of the finance reports. It does not say anything about bottom of the harbour schemes, but it gets close to it.

Mr GIBBS: So "bottom of the harbour" was your own interpretation of it?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes.

Mr GIBBS: I will not answer your interpretation; it is not worth it.

Mr VEIVERS: I refer to page 17 of your Portfolio Program Statements where you claim an economic study of the Indy Car Grand Prix was undertaken by Ernst and Young. Who paid Ernst and Young's consultancy fees to undertake this report and how much did it cost?

Mr GIBBS: The Ernst and Young's 1995 economic impact statement cost the Indy Car Australia organisation approximately \$40,000.

Mr VEIVERS: So basically, the taxpayer paid for the cost of Ernst and Young to prepare this report, and you have refused to release the details of this report, claiming confidentiality of sponsorship arrangements?

Mr GIBBS: I have not refused to release it publicly; that is a document which is the property of the Gold Coast Motor Events Company which has relayed to me—and I certainly concur with this advice—that there are matters of—

Mr VEIVERS: Grave importance or something?

Mr GIBBS: No, matters of some corporate confidentiality contained within that document related to sponsorships and other matters associated with the companies who support it. Mr Veivers, you have been a businessman in the past and you obviously know as well as I do that when companies make financial contributions to major events they want do not want it splashed all over the place. In some circumstances, I guess, even shareholders might question whether money has been used correctly; I do not know. I am simply saying that it is not a practice that is new. A lot of major organisations are commercially sensitive about what they put into events.

Mr VEIVERS: Seeing as this completed economic impact study of the event was paid for by all Queenslanders, we should be given the opportunity to evaluate the benefits to the State by looking at the entire report. Could I have a look at that report at some time, Minister?

Mr GIBBS: No.

Mr VEIVERS: At last year's Estimates hearing you stated that you were satisfied that the Government provided sufficient financial support for this year to permit the QTTC to operate at

maximum capacity. You also said that you had budgeted \$5m for this year's Indy event. The reference is at *Hansard*, pages 261-2, on 16 June 1994. In the 1994 Portfolio Program Statements, page 23, it is mentioned that QTTC advanced a further grant of \$3.6m for staging the 1995 Indy event. Did the actual cost of staging the 1995 Indy exceed the budget allocation received?

Mr GIBBS: No. As you would be aware, as a Government we have always said that we would like to get down to an absolute commitment of Government in the order of \$5m per year. In fact, that was something that we strove very hard to achieve. When the event was transferred to my department, the first thing that we did was to insist upon having a look at all the contracts involved in the event. Through my director-general I instructed that there be a due diligence report prepared so that we were aware of the exact position of the company. Out of that due diligence report certain management changes were made and certain structures within the company were changed. As a result of that, we now have a far more efficient operation. In saying that, I do not mean any reflection on the expertise of previous management or other people. I simply believe that a new approach was needed in some areas.

In 1993-94 the Government level of investment was approximately \$9.1m. In 1994-95, as I said, we anticipate that the level of Government funding will be approximately \$8.7m. That indicates a fairly reasonable decline on the previous year's investments in costs. In round figures, about \$1m has been spent this year on improvements to the circuit for safety reasons. Obviously you cannot let a circuit like that drop into a state of disrepair. Significant changes were made in the structural design, particularly in relation to problems with the chicane areas and the ocean side straight. If that had not occurred, then we would have brought the event in almost \$2m better performed than what occurred in the previous year. But I am going to make the point to you that there should never be doubt in anybody's mind. As far as I am concerned, if it means a difference of \$1m or \$1.5m to ensure the safety of drivers in an event which is paramount upon attracting drivers and the people who keep coming back to this event, I have no doubt that that is a worthy investment of the money.

Mr VEIVERS: I refer again to the financial statements of the Government owned companies within your Portfolio Statements. On page 26 of that document, section 12C, there is reference to commitments made by the Queensland Events Corporation of various events occurring—which the gentleman here has spoken a little about—for funding of operation and/or funding of potential deficits. Could you tell us what these commitments are and why these commitments have not been included in the annual reports, especially when specific reference has been made to that section of the report? How will these commitments affect the 1995-96 Estimates when these cost are brought to account?

Mr GIBBS: I will refer that to Mr Thornton.

Mr THORNTON: What happens in a number of events is that in the budgetary allocations for expenditure it may quite often be spread over two years. A very good case in point is the World Masters Games.

Mr VEIVERS: Where they did not pay any directors' fees.

Mr THORNTON: Expenditure with the World Masters Games was spread over at least two financial years. What you see in the statement of these accounts is an example of that where forward commitments are already accrued within the reports, and it gives an indication of just what the budgetary outlays are going to be over a two-year period. It shows what the actual commitments are within the actual financial year that is being reported and it shows what the overflow, as it were, or accrual is going to be in future years. I would suggest that that is not uncommon in the way that a lot of other companies operate, either.

Mr GIBBS: You seem to have some problem about the fact that people from World Masters Games did not get a directors' fee.

Mr VEIVERS: Give me a bit of time; I am asking the questions.

Mr GIBBS: I am concerned about this. I hate to see you worried about it.

Mr VEIVERS: You can talk to me about it after. In the Budget papers in 1995-96, \$143.5m is shown as an increase of 22 per cent over the 1994-95 Budget. The increase is said to be attributable to new initiatives of \$12.8m. Could you supply a list of these initiatives?

Mr GIBBS: In the new initiatives \$2.5m, which has been earmarked specifically for conventions marketing, has been brought about as a result of the expansion of the conventions industry in Queensland. You would be aware of it in your own area of the Gold Coast which has become a significant convention marketing area. With the opening of the new convention and exhibition centre here in Brisbane, the new one that has been built in Cairns and the one currently operating in Townsville, we believe that we have to get in now and be more aggressive about that because it is a specifically different area to your normal international market that comes as part of the tourist industry. That is what that has been earmarked for. The \$2.5m, in terms of the funding arrangement that we have been able to negotiate with most of the convention areas throughout the State, will probably eventually come to about \$3.5m. I think it is on a dollar-for-dollar basis. I might say that this is what in part led, as I understand it, to the Lord Mayor's statement the other day that in his budget next week he will be earmarking something like \$650,000 for convention marketing here in Brisbane, which we will complement.

As to our overseas international marketing—we have made a further allocation of a million dollars to promote Queensland right throughout our international offices. We again believe that that is important, given the fact that we are not that far away from the year 2000 and the Olympic Games. We now need to be upping the ante, as it were,

and working with the Australian Tourist Commission to ensure not only that we are going to see Sydney/Australia promoted where they are riding off that wave of success which we believe is going to come but also that we get our fair share of the market leading up to and following the games in the year 2000.

We have earmarked \$650,000 for the establishment of our international market in Korea and we have put forward \$365,000 for the Queensland Academy of Sport Olympic Enhancement Program. Are you talking about the increase overall or basically just for tourism?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes, just for tourism.

Mr GIBBS: The major initiatives for tourism have been the amounts of money that I have pointed out to you.

The CHAIRMAN: We now move to questions from the Government members. I invite the member for Sunnybank, Mr Robertson, to resume his questioning.

Mr ROBERTSON: Minister, can I refer you to pages 17 and 18 of the Portfolio Program Statements which detail the QTTC's efforts in marketing Queensland to interstate visitors. In recognising the enormous potential that tourism has in terms of economic activity in unemployment for Queensland, I ask—with apologies to my colleagues from Currumbin and Barron River—what is the QTTC doing to ensure that benefits of tourism are enjoyed throughout the State and not just in the major tourism areas of the Gold Coast and Cairns?

Mr GIBBS: If you look at the composition of the board of the Queensland Tourist and Travel Corporation, you will see that when we came into Government in 1989 the then board—I think representing the mentality of the Government of the day—basically consisted of people from Cairns and the Gold Coast. If you happened to be geographically located between those two areas, it was a case of bad luck, you missed out. We have now ensured that the board that we have, the QTTC, is one that is broadly representative of the whole of Queensland, and the QTTC is represented on each of the 14 regional tourism associations or the boards by a senior staff member. That is to ensure not only that there is a good input from QTTC in terms of the expertise that they have but also that that representative is able to bring back the concerns and in many cases the excellent ideas for marketing promotion that come out of those particular areas.

The QTTC has implemented a program of making sure that we have introduced what is known as cooperative advertising campaigns throughout the State in most of the regional areas, and that again is ensuring that the budgetary allocation for QTTC, I guess you could say, is broadly moved throughout the State. We assist regional tourism associations with cooperative advertising. That may involve television campaigns which are complementary to our major central campaign Live it Up. It can involve campaigns where RTAs, through an involvement with the QTTC, are able to negotiate—and indeed do negotiate on many

occasions—a far better rate of advertisement, whether it be electronic or through the printed media.

That has been mirrored in a number of the very successful campaigns we have had both in New South Wales and Victoria where the QTTC has organised for regional tourism associations to have inserts put into the major newspapers. One that I recall recently was the Northern Rivers area of New South Wales. It was used to promote the Gold Coast and environs. There were other occasions when we assisted areas such as the Whitsundays because they are a distinctly different product from Cairns. Even though in the past they have tended to be rolled into the Cairns product, they will argue with you—and I believe correctly so—that their product is totally different from that in Cairns. All in all, I think the QTTC's coverage of the State has been on a very professional basis, notwithstanding the fact also that the QTTC on a very regular basis brings in, on familiarisation tours, journalists from other countries and takes them right throughout the State. So that product exposure is fairly done.

Mr ROBERTSON: My final question is an addition to a question asked by Mr Veivers about the opening of the convention centre and what the QTTC is doing about attracting more conventions to Queensland. One point that I do not think was covered in your answer to Mr Veivers was the actual size of the convention market and the strategies that would be put place, as a result of that budget allocation, to increase our share of the convention market. Can you provide details of some of those measures and about the size of the market that we are attacking?

Mr GIBBS: It is estimated that the conventions market is worth \$360m annually to Queensland. That sounds a significant amount of money, but in terms of the overall convention market that is available worldwide and which is coming to Australia, it is probably fair to say that, at the moment, we can do a lot better. We are going to do a lot better. That is why we have made that special allocation within the budget this year of \$2.5m and why the QTTC has played such a prominent role. Mr Draffin, who is here today, has been at the forefront as has my director-general, Mr David Williams. They have been travelling throughout the State negotiating with those five major centres to ensure that whatever we are able to give them in the budget will be complemented and backed up by each of those four regional areas.

We believe that we need to develop a strategy to target the conventions market to the potential major international convenors and the QTTC is now in the process of ensuring that that happens. Our offices overseas, particularly in North America, are staffed by what I consider to be very skilful people who are, you could say, virtually in the heartland of convention country. An amount of the \$1m for international marketing and amounts relevant to the \$2.5m will be targeted into that specific market to try to attract more of the lucrative convention business from that part of the world into Queensland.

Mrs ROSE: You have already outlined a number of the QTTC's marketing initiatives for promotion of the Queensland tourism product, but I refer to page 20 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which says that a key strategic marketing initiative for the QTTC in 1995-96 will be the continued development and promotion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism as well as other specialised product. Could you please tell the Committee how much the QTTC plans to spend on this initiative and the specific programs that will be developed?

Mr GIBBS: Yes, again the QTTC was at the forefront of a new initiative that was one of the recommendations of the Kennedy report, which identified clearly that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures in Queensland could play a significant part in our tourism product. We recognise that and I think that I would be correct in saying that we were the first tourism body in Australia to utilise professionalism and, with the QTTC, bring on board a representative of the Aboriginal and Islander communities, Mr Greg Miller, who is employed by QTTC. It spends approximately \$200,000 a year marketing specifically Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tourism. We now have 13 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander products which are listed on the Sunlover Holidays databases and more than 20 of those particular products are distributed domestically through Queensland Government travel centres and internationally through the QTTC's international offices. We have had a marvellous response to that promotion. The QTTC also supports the indigenous projects through its media and publicity divisions. During 1994, publicity was arranged for various projects throughout national media such as *The Great Outdoors* and *Getaway* television programs, *Elle* magazine, *Country Style* magazine, national and metropolitan newspapers, etc. We also make sure that, when international and national media associated with the tourism industry visit Queensland on familiarisation tours, as much as possible this product is exposed to that market.

Approximately two or three months ago, Mr Miller addressed an international conference aimed specifically at indigenous product throughout the world. The reports that we received from overseas were that his presentation and the material that he used as part of that presentation resulted in one of the most highly acclaimed performances and presentations at that international forum, so we have a person in whom we have great confidence. I know the QTTC is very committed to ensuring that that product range receives as much coverage as possible.

Mrs ROSE: I refer also to page 18 of the Portfolio Program Statements and page 11 of the annual report, which state that the Tourism Policy Bureau will provide strategic planning, assistance and advice to regional tourism associations. I am also aware that in Emerald you recently unveiled the draft Capricorn Tourism Strategy for public consultation and comment. Can you please outline to the Committee the special factors which make regional tourism strategies vital in Queensland and

can you also tell the Committee with which regions the Tourism Policy Bureau will work to formulate strategies? Can you also detail the benefits a region can expect from formulating such a strategy?

Mr GIBBS: Regional tourism strategies are of vital importance to our tourism industry in the future. It is fair to make the observation that, on a great number of occasions in the past, people would associate Queensland either with the rainforest of the far north and the wonderful beaches of the Gold Coast and other areas throughout Queensland and that probably tended to be the major slant on product. We have a lot more to offer than simply those two parts of the product. Regional tourism strategies have been prepared for the Cairns region, with strategies presently being finalised for the Whitsunday and Capricornia regions. I actually launched the strategy for the Capricornia region. Preliminary planning has been undertaken for the development of regional tourism strategy plans for the outback Queensland region and the combined Toowoomba, golden west and southern downs areas. We plan to segment our market in a far better way than perhaps we have done in the past to ensure that when we bring people here on familiarisation tours we are able to show them a specific market that is distinctively different from another area of Queensland. Through RTAs, we are trying to make sure that, rather than people coming to one area of the State and staying for there for seven or ten days—whatever their holiday time maybe—people are encouraged to take advantage of that great range of products that Queensland has to offer. In other words, they may spend a couple of days on the Gold Coast, a few days in Brisbane and then go to areas as distinctively different as Fraser Island, Cairns and out west. The regional tourism strategies are designed to help our tourist industry in some of those areas understand not only their product market better but also how to promote and market it better and, working through the QTTC, make sure that they are getting their fair share of the visitation market, whether it happens to be the international or domestic market.

The CHAIRMAN: My question relates generally to the Olympic Task Force, because I have a particular interest in Queensland's preparation for and the benefits that we derive from the lead-up to the 2000 Olympics. I note from page 24 of the Portfolio Program Statements that the budgeted and estimated actual expenditure on the Olympic Task Force this year is \$287,000, which will increase significantly to \$407,000 next year. Could you indicate what specific activities will be undertaken to account for that extra expenditure and what we can expect to get out of that?

Mr GIBBS: The allowance in the budget for a graduated increase is simply on the basis that, as we draw closer to the year 2000, there is going to be a need for a greater involvement by the task force to ensure our fair share of whatever part of the Olympics it may be. I made some remarks in relation to the great excitement in the tourism industry. We have established six committees within that board. One of those is aimed specifically at tourism and that is headed up by the Chairman of

the QTTC, Mr Frank Burnett. Frank's job is to coordinate throughout the State and he has done that by ensuring that the subcommittee that he chairs is representative of the industry throughout Queensland. For example, we just brought Mr Ray Stevens, Mayor of the Gold Coast, onto the committee to ensure that the Gold Coast has an input. We have good representation from throughout the rest of the State.

In addition, our business committee is headed by the Chairman of South Bank, Mr Ron Paul. His job is to liaise with SOCOG Chairman, Mr Gary Pemberton, to utilise as far as possible business opportunities that may present themselves for Queensland. That can go across a broad range of areas, including construction of areas of the Olympic village, the athletics tracks—I know that the swimming pool is already down—or other facilities that will be required for the Games, the competitors and the Games village. There will obviously be opportunities for Queensland business as well.

Arts and culture is another area that we are targeting specifically. We will want to make sure that, in the lead-up to the Games, we try to have a significant event in Queensland that will run off the Olympic Games to bring people up here. We also have a number of other committees which hold the responsibility for ensuring that we have special events. That will obviously tie in very closely with arts and culture.

We also have the sport subcommittee. Its job will be to ensure that we are in there making sure that we are lobbying as hard as we can for Queensland to bring squads of international athletes into Queensland for pre-Games training; indeed, not only for pre-Games training but for familiarisation tours of Queensland to distinguish where are the best facilities that they can utilise in the lead-up to the Games. I already mentioned the tourism area.

All those committees have a vitally important role to play. It has been spelled out that the budget allocation will be increased. I believe that the budget allocation thus far is certainly sufficient to achieve what we are aiming at. I might add that we were the State off the blocks on that initiative, ably and very competently supported by a number of regional committees that have formed throughout the State which work through that main committee—so we are not having a scatter-gun approach to this issue. I am very happy that we have the expertise of Mr Rodney Metcalfe who, I think, will bring a great deal of professionalism to those committees to assist in this planning.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the morning session. We now adjourn for lunch and resume this hearing at 2 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 1.03 till 2 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I officially resume this hearing of Estimates Committee D. We are in the process of examining the Estimates of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing in the division of tourism. We now return to the Opposition spokesperson, Mr Veivers, to resume his questioning.

Mr VEIVERS: Minister, prior to lunch I asked some questions about the directors' fees or the remuneration to directors. Mr Thornton said that it was \$69,002 and I disagreed. I was wondering if I could give you a list of partnerships of the Gold Coast Events Company board members' remuneration fees—Southcoast Tyre Service, Truffle, Igli, Raxmont and Papandrea—with the total directors' remuneration of around \$442,066. I am wondering if Mr Thornton could give me an answer after going, as he suggested, to an accountant?

Mr GIBBS: Do you want to us take that on notice from you and reply in detail?

Mr VEIVERS: On that, yes. Thank you.

Mr GIBBS: That is fine.

Mr VEIVERS: Regarding the fact that QRIS-added stakes in the two-year-old races will no longer be available, why is there no provision in this year's budget to assist racing clubs that are experiencing problems as a result of the change that occurred in the middle of the racing year? I know you answered a question in Parliament about boat races in Mount Isa or wherever it was, but there are clubs out there that, because of that money no longer being available, are experiencing troubles.

Mr GIBBS: Are you assuming that QRIS money is not available?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes.

Mr GIBBS: No, QRIS money is available. I wrote to all race clubs—

Mr VEIVERS: When was this?

Mr GIBBS: The other day—advising that QRIS-added stakes are still available and that they are committed. When we relaxed the number of starters in a couple of those QRIS races over a couple of weeks, unfortunately we went from a very healthy budget situation, well within the parameters of what we forecast, to a sudden budget blow-out as a result of a whole swag of QRIS money being won. As a result of that, officers of my department advised me that we were approaching the end of the \$1m budget—remember that we allocate \$1.5m for QRIS, and that was broken up into \$1m for two-year-olds and half a million dollars for three-year-olds. That is for this financial year.

As I said, the budget looked like becoming overrun. However, as you would be aware, I made those requirements to fix the number of required starters in a QRIS race. By doing that, we ensured that we basically pulled the budget back into line. If there has to be a slight drawing on the half a million, which was allocated for three-year-old races, and which will commence as of 1 August, we will ride with that to ensure that the commitment is there. I would also be very confident that in the next financial year, that is, the QRIS financial year, that money will be made up as a result of ensuring that we keep the limitation on the number of QRIS horses that are required in the race. In short, QRIS money has not been wound up at all; I can assure you of it.

Mr VEIVERS: Since there are no eligible three-year-olds this season, the only conclusion that

could be drawn is that the whole amount of \$1.5m for the first year would go towards only those two-year-old races?

Mr GIBBS: No, that was made adequately clear to the industry when my departmental offices sat down and negotiated through this with Q Millions, representatives of the race clubs and representatives of the Queensland Bloodstock Breeders Association. They understood clearly that that would be the situation. With QRIS, we cannot simply have bonuses applying for two-year-old horses. The whole idea was to try to get people investing in the industry, buying a yearling, racing it as a two-year-old, and then ensuring that we still had prize money available for three-year-olds as well. By making it for two-year-olds and three-year-olds, it operates as an incentive for people to keep coming back to our sales and buying a horse on a regular basis. You mentioned clubs that you believe were going to experience some difficulties. Are you talking about financial difficulties, or difficulties in finding fields?

Mr VEIVERS: A little of both, actually. We had this situation where the fellow had travelled from—

Mr GIBBS: I accept that. That must be clearly understood. As you heard me make the point recently in Parliament, I do not make that decision. That is a decision for the Queensland Principal Club to make, and I certainly concur with some of the criticisms that were made about the quick notice that was given by the QPC. I have no disagreement with that whatsoever. I think that the QPC should have said, "We will do this but it will apply in two weeks' time." As I understand it, it was on the Thursday that the decision was made and it went out, and they said, "It will apply from here on in." There were a couple of unfortunate cases where trainers from remote areas of the State were on the road with a horse in the float, and they arrived at the destination on the Saturday to find that the meeting had been cancelled because of the QPC requirements. I cannot change that. That is a decision by the QPC. I simply say that it probably should have given another week's notice additional to what was given about what it was doing.

Mr VEIVERS: Can you confirm that your estimates for funding additional stakes moneys will allow the clubs' proposed two-year-old and three-year-old events to be fully funded as promised throughout 1995-96? You have nearly answered it. Can you confirm that?

Mr GIBBS: Without qualification; absolutely. I again make the point that this is a scheme that has not only been roundly applauded by the industry in Queensland but also the main initiative for doing this was to ensure that a breeding industry, which was fast becoming the brunt of bad jokes in this country, picked up its act. The only way to do that was to ensure that we had a healthy injection of prize money into the industry, but aimed specifically at Queensland-bred horses. I should perhaps just outline to you briefly the benefits that are now accruing. You have got people like John Hasler, for example, who bought what was called previously

the Myola stud, now renamed Glen Logan, and standing St Jude which, under normal circumstances would have probably gone interstate, but the horse had won \$2.5m in stakes money and he is now standing in Queensland. He has recently acquired Alannon, another top-performing stallion, which is now coming up here for breeding purposes and St Covet is now standing down there. He is currently negotiating to purchase Stylish Century and bring it back from New Zealand.

The other day, there was an announcement by a top breeder on the downs, Colin McAlpine, that he was not only keeping Semipalatinsk, which he was prepared to let go to Victoria, but also purchasing the top two-year old sire in the UK. I understand that that purchase has been assured by a premium fee of about \$800,000. That horse will come to stand at that stud as well. Rob McAnulty is recognised as one of the foremost bloodstock experts in the world. He has now moved his whole breeding and racing operation over from New Zealand, including a stock of 25 top-quality brood mares that will now stand in Queensland.

Next week, I am having discussions with one of the Freedman brothers about establishing stables in Queensland. John Hawkes, who trains for the Ingham brothers, who spend about \$7m per year on yearlings, is also establishing stables in Queensland. All of this has happened because of the QRIS scheme. I know for a fact that other top people in the industry are interested. Colin Hayes, with whom I have had discussions recently, will make a couple of major announcements in the not-too-distant future in relation to other bloodstock which I know are being considered for bringing to Queensland for breeding purposes.

Mr VEIVERS: You are bringing those people to Queensland, and I support that. What arrangements have been made for drought-affected breeders in Queensland? This is not a bloodstock industry.

Mr GIBBS: As to the drought-affected breeders—I put a case to Cabinet early in 1992 because I believed that people in the thoroughbred industry are no different from other primary producers. They are required to handfeed stock.

Mr VEIVERS: I agree with that.

Mr GIBBS: There was a dramatic problem within the industry. Cabinet agreed with my submission. The breeders have been given the same concessions. I might add that this is the first time in Queensland that they have been recognised as primary producers by any Government, and this is still the only State in Australia in which they are given that recognition. They receive the same concessions on the cartage of fodder and water as do other primary producers, but only for stock which is brought from interstate and is standing there on agistment—that is, mares which are either waiting to be serviced by a stallion or mares which have been serviced and are in foal and which are on the property at the time.

Mr VEIVERS: But not for their own brood mares?

Mr GIBBS: Their own stocks have not been recognised. Apart from the major influx as a result of QRIS and the significant number of breeders investing in stock, most of the stud properties were either in a state of absolute dereliction or most—certainly the ones that I have inspected over the past couple of years—had absolutely let the bloodstock run down. The only stock which they were bringing in were horses on agistment for servicing or standing from interstate. They are starting to build up their stock, and I have already heralded to the industry that I intend to make a representation to have that position changed.

Mr VEIVERS: Changed or ratified? It seems a bit peculiar to me that you are looking after horses coming in from outside of the State. You have been out to that area of Queensland. A lot of breeders are trying to hang on. Maybe their own stock should be put into that bracket.

Mr GIBBS: I know that you do trust me deeply and that your faith in what you have said will be well recognised and rewarded in the future.

Mr VEIVERS: Now I am worried. I note in the 1993-94 annual report of your department that the Racing Services Unit engaged a debt collection agency to recover the maximum amount possible of more than \$900,000 in unpaid SP bookmaking fines. How much does that agency charge, and how much of the outstanding fines was it able to recover?

Mr GIBBS: There were 47 judgments of outstanding debts totalling \$953,213. Of those, only five, whose debts amounted to \$45,049.6, were in repayment programs. Since the engagement of Collection House, the outstanding debt has been reduced from \$953,213 to \$190,643.6, as at 30 April 1995. As I recall, about 12 debts are still outstanding, and six are currently under investigation by Collection House. The problem with these outstanding debts, as you would realise, was brought about because inaction by the previous Government meant that no requirement was placed on people to pay outstanding fines.

Initiatives taken by this Government have now made SP bookmaking a serious offence. There is a significant fine and also a hefty gaol sentence for non-payment of fines after the second and third offences. Through other initiatives, such as the introduction of telephone bookmaking services and the expansion and extension of telephone services into country Queensland for the utilisation of the TAB, there has been a massive reduction in what we would have termed the SP market. I think that is mirrored in not only a hefty increase in telephone betting within the TAB but also by quite productive increases for on-course bookmakers. Collection House works on a 10 per cent collection fee.

Mr VEIVERS: I refer to various reports regarding the computer virus that affected TAB operations during this financial year and, in turn, to decreasing revenues and subsequent returns to the Government. Will that computer virus reduce the real turnover for 1994-95, and to what degree will this year's figures be negative based on your Estimates of last year?

Mr GIBBS: I cannot give you an exact figure for what any negative figures may be. I have not heard of the computer virus within the TAB. That has never been reported to me by officers of the TAB or board members. If there has been a computer virus, I am certainly not aware of it. There were breakdowns as a result of power problems on a couple of particularly hot days over summer. Consumers were draining heavily on the electricity system, and the computer at the TAB failed twice. My only comment in relation to any drop-off in TAB profits this year is that it would obviously have come about as a result of a couple of bad betting meetings due to inclement weather. As you know, punters are very reticent to bet heavily when tracks are heavy. We have had a couple of such days.

We also lost a couple of meetings, and there was a negative impact on the TAB's financial situation as a result of the horse virus earlier this year. Maybe the horse virus got into the TAB computer. In addition, at this stage it is not known what impact the casino will have on the TAB, but I can assure you that the TAB is aggressively marketing itself and doing its utmost to ensure that the casino's impact is minimal.

Mr VEIVERS: I refer to the 1993-94 annual report of the TAB and to the TAB's five-year review of operations, in particular page 22, relating to the distributions to the racing industry, which shows outlays of \$44.909m. On the other hand, page 40 in the same report indicates a grand total of distributions of \$47.541m. Which figure is the correct amount distributed to clubs?

Mr GIBBS: To my knowledge, the correct figure is \$47m. I will have that double-checked for you, but my last awareness was that \$47m was in fact distributed to race clubs. I have a bit of an update here. Based on the TAB profits, distribution payments of \$42,942,000 were made to strategic clubs in 1993-94. Current TAB projections are that distribution payments to strategic clubs will totally approximately \$49.5m. That is an increase of \$6.5m, or 15 per cent, over the 1993-94 distribution.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the 20-minute session for questions from Opposition members. We now turn to Government members, and I invite the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose, to ask questions on the Racing Division.

Mrs ROSE: Following on from the answer which you just gave on the distribution of TAB profits—I refer you to page 37 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which mentions the introduction of a new formula to distribute TAB profits. Can you explain to the Committee what was wrong with the old TAB profit distribution formula and why the new formula will benefit Queensland race clubs?

Mr GIBBS: The problem with the former TAB distribution formula was that it was not making any recognition of clubs which were making the greatest contribution to the racing industry. A disproportionate amount of money was being put into a number of clubs throughout the State which, it could be said, were not really capitalising on some

of the new ideas which were incorporated into racing under this Government. It was economically non-sustainable for the TAB to have kept up the old system, because it had a built-in guarantee, if I recall correctly, of a 10 per cent increase each year, and it is simply not feasible or viable to think that the TAB profitability can increase 10 per cent every year on an ongoing basis. It induced clubs to borrow from banks to fund prize money and then receive 80 per cent or less of the prize money from the TAB, plus incurring substantial bank charges. Depending on the level of interest rates at a given time, it was forcing many smaller clubs—particularly in rural Queensland—to the wall. As well, it was not performance based.

Under the new formula, we make sure that we maximise prize money for races, particularly those which are covered by the TAB and Sky Channel, and we have built in a special incentive payment or performance factor for those particular clubs. We have now allowed clubs to go to a forward planning basis on budgets, which they were unable to do before, particularly those clubs that we refer to as developmental clubs—which primarily are the rural clubs of Queensland—where they know virtually 12 months in advance what they will receive for the next 12 months, so that they can prepare budgets accordingly. They are now no longer in the situation of having to borrow from banks, so there have been substantial savings there.

We also allow those clubs to make a decision off their own bat whereby, depending on what each club receives, they can make an arrangement themselves as to what they believe should be put into prize money and what should be put into racecourse improvements or track improvements relative to safety factors, etc. It has certainly helped to improve club management substantially and, interestingly enough, in the next financial year we will distribute almost \$1.5m more to those clubs than they received this year. In toto, we will be putting out more than \$6m to all of those clubs throughout Queensland.

Mrs ROSE: I refer to page 38 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which cites monitoring the quality and integrity of the Racing Science Centre's services as a priority for the next financial year. I also note from page 39 of the Program Statements that the centre plans to conduct 10,500 tests in the forthcoming year. I am aware of the important work that the centre does to deter and detect the use of illicit drugs in racing. Can you please explain to the Committee the role of the Racing Science Centre, and can you assure the Committee that the Racing Science Centre has the confidence of the industry in the important task of drug detection and deterrence?

Mr GIBBS: The Racing Science Centre of Queensland is now recognised as being among the best in the world in terms of quality and professionalism. It is significant that some overseas countries actually send samples to Queensland for testing from time to time, and I include in that the International Drug Centre, which is located in Georgia in the United States. As far as I am concerned, the Racing Science Centre is the nerve

centre of racing integrity in Queensland. If we do not have integrity in racing and confidence by the public that racing is being run on a fair basis, giving every punter an equal opportunity, that will obviously impact on prize money as a result of punter lack of confidence through the TAB, crowd attendances, betting oncourse, betting offcourse, etc.

One of the unfair criticisms made from time to time—and it is made by a small group of people who still cannot come to grips with the fact that they no longer will control racing in Queensland for their own purposes—is an alleged massive budget blow-out at the Racing Science Centre, which simply is not true. When we came to office in 1989, the Racing Science Centre had only just been introduced; it had been in operation for only a couple of months, so obviously we were not able to get a true perspective over a 12-month period of the expenditure required.

It is true that, this year, the centre will conduct over 10,000 tests, and I make no apology for that. We have to make sure that we are diligent in the testing of animals, and that applies across the three codes—whether it be thoroughbred racing, dog racing or standardbreds. Winners are tested, and favourites which do not perform to promise are tested to ensure that there has been no interference with them. Currently, there is a staff of 17 at the centre. That includes six professional staff who are highly qualified chemists and veterinarians, eight technical staff who are qualified chemistry technicians and three administrative staff only. So the administration side of it is kept to an absolute minimum. We work in closely with all four of the Australian racing laboratories. We participate in mutual quality assurance programs. We work closely with the VRC, the AJC and all drug centres throughout Australia.

The final point that I would make is that it is the role of the Racing Science Centre not only to test animals but also to undertake forward work on new drugs that can possibly be brought in to hit animals. The reality is that there are people out there in industries who work that way and constantly want to experiment. Our job is to keep ahead of them.

Mrs ROSE: I refer to page 37 of the Portfolio Program Statements, which states that a major achievement in the last year was the introduction of telephone bookmaking, including the purchase and installation of operational infrastructure. I am aware that there are some concerns associated with the introduction of telephone bookmaking, in that the system would not be used and could become a white elephant. Can you please provide the Committee with details of the cost to implement telephone bookmaking, the performance of the system since it was implemented and the level of satisfaction with the system within the racing community?

Mr GIBBS: Certainly. I might at the outset compliment the gentleman on my right, Dr Bob Mason, who heads up the Racing Division within my department. Dr Mason—very ably assisted by Kevin Hasemann, who is also here today, and other

people from that division—played a major role in steering the industry through some of the problems associated with the introduction of telephone bookmaking. We were the second State in Australia to introduce it after South Australia, which discovered early bugs in its system. A couple of breakdowns as a result of some frequency problems in the first couple of weekends of the system's introduction here are the only major problems that I can recall us having. A grant of \$250,000 was made from the Racing Development Fund to purchase the equipment, and it commenced operation on 2 July 1994. Contrary to some of the pundits who said that it would be a failure and that it would be white elephant, as I said before it has had an incredible impact on SP bookmaking.

I might take you through a little of the performance of the system. To date, the telephone bookmaking system has generated in excess of \$24m in betting turnover. The impact on the TAB turnover on the bet level above \$250 has been monitored. A \$250 level was imposed so that it would not impact on the smaller punter who was punting through the TAB. The TAB has indicated that, prior to the introduction of telephone bookmaking, bets above \$250 accounted for 10.7 per cent of sales. Since the inception of telephone bookmaking, that percentage has dropped slightly to 7.3, which indicates that there has been a slight drop in TAB bets, but what has been dropped off in the TAB bets has been picked up by the on-course telephone betting system with bookmakers. I believe that that system has played a major role.

Those figures show that we have had 60 bookmakers connected to telephone bookmaking and that there has been \$24m in betting turnover, which represents \$24m that no longer goes into SP bookmaking or illegal betting systems. Of course, that means that taxation earned from that betting is going to Government revenue. It also means that race clubs have benefited more and that bookmakers have benefited in terms of the percentage of bookmakers' tax that they pay to the clubs. Presently, we are looking at a couple of other exciting measures in relation to bookmakers, but it has certainly been a highly successful system.

Dr CLARK: I notice that the Racing Program outlays on page 40 of the PPS show a substantial variation of almost \$4m in the amount budgeted for in 1994-95 and the amount actually spent. This variation appears to be due primarily to an increase in the level of claims on approved grants made from the Racing Development Fund. Can you explain why this occurred?

Mr GIBBS: The overspending in the Racing Development Fund outlays really is equivalent to an increase in grants expenditure, that is, the moneys that we approved for expenditure from the RDF, remembering that the RDF is a fund which we have certainly been very prudent about. When we came to office, there was a \$72m debt outstanding on RDF funds. As a result of the improvement, I think that we have now reduced that debt to about \$36m, while ensuring that the prudence was not a reflection of meanness or a commitment to the industry itself.

This year, we had to fund a number of unforeseen projects. There was \$568,000 for the upgrade of the Cluden Racecourse and the old grandstand, and it was necessary for that to take place at the same time. There was also the purchase of machinery for the Townsville Turf Club at a cost of \$150,000. The Albion Park Racing Complex rectification work to maintain public safety came to \$500,000. There were a number of problems there due to the fact that the stand was sinking. I have gone into the reasons the stand was sinking, and I will not reiterate those.

There was also provision of \$215,000 for maintenance of tracks that were suffering because of the drought. Because of the poor rainfall in a number of those areas, the tracks were in a pretty appalling state. A racing centre such as the one in Toowoomba is of vital importance to the racing industry. It was absolutely vital that we made sure that the track condition was such that horses could still race there. In Toowoomba, the industry employs something like 500 people, so we had a commitment to ensure that that club received money. Unexpected emergencies, such as the horse virus, cost us \$117,000. We funded improvements to the course property at Eagle Farm at a cost of \$348,000.

Incidentally, there was another \$1m approval from the Racing Development Fund which was still outstanding to the Queensland Turf Club. I simply make the observation that in spite of criticism from the Queensland Turf Club of some bias against it by this Government, there was \$1m waiting to be claimed by the Queensland Turf Club. The reality is that the department simply cannot hand money out unless clubs make an application. Somebody finally put them wise and, after almost five years of waiting, that club has put in a few applications which have been honoured. An amount of \$320,000 was funded for the installation of the approved telephone bookmaking system.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer you to page 37 of the PPS, which cites the implementation of the Racing Industry Management and Information System as a major program issue. Can you explain to the Committee why the racing industry needs a management and information system, how the industry can expect to benefit from its investment in such a system and how the system will help determine the economic contribution of the racing industry?

Mr GIBBS: Again, I alluded to the reason there needed to be a change made to the TAB distribution formula. The economics of the industry is such that, again, when we came in, we found that there was really no centralised database or accountancy system for any of the three codes of the racing industry. Considering that there are 176 race clubs throughout the State, it was hard to believe that there was no centralised link. Accountancy systems in every one of them probably differed in some way to another club which may have been only 50 kilometres down the road. I think it would be fair to say that at that stage the industry was full of accountancy problems.

The system that we are going to introduce will benefit the racing industry in the follows ways: it will improve the information-based decision-making processes; there will be a more efficient allocation of resources; and there will be improved financial management control of the clubs. I think that the RIMIS will lead to the introduction of one system, basically a centralised system right throughout the State in the three areas of management. We will be able to establish industry information management standards, reduce data duplication, with associated cost savings, and reduce the incidence of some illicit activity which has happened in the past.

Apart from that, from a departmental point of view it will allow us to keep a more professional eye on Racing Development Fund expenditure, and it will ensure that quotes for RDF funded works, for example, will be done on a more professional basis. We will be able to track prize money subsidisation, which I guess at times is a little hard. I think that that was probably reflected in some of the earlier problems that we had with the QRIS added stakes, hence my statement to the Parliament the week before last. Of course, most importantly, there will be performance measures of projects. In the past, there have been occasions where there have been some question marks over projects which have been constructed. Sometimes they did not reflect value for money. There have been alarm signals in the past. Maybe people at race clubs were perhaps not being as open as they could be in the tendering processes, that is, perhaps not seeking the best advice that was available. Any of those problems that did exist in the past will be adequately covered by the introduction of a centralised system.

The CHAIRMAN: I notice on page 37 of the Portfolio Program Statements the implementation of a Racing Industry Training Infrastructure Program to provide for vocational education and training. An amount of \$100,000 has been provided towards that program in the last financial year from the RDF. Is that the only source of funding, or are there other sources of funding, and are there plans to inject further money into that program from the RDF next year?

Mr GIBBS: The industry training program has been identified as critical to the future viability of the racing industry. This industry has been very poorly serviced in relation to training. To use the instance of trainers—most young men and women who come into the industry learn about it by being with somebody who has been around the industry for years. In some cases it is basically a hit-and-run method of learning from books. I have always had a particular concern about the future of the industry in relation to the training of apprentices, because the old master-servant regime has never been more prevalent anywhere in this modern day than in the racing industry. Young people do not get treated correctly in some instances, and I say "some" instances because there are excellent people who train apprentices within the industry. For a lot of young people who go into the industry and do not make it as apprentices, the future is very limited. We are assured that with a proper training scheme

we will be able to enhance the career prospects of those people in other areas of the racing industry.

The provision of \$100,000 from the RDF was combined with a matching grant from the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission, or VETEC, to jointly fund an industry analysis which will identify vocational education and training needs in the industry and develop a training plan that will deliver education and training in accord with the National Training Reform Agenda. An interim training centre has been established at Albion Park with the cooperation of the three codes of racing. My department and the Albion Park Trust will actually perform the official opening on Thursday, 8 June. I think this is an exciting innovation for the industry. It will incorporate a nationally approved curriculum for jockeys, stable hands, strappers, farriers and harness trainer drivers. That has already been approved by the National Training Board, and funds are also provided for a training development officer whose role will be to ensure that a training plan is established which will be suitable for the industry's needs. This is the first significant step towards having a proper training program. To a large degree it was initiated by my department; we were keen to see a nationally accredited program in place. One of the initiatives that we, as a Government, will be looking at in the future will be the establishment—if I am able to have my way, that is—of the most professional training centre within the racing industry, based in Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: We now return to questions from Mr Veivers.

Mr VEIVERS: I refer to the 1993-94 annual report of the Queensland Principal Club. On page 3 of that report an admission is made that the QPC applied to the RDF for an \$800,000 administration grant, reportedly to alleviate the cost of administration paid by country clubs throughout Queensland. Is the Queensland Principal Club in such dire financial circumstances that it has to seek funding from the Racing Development Fund and put the blame on the country clubs?

Mr GIBBS: What was your reference to blaming country clubs?

Mr VEIVERS: Is the QPC in such dire financial circumstances that it has to seek funding for the cost of administration from the Racing Development Fund and put the blame on country clubs for that?

Mr GIBBS: I clearly indicated to you in the previous session that I am not going to sit here and take these garbage statements from you off the shoulder simply for a bit of sport. If the QPC has blamed country clubs, show me where that question is relevant within the Portfolio Program Statements sent to you.

Mr VEIVERS: It is not, but why is the—

Mr GIBBS: Where did they blame country clubs? I do not want any garbage; put it on the line.

Mr VEIVERS: What is the \$800,000 administration grant reportedly to alleviate the cost of administration paid to country clubs throughout Queensland?

Mr GIBBS: The \$800,000 paid was as a result of the absolute disruptive, conniving and, I shall say, conspiratorial processes that some members of the Queensland Turf Club, ably assisted by your colleague, the member for Indooroopilly—and you have heard me make that statement in the House before—initiated through legal action against the Queensland Principal Club, which was settled out of court. Therefore, in its second year of operation, the QPC had to pay out large sums of money for legal disputations. If you are trying to make any inference about the current administration of the Queensland Principal Club, I simply draw your attention once more to the Auditor-General's report, which reflected the financial practices and happenings of the QPC under the former administration of Mr Peter Gallagher, ably assisted by the chief executive officer at that time. Those matters have now been cleared up, and today the QPC enjoys an excellent financial reputation and clearance from the Auditor-General.

Mr VEIVERS: I again refer to the QPC annual report and the income and expenditure account. What is the amount of \$350,000, labelled as statutory distribution under operating income, and where did that amount come from?

Mr GIBBS: I do not have the Queensland Principal Club statement with me. I would not attempt to answer without having it in front of me. If you would put that on notice, we will get you the required information.

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like that on notice, Mr Veivers?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes. You have not got the balance sheet, but the QPC balance sheet for the year ended 30 June 1994 shows an increase in the amount of investment of more than \$1m. Can you tell us what this growth in investment is attributed to?

Mr GIBBS: Again, I do not have the QPC balance sheet with me. If you put that on notice, I will get you an answer.

Mr VEIVERS: While you are doing that, is that expected to be repeated in 1994-95?

Mr GIBBS: Profit by the QPC?

The CHAIRMAN: The increase in investments.

Mr VEIVERS: Yes.

Mr GIBBS: Sure. That is on notice.

Mr VEIVERS: It is not much use talking about this balance sheet. Do you want mine?

Mr GIBBS: I am sure that you came with it. I have already named your friends who provide you with that sort of information, and I would have been disappointed if you had not brought it with you today.

Mr VEIVERS: I am allowed to see everything, and I have the whole lot. Indeed, I will not have time to talk to you about certain things, especially if you carry on like you are.

Mr GIBBS: If you want to see everything, get yourself into Government.

Mr VEIVERS: We are closer than you think, Minister.

Mr GIBBS: I know it is hard for you, but you need to be more positive about your role.

Mr VEIVERS: You are taking up my time. In the same balance sheet I note that an equity item called "net assets from antecedent principal club" shows the same figure for the 1993-94 financial year, namely \$837,467. Why have these assets not been depreciated?

Mr GIBBS: I will take that question on notice. If you have questions that are relevant to the balance sheet of the QPC, put them en bloc, and I will get them answered for you.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Veivers, do you have any further questions relating to that balance sheet?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes. When is the asset value of the long-term leases that the Queensland Principal Club holds for land and building going to be brought to account as an asset in the Queensland Principal Club balance sheet? You can take that on notice, as well. The 1992-93 interim audit of the Queensland Principal Club discloses a \$742,000 deficit attributed to a complete lack of budgetary and financial controls within the QPC. We are assured budgetary decisions have been revised to ensure a surplus in the 1993-94 financial year. According to the income and expenditure account of the QPC for the year ended 30 June 1994, there was an accumulated deficit of almost \$129,000. When will budgetary and financial controls be implemented in the QPC to ensure a surplus?

Mr GIBBS: They have been introduced. As you correctly acknowledge, those problems that you just alluded to occurred under the former administration of the Queensland Principal Club. Since the new administration has been there, it has taken great note of recommendations made by the Auditor-General. As I am aware, the Auditor-General in his last report said—

"The club has taken positive action in addressing issues identified by audit. Significant improvement has been made in its accounting and control system and its financial management practices. For the year ended 30 June 1994, the club recorded an operating surplus of \$80,535 compared to the previous year's deficiency of \$742,087."

I would think, in all fairness, that under Mr Bentley's stewardship, and that of the committee that he heads, it is long overdue that there should be some recognition by people such as yourself that the QPC has turned a significant financial milestone from being what before could be described only as a millstone created by its previous administrators.

Mr VEIVERS: Talking about that racing science centre, why would a further 2 and-a-half years be needed to finalise quality management of that centre before proceeding to certification? There

are numerous examples of this process taking only 12 months at the most in large private industries?

Mr GIBBS: Why would 32 years be required? Because you were in office for 32 years.

Mr VEIVERS: No, I said a further 2 and-a-half years. You jumped in a bit quick, Minister. Come forward. You have been in Government for five years. Why would a further 2 and-a-half years be needed to finalise quality management at that racing science centre before proceeding to certification? When certification is given it takes only about 12 months at the most in large private industries.

Mr GIBBS: I will ask Dr Mason to respond to that.

Dr MASON: I think you are probably referring to one of the objectives in the corporate planning for the science centre. The objective there refers to the introduction of a total quality management system at the science centre. There are various parts of the operation already quality assured through systems such as the NATA, the National Association of Testing Authorities, and the Association of Official Racing Chemists, which is a world-wide organisation, but the objective there is within 2 and-a-half years to introduce a total quality management system throughout the whole operation which will include its interfaces with the stipendiary steward systems on three codes of racing, and that takes some negotiation and discussions with outside bodies.

Mr GIBBS: Part of that is dependent upon negotiation and further discussion with the AJC and VRC in terms of compatible systems and an across-the-board system throughout Australia that will be suitable to all racing in Australia in terms of security checks, etc. There are also matters that you have raised which come up frequently when we have ministerial council meetings of Racing Ministers from various States. Whilst we may all agree on a program or direction, it often requires that Ministers of different political persuasions have to go back to their Governments to receive permission from Cabinet for a number of these things. That is why the factor has occurred.

Mr VEIVERS: The Racing and Betting Act was amended in 1993 to provide for mandatory imprisonment in default of payment of section 218 fines. What is the incidence of the imprisonment in relation to the number of fines imposed?. We were talking about this before.

Mr GIBBS: That is under the new SP legislation. At this stage, I do not think we have had a person in prison. At this stage since we introduced the legislation, I would have to say that I am unaware of anybody who has gone through the courts on a charge of SP bookmaking and I am certainly totally unaware of any person at this stage who has received a prison sentence. I think that probably reflects—I hope it reflects—not only the success of the introduction of that legislation but the success that legalised telephone bookmaking is having in terms of eliminating the SP industry.

I might make the observation that I am not trying to pretend that SP has been completely

wiped out. There is a recognition, not only from within my department but also indeed from the Queensland Police Service that the latest forms of technology that are available these days such as mobile telephones, to name one, where you can sit out in a location in Moreton Bay and be on the move constantly during the day—or you can travel around by car—obviously make it harder for enforcement agencies to locate SP bookmaking services. However, my department works closely with the Queensland Police Service on this matter and, wherever there is suspicion of those practices taking place, you can be assured the full force of the law will apply.

Mr VEIVERS: What are the strategic issues relating to the deregulation and internationalisation of licensed betting? How is the department addressing these issues?

Mr GIBBS: There are a number of issues that have to be looked at. We became very concerned two years ago when our attention was drawn to the pool which was operating at that stage between the ACT, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia, who were all linking into an offshore system providing a service out of Vanuatu. For a number of reasons that arrangement came to a very abrupt end. We are still sufficiently concerned to know that in the future, for example, home betting services will improve and people will be able to bet in their homes through systems other than the telephone—probably not too far down the track will be the insertion of a credit card into a betting system at home—or there will be the utilisation of the current system, which was perfected on the Gold Coast, which is available on the premises of the Hong Kong Jockey Club. We have a major problem looming to ensure the protection of our base here, that is, that legitimate betting is going into our Queensland TAB pool and is not being punted directly out of the home into other pools such as those in New South Wales and Victoria.

But it will go further than that. With the expansion of Sky—whether or not it goes under another name in the future—pictures of Australian races are now becoming a very important export commodity. In the next couple of years these pictures could well be going into places such as Taiwan, Indonesia, Japan and, in the future, into China. It is going to be very important that we protect our base to make sure that everything stays here in Australia and in Queensland.

Mr VEIVERS: That is going to be reasonably difficult.

Mr GIBBS: It will be.

Mr VEIVERS: You are doing an economic impact assessment of the racing industry. Why is it going to take a further 18 months to complete that?

Mr GIBBS: I will get Bob Mason to answer that for you in greater detail. I know that the last time we made a decision—we made this at the Racing Minister's council meeting—to have an economic impact statement on the importance of racing done, when it came back we were not very impressed with it. I certainly was not, anyway. That was an eight month process. That proved to be too short a period

of time. We want to make sure that we are getting it right. It is necessary to do that because that has a major effect in terms of the issue that you just alluded to and that I have spoken about, protecting our betting base. Dr Mason might like to expand further on that.

Dr MASON: I think the rationale behind getting a model to measure the economic impact of the racing industry hinges around the fact that, although we have always talked about the fact that everybody recognises the economic importance of the industry, we have had great difficulty, apart from the major study that was commissioned in 1991, called the ACIL report, because there has been no real system, apart from what we have been able to glean from the Australian Bureau of Statistics, of being able to really track the important economic data in the racing industry. We are working with the Bureau of Statistics and the industry itself trying to develop a system so that we will have a model that can be a repetitive examination of the industry as we go along. Once again, it is a bit like that other question that I answered for you. We cannot rush in and design that overnight. It takes quite a bit of negotiation and research to set it up properly.

Mr VEIVERS: I refer to the TAB 1993-94 annual report, page 18, and the TAB 1991-92 annual report, page 35, under the subheading "Pool Type" whereby the revenues derived from all TAB operations are defined for financial years ending 1991-1992, 1992-93 and 1993-94, and so collectively relate to the overall estimates in 1995-96. Over the past five years, provincial greyhound racing turnover has been declining rapidly, even though the variance in the number of meetings held is not declining rapidly. For example, in 1991, 261 meetings—\$20.287m; 1991-92, 214 meetings—\$16.9m; 1992-93, 213 meetings—\$16.7m; and 1993-94, 211 meetings—\$18.1m. What is the reason for the betting turnover of provincial meetings declining to a negative 10.54 per cent over that five-year period whereas during that same period at metropolitan meetings it has increased by 114.37 per cent?

Mr GIBBS: There has been a drop-off of interest in provincial centres throughout Queensland in greyhound and harness racing. The bottom line is that a couple of those clubs were not financially viable and had to be looked at. We do that in the context of making sure that we are very fair with those clubs. If they are viable, we want to see them survive but, if they are not, then we have a responsibility to ensure that they are serving the public.

We have had two metropolitan meetings per week at Albion Park since that complex was established. That was to make up with the industry what they saw as a turndown of racing when we changed the venue from the Gabba to Albion Park. Also, we looked to try to get more quality meetings at Albion Park. I am not sure how many clubs there are.

Dr MASON: Fourteen greyhound clubs.

The CHAIRMAN: That is the end of that 20-minute block of questions. We now turn to

Government members, who are inclined to move on to sport and recreation.

Mr VEIVERS: They can if they wish. I will continue to ask my questions on racing.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Veivers, how many more questions do you have on racing?

Mr VEIVERS: I have just started on greyhounds and we have not yet started on harness racing.

The CHAIRMAN: We will move to sport and recreation.

Mr GIBBS: Does Mr Veivers not want to stay on racing?

The CHAIRMAN: Do Government members have any further questions on racing? Would the Minister prefer to allow Mr Veivers to continue his questioning with regard to racing?

Mr GIBBS: I am quite happy about that.

The CHAIRMAN: If Government members are happy with that, we will allow Mr Veivers to continue his questions on racing for the moment.

Mr VEIVERS: In relation to greyhound racing and that 114 per cent, even after allowing for annual CPI increases, which can only help those provincial greyhound betting turnover results, the facts are that prize moneys are down and the distribution of grants is up. Minister, will you undertake to investigate the reasons and report the findings to the betting public of Queensland for this downfall in revenues in relation to marketing, allocation of prize moneys, distribution of grants and other relevant areas?

Mr GIBBS: Are we still talking about greyhounds?

Mr VEIVERS: Yes.

Mr GIBBS: Over the past 18 months, the Greyhound Racing Control Board has spent considerable time and money putting into place a strategic plan which incorporates all areas of the industry—management practices, club management, and marketing and promotion of the industry. I think that that plan will be a blueprint for the future of the industry. In terms of the greyhound racing industry—I am quite happy with the industry. We have ensured that as we have increased prize money within the thoroughbred industry, we have tried to ensure that that is reflected in both other codes. We have made sure that in the new TAB distribution formula, the same allocations and incentives apply to both other codes of racing as apply to the thoroughbreds. That is reflected, as you have rightly made the point, in the increased stakes money for greyhound racing in Queensland. I think that the board—both the current board and the previous board—is doing a very professional job of marketing the industry. I am happy to say that I believe that there will continue to be significant healthy growth within the next financial year.

Mr VEIVERS: Some situations have developed over the years with greyhound racing regarding the rules and regulations that exist for the operations of clubs. Office bearers—whether they be members of the community or stewards or, like

Dr Mason, a vet—are not allowed to own dogs or have licences. Is that correct?

Mr GIBBS: I am not aware of that. I stand to be corrected in terms of the greyhound industry, but I believe that I relinquished that a couple of years ago. At that time, it was a requirement that all rules and regulations of the greyhound racing industry had to be approved by the Minister. I relinquished that control over the industry to try to make the industry more responsible for itself. I do not encourage across the three codes of racing the medieval system that used to operate in which certain people could not be members of turf clubs, greyhound clubs, any clubs or the committee. To me, that was something that had hairs on it, and we have tried to rectify that. I am not aware of that rule applying. It certainly has never been brought to my notice, but that is a responsibility of the Greyhound Racing Control Board.

Mr VEIVERS: A situation arose at one club in which the doctor, or the vet, was not allowed to bet or was not supposed to bet. That was supposed to be in the rules.

Mr GIBBS: He might have been a steward. You said "the doctor", but unless I am incorrect, I think that he was actually a steward. In any code, stewards are forbidden to bet. That applies in the three codes.

Mr VEIVERS: I have asked a couple of times about harness racing, particularly in far-north Queensland. I have sent letters to you regarding Townsville starting their harness racing activities again. Today, I ask again: is there any reason why they should not be starting in north Queensland, bearing in mind that they seem to have a budget forecast that they can reliably cope with that situation?

Mr GIBBS: My experience has been that the people who are saying to you that they have a budget—

Mr VEIVERS: Yes, they have come to me.

Mr GIBBS: I know they have come to you. They have come to me. These are the same people.

Mr VEIVERS: I presume they are.

Mr GIBBS: They have spoken to both of us. The reality is that we have looked at their proposed budget and it simply does not stand up to scrutiny. They would be coming back in the not-too-distant future making claims on the Racing Development Fund for propping up, as was required in the past. Initially, when I took the hard line against Townsville, we replaced the committee with an administrator who wiped all of their debts off the slate. We paid it out of the RDF, and I think it cost \$200,000 one year and a quarter of a million the next year to wipe the slate clean for them completely. Within a number of months, they were back in the financial diabolics. At that stage, under the old Racing and Betting Act, I made a judgment and dissolved the club. I know that that can be an emotive issue with some people up there, but there are two points: there is simply not the pool of horses in the standard-bred industry to be able to service a

professional circuit, or a continuation of professional harness racing in that area. Remember, at one stage Cairns used to hold races as well. But they were going so fantastically well that at night they actually used to switch on their lights by illegally slipping into a legitimate power supply on one of the lines offcourse. That is how well they were going. So they went down as well. The point that I have tried to make to the people in Townsville—and, in fact, yesterday I replied to a letter from them—is that for them to start up again simply means that the whole TAB distribution formula, which has been devised on making payments to the number of clubs that are racing under the three codes in Queensland, would have to be addressed. Again, it would mean that within the standard bred, or the harness racing industry, people who are currently participants within that industry, whether that be at Albion Park, Redcliffe or down in your own area of Parklands, would all be required to make a sacrifice in terms of prize money and put up their hands voluntary and say, "We are prepared to give up some of our pool to allow them to start up again at Townsville." I doubt that the industry is prepared to do that. My final point is that—and I am sure they do not do it intentionally—the representation that the people in Townsville make about this incident does not reflect the reality of the situation.

Mr VEIVERS: Referring to greyhound racing in Toowoomba, there seem to be problems in certain areas. People keep coming to me and saying "This, this, and that." Can you tell me if that club is functioning correctly?

Mr GIBBS: It is still under the control of an administrator appointed by the Greyhound Racing Control Board. There were a number of problems with that club. As I was required to do, I referred a number of those to the Criminal Justice Commission which, as I recollect, did not find adversely against the activities of former members of the committee but certainly made some observations about management's suitability and professionalism. One of the problems was simply that the club had become an enclave for a selected handful of people. When you consider the size of the population of a city such as Toowoomba and its surrounding areas, I think it had a membership of less than 30. Although I do not like to be here to score a political point from you, Mr Veivers, the other reality was that it was controlled by a small group of people representing one political party, and that is how it was being run.

The CHAIRMAN: We will turn to sport. The Government members will now ask questions about sport and recreation. I thank the officers and staff of the Racing Program. I invite Mrs Rose to open the questioning on sport and recreation.

Mrs ROSE: I refer to page 18 of the annual report of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing, which states—

"The community Use of Schools concept will be evaluated and included in the 1996 Queensland Facilities Development Scheme."

I am aware that there have been a number of such projects undertaken in schools around the State,

including the Palm Beach/Currumbin State High School. Minister, can you please explain to the Committee the rationale behind the project? Does the project have the support of local authorities and the greater community? What importance has the department placed on increasing the community use of school facilities?

Mr GIBBS: I think that the introduction of the Community Use of School Facilities Program is probably one of the great initiatives of this Government. We started it off as a pilot project because the view that I had, and which was shared and driven very much by my director-general, was that school facilities had to be used much more in our community. Over the years, many of us have experienced going to school at 3 o'clock in the afternoon and, in many cases, school pools and athletic fields were shut down. People had gone home and the facilities remained dormant and not used over the weekends. We believed that this scheme offered an opportunity to be able go in and, based on a needs basis, look at turning schools into a true community-involved area.

The pilot project involved a number of schools. The first ones were the Marsden State High School, the Redbank Plains State High School, the Mossman State High School and the Palm Beach/Currumbin State High School. We later earmarked the Runcorn State High School and the Carole Park State School as the first schools in the pilot project for swimming pools. Each of those projects has been financed by Government to a differing amount but, in all cases, has been very warmly supported by the local authorities concerned and by the school P & C. The management process of these facilities involves a component from the local school organisation—the P & C—the school principal, representatives of my department and representatives of the local sporting community in the area that is going to support these particular projects.

The Education Department has been marvellously cooperative in terms of signing deeds of agreement to allow us to use the grounds within the school itself. Although a number of those projects are still under construction and in their early stages, all of them show great promise. My department is continuing to monitor progress at those schools. In most cases, it involves the laying of a single court. After the first one, we realised that the schools probably needed two courts. Those courts are multipurpose. They could accommodate indoor sporting games such as netball, basketball and volleyball. They are all built to a very high standard to ensure that competition is going to minimise injuries to people who utilise the facilities. Early indicators are that they are very successful.

Dr CLARK: I refer to page 27 of the Portfolio Program Statements. In particular, I am interested in the development of an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Sport and Recreation Policy. I would like some further details about this program and how the department is working to improve access to sport for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, particularly those in some of the more remote

communities. How much is allocated for this task in the 1995-96 Budget?

Mr GIBBS: We have been administering the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young Persons Sport and Recreation Program since December 1993. The program was established as a direct result of the recommendations of the 1992 Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. For a long time, we have been aware not only that there have not been adequate facilities in Aboriginal and Islander communities throughout Queensland but also that some of the marvellous talent available in the communities was not utilised and encouraged.

The program aims to decrease alcohol and substance abuse and anti-social behaviour by indigenous young people through the provision of sport and recreation programs. I am very proud of the officers of my department—Mark and other people—who have been very much involved in driving this program along. As I said, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander development officers in my department have been involved in organising and facilitating a great number of coaching clinics throughout Queensland for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Skills development clinics have enabled a number of people to be brought in from the various communities to improve their coaching skills so that they are brought up to standard.

Fitness Leader courses aim as far as possible to have people out in the communities talking about basic levels of fitness and trying to put into place and implement suitable programs that will steer young people in particular away from the use of alcohol and drugs in those isolated communities. Cultural recreation camps have broadly been aimed at trying to make Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more aware of their own cultural background. That is something which I am sure has not only been of concern to my department but also to the departments of a number of my colleagues. Over the years, there has been a lack of emphasis on Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal cultural backgrounds. A community needs analysis will be undertaken in those areas to ensure that we are across the requirements of communities so that we put the sorts of facilities into those areas that are provided through community school projects and other projects throughout the State.

The department is increasing its support by employing additional officers to extend services to other communities, and the department will appoint additional officers under the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Young Persons Sport and Recreation Development Program for Thursday Island in 1995 and Rockhampton in 1996.

Dr CLARK: I am particularly interested in that program. Will there be any opportunity for any training programs to place recreation officers into any of the Aboriginal communities? Could there be a program with TAFE to get people into those communities?

Mr GIBBS: That issue is being addressed in the department in relation to equity issues. There

will be an appointment of a program coordinator based in central office and two additional field positions in Toowoomba to service the south-west region and the Maryborough and Wide Bay/Burnett region. We are developing a two-year TAFE recreation training course which will be conducted through the Cairns and Johnstone colleges for Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander recreation officers. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from remote communities such as Yarrabah, Umagico and New Mapoon will receive training to increase skills in the areas of recreation planning and development, event organisation and sports administration.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer you to the Statewide Sports Development Program and in particular to page 27 of the PPS, which shows that funding under the Statewide Sports Development Program last year amounted to \$7.3m. This is a sizeable commitment to developing sport in Queensland. As such, can the Minister outline what measures his department has in place to ensure accountability in the administration of the scheme?

Mr GIBBS: As you have rightly identified, the department invests approximately \$7m each year in State sporting organisations for the development of sport on a Statewide basis. There has been the development and application of eligibility criteria for funding, including a requirement to prepare a three-year development plan. This has been a major step forward for my department. I think this program was implemented last year or the year before that. This means that we are not simply handing out large amounts of money to organisations without them having a proper, planned process for the spending of that money. They also have to advise us of where they believe their sport is going in the future.

Built into that process was a proper equity ratio for both male and female participants in sport. That was a necessity because of the large amounts of money that we now distribute from our department through the introduction of poker machines. It took a lot of sports administrations away from the days of holding chook raffles on a Friday night. They have gone from handling small amounts of money to large amounts, so it became important that accountability was built in. There has been the development and introduction of a resource agreement between the department and funded organisations which outlines operational and financial accountability requirements, including a performance contract. As I have indicated, performance targets are specified for a 12-month period.

We have appointed specific sport development officers to liaise with funded organisations regarding planning, evaluation, service delivery, funding and financial accountability. A program of cyclical audits has been conducted of funded organisations. In 1994-95, over 20 organisations have been audited, with up to a further 10 organisations in the last quarter of the 1994-95 financial year. There has been the development and implementation of a performance review strategy for a number of selected

organisations each calendar year. There has also been an ongoing series of workshops and seminars aimed at increasing the knowledge of financial procedures and practices for professional and volunteer support administrations.

The success of these measures has already been reflected in the fact that we have had very few problems with the accountability of organisations. It has not been perfect. We have had a couple of problems, but usually we have been able to identify those before they get out of hand. More importantly, these programs are a major feeder into the Queensland Academy of Sport, and the value of these programs is being reflected in the brilliance of Queensland athletes.

The CHAIRMAN: We have only a couple minutes left. With the Minister's indulgence, the members of the Government have graciously shown leniency on members of the Opposition by allowing the member for Southport to ask one last question.

Mr VEIVERS: As to Lang Park—the Auditor-General found it necessary to include a comment in the audit certificate of the financial statements for the Lang Park Trust for the year ended 31 December 1993 that the books and accounts were not maintained in a satisfactory manner throughout the financial year to provide a reliable basis for financial management purposes and that the financial statements were not prepared on a timely basis in that they were not finalised until 15 July 1994. This seems pretty ludicrous, as the statutory bodies had since 1990 to implement the necessary financial control. Can you confirm whether the 1994 accounts have been completed in a timely manner as required by law and that the possibility of any misappropriations or unnecessary losses has definitely been excluded?

Mr GIBBS: I wanted to finish on a gracious basis with you. I regret that you used the word "misappropriation". At no time have I doubted the honesty and integrity of either current members of the trust or former members of the trust. There were

some difficulties in terms of the expertise of some members composing the former trust that I replaced some months ago. The Auditor-General's comments related to the performance of the previous trust, not the current trust.

Mr VEIVERS: I understand that.

Mr GIBBS: The current trust did make an application for an extension of time, which I granted. That is why the report has not been tabled in the Parliament, but that was simply because they went from a manual system to a proper computerised system. It took a significant period to transfer data, and that was the reason that the extension of time was sought.

The final comment I make is this: you will find when I table the report in the Parliament that the Auditor-General's only concern relates to the financial viability of the trust. Sadly, that has come about this year as a result of the uncertainty regarding the Super League/Australian Rugby League situation. Because of that uncertainty, there has been a reluctance on behalf of corporate Queensland to commit to the purchase or otherwise of some of the other super-suites there. I am still confident that that will resolve itself, but that is the only issue of concern. I received the report this morning. I read it carefully. It will probably be tabled in the Parliament next week.

Mr VEIVERS: Thank you, Minister.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to conclude by thanking the Minister and all staff of the department for their cooperation and patience in answering the questions put by members of Estimates Committee D. I would like to thank members of the Committee also for their contributions to the analysis of the Estimates of this department. That concludes the Estimates hearing in respect of the Department of Tourism, Sport and Racing. We will take a two-minute break before commencing the next department.

Sitting suspended from 3.32 till 3.36 p.m.

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

In Attendance

- Hon. A. Warner, Minister for Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs
- Ms Ruth Matchett, Director-General
- Mr Jim Wauchope, Director, Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs
- Ms Jan Williams, Divisional Head, Community Services Development
- Ms Helen Twohill, Divisional Head, Protective Services and Juvenile Justice
- Mr Arthur O'Brien, A/Manager, Budget Section, Finance and Organisational Services
- Mr Julian Foley, Divisional Head, Intellectual Disability Services
- Mr Michael Lewis, Manager, Planning and Co-ordination, Intellectual Disability Services

The CHAIRMAN: I reopen this meeting of Estimates Committee D to examine the Estimates of expenditure for the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Firstly, I will introduce the members of the Committee. On my right I have the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose; the member for Barron River, Dr Clark; and the member for Sunnybank, Mr Robertson. On my left I have the member for Western Downs, Mr Littleproud, and the member for Burnett, Mr Slack. There is another member of the Committee who may return later.

By way of procedure, I indicate that the questioning will start with a 20-minute session of questions from Opposition members, to be followed by 20 minutes from Government members, and so on. In respect of each question, the questioner is limited to a question not longer than one minute, and the Minister or staff are asked to answer the question within three minutes. Fifteen seconds from the completion of that time limit, there will be a single chime to indicate the remaining 15 seconds allowed and a double chime at the end of the three-minute period allowed for the answer.

As was the case with this Committee last year, we have structured our questioning for the purpose of enabling the Minister and the department to organise the staff so that one program at a time is dealt with. We are starting today with the Aboriginal Affairs program, and we will work progressively through the programs as time permits. I ask that staff members who are sitting at the table in the course of questioning identify themselves for the benefit of the record before answering a question. Without further ado, I declare this examination of the Estimates of the department open. The question is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

I invite the Minister to make a brief opening statement.

Ms WARNER: I am very pleased to be part of the Estimates committee process. I believe that it has already increased both the parliamentary and the public appreciation of the Budget process and the magnitude of the financial commitments with which we deal every year. I am particularly pleased to be presenting the budget this year, because there have been significant increases for my department. The increase in expenditure over the last year represents a 16 per cent increase. The funds provided for new initiatives and improvements to existing services total \$25.55m, increasing to \$41.702m for next year and \$54.255m in 1997-98. But a more enlightening figure than just the figures for this year is the performance that we have achieved over the last five and a half years. My department's budget has grown from \$159m in 1989-90 to just over \$500m this year. I am proud of my Government's achievement in trebling the budget of this department.

Before we came to Government in 1989, the non-Government sector mounted a campaign to improve the department's budget from what was 1.52 per cent of consolidated revenue in 1989-90 to a figure of 2 per cent. That was their target and that was their campaign. I am pleased to be able to inform honourable members that we have well and truly doubled the expectation which the social welfare peak bodies had in 1989. The Family Services budget is now a satisfying 4 per cent of the Government's total consolidated revenue. These increases have meant huge improvements in services and security for some of the most disadvantaged Queenslanders, from neglected children to people with intellectual disabilities; from women and children escaping domestic violence to people without homes.

Of course, many of the problems and issues which my department deals with have been put in the too-hard basket by successive previous administrations. But it is also true to say that some levels of social dysfunction will continue to present challenges for Governments and the community as a whole. However, it is the ability of a society to respond to the victims and their distress in a constructive and positive way that is the mark of a civilised and humane society.

The CHAIRMAN: I invite Mr Littleproud to commence his questioning.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: We are dealing first of all with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs. It has been changed in name from "division" to "office". For the record, you might like to outline what that means in terms of administrative structure, manpower and those sorts of things, and whether it will remain within this portfolio as the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs.

Ms WARNER: Yes. The situation was reviewed in late 1994 to look at the structure of the Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. Over a long period—and I think I mentioned this in last year's Estimates—the Government has proceeded to provide the most direct service delivery aspects of what used to be the old Department of Community Services and then the Division of Aboriginal and

Islander Affairs to the appropriate Government department so that we could get the relevant levels of expertise. For example, housing matters went to the Department of Housing, transport matters went to the Transport Department and land matters went to the Lands Department. That meant that the actual Division of Aboriginal and Islander Affairs was continuing to be structured to provide the direct services that it was no longer providing.

So we had a look at the development of the office. I think the term "office" is simply being used because that is the current terminology that people prefer to use; we all know how these fashions emerge. The basic restructuring of the office has been support to ensure that Aboriginal people have access and equity, policy development and service delivery across all Government departments. It is the lead agency for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander matters and it has a vital role in assisting the development and coordination of policies, programs and services. The responsibility for actual programs lies with mainstream agencies which have specific levels of expertise.

The office consists of a Policy and Coordination Unit based in Brisbane and regional offices in six locations. The regional network ensures adequate liaison with indigenous Queenslanders and their involvement in decision-making processes. It also enhances coordination of service delivery in those areas. The office retains responsibility for the administration of the Community Services (Aborigines) Act and the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act.

The restructuring of the former division entailed the redeployment or voluntary early retirement of 100 officers. The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs now has an approved staffing establishment of 103 officers. One hundred officers have been or will be transferred to other divisions of Family Services or other Queensland Government agencies or have been offered the option of the early voluntary retirement program. Jim, is there anything that you want to add to the structure?

Mr WAUCHOPE: I think that the Minister has covered it quite well. It involved the shifting of various functions to other parts of the department. As the Minister said, a number of officers in that process were offered voluntary early retirement, but primarily we were able to accommodate people within the Government generally.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I think it is good to have that terminology on the record. I will pass now to the management of public intoxication. In particular, I am interested in two centres, the first of which is the Townsville centre. I have had representation from people who say that there is concern that this proposed centre will be too close to the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre, and obviously there are some NIMBY's there. You have settled upon that site. Are you happy with the proposal to put it there, considering those factors?

Ms WARNER: We went through a very extensive consultation process in Townsville which went on for far longer than I would have appreciated at the time. I think I mentioned last

year the difficulty we were having in persuading local communities to accept things like diversionary centres. We not only have that problem in Townsville, but we also had it in Rockhampton. We set up a steering committee that looked at all the possible sites in Townsville. We consulted with everybody who had an interest in the matter. That committee, which represented a whole range of people in Townsville, met with the council.

That site was the recommended site. There were still protests from the people in Townsville about that location. I think that that location was identified for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is not in an area of high residential density. Secondly, it is close to areas of land which have been broadly and generally identified as land which has been used by Aboriginal people over a long period, such as Happy Valley. It is land which the department had owned before 1989 which is now broadly described as land owned by Mrs Srebniak. So the land had an Aboriginal cultural identity in Townsville.

After the site was identified by the steering committee, I then had to attend another public meeting and undertake further consultation processes because some people were still opposing it. I took the view then, and I still take the view, that there needs to be as much community support as possible. So by means of persuasion rather than by just a simple administrative act of Government fiat, we decided to go through a lengthy consultation process. I attended a large, heated meeting in Townsville.

The planning process is under way in terms of the identification of land tenure history and we are proceeding down that path. Given all those competing and conflicting interests and desires of the people in Townsville, I still think that it is the most appropriate piece of land. It is also close enough to town, the watch-house, the police station and the hospitals to be able to provide a good service. We have been careful to take our time and to do it properly rather than rush it and find that we have built a white elephant.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will pursue that a bit further. You have not, as yet, addressed the question of the suitability of having it next to the youth detention centre. Also, has it now been rezoned by local government to make it possible? I understood that it needed a rezoning.

Ms WARNER: I do not think there would be a detrimental effect in having the youth detention centre that close. In fact, it is not that close. The two areas of land would be quite separate. Perhaps you could outline to me what you think would be the relationship of the two.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: It was put to me that intoxication is often involved with some sort of lawlessness. Because you are putting a youth centre beside a correctional centre, there is the possibility that some of the people inside the detention centre for youth may in fact get access to the sorts of things that would make it disruptive inside the Cleveland centre—mainly alcohol and drugs.

Ms WARNER: Unless they have some fairly space-age kinds of communication, there would not be any way in which they could transmit alcohol or drugs, except by beaming it across in some way. I do not think there would be any greater likelihood of it happening at that site than anywhere else in Townsville. I think what you might be referring to is an unexplained fear rather than a real problem. I cannot really see that there would be a material effect on either the detention centre or the diversionary centre if it was to be placed in that area.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: There have been ongoing difficulties with assistance to community councils over a number of years. Is it your intention to use modern technology, so that community councils have access to fax machines and telephones on a monthly basis in order to submit their minutes of meetings and financial records? The Auditor-General has highlighted an historical problem that, in fact, sometimes the budgets are very late being adopted, there is a lack of minutes and meetings are not being held. There is a need for assistance in this area. Can you see that modern technology may upgrade the assistance being given?

Ms WARNER: Most Aboriginal councils would have access to the modern technology that you are referring to such as fax machines, photocopiers, telephones, etc. That technology is already in existence in most, if not all, Aboriginal councils, although it may not be available to some Islander councils because they can be very small.

The process of monitoring the ongoing activities of councils is part of a coordinated plan between the department, the office and the respective Aboriginal and Islander coordinating committees. There is an extensive program for that monitoring process to take place. I am not sure of the wisdom of simply having the minutes of every council meeting faxed to an office in Brisbane, if the only purposes for that was to simply know that they had done it.

We really have to move towards encouraging councils to be accountable, not only to us but also to their own constituents. Remember, these are separately elected people. They are in the same position as parliamentarians in terms of their relationships with their own constituents. They should be accountable for their activities to their own constituents rather than upwards to the State Government. The councils are a separate layer of Government. It would be like requiring every local government in Queensland to submit the minutes of their meetings to the Department of Housing and Local Government. I think it would be an onerous, unnecessary and inappropriate mechanism to employ to try to encourage accountability, because it is accountability from the top down. That will not work in the long run. What is going to work is instilling a sense of accountability in the councils themselves. They do not get that through scrutiny from above but through scrutiny from below, so that if they make mistakes they are responsible to their own constituents. That is what has happened at Woorabinda right now.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Does the department have a fund for what I term "emergency sustaining payments" for people who have a need for daily access to money for food?

Ms WARNER: Yes, the Emergency Relief Fund.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: What would be the agency for that?

Ms WARNER: It is not in this particular part of the portfolio, because those payments go not only to Aboriginal people but also to anyone in the community who requires it.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Is it the department that controls that fund?

Ms WARNER: The Community Services Department allocates those funds. You might like to ask that question of them.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I put on notice that I would like to know, and the director-general might be able to tell me, how much per day the allocation is. I understand there are some people accessing some sort of daily sustenance allowance.

Ms WARNER: It is not appropriate to this part of the portfolio.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: With regard to the stores in some of the communities, last year it was indicated that the department still controls seven stores. What is the situation now?

Ms WARNER: We had hoped we would be able to transfer those stores by the beginning of this year, but we have had to maintain them for longer. We are hoping that they will go over in about September of this year.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Could you expand on that?

Ms WARNER: There are significant difficulties. The previous administration had a similar policy of trying to hand stores over to local communities and had difficulty doing that. We are encountering the same sorts of difficulties. We have been involved in a very extensive consultation process to effect that transfer, because it is our fervent desire that those stores should go over as quickly as possible.

The main arguments have been around the question of whether communities should communally run those stores or whether individual communities should run them separately. A suggestion has been made that there be an Aboriginal industries board set up much like the Islanders' industries board, IBIS, which runs all the stores on the islands. We have been trying to persuade the communities that that might be the most appropriate thing to do, so they can get some kind of cross-subsidy. There are a number of communities where the stores are profitable and a number of communities where the stores are unprofitable. The communities with profitable stores want to have the stores for themselves. That puts at risk and in jeopardy the service delivery in the communities where the stores are unprofitable. That debate has been ongoing and it has been part of

the consultation process. Jim Wauchope might like to say what the feeling now is.

Mr WAUCHOPE: One of the major issues is that there is not a lot of pressure from the stores to be taken over. As you would appreciate, they are not easy to run. There is a recognition in the Aboriginal community that generally the best way of dealing with this is to keep them together in some way that allows the more profitable stores to assist the less profitable stores. This would also mean that the management systems would be much easier to apply across a range of stores if they are operated together.

What we were worried about and what councils were worried about was the additional impost on their administration by picking up the responsibility for the stores. Even though we have had a policy of wanting to move the stores across, there has not been a level of pressure from the communities to say "Proceed as quickly as possible", because I think there is some recognition that those stores are an absolutely essential component of what happens in the communities and they want them to be run as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: My next question is with regard to the Children's Court as it applies to Aboriginal communities. Judge Fred McGuire made comments in his annual report after the first year of the Juvenile Justice Act that the courts should make use of some people within the Aboriginal community to advise the courts. Do you accept that recommendation? Would you appreciate, because of the lack of employment opportunities in these communities, that that ought to be a paid position?

Ms WARNER: I think the legislation actually makes provision for Aboriginal people to advise courts on appropriate sentencing or specific aspects of any particular offender's case. So the facility already exists and would be utilised in those places where there were appropriate people to give that advice. I think the situation about whether or not those people should be paid then raises the question of how we do that and whether or not that is money well spent. I think that in most cases in most Aboriginal communities if there are people who can appropriately advise then they do so. I do not think that they necessarily seek payment for that purpose. The other thing is that there is an Aboriginal Legal Service which can provide input for the young people, from elders, community members or whatever. That facility is already there. I am not entirely sure that you are going to advance the situation any more by having a specific professionally paid person to give advice which really should be community-based advice on what is going on rather than someone who sees it as just their job.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am of the opinion that the people who represent the various communities on the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council are at a distinct disadvantage compared with those people who are commissioners in ATSIC. The ATSIC commissioners are paid pretty well yet with these people, I understand, it is an honorary position where they represent their own community council on the co-ordinating council. Is that a fact? There is

a lack of employment in these places and there is also a lack of social strata for the people who are the leaders.

Ms WARNER: I think that the question seems to be raising the question of whether or not we should set up a Statewide ATSIC.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Should the chairman of those councils be paid when he or she make representations on the co-ordinating council?

Ms WARNER: They do get paid a per diem for attending ACC meetings as do ATSIC councillors get paid per diem. We fund the ACC, and last year it was \$671,000 for the running expenses of that council. I am not entirely sure that the individuals who are represented on the ACC and the ICC are significantly less well off than ATSIC commissioners. They get there through a different process. They are elected to their councils and are thereby members of the council, whereas ATSIC commissioners are directly elected by a wide body of Aboriginal people specifically to be on ATSIC, which is effectively the council. It is a different process.

The ACC is a peak body. It is funded. They do get paid a per diem and they are working in an increasingly cooperative manner with the State Government to provide services to Aboriginal communities. I do not really think that any further funding on an individual basis is warranted.

The CHAIRMAN: We now move to the next session of questions, this time from Government members, and I invite the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose, to open the questioning.

Mrs ROSE: Woorabinda has experienced ongoing financial difficulties. Could you outline what has been done or what is going to be done to improve the situation for the community?

Ms WARNER: I thank the member for the question. The situation of problems with financial accountability at Woorabinda emerged as a result of the auditing process in 1993-94 which indicated that the figures were not adding up. The major contributing factors to the financial position included a \$680,439 overrun in the Community Development Employment Program, which is an ATSIC Commonwealth program. There was expenditure in excess of grants received for particular projects and poor financial management practices generally by senior personnel within the financial section of the Woorabinda Aboriginal Council.

In the light of the financial position of the council, I issued a notice to show cause why the council should not be dissolved by the Governor-in-Council, but that action was prevented in the Supreme Court. There was an injunction taken out in the Supreme Court which prevented that dissolution of the council. The court argued that the council had not been in office for long enough to be able to bear the responsibility for the financial difficulties that Woorabinda was experiencing and thereby effectively stopped the immediate and direct action that was being taken by my department. So we had to go down another track. Officers of the department, and specifically the regional manager from Rockhampton, are working

very closely or trying to work very closely with the council to assist them to get out of the financial difficulties that they are in. They have appointed a financial adviser, a very competent individual who has accounting experience in other communities, and they are trying to work through it.

In April of this year, I wrote to the council and asked them to develop a financial management plan to manage current and future financial and legal obligations. The director-general and I, acting on legal advice, wrote to the council in March setting out the expectations in terms of financial restructuring arrangements and setting out the conditions associated with continued funding from the department. The department has maintained its level of funding to the Woorabinda council as approved by the budget, but does so on a weekly basis. We only send out a cheque for a week to the council. We have given the council until the end of June to advise us of those matters when we will reconsider the whole issue.

Dr CLARK: I would like to begin by picking up on a question that was asked by Mr Littleproud, and that is the management of the management of public intoxication program. He was particularly interested in the Townsville issue. Could you give us a more general picture of that particular program? I understand there is \$1.069m allocated for that program. Could you describe the plans for that allocation? Is there a possibility for the diversionary centre established in Cairns to put in submissions for that funding or is it already determined where it is likely to be allocated? As you are aware, we do have a fairly significant problem of public drunkenness in Cairns.

Ms WARNER: That \$1.069m has been allocated to community services development rather than to the Office of Aboriginal Affairs because it is part of a management of public intoxication program that is being run collaboratively with Health. My department is responsible more for the support kinds of services. Health is responsible for the medical intervention and actual detoxification process. It is quite separate from the Aboriginal diversionary program which relates to diverting people from being held in watch-houses. This is about public drunkenness, and whether or not people are being arrested for it. It is about drunkenness per se as a health issue. Because it is an overarching program with Health, it does not relate solely to Aboriginal people; it relates to the general community.

The priority areas where we will be looking at providing services will include Brisbane, Cairns, Cunnamulla, Gladstone, Ipswich, Mackay, Mareeba, Sunshine Coast, Mossman, Mount Isa, Normanton, Rockhampton, Gold Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville and the deeds of grant in trust communities as well. Health will have the responsibility for the medical interventions and specialist therapy, but they say that they are going to do it on a non-medical basis—which in many ways blurs the distinction between their activities and my department's activities—but it may very well be that we can utilise some aspects of the existing diversionary centres to provide those other

programs. We will have to do that in consultation and work it out fairly carefully. We are at the beginning of this program. We have not worked out the absolute detail of exactly what is going to happen, because a huge community input is required into the design of the programs so that we will know whether it is going to work or not. Basically, it is an across-Government initiative, which I think is much-needed. Once those programs are planned and in place, my department is very happy to play its part in providing assistance and support to people who are recovering from alcohol addiction, which is effectively what it is going to be in the long run. It is not going to be that front end; it is going to be after they have sought counselling and intervention from the Health Department that we will come in with further community support.

Dr CLARK: My next question relates specifically to the Aboriginal Affairs area. I note on page 7 of the Portfolio Program Statements that the budget allocates a substantial amount of funding over three years to improving infrastructure on Aboriginal communities for such things as water bores, water storage and sewerage schemes. I was hoping that the Minister could clarify how much is allocated in the Aboriginal infrastructure program and what is hoped to be achieved in 1995-96. What will be the involvement of the Commonwealth in that scheme?

Ms WARNER: The State funds that have been allocated in 1995-96 are \$3m for next year increasing to \$10m the year after, 1996-97, and \$15m in 1997-98, which is a total of \$28m for the three-year period. It is a substantial program. You may have heard and seen in a lot of the publicity that has surrounded issues of Aboriginal health that Aboriginal health issues relate not only to specific medical interventions but also to the questions of public health, the questions of public infrastructure. There used to be the Commonwealth National Health Strategy which provided, from the Commonwealth level, a significant amount of money. Palm Island Dam is an example of that National Health Strategy money that was allocated to infrastructure. We have picked up that particular need, because there has long been criticism of State Governments over many years that they did not provide enough in that area.

We are hoping that that \$28m will be augmented by money from ATSIC. We are involved in negotiations at this point. We have already negotiated an agreement with ATSIC on Palm Island, which is the first in Australia. The first bilateral agreement on a specific Aboriginal health infrastructure project happened here in Queensland. We are quite proud of that. We are very optimistic that ATSIC will not only match our \$28m effort but go better than that. There is some room for optimism in that area.

I probably do not need to stress to members of the Committee just how important it is to have clean water and adequate and reliable sewage treatment, and how important it is to have the basics of life available. Sadly, that does not apply in a lot of Aboriginal communities in Queensland at the moment.

Mr ROBERTSON: It is no secret that this is your final appearance before a Budget Estimates Committee. So by way of introduction to my question, I will accord, if I can, my personal congratulations to you on your achievements in what has obviously been a difficult and challenging portfolio over the past five years. You have demonstrated commitment to providing not just financial assistance but an appropriate environment for those quite disparate groups that your portfolio covers. I am sure that that is appreciated by everyone involved. I wish you every success in your future endeavours.

The CHAIRMAN: Hear, hear!

Ms WARNER: Thank you.

Mr ROBERTSON: Thank you, Minister. You said that you were amending the Community Services Acts to include financial accountability. Your Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs recently sent me a paper on the proposed amendments. Could you outline to the Committee what progress has been made on the proposed legislative reforms?

Ms WARNER: A significant amount of work has been done in trying to produce amendments to the Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984 and the Community Services (Torres Strait) Act 1984. A number of those recommendations came from the Public Accounts Committee. Some were simple, mechanical ones like reducing the number of funds from four to two, maintaining a pecuniary interests register for councillors and key councillors, holding regular, open council meetings with minutes of meetings to be available to the public—which addresses Mr Littleproud's enquiry about minutes of the councils—and including as part of the amendments relevant parts of the Local Government Act 1993, which was in 1994. The new framework that we are moving towards is designed to improve accountability, which at the same time empowers councils with better legal framework for administering their own local government functions. There has been an extensive consultation process on the amendments. The main concerns that we have been picking up during the whole consultation process were the difficulties of maintaining pecuniary interest registers because of the extended family relationships that exist on Aboriginal communities, problems maintaining order during open council meetings and the difficulties of imposing additional reporting requirements.

One of the things that we have been trying to accomplish whilst doing the consulting process for the new amendments, has been to get the cooperation of Aboriginal people and Islander people in the final piece of legislation. You can contrast that with happened when the original Acts were introduced in 1984. I happened to be a member of the House at the time and I think Mr Littleproud might have been as well. We stayed up all night. The Acts were introduced in the night and nobody had a look at them. When we have been going through them, we have found that, in many cases, the existing legislation is inconsistent, defective and poses a lot of problems when trying

to amend it in order to make a consistent, whole piece of legislation going in the same direction. That is the difficulty that we have been facing. We are determined not to repeat the mistakes of 1984. When we get a piece of legislation, we want Aboriginal people to embrace it, implement it and not to think that it is yet another piece of white legislation that is thrust upon them against their will because of interests that are quite outside their own.

Mr ROBERTSON: In relation to the Communities and Personal Histories Program, I note that this program was upgraded in 1994-95. Could you please outline the details of that program?

Ms WARNER: This is a very interesting program, which we introduced in September 1994. Actually, it was available before then, but we had a big promotion of it so that everybody in the Aboriginal community would be aware that that facility was available to them. The records that are held in my department have long been a contentious issue. You may know that, in the past, protectors have written all sorts of things about individual Aboriginal people, which have been kept secret within the vaults of the department. Unfortunately, many of those things that were written in that bygone era were untrue and, in many cases, defamatory of the behaviour and activities of Aboriginal people. In many cases, they were written simply to justify Government policy of the ill treatment that Aboriginal people suffered at the time.

There is considerable pain among Aboriginal communities about the movements that they experienced at the hands of colonial administrators, and there is considerable pain about the removal of children from their families. There has been a desire on the part of Aboriginal people to find out their roots; to go back and retrace what has happened to their families, to get a clear picture of their identity and to get a clear picture of their history. We have made a program available, which in 1994-95 has been allocated \$152,704. That funding is designed to promote not only information for individuals but also about whole communities. So research projects are available for individuals. The level of requests has far exceeded the funds that are available, but we have been able to put together a user-friendly guide to locate information, which is available not only in my department but also in archives in the John Oxley Library or wherever else.

We have employed individuals with specific skills to work with people in the community—there are 10 individuals in the unit—to try to find out about themselves and their community and to give them the information that people need to be able to do that work themselves. It is quite a complex task. There has been some recent media coverage from people who still believe that the information is kept secret. It is not. However, we would not give personal information about one individual to another individual, because that would be a breach of privacy. The other use to which this information can be put is in relation to the conduct of land claims.

The CHAIRMAN: No further questions? I invite Mr Littleproud to recommence the next section of 20 minutes of questions.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I turn to community services development. Minister, on page 16 of the Portfolio Program Statements, it states—

" . . . two pilot post-school options service in Brisbane and north Queensland will be established for young people with disabilities . . ."

and it refers to those who will be leaving special schools. It states further—

"The services, which will be sponsored by non-government organisations, will provide day options for school leavers who would otherwise be at risk of total reliance on their families."

One could read that and say, "You have done nothing in the last five years" because, all of a sudden, you are going to initiate two pilot programs. I am interested to know what non-Government organisations are going to provide those post-school options for people with disabilities, because it is a grave area.

Ms WARNER: I think that you would have to look at the question of post-school options in the broad sense first. It is an area of great need. It is a gap in the services that has existed for some time. There is a Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement under which, broadly speaking, my department is responsible for accommodation support services and the Commonwealth is responsible for employment-type services. When a person who does not have a disability leaves school, usually they go into the employment sphere. Obviously, people who have disabilities—intellectual disabilities or, in some cases, physical disabilities—are unable to locate employment for a range of reasons. This poses a significant problem for them. It has not been identified as a specific State concern. However, we are so worried about the effect that a child who has a disability and who is leaving school has on the family that we have moved to provide financial assistance.

This year, \$1.45m has been allocated and that funding will be increased to \$3m in 1996-97 and 1997-98 to provide two pilot projects to develop appropriate services to provide options for people with disabilities leaving schools to take the pressure off their families. We will probably be looking at a number of different non-Government organisations that are already involved in the delivery of disability services of some kind. It has just been pointed out to me that that \$1.45m should actually be \$1.5m, so it is a little bit better than we thought.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I am more interested in activities than money.

Ms WARNER: Basically, we will be looking at trying to find individual, focused options for people rather than saying, "We are going to have a centre here and anybody who is not at school and who is not at work will go into the centre." That would be the worst possible kind of service that you could operate. So it is not likely to go to any one specific disability service. It may not go to any existing

disability service at all. The funding may go to individuals to provide activities and recreational options for people.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Who have you got in mind? Name some organisations that you have in mind.

Ms WARNER: The W. R. Black Home, for one, could probably be involved in this sort of thing. The Xavier Home could possibly be involved.

Ms WILLIAMS: As the Minister was explaining, we would be calling for submissions for a suitable auspice. We really would not know which organisation that would be, but there has already been a lot of activity in Townsville and Brisbane South, which are two of the areas that we will be looking at initially, where groups have already got together and were looking at how they can cooperate to provide the best services and link people into a whole range of services that exist already in the community. So we will be working with other Government departments and other community agencies. A lot of that work has been done already through some pilot programs that were conducted previously. So with this money we will be able to build on some of that work that has been done already.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Still on disability services, on page 2 of the Portfolio Program Statements reference is made to the implementation of institutional reform and residents being relocated to a community of their choice. That raises a couple of questions. Firstly, some of the people in those centres are incoherent, so how can they select a community of their choice? I do not know. Secondly, no reference is made to the choice of their parents. A number of people have contacted me knowing that people in the welfare industry are committed to your idea of institutional reform, but lots of parents come to me very concerned that, in fact, the sorts of services you are talking about in the broader community will not work. Can you explain how people can be relocated to a community of their choice and is it being truly implemented?

Ms WARNER: I think when you are talking about choice, you have to look at wherever it is practical and possible.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: But that is not choice.

Ms WARNER: Wherever it is practical and possible, identify where that person would feel happiest. Obviously, there have to be some judgments made about that on behalf of the individual. You do need to consult very closely with the family about what the choice might be. You do need to consult with your existing staff members who know that person. A lot of people do not just stay in institutions all the time; they actually do go out on a number of occasions for visits and so on. People who have intellectual disabilities may not be able to communicate directly, but they can communicate indirectly. They can express when they are pleased and when they are displeased. They can show when they are happy and when they are not happy. They can show when they feel comfort and when they are distressed. By a

reasonable and professional observation of those kinds of indices, you can work out what a "reasonable" choice may be. I do not think that it is very appropriate to assume that because someone cannot communicate directly in a verbal way, they cannot communicate at all. We should adopt the principle that, wherever possible and to the best of our ability and knowledge, we fulfil the choices of that person rather than the choices of the bureaucracy or any other individual. I do not think that it is reasonable to dismiss people with an intellectual disability as being incapable of any communication of any type.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I was not implying that. We are talking about their choice. Recently, I received letters and a phone call from a man who was quite traumatised because his son, who was a resident at Challinor, was moved out on a trial basis into a community-based accommodation service. He underwent a tremendous change of personality. Obviously, that move did not suit him. He was only too pleased to get back into Challinor. In that case, the person was not satisfied with living in the broader community. He and his parents are happy that he is back at Challinor. Will there be some centres at which profoundly disabled people can receive services?

Ms WARNER: That person who was moved out of Challinor was probably moved out under a National Party Government rather than ours.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No, he was moved out in recent weeks under your institutional reform program.

Ms WARNER: I think that would be fairly unlikely. Incidentally, we are in the wrong portfolio area for that question.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: We are talking about disability services.

Ms WARNER: Yes, I know. Challinor is run by Intellectual Disability Services, not by Community Services Development.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Why do you not just answer the question instead of dodging it?

Ms WARNER: The particular person who would know the answer to that question is not at the table at the moment. We will pick up the issue again later. We are now embarking upon a process of institutional reform to achieve enhanced outcomes. A considerable amount of money has been allocated for this process. The process will provide a range of options. It may very well be the case that the first option does not necessarily suit an individual. We can look at other options. We do not have to be bound by the first decision that we make. There is an ongoing process of improvement in the quality of life of individuals.

As to the process of reform—as I said, Cabinet was very concerned about and committed to provide enhanced community options for people. It is difficult to accommodate people who have been institutionalised for a long time, because there is a deterioration in their capacities and abilities. That is not as a result of whatever disability they have but simply as a result of institutionalisation. If people are

institutionalised for a long time, their personal capacities deteriorate considerably. When people move from one setting to another, there is a personality change. That might be quite positive in a number of ways in terms of people being able to experience something new. It may very well be possible for people to be able to communicate a little better as a result of the relative freedom of the community setting. I do not necessarily think that that is a negative. I do not know of the individual case that you are talking about. I would like to hear about it. That issue is not covered in this section. If you could identify the issue a little more clearly, that would be helpful.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will talk to you in private about the person later on.

Ms WARNER: Maybe that would be better dealt with in correspondence between us. However, we cannot damn the whole process by highlighting an individual case. This is an issue that we have to deal with. Most of the evidence from research not only in this State but also in every other State—and not only under this Government but also under conservative Governments—indicates that community placements are better than institutionalised settings for protecting the rights and abilities of the individuals with whom we are concerned.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will not let the issue rest with that answer. It is a bit of a put-down to suggest that because I quoted one case all of the rest are all right. That case is representative of lots of contacts that I have had with people. You would be aware of all of the people who have made contact with you with regard to another centre out towards Enoggera/Ashgrove. You talk in managerial terms about other options. That sounds pretty good when you are organising things at a departmental level. However, the people concerned and their families want some specifics. Can you tell me what some of these options are?

Ms WARNER: There are a number of options.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Be specific.

Ms WARNER: I was about to be specific. There is shared family care, that is, a person lives with another family that acts as an adult foster person, if the person is not a child. There can be shared households with two, three or four other individuals who are compatible. They may very well be individually supported in their own flats by workers. There may very well be some people with significant disabilities who will need that type of care. Recently, I was contacted by a parent whose son was an absconder—a runner. Even when in institutions, he tended to make a run for it. His family was very concerned about whether he could come out of the institution and find an option which could accommodate his behaviour. Housing and Local Government was also prepared to put in some money to provide an acreage on which that person could live with perhaps one other individual, with support staff on hand to accommodate his needs and to help him overcome the difficulties that he faced. That meant not having to resort to an

institutionalised setting. I am not a prophet and I do not have a totally elastic imagination. However, there is a large number of options, most of which would be too great in variety for me to describe within the three minutes that is allocated.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: But do you not accept that probably the best option in some cases is for these people to be housed where they are close to intensive care and the carers that they need for medical purposes, feeding and so on, in the case of the profoundly disabled?

Ms WARNER: I do not disagree with you. I think that can be accommodated within the community setting. I do not think there is very much difference between housing these people in a large institution which does not have its own medical facility to living down the road from a hospital. It may very well be that a number of people would be located close to medical facilities, but those medical facilities would be in the community.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I suggest that you have a selling job to do. If you are going to get those concerned parents out there to come to terms with this program, they need to be told much more about what the options are and whether there will be access to all of the services that they need. They are fearful.

Ms WARNER: I understand that there is a great deal of fear and concern in the community. In many respects, that is good and healthy because it means that people care about what is happening to individuals who have an intellectual disability. People from the peak organisations of the parent bodies have direct input into the development and design of all of the options that I have been describing. Some options probably have not even been thought of yet. We can look at a number of ways of going about it. I can assure you—and I hope that you would assure parents—that through their peak body organisations they can have direct input at senior officer level into the construction, design and location of services that we are developing. That is the best way to go.

Judging from some of the questions that you have asked, I think you have some lack of understanding about institutional reform. You should visit some of the institutions where this has already happened—the Xavier Home and W. R. Black—and talk to the people who have placed other people in community settings. You should visit some of those people in their community settings and talk to them about the principles involved, their relationship with their family, and the improvements in the young people who have gone from institutions into the community. Previously, they may not have had words and now they have words. Previously, they may not have been able to walk and now they can walk. Previously, they did not show emotion and now they do. Hearing the story from the individuals involved is much better than just grilling Ministers on the subject. I suggest you do some of that legwork around the community.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I have done that, too.

Ms WARNER: Well, I do not think that you have.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Because of time constraints, I will have to pass over that for the time being. I turn now to the Child Protection Strategy and the SCAN project. You work closely with doctors and teachers—

Ms WARNER: Mr Littleproud—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: This comes under Community Services Development on page 17. That page refers to the Child Protection Strategy.

Ms WARNER: What is the question?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I want to ask about SCAN teams. Surely that is child protection.

Ms WARNER: It is child protection, which is under Protective Services and Juvenile Justice, and we are now under Community Services Development.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You mention juvenile justice under child protection, and it comes under Community Services Development on page 17.

Ms WARNER: I see.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Fair enough?

Ms WARNER: That is the prevention strategy rather than the investigative strategy, which is the SCAN team. I am sorry about this. Can we put that one on notice for the next particular session? If I can help you, I will, but I would prefer to have the relevant people here so that I can give you—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will move on to organisations to which you provide grants. A couple of years ago, the Auditor-General was highly critical of the administration of your department because audited accounts were not coming forward from those organisations, which were receiving substantial amounts of money. Criticism is also coming forward that some of those groups that have provided community services for a long period are now finding that, in real terms, their funding from the Government is being diminished. What sort of process are you going through in terms of evaluation of the services that those people provide? I understand that there are service agreements. What has been done in the last 12 months to tidy up that situation with regard to service agreements, auditing and accountability?

Ms WARNER: We have now formally linked the continuation of funding with the submission of annual audited statements, so that is now a very formally linked process. In other words, if we do not get the annual audited statement, they do not get funding for the following period. The auditor noted that we have always maintained a very strong link between progressive quarterly returns and continued funding, so there are still a number of brakes in the system to ensure accountability. This mechanism ensures that funding does not continue to services that are not operational. We have also instituted a formal reporting process for senior management on outstanding accountability reports. I am advised that the current position in respect of outstanding accountability of documents for 1993-94 is that compliance is yet to be finalised in less than 1 per cent of all the funds that are

expended. That means that for all the funds, except for under 1 per cent of those funds, the accounts have been forwarded.

In addition to that, I think I mentioned to you last year that the organisations are required to sign a service agreement which sets out the department's performance requirements and the ways in which they will be measured. The service agreements were introduced over the last couple of years as a means of being very precise about what a funded organisation is expected to do in return for a particular grant. The service agreements are used for developmental processes as a means of focusing attention on what an organisation is trying to achieve and how it will move to do that. They also provide a basis for broadening accountability beyond financial matters and include details of what has been agreed between the CSD—the Division of Community Services Development—and the funded organisations and how their performance will be measured. The information collected around these performance indicators provides the basis for assessing the performance.

Most organisations have a service agreement in place. A substantial number are being reviewed and renegotiated, and funding continues through the negotiation period for the currently funded services. Service agreements have been finalised for over 90 per cent of funded organisations, and the others are under review. That is a very strong accountability mechanism that we have in place, and it contrasts sharply to no accountability procedures in the delivery of grants when I took over this portfolio.

The CHAIRMAN: We move now to questions from Government members. I invite Mrs Rose to open questioning. We are discussing the Community Services Development Program.

Mrs ROSE: The budget has allocated \$876,000 in each of the next three years to assist children who have witnessed domestic violence. Would you please outline the objectives of this program?

Ms WARNER: It is a very important program in respect of the strategy that we have across Government to deal with issues of violence against women, and we have been conducting that strategy across a number of areas. The Domestic Violence Program is one that my department has been running with for a long time. A number of community workers have expressed to us the level of frustration that they have experienced upon noticing that a number of children are exhibiting significant signs of distress as a result of witnessing domestic violence. The idea of the Child Witnesses of Domestic Violence Program is to employ 11 specialist counsellors who will be located in the existing domestic violence services to target the specific needs of those children who have witnessed domestic violence.

We can say that children who experience domestic violence have significant behavioural problems. It affects them in terms of the levels of fear that they experience, mistrust, aggressiveness and destructiveness. But perhaps a more

concerning issue is that people who have experienced family violence when they are young often believe that that is the way to behave in a family, and when they grow older and have families they mirror those patterns of violent behaviour; so there is a generational impact of domestic violence. One of the things that we are hoping to do with the development of this program is try to break the intergenerational syndrome that is operating. I think it makes sense in the long run if we can do that. The program involves \$879,000 in 1995-96, but over a three-year period it will be a \$2.6m program. As I said before, 11 specialists will be employed to counsel and target those children who have been witnessing domestic violence in their homes. I think that the sector will be very pleased with this development, because it is something that they have been seeking for years. Obviously, we first of all had to attend to the needs of the immediate victims, but now we have to move to try to do something for the next generation.

Mrs ROSE: I also note a new initiative in the budget for people with psychiatric disabilities. Will you please outline the details of this important new development?

Ms WARNER: This particular program is part of the institutional reform package. The program will involve \$22.6m over three years. It also is a program that has been developed in conjunction with the Health Department. The individuals will be coming from three psychiatric hospitals in Queensland—Wolston Park at Wacol, Baillie Henderson and Mosman Hall. It is part of the Queensland Mental Health Plan. My department is seeking to build on a new initiative that we had in last year's budget, where we had a recurrent amount of \$300,000 to initiate some pilot projects to develop community-based psychiatric disability services.

Again, our department specialises in the area of community support to enable people to live in the community. So these sorts of services are not medical; the Health Department would continue to provide the specialist medical services that those individuals will need, and our department will be providing support workers who will perhaps help with the shopping, daily activities of the individual and assist people to find accommodation. We will also be liaising with the Department of Housing and Local Government. Local government will be providing the bricks and mortar for people.

It is an across-the-Government plan. It is very ambitious and pretty revolutionary, really. For the first time, our Government is doing institutional reform properly. We are looking at every aspect of the needs of individuals. We are looking at their housing, medical and community support needs. With those three strategies in place, we hope to allay all of the fears that Mr Littleproud has expressed about institutional reform. The problems that emerged in the institutionalisation process were the result of Governments that did institutional reform badly; who did it without looking at every aspect of the individual and without looking at people as individuals. The problems emerged because people were seen as just a group of

people with the same characteristic, and therefore it was believed that they could all be treated in the same way. That is not the case. We are looking at a rights-based policy that looks at the individuals. I am very happy that we have attracted this funding to be able to participate in what is a very exciting project for the Government. I look forward to huge successes in the area and being able to provide a lead for the rest of Australia.

Dr CLARK: I would like to refer the Minister to page 17 of the PPS. Could you provide details of the new Social Infrastructure Program to be established in growing urban areas? I note that this program has actually been funded over three years, but could the Minister describe how the amount of \$436,000 that is allocated for the 1995-96 year is to be spent?

Ms WARNER: Basically, the key to this funding package is that it is based on \$3 per capita to provide services. That is at the higher end of service provision in New South Wales. It is aimed at those high growth areas where services have not developed because they are only very recently developed communities. The idea is to not go in with specific programs dealing with child care, domestic violence, child protection, disability services and so on, but to look at self-identified needs in that new community. We provide money for whatever those people in that community say they need.

We tried this in what we call the Cross-funding Program last year, which was aimed at the rural and remote areas of Queensland. We did not go in and say, "We are going to build a neighbourhood centre." We did not go in and say, "We are going to give you a women's refuge." We went to them and said, "We have an amount of money. What do you identify as a major need in this community?" We talked to a number of people who are experiencing and observing what is happening to families in those areas. Areas such as those in the northern region of Cairns have seen an influx of people over a period of time. They are leaving their families behind—their support systems, that is, the aunts and uncles and grandmas—and they have no-one to help them with child care. So, quite often, because those people have moved away from that sort of informal supports, child care is in great need.

Quite often, there is need for domestic violence services because the grand move to the great place in the sunshine does not turn out to be the be-all and end-all that one thought it was and that causes a degree of family conflict that then has to be dealt with. The funding would go to different areas, depending on the age of the community. In some areas there would be a large number of teenage kids, and those areas would be looking for money to provide activities for those kids. It is an open-ended project and it is related to the geographical and demographic aspects of our community. It allows those communities to identify what services they want, rather than us saying that there is X amount of money for domestic violence or one thing or another.

The areas we have identified as being high growth areas are Albert Shire and Caboolture—that

is, north and south of Brisbane—Hervey Bay, which is an area of high growth, northern Cairns, as I mentioned before, and the Springfield/Camira area in south-west Brisbane.

Dr CLARK: I actually have another question but my colleague has one he would like to ask on that same topic.

Mr ROBERTSON: Whilst my electorate is not necessarily one of the areas you mentioned, would access to that scheme be via an organisation such as Sunnybank Family Support? If it has X range of services but it sees an additional problem within a community that is not being serviced, would it be a group such as that that would have access to it?

Ms WARNER: It would be a group such as that. You would probably talk to the local neighbourhood centre, child-care agencies, the local council, local schools and teachers and any social workers who were already operating from whatever services are already in the area. You would talk to everybody in the area. It may very well be that an organisation like that would have a huge input into the development of new services in any area. The only problem that we find, of course, is that sometimes individual services only think of new services in terms of those that they can conduct themselves.

Dr CLARK: Continuing on another program, could you comment on the proposal to design constructive projects for young people as an alternative to anti-social behaviour in places such as shopping malls and, in my part of the world, along beaches, which I understand is actually a component of the juvenile justice initiative? There is funding for a Community Services Development Program. Again, I note that that \$1.5m will be allocated over three years. Is that funding actually going to be for extending existing or creating perhaps new YACCA—Youth and Community Combined Action—programs or are we talking about a new kind of program here? Could you provide some details on that?

Ms WARNER: The YACCA programs have been very useful. YACCA—Youth and Community Combined Action—programs commenced in April 1993. They have thrown up a variety of models from about 20 recurrently funded community-based projects. One of the projects that was funded was a project at Logan Hyperdome and Crestmead Park at Browns Plains which was to respond to the community's concerns about juvenile offending.

Basically, the story is fairly familiar. The problem is that young people are gathering in shopping centres and other places. They are bored and they are committing offences, or they look as if they might be committing offences—quite often they are not—against property and person. They are seen to be a local nuisance. The Federal Arts Community Based Cultural Development Organisation works with marginalised young people. Under YACCA, the Logan Hyperdome received a grant of \$20,000 to undertake an arts-based project. The shopping centre made available a grass area at the back of the hyperdome. Arts

activities were conducted on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays over a six-week period and there was a fairly good attendance.

Young people who were not in contact with any other organisations were actually attracted to the project. Young people were doing all kinds of things: writing and recording songs, painting and dyeing shirts, video camera work, interviews, cutting steel, concreting and welding. There were a whole range of activities that people could get involved in. It diverts them from hanging around and looking as if they are going to commit a felony, whether they are or not. I suppose it is much better to distract and prevent crime from occurring rather than trying to go for the hard options after it has happened. This program is an imaginative and community inclusive way of addressing that problem.

I am particularly concerned about the general level of debate about the activities of young people who are often referred to as thugs and hooligans. That just makes them think, "Well, if that is what the community thinks about me, that is the way I will behave." If we put a label on them, they will live up to the label. This is one way of avoiding that trap.

Dr CLARK: Perhaps the Community Arts Program in Cairns will be able to access some of that funding to extend its activities, because it has been doing some very good work. In relation to child care, on page 26 of the PPS it indicates an increase of approximately \$10m for child-care programs now to an amount of some \$28m in 1995-96. Could you outline how Queensland is in fact progressing in the delivery of child-care places under the Better Child Care Strategy?

Ms WARNER: Child care is actually a good news story. In 1989, the State Government spent something like \$800,000 on child care. In 1996, we will provide 17,936 new places, and the estimated outlay on child-care services will be \$24.76m. Those new places comprise outside school hours care, vacation care, family day care, long day care, occasional care, TAFE campus care, and the remote Aboriginal area child care program. It is great to see child care taking its place in remote areas of the State, because it is a way of binding the community. It provides an opportunity for people to gather together and they feel much less isolated. Mothers in particular get a lot out of that. There is also employer support of school-age care.

We have worked very closely with the Commonwealth in developing substantially innovative schemes to cover the breadth of the needs in child care, which come in all shapes and sizes. We have 60 small flexible limited hours care centres providing 250 places. They operate from places like Saffron, Winton and Stanthorpe. They really are an adjunct to the local community and provide much-needed social infrastructure. Child care is also provided for seasonal workers. We have bought some places in family day care centres to provide child care for seasonal workers in areas where there is fruit picking, etc. We are trying to get some different kinds of child care services operating to meet the needs that we have identified.

One of the surprising things about the child-care industry is the longevity and resilience of the Family Day Care Program, which was introduced in about 1975. It is probably one of the most flexible and, in many cases, the most popular ways of providing child care. Incidentally, carers in family day care centres get better wages now. Child care has experienced really good, all-round development. The community and the private sector have both increased the delivery of child care.

Dr CLARK: I would be interested if you could comment on something I have encountered in relation to an after-school care program. The parents and community were very keen to develop a program and they did all the surveying they needed to do. However, there was a lack of space in the school to actually store the equipment. They managed to solve the problem in that instance by getting the Department of Administrative Services to fund a very large shed. Is there some way that either the State or Commonwealth can address that problem, because it really is a difficult one?

Ms WARNER: I am glad that the Department of Administrative Services came to the party on that occasion, but the Education Department also has a significant responsibility to make facilities for child care available on their premises. We have moved a long way in that direction over the last few years, but I suspect that we still have a way to go.

There are a number of ways that we can look at improving access, although I think you have hit upon another issue. Currently, before and after school hours care is not covered under the Child Care Regulations. The physical circumstances that are necessary for that service to take place are not laid down in any regulation at all. There is a demand in the community that we start looking at standards and at trying to get some kind of norm across the State, so that parents know what to expect when they place their child in before or after school hours care. You can only do that by integrating general child care standards, and we are looking that.

I was talking to Child Care Ministerial Committee members and they raised that issue with me. We have \$675,000 from capital funding available which could perhaps go to the refurbishment of premises, the provision of equipment and that sort of thing. That capital money is there and can be used. We have made provision for that, but we can also have a reasonable expectation that existing authorities and the community at large, including employers—and the Education Department would be an employer in this area—have some responsibility towards child care.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes questions from Government members. We now go back to Mr Littleproud, and I understand that he will move to another program area. Before he does, previously Mr Littleproud foreshadowed a question in relation to emergency sustenance funds which the Minister referred to that area. Would you like to answer that now, Minister?

Ms MATCHETT: I am not exactly sure of your question, but I would point out that the department does provide funding to a wide range of non-Government organisations to provide emergency relief. That might be by way of a voucher or it might be an actual handing out of the goods. This financial year we have provided funding for 107 organisations across the State. A total of \$1.39m has been allocated for that purpose and that goes to a wide range of organisations which are listed in our 1993-94 annual report. Not many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations receive funding through that program. Only about \$58,000 was actually provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations under the emergency relief program. You would also be aware that the Commonwealth has a lot of responsibilities in the area of income maintenance and it provides funding in that area. Does that answer your question?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Thank you, yes.

Ms MATCHETT: All the organisations are listed in our annual report. When our report comes out for this financial year, they will be listed there, too.

The CHAIRMAN: We now move to the next area.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Mr Chairman, I do not have any questions in regard to Ethnic Affairs, but I recognise the work being done by the Department of Ethnic Affairs. I hope Mr Themal does not feel put out that I do not have any questions for him through the Minister, but be assured that a coalition Government would recognise the need for these sorts of services. We would certainly provide those, as they are provided now.

I will move on to protective services and juvenile justice, and the SCAN scheme that the Minister suggested I refer to here. I think that the idea of the SCAN project is commendable, but I need some clarification. A solicitor rang me this week in relation to a case where JAB and the Department of Family Services had been involved. The solicitor advised the Juvenile Aid Bureau that there had been evidence of child abuse in a particular case of his, and JAB advised him that the matter would rest with the Department of Family Services as the lead agency. I want to know if that is correct. It would seem that there is a good chance there could have been a case mounted against some criminal activity on the part of some perpetrator, yet it rests with the Department of Family Services. Are you happy with that being the case or do you think it would be better if it was led by the Juvenile Aid Bureau under the police force who in fact can enforce the law?

Ms WARNER: No, I do not believe that that would be an appropriate way to go. There was a very tragic case in Victoria a few years ago where they had this kind of dual mechanism whereby the police have some responsibility and Family Services have some responsibility. There was a young boy called Danny Valerio who was reported to both agencies; both agencies thought that the other agency was doing it, and he fell through the cracks

in terms of the bureaucratic system and, unfortunately, that young boy was killed as a result of not being picked up. So I think it is better in terms of reporting of child abuse cases and the responsibility for the investigation that that remain with a single agency. And given that my department is responsible for dealing with the casework that is involved afterwards, and attempts to deal with that family's problems and the young person's problems, we should maintain that responsibility. However, if the police think that a criminal offence has occurred, they have the responsibility to charge that person with a criminal offence.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Would they be waiting for further casework to be done by the Department of Family Services?

Ms WARNER: They do not have to. If they think that an abuse has occurred which is against the law, then they can charge the person. In terms of the removal of that child from the protective custody—or the lack of protective custody in this case—of the parents, the police have to consult with us so as to exercise that option. I would find it very hard to believe that officers of my department would not move immediately to investigate that situation.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I will take this up with you in another place, because that solicitor was concerned. With regard to the Juvenile Justice Act and all the options available before the court—one option is a community service order. It has been reported, especially in the Gold Coast area, that some people whom the Children's Court places on a community service order in fact abscond before they have met the requirements of the order. Do you have statistics on how many people have been given community service orders by the court and what the level of compliance is?

Ms WARNER: I have. Community service orders were introduced under the Juvenile Justice Act in 1992. From the commencement of the Act there were \$3,753 community service orders given. As at 28 February this year, 400 juvenile offenders were working under community service orders. Only 10 per cent of offenders failed to comply with the orders and have been breached and brought back to courts for re-sentencing as a result of those breaches. Ten per cent is not a bad figure for that. A total of 571 community agencies have been approved to deliver community service order activities across the State, and the maximum hours of community service are 60 hours for 13 and 14-year-olds and 120 hours for 15 and 16-year-olds. I think that is a fairly good rate of compliance with the orders. I think it does take a while for the community to work out that there is going to be some significant benefit in ensuring that young people have the opportunity to take part in those orders, because they are rehabilitating. I think that one of the problems that we have for the youngsters is that they feel that they have no function, no purpose in life, and that offending at least gives them some kind of stimulation in terms of their activities; that they often do not see anything in non-offending behaviour that is attractive or purposeful or

compelling. Community service orders can attract the attention of those young persons.

I have a case study here of a young boy called John. At 15 he has a new job, renewed contact with his family and a positive self-image after a community service order. He was keen to complete his 60 hours' community service. He was placed at three local community agencies. He successfully completed his hours and was given a positive reference in relation to work. So it is actually a step, because it brings them into the community and gives them a piece of paper to go to an employer and say, "Look, I did this. This is what I am capable of." He got a job as a result of that. The work that he did on the community service order involved mowing lawns, cleaning and some office duties. I think a large number of the problems that young people face today could actually be resolved if we could find meaningful work for them to do.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: With regard to detention centres—one of the things that the riots at Westbrook can be attributed to was the mixing of juveniles on remand with those convicted. I understand that in the adult correctional institutions that is quite illegal. It is illegal under the Juvenile Justice Act. Does it still occur?

Ms WARNER: I do not know that we would agree with what you say about that. The separation of remand and sentenced offenders—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Is that not international convention?

Ms WARNER: No. The international convention is about separating adults from youth. I think that there is a degree of flexibility. It is a question of management. I think that there is a school of thought that if you put all the remand people together you will get a better outcome and you will keep the others quieter. There is also a school of thought which believes that if you mix the two groups—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In hindsight, what is your school of thought now in your department?

Ms WARNER: We believe that it is not necessary to separate them. Remand is a particularly volatile experience for young people. If you put all the volatile kids together with no leavening in one area you are likely to get a more explosive situation than if you mix them with people who have got some stake in working their way through the system, which is usually the people who have convictions. They know what they are in there for, they know how long they are there for, and they have some plans about what they are doing with their lives. I think it is useful for them to be mixed in that way. I do not necessarily think that we have the same experience as the adult system in respect of that.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I want to refer to the Outlook, a place outside Boonah. There was quite a bit of disquiet expressed by the mayor of that local authority when it was announced that you were going to send some juvenile offenders to the Outlook. You gave assurances that they would be carefully screened and strictly supervised and that they would be sincere about wishing to reform

themselves. The experience was reported this way: two juvenile offenders escaped from the Outlook, tied up the security services of the town for a good proportion of the night and stole a car. Do you now regret that perhaps the assurances were not watertight or that the selection process was not right?

Ms WARNER: No. You cannot predict all young kids. I had discussions with the Mayor of Boonah, and a very reasonable man he is, too, in terms of the use of the Outlook for these purposes. Yes, we do screen very carefully before we send them there. One kid who absconded had three weeks to go. The problem with young kids is that they do not think beyond tomorrow and they are very impetuous. You think that they are doing really well in the detention centre, they are not causing anybody any trouble, they are really working hard and they are very committed, but if they see an opportunity to go, they do not think about the consequences for themselves. One of the differences between adult corrections and juvenile corrections is that young people do not have that self-protective forethought about what the consequences for them are going to be if they have a one-night spree compared with spending three weeks more in a place where they are actually involved in some useful activity. It is very impetuous behaviour. It is tragic in terms of the consequences for that young person, but I believe that it is still worth giving it a go. I do not think that the level of social unrest in Boonah is significant. In fact, I understand that a number of people in Boonah are very pleased with this program.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Are you still doing it?

Ms WARNER: There are only four kids at a time. To finish what I was saying—it adds a little bit of work for the people in the town who come in and assist us on the program, and it is not particularly socially disruptive. We cannot, obviously, account for the impulsive behaviour of every juvenile on every occasion. I think it is worth taking that risk, to try to get those kids rehabilitated and, in the main, most of them will conform and respond.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: The Budget papers mention the Outreach Program. I think it referred mainly to Aboriginal juvenile offenders. Do you have plans to go further down that track and do you think that you are currently making full use of centres like Petford, BoysTown and the Shaftesbury centre? There is another one at Mission Beach, near Cairns, but the name escapes me.

Ms WARNER: Clump Mountain.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Yes, Clump Mountain.

Ms WARNER: Yes, I think that we are using all of those facilities and there is a need to develop more, because there is a need to target specifically the areas where offending rates are high, not only are they high but also the same kids come through the system all the time. They are not a large percentage of the population, but they are a very recalcitrant percentage of the population. We really need to try to put some effort and time specifically into the young Aboriginal kids because they are massively over-represented in the system. We need

to specifically target it to try to come to terms with their levels of energy in many ways—their levels of wanting to be active. We will be putting some supports and staff into developing further Outreach programs. Most of the money will not go on bricks and mortar, because there are lots of places where you can take young kids without building a specific facility to do so. You can take them bush, and Clump Mountain is a particularly good facility, but we have a lot of room for a lot more of those kinds of programs. The sum of \$500,000 has been allocated for developing those programs in Cairns and Cherbourg. I think that that will be money well spent. I think that that will be a useful activity.

BoysTown is a facility that is already currently used, but I think we need more than just very structured educational facilities, which is what BoysTown is. We need that kind of outreach, occasional program through which we can intensively work with kids for a six-week or two-month period, rather than the two years that I think BoysTown expects people to stay.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: With regard to Petford in particular, I spoke to a departmental officer some time ago because it was brought to my attention that it was under threat. I think that the owner of Petford was negotiating to buy another piece of property, Strathburn, and he was having trouble finalising that. I thought at the time, and it was reported to me, that Strathburn could be subject to an Aboriginal land claim. I suggested that, in your capacity, your department might be able to give some assistance to overcome that problem to allow for the sale of Strathburn to go through, so that Petford, a very worthwhile program, would be saved. Its costs per juvenile are pretty low when compared with detention centres and it is probably doing better work.

Ms WARNER: I understand that what has happened is that the chairman of Petford is facing a bit of a financial crisis because he has purchased Strathburn Station. He has made a request to ATSIC to purchase the surrounding Emu Creek Station from him, to enable him to honour his financial commitments at Strathburn. I understand that the submission to ATSIC was unsuccessful. I do not know the reasons for that, but it was unsuccessful. I understand that Mr Guest has stated in the media that the Petford Training Farm will close because of our inaction in supporting the purchase, but I do not think that we are in a position to tell ATSIC what to do.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I understand that there was some intention to start another closer in to Atherton or Mareeba.

Ms WARNER: I think that we have to look at a wide range of facilities in terms of the provision of new services. I do not think that we should simply stay with existing services.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You would not want to let that one fall over, because Mr Guest has been recognised in the Australia Day Awards for what he has done.

Ms WARNER: I do not think that the rumour that Petford is facing closure is valid. We are

working with Mr Guest to assist him with his difficulties.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: With regard to the report given by Judge Fred Maguire after 12 months of the Juvenile Justice Act being in operation, he made lots of recommendations. One related to compulsory attendance of parents with offending juveniles. He also said that, if a juvenile continued to offend, a history of cautionings could be brought to light and take part in the consideration of how the court would act. Do you intend to act upon those recommendations and others coming from Judge Maguire?

Ms WARNER: To make it compulsory—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: To amend the Act.

Ms WARNER: Amend the Act to make it compulsory for parents to attend court?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Not court, but some sort of counselling.

Ms WARNER: Amend the Act to make it compulsory for parents to attend some sort of counselling?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Yes, if a court order is given.

Ms WARNER: I think that the courts are quite at liberty to make the order that they feel so inclined to do. If Judge Maguire believes that part of his advice is to allow for counselling of parents, then he should make that order. I do not think that I can actually put that into legislation as a sentence. It is actually quite difficult to impose a penalty for another party. The child has committed the offence. It is quite difficult in our system of law for a court to be able to impose a penalty on another person. It has been looked at time and time again in the context of making parents pay for the damages that their children commit.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Judge Maguire must be aware of that, though.

Ms WARNER: You have to face the fact that our legislation provides, for instance, for parents to be asked to pay restitution. The courts, in their wisdom, very rarely ask for that, because it is quite difficult for them to insist on that. What are you going to do to parents if they do not pay? Are you going to imprison them? How far down the line do you want to go with compulsion? I think that it is much better to look for cooperation because, if you compel parents to do it, you are not actually going to get the results that you want. In fact, you are probably going to create another problem. If you hold up the case until parents turn up, you will probably end up not being able to hear a number of cases, so you will have kids in limbo in large percentages of cases. You have to look at the practicalities. It sounds good, but you cannot do it by a simple legislative stroke because all that will result in is legislation that is not operable.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes that session of questioning. We now return to Government members for questions. I invite the member for Sunnybank, Mr Robertson, to continue questions on the Protective Services and Juvenile Justice Program.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer to page 42 of the Portfolio Program Statements. One of the new policy initiatives in this year's budget is the allocation of \$24m over three years for a new Child Protection Strategy. Could you outline details of that strategy and how you envisage, greater protection for children as a result of this particular initiative?

Ms WARNER: There has been a major review of child protection policy in legislation. We had an allocation in last year's Budget of \$550,000 to look at various options for the child protection strategy. We are really on the verge of bringing that legislative reform into place. The \$8m that has been allocated—\$24m over a three-year period—has been made available to assist in what will be a major reform of a system that has not had any legislative change since 1965. So it is a very longstanding piece of legislation. Obviously, over the years the department's practice has changed very significantly from the practices that occurred in 1965, and the legislation does not reflect those changed needs and practices. One situation is that, in child protection cases, regardless of whether you want a small intervention or a large intervention, if you want to enforce that intervention, the only thing you can go for in a court is a guardianship order, and that is forever until you have it revoked. In many cases, it is using a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Under the new legislation, people will be able to go for a time constraint order for a six-month period, a six-week period or in some cases it could be even as short just wanting to have a medical examination and the parents are refusing. So you can go to the court and get that order, which is targeted specifically to the needs of the child.

The other thing is that there will be time-limited orders, so when departmental officers go to courts, they will be going for an order for a two-year period or a three-year period—I think it is for a maximum of two years. At the end of that two-year period, they have to go back and review the case. At the moment, quite often kids come into care and then just stay in the system because they do not get reviewed. We are looking at providing a level of resourcing and a level of support for families, which means that their cases are revisited considerably.

Within the new legislation, we are looking at trying to strengthen the role and the rights of parents so that they will have better access to the courts and a better understanding of their responsibilities, rather than the department simply just taking their kids away and not doing any further work with them. So it is much more collaborative, and it is much more based on the idea that the community and families take responsibility for the care of children as well as the department.

The CHAIRMAN: I now ask Ms Rose, the member for Currumbin, to ask any questions she may have on this program area.

Mrs ROSE: There has been a significant increase in the number of child abuse cases notified to your department. How has the department managed this increase in demand and have additional resources been allocated?

Ms WARNER: We were lucky enough to get an allocation of \$700,000 by Treasury in the mid-year review to employ supplementary staff in area and regional offices. We also allocated \$200,000 from other areas of the department. That was an internal allocation. Therefore, we had \$900,000 made available to place in the Division of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice of the department. That bought about 50 full-time equivalent staff, which is not necessary 50 people but 50 full-time equivalents over and above the number who had been employed in December 1994. The extra staff were employed as adolescent resource workers and family service officers. Most importantly, we had the money through that review to back fill positions left vacant by people who were on leave, or who were acting in other positions. That was really important. That represented a real increase of 10 per cent in the number of direct service staff in the six-month period from December 1994 to May 1995. It meant a lot for our department to be able to do that, because there has been a significant increase in the number of notifications. There has also been a huge increase in community expectations of the amount of work that officers will do in any one case. We were very grateful for that increase, and I think that the department has felt pleased about that.

Overall, we are very pleased with the \$8m that we are getting. I hope that that amount goes up next year. I might put that on the record in the Parliament right now: I have made it quite clear that I believe that the \$8m should not be an extra \$8m next year; indeed, it should be something between an extra \$10m and \$15m to meet the needs of the newly introduced child protection legislation, which will be well and truly kicking in the next financial year. I urge all members who will be members of Parliament at that time to lobby very heavily for that to occur.

Mrs ROSE: Thank you. In relation to overseas adoptions, could you please explain the process for overseas adoptions and whether any new agreements have been reached?

Ms WARNER: The applicants for adoptions of foreign children pay a \$53 application fee to go on the list of overseas adoptions, and a fee of \$641 for the completion of a home study assessment and administrative processes necessary to forward the information to the country overseas. As at 21 April 1995, the number of applicants on the foreign children's adoption list was 205 and, as of that same date, there were 17 foreign countries with whom we have agreements. The approximate waiting time is three to four years. The practice in Queensland is that we do not allow overseas adoptions of children over five.

There is a process that we conduct with other Ministers through the ministerial council process and that is that, when a new agreement is to be signed, a particular State will take responsibility for making contact with that country. We were instrumental in sending to Ethiopia Mary Twomey from the adoptions section of the Division of Protective Services and Juvenile Justice to negotiate with the Government about a system of protocols that both

they and we would respect and recognise in the event of children being adopted from that country.

It is often very difficult, particularly in countries such as Ethiopia, which has experienced civil war, various famines and relative political instability. So you have to be very careful because one of the things that we are very keen to avoid and, in fact, I believe that it is our moral duty to avoid, is the situation in which we enter into shonky deals with supposed authorities overseas and what we are actually entering into is not a real adoption program but, indeed, simply a trafficking in children program. That is something that would be totally and utterly repugnant.

Mrs ROSE: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: The member for Barron River, Dr Clark, now has a question.

Dr CLARK: It is really more of an expansion, if you can, on your answer to a question that was asked by Mr Littleproud in relation to the Outreach Programs that have been proposed for young offenders. You mentioned Cairns and Cherbourg as the locations that have been identified for those programs. I was wondering if you could just give us some more details about those programs, or how you will be going about designing those if they are not fully formulated yet.

Ms WARNER: I think the trick with those particular programs is to generate some enthusiasm within the Aboriginal community to pick them up and, indeed, employ Aboriginal staff to provide the intensive supervision orders, mainly because I believe that that is the only way in which the programs will work. So if we can, through a fairly lengthy consultation process, make sure that we get Aboriginal staff who are committed to this area, then we can get results. If I could just digress and say that we have had some experience with a number of programs of various kinds set up throughout the State. Many of them just develop naturally in an incremental way. In that way, we are actually building on that experience and moving it forwards into a recognised program within the department.

For instance, honourable members may recall the problems that we had in Ayr some time ago. We employed a couple of youth workers to work with that family. I understand that they achieved huge successes with respect to finding activities for people, developing the confidence of the townspeople in dealing with the youngsters concerned, and developing some consciousness and understanding of the issues and problems. Most of all, it was about providing a focus for communication so that, if people were concerned about something that was happening, they had somewhere to go and someone to ring to ask, "What is going on here? Can you explain why Billy was wandering down the street at midnight last night? Billy might not have been doing anything other than wandering down the street, but can you explain it?" For example, someone is keeping an eye on who is doing what, where and why.

In addition, we provided trained specialist staff to work intensively with the young people to offer

alternative activities for them in a structured and professional environment. Unfortunately, we will have to provide a specialisation for those staff; the issue is not isolated to that community, and we will have to put a lot of effort into developing that program.

Dr CLARK: Will you be looking to draw staff from Aboriginal organisations? For example, will you be encouraging Aboriginal organisations to apply for funding to train staff to deliver the services?

Ms WARNER: Mainly departmental staff will be offering this direct service, as was the case in Ayr.

Dr CLARK: Will that program see the employment of an additional one or two staff members at the Cairns office, or is that not clear?

Ms MATCHETT: It may not be the case that the staff will be located in the Cairns office. They might be based in a community somewhere. They will be working very closely with other Aboriginal organisations, the police and other key people within the community. They will provide intensive programs for young people with respect to drug and alcohol abuse. We will be looking at close supervision of the young people's work and leisure time. That will be the focus. To start with, they will be working flexible hours so that they can be with the young people when they are most active. Although it will involve intensive supervision, it will focus on addressing some of their specific problems with respect to alcohol and drugs, education, work experience and so on.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a question in relation to the grants for the International Year of the Family mentioned in the 1993-94 annual report. Were any of those grants held over, or were there any activities in the most recent financial year to continue that initiative?

Ms WARNER: Into this financial year, 1994-95?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Ms WARNER: Yes. The last six months of the International Year of the Family was in this financial year. The report was handed to me from the committee in January or February of this year so, yes, it went well into this financial year. The amount of money made available was \$600,000, part of which was spent in 1994-95. The Value of Children Campaign involved funding of \$185,000. The publication *Families—Facts and Figures* was a fairly substantial document which gives a fairly good picture of what is happening in relation to families in Queensland. That involved funding of \$60,000. A grants program was originally worth \$100,000. However, we provided another \$100,000 because of community demand.

One of the interesting aspects of the International Year of the Family was the study on elder abuse, which cost \$94,000. That resulted in a fairly extensive project to identify what is a very little known area of abusive behaviour directed at older people. We examined that problem and we had a significant discussion with seniors organisations and other people to try to develop some ideas for

programs to sensitise the community to it. It is important to recognise that older people are part of families. Families are not just about kids; they are also about grandparents.

The CHAIRMAN: So a number of issues arising from the projects that were able to be funded in that year indicated areas of need?

Ms WARNER: They were not necessarily all in areas of need; there were celebrations, picnics, activities and promotions. The Value of Children Campaign was a particularly important promotion in that year. A lot of the activities that occurred in that year will inform Government policy for many years to come. One of the significant areas touched on was the question of how we join family responsibilities with work responsibilities and how we can make our work areas more amenable to the fact that people are not just individuals; they come with significant attachments to others. This raises issues of compassionate leave, parental care and flexibility of working hours, which is coming into the enterprise bargaining arena as well. As employers and as a community, there is a lot that we need to do to make sure that we do not produce work environments that cause families to break down, which has been occurring over time.

The CHAIRMAN: Finally, you implored all of us to lobby strenuously for additional funding for child protection, with the Child Protection Strategy, as you said, kicking in more significantly next year. Could you indicate for the benefit of members and some of us who are not fully familiar with the strategy what specific elements of it will require a call on additional resources? For example, I refer to the additional staff who will identify and investigate cases of abuse. Could you be a bit more specific about what is going to cause the call on resources?

Ms WARNER: I have had a look at a number of child protection systems around Australia and overseas. One of the features which appears to be common to all of them is that, as a society, we are very concerned to remove kids who are at risk from the families that place them at risk. The department goes in, takes the kid out and says, "Okay, we have stopped them from being at risk. We have done our job." However, the job has only just started. You then have to find a way of integrating the child back into the community. That is the principle that the department would like to be able to operate on. In order to do that, you need significant resources to be able to work with that family to try to create the circumstances in which it is safe for that child to return to its family. Meanwhile, you need adequate facilities to be able to give that child care and protection in another setting. Foster care is a really good setting for that, but we do need to be able to use resources to encourage more people to be part of that program and to be able to resource them adequately. There should not be a penalty for those people when they take on the care of a young person.

The CHAIRMAN: There currently is to some extent.

Ms WARNER: In some cases there is, and we are very concerned about that. We are trying to

resource officers so that they can spend more time with families. We are trying to set up more prevention programs and programs from which families can learn about their behaviours and how to alter them. We are trying to set up more specialist places for kids who are seriously psychologically and emotionally damaged by their experiences so that they are kept safe during that period.

As to the offending population amongst children—they are quite often kids who have experienced quite dreadful rejections and physical experiences within their families. It is not surprising that they are going to have antisocial attitudes. The more we can intervene not only at the investigation end but also at the therapeutic end to try to provide specialist services, therapies, placements for kids, opportunities for officers, social workers and others to work with families to rehabilitate the family structure the better. That is what really needs to be done if we are going to have a successful Child Protection Strategy.

The CHAIRMAN: We now return to Mr Littleproud.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Along the same vein—from reading the documents, I have noted that there appears to be a general increase in funds and that lots of programs are mentioned, but the hard reality is that field staff are really stretched because they have a tremendous workload. I want to mention what is happening in rural areas in particular. For example, in my electorate there is an office of your department in Roma which handles everything in the west. That is shared between Howard Hobbs and me. At times, I can also access some officers in Toowoomba. The Program Statements refer to greater use being made of the local community in terms of child protection and family dispute resolution. Does that come under FISP—if that still exists—or what is the plan?

Ms WARNER: It would probably be part of the Child Protection Strategy but would be conducted through Community Services Development in conjunction with a non-Government organisation that would pick up a preventive program. It would be part of the \$8m Child Protection Strategy, so the funding goes through Protective Services and Juvenile Justice, but they may very well send some out to the non-Government sector through CSD to set up prevention programs where necessary. That will be an important aspect of trying to achieve a total community response.

To refer to your question—the \$900,000 increase that was provided midyear assisted greatly in relieving the pressures on area officers within the department. Hopefully, over time, with the recognition of the need for resources in properly attending to the very difficult and complex issues that the department faces, we will obtain better resources both at the area office level and the community level.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Time prevents me from taking that issue any further. I turn now to adoption. Recently, I asked a question in the House about

how many times you had used your authority as Minister to start proceedings against people who had made unwanted contacts. You said that in two instances you had exercised your right. I want to know how many requests for action you have received from adoptees and birth mothers. You have acted only twice.

Ms WARNER: I do not think that I have the number of requests with me. Basically, when the legislation has been breached in terms of individuals who are not honouring the veto, the matter has to be reported to the police, and the police ask me for the authority to proceed. I have done that on two occasions for the same individual.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: But you have denied it on another occasions.

Ms WARNER: I have not been approached on other occasions, so—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Thank you. The term "open adoption" has some currency at present. I understand it to be an arrangement whereby the birth mother has continuing contact with the adoptee with the permission of the adoptive parent. As a department, are you encouraging open adoptions? Is it proposed to be implemented in new legislation? Does it require legislative change?

Ms WARNER: It will require legislative change. I am told that it is operative in New Zealand at present, and I think that it is worth looking at. The trends are towards open adoption.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: There would be a veto in that, I imagine.

Ms WARNER: No. If you have an open adoption, you have an open adoption; there is nothing to veto.

Ms MATCHETT: When the adoption order is originally made, it is made on the basis that both the relinquishing parent and the adoptive parent know that part of the process from there on in—

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is the original agreement, then; righto.

Ms MATCHETT: Yes, part of the process from there on in will be some form of contact. In some instances, it can be just telephone or written contact; in other instances it can be personal contact as well. But that is all known up front.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In other cases the confidentiality of the past can be part and parcel of the agreement?

Ms MATCHETT: Absolutely, but it is something that is entered into before the adoption order is finally made.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I turn now to Intellectual Disability Services. The first question refers to Tourette syndrome.

Ms WARNER: What?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I thought that you might say that! My question refers to Tourette syndrome. It is a form of disability. I understand that a person who suffers from that disability has made a request to the Intellectually Disabled Citizens Council of Queensland to have it regarded as a disability that

would gain benefits. The council decided that that would not be the case. Does that person have the right to approach you as Minister to ask that his case be considered? It is certainly a recognised disability, but as yet—

Ms WARNER: I am sorry, I haven't a clue what it is. I am seeking some advice.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Would that person have the right to approach you, or does the decision rest completely with the Intellectually Disabled Citizens Council of Queensland?

Ms WARNER: I suggest that that person write to me.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That condition was unknown to me also until about two days ago.

Ms WARNER: I will find out, too.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I refer to the Portfolio Program Statements at page 36. Reference is made there to a comprehensive duty of care package for residential care officers. I imagine that that will be a public document that will be made available to carers in the field. Would it be possible for me to obtain a copy of that document, and will you give me some details about it?

Ms MATCHETT: The package is for our staff, and it outlines to the staff what their duties are in terms of caring for clients. Certainly, if you would like a copy of that package, I am happy to post one to you.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: People outside the department will also be utilised as care providers. What sort of process do you undertake in terms of selecting those people? I have had contact from people who are currently working in institutions and have applied to become care providers but they have been turned down. They are mystified about the reasons for that. Their skills are currently being used successfully, yet their applications have been denied by the department.

Ms WARNER: Will you repeat the question? I am not entirely sure what you are getting at.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: What process is the department undertaking to select those eligible to be care providers for people living in the community suffering from intellectual disabilities?

Ms WARNER: Julian Foley, the divisional head of Intellectual Disability Services, will answer that question.

Mr FOLEY: Within our own department, the residential care officers we employ go through a very extensive process of training. You would have read that we are looking at their recruitment and selection procedures. I think the group to which you are referring is the group in the non-Government sector. Although a non-Government organisation has responsibility for its recruitment, our interaction with the non-Government organisations is through a service agreement. In respect of a number of our clients there would be quite a specific service agreement which sets out the standards of service that the organisation is expected to achieve. The regional staff of Community Services Development actually have a role in monitoring that agreement

down to the level of the quality of care to individual clients if needs be.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: So that is where the selection process and accountability measures will be put in place. The Program Statements refer to the number of people to be moved from the various institutions into the community. I refer you to page 41 of the Program Statements. There is a table there headed "Major Activities", which refers to residential services and accommodation and service options. There is a fairly large increase in those sectors. I can understand the increase in the accommodation and service options area, given that you are moving people into the community, but there is still an increase in residential services even though fewer people will be cared for in that way. There has been an increase in that sector from \$53m to \$56m. Am I right in drawing that conclusion, or have I got it wrong?

Ms WARNER: Well, it is not.

Ms MATCHETT: Even though there will be in future years a smaller number of people in our residential facilities, part of the funding we are receiving is what is called hump funding. We will be moving the clients out into the community progressively. That will still mean that we will need to run the kitchens and laundries and have the overheads in the existing institutions. So, there is that hump funding there. Also, as the Minister said earlier when she was talking about institutional reform, we are developing a whole new range of services at the community level to support these clients in the community.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Is that provided by your department?

Ms MATCHETT: By the department and by non-Government organisations. Take Challinor, for example. When the whole institutional reform process has been concluded at Challinor and all of the clients are relocated into the community, we will actually be spending more money on those clients than we were spending when they were in Challinor. So there will be increases in the funding even though there will be fewer people within the institutions, and you will notice that as you look at our budget over subsequent years.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: So the term "residential" covers both those in the institutions and those there in the broader community?

Ms MATCHETT: Yes.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That was a misunderstanding. Minister, towards the end of last year you said that, as each resident moved from an institution into the broader community, there was something like \$80,000 funding per resident. That prompted people who are currently, and have for a long time, caring for family or friends with intellectual disabilities in their own home to come to me. They argued that there is a great disparity between the sort of assistance the person they look after gets and the sort of assistance that will be available to those people who are being moved from institutions and into the broader community. Have they got a valid argument and, if so, what are you going to do about addressing it?

Ms WARNER: I believe that they do have a valid concern. We really do have to lift the quality of care and support that we give to individuals with intellectual disabilities, whether they live in the community or whether they are currently in institutions. I think the fact that we have managed to attract funds for deinstitutionalisation of Challinor, Basil Stafford, Maryborough, Hervey Bay and W. R. Black is of huge benefit to people with intellectual disabilities.

At the moment, Challinor provides a service for 172 individuals. Those individuals, some of whom are quite old, will not be there forever, but when they go into the community their funded place will still be available for another person who is currently in need of greater support than they have at the moment. So, in other words, the extra money that will be part of the institutionalisation package will benefit those people who currently have a lesser level of services. Even though we are closing down the bricks and mortar of the institutions, we are not closing down the funding arrangement.

We have what we call an accommodation matrix. The people who are in need of financial support place their names on what is like a waiting list. It is called a matrix because it actually takes into account all factors, such as the level of disability, etc. So, it is not just a time thing. They can still place their name on that matrix and expect to get some of the supports when those places become available in the future. So the institutional reform will be directly benefiting those individuals who are coming out of the institutions in the short run. In the long run, it will be placing appropriate services at the disposal of the whole community over a longer period of time. That is really useful.

The other issue that we are looking at is the provision of increased funding to the non-Government sector to provide accommodation support. We are looking at trying to increase funding at all levels, but we really do have to do something about the fact that we have people living in large institutions in this State whose rights are not being as respected as they would if they were living in the community.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I draw your attention now to respite care both for the people with disabilities and also the carers. Do you have specific plans within your funding to increase the number of places to provide respite care for both parties?

Ms WARNER: We have basically two areas in the department that deal with disability: one area basically is responsible for the over-arching policy of a whole-of-Government approach, that is, disability directions, lead agency, etc.; the other area is involved in the provision of direct services, that is, Intellectual Disability Services. Intellectual Disability Services is moving out of the area of the provision of respite and placing it into that community context. It is doing that over a five-year period. We are working with parents, individuals and centres to try to work that through. There will be no reduction in the level of respite that is available; hopefully, the levels will increase. Do you want more details about that?

Mr LITTLEPROUD: No. I will put a proposition to you: after the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, a significant amount of Federal money was allocated to housing, among other things, for Aboriginal people. What do you think about the idea of a national commission into intellectually disabled people? There should be national and State recognition of the need for services to help in looking after people with intellectual disabilities across the nation.

Ms WARNER: There was some debate held between the Commonwealth and the State throughout the Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement which we entered into in 1991. That was a substantial reform that made a significant amount of money available for direct services for people with disabilities. Basically, the Commonwealth gave us some more money because we as a State had been underfunded considerably, not only from the State Government's point of view, but also compared with the amount of Commonwealth dollars that we were receiving compared with other States. We received extra funding because our infrastructure was so much lower than elsewhere.

That Commonwealth/State Disability Agreement was aimed at trying to bring us up to the average level of funding across Australia. It meant that States like South Australia, which had quite high levels of funding per capita, did not get very much out of the deal, but States like Queensland, which had very low levels of funding per capita in the disability area, got a very good deal. So we actually got extra dollars. Not only that, we actually signed the agreement early and we managed to score ourselves a couple of million dollars extra. That agreement basically divided the responsibilities. We got accommodation support, not just in the area of intellectual disability but across disability in general and other support services, and the Commonwealth got employment provisions.

That agreement, which I think has brought some significant benefits to Queensland, is up for renegotiation next year. We have managed to attract the Commonwealth/State moneys and, while signing that, we introduced disability legislation which set in place a regime of rights and an understanding of the right of people with disabilities to be included in the community. That process has to be undergone again. I think that the point that you make about trying to get some Commonwealth commitment—particularly for the areas where I think we have not gone as far as we should, which is the provision of employment for people with disabilities—is quite valid. In terms of funding, the Commonwealth really has to lift its game. As I said before, we also need more funding in the area of post-school options. I think they have a significant role to play there, too.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Have you some statistical data in relation to the financial costs of delivering services in institutional situations as against community institutions?

Ms WARNER: It is more expensive to deliver services in the community situation, if you do it properly. For example, in the case of Challinor,

which you mentioned before, we currently spend \$8.8m to keep 172 individuals. When those 172 individuals are in communities in all different kinds of placements, we will be spending \$14.6m.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: That is a 75 per cent increase.

Ms WARNER: It is a substantial increase.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: Do you think that will be consistent?

Ms WARNER: I took the submission to Cabinet, which was very concerned, as I think most thinking people are. Anybody looking at the Basil Stafford inquiry report would understand the dangers and difficulties, and I do not suggest that they have emerged only under this Government; this has gone on for years. The dangers and difficulties that you have in running institutions per se you would have less of in the community where there is more monitoring and more public attention paid to them. When you and I were young, we hardly ever saw anybody with any disabilities in the community. Now we expect to see people in wheelchairs and people with disabilities. They are part of our daily lives, and that is healthier. We no longer have the idea that we shut away those people who are different because we somehow find them obnoxious or unpleasant or we feel sensitive about them. Those people deserve to live in the same community you and I live in and have their rights respected. In order for us to do that, we have to spend more money and put more commitment in. I think it is money well spent. For too long the people who are least able to represent themselves have been under-funded in terms of the delivery of Government services.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: In the papers you refer to psychiatric disability and intellectual disability. I need some sort of clarification, because there are people who suffer from a mental health problem or people who are intellectually disabled and there is a line between yourself and the Department of Health. Can you expand on that?

Ms WARNER: People who have intellectual disabilities are not mentally ill.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: What about psychiatric disabilities; why does that not come under the Department of Health?

Ms WARNER: It does. I have explained before that we will be providing supports for people with psychiatric disabilities to enable them to live in the community. That is part of the program.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: What role does the Health Department play in that?

Ms WARNER: I explained that before: the Health Department will be providing medical, psychiatric and therapy services and things along that line. We will be providing the ordinary, everyday supports that those people require to enable them to live in the community. Ruth Matchett is desperate to say something on the subject.

Ms MATCHETT: I am not desperate, but I hope what I have to say will help this debate. We will be providing services to assist people with

mental illnesses or psychiatric disabilities with their day-to-day lives. Some people might need assistance with shopping or laundry; there are people who need to have recreation activities provided that will link up with other activities in the community. We will be providing a network of services to support those people in the community in those ways. Experience elsewhere with the deinstitutionalisation of people with a psychiatric illness has often been that they get some health services, but their other needs are not attended to such as their specialised accommodation and support needs within the community. These funds have been allocated so that we have the proper level of supports for these people in the community and we do not have the problems that occurred elsewhere when people have been disgorged from psychiatric hospitals without the appropriate personal supports.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: What is the differences between what you are going to provide and the experience elsewhere?

Ms WARNER: Money is the difference. We are providing money, real services, real supports, and workers to help people live in the community.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: You are going to provide more money per client than the other States?

Ms WARNER: That is right.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: To what degree?

Ms MATCHETT: For example, currently about \$300,000 is spent on community support services for people with psychiatric disabilities such as I have just described. When this program is concluded, we anticipate that we will be spending \$12.4m on services provided by non-Government organisations to support people in the community. It is a significant addition.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: I have no more questions.

The CHAIRMAN: There are a couple of questions from Government members before we conclude.

Mr ROBERTSON: One area that I do not think has been explored yet is the question of consultation with the families that are directly affected by that institutional reform process. To what extent has the department been consulting with families about the future plans for their family members with respect to this process?

Ms WARNER: We are very keen to ensure that families are included in the process of institutional reform. A group that has been quite critical of us of is Australian Parents Advocacy, whose members include a number of the relatives of people who live at Challinor or Basil Stafford. There are other parent groups like Queensland Parents of People with Disabilities, QPPD, and Queensland Advocacy Incorporated, QAI. These groups are very supportive of well-resourced, institutional reform. We want to involve all those groups in the development of the options and the processes that we are going through.

The concerns of these groups range from whether or not their family members have the capacity to live in the community and whether or not the department will provide adequate support. Most significantly, their major concern is whether we will continue to provide that support as we would if it was an institution. The answer to that is: yes, we will continue to provide that support. We may even call it the "Challinor Program", even though as a building Challinor no longer exists. The funding for Challinor will be increased to \$14.4m in three years' time and it will remain a program to provide funds for people in the community. In terms of funding, individuals who are being deinstitutionalised will be better supported, and as securely supported in terms of the financial commitment, as they are now in Challinor. That is also the case with Basil Stafford and Maryborough, and all the others.

We need to persuade parents that this is the reality of the situation and to work through some of their concerns and fears with them. I would be very grateful if Mr Littleproud would assist in that process, particularly as he has looked at some of the successful deinstitutionalisation programs that have been conducted in the non-Government sector, such as W. R. Black, Uniting Church and Xavier homes where the process has really worked well. We want to include those people in the process. A committee will be liaising directly with Julian Foley, the divisional head, to provide advice to him.

Mrs ROSE: The budget has allocated funding for the relocation of residents of the Maryborough disabled person's ward. Would you outline the details of this relocation project?

Ms WARNER: In 1991 the Commonwealth provided \$373,000 for preparatory planning for the relocation of residents. There are 25 people with multiple disabilities who currently live in the ward; three people who have been placed in alternative individual arrangements in Brisbane, Hervey Bay and Cairns; and two people who have been placed in shared accommodation in Gympie. There has been widespread community interest in the project to relocate residents from the ward with QAI—Queensland Advocacy Inc., which I mentioned before—the Legal Friend, the Intellectual Disability Citizens Council, the Public Trustee, the local Maryborough Action Group and a Coroners Court all calling for action to close the ward. There has been funds of \$1.316m available in 1995-96, \$2.365m in 1996-97, and \$1,909m in 1997-98 to relocate all the residents of the ward by January 1997. These funds will provide residents with the supports that we have been talking about at some length to live in the community or in purpose-built adapted housing for those purposes. I really look forward to the day when we no longer see people with intellectual disability living in hospitals in this State.

Dr CLARK: Could you please outline for us how the clients of the Division of Intellectual Disability Services have their grievances addressed in a way that recognises their special needs?

Ms WARNER: We set up a grievance procedure in October 1993. The procedure is formal

and it provides an internal grievance mechanism. Twenty-two formal grievances have been lodged and resolved since October 1993, and I am pleased that that has happened, because it means that that process is working. I think that you can resolve the issues that are raised through that process.

A person who can raise issues is a person acting in the interests of a client—they may be members of the family—and the grievances may be submitted verbally to the supervisor of the relevant service. If the consumer and their family or advocate does not think that the grievance has been satisfactorily resolved it proceeds to the next level of supervision and the grievance proceeds through a maximum of four stages to the provisional head, if necessary. At each stage the resolution must occur within 10 days or pass on to the next stage, and evaluation of the procedure is currently being undertaken. There are another seven grievances which have been lodged but which have not yet been resolved. The majority of grievances have been about physical aggression, threats of violence by one consumer towards another, the physical environments in which consumers live and the lack of communication about service delivery. Most grievances have been lodged by families or by staff on behalf of consumers. Three grievances have been lodged by the consumers themselves.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. That concludes the questions of the Estimates

Committee D in respect of the Department of Family Services and Aboriginal and Islander Affairs. I would like to say in conclusion that what the examination of the Estimates this afternoon certainly showed to members on this Committee is that your department is responsible for an enormous range of services and areas of need. I think far too few members on both sides of Parliament underestimate the enormous range of responsibilities that the department carries, and for too long the resources dedicated to this area do not reflect the responsibility that any just society should accord to the needs of people whom your department cares for.

We are grateful for the work that all of your staff perform under what is quite obviously very stressful circumstances with very limited resources. On behalf of the Committee, I would particularly like to thank them for their preparation for this Estimates hearing today, and to yourself as the retiring Minister, we are grateful for your efforts over the period of your ministry.

Ms WARNER: I thank the Committee for its questions, some of which were reassuringly robust.

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare the hearing closed for the moment. We will adjourn until 7.30 p.m. when we will have the Estimates hearing for the next department.

Sitting suspended from 6.25 to 7.30 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND HERITAGE**In Attendance**

Hon. M. Robson, Minister for Environment and Heritage

Dr Craig Emerson, Director-General

Mr Rod Arnott, Director, Corporate Services

Mr Ross Rolfe, Executive Director (Conservation)

Mr Bob Speirs, Regional Director

Mr John Gilmour, Executive Director, Environment

Mr Jon Womersley, Director, Queensland National Parks and Wildlife Service

The CHAIRMAN: I declare open this meeting of Estimates Committee D to look at the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill with respect to the Department of Environment and Heritage. Before proceeding, I introduce members of the Committee for the benefit of officers and staff of the department. On my right we have Government members: the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose, the member for Barron River, Dr Clark, and the member for Sunnybank, Mr Robertson. On my left we have the Opposition spokesperson for Environment and member for Burnett, Mr Slack; the member for Southport, Mr Veivers; and the member for Western Downs, Mr Littleproud. We will proceed in much the same manner as the operation of this Committee last year. After a brief statement from the Minister, we will begin with questions for a 20-minute period from Opposition members, followed by 20 minutes of questions from Government members and so on, alternating in that order. With respect to each question, the sessional orders provide for questions to be asked within a time limit of one minute and answers to be given within a time limit of three minutes, 15 seconds prior to the end of which you will hear a single chime from our loyal time keeper. At the end of the three-minute period there will be a double chime to indicate the end of the time allowed for the answer to that particular question. However, at the request of the questioner or the Minister, the Chair can consider an extension of time or a further question can be asked.

As occurred in this Committee last year, there has been agreement among Committee members that we will deal with each department according to a program basis. In this case, we will start with the Conservation Program and proceed on to other programs so that all questions in block are asked in respect of each program in turn. Usually it will be the Opposition questioner who will indicate when we change from the first program to the second and so on. I now declare the hearings into the expenditure of the Department of Environment and Heritage open for examination. The question is that the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I invite the Minister to make a brief opening statement.

Ms ROBSON: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and members of the Estimates committee. I welcome

the opportunity to debate the Budget Estimates for the Department of Environment and Heritage with members of the Estimates committee. In the past year, the Department of Environment and Heritage has undergone extensive organisational growth and development, including increasing our range of environmental responsibilities and increasing day-to-day management of an expanding national park estate. There has been an important shift in emphasis from mainly a conservation perspective to an agency with increasing responsibility for broader environmental issues and a primary focus on ecologically sustainable development. This ongoing transformation is the direct consequence of changing Government policy and is reflected in six major new initiatives. These initiatives will make a substantive contribution to a clean, safe and secure environment for the long-term benefit of the Queensland community.

The first initiative involves directing significant resources towards ensuring full implementation of the new environmental protection legislation. It will support expansion and development of a comprehensive environmental work force and improve both efficiency and a range of environmental management services provided to industry and the community.

The second is the Koala Coast Protection Plan, which will support the acquisition and restoration of critical koala habitat on the koala coast, improve our scientific knowledge and community awareness of koala ecology, reduce koala mortality caused by human activities, and develop the koala coast visitor infrastructure.

The Conservation Management Initiative will provide funding and staffing resources for the day-to-day management of the national park estate, implementation of the Great Sandy Region Management Plan and support community-based nature conservation outside the national park estate. The Land Acquisition Initiative involves significant funding for continuing the Government's commitment to expand the national park estate.

The General Capital Initiative comprises the development of a world-class herbarium at Mount Coot-tha, which will ensure the long-term care of that institution's scientifically important plant collection; the purchase of replacement vessels for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park surveillance; development of the Toohey Forest environment education centre; and a Wet Tropics Capital Works Program to improve visitor facilities to that important World Heritage area.

The sixth initiative is in the employment area in which funding is provided for the highly successful Youth Conservation Corps project and other trainee projects. This initiative is aimed mainly at the establishment of plantations as an alternative to the logging of native forests with high conservation values.

A new charging policy has been adopted to rationalise existing charges for a range of departmental services and to provide fiscal incentives for responsible environmental practice. It is anticipated that increasing receipts from user

charges with the full operation of the nature conservation legislation will generate significant revenue, especially increases in receipts for wildlife permits, licence fees and camping fees. As well, the introduction of a comprehensive user-pays scheme under the environmental protection legislation will help to offset the cost of this scheme.

In total, a record of \$160.9m has been provided in the 1995-96 budget for the Department of Environment and Heritage, which represents an increase of almost 18 per cent on the 1994-95 budget. New initiative funding stands at \$25.3m, which is almost double last year's allocation. Mr Chairman, I welcome questions from the Estimates committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. We will open our first 20 minutes of questioning with Mr Slack.

Mr SLACK: I would like to clear up a point that carried over from last year. It relates to a question that I asked on notice. I asked you to provide the names of the consultants engaged by the Department of Environment and Heritage for 1993-94. Your answer was that the details of consultancies for the period 1 July 1993 to 31 May 1994 and projected consultants costs for 1994-95 were shown on the attached schedule. You provided the schedule but you have not provided the names of those consultants. I ask: what is your reason for doing that? Are you prepared to provide the names of those consultants that were used this year and the costs of those consultants and, if not, why not? Why were the names of the consultants engaged by the department not provided last year? That was Question No. 3 on notice from last year.

Ms ROBSON: We can provide you with that information. We might have to do it in the next couple of days, but we have the lists available with the names of the consultants who were involved. We can put it into a form that is suitable.

Mr SLACK: Which includes the names?

Ms ROBSON: I do not have a problem with that. I was not aware that you actually asked for that last year. I was not conscious of the fact—

Mr SLACK: It was a question on notice.

Ms ROBSON: From last year?

Mr SLACK: Yes, it was a question on notice.

Ms ROBSON: Sure, and you did not receive it?

Mr SLACK: All I received were the total amounts paid and not the actual names.

Ms ROBSON: And you actually asked for the names?

Mr SLACK: Yes.

Ms ROBSON: I was not conscious that you had not got that.

Mr SLACK: Okay. I put this question to you in respect of the number of rangers who are indicated on page 19 of the Program Statements: considering out of 215 national parks only 52 have resident rangers, could you explain why there has been a drop in the ranger numbers from 542 to

411, as shown in the Budget papers? This is on page 19 of the Program Statements.

Ms ROBSON: I will take you through the explanation that is underneath on page 19, which explains the variations and for any additional information, Mr Rolfe or Dr Emerson can elaborate. The major variation in the 1995-96 estimate shows a reduction to 411 parks and wildlife rangers. This is owing to 58 ranger positions now being correctly attributed to the Coastal Management Subprogram. In other words, there has been a reallocation of where people are working. So those 58 have been correctly attributed to the Coastal Management Subprogram, 11 to the Conservation Strategy Subprogram, and two to the Cultural Heritage Subprogram. That reflects more accurately the nature of their particular duties. So that is why those figures are different. Additionally, some wages employee net reductions were experienced as a result of a structured winding down of the Jobs for the Environment Program, and 45 are related to that, with the reorganisation of the Youth Conservation Corps accounting for 15. The reduction in the 1995-96 estimates of professional officers in the National Parks and Wildlife Service is a result of such officers either now being correctly attributed to the administrative category within that subprogram or now being shown as professional officers within the Conservation Strategy Subprogram, which reflects more accurately the nature of their duties. In other words, we have gone through introducing new programs—and you would be aware that we do that literally on an annual basis with new initiatives and new program work that we take on—and we shift officers around. It may be that they are shifting around from branch to branch or inside their branches. We try to reflect, through the category that they are placed under—for example, Coastal Management at the top of that table—the duties that they are doing. It may be that, for example, in the Coastal Management Branch we have a heavy workload in any given period of time and we need to shift people around, or whatever—or they may wish to move. There are a range of reasons.

Mr SLACK: I understand that. But what you are saying from this second paragraph on page 19 is that the wages employees, that is the Jobs for the Environment Program employees, of 45 and the Youth Conservation Corporations of 15 are included in that ranger number of 542.

Ms ROBSON: That is correct, yes.

Mr SLACK: I refer you to a question that I put to you last year in respect to this issue. When I asked you about the Youth Conservation Corps, you stated—

"No, they are not part of the YCC or the Jobs for the Environment Program; a totally separate set of figures covers these two programs. They are not included in my mainstream budget."

I was referring to the number of rangers. Before that answer, I asked the question—

"You seemed to be much more specific in your answers to the member for Albert.

Could I follow on from some of the questions that he raised in respect to national parks and the employment of rangers? I have several questions here—a couple of which I have asked you—in respect to the break-up of the rangers employed in each region. I also referred to the number of rangers who were on renewable contract, to which you referred in your last answer before the Government members of the Committee asked you questions. Of the 512 rangers who were employed last year, I referred to cadet rangers. Could you indicate to me whether included in that figure were people who were employed under the funding provided for the Youth Conservation Corps or the Jobs for the Environment Program, or were those 512 rangers all experienced rangers?

So there seems to be a discrepancy that, in this year, you are including those Youth Conservation Corps people within the ranger numbers and last year you were not.

Ms ROBSON: It might be appropriate for Mr Rolfe to actually answer that. He is the Executive Director of the Division of Conservation.

Dr EMERSON: I might just start. First, in terms of the total number of rangers, which really follows on from your first question, you noted a reduction in that row from 542 to 411; but if you add the various other categories, namely the 63 for Coastal Management, the 11 for Conservation Strategy, the two for Cultural Heritage with 411 from the National Parks and Wildlife Service, you get a total of 487. Really, as an elaboration on what the Minister was saying, in terms of the total change in the number of rangers, we are really looking at a change from 542 to 487, which is essentially explained in the variations.

Mr SLACK: Which is a drop.

Dr EMERSON: Because—and Mr Rolfe will go on about this—of the categorisation. You see, in 1991 the department was reviewed by the Public Sector Management Commission. In doing that, the whole structure of the department was changed from one program to the three programs that we are dealing with tonight—Conservation, Environment and Corporate Services. In that process there needed to be a process of redesignating people, and we are going through that process.

Mr SLACK: I understand that. I have no problem with that, Dr Emerson. The question I am asking is relevant to the explanation at the bottom of page 19. The first part of the explanation is fine; I have no problem with that whatsoever. But you are indicating in the second part of the explanation that the figures included in these numbers of rangers included the Jobs for the Environment Program of 45, and the reorganisation of the Youth Conservation Corps of 15. So I understand that they are included in the 542 that you have nominated there.

Dr EMERSON: And the figure—

Mr SLACK: But they were not—

Dr EMERSON: The figure I think that you referred to last year was 512. So just picking up what you said—

Mr SLACK: Five hundred and twelve rangers, but when you add the 60 from 45 and 15, it makes 572, not 542.

Dr EMERSON: I am aware of that. It is really as a result of a redesignation and reclassification, including the use of temporaries and the inclusion of people in both years from the Youth Conservation Corps and the Jobs for the Environment Program. You might recall that both of those programs were essentially three-year programs. Basically, they are winding down now, and that is why you get these figures.

Mr SLACK: But in actual fact, the Minister said last year that those people were not included in the ranger numbers—the Youth Conservation Corps. What you are actually seeing now, if you add up your figures, is a drop in rangers. Despite the fact that there has been redeployment from that area and, as you say, putting them in their correct places within the system, you still have a drop in actual ranger numbers.

Dr EMERSON: I do not think that is right. I am sure that is not right. There has actually been an increase in rangers in 1992-93—\$5.6m—

Mr SLACK: 1994-95.

Dr EMERSON: That funding was provided, and that allowed the creation of 110 ranger positions.

Mr SLACK: I am not referring to 1992-93. What I am saying is that you are proposing a drop from 1994-95 to 1995-96.

Dr EMERSON: There is no drop. There is provision in the new initiative funding for an extra 25 rangers to be added to the total. To some extent it is confusing, but there is no drop in the number of national park rangers. It is the result of recategorisation.

Mr SLACK: I find it difficult to reconcile that with the figures. When I add them all up, if I do not include the totals of 45 and 15, I do not find that you have an increase of 25. If you take 411, delete 45, 15 and 60 and add 71 for the number redeployed, that comes to 482; it does not come to 543.

Dr EMERSON: I can only repeat: it is a result of the recategorisation and the exclusion in the figures provided last year of some people and their inclusion in the revised figures. We do not want to confuse the general public or this Committee by comparing unlike with unlike. It is a recategorisation so that we can compare like with like. I would also point out that these staffing levels are full-time equivalents—and I know that this is difficult to follow—but it is different from the number of positions. For example, you could have two people working part-time; that would be two positions but one full-time equivalent.

Ms ROBSON: I can see the point that you are making. I think the figures that I gave you last year are accurate. We did check them again. As Dr

Emerson has said, the reshuffling of categories has caused this problem. It is probably more relevant to start looking at the total figures that we are talking about in relation to an increase. The redistribution of functions has caused the confusion. As I am aware, the figures are a comparison with the baseline figure from last year and what is predicted for the coming year.

Mr SLACK: In coastal management, you have gone from five to 63. That is an increase of 58. The number of rangers in the conservation strategy has gone from 0 to 11. That is an increase of 11. The number of rangers in cultural heritage has gone from 0 to 2. When those figures are added up—for example, 58 and 11 is 69, two on top of that is 71, and add that to 411—the total is 482. Your figure for last year is 542. I have taken into consideration the increase in the redeployment. It is black and white.

Dr EMERSON: We need to return to the three paragraphs underneath which explain the variation.

Ms ROBSON: I can go over the variations again if you like.

Mr SLACK: You can go over it as much as you like.

Dr EMERSON: We accept that the recategorisation creates some difficulty in interpretation, but it has never been the intention of the Department of Environment and Heritage to reduce the number of rangers. As to the number of rangers, apart from the Jobs for the Environment Program and the Youth Conservation Corps—that variation, which is explained in those paragraphs, has not fallen; it has increased and it will increase again.

Mr SLACK: A member of the public reading these statements would also have to be forgiven for coming to the conclusion that I came to. I am finding it difficult to see where the increase of 25 came from.

Dr EMERSON: This is the base level funding. The increase of 25—and I want to double check this with the director of corporate services—does not include the new initiative funding.

Mr SLACK: Are you saying that there are extra positions on top of these figures that are not included in the statement?

Dr EMERSON: Yes.

Mr SLACK: Why are they not included?

Dr EMERSON: Because this is the standard format. It is standard across all of the portfolios to refer to base level funding.

Mr SLACK: How the hell can we ask questions and come to a conclusion if they are not in the figures? It may well be a standard format.

Dr EMERSON: We do explain elsewhere in the documentation the increase of 25 ranger positions, but this refers to the base level activity for the Department of Environment and Heritage.

Mr SLACK: Mr Chairman, I have some difficulty with this. Where are the figures that explain the extra 25 positions, if this is the standard format and they are not included in it?

Dr EMERSON: I can only repeat: this is the staffing resources based on the base level of funding. There is new initiative funding for national park management of \$12m over three years. That provides for an increase of 25 ranger positions.

Mr SLACK: Explain again why that is not in this column. This is the column that we base our questions on. Why is the figure not in the column?

Dr EMERSON: Because this refers to the base level of Department of Environment and Heritage funding. This is the base funding.

Mr SLACK: So you are saying that the \$164.9m that you have allocated is not the full sum that you are going to be using for Environment and Heritage. I understand that these would be the figures on which you base your rangers' wages.

Dr EMERSON: No, \$160.9m is the total budget this year, which includes the base funding plus, as explained in the very early pages of the document—page 4—new initiative funding of \$25.3m, of which \$9.5m is for conservation management. That then is broken down further to the allocation for national park management, which is \$2.5m in the first year and \$12m over three years.

Mr SLACK: Could I suggest to you, Dr Emerson, that you reorganise your Program Statements for next year so that we have a better indication of what the situation is?

Dr EMERSON: You can certainly suggest that, yes.

Mr VEIVERS: But whether you do it is another thing.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! With respect, this does not involve Dr Emerson so much; he has directions from Treasury as to how they are to be formatted. Perhaps it is a question that should be put to the Treasurer in the Parliament. Dr Emerson has acted on directions on the way to format the figures. Mr Slack, your concerns are legitimate and you are entitled to pursue them.

Mr SLACK: Are you saying that the formatting of all of the other Program Statements is directed from Treasury and that they can contain a similar anomaly?

Dr EMERSON: The format is given to us and we follow it. There is a standard format. We do not pick and choose the way these figures are presented.

Mr LITTLEPROUD: On a point of order—I was involved in the Estimates hearings for Emergency Services. I raised this issue in those Estimates; that is, the staffing tables for 1994-95 were presented in a different format in 1995-96. I questioned the fact that there are orders coming through from Treasury, because they are inconsistent from one year to the next.

The CHAIRMAN: Your comment is noted, Mr Littleproud. There is no point of order as such.

We are just about out of time. I will allow Mr Slack to ask one further question.

Mr SLACK: While I am on these questions, I might as well follow them through. Could the Minister give the number of persons employed under a Commonwealth subsidised employment program in the Department of Environment and Heritage and in the national parks?

Ms ROBSON: Did you want the amount of money or the number of jobs?

Mr SLACK: The number of jobs; the number of persons employed.

Ms ROBSON: These are the Jobs for the Environment programs. Last year, Commonwealth programs provided 550 training places of six-months' duration under the Jobskills program, which is a Commonwealth program, and also 155 temporary salary wages positions of at least four months' duration. There were 30 staff employed at regional level and two staff at head office to administer the program.

I will give you the figures that I have for the Youth Conservation Corps program. In the period July 1992 to June 1995, the YCC has provided 1,530 places for trainees in 117 projects. These particular projects are of 26 weeks' duration, with the exception of the first 10 pilot projects, which were of 16 weeks' duration. These particular programs involved young unemployed people and had a TAFE component, and they were directed through project work in the national park and State forest estate. There are 72 staff employed at regional level and three staff at head office to deliver and administer that particular program. The independent evaluation of that program concluded at the end of April this year. The outcomes of that program are that 66 per cent of participants obtained employment after the program and 14 per cent entered into further education or training. They are the two major Commonwealth employment projects.

Mr SLACK: How much did the Commonwealth contribute to the wages of those people that you have mentioned?

Ms ROBSON: The Commonwealth funding for Jobs for the Environment for the year 1994-95 was \$960,000 and for the Youth Conservation Corps for the year 1994-95 was \$4.7m.

The CHAIRMAN: We move now to Government members for their questions. I invite the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose, to start.

Mrs ROSE: As the Government's commitment to double the national park estate is now all but complete, I understand that your emphasis now will increasingly shift to management of these parks. Could you outline the additional staffing and funding you have already allocated to this task and the allocations planned for 1995-96?

Ms ROBSON: In the 1992-93 financial year, \$5.6m was appropriated as a new initiative to effectively manage new national parks. One hundred and ten additional ranger positions were established with this funding and were filled over three financial years, bringing the current total

number of permanent wages ranger positions for the Conservation program to 487, accounting for \$15.78m in labour costs in 1994-95. The Portfolio Program Statements detail current salaries and wages positions across the State. These positions may not necessarily be currently filled by permanent staff members but are a reflection of the approved positions. The National Parks and Wildlife Service provides for an additional 25 positions, both salaried and wages, over the next three years to further enhance park and wildlife management.

Referring again to the Portfolio Program Statements—the 1995-96 year details a more accurate figure than in previous years with regard to the number of staff positions against each subprogram in the Conservation program. This is particularly so with the 58 marine park ranger positions along the coastline now being correctly attributed to the Coastal Management subprogram rather than the National Parks and Wildlife subprogram. The net decrease in ranger positions relates to the structured winding down of the work and labour-market activities Jobs for the Environment and Youth Conservation Corps, which involved 60 positions. This is detailed in the explanation of variations as provided, and we have just been through that.

The 1995-96 budget provides a new initiative for conservation management worth \$9.5m in the first year rising to \$14.9m in the third year. This new initiative has four components in 1995-96. These are: national park management, \$2.5m; Great Sandy management, \$1.5m; wildlife management, \$1.5m; off-park conservation, \$1.5m; and a \$2.5m Coastal Management Strategy. This increase in funding will lead to better park management through improved day-to-day operations, more effective resource protection, including pest, plant and animal control, and greater visitor contact and interpretation through weekend work and overtime.

Mrs ROSE: The National Parks and Wildlife Service has developed and implemented over a number of years now a good neighbour policy with those land-holders adjoining our national parks. I understand that this policy focused heavily on the issues of fencing, feral animal and weed control and fire management. Could you outline the work done in these areas during the last year and what funds have been directed towards the implementation of this policy in the 1995-96 budget?

Ms ROBSON: The good neighbour policy of the department provides the basis for a common understanding between park rangers and neighbouring land-holders, particularly with regard to the differing uses of land. National parks and other protected areas are dedicated for the conservation of nature and attendant appropriate public use. Rural production, whether it be grazing or cropping, is recognised by rangers as a legitimate land use, and this mutual understanding helps in the ongoing management of natural resources of the protected area as well as management of the pasture or crop adjacent.

The Department of Environment and Heritage continues to upgrade or develop fencing and fire trails around the boundaries of national parks and

other protected areas in order to maintain or rebuild the integrity of the natural systems on the protected area as well as minimise the intrusion both ways of unwanted problems such as wildfires, stray stock and feral pests. During the last financial year, almost \$3.4m has been expended in this area. This includes an additional \$1.44m allocated in the mid-year budget review for enhancement of fire management on national parks, which was an outcome of the audit undertaken by the Queensland Government into Queensland's bushfire management capabilities. A total of almost \$900,000 will be expended during the current financial year on fencing and fire trails, including many in new national park areas. Of particular note is the recent addition to Noosa National Park, where expensive clearance of unexploded ordnance is required before fire trail construction can occur.

Just over \$400,000 has been expended on feral animal and weed control across the State via a grant through ANZECC into weed research by CSIRO as well as the department's commitment to the Department of Lands' strategic weed initiative. Park rangers work closely with Department of Lands staff on these matters. The balance of funds have been directed to enhancement of fire equipment across the State, including five additional trucks with 3,000-litre firefighting units and 20 additional smaller park-based mop-up units. Additional training in fire management is currently under way. Newly recruited rangers, including former timber workers from Fraser Island and Cooloola, are involved. The long period of fire danger from September 1994 to January 1995 required additional park management resources of almost \$500,000.

Dr CLARK: I have some questions relating specifically to north Queensland. The Minister would be aware that smuggling of fauna and flora has received a great deal of publicity recently, and allegations are still being made that that practice is occurring on a large scale. I would like the Minister to outline what the department is doing in this area and what resources and funding have been made available for this work in the 1995-96 budget.

Ms ROBSON: I thank the member for the question. The Police Wildlife Task Force is seconded to assist the National Parks and Wildlife Service. Its principal objective is to investigate serious offences and to prosecute persons involved in the taking, keeping or using—including dealing in—wildlife for commercial exploitation or for personal reasons. Serious offences cover circumstances involving or suspected of involving organised crime, wildlife trafficking—particularly from remote regions of the State—or activities which are or are suspected of being linked to such circumstances.

The Police Wildlife Task Force is staffed by two full-time police officers and has an annual budget of \$150,000. Together with departmental staff, the Police Wildlife Task Force has been involved in two major enforcement operations in 1994-95. One of those operations is a continuing operation that commenced in January 1994, undertaken primarily by staff of the far-northern region and involving investigations into the illegal taking and dealing in

protected wildlife in the far north of the State, particularly on the Cape York Peninsula. The operation has cost \$61,000 to date. Operation Verge was conducted by officers of the Police Wildlife Task Force and far-northern regional staff between October 1994 and April 1995. This involved surveillance of the Cape Melville National Park in order to curtail the illegal removal from the park of wildlife, including seed of the rare foxtail palm, classified as vulnerable. This operation cost \$200,000.

Other matters dealt with by the task force in 1994-95 include investigations into the macropod harvesting industry and the inspection of premises of commercial and recreational keepers of wildlife to investigate possible wildlife trafficking activities. Over the past two financial years, the activities of the Police Wildlife Task Force, other police and rangers have resulted in 64 prosecutions under the Fauna Conservation Act 1974, the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1975 and the Nature Conservation Act 1992. The total financial penalties imposed as a result of those court actions was \$79,400. Also during that period, a total of 102 notices to offenders under the Fauna Conservation Act 1974 were issued with a total penalty of \$6,500.

A computerised wildlife system is now available to provide for the rapid assembling of information concerning the taking, keeping and use of wildlife which will assist significantly in the surveillance and protection of wildlife. The 1995-96 budget includes an allocation of \$140,000 for expanded law enforcement activities across the whole of Queensland and these funds will be spent on the analysis of information and the conduct of strategically targeted operations to detect and control offences which threaten Queensland's rare and endangered wildlife.

Dr CLARK: The acquisition of the Starcke and Silver Plains properties has been widely reported throughout the community and certainly warmly welcomed in far-north Queensland. Their addition to the national park estate is a major move in preserving forever those significant wilderness areas in Cape York. Would you outline for the benefit of the members of the Committee the environmental qualities of those two parks, how you funded their purchase and the proposed allocation of them to national park, traditional lands and any other tenures?

Ms ROBSON: Both areas, as we know, have high wilderness qualities. Starcke, for example, represents one of the areas of highest biodiversity on the Cape York Peninsula. This is partly in response to the wide environmental gradients found there. A large number of new plant species also occur and the park will link four relatively small existing parks and will extend along 140 kilometres of untouched coastline.

Indications are that the rainforests of the area are part of the biogeographical distinct province with its own unique suit of species, a number of which are endemic to the area and many are new to science. These rainforests consist of hundreds of separate occurrences, mostly less than 50 hectares in size, occurring on a range of geologically different

substratas and covering a range of structural types. A clue to the unique nature of the province has long been the presence of an endemic palm genus, the foxtail palm *wodyetia bicifata* within the existing Cape Melville National Park. It now appears clear that this palm's presence is not an isolated phenomenon but is accompanied by the presence of other species that are rare or restricted in distribution.

A new species of eucalypt known from a total of only three specimens is located at the northern end of the Starcke aggregation. An isolated occurrence of the swamp banksia *robur* has been located on a high sandstone plateau on Starcke Holding at an elevation of 500 feet. The occurrence is remarkable not only for the presence of such a well-developed swamp on a small, high plateau but because the species in it are typical of swamps in some parts of south-east Queensland. The banksia *robur* elsewhere north of Rockhampton is known only from a small occurrence near Hope Vale, 130 kilometres south of this location. In other words, this elevated community is one of two outliers of a community whose distribution is otherwise confined to coastal lowland localities, more than 1,500 kilometres to the south.

The battle camp sandstone formations within Starcke form a landscape which is one of the most scientifically attractive on Cape York Peninsula. It covers a large area within the Laura Basin but is almost totally unrepresented within the park system. Coastal parabolic high dune systems cover very large areas of Cape York Peninsula. The parabolic dunes near the mouth of the Jeannie River are, however, the only opportunity to provide some representation of this important ecosystem.

Mr VEIVERS: Good to see that you are so well prepared.

Ms ROBSON: We are always well prepared. Silver Plains contains a number of ecosystems poorly conserved in Cape York Peninsula, particularly north of the Massey River and along the Mcllwraith Range, by forming an aggregation with the extensive rainforests on tender reserve 14 on the Mcllwraith Range and the vacant Crown land on the Nesbitt Valley to the north where important national grasslands occur. Mr Chairman, would you like me to continue the answer?

Dr CLARK: Perhaps, if there is time, we could come back to the other part of the question.

The CHAIRMAN: We will now have a question from Mr Robertson.

Mr ROBERTSON: I refer to the wildlife licensing provisions that came into force with the proclamation of the Nature Conservation Act last December. I understand that these new fees and identification requirements are part of the Government's commitment to a user-pays policy. Could you outline the justification for these charges, the extent of the fee increases and the amount of consolidated revenue that will still need to be found to administer these provisions of the Act?

Ms ROBSON: I would be delighted. This is a great educational process for you. Schedule 6 of the Nature Conservation Regulation 1994

prescribes the fees to be levied under the legislation. The department has calculated wildlife licensing fees in accordance with Public Finance Standards based on full cost recovery of departmental costs directly associated with the processing of applications, the issuing of licences and compliance monitoring. These fees do not cover all of the costs of administering the wildlife provisions of the Nature Conservation Act 1992. The Government will be carefully monitoring the impact of these fees.

Wildlife licensing fees currently recover approximately 43 per cent of costs directly attributed. Within this framework, fees have been adjusted in order to recognise the ability to pay the various sectors of the community. For example, in the case of macropod commercial shooter and dealer licences, only 32 per cent of costs will be recovered initially in recognition of the difficulties imposed on these industry participants by both the rural recession and the drought. In most cases, the fees set down in the new legislation at its full commencement on December 1994 are in line with the fees charged under the now repealed Fauna Conservation Act 1974 plus a consumer price index increase.

One area of significant departure from the situation is a wildlife farming licence, which is a licence issued under the Nature Conservation Act 1992 to crocodile, butterfly and emu farmers. The fee for crocodile and emu farmers has risen from \$420.40, which would be the CPI escalated Fauna Conservation Act fee, up to \$1,000. The 100 per cent cost recovery fee for this licence will be \$1,230. The butterfly farming fee has been set at \$100, which is a reduction in cost which recognises the special nature of the butterfly farming industry. This will come into effect when the currently proposed regulation amendments are implemented.

The recreational wildlife specialist licence is issued to recreational keepers of species of birds and reptiles for which there is conservation concern. Given that most species which are able to be kept by this class of licence could not be kept for recreational purposes under the old Fauna Conservation Act, comparisons between fees are not directly valid. The current fee is \$150 and the full cost recovery fee will be \$820. There has been considerable misrepresentation of the cost of fees for the recreational keeping of aviary birds. Keepers of aviary birds are able, in many instances, to make use of a recreational wildlife licence which cost \$30, unless they are keeping restricted species.

Mr ROBERTSON: The provision of recreational services on our national parks, and particularly on island national parks, is, I understand and appreciate, a costly exercise. As these costs can relate to both infrastructure and administrative costs, and the Government is committed to implementing its user-pays policy, can you outline where fee increases are planned in the park estate, the level of these fees, their justification, and the percentage of full cost recovery that they represent?

Ms ROBSON: On the protected area estate, fees are charged for commercial operations and camping, together with some special access fees to

places like Undarra Volcanic National Park. With the proclamation of the Nature Conservation Act 1992, the opportunity was taken to change to a per head fee for camping on national parks and other related reserves. Similarly, camping on the declared recreation areas of Fraser and Moreton Islands is proposed to change to the same fee of \$3 per head per night, with a maximum of \$12 per family per night. Simplicity of the fee structure will lower the cost of collection and administration. In accordance with the Public Finance Standard cost recovery for fees on protected areas and declared recreation areas, it covers maintenance and servicing of recreation and park interpretation facilities, the depreciation of public recreation facilities including capital infrastructure and walking tracks, and the administration of the cost recovery system including the costs of collection and enforcement of fees. With those proposed increases, cost recovery will be just over 25 per cent.

Specifically in the case of the Fraser Island recreation area, fees have not been increased for several years. In fact, most have not increased since 1 July 1988, although daily pass fees were increased on 1 January 1989. Increases were held in abeyance during the commission of inquiry into the conservation management and use of Fraser Island and the Great Sandy Region and the consequent management planning process. The proposed fee increases from the Fraser Island recreation area are: the vehicle fee is currently \$15 and will be \$25; the camping fees per site per night are currently \$7.50 and will be \$3 per person per night with a maximum of \$12 per family; the commercial tour fees per person are currently \$1.15 for half a day and will be \$2.50 for half a day, and the fee is currently \$2.30 for a full day and will be \$5 for a full day; commercial tour operator camping fees per person per night are currently \$1 and will rise to \$3. Currently, the receipts from user-pays fees represent only about 40 per cent of the funding necessary to provide effective recreation management on Fraser Island. New proposed fees will bring receipts up to about 65 per cent of what is needed for effective recreation management. The increases in commercial tour operator fees will occur not earlier than January 1996.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we return to Mr Slack for further questions, to help resolve an issue that Mr Slack raised before in respect of the figures for staff on page 19 of the Program Statements, will the Minister take on notice a request to provide a reconciliation statement to clarify the discrepancy between the figures of 512 for last year, 542 for this year and 411 for 1995-96, and outline how the change in representing those in the statement affects the numbers? Are you able to take that on notice?

Ms ROBSON: I am happy to do that.

The CHAIRMAN: I ask Mr Slack to resume a further 20-minute question period.

Mr SLACK: In answer to a question earlier, you referred to bird licence fees. You said that the recreational licence fee as being \$30 and the specialist recreational licence fee as being \$150. Is it correct that you are proposing a 500 per cent

increase in those fees from \$30 to \$150 for the recreational licence fees and from \$150 to \$825 for the specialist fee, and that that is proposed to come into effect in January 1997?

Ms ROBSON: Where are you quoting from?

Mr SLACK: I am asking: is it correct that the department is looking at that increase?

Ms ROBSON: First of all, it is necessary to clarify who has to have a licence.

Mr SLACK: I am asking: are you increasing those fees?

Ms ROBSON: It is necessary to clarify because you are crossing two categories. No licence is needed to keep 10 species of commonly kept captive native birds, such as budgies, quarrions and zebra finches. A recreational wildlife licence costing \$30 is required for catching and keeping birds such as galahs and white cockatoos.

Mr SLACK: I understand that, but will you answer the question?

Ms ROBSON: Mr Chairman, can I finish answering the question my way?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Ms ROBSON: A recreational specialist wildlife licence is required, costing \$150, for a further group of birds for which conservation concern is held. That includes such species as the red-tailed black cockatoo, the eclectus parrot, and the Major Mitchell cockatoo. The fee applies only if the holder is actually breeding the birds, and that is the cross-over I am talking about. A person holding a single bird as a pet will only pay \$30. In terms of your question as to whether that fee is going up—did you say by 500 per cent?

Mr SLACK: Yes.

Ms ROBSON: It is not my understanding that that is happening. Mr Rolfe can elaborate on the intention of the section to do that or not.

Mr ROLFE: These fees in the first instance are based on what we understand to be a reasonable level of service provided. The cost recovery notion is clearly based on what it actually costs. As the Minister said, one of the things that we will be doing over the next 12 months is monitoring closely what it actually does cost with a view to introducing, wherever possible, efficiencies to reduce that cost. For example, where the costs might be calculated on the basis of two inspections per year, we will see whether that is indeed necessary and whether there will be classes of fees that can be reduced by virtue of the fact that an inspection is required once every two years. What is really important here is the notion of what it actually costs.

Mr SLACK: I did not ask that question. I simply want to know whether there is a proposal to put the fees up from \$30 to \$150 and from \$150 to \$825. Is that correct or not? Regardless of all the explanations in the world, I want to know whether it is correct or not.

Mr ROLFE: I am answering that question by saying that there is no notion of an \$825 fee. We are looking at what it actually costs.

Mr SLACK: You are saying that there is no proposal to do that?

Mr ROLFE: That is right. There is no figure of \$825 that I am aware of which we are moving towards.

Ms ROBSON: Mr Rolfe is explaining that we are test running, if you will, and there will be variations in the fee. You are saying that there is a set fee of \$825; he is trying to explain to you that there are gradients built into that and at this moment we have not determined that there will be, for example, a fee of \$825.

Mr SLACK: But you are considering that fee?

Ms ROBSON: No, that has never come past me, and that is why I asked you where you got the information from.

Mr SLACK: It is not my information.

Ms ROBSON: Can you tell me the source of your information?

Mr SLACK: No.

Ms ROBSON: Well, I cannot check it.

Mr SLACK: I consider it to be reliable information and, by the same token, we have issued press statements to this effect.

Ms ROBSON: They have been wrong.

Mr SLACK: At no stage has your department denied this.

Ms ROBSON: These are the people here who actually, along with myself, make those final decisions, and I am telling you that none of the three of us have heard of that except perhaps through your media releases.

Mr SLACK: I turn to the koalas and the tollway. I refer to page 20 of the Program Statements. A total amount of \$10m has been allocated to the Koala Coast Community Facilities Program with an estimated allocation of \$3m for 1995-96. What guidelines were used or will be used for the allocations and could the Minister table the full criteria for the guidelines?

Ms ROBSON: The full criteria have been tabled before in the Parliament, but we can re-table them if you wish. It was a public document. The allocation guidelines similarly have been made public and you would be aware that they were publicised in the advertisements that were placed in newspapers and they talked about the various criteria for assessment for that particular area. You are talking about the Community Facilities Program specifically under the Koala Coast package. I have explained the process ad nauseam to the House. It was a process whereby criteria were determined by a committee that was set up. Those criteria were subsequently audited as part of the process of the committee which Mr Speirs chaired as the regional director for that Koala Coast area, and it was a very strict process of allocation. Some \$5m was allocated to projects which came within the criteria as very clearly determined. The criteria were weighted with a numerical weighting and the results of that were the projects that were publicly

announced. That process, we believe, which has been audited by Price Waterhouse, and which I am very comfortable with as would be Price Waterhouse, is a most appropriate process and is the criterion by which we would continue to allocate funding under this particular program.

I can read the criteria out, and I think it is probably relevant to do that. The criteria are: the severity of social impact of the south coast motorway on beneficiaries; the approximate number of beneficiaries of the proposal; the size of funding requirements; the ratio of capital to recurrent funding; and the scarcity of other new bi-community facilities. The criteria were very carefully and clearly designed to meet the needs of a community which was having, in some cases, a very severe impact from a proposed road development. The idea is that the maximum number of people in any given community was to be assessed for eligibility for funding. I think, as I said, that was done very carefully and very well and it was audited independently. So I am quite comfortable with that.

Mr SLACK: I refer to the Koala Coast Secretariat. Concerning the operations of the secretariat, would you tell us who the four officials are, two from the Office of Cabinet and two from DEH, who administer the \$38 allocated to the secretariat?

Ms ROBSON: I might ask Bob Speirs, the chair of that particular committee, to speak to that item.

Mr SPEIRS: There is a distinction between the Koala Coast Secretariat and the assessment committee for the Community Facilities Program. The four people who were on the assessment committee for the Community Facilities Program were myself as Chair, from the Department of Environment and Heritage, Ms Cathy Skippington, also from the Department of Environment and Heritage, and the two officers of the Office of the Cabinet were Mr Ian Shears and Ms Freya Schaloupka.

Mr SLACK: What were their positions before they were appointed from the Cabinet?

Mr SPEIRS: They were not appointed—

The CHAIRMAN: Order! You have got the names of the people, you know where they are from, the department and the Office of the Cabinet. If you want to ask questions about what money they spent, well, ask that.

Mr SLACK: I refer to the allocation of \$275,000 to the Chatswood Hills State School from the Koala Coast Secretariat. According to your documentation, the corresponding proposal was for landscape works, rehabilitation, fencing, irrigation, construction of natural amphitheatre and playground equipment, provision for a security system for building, general maintenance of facilities and other general works. As member for Springwood, and Minister responsible for the \$7.3m allocated to the Community Facilities Program, did you prepare this submission which sought a substantial amount of money from the Department of Environment and Heritage.

Ms ROBSON: The Chatswood Hills State School submission, as with all the other submissions, and I submitted for six schools, was prepared as a result of work done after I took the Administrative Services Minister on what is for me a fairly routine visit to my local schools. Along with the relevant school principals and any other teachers or P&C people who were present, we assessed the needs of each school under the criteria that had been advertised for that facilities program at the time. Chatswood Hills particularly put forward proposals for a lot of groundworks. In addition to the formal criteria I required that any work done would advantage the school grounds being opened to the community because, as I have said before, I have a philosophy that all of our public buildings and their grounds should be available seven days a week to the community. Q-Build subsequently gave me the quotes. I then incorporated those quotes into the submission that I placed before the appropriate committee for consideration. I did it in one submission in which I detailed the order of priority, and my order of priority related to the distance of each school from the proposed road. So the school that was closest to the proposed road was my No. 1 priority and I worked through the list in that manner. I did not prioritise in any other sense. The allocation of the funding, as far as I am concerned, was up to the committee and I had nothing further to do with it.

Mr SLACK: What you are saying is that the school was aware of the guidelines and you were aware of the guidelines—

Ms ROBSON: That is correct.

Mr SLACK: I also refer to the allocation of \$5,000 to the Springwood Central State School. According to your documentation, the corresponding proposal was for maintenance of facilities, construction of paving and general landscape activities provision, a security system for buildings and replacement of furniture. I ask a question similar to my previous question. As member for Springwood and the Minister responsible for the \$7.3m allocated to the Community Facilities Program, did you prepare the submission that sought \$675,000 from the Department of Environment and Heritage?

Ms ROBSON: Yes.

Mr SLACK: Given your knowledge of the guidelines and your claim to have advised schools about the guidelines prior to the preparation of each submission, I ask: why did Chatswood Hills receive \$275,000 as a result of your representation while Springwood Central received just \$5,000?

Ms ROBSON: I did not make the decision so I cannot tell you the reason. But I suggest to you that the application that was placed from one school was more relevant to the criteria than the application of the other. In the case of Springwood Central, over the period that I have been the local member we have done quite a lot of work on the Springwood Central State School grounds. The schools in my area have been built at different times. Some of them were much better finished than others. For example, I suggest to you that

Springwood Central is an older school, Chatswood Hills is a newer school. Springwood Central has had funding for a long time. It did not require quite as much ground work because such work had been done over a period of years. Schools such as Chatswood Hills and Rochedale South, which was an absolute disgrace in terms of the lack of work that had been done on the grounds when it was built 15 years ago, were the two schools which drew the largest amount of funding because under the criteria they had the greatest need. The schools are aware of the reasons why they got differing funding and they are not unhappy with that particular process. As I said to them, there will be another round of funding coming up for the next allocation, at which time people can apply for further project money.

Mr SLACK: You are aware that both schools were referred to new guidelines and criteria, yet one did not appear to make as good a submission as the other.

Ms ROBSON: I made all the submissions, so there was consistency. I gave no favouritism. I simply presented the case as Q-Build had assessed it, and the criteria were applied very strictly. As is shown by the audit by Price Waterhouse, it was applied appropriately. Perhaps Mr Speirs would like to add something to that.

Mr SPEIRS: The reason the variation exists between funding which was made available to the different schools relates to the components of the proposals in each case. When we received the proposal from the schools, some included just landscaping and community facilities-type components which met the criteria, to make the facilities available to the public. Others included things such as painting walls, doing up teachers' offices, doing up the tops of desks and what we regarded as routine maintenance that could not be regarded as community facilities. We went through those proposals, dissected them and said that where a school was seeking funding for the purpose of a community facility—landscaping, development of its grounds, providing shade for the kids while waiting for the bus or facilities for a handicapped child—we thought that those things would fit within the criteria; but painting walls and routine maintenance was not going to do that. That is reflected in the recommendations that were made. The other thing to bear in mind is that each of those schools—as would be the case with any other school—is quite at liberty to put in a further application or seek a review of an application for the second round of the Community Facilities Program.

Mr SLACK: If money is allocated according to need, why is Carbrook Primary School, which has lost 30 metres of frontage to a tollway exit ramp, still waiting for funds?

Ms ROBSON: They did not apply. Lists have been published of schools that supposedly have been denied funding, but they never applied.

Mr SLACK: Why did they not apply?

Ms ROBSON: It was publicly advertised in all the regional newspapers. Local members and councils and others were contacted. We do that as

a very public process. We certainly went out, and a lot of people knew about the program; but that school did not apply.

Mr SLACK: You are saying that, in your situation, you went to your respective schools and made them aware of it, and you went with the Minister for Administrative Services. In this particular case, however, you are saying that they were aware. Surely, if they were aware of it, they would have applied.

Ms ROBSON: I cannot answer for them. I took a view, after having spoken to people in my electorate, as to where I could best apply that money. As I said before, my philosophy is that you should put it into facilities that will benefit the maximum number of people, and I chose to do that in my schools' grounds, simply because we have very few recreational facilities in the Springwood electorate. We need those nice big open fields and paddocks and sports fields that schools have. So that was the reason that I chose my schools. I have also had meetings with Logan City Council about bikeways, pathways and things which they applied for. It was a coordinated effort, but I focused on the schools.

Mr SLACK: You went straight out and did it. You were aware that that money was available and you took full advantage of it.

Ms ROBSON: The decision was announced in August 1994. I was the person who took it through Cabinet, as you very well know. We advised all local members, councils, etc., at a later time that that was happening. It was very public and very well advertised. You probably have a copy of the ads—if you have done your homework. There is nothing secretive about it. It was up to people to apply themselves. We had enough publicity about the Community Facilities Program. I would be amazed if anyone in Queensland did not know about it.

Mr SLACK: Who is the member responsible for Carbrook?

Ms ROBSON: I believe that it is Mr Budd. It is not one of my schools. It is for him to decide where he wants to—

Mr SLACK: You are saying that Mr Budd did not follow that up?

Ms ROBSON: It is for him to decide where he wants to focus his funding. I do not tell him what to do, and he does not tell me what to do as a local member, and I think that is probably fair enough.

The CHAIRMAN: It is now time for Government members to have their 20-minute session of questions. I invite the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose, to commence the questions.

Mrs ROSE: The Government's record on the protection of Fraser Island has received wide acclaim, particularly the decisions to cease logging and place the island on the World Heritage List, and the preparation of the far-reaching management plan. The 1995-96 Budget allocates additional funding of \$1.5m and \$4.5m over three years for the implementation of that plan. Could you please outline where these funds will be spent and what

progress has been achieved with the implementation of the plan?

Ms ROBSON: In relation to the Great Sandy Region and Fraser Island management—additional funding of \$1.5m is provided to assist in implementing the provisions of the recently approved Great Sandy Region Management Plan. Specific activities include the introduction of a waste management program for Fraser Island, preparation of development control plans for the Great Sandy Region, upgrading of key access roads on Fraser Island and the development of Stage 1 of regulated camping at Inskip Point. Those are the major features of that particular new initiative funding. Did you ask for any further information?

Mrs ROSE: Yes, I referred to the \$4.5m over three years for the implementation of the plan.

Ms ROBSON: I think that the \$4.5m to which you are referring is three years of funding at \$1.5m. I explained to you in my explanation what that is for.

Dr CLARK: I have a question in relation to Aboriginal involvement in national park management. As members would be aware, we have arrived at a stage at which we have at least one national park which was gazetted for claim by traditional Aboriginal owners that has progressed to the stage at which it is available for claim and has been successfully claimed. Another couple are going through that process. Could you please outline the benefits of that program to national parks in Queensland and what happens with the management of that park now that it has been successfully claimed by Aboriginal people? What funding has been allocated for the management of that park or other parks that will be successfully claimed by Aboriginal people?

Ms ROBSON: I will just give you the background. As you know, 13 national parks have been gazetted and available for claim under the Aboriginal Land Act. Twelve of these parks are on Cape York and one is in the Simpson Desert. Claims have been lodged over nine of these parks and the Minister for Lands has accepted a recommendation from the land tribunal to grant ownership of the land for the Cape Melville, Flinders Island and the Simpson Desert National Parks. Management plans and leases must be completed before these parks can be formally granted to their traditional owners as national park/Aboriginal land. The land tribunal has completed hearings for Lakefield and Cliff Islands National Parks.

The department considers that the dedication of national parks as Aboriginal land will benefit the management of those national parks in the following areas: broader community representation in decision making through a board of management; a broader skills and knowledge base through Aboriginal employment; an enhanced protection of cultural values; the incorporation of Aboriginal land management skills, including fire management skills; the input of Aboriginal knowledge into research and management programs; an enhanced experience of park visitors through Aboriginal involvement interpretation programs—I might say that is going extremely well

where it is being trialled at the moment—a greater surveillance capacity with an Aboriginal presence on the park; and a greater level of cooperation between the department and Aboriginal groups, which will enhance conservation programs in other protected areas and on Aboriginal lands.

The department has a budget of \$679,000 to implement the Aboriginal Land Act on national parks. Those funds provide for the preparation of land management information for claim hearings, the preparation of management plans and leases prior to land becoming national park/Aboriginal land, and liaison with Aboriginal groups relating to land claims. Where a national park is successfully claimed, additional funding will be required for the operation of boards of management and Aboriginal employment and training. As many of these claimable national parks are understaffed and have few resources, it is expected that additional funding will be required to enable the effective management of these parks once they become national park/Aboriginal land. Additional funding requirements for each park will be determined during the lease and management plan preparation and will be considered by Government on a case-by-case basis at the time a lease and management plan is approved.

Dr CLARK: I have just a supplementary question on that particular issue with respect to the boards of management. That has been an issue of interest to people, and I was wondering, with the park that is closest to that stage, has any decision been made in terms of the composition of that board of management and the desire of Aboriginal people to have a majority on that board, or is that still open for discussion and negotiation?

Ms ROBSON: I think Mr Rolfe, who has been involved in that formulation, might answer that question.

Mr ROLFE: To date, there has been no final decision on that. At the moment, discussions are under way with the claimant groups, with various relevant interest groups from around the cape and with the relevant scientists to provide scientific expertise. As yet, those discussions have not firmed to a point where it has been possible to make a decision.

The CHAIRMAN: I invite Mr Robertson to ask questions.

Mr ROBERTSON: You have been successful in securing funding for the extremely well-publicised Koala Coast Protection Plan. Given the recent publicity featuring koalas killed on the roads already in this area, it is obvious that this is an initiative that is needed badly. Unfortunately, one of those turned up at a function that I attended a couple of weeks ago. Could you please outline the breakdown of this fund, particularly the specific measures contained in it to reduce koala fatalities owing to dogs and cars, and tell us what progress has been made with the acquisition program?

Ms ROBSON: Thank you for that question. Obviously, it is one that the member and I feel very strongly about, particularly in relation to koala fatalities and the causes thereof. I do not think it has been said often enough that the koala fatalities

that we have currently in that very significant region are very largely related to people's dogs and cars on the roads which exist already in the area. The awareness that Cabinet has of that particular situation as a result of long-term lobbying by people such as Mr Robertson, others in the area and I has resulted in a very significant package, which was awarded to ameliorate the impact of further incursion into that koala habitat. I am talking about the decision in August 1994 of a \$38m Koala Coast Protection Plan and of a Koala Coast Community Facilities Program. Elements of that plan that you have asked for details about are the protection of koala habitat at an estimated cost of \$20m over a five-year period; research on koalas at an estimated cost of \$1.6m over a five-year period; the minimisation of koala deaths and injuries at an estimated cost of \$2.6m over five years; and the development of visitor infrastructure for the Koala Coast at an estimated cost of \$3m over five years.

The major plans that were enacted in 1994-95 are the construction of a visitor information centre and associated infrastructure in the Daisy Hill State Forest at an estimated cost of \$1.832m; commencement of habitat acquisition at a cost of \$1m in 1994-95; commencement in May of a pilot trial of lower night-time speeds at a cost of \$25,000 and an information program costing \$20,000; commencement of koala research requiring \$90,000; enhancement of koala hospital and ambulance facilities, costing \$83,000 and \$125,000 to develop a geographic information system; and commissioning the consultant to assist in the preparation of the Koala Coast State Planning Policy at a cost of \$30,000. I think all of those initiatives are very essential for what we believe is probably the most significant existing koala habitat in the world.

The reality is that I, for one, have been bringing this matter to Ministers' attention in the five and a half years that I have been the member for Springwood. It was probably an unfortunate incident of having to accept the need for this road that has brought it to fruition, but I think there is a lot of good coming out of it.

Mr ROBERTSON: Perhaps we can move to the north side of Brisbane for a moment. In the Budget-related papers in the key initiatives section, it refers to funds being allocated to the construction of a world-standard herbarium at Mount Coot-tha to accommodate the State's plant collection. Could you please outline the extent of this collection, the need for a new facility and the role of the Brisbane City Council in this project? What funds have been allocated for the building in the 1995-96 Budget, and when are we likely to see the project completed?

Ms ROBSON: I must say that this is a very exciting project. We have been quite concerned for a period of time that the current location of the herbarium was becoming extremely cramped and uncomfortable. On my visits there, I have noted that they have a wonderful collection—a very valuable collection—of plants and literature, which I wanted to see better housed and better displayed to the

public. Currently, that is situated at Moggill. The move to take the herbarium over to Mount Coot-tha—and I have visited that site in the last couple of weeks as well—has been welcomed by the people who are in charge of the botanical gardens there. It is a very good site that they have chosen and it is going to enable the public at large to have a look at what a herbarium is all about and perhaps dispel the myth that we grow herbs in a herbarium.

The Brisbane City Council has agreed to that site, and that is a major contribution from it. The State will have a long-term lease of 50 years of the site at a cost of \$2,000 per annum. A Budget estimate of \$600,000 for 1995-96 includes site works and design and documentation for the building. The building will be constructed in 1996-97, with an anticipated completion date of August 1997. Obviously, the object of the project is to provide a world-class facility that will improve the security and preservation of the irreplaceable collection, which is currently valued at \$25m and which consists of some 575,000 specimens. The building will also provide working facilities for 44 staff and visiting scientists, as well as members of the public who may wish to identify plants and obtain access to botanical information. As I said, it is a very exciting and probably long-overdue move to relocate what I consider to be a most valuable resource of data and information. I can assure you that the staff there are extremely excited about it.

The CHAIRMAN: I have a general question. On page 20 of the Portfolio Program Statements, a number of major capital works projects are identified, and there are estimates for 1995-96 contributions to those projects. Can you report on progress in relation to the SEQ ROSS Land Acquisition Program? It states that the total estimated cost is \$20m. I imagine that is over five years. The estimate of expenditure in the 1995-96 year is \$4m. Could you advise of progress in that land acquisition to date and how you are assessing where to spend that \$4m in the next financial year? What role does the Lands Department have, if any, in administering that?

Ms ROBSON: The Lands Department has been the lead agency for this project and therefore has been the identifying agency. We work closely with Lands and have been involved in an interdepartmental structure with committees and advisory groups to select pieces of property in line with the recommendations of SEQ 2001, namely, to secure an effective open space system for south-east Queensland. That was endorsed by Cabinet in April 1994. The idea is that we enhance and protect the conservation, cultural, recreational and landscape resources of south-east Queensland. That does not mean that all of that land—a lot of it or any of it, in some cases—will go into national park estate, although where possible we do obviously try to extend the facility of an area.

Springbrook is probably a good example of a recent acquisition that abuts a national park. We can put a small amount into the national park and the rest will probably be used for recreation. In consultation with the local community, it will be decided how that land will be used. A lot of progress

has been made. Some \$4m in funding was approved for the purchase of land in 1994-95 and in each of the following four years.

To date, \$3.52m has been expended on four major projects—Ewan Maddock Dam, one at Springbrook, one at Caboolture and another at the Settlement at Springbrook. There were two purchases of Springbrook property. One was the Settlement, which received a fair bit of publicity. Another 120 parcels of land are currently being investigated for funding under that scheme. Some of that expenditure will be recouped, because there may be parcels of land that are on-sold.

For example, the Caloundra City Council is contributing \$130,000 spread over five years towards the purchase of one piece of property. There is the possibility of on-selling some land on the Settlement property which does not meet the ROSS guidelines. It was sold as a parcel. We may not require it all and the community may not require some of it, so some may be on-sold. That is the sort of flexibility that we have under the ROSS scheme. We purchased the Settlement under a private freehold land sale. It is quite a flexible scheme. It is progressing quite successfully. As I said, 120 lots are being considered. The idea is to secure them so that we do not lose them to development and clearing. They are very largely for recreational purposes.

Dr CLARK: I refer to land acquisition. Page 10 of the Portfolio Program Statements refers to new initiative funding for land acquisition of \$2.5m being provided in the budget this coming year, 1995-96, in addition to the \$1.086m already allocated for land acquisition. Is it possible to give details of any proposals for land acquisition? Is there anything that the money is earmarked for? Also, I notice in the statement on page 14 in relation to the Wet Tropics that four properties are under negotiation. Is it possible to give details of that, or is that confidential information that would not be appropriate to disclose at this time?

Ms ROBSON: Dealing with the \$2.5m for land acquisitions—the focus is on coastal areas, including wetlands and areas of high conservation value which contain rare and endangered species and habitats. Approximately \$200,000 of the total amount will be spent on acquisitions—that is, from the Commonwealth Government—of lighthouses. We will be trying to purchase from the Commonwealth Government lighthouses at various locations along the Queensland coastline. The balance of available funding will be expended on acquisition of areas, especially lowland rainforest areas in the far north of the State, focusing on the Tully region. Acquisitions will be made to give effect to the Government's Sugar Industry Infrastructure Package.

The current mahogany glider habitat debate is part of what motivated us to move towards appropriate funding there. We have been moving around the Tully, Ingham and Innisfail areas to identify significant habitat of the poor old mahogany glider, which until 1991 we had believed was extinct. It is now listed as an endangered species. We have to make that money available. A couple of

illustrations in recent weeks have proven why it is quite appropriate and useful to have some funding available to us. As to the Wet Tropics area that you referred to—was it part of the Daintree Rescue Package that you were interested in, or specifically any other part of the Wet Tropics area?

Dr CLARK: With respect to the properties mentioned, it was not clear whether that was the Daintree funding package or whether it was the Wet Tropics capital funding or general land acquisition funding. I was not sure where that money was coming from. Is the reference on page 14 part of the Daintree buyback?

Ms ROBSON: This is part of it.

Dr CLARK: Is it possible to give us some details of how that Daintree buyback is going?

Ms ROBSON: I will give you a bit of detail. The total budget for the program is \$23.16m over four years. It is broken down as follows: \$17.3m principally for land acquisition and \$5.86m for infrastructure and visitor facilities. Queensland is contributing \$11.58m and matching the Commonwealth contribution for the life of the project. The 1994-95 contribution is \$2m from both Governments, and the program provides for voluntary land acquisition, education of land-holders, cooperative management agreements with land-holders and provision of visitor facilities. A steering committee has been established to oversee the program, and that reports to the ministerial council on the Wet Tropics, which I chair. Commonwealth, State and local Governments are represented on the committee, in addition to two local Aboriginal communities and the Wet Tropics Management Authority.

Progress to 2 May 1995 includes works commenced on the new Thornton Beach day-use area visitors facility. Stage 1 of the Alexandra Range lookout has been completed. Upgrading of works at the Cape Tribulation car park has been completed. Fifty-nine properties have been assessed and selected for acquisition. Four properties are under negotiation. One property has been purchased. One hundred and eighteen property owners have expressed interest in cooperative management agreements and three cooperative management agreements are currently under negotiation. So it has progressed quite well.

The CHAIRMAN: We now return to questions from Opposition members, and I invite Mr Slack to resume questioning.

Mr SLACK: You say that you made the CFP recommendations in 1994. You said also that priority was given to submissions based on the proximity of respective schools to the proposed South Coast Motorway. How could you, in August 1994, prioritise submissions based on that proviso if the proposed route was confirmed and released by the Cabinet only this year?

Ms ROBSON: The proposed route along the boundary of my electorate has not been altered much at all. In fact, even if it were moved one way or the other, it would still be the same comparative distance from any of my schools. You would have to move it right through the grounds of the closest

one, and even that would not change its priority. So the road essentially has not moved in terms of that ratio of distance between schools.

Mr SLACK: You spoke earlier of the advertising campaign involved in this program to make the community aware of the availability of funds. You spoke about the schools in your electorate which have received funding, and I have questioned you about that. You referred to the Carbrook school, not knowing that the funds were available. You have talked about your priorities and those of Mr Budd in your respective electorates. Given that the Education Department compiles a list of the requirements of schools based on the numbers of children attending various schools and other criteria, surely it would have been a simpler matter for the Education Department to nominate the schools close to that particular route as being disadvantaged or those classed as requiring certain expenditure rather than having to undertake an advertising campaign to inform people of the availability of that funding, which is allocated based on criteria that you have formulated.

Ms ROBSON: What is your question?

Mr SLACK: My question is: why did you not use the lists available at the Education Department? That department would be able to tell you which schools needed what in relation to additional playground equipment—

Ms ROBSON: But that is the role of the Department of Administrative Services. That is why I took the Administrative Services Minister with me.

Mr SLACK: The Department of Administrative Services and the Department of Education hold such lists. If a school in my electorate needs extra playground equipment, quite often the required funding is not available because it has been used for other items, or it may be that the school in question does not have enough students to justify a certain item. The regional director advises the Department of Administrative Services of the needs of various schools in order of priority. Rather than all that expensive advertising, would the logical course not have been to approach the Department of Administrative Services or the Education Department to access those lists in order to avoid a school being unaware of the availability of the funding—as may have occurred in the case of the Carbrook school, because it did not apply? Surely that would have been the logical and least expensive way to go about distributing those funds to schools.

Ms ROBSON: Cabinet took a decision that we had to publicly advertise, and I think that that was a good decision.

Mr SLACK: Why did Cabinet take that decision?

Ms ROBSON: May I just finish answering one question here? Cabinet took a decision that the fairest way to allocate the funding was to publicly advertise so that everyone in the community—whether it be an individual, a school, a group, a council or a local member—could apply for that funding. That was the process that was determined and directed by Cabinet. I believe that that is a

fairer process. It is a matter for the Education Department if it wants to apply for funding. That department would have been aware of that Government decision. I do not know whether the department approached anyone to apply for funding; it did not approach me. As I said before, local members, local councils and community groups applied according to the directive of the funding criteria. I think it is a fair way to go. I did not bother to contact the Education Department. I contacted the Department of Administrative Services, which is the agency that assesses that sort of work in schools. If you contact the Education Department, they will tell you to contact the Department of Administrative Services.

There is a routine process, of which we are all aware and which you have outlined, in which routine maintenance, including painting and guttering, etc., is sought by the principal of a school as part of his or her duties. That is a procedure separate from what I have been talking about. What I am talking about is fitting the criteria of this particular proposal and the public advertising process—which I believe is fair. It is not selective; it is fairly broad based.

When I considered carefully how I could apply to ameliorate the impact on my constituents and how they could derive the maximum benefit from that funding, I decided that I would focus on my schools, because I believe that those schools—particularly those built 15 and 20 years ago—have been built fairly appallingly and they have not been provided with landscaping and ground facilities which are safe and suitable for the community at large to use. As a result of that funding coming through, school grounds in my electorate will be safely and openly accessible to the whole community; and to me that means community benefit on a large scale. That is what I was aiming for, that is what the criteria that I read out to you dictated to me, and I believe that they were very good allocations.

Mr SLACK: What you are saying is that you prioritised. You said that you went to the Department of Administrative Services. Would it not have been the normal situation to show the guidelines to the Department of Administrative Services and, if you wanted to, nominate all the schools within your electorate near that roadway and say, "Look, these are the guidelines. You have the list of schools needing facilities. Will you please indicate which schools should be funded and to what extent"?

Ms ROBSON: I think that you are insulting the intelligence—

Mr SLACK: I am not insulting anybody.

Ms ROBSON:—of the community at large, who have had public advertisements placed before them. I am not going to hold the hand of every member of the community. I have 40,000 people living in my community. I try to serve them; that is what they elected me for. I think that you are insulting the intelligence of that community, who were very aware of the Community Facilities Program. There was a lot of criticism and critique made of that program when Cabinet announced it.

The Administrative Services Minister was part of the decision making of Cabinet. He was fully cognisant of how it was directed. I defend staunchly my right as the member for Springwood to apply as I saw appropriate. I believe that it was appropriate for other local members—Mr Budd, Ms Power, Mr Szczerbanik and others in the area—to do similarly.

Mr SLACK: I am not insulting your community in any way; I am putting to you that it was appropriate politically for Cabinet to do what it did, because in that way the program could be advertised. However, there was an accepted process whereby which schools needed what could be prioritised without your political involvement as the member for the area.

Ms ROBSON: I can keep explaining to you why I did it.

Mr SLACK: You can keep explaining it, but I can also suggest the reason it happened.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Slack, if you have a question, ask it.

Ms ROBSON: I just want to—

The CHAIRMAN: He has not asked a question. You do not need to give an answer.

Ms ROBSON: It was just a comment, was it?

Mr SLACK: I again ask: why, when individual members had the guidelines, did they not use the priority list that would have been well established and properly thought out by the Administrative Services Department? There was no need to advertise that program. Had my suggested course been adopted, you would not have arrived at the situation in which Carbrook did not apply. But the other schools that you personally visited with the Minister for Administrative Services were able to be prioritised and come within the guidelines. Most schools would have come within the guidelines.

Ms ROBSON: Let me ask you why you think that it is my responsibility to do the work of other local members. Do you do the work of the member for Bundaberg, for example? I am sure that you do not.

Mr SLACK: What you are saying—

Ms ROBSON: Or the member for Southport?

Mr SLACK:—is that, as a result of what happened, the schools in that area were unevenly treated.

Ms ROBSON: I think that that is an absurd extrapolation of the facts. I have given you the facts. I have given you a very detailed outline of the process that Cabinet determined should be followed—and it was a collective decision—and I have given you a very detailed ad infinitum account of why I did what I did and how I did it, and there is not much about it that you do not know. If you do not agree with what I did and if you believe that we should have employed another process, that is your view. I believe that individual members are allowed to make up their own minds as to how to best represent their constituency. I did that, and I did it in consultation with that constituency, and I think that it was a very favourable outcome for them.

Mr SLACK: What you are suggesting is that, as the member for Burnett, I could go around my schools and prioritise which schools should receive public works.

Ms ROBSON: You can do that if you like; you probably should do that.

Mr SLACK: That decision is made by Administrative Services based on certain criteria. You are saying that I can go around and prioritise my schools and that I should expect to obtain funding for them.

Ms ROBSON: You know—or you should know; you have been a member of Parliament—

Mr SLACK: That is what leads to pork-barrelling. I could go to a particular school in a particular district where my vote is down—which you would acknowledge—and suggest in that particular school that they get—

Ms ROBSON: I did not acknowledge anything. What are you talking about? Mrs Sheldon may have made those very obscure and laughable assertions yesterday, but I assure you that it was absolutely nothing to do with the truth. As a local member, you can go and do what you like, and you probably should. Visiting schools—which I do on a regular basis—

Mr SLACK: I do.

Ms ROBSON:—is a really good thing to do, and it keeps me in touch with their needs. I indicated some of their needs in my submissions to the Community Facilities Program. I think that is a very good way to progress those needs of that community, but there was an additional layer which I have explained to you, that is, opening the schools up for outside school activities seven days a week for the community. That is an additional layer, and I think you may find that that would not be prioritised in routine school maintenance because routine school maintenance involves safety of buildings and keeping the facilities of the school up and running. I am talking about—and I have explained it over and over—an approach which is broader than that. It is a separate process from normal school maintenance. It could well be that normal school maintenance would eventually encompass the sorts of things that I am talking about, but I want it now. I want those communities using the school grounds seven days a week now. I do not want to wait until routine normal maintenance goes on.

This was an opportunity—because those are the communities that will be impacted upon when this road is built—to give them good community facilities which are lacking in the Springwood electorate. We do not have many recreational facilities; it is a small electorate and it has not been well serviced historically with good sport and recreational facilities. We have good school grounds there which are able to provide that facility and that is what that Community Facilities Program is about.

Mr SLACK: Can I get back to the funding? Was the \$5m allocated from this program in the 1994-95 budget or the 1995-96 budget? I am

talking about the Community Facilities Program of the State Government.

Ms ROBSON: Can you just say that again?

Mr SLACK: Was the \$5m allocated from this program in the first grant of the 1994-95 budget or the 1995-96 budget?

Ms ROBSON: It was part of both. There was \$1m for the first year and \$4m for the second year. I think that was the way Cabinet allocated it. Mr Speirs might like to speak to that.

Mr SPEIRS: Our instructions were to look at \$1m in the 1994-95 budget and then to a total of \$5m. So the approval was given for \$1m worth of projects in the 1994-95 budget and approval for these other projects effectively in principle. You will see from the figures that the allocation is \$3m for 1995-96, so those figures would be ongoing.

Mr SLACK: And that is a decision of the Minister?

Dr EMERSON: No, the decision was in fact the decision of the mid-term review of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee which allocated \$1m for 1994-95 and the balance for the subsequent years. So, just reiterating what Mr Speirs said, that was the basis on which they did the evaluation.

Mr SLACK: The second round—is that the \$4m that you are talking about? Is there another amount for the second round?

Dr EMERSON: No, the total of the first round is \$5m and the second round will also be \$5m.

Mr SLACK: Will you have the same situation where the politicians, that is, the Minister and the member for Redlands, can make a decision as to which way it will be spent?

Ms ROBSON: We did not make a decision. I have made that perfectly clear. This gentleman's committee took that decision, okay? I have had nothing to do with the decision making; I have distanced myself so far and so fast from it you would not believe for the simple reason that I was not going to have any of the sorts of allegations that you have been making substantiated. There is no further action that I could have taken to put myself further from that, other than going overseas to Iceland.

Mr SLACK: You just said that you represent certain schools in the area.

Ms ROBSON: You talked about allocating the funding. Your statement clearly was whether I allocated the funding.

Mr SLACK: Initially, then I said—

Ms ROBSON: No, you just said it. If you want it read back, we will have it read back. You just said, "The Minister allocated the funding." I object to that and I object to the insinuation that you keep making.

Mr SLACK: I may not have made myself clear. I am referring to the spending of the funding.

Ms ROBSON: That is the same thing. I do not decide on the spending of the funding.

Mr SLACK: But you prioritise or you go to wherever you feel—

Ms ROBSON: I make a submission.

Mr SLACK: You make a submission in the areas that you feel are appropriate?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct, and it is my right as a local member to do that.

Mr SLACK: Could I turn to national parks? During the Estimates debate last year, in answer to my question on notice about the amount allocated for fire prevention and control in national parks, you said that \$1.5m was expended annually with an extra amount of \$0.5m on upgrading firebreaks. Page 6 of the Portfolio Program Statements says that the variation between 1994-95 budget and 1994-95 estimated actual salaries, wages and related payments is partly a result of fire management which was funded mid-year, yet on page 72 of the Capital Works statement there is only an amount of \$0.46m for both fencing and fire control. Further, on page 75 of the Capital Works Program, an amount of \$1.933m is provided for management infrastructure, which includes fencing, firebreaks, work sheds and residences. On page 72 it states that \$1.3m of this will go to accommodation for national park rangers. That leaves \$6.33m. How can you reconcile an amount of \$2m annually for fire prevention, fire control and firebreaks? Did you mislead the Committee in your answer last year, or is the amount of \$4.6m wrong?

Ms ROBSON: I certainly did not mislead you in my answer last year. You have just given me a series of four references in rapid, machine-gun form.

Mr SLACK: I have just given the pages. I apologise for that.

Ms ROBSON: It is fine for you to sit down and calculate this in advance, but I cannot do it that fast in my head.

Mr SLACK: I realise that.

Ms ROBSON: In terms of your general question, did I mislead you—no. I very carefully instructed the people from my department to answer your question accurately and fully, and I believe that they have done that. The additional funding that is obtained in the mid-year review is, I believe, a very good way of doing business. We budget for a figure at the beginning of a financial year, but we need to have some flexibility. For example, we did a review on fire management, which was done through Tom Burns' Emergency Services Division, on the state of equipment in my department and other departments. We also had some problems, of course, with fires in national parks around the State. So that flexibility is fairly necessary for us.

As I said, I do not have in front of me all of those figures and the areas from which you have drawn them, but if you want us to justify that figure that we have given you last year against those comparative figures—in other words, give us a copy of the calculations that you have done—I am quite happy to give you a full explanation of how those figures were arrived at.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you want that on notice, Mr Slack?

Mr SLACK: No, I will just pursue it a little further. There is \$1.5m expended annually on fire prevention—

Ms ROBSON: What page are you at now?

Mr SLACK: I am on the answer to the question last year. There was an extra \$500,000 allocated for upgrading fire breaks. That comes to \$2m. In Budget Paper No. 3, page 72, it says quite clearly—

"As in previous years, funding is provided for fencing and fire trails particularly on new national parks and other protected areas. A total of \$0.46 million is allocated for this purpose throughout the State this year."

Ms ROBSON: What is your question?

Mr SLACK: What does that \$0.46m cover?

Ms ROBSON: Dr Emerson will speak to that.

Dr EMERSON: The figures that you refer to are capital works for fire management, but in addition to capital works for fire management we have general operated funds for fire management. You are drawing from a capital works program, but total fire management is obviously capital works plus the operating budget for fire management. On that, there were additional fire management activities from the mid-year review, which I can provide for you if that is of interest. There was \$282,000 for reimbursement of wildlife suppression activities that had already occurred—and we can provide this on a regional basis if you like—\$470,000 for fire trails, \$540,000 for equipment and vehicles and \$148,000 for training. That gave a full total of \$1.44m.

Mr SLACK: That is for 1995-96?

Ms ROBSON: For 1994-95.

Dr EMERSON: That was the funding provided in that mid-year review for 1994-95. We are not at the end of the financial year, so some of that money may be carried over. It was a very significant injection of money, but we are not in a position to finally determine carryovers.

Mr SLACK: What was the figure you gave for fire trails in 1994-95?

Dr EMERSON: There is \$470,000 for fire trails, but the total for fencing, fire trails, construction and redevelopment is \$400,000.

Mr SLACK: Dr Emerson, in this statement you are saying that fire trails is clearly capital works and in that statement you are saying it is capital works. You have indicated a figure of \$470,000 for fire trails in the 1994-95 budget, but in this budget you are allowing \$460,000 for fire trails, which is the same capital works, and fencing. Is that not a significant decrease on the 1994-95 budget figures?

Mr ROLFE: This is explained by the fact that the figures that you are referring to really arose from the mid-year budget review process, which resulted in a \$1.4m increase. The ongoing effect of that is absorbed within the conservation management new

initiative, that is, a total of \$9.5m for 1995-96. The precise detail of what will be spent on fire trails, etc., and indeed for fire control in 1995-96 is yet to be finally determined.

Mr SLACK: You are saying this is not accurate?

Mr ROLFE: I am saying it is accurate.

Mr SLACK: But it is yet to be determined.

Mr ROLFE: Perhaps I misunderstood the question. The ongoing effect in 1995-96 for this provision is incorporated within the conservation management component.

Mr SLACK: So it is in another area?

Mr ROLFE: Yes.

Mr SLACK: It strikes me as strange when a definite statement is made that that will be the amount allocated for this purpose in 1995-96. Are you saying that there is again some confusion in the way it is put?

Mr ROLFE: I suppose it is the way that the budgetary papers are structured, but I do not think there is confusion about what the final figure will be.

Mr SLACK: Looking at page 75 of Budget Paper No. 3, there is a total provision of \$1.933m for management infrastructure, which includes development and redevelopment of fencing, firebreaks, work sheds and residences. The provision for residences to accommodate national park rangers is \$1.3m, which is set out on page 72. That leaves \$633,000. From that you take \$460,000, which leaves about \$200,000 for work sheds, which is not very much when spread over all national parks throughout Queensland. Reconciling the figures from pages 75 and page 72, are you saying that that is understating what will be spent because the fire provision is understated?

Mr WOMERSLEY: The budget provisions in the last financial year have come from two sources. One is the mid-year budget review, which was \$1.44m, and that was completely over and above any other expenditure by the department. Over and above that, we have calculated from the expenditures within the department that we spent approximately \$1.93m in 1994-95 on fire management and pest plant management control.

Mr SLACK: Pest plant control?

Mr WOMERSLEY: The figures that we have taken out wrap together all the aspects of protecting the resources of national parks, which includes fire management. The expenditure of \$1.93m includes funds which are provided from the capital allocation to the department. I do not have the specific figure of how much of that capital was actually spent.

Mr SLACK: You said there is expenditure of \$1.93m in respect of fire, which includes capital, so I take it that is the total; but you say also fire and weed control?

Mr WOMERSLEY: That is correct.

Mr SLACK: Therefore, you did not spend \$2m on fire control.

Mr WOMERSLEY: The vast majority of that money is spent, in fact, on fire management.

Mr SLACK: The vast majority, but not all?

Mr WOMERSLEY: That is correct.

Mr SLACK: You are saying that there is a discrepancy in the figure of \$2m provided for fire control, as given in the answer by the Minister, because that actually, in round figures, includes weed control?

Mr WOMERSLEY: No, I am not saying that. I am not sure where you are quoting the figure of \$2m from.

Mr SLACK: I am quoting from an answer given last year that approximately \$1.5m is expended annually on fire prevention with an extra \$500,000 spent on upgrading firebreaks. There is no mention there of weed control. How can you substantiate that figure of \$2m?

Mr WOMERSLEY: The figures we have extracted for 1994-95 are the ones that I have just indicated to you. That has been the expenditure in this year, with an additional \$1.4 spent over and above that \$1.93m.

Mr SLACK: That will explain it, okay.

Mr WOMERSLEY: It is well in excess of \$2m, in fact.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes questions from the Opposition for the moment. We now return to questions from Government members. I wish to clarify the question of distribution funds under the Koala Coast Community Facilities Program. To make it absolutely clear, has Cabinet resolved to make \$10m available under that program?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: That \$10m was to be allocated initially by a first round allocation of funds of \$5m?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Cabinet resolved that that initial round of funding would be made available following public advertising and public notices inviting applications; is that right?

Ms ROBSON: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: And any member of Parliament would have had the opportunity to be aware of that public call for applications and make his or her community groups, schools or whatever aware of it; is that right?

Ms ROBSON: That is right.

The CHAIRMAN: All you did as the local member was draw that notice to the attention of some schools in your area; is that right?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: They wished, presumably, to make an application following that public notice; is that the case?

Ms ROBSON: They did not individually make the application. I put in one submission for the whole six schools.

The CHAIRMAN: But they indicated to you that they would like you to make a submission on their behalf?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct.

The CHAIRMAN: Any school affected in that area had the opportunity of making similar applications?

Ms ROBSON: Any member of the community in the area, whether or not he or she was part of the school community, was able to apply, and that was well advertised.

The CHAIRMAN: You assisted the schools in preparing the application so that they would address the guidelines which were advertised?

Ms ROBSON: No. I prepared the application, but I consulted with the school community before I did it. I went around with the Admin. Services and departmental representative. Along with the school community, the principal or whoever was involved, we identified the areas that they believed needed priority attention in order to meet the criteria that we outlined from the Community Facilities Program.

The CHAIRMAN: The criteria that the Education Department might use for assessing routine maintenance would not necessarily be appropriate criteria to be applied anyhow, would they?

Ms ROBSON: In some cases it would cross over. I think Rochedale South State School was a really good example of a school with large ground works—being built 15 years ago. The buildings were plonked in the middle of a large and eroded piece of property. There was a requirement of a substantial amount of money—over half a million dollars, in fact—to bring those school grounds up to what I believed to be an acceptable safety standard to start with. The grounds were very rocky and unsafe. The school community experienced quite a lot of accidents in that ground. But that work had not been done initially, and the school community was having a great deal of difficulty over those 15 years getting such a large amount of funding for the school—considering that so much else needed to be done to all the schools that were built during that period. They were fundamentally made up of classrooms, and there was very little facility for children to play in the playgrounds or sit down. I think the school historically was pretty strapped just to keep up with routine maintenance.

So those enormous projects—such as half a million dollars for groundwork—were something they were struggling in getting off the ground. As the local member, I was not having a great deal of success getting off the ground through the normal processes, given the large demands generally on upgrading the school facilities in the community. That is why I believed it was an ideal opportunity—and that school is very directly impacted upon. It was my first priority. It had the largest community of effect, and it met the criteria very well.

The CHAIRMAN: In preparing the submission, like any local member, you suggested, according to how far the schools were from the affected highway, what order of priority might be given to allocating the funds; is that right?

Ms ROBSON: That is right. I provided a map for the committee's consideration on which I marked

all the schools in my electorate that I was proposing work on. They could see on that map superimposed where the proposed motorway would be and the distance of each school from it. I indicated further to them the population of that particular school community—which was also one of the criteria. So we looked at the immediate area surrounding those schools and estimated the number of people in the very direct locality who would be able to use those schools on a seven day a week basis.

The CHAIRMAN: If any other school in the area or outside your area had sought to apply for funding, the local member could easily have similarly written a letter making suggestions as to some order of priority under which they might be considered, could they not?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct. As I said before, local members had their own range of priorities, and that is fine for them. That is for them to decide. They no doubt worked with their local council as well to try to maximise the submissions. My local council applied for bikeways and pathways, which I had been very keen to get in place. They were awarded funding for that purpose and for a major recreational facility south of my electorate, but nevertheless one that people in my electorate would be able to use.

The CHAIRMAN: There was nothing in your suggestion of priorities which would have suggested that any school in the neighbouring area should have been excluded from being considered if it had applied, was there?

Ms ROBSON: No, nothing at all. It was not up to me to decide who could or could not apply. It was publicly advertised for that specific purpose, and everyone was encouraged to apply. That is exactly what I did as the local member.

The CHAIRMAN: When that submission went in, did you have anything to do with it after that?

Ms ROBSON: Certainly not. I placed the submission with the appropriate committee, and I had nothing further to do with it. I made no inquiries as to how I was proceeding in terms of my success or otherwise. I made no inquiries as to what other members had applied for—either to the local members or community members. I totally distanced myself from the whole process for the reasons that I have explained. I did not wish to be accused of having influenced that process, and I can say with a clear conscience that I absolutely did not.

The CHAIRMAN: Even though you suggested a possible priority of allocation, for all you knew only one of those schools might have ever got anything or indeed none of them.

Ms ROBSON: Exactly. I had no control over that process or any influence on any of the committee members.

The CHAIRMAN: How many schools were in your submission?

Ms ROBSON: There were six schools in my submission.

The CHAIRMAN: There could have been three successful—or two or four—without you ever knowing until it was announced?

Ms ROBSON: That is correct. They could have applied independently themselves. It was not up to them to report to me or me to report to them, except in the initial consultation, where I determined their priorities and reflected them in my submission, which I told them I would do. Anyone could have applied in the local community. They could have sent me a copy of their submission to support, which is the case of the Logan City Council. Councillors came to see me after they had put their submission together, sat down with me, went through it and asked for my support. I cannot recall whether or not I wrote a letter of support, but I probably did. It is my normal procedure when that happens to write a letter as the local member. I am not too sure whether I did that in this case, but that is the way I proceed. I would add, at this point, that I applied for a lot more money than I got funding for. In fact, it is probably about half of what I actually applied for in that initial round. I think that to have some \$900,000 of an amount of \$5m is probably pretty proportionate to a fair distribution.

The CHAIRMAN: When you say you applied, you only applied on behalf of the schools.

Ms ROBSON: As the local member, I was an agent for those communities. I was not applying for funding for myself, I was applying for funding for those schools which are public property and which I believe I should represent in that way.

The CHAIRMAN: So your involvement did not extend anywhere beyond the front door of your electorate office in the sense that your input to the submissions really only related to the priorities that the schools had?

Ms ROBSON: Exactly.

The CHAIRMAN: After it was posted, you had no role in assessing priorities whatsoever?

Ms ROBSON: Absolutely not. I knew the criteria in advance, as we all did. That was advertised. The weighting was advertised. Clearly, the criteria was advertised. The weighting was determined by that committee prior to that process, and that was the process that was audited. The weighting numbers were added up and successfully listed according to those numbers.

The CHAIRMAN: You did not know in advance what that weighting was? That was a matter for the committee.

Ms ROBSON: That was a matter for the committee. I just distanced myself from it.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. I think that is satisfactorily explained. Do members of the Government have any further questions on the Conservation program?

Mr ROBERTSON: Are you satisfied that it was an open and accountable process?

Ms ROBSON: Well, Price Waterhouse thought so.

The CHAIRMAN: Mr Slack, are you ready to move on to the next program, or would you like to continue with conservation?

Mr SLACK: I would like to continue with conservation.

The CHAIRMAN: We will return to Mr Slack for questions.

Mr SLACK: I will make a comment following the Crown Prosecutor's submission, that in respect—

Ms ROBSON: Sorry, what Crown Prosecutor?

Mr SLACK: The Chairman sounded very much like the Crown Prosecutor.

The CHAIRMAN: I was just clarifying it.

Mr ROBERTSON: He is showing disrespect for the Chair.

Mr SLACK: There was no disrespect to the Chair and I ask for an apology for that.

Ms ROBSON: He is probably flattered.

Mr SLACK: That is right. In respect of those questions you were aware of the guidelines, and you were very familiar with the guidelines, so you could reasonably expect that what you could recommend would be well within the guidelines and, therefore, have a very good chance of success.

Ms ROBSON: Well, I would be pretty stupid to apply for something that I did not think would get up. I do want to help my schools in reality.

Mr SLACK: But you would be in as good a position as anybody or a better position than most because of your position as Minister for Environment and Heritage to know exactly what is most likely to succeed.

Ms ROBSON: No, I do not agree with that. As I said, the criteria were widely published. Certainly, people were notified. If you look at the success of other applicants you will find that Logan City Council, for one, which received far more than I did, understood the criteria. The people in my community know what we are talking about. They have been involved in the debate about the motorway. They have been informed by me about the \$38m and the \$28m and the \$10m for this facilities program. There has been a very good educational process whereby just about everybody knew what the criteria were. The criteria were very simple. Once I had made a decision to focus on my schools, it was not too hard to convey that, if you will, to the principals, staff and P & Cs and ask, "What projects do you have that will fit within these guidelines?" That was the process.

As I said, a lot of the assessment that was done by Q-Build is not eligible for funding. Work such as repainting and guttering is not eligible under that program and will not be funded. The sorts of projects that were successfully funded that I applied for were very clearly within the broad guidelines. As I said before, I did not get all of the funding that I applied for.

Mr SLACK: Did any of the other members get the funding that they applied for?

Ms ROBSON: I do not know what they applied for. Again, I took no part or interest, either in verbal discussion or in any other way. I did not ask Laurel Power what she had applied for. I had no idea.

Mr SLACK: She seemed very upset about what she got.

Ms ROBSON: I had no idea what she applied for. I did not ask John Budd, John Szczerbanik or any other local member what he or she applied for. In fact, I did not know until we were all notified at the same time what the outcome of that committee's deliberations were. I asked that that be the case. I asked Mr Speirs and Dr Emerson that I not be informed of any process. They had no obligation to inform me. I told them that I wanted to be kept away from it. That is what they did; they respected that wish.

Mr SLACK: Minister, in respect of the Koala Information Centre built in the Daisy Hill Forest and due for opening, which is referred to on page 12 of the Portfolio Program Statements under the heading "Program Performance Assessments", what was the estimated cost for that information centre and what is the actual cost?

Ms ROBSON: The information centre has only just been finished. The estimated cost is \$1.6m which comprises \$1.2m and \$400,000 for displays. We are doing a very interesting display auditorium with a virtual reality approach. People can be sat down in a forum that is very educational. We take them through a koala habitat and they can imagine that they are in it. We have great educational messages going through that display. The idea is, obviously, to focus on schools, because the way we are going to save habitat in the future is by educating our children.

Subsequently, \$20,000 for children's koala kits has been costed into that. That will cost \$100,000 in total. Staff operating costs including the operation of a koala ambulance, which will be based at the centre, are estimated at \$130,000 for the year 1994-95. As I said, I have been informed by Mr Speirs that the visitor centre is almost ready for opening. The public will be advised very shortly that it is available for school tours.

Mr SLACK: In respect of that section of the budget, on page 11 of the Budget papers, under the heading "Program Performance Assessments", it states that the rescue plan for the greater bilby in Queensland has been completed. As such a rescue plan was only recently announced by the Premier, could the Minister please explain the details, the cost, what action was taken and how many animals were rescued as you say that it has been completed?

Ms ROBSON: I will ask Ross Rolfe to speak to that.

Mr ROLFE: Perhaps the word "completion" could be misunderstood. The plan itself has been completed and released for public comment. There are several core elements of the plan. First is the protection of core habitat as part of a scientific national park where the predominant remaining colony of bilbies exists. A colony of about 600 is

understood to be on the property known as Store Paddock on Davenport Downs. The scientific advice is that this is the only colony that has serious prospects of long-term survival if properly managed. Proper management basically entails removing the agents of decline, which potentially include cattle, degradation of natural habitat as a result of cattle grazing; feral animal problems, particularly foxes; possibly wild horse devastation to natural habitat and so on. The plan basically canvasses how the scientific approach to dealing with those agents has declined.

What we have done in particular since then is work closely with Stanbroke Pastoral Company, which was the former owner of Davenport Downs. We acquired from them the Store Paddock and we also acquired a part of the neighbouring property Springvale as bilby habitat. The other component of that is the protection of bilby habitat on the remainder of Davenport Downs which is cooperatively met with the assistance of Stanbroke Pastoral Company. Additionally, we will be undertaking a captive breeding program which is currently based at Moggill, which is aimed at better understanding the biology of the species. Those are the main elements of the plan. We are pretty well advanced in implementing its core features, namely, protection of the habitat by reservations—national park—by making arrangements for management of the adjoining lands and undertaking scientific research.

Ms ROBSON: I might add to that that the Stanbroke Pastoral Company has dedicated \$500,000 over five years to be matched dollar for dollar by us to add to that effort in terms of scientific research and other work that is required to ensure that that species continues to exist.

Mr SLACK: What does the Stanbroke Pastoral Company do in return? Are there any arrangements? I understand that it would have some arrangement with Springvale.

Ms ROBSON: Yes, that is correct. Ross could probably explain it.

Mr ROLFE: There is nothing in return. The transaction is based entirely on exchanging properties of equal value, or parcels of the properties of equal value. Their contribution to research is entirely a commitment in good faith.

Mr SLACK: And no other consideration will be given to Stanbroke in respect to pastoral—

Mr ROLFE: No.

Mr SLACK: I refer to the herbarium on page 10 of the Program Statements and note that there is an amount of \$600,000 for planning and design work. Could the Minister indicate when work will begin on the site and when the work will be completed?

Ms ROBSON: As I indicated earlier, the work will be completed in about August 1997. I understand—and I do not have a date in front of me—that probably around about now they will be considering putting together the design and the final plans. I am not too sure when they actually turn the first sod on the development.

Dr EMERSON: It will be in this financial year. There has been a financial allocation of \$600,000 in this year—1995-96—for site works and design and documentation of the building. So we will be expecting some work to start this financial year.

Mr SLACK: I refer to the same page—page 10—regarding the provision for land acquisition in 1995-96. There is a total amount of \$3.586m—that is the \$2.5m plus the \$1.08m listed in expenditure for the purchase of 550,000 hectares. In last year's Budget there was a reference to having purchased—I think my memory is correct—535,000 hectares for national park estate. Could you give me the cost of what that 535,000 hectares amounted to? Last year, we actually talked of an allocation of \$7.7m for national parks, and that did not include the Starcke purchase

Ms ROBSON: I have a five-year summary of the amount that has been acquired, but I have not got the financial component for that. We have it for the five-year period. I can run through it, if you like, in terms of how much was acquired in area and how much each acquisition cost.

Mr SLACK: No, I am asking this question because my understanding of it, from the Budget last year, was that there was a \$7.7m figure for the acquisition of land.

Ms ROBSON: Right.

Mr SLACK: According to these papers, the amount purchased was 535,000 hectares. My understanding of that \$7.7m is that it did not include the Starcke purchase.

Ms ROBSON: That is correct.

Mr SLACK: I am not sure whether that Starcke purchase figure is in that 535,000 hectares or not—the total area of Starcke that was purchased for national park.

Ms ROBSON: My understanding is that it is not.

Mr ROLFE: It is.

Ms ROBSON: It is. I am sorry, it is included.

Mr SLACK: From that figure, I total up—and I do not know where Silver Plains sits in the equation—at least \$12m for national parkland last year for 535,000 hectares, yet you have budgeted \$3.586m for 550,000 hectares. How can you explain the difference in the costing in what it actually cost last year and the proposed amount for the 550,000 hectares this year? I find it very difficult to understand how you could acquire 550,000 hectares for \$3.586m.

Ms ROBSON: We might just take that one on notice because I do not want to waste much more time. We have figures that are in different places here, and if you are happy to put that on notice, we will pull them altogether and give you a more succinct answer.

Mr SLACK: Have the Starcke and Silver Plains purchases been paid for? That is the next question.

Mr ROLFE: The Starcke purchase—the vendor has received, as he is entitled to under the

provisions of the Land Acquisition Act, the amount of the Crown valuation, and the Silver Plains purchase has been paid for.

Mr SLACK: So they are both in the 1994-95 actual estimate of the \$164m?

Mr ROLFE: Yes.

Mr SLACK: Both of those properties, Silver Plans and Starcke, are included in that 535,000 hectares?

Mr ROLFE: They are.

Mr SLACK: We have \$8m between those two properties straight off. It is very difficult for me to understand.

Ms ROBSON: That is why I think it is a good idea that we give you a more consolidated answer that you can consider.

Dr EMERSON: We can help explain that now, but we will elaborate in the follow up to your question.

Mr ROLFE: The Silver Plans purchase was an addition at mid-year Budget review. Basically, that would not have featured in the \$7m figure, or whatever figure it was.

Mr SLACK: So you would have the \$7.7m, and then you would have the \$4m for Starcke, and then you would have another \$4m for Silver Plans. So that \$8m and \$7.7m is \$15.7m to acquire 545,000 hectares last year, yet you have allocated in your budget \$3.586m to acquire 550,000 hectares.

Dr EMERSON: I think you will find in the information that we will provide that the total that you spoke of includes the money for the Regional Open Space System—the ROSS scheme.

Ms ROBSON: Yes, the \$4m for SEQ 2001.

Dr EMERSON: Obviously, when you get down into south-east Queensland, you have to spend a lot more money per hectare.

Mr SLACK: I appreciate that.

Dr EMERSON: So when we talk about the funding for next year for the general National Park Acquisition Program, we are more likely to be targeting those 13 biogeographical regions where the cost per hectare is lower. So the figures are biased by the ones that you sighted, including the money for the Regional Open Space System.

Mr SLACK: Dr Emerson, with respect, even if you take that \$4m out of that, you are still spending \$3.3m plus \$8m—\$11.7m—for essentially 535,000 hectares of land and you are proposing to spend a total of \$3.8m this year for 550,000 hectares.

Ms ROBSON: I think that is why I am suggesting to you that it would be better if we gave you more detailed figures because land values vary so much throughout the State. Some of those acquisitions are in areas where it is extremely expensive, like far-north Queensland.

Mr SLACK: Could you nominate the properties involved and the price? For argument's sake, is that Springvale figure, with the deal that you have done with Stanbroke, included in this

year's budget or last year's actual? Is that figure in that 550,000 hectares?

Mr ROLFE: It is in the 535,000.

Mr SLACK: That is another amount of money.

Mr ROLFE: That was included in the mid-year Budget review. The other thing to say in relation to the expansion of the national park estate is that the term "acquisition" implies a purchase, but this also includes areas of Crown land and State forest land and so on, which is included within the national park estate.

Mr SLACK: So this year, the National Park Expansion Program will include a significant amount of Crown land?

Mr ROLFE: It could, as it has in previous years where areas of Crown land have been determined to become national park.

Dr EMERSON: A good example of that is in the Wet Tropics, where we will expect that there will be some substantial conversion of forest land.

Mr SLACK: So is it fair to say that, to explain that figure, you are embarking on an increasing program to move a significant area of forestry land into national park estate?

Dr EMERSON: Forestry land that is not used for productive forests, which is certainly the case in the Wet Tropics World Heritage area.

Mr ROLFE: For example, several hundred thousand hectares in the Wet Tropics area has been mooted for several years to become national park.

Mr SLACK: The average member of the public could be slightly misled when you talk about an acquisition of 550,000 hectares for a national park.

Dr EMERSON: I do not think so. It is certainly not intended to be. We do make an estimate for informing people of how we are going against the commitment to increase the national parks estate by 3.6 million hectares. As in the past, the acquisitions have included both purchases and some transfers. One of the parks that is very advanced in, or maybe even through, the claim process is the Simpson Desert. That very substantial area was vacant Crown land. It was included in the figures, too, but it was not purchased.

Mr SLACK: Is the Homevale property near Nebo in the process of being purchased?

Mr ROLFE: It was purchased last year.

Mr SLACK: So it came into the figures last year as well?

Mr ROLFE: Yes.

Mr SLACK: How much did it cost?

Dr EMERSON: Can we take that on notice? Sometimes owners ask us to enter into confidentiality clauses.

Mr SLACK: Did that amount of money to pay for Homevale come into last year's or this year's Budget?

Mr ROLFE: It was in last year's Budget but, as I recall, it was a carryover from the previous year.

Mr SLACK: A carryover from 1993-94?

Mr ROLFE: As I recall, that was the case. That negotiation settled towards the end of the 1993-94 financial year. I think it was a carryover figure.

Mr SLACK: Can I take it that, on notice, I will be provided with a definite date for when that property was purchased and when that money will come into the figures?

Dr EMERSON: I am advised that it has been settled.

Mr SLACK: Yes, it has been settled, but the question is: in what year?

Dr EMERSON: It would have been settled in 1994-95. Mr Rolfe was explaining that there may well have been provision for it in 1993-94. With respect to the acquisition budget—you go through fairly protracted negotiations. All you can do is provide an estimate in each financial year as to what will be spent and how many hectares will be retained. It could slip one side or the other of 30 June by several million dollars and a few hundred thousand hectares.

Mr SLACK: It seems strange that, when the figure is not readily available for the price that was paid, the settlement would have taken place 12 months ago.

Dr EMERSON: The figure would be available. I am saying that I am aware of a substantial number of contracts that are signed in relation to which the owner insists on a confidentiality clause about the price.

Mr SLACK: Local authorities would have that information straightaway when the purchase went through?

Dr EMERSON: I am aware of a number of purchases where that is a requirement of sale. Obviously, if the owner is happy for that figure to be disclosed, we do not have any problem. We do potentially have a legal problem if we breach that confidentiality clause. We do not recall immediately whether the Homevale purchase was subject to that, but I am aware of a number that were.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from Opposition members has expired. I understand that Government members are ready to move to the Environment Program. I invite the member for Currumbin, Mrs Rose, to commence her questions.

Mrs ROSE: The Queensland Government has committed itself to returning Queensland's greenhouse gas emissions to their 1990 levels by the year 2000 under the Queensland Greenhouse Response Strategy. I understand that the strategy is based on a no-regrets approach, consisting of measures which not only reduce greenhouse gas emissions but also make good economic environmental sense in their own right. Could you outline to the Committee the highlights of the strategy with particular emphasis on the financial incentives being offered?

Ms ROBSON: Yes, I am pleased to do that. The Greenhouse Response Strategy is certainly a no-regrets approach to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. You are quite right; it is equally composed of sound measures aimed at promoting the wise and efficient use of energy. In doing so, the strategy includes measures which specifically target energy users by promoting alternative energy sources, efficient energy travel and enhancing natural greenhouse gas sinks. The Premier has recently announced a \$35m Alternative Energy Promotion Package, which includes: grants of up to \$500 for home owners to install solar hot water systems; a \$5 rebate for each of up to three energy efficient fluorescent lamps purchased by each household; a rebate of up to \$80 for improvements undertaken to reduce electric hot water costs; grants of up to \$7,500 for home owners in remote areas to install stand-alone power systems which use renewable energy; rebates of up to 50 per cent of the cost of energy efficient lighting and solar window film installed by commercial building owners; establishment of an Energy Advisory Centre and two mobile advisory services to promote energy efficiency and provide advice to domestic, commercial and industrial consumers; and \$5m in funding for alternative energy demonstration programs.

The Government will also encourage the use of other energy sources, including bagasse, which is the waste from sugarcane processing, mini hydro-electric systems, wind power and a combination of industry waste and landfill gas. We have certainly moved significantly forward in how we consider generation and use of energy in Queensland. I believe that the greenhouse gas response document, which is a whole-of-Government approach, addresses those issues very substantially. The notion of having a whole-of-Government response was simply to indicate that all departments are conscious and aware of the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

We are all conscious of the scientific debate that is going on. It was felt that other agencies such as Minerals and Energy, Housing, Local Government and Planning and various other agencies can also have a very definitive influence on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. I think it is very valid that it is not just the Department of Environment and Heritage that is singularly seen to be promoting greenhouse gas emission reduction. The initiatives that I have outlined to you indicate clearly the whole-of-Government commitment to that.

Dr CLARK: I have a general question. I am asking it in this bracket because it is the final period for questioning. It was a question that I anticipated that Mr Slack would ask but, since he has not asked it, I feel it is important that I raise it. You will recall that when the Budget was brought down, there was some suggestion that there had been a reduction in the allocation for your portfolio. I assume that since Mr Slack has not questioned you on that issue, he now understands that there has been a significant increase.

Mr SLACK: I do not accept that. You are jumping to conclusions.

Dr CLARK: I did think that he would have questioned the Minister closely on that if he had concerns. Some members of the Green Party are still of the opinion—and expressing the opinion—that there has been a reduction in your budget. Could you put on the record a clarification of what is described on page 5 of the Portfolio Statements? Could you give a very clear explanation as to why there is a difference between the 1994-95 Estimated Actual of \$164.9m and the 1995-96 Estimate of \$160.9m? I would like you to put on the record an explanation of why there is an increase in your allocation.

Ms ROBSON: I think that is appropriate, given the misleading debate that was undertaken the day the Budget was actually brought down. Nobody who was making a critique of it at that time had had time to examine the documents in any detail or to question anyone that I was aware of in my departmental structure or my office about how those figures were arrived at. An explanation is given—I believe quite substantially—in the documents that have been presented publicly, but I will work through it in a more structured way.

The development of a departmental budget in any year takes account of a number of factors, including expenditure, forward estimates and proposals for new initiatives which may include Commonwealth matching funds. Annual budgets when appropriated represent a department's planned expenditure for the year, and Queensland now fortunately has a very dynamic budgeting process where changes in priorities which occur during the year can be considered in our mid-year budget review process. The process involves a redistribution of original appropriations as well as any additional revenue gained throughout the year, which is geared to meet emerging priorities. Adjustments to appropriations during the year as a result of variations in Commonwealth contributions also add to the dynamic nature of the budget process. There is also a consideration from rollover of funding for funds committed in the previous budget but not expended and expended in the following budgeting year.

Secondly, it is true that there has been an 18 per cent increase in the appropriated budget for my department between 1994-95 and 1995-96. The department's appropriation for last year was, however, increased as a result of an additional appropriation arising out of that mid-year budget review that I spoke of, and that review provided funds for land acquisitions—which were Silver Plains and Springvale—which was \$4.45m, carryovers which were unanticipated at the time of the original budget of \$11.006m, and additional receipts from Commonwealth and other sources of \$5.384m. I think it is important to understand that this funding is not a permanent addition to the department's budget, and I believe that that was the basis upon which some criticism had been made by the greens who cast their eyes very quickly over it and came to the conclusion that there was actually a reduction in my budget. That was definitively not the case.

I think we could safely predict that, even though we have a budget this year of \$160.9m, by the time we get to the actuals at the end of the financial year period, that will be substantially more than that because we will do another mid-year review to reflect that dynamic budgetary process that we have put in place. I think that the figure of \$164.97m, which is the figure that was talked about in the Budget papers as an estimated actual expenditure for that year of 1994-95, cannot be used comparatively on the basis of that explanation. It does include non-recurring amounts of funding for the mid-year. It should be recognised that in the six-year period since 1989-90 the department's annual appropriation has grown by 164 per cent, reflecting the Government's genuine commitment to environmental reform in this State.

Mr ROBERTSON: On the topic of environmental reform—the passage of the new Environmental Protection Act has met with wide support within Government, industry and the environmental movement. To give effect to that piece of legislation, you will obviously be conducting a regular program of inspections by environmentally qualified staff. Will you outline to the Committee the level of inspections conducted by the department, the types of inspections that are carried out and the number of these during the past year?

Ms ROBSON: Yes, I would be happy to. I believe that this is a very important and innovative part of our work, and it is certainly a first for Queensland. Regional officers inspect premises for both compliance with the legislation and in relation to impact assessment and other planning issues. The inspection of premises to ensure compliance ranges from ensuring that licensees comply with their licences to inspection of unlicensed premises to ensure that the general provisions of the Act are being complied with. The inspection of premises for impact assessment or other planning purposes is carried out in order to fulfil the department's role in ensuring that planning takes full account of environmental aspects of any proposed development.

This year, a total of 1,964 compliance inspections have been carried out across the five regions of the State, with 391 planning inspections also being completed. As would be expected, south-eastern region provided the bulk of the planning inspections with a total of 169, while northern region had a total of 770 compliance inspections. Regional variation is a result of specific enforcement programs that are carried out in different regions. For example, south-eastern region focused on a number of complex industries, whereas northern region specifically targeted users of ozone-depleting substances. A comparison of this year's inspections with the previous year's shows almost a tripling in the compliance area and slightly less than double in the planning area. A total of 1,366 licences requiring inspection have been issued throughout the State. A breakdown of this figure shows the bulk of 573 in the south-eastern region, 266 in the central region, 240 in the northern region, 172 in the far-northern region and 115 in the south west. Of this total, approximately

half were under the Clean Air Act and about 50 under the Noise Abatement Act.

It is very important that we reflect upon those figures, because it indicates the commitment that we have made in the last couple of years to beefing up that area of our operations. It reflects that we have adequate funding to complete that work and that we are able to resource it with staff and any other required resourcing in order to do what we are supposed to do, which is to protect the environment and ensure that industry understands, through educational interaction with our department, what it can do and how it can play a role. From what I have indicated to you, each region obviously has taken a slightly varied approach to that according to their local circumstances.

Mrs ROSE: Last year, the Department of Environment and Heritage conducted a well-publicised review of all Queensland sewage treatment plants, with some quite disturbing results. Could you outline the details of those results, the action taken by your department since then, the results achieved and the funding provided from this Budget that will be directed to further work in that area?

Ms ROBSON: That is a very relevant question, because it was a very important exercise that the department undertook in order to give us some sort of an indication of how provisions under licences have been complied with or not in the past. The department reviewed the performance of sewage treatment plants by examining the results of monitoring programs carried out by operators as a condition of their licence. The results were compared with requirements for the effluent discharge set by environmental licences. An analysis of the results provided to the department by the operators revealed that about 10 per cent of plants were not monitoring; that where monitoring data was available, the records were not complete in most cases; that about 10 per cent of plants complied fully with their licence for those data available and that all treatment plants were capable of treating to secondary standard before discharge.

The department took the action required by the environmental legislation in issuing notices under the Clean Waters Act to 128 sewage treatment operations, and they inspected 57 others to check on performance. The notices required operators to demonstrate that plant effluent was not causing water pollution. The department has accepted plans to improve performance from 52 plants, and a further 40 plants are preparing plans which will bring them into compliance. For 37, no action is currently required, and 39 are yet to be completely assessed.

Information which has been obtained from the review was used to evaluate current licence conditions for appropriateness. As a result, conditions were modified to reflect the need to account for wet weather flows and to require more stringent sampling regimes. As a requirement of the Environmental Protection Act, all sewage treatment plant licences will be recalled and fully reviewed by 1 March 1996. The licences issued will deal with noise and air quality issues as well as water quality. This

will be undertaken as part of the expanded environment program, with additional initiative funding of \$5m for the implementation of the Environmental Protection Act.

The review I initiated has already resulted in a significant improvement in both the performance of existing plants and the level of planning for future requirements. As I have indicated to the Parliament and in the media, I believe that this is a very crucial component of moving forward to achieving what all States in Australia are trying to achieve, that is, a cleaning up of our waterways and more appropriate and well-maintained sewage treatment systems through our licensees throughout the State. Obviously, this pressure is being applied not only in Australia but of course all around the world; we can no longer continue to pollute our waterways in the way we have been doing historically.

I have asked sewage licence operators to look toward planning for the next 50 years or so, not just doing patch-up work but doing something substantial that will take us well into the next few decades and carry us through so that we do not have to go through this exercise too often.

The CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions from Government members?

Mr ROBERTSON: The incineration of hospital waste has been a topical issue in both Brisbane and Sydney for some time now. I understand that high-temperature incineration is the best disposal measure for pathological wastes. Could you outline what is the current contract situation with the Brisbane incinerator, and is it currently conforming to its licence requirements?

Ms ROBSON: The particular problem of the incineration of hospital waste has been well debated in the public arena since about the middle of 1993. At that stage we were dealing with the Ace Waste facility at Willawong. That facility has caused the community at Willawong a level of concern, particularly in the last couple of years. The incinerator operator spent time with my departmental staff striving to reach compliance with the standards of the licence that it has been provided with, and has put a considerable amount of effort and money into reaching that level of compliance. Clearly we were not very happy with the

processes it was undertaking, and we believed that the technology it was using was inappropriate for the purposes for which it had been licensed.

The work that Ace Waste has done on the incinerator has certainly made a big difference to the area. The complaints have fallen away considerably. In fact, that facility has operated normally within its licensing conditions for the past few months and we have not had any major complaints about smoke emissions or unusual occurrences, which were the problems that we were getting complaints about for quite a period of time. Allegations have been made by some local residents in the Pallara area, however, which have not been substantiated as coming from the Ace Waste facility. A noise assessment is being done by a consultant to attempt to finalise the sources of noise which one of the neighbours has continued to complain about.

Issues raised by the residents at various forum meetings have centred on the storage of waste and the delivery of waste from other areas of Queensland, such as Rockhampton. There are possible plans to locate a compactor in Rockhampton and to rail the waste to Brisbane. Residents have expressed fears about overloading that incinerator. The material now being made available for incineration is replacing the material which was being contracted from Sydney, which was also causing some consternation to residents.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. That concludes the period allowed for the examination of the Estimates of the Department of Environment and Heritage. Clearly, from the examination of these Estimates, in terms of financial responsibilities the department is growing and has increasing responsibilities. This, of course, imposes some burden on the department to ensure that funds are properly expended.

On behalf of the Committee, I thank you, Minister, and all your staff for their preparation, time and input into this Estimates Committee investigation today. On that note, I declare closed the examination of the Estimates for your department.

The Committee adjourned at 10.32 p.m..