

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C**

Mr V. P. Lester (Chair)	Mr J. J. Hegarty
Hon. P. J. Braddy	Ms J. C. Spence
Mr S. D. Bredhauer	Mr F. J. Tanti

**MINISTER FOR TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS****IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. S. Santoro, Minister for Training and Industrial Relations

Mr C. Thatcher, Director-General

Mr C. Hooper, Executive Director, Division of Corporate Services

Mr B. Carlon, Executive Director, Division of Vocational Education, Training and Employment

Mr S. Sielaff, Executive Director, TAFE Qld

Mr P. Henneken, Executive Director, Division of Labour Market Reform

Mr J. Hodges, Executive Director, Division of Workplace Health and Safety

Ms Rhonda Pashen, Acting General Manager, Division of Workers' Compensation

The Committee commenced at 9 a.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Good morning everybody. It is now 9 a.m. I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee C now open. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in Appropriation Bill (No. 2) 1996 for the areas as set out in the sessional orders. The organisational units will be examined in the following order—

- (1) Department of Training and Industrial Relations from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.
- (2) Department of Education from 2.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.

I remind members of the Committee and the Minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the end of those time limits. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. A double chime will also ring two minutes after an extension of time has been given. The sessional orders require that at least half the time be allocated to non-Government members. The Committee has agreed that the first 20 minutes of questions will be from non-Government members.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask witnesses to identify themselves before they answer a question. A resolution to grant leave to members other than Committee members to ask questions has been made by the Committee. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, would you like to make a brief introductory statement?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Yes, I will take the opportunity offered to make a brief statement. First of all, let me reiterate the value that the Government places on this process. In Opposition we were very supportive of a very positive role and a very strong role for committees. Honourable members who are here today and who were in the place at that time will appreciate that we took every opportunity, in a serious manner, to scrutinise the role of the previous Government. We will welcome similar scrutiny today. Working in a unicameral system such as that that we have here in Queensland, we regard the committee process as a very serious one and we look forward to participating in a different role today.

As honourable members would appreciate, I represent as the Minister a very large and complex department, which focuses on a wide range of issues. Since the change of Government, a range of important issues have had to be tackled by the Government—the Kennedy inquiry into the workers' compensation system and the industrial relations consultation process. We are in the process of revising the industrial relations legislation. There is a massive—perhaps some would say "unprecedented"—level of consultation that is taking place. The trading hours inquiry has also been completed and the Government is considering the recommendations of that inquiry. We are refocusing on TAFE. There is a great amount of internal activity that has taken place within TAFE Queensland with a view to lifting morale and refocusing the competitive effort in TAFE Queensland so that it can be a competitive organisation in an increasingly competitive environment. We are also helping to introduce the new MAATS and the new user-choice systems in terms of training. We have also initiated a review of the Workplace Health and Safety Division as indeed recommended by Mr Kennedy in his inquiry.

The Budget obviously reflects a number of those initiatives, but I hasten to add that the Budget has been formulated within the difficult context that I am sure has been explained by the Premier and the Treasurer during previous hearings of the committees. It includes new initiatives to achieve and improve an industrial relations system with greater flexibilities, more training places to better assist people attain real jobs, emphasis on a competitive and flexible training market and help for the Workers Compensation Fund, which I think everybody acknowledges is in dire need of repair. There has been a very real shift of resources from the various head offices and the bureaucracies into the places where services are delivered to our clients, the people of Queensland.

We have had to make some decisions—and undoubtedly members opposite will draw me out on those—and I will be pleased to explain why those decisions have had to be made. I want to say right from the outset that where staff are affected by the decisions made by Government, they will be treated in a sensitive and fair way. The process of relocation, redeployment and VERs will be managed with the standards laid down for the management of

displaced staff which were put in place by the previous Government.

The Budget does contain figures that, obviously, have been affected by the recent Federal Government Budget and there are still many officer-to-officer meetings occurring, which will finetune further some of the figures contained in the budget. I think that I will leave it at that, and I will be pleased to take some questions. Before doing so, can I introduce the officers from the department who are here to assist me to answer some of the more technical questions. On my far right we have John Hodges, the Executive Director of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety; Peter Henneken, who is the Executive Director of the Division of Labour Market Reform; we have Mr Chris Hooper, the Executive Director of Corporate Services Division; the Director-General of the department is sitting next to me on my right, Mr Colin Thatcher; to my left, Bernie Carlon, the Executive Director of Training Queensland; on his left, Stan Sielaff, the Executive Director of TAFE Queensland; and the Acting Executive Director, Division of Workers' Compensation, Ms Rhonda Pashen. The General Manager of the Workers' Compensation Division is on leave. That was arranged prior to the setting of the date of this Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I call upon the member for Kedron, the Honourable Paul Braddy, to commence questioning.

**Mr BRADDY:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, the first question is to you. I refer to the Budget papers, which appropriate some \$25.3m in the workplace health and safety area. I further refer to the Kennedy report, Volume 1, Appendices 1 to 5, page 30, where Kennedy makes the following comment—

"My impression is serious problems exist in this division. It is necessary to determine if the current policy of a lack of enforcement in favour of self regulation and encouragement to employers is appropriate. The self regulation policy seems nebulous and not enough businesses are inspected or monitored."

Pages 12 and 13 of the Program Statements make no reference to these serious problems except to say that a review will be undertaken in 1996. Why do not the Program Statements address the issues? Why is there no sense of urgency about the conduct of the review?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you for the question, Mr Braddy. You are right in saying that Mr Kennedy did make comments that were quite scathing of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. Right from the outset, let me say that that was really one of the surprise outcomes of that inquiry. As the Minister, when I started attending meetings of the various advisory bodies—which, as you would be aware, are tripartite advisory bodies—never once during any of those meetings by either employers, unions or specialist people, who are put on those committees for very good reason, was the issue of growing unsafeness within Queensland workplaces ever raised. In fact, as I travelled around Queensland and as I kept on taking advice from the tripartite

committees, what I was told was that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety, mainly to give credit where credit is due, as a result of the policy direction set by the Government of which were you a member, was working very well. Kennedy, as I said, really surprised me when, out of blue, he came out with the recommendation that he did—that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety was in need of serious overhaul.

We obviously went into action in terms of the workers' compensation reforms, which I am sure you would agree we regard as very, very urgent. Shortly after that, we worked out the terms of reference for the inquiry into the Division of Workplace Health and Safety, or the review as we have called it, and we have appointed a committee which is an expert committee as well as a representative committee. The independent consultant is in the process of being employed. That work of review will commence in the very near future. My officers will get for me the particular details of the committee. If you wish, I can outline them, but in the interests of preserving time here, I have made the statement in the Parliament. As I look at the committee now, it is a representative committee. There are some employee representatives, for example, on that. But I can assure you, Mr Braddy and the Committee, that we are proceeding with all due haste. We did give preference to the workers' compensation issue because that was a very urgent—particularly from the financial point of view—issue. It is losing, as you would be aware from the Actuary's assessments, \$2.5m a week. But I take your point on board that we need to get on with it very quickly, and it is now a matter of priority within my department.

**Mr BRADDY:** Can you please inform us who will conduct the review and whether it will be an independent and public review?

**Mr SANTORO:** The committee, as you know, has been appointed. I will just outline the committee for you. Colin Thatcher, the Director-General—and obviously there is a steering committee, as recommended by Kennedy, that has been set up—

**Mr BRADDY:** Are they conducting the review, or is it a steering committee just to set up the review?

**Mr SANTORO:** No, they will be assisting the independent consultant. We have gone out to tender to get an independent consultant with, obviously, specialist expertise. That process of appointment is proceeding. The steering committee will be Colin Thatcher, the Director-General; John Hodges, the Executive Director of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety; Gary Chaplin, the Acting Director of the Inspection Advisory Services; Clive Bubb, the General Manager of the QCCI; John Christian, who is the Safety and Training Coordinator of the Australian Building and Construction Employees and Builders Labourers Federation Union of Employees; John Grauf, who is a councillor of the Housing Industry Association; Ken Horrigan, the State General Manager of the National Safety Council of Australia; and Margaret Cook, the President of the Safety Institute of Australia. Those people, obviously, will provide input and technical and

expert support to the expert independent consultant.

**Mr BRADY:** Thank you, Minister. In the 1994-95 annual report, under the heading "Performance" on page 51, it is reported that the division completed 127 prosecutions of which 58 were serious breaches of the Act. Why is there no mention of this important indicator of performance in the Program Statements in the budget for this division, particularly when Kennedy questions whether the current policy of the lack of enforcement in favour of self-regulation is appropriate?

**Mr SANTORO:** I think, Mr Braddy, if we all have a close look at the Ministerial Program Statements you will see that, in fact, the Inspection and Advisory Services do have a commensurate allocation in the budget. So I want to stress right from the word go—and I was hoping that I would get a question to this effect—that the Government is totally committed to maintaining a strong inspectorate within the Division of Workplace Health and Safety.

We have heard during recent days—and dare I say it, I think probably for political purposes—that the inspectorate within the Division of Workplace Health and Safety will somehow be adversely affected by the slight decrease in funds of approximately \$600,000, which is indicated within the subprogram detail on page 16 of the Statements. I wish to stress that that is not the intention of the Government. I can explain perhaps later on in the hearings as to why that decrease has occurred. If the honourable member in fact refers to page 14 of the Statements, the number of workplace accidents and complaints which were investigated in 1995-96—and, of course, we are talking about actual numbers—was 16,756. We anticipate that in fact this year it will go into 18,000 investigations of complaints.

I realise that it is a very contentious issue as to whether or not the division is going to go hard, or harder, in terms of inspections even without the results of the review that I have just talked about. There is provision in terms of the key outputs and outcomes within the statement for an extra approximately 1,200 workplace accidents and complaints to be investigated. In addition to that, if you have a look at the staffing resources as at 30 June, in terms of inspections and advisory services, 220 inspectors are allocated and the Estimates, of course, maintain that level of inspectorate services. I do want to give you the assurance that it is not our intention—it is not the intention of the Government in any way—to go soft on the inspectorate.

I need to say to you that I have been criticised for setting up the Kennedy inquiry and I have been criticised for the way the Government has gone about implementing the reform there. I have come under some scrutiny and some, I suppose, comment from employers and also from some unions for the very quick way that we have gone into implementing that other part of the Kennedy report, and that is the review of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety.

**Mr BRADY:** My next question is to Mr Hodges. Mr Hodges, in the Kennedy report

reference is made to the number of temporary appointments in the division and that you, as division head, explained that that was necessary until the direction of the division is known. Mr Kennedy said that this lack of permanency in positions is a source of concern and anxiety to officers. Mr Hodges, how many officers in your section are in temporary positions and what are their locations?

**Mr SANTORO:** Just before Mr Hodges—and I want Mr Hodges to answer your question very fully; there is not a problem there—just in terms of an overall comment, and I will be very brief, when this Government came to power, one of the major complaints that we received from the Public Service was the number of temporary and acting positions. In fact, as I go around the department, I jokingly say that if Actors Equity could in fact recruit actors within the Public Service, their membership would boom because of the great number of acting positions which in fact were created under the previous Government.

Mr Braddy, that is as political as I will be in terms of this answer, but I assure you that it is one of my key objectives, as the Minister, to ensure that we convert as many of those positions into permanent positions, so that one of the basic tenets of the Westminster system of public service, which is security of tenure, is again reflected as adequately as possible.

**Mr BRADY:** In the light of what you say, I will ask another question. I was seeking to know the number of officers in temporary positions and what their locations are. Are these officers to continue in their temporary positions until the review is completed?

**Mr HODGES:** The question you ask has implications from the top down, because, of course, if management positions are vacant then people are moved up to fill those positions on a temporary basis. My understanding is that Kennedy was focusing particularly on the management positions within the division.

In relation to inspectorate positions, we try to avoid any higher duty situations and any temporary situations in relation to the inspectorate, so there are very few there. However, in the management area we have had a very high level of recruitment to other parts of the department, Government and the private sector out of our area for some time. Whenever that occurs on a temporary basis, that is, whenever people are moved to other areas of Government on a temporary basis, we are prevented from filling those positions.

Apart from that situation, which has been a real problem for the management level of the division, there are really only one or two management positions which I expect could be affected by a review which may change structures. In relation to other clerical positions within the division or research positions, the introduction of the new Workplace Safety Health and Safety Act in 1995 led to the need to rapidly review the very large number of standards that are applicable under the Act and, consequently, a number of temporary positions had to be created there. That work is tapering down now and is fairly

much completed. Therefore, that led to another short-term increase in higher duties or non-permanent appointments. However, we do look forward to the completion of the review and to the resulting stability of structure.

**Mr BRADY:** The first two questions I asked were how many officers are currently in temporary positions and what are their locations. If you are unable to give me that information, I will put it on notice.

**Mr SANTORO:** We will be pleased to take it on notice, Mr Braddy.

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Hodges, in his report Kennedy says that the apparent lack of interest in his inquiry by staff in your division is more likely to be because of their fear of discrimination by not being confirmed in their acting positions or in their future job prospects. He said that this culture within the division must be changed to a more open and professional one. Do you agree with Mr Kennedy? If so, given the fact that the Budget and Ministerial Program Statements all but ignore what he says, what efforts are being taken to improve the situation?

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Braddy, again very briefly before the Executive Director—

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Chairman, this is the second time that I have asked a factual question of an officer and the Minister has intervened. I do not know if he intends to keep doing this.

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Chairman, under the Standing Orders the Minister can instruct a public servant not to answer a question and can answer it himself. I do not wish to do that at all, but I think some of the questions do touch on areas of policy as well as areas of detail. I will not take up much of the three minutes that is available. I do not want to get into the situation where I say that I do not want the public servant to answer, because I honestly want this Committee to work very openly.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I ask both sides to keep the questioning as peaceful as possible.

**Mr SANTORO:** Absolutely.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If it becomes an issue, we will have to suspend the proceedings and the Committee will have to deliberate. I hope we do not have to do that.

**Mr SANTORO:** Absolutely. You can see from my tone that I intend proceedings to be conducted in that fashion. As I mentioned at the beginning, the Kennedy inquiry's biggest surprise for me came in the area of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. In fairness to Mr Hodges, who was obviously very much the subject of that comment, during all of the time that I liaised with the advisory committees, as well as during the time that I liaised with staff as the responsible Minister, I did not pick up that particular sentiment. Having said that, I think that it is something that the consultants and the steering committee should very much take on board. It is obviously a very strong comment within the Kennedy inquiry report. It is terribly important that

that point be considered. John, do you want to add to that?

**Mr HODGES:** I must say that I, too, was surprised by that comment. In fact, all staff of the division were advised in advance of the review and the divisional officers participated in a background submission to the Kennedy inquiry. In fact, a divisional officer was seconded full time to the team that prepared that.

However, it did appear—and it appeared very strongly to some of us—that the review was overwhelmingly about workers' compensation matters and, in particular, matters directly relating to the financial status of the fund. For that reason, there was some reluctance, I suppose, on the part of the divisional officers to directly express comments on that area. However, Mr Kennedy was able to speak to a number of people who approached him and, indeed, who were encouraged to approach him. So far as I am aware, I have no reason to doubt that managers would make their views known, had they been asked to, about particular areas. I think it was just a difficult time in terms of the perception of what the inquiry was about and what its pre-eminent role was. We are very pleased that the door has been opened through the review that is now proposed to enable all people to put their views, and that is in fact occurring right now.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am not sure if I have understood what you have said. I think you were indicating that the reason why the officers of your division might not have been so forthcoming is because they felt the inquiry was into the financial status of the fund and not related matters. Is that what you were driving at?

**Mr HODGES:** They felt it was overwhelmingly focusing on that area.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I would have thought that the issues of health and safety were fairly germane to the Workers Compensation Fund and its financial status. We are talking about preventing injuries through workplace health and safety and preventing claims being made on the fund, including common law claims, which is one of the things that the Government is currently trying to limit. I am curious about there not being seen to be that nexus by employees of your division.

**Mr THATCHER:** Perhaps I could assist. I met individually with Des Knight, who was an assistant to the Kennedy inquiry. I quizzed him about his perceptions of what the words meant before drawing up and recommending to the Minister, independent of Mr Hodges, the terms of reference of the review. I can only support what Mr Hodges has said that there was apparently some miscommunication or misunderstanding by the officers of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. All I can say from the other perspective is that I can give a guarantee as the chair of the steering committee that it will be a fulsome inquiry conducted by the external consultant once that selection process has been completed, but there will be ample opportunity to involve the staff and take the staff along with the review.

**Mr SANTORO:** Could I just add one further point? It was asked how the inquiry was going to be conducted. In order to give all staff right throughout Queensland a fair go at the inquiry, the inquiry will be required to travel to regional centres also. So it just will not be a Brisbane-based inquiry.

**Mr PURCELL:** The Kennedy inquiry found that 105,000 injuries occurred in Queensland in 1995. By using a calculator, you can find out that only 7.98 per cent of employers caused those injuries. That means that 92 per cent of employers in this State had workplaces that were injury or accident free. Going from the figures you gave us earlier this morning, 16,000 of those accidents were investigated by the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. There were 58 prosecutions in the State for those injuries. Workers' compensation common law claims are blowing out, yet we have only 58 prosecutions for major injuries. Only 58 matters have gone to court in respect of which employers have been found at fault in relation to workers' injuries. Do you see a problem with that?

**Mr SANTORO:** What was the question?

**Mr PURCELL:** Do you see a problem in having only 58 prosecutions, given the high number of injuries to workers in the workplace?

**Mr SANTORO:** Let me say first of all that, in terms of the number of employers responsible for workplace injuries and accidents, when I saw that figure within the Kennedy report, I also, like you, was alarmed. I immediately said to myself, "Well, it is only a small number of employers. It should be very easy to target them." We are pulling out the figures and we will make them available to the Parliament as soon as we have reliable figures, and I hope that is as soon as possible. That is a commitment. What we are looking at is that the employers with large work forces, of course, are responsible for multiple injuries within workplaces. That accounts for why a small number of employers seems to be responsible for most of the injuries. That is because you have got very large workplaces employing a lot of people responsible for multiple injuries. They obviously all come under the one employer.

We are pulling those figures out. Like you, I looked at that and I said, "It should be a little easier to get some good prevention strategies going within those places." In fact, that is happening. The whole thrust of the review of the Workplace Health and Safety Division is to be more precise in terms of the targeting. That is a major emphasis of that review. If you wish, I can reiterate the terms of reference, if one of the officers could pull them out. I do not want to take up the time of the Committee. The terms of reference of the committee are very much inclined towards prevention and enforcement.

As I have travelled around the State—and I have visited just about every regional office of the division—inspectors are saying that they want to have more teeth within the legislation. I do not mind going on the record as saying that that is feedback that I have received, and I would hope that the steering committee, the consultant and the review will take on board those suggestions. To answer

your question: yes, I do see it as a problem. In terms of my personal and my Government's predisposition towards prevention and, if necessary, more enforcement and definitely more targeting, we are with you when it comes to that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for questions by non-Government members has expired. As the Chairman, I will ask the first question from Government members. Why does this budget provide for the curtailment of certain employment programs? With respect to curtailment of certain employment programs outlined in the budget, how many staff are affected and what processes does your department have in place to manage the resulting staff dislocations?

**Mr SANTORO:** This particular issue, as I am sure honourable members and others in this room would appreciate, is a matter of some moment within the community. In fact, one of the reasons why I, whilst not running late, came in at the very last moment was that I had to do an interview on ABC radio in response to some of the claims that are being made by certain unions about this particular issue. First of all, I wish to assure the Committee that the decision to discontinue with some of the employment programs was not one that was made lightly by either myself, as the Minister, or the Government. In making the decision, we were cognisant of various studies that had been made, or various conclusions within those studies, and also of the respective roles of the Federal and State Governments. We decided that we wanted to change focus and we decided that we wanted to change emphasis when it came to employment programs. So what we decided to do was to shift the focus onto training and to in fact downsize our employment programs at a State level.

I think honourable members would agree that historically it has been the Commonwealth Government that has had the primary responsibility for employment policy and labour market programs, and that over the late seventies and eighties, as unemployment increased, what happened was that the States moved to supplement those particular programs at a State level. What has happened is that, as the new Government has come in Federally and is introducing its own programs, there will be some duplication. So we felt comfortable in vacating that territory, knowing that that slab will be picked up by the feds.

There are 152 positions involved. I am talking about positions, but really 125 people are affected. As I have indicated to the House previously—and I will indicate again to this Committee—of those 125 we expect 40 to take up VER options, we expect 60 to be redeployed internally and we expect another 25 to achieve sector-wide redeployment. Those particular issues, as I have said, have been handled sensitively. Many staff have taken up my invitation of talking directly to me via a telephone hook-up on the day after the Budget. I spent a good part of the last weekend just talking to people who have been affected. They understand that when a Government changes there is a change of policy, and they just want to be looked after. The commitment that I can

give to this Committee is that we are totally committed to doing that.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, the previous Government failed to maintain its 1991 decision to have TAFE fees contribute 10 per cent to the cost of a student contact hour. Why have you now reintroduced this decision and why have you reduced the level of concessions available to Social Security card holders?

**Mr SANTORO:** Not all honourable members may be aware that in fact the previous Government approved a benchmark of 10 per cent as an individual's contribution to the cost of their education, and that increases to fees have been made within the consumer price index movement only. However, TAFE fees have increased beyond the CPI for the simple reason that the type of training that we are these days delivering in Queensland has become more complex. Courses are longer and a very strong bias has been developing towards more complicated and more expensive technology.

The Queensland State Commission of Audit reported—and honourable members may be interested to hear precisely what is reported—that the proportion of the Queensland work force with formal qualifications is lower than that in the rest of Australia, and Queensland has one of the lowest fee structures and one of the most generous exemption policies in Australia. Based on these imperatives, the Government has made the decision to reintroduce the decision made by the previous Government to have TAFE fees contribute at least 10 per cent to the cost of a student contact hour. But the point that I want to stress in making this decision of the Government clear is that even when that new fee structure comes in, the average program studied in Queensland will be cheaper by approximately \$30 compared with the lowest in any other State.

The other point that really needs to be made is that there is a safety net that does apply, that is, where a student can demonstrate that there is a genuine hardship case, by application to a college or an institute director, a 100 per cent exemption from tuition and student services fees will continue to be available. That was a safety net mechanism introduced by the previous Government, and we are quite happy for that particular safety net to continue. Other safety nets also remain, including students being able to apply for time to pay fees, as well as a fee ceiling whereby a student only pays for the first 770 hours of study in a consecutive 12-month period.

The other point that I wish to make in relation to this Government initiative is that all of the money that is collected from the increase in fees will be ploughed straight back into the TAFE system to create extra places. So it is not going into consolidated revenue; it is a measure which implements a benchmark decision made by the previous Government but which also sees all of the money that is raised through the initiative—which will be \$6.673m revenue in the full year and \$3.336m in 1996-97—go straight back into TAFE Queensland.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, I note in the Ministerial Program Statements that management

expenses for workers' compensation are estimated to increase by nearly 5 per cent over the next 12 months. In light of the problems with the fund, how can this be allowed?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you for a question which I know has been looked at with great interest by a lot of observers. Just before I answer in some detail, let me say that I have a tremendous amount of respect for the staff within the Workers Compensation Division of my department. The vast majority at the moment are working enormously long and hard hours to bring about the reform that the Government would wish to pursue through Parliament to the workers' compensation system. I go on the record as saying that in all of my time as the shadow Minister—six years—the professionalism of the staff of the Workers Compensation Division was never questioned. There was the occasional person who would say, "Look, somebody was rude to me", but upon checking—as I usually did—that was basically a reaction of people under stress. But the vast majority of consumers out there regard the Division of Workers Compensation within the department as being a very professional division.

It probably need not be said, but close attention is paid by management of the board to the management expenses, and the costs and benefits of expenditure are very carefully analysed. Some of the increase will be to increase the staff numbers in compliance activities. I know that the honourable member for Bulimba would be very keen to hear that, because I have heard him speak often in the Parliament about it. But certainly the increase in staff members is mainly explained by the necessity to achieve greater compliance. Further expenditure also relates to the upgrading of the board's computer system. This was also another area which Kennedy indicated needed attention. He indicated that compliance needed attention, but the upgrading of the computer systems was another area which required attention. In 1996-97 several new systems will in fact be developed to improve efficiency and also to allow improved client service.

Having said all of that, you will notice if you have a close look at the Program Statements—as I am sure you have—that the board's management expenses as a percentage of declared wages were 0.21 per cent in 1995-96, whereas in other jurisdictions it ranged from 0.30 per cent to 0.45 per cent. So when the Workers Compensation Board participated in a major exercise to compare the management costs of the various workers' compensation systems, they are the figures that were arrived at independently. I think that that speaks volumes for the efficiency of our division, and it also backs up the general statements that I made in terms of the professional approach of the division to our clients, that is, the people of Queensland.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. It is my turn again. Page 33 of the Ministerial Program Statements states that an additional \$28.815m was provided for the delivery of training places through user choice and competitive funding programs. This is part of an additional 16,000 places to be provided

in 1997. What will be the focus of the additional student places?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I must admit, as I begin to answer the question, that this is one of the frustrations that I have been experiencing since the Budget came down, that is, getting across the message that one of the most significant initiatives of the new Government in terms of its Budget was the provision within the Budget of 16,270 additional places, which will implement one of the most strategic aims of the Government through its Budget, that is, to assist youth who are disadvantaged in the labour market to in fact get into the labour market via training. A substantial proportion of the additional funding will allow training to be purchased by the competitive funding program, to be targeted specifically to youth disadvantaged in the labour market as well as women, people with disabilities, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and the regionally isolated. This targeting will primarily be achieved through the calling of tenders for a training delivery strategy.

Part of the conditions within those tenders will be that those types of people will have to be targeted and will have to be looked after within the competitive tendering process. This will involve the development of specifications in consultation with industry to determine the training that is required and the target group to undertake the training, therefore allowing the ability to assist those people already mentioned by developing tenders that specifically request training to best suit their needs and to encourage their participation. They are not just hollow words. That is a direct response by the Government in terms of providing training that is required specifically by industry—because as we develop the tenders we are going to talk to industry—for disadvantaged groups.

I want to raise within the context of these hearings the mickey mouse statement. It has been raised once before, and it is something that will undoubtedly be raised again. I will admit that that was an indiscreet statement, and the Opposition was quite right in picking it up. What I was referring to there is not the tremendous work that our people do within the department. As I said, I spent a considerable amount of my weekend talking to our very valued employees. I have always stated from the time that I became the Minister and right throughout the weekend that I tremendously value their expertise and their input. But what happens is that prior to every election, an enormous amount of money is pumped into labour market programs specifically for the purpose of pulling off the dole queues people who are unemployed so that the figures can be made to look good prior to every election. It is that type of exercise that I referred to, but that is not what we are about here in Queensland.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, how much revenue will TAFE receive from the extension of user choice and competitive funding? How will these initiatives impact on TAFE Queensland?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Tanti. It is a very good question, and it is a question that again goes to the heart of the developing competitive agenda within the training market not just of Queensland but right throughout Australia. \$18.336m which was previously allocated to TAFE Queensland for training apprentices has now been transferred to Training and Employment Queensland to support user-choice funding for registered providers. TAFE Queensland, I should stress, has successfully maintained delivery of off-the-job training to over 94 per cent of apprentices participating in a pilot of user-choice arrangements during 1996. Only 55,000 student contact hours—or 5.7 per cent—of the 950,000 student contact hours available for delivery under the pilot were taken up by private providers.

The last part of your question—how will these initiatives impact on TAFE Queensland—is a very important one, because there are a lot of people within TAFE Queensland who are very genuinely concerned about how the increasingly competitive arrangements will impact on them. As a Minister who has been very involved in refocusing effort and refocusing activity within TAFE, I keep on telling them that because they are such a professional, competitive group of individuals who make up the premier training provider in Queensland called TAFE Queensland, I believe that they will be able to attract the vast majority of the competitive funds within the competitive bucket. That particular belief is backed up by the figure that I have just quoted to you, that is, that 94 per cent of apprentices employed under the pilot were in fact done through TAFE Queensland.

The pilot will be extended from 1 January 1997 to Queensland, at which time all engineering-related trades, as well as greenkeeping and boat building, will be incorporated, and this will represent 3.5 million student contact hours, at a cost of approximately \$28m for a full year, allowing for the training of some 12,500 apprentices across Queensland. I think that that is a very good news story not just for apprentices but particularly for the professionals who make up TAFE Queensland. I have a great amount of confidence that the new open training market will allow TAFE Queensland and employers to interact in a way that will lead to the delivery of a more in tune training output.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, you have already referred to workplace health and safety in relation to a question from the member for Kedron, but I would like to bring you to the Kennedy Inquiry into Workers Compensation and Related Matters in Queensland, which stated that workplace health and safety inspectors are fighting a tough but losing battle to maintain an effective role in enhancing workplace health and safety. Will this budget cause any curtailment to inspectorate functions?

**Mr SANTORO:** I have already addressed this particular issue in answer to some of the Opposition questions, but I appreciate the opportunity to elaborate a little bit further. Obviously, you would appreciate that the inspectorate budget has been maintained and that consequently there will be no curtailment in inspectorate functions or activities—

that is an absolute guarantee. Everybody is committed to safe workplaces, and one of the more satisfying aspects of my Ministry since becoming the Minister has been the relative bipartisan approach to workplace health and safety. I want to say to all honourable members opposite, particularly Mr Purcell, that that commitment to a bipartisan approach to workplace health and safety will certainly be maintained.

In fact, as a consequence of initiatives such as the increased use of technology, computing technology and mobile phones to create mobile office environments—in other words, getting out with greater ease and greater backup from good technology—and the accreditation of the external providers to undertake such functions as inspections and the maintenance of high-risk plant, as well as to develop and implement health and safety management plans and self-audit tools, inspectors will be able to better focus more intently on assisting workplaces achieve greater prevention of workplace injury and disease and more effective enforcement of workplace health and safety law.

In addition to that, and after its first full year of operation, the division's compliance order program has moved to the targeted audit phase. This will allow inspectors to audit those workplaces and industries which have been identified as high risk, and I think that embodies the spirit of that recommendation from Kennedy, and certainly more enhanced workers' compensation data will assist in the targeting of employers with poor claims records. So there is a very strong attempt to build up and reinforce the relationship between the Workers Compensation Division and the Division of Workplace Health and Safety with a view to providing harder data to enable the division to better target.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for questions by Government members has now expired. I call upon the member for Bulimba.

**Mr PURCELL:** Minister, you indicated earlier that you will be looking at legislative changes so that delinquent employers who continue to injure employees will be brought to book—and I think that is a very good idea; certainly 58 prosecutions out of that amount of injuries is delinquent and something should be done about it. Do you accept the figures in the Kennedy report that 103 employers caused 30 per cent of the common law claims currently for last year? I should not say in the last year; that could be over a period of time. What industry are they in? Have any of these so-called killer companies been prosecuted, and if they have, what is the result and who are they?

**Mr SANTORO:** Just as the executive director sees if we have that information readily available, let me again say that we are doing a statistical exercise to find out precisely who the large employers are so that we can provide the information to the satisfaction of the Parliament. That commitment is there. I suspect you will find that a large number of cases will have many multiple accidents on one large employer site.

In terms of the more detailed statistics, I will hand over to the executive director. If he is unable to provide that sort of detail, I would be quite happy to in fact make it available. I do not see anything wrong with that. Again, let me say that there really is a very strong commitment and culture—and it is a growing culture within Queensland workplaces—towards maintaining safe workplaces. There is no employer I know who deliberately wishes to injure their workers—

**Mr PURCELL:** I will just make a comment in passing. In the industry that I come from, the occupational health and safety in that industry is deteriorating and deteriorating at a fast rate. With fewer workers in there, they are injuring more.

**Mr SANTORO:** I appreciate what you are saying, and you will recall that I made a very major statement to the Parliament recently that particularly addressed that situation within the construction industry. We have industry councils that are working very hard in developing and finetuning compliance and advisory standards.

**Mr PURCELL:** I was on those councils and made recommendations and none of them got taken up by the department over a bloody near six-year period, so do not tell me about those councils.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We do not want the word "bloody" used here, thank you; it is not necessary. Also, we do not necessarily want a debate; we want questions and answers.

**Mr SANTORO:** I will wind up with this comment before handing over to the executive director. I hear what you said about these recommendations not being implemented during the last six years, and I remind the honourable member that we have only been in Government for six months and if you have got that complaint to level, perhaps you should level it—and I do not want to be political—at previous Ministers. But because I know you have a heartfelt and sincere interest in that area, I am happy to sit down with you and to take on board where you think there are deficiencies within the compliance and advisory standards. I will hand over to Mr Hodges.

**Mr PURCELL:** Just one thing I have to correct: I was appointed not by the Labor Government but by previous National Party/Liberal Party Governments, and they were in administration when those recommendations were not being adhered to.

**Mr SANTORO:** But your Government then had six years to fix all that up. I am just saying that I am working as hard as I can with Mr Hodges, and I am extending to you the opportunity to work with me, to get it right. I do know that you have some significant expertise in that area. Mr Hodges?

**Mr HODGES:** If I understand your question correctly, the Kennedy report referred to 130 employers who were in fact creating some I think you said 30 per cent of injuries. We naturally had a very good look at that figure. It turns out that of that 130, they were all very large firms. Their injury rates were such that only one was actually getting a demerit on their premium and some were getting



merit bonuses up to the maximum. In other words, the rate of injury for the size of the employer was relatively low, and I think that demonstrates the difficulty of targeting based on simply raw figures like that.

Can I also say that Kennedy recommended that there should be 10 per cent contact by the inspectorate with these large employers. In fact, when we looked at the period that the report referred to, 1994-95, the contact rate had been 40 per cent for those large employers because that is the way—by contacting the large employers—that you get good coverage of the work force. But the point I make is that we jump to easy conclusions about injury when in fact it is a very complex matter—injury rates depending more on the size of the employers.

**Mr PURCELL:** I wanted to know how many were prosecuted, what the results were and who the companies are.

**Mr SANTORO:** We can undertake to provide you with that information. But, again, when you conduct inspections, an accident occurs, an inspection is conducted and it may be something that can be fixed up in the spirit of the Act in a conciliatory manner. Advice is tendered by the division and by the inspectors and the problem is fixed up. I want to assure you that where somebody is at fault, we will throw the book at them. Where there is deliberate negligence, where there is deliberate wrongdoing, we will throw the book at people and there will be nobody—

**Mr PURCELL:** So they will not be able to make a donation to Meals on Wheels.

**Mr SANTORO:** That is another matter altogether. You can certainly rest assured that we will take our responsibilities within workplace health and safety very seriously.

**Mr BRADY:** I refer the Minister to page 77 of Budget Paper No. 2, which shows that, in the total of \$521.4m being allocated by the Government to vocational education and training, there is an increase of 6 per cent, which amounts to about \$31m. Can you advise the Committee of the sources of that \$31m increase?

**Mr SANTORO:** Yes, I certainly can. You would be aware that there was provision for State growth funding for a full year of \$6.171m. That was something that was allocated by the previous Government, and we made the very deliberate decision of carrying that over. I am pleased to state that you have bipartisan support there.

In terms of new State initiative growth funds—\$4.3m over a full year. As I mentioned before, over a full year, in terms of the retention of additional revenue from TAFE fees, you can add another \$6.673m. In terms of the Commonwealth growth funding provision, in other words, growth funds that are dispersed via ANTA—you are looking at \$13.002m. That accounts for the total increase that you have identified, that is, a total increase of \$30.146m. So that is basically the increase in the total funding. In terms of student contact hours—that translates from the State growth funding of \$6.171m. That will provide for 851,000 student contact hours,

or 3,273 places. The combination of the State new initiative funding plus the retention of the additional TAFE revenue that will come from fees will generate an extra 1.586 million student contact hours, or 6,100 places. If you want a slightly better break-up of those 6,100 places—2,400 will come from the State new initiative funding and 3,700 will come from the revenue that is retained as a result of an increase in State fees. I pause here for a minute to reiterate the commitment of the Government that the revenue that comes from the fees is not going into consolidated revenue but is going straight into the creation of the extra places.

The Commonwealth growth funding of \$13.002m will generate 1.793 million student contact hours, or an extra 6,898 places. The total increase of \$30.146m will generate 4.230 million student contact hours and, as I have said before, 16,271 places. Of that, I can give you a further figure. I had another figure that I could have given you, but I will slip it in during another answer.

**Mr BRADY:** In relation to TAFE—I refer to page 22 of the Program Statements, which shows that TAFE underexpended its fixed capital expenditure budget by more than \$16m. Can the Minister provide details of the projects delayed and their locations? What was the impact of these delays on the building and construction industry at a time when it is in a trough and apprenticeships in the industry are at a very low level?

**Mr SANTORO:** Obviously, there has been some discussion about delays to capital works programs. My officers are very quickly getting for me some of the detail that you wish. To the very best of my knowledge there have not been any delays in any of the capital works programs that have been taken on by the Government.

Just to give you a little bit of an idea—I went up to Cairns and I reinforced a capital expenditure program up there of over \$13m, which was made by the previous Government. In Redcliffe, there was an indication given by the previous Government to construct a TAFE campus at Redcliffe. That is going ahead. I can say to you that that has been slightly stalled—in case anybody else has that question in their bag—because of some problems with the original contractor who took that on. We are trying to speed that up as much as we can with a view to still starting on time in the new school year in 1997. We are going ahead with the construction of the horticultural facilities in Bundaberg. As to the horticultural facilities and the child-care centre in Townsville—we gave that as much of a hurry along as possible, particularly subsequent to Mundingburra, when it became a bit of an issue.

I have to say honestly that often the Opposition has talked about the freeze. But certainly within TAFE Queensland I have always instructed my officers to proceed with capital works programs as quickly as we possibly can. There is that variation which you mentioned. I have just been given a note here that the 1995-96 budget variance with fixed capital includes—and I can go through them to supplement the general answer—Bundaberg horticulture, \$2.4m; the QCA relocation payment of \$2m—

**Mr BRADY:** Are these what you have done? I am saying that nearly 30 per cent of the budget was underexpended. Are you giving me figures of non-expenditure or expenditure?

**Mr SANTORO:** These are carryovers as the projects come on stream and are due to be completed. The Colchester site acquisition—\$0.7m; various projects due to minor delays, certainly not related to any freeze, official or unofficial—as you would appreciate, there has never been an official or unofficial freeze—\$1.2m; and institute minor works of \$1.6m. I think that is probably the best that I can do for you. I will take note of your question and see if I can provide you in writing with a more specific answer. I do want to stress that we have not delayed capital works within TAFE Queensland. We have appreciated that a well-trained work force is a good work force. The construction of up-to-date, modern facilities is very much part of providing for that well-trained work force.

**Mr BRADY:** I refer to page 22 of the Program Statements, which shows that expenditure on plant and equipment increased from a budget of \$15.5m to more than \$24m. Who authorised this diversion of funds? Where did the funds come from? When were the bulk of the funds expended? Was this a case of a massive spending spree at the end of the year?

**Mr SANTORO:** Can I answer the question in a general sense very briefly? I want to give my executive officer, Mr SIELAFF, as much time as possible. There have been many complaints, while I have travelled throughout Queensland visiting TAFE colleges, of the dilapidated state of the equipment within the campuses. I must admit that that is one of the more disappointing aspects of my responsibilities within TAFE, that I keep on getting a lot of complaints from the staff that we do not have a sufficient commitment, or we have not had a sufficient commitment to the upgrading of equipment. I have questioned that particular figure with my executive director, and he will be able to supply you with some specific details.

**Mr SIELAFF:** In response to both your questions—if you look at the two lines, that is, fixed capital expenditure and plant and equipment, you will note that one is underspent—as you have identified—and the other is overspent. One of the elements of variation in the underexpenditure in fixed capital equipment relates to the Commonwealth infrastructure grant actually being classified as fixed capital in terms of the 1995-96 budget and then being moved in terms of where the expenditure is recorded.

You asked about the purchase of computers and how the money was actually expended—it wasn't a splurge of expenditure at the end of June. The plant and equipment relates to approximately \$3m being expended on personal computers and the upgrade of personal computers across the year as, in fact, we have done a lot to computerise our education system. Now approximately 90 per cent of our students come to our courses as computer literate. Indeed, an additional amount of money, \$0.6m, has been spent on upgrading

telecommunications facilities, because we have needed to improve the way in which we relate to our clients. One of the things that we were getting frequent complaints about related to the inability of people to be able to ring TAFE institutes and get an answer. They were not able to get through and so on. We have substantially upgraded the telecommunications system of all of the institutes, and we are moving through a process whereby we want to be able to have every institute connected by voice, data and video. The expenditure is not inappropriate in any way. Rather, it is related to Commonwealth moneys which were provided for that purpose. It is just a case of the way in which they were recorded in the 1995-96 Budget documents.

**Mr SANTORO:** In layman's terms, they were in the wrong bucket.

**Mr SIELAFF:** That's right.

**Mr BRADY:** What you did, Mr Sielaff, was expend significantly less on capital works and overexpended by a significant amount in plant and equipment. Were you the person who authorised that? Will that be done again this year? What measures have you put in place to avoid a repeat of what appears to be significant underexpenditure in one area and overexpenditure in another?

**Mr SIELAFF:** I hope I get the responses in the right order to your questions. We haven't undertaken any expenditure which is unauthorised. The money that we get for the infrastructure grant is for plant and equipment. However, in terms of it coming in as part of a Commonwealth grant, it was recorded in the fixed capital expenditure area, so it is a recording. The expenditure on particular items—if I'm getting the answers to your questions in the right order—were all made in line with the delegations set out in the departmental delegations manual. Some of those delegations would sit with me, some would sit with the Minister and some would obviously go to Executive Council.

In terms of future expenditure, we are exposed to significant audit regulations in this regard and we have never had difficulties in terms of spending moneys from one area which were appropriated for another area, so the moneys have been expended appropriately and I think that we can provide evidence to that effect.

**Mr SANTORO:** So, in other words, some of the \$60.873m should have really been recorded on top of that \$15.561m

**Mr SIELAFF:** Yes. The \$5.2m of the infrastructure grant should have actually been within the—

**Mr SANTORO:** On top of that figure for plant and equipment.

**Mr SIELAFF:** That's right. Equally, there's a carry over in terms of the 1995-96 infrastructure grant, so we're really talking about over \$8m being accurately allocated for plant and equipment.

**Mr SANTORO:** So it was a mistake in last year's budget, which was not the responsibility of this Government?

**Mr SIELAFF:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Time has now expired for the questions by non-Government members. I would like to ask the first question for Government members.

In the Workplace Health and Safety Program there are two major areas showing a significant reduction—plant and equipment and grants and subsidies, especially subsidies to the workplace health and safety officer and representative training. Can you explain those reductions, please, Minister?

**Mr SANTORO:** There are two parts to your question. In relation to plant and equipment, in 1995-96, there was a one-off expenditure on technology to establish mobile office facilities for the division's field staff. Computing technology and mobile phones were the major items of plant and equipment. That initiative, as I have stated in answers to previous questions, is contributing to increased operational efficiency and improved client services. The inspectors are able to spend more time in the field working with workplaces. The figure there roughly is \$400,000, which does account for the decrease in the total budget for the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. I have noticed that some political play has been made of that decrease and the suggestion, as I have said before, was that perhaps that was going to affect the inspectorate capacity of the division. I assure the Committee that that is not case.

In terms of grants and subsidies, the Estimates show a reduction in funding, as has been correctly identified by Mr Lester, for subsidies and grants. That is mostly accounted for in the cessation of training subsidies for workplace health and safety officers and workplace health and safety representatives. Funding, as honourable members would appreciate, was introduced in 1991 to help promote this type of workplace health and safety, which was required under the then new Workplace Health and Safety Act and to also establish an appropriate training infrastructure. The subsidy scheme—which has helped to train, and I think that this is great, some 18,000 people—as honourable members, including particularly the member for Bulimba would appreciate, expired on 28 August 1996 as was recommended by the Workplace Health and Safety Council. We wanted to honour all commitments there because they required an extra month and that is one of the things that I have done as Minister, that is, we extended the scheme to the end of September so as to allow its orderly and productive winding down.

I again wish to assure the Committee that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety is absolutely not walking away from its obligations in relation to workplace health and safety officers and workplace health and safety representatives. In fact, the division is maintaining very strong support for this training through continued syllabus development, accreditation of private providers of the courses and trainers, and publicity, of course, for the scheme to make the general public, and particularly employers, aware of its benefits.

**Mr TANTI:** In the MPS, compliance and fraud are stated to be areas of major focus for workers' compensation. Is the effort worth the return?

**Mr SANTORO:** That is one of the really good-news stories in terms of the budget and particularly the revenue side of it. Workers' compensation fraud, including employer non-compliance—in other words, premium avoidance—has been estimated to cost workers' compensation schemes Australiawide a staggering \$620m annually. Over the past few years the board has introduced strategies to prevent fraudulent activity, including non-compliance, and to identify, retain and recover the associated costs. You may be interested to know that the board's Compliance Investigation Unit identifies and investigates uninsured and underinsured employers, while its Loss Investigation Unit detects and reduces employee and employer service provider fraud. The figures are very interesting. Since its inception, it is considered that those units have well and truly recovered the costs.

You would be interested to know that the Loss Investigation Unit has saved the fund an estimated \$4.5m in claims cost, which is outside of the \$0.4m in fines and costs paid. In 1995-96, the total estimated savings, including fines and costs, was \$2.7m compared with only \$0.9m of unit expenditure. The Compliance Investigation Unit has identified a total of over \$9.5m in additional premium, and the ratio of costs of compliance activities to premium identified through compliance activity was approximately 1 in 6 in 1995-96. In other words, for every dollar that it cost us, we brought in an extra \$6. I am sure that you would agree with me that that is a very good achievement.

Mr Kennedy, as again has been stated previously at this Committee hearing, found that fraud and compliance are very important issues to be addressed. In his report he stated that everything possible must be done to protect workers' compensation benefits in a manner that is fair and reasonable which discourages the abuse of the system through fraud from either employer or employees.

I hope from the answer I have given you that you appreciate that, even before implementing some of the worthwhile reforms that Mr Kennedy has recommended, we already within the Division of Workers Compensation are doing everything possible to stamp out fraud and non-compliance.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. The member for Redlands.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, what is the Government doing to ensure that the training needs of people in regional Queensland are being addressed?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Hegarty. That is a question to which the answer gives me an enormous amount of pleasure in recounting. I have travelled since becoming the Minister through dozens and dozens of TAFE colleges and institutes throughout Queensland. One of the greatest satisfactions that I have achieved is to actually bring people on board in terms of the input that they have

in helping to make TAFE Queensland and maintain it as the premier training provider in Queensland.

I launched an initiative a couple of months back which was basically titled TAFE Queensland—Working Better Together. One of the major planks of that initiative was the reinstatement of genuine advisory councils, which would be very much representative of the economic and social hinterland that the TAFE colleges and the TAFE institutes service. I have put a very strong small-business emphasis on the activities and the composition of those councils because, in the end, our training input must clearly be relevant to industry because we want our training output to be employed; we want our trainees, our apprentices and other trained people to be employed by small business. So what I have wanted to do, through the reinstatement of the councils, is to put a very strong small-business bias in that.

I hasten to add, particularly for honourable members of the Opposition, that I insisted that we also include employee representatives. One of the real surprises of it all was just how few employee representatives in fact nominated for membership of the TAFE advisory councils. But we have some good, strong representation on there from the union movement and, of course, I and TAFE Queensland welcome that. So we do have a very restructured advisory council system which will provide particularly rural Queensland and provincial Queensland with significant input. I am having the first meeting with all of the chairs of the councils on Saturday week. It is a full-day meeting here at Parliament House.

The other major initiative is the creation of round tables, which will also assist the VET bureaucracy to come up with more informed and better attuned training programs. The round tables will be constituted by the end of this year and they will start operating next year. They will include private training providers, public training providers such as TAFE Queensland, representatives of small business and representatives of employee organisations. It is again another mechanism to ensure that local, regional and State training profiles have the maximum possible input from the people whom the training system is meant to be serving. So I am finding that a very exciting part of my portfolio. I do thank you for giving me the opportunity to outline it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Commission of Audit identified the lower skill level of the Queensland work force. What initiatives are contained in the budget which will lead to these skill levels being raised?

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Chairman, basically, what that question does is to again give me the opportunity to just reiterate some of the points that I have been making here this morning, and that is the creation of an extra 16,271 places within the VET system of Queensland. This does represent approximately an increase of 7 per cent on the places which are currently available.

In excess of \$500m will be allocated for the public provision of vocational education in

Queensland, as is clearly evident from the budget documents. What the commission in fact found was pretty worrying. It found—and I will quote for the benefit of honourable members on the Committee—that the "State's work force has the lowest qualification profile for vocational education overall of any State or Territory and low-skill patterns appear to be related to the State's low performance in labour productivity." Far be it from me to indulge in politics on that particular finding but clearly, when the new Government came to power, it had a real job to take on in light of that particular finding. We have taken it on with great gusto.

As I said, we have made provision within the budget for the extra 16,271 places, we are restructuring TAFE Queensland so as to make TAFE Queensland a far more in tune and competitive organisation, and a large proportion of the additional training activity is planned to provide basic vocational qualifications, which is the area where the Commission of Audit in fact identified that Queensland has the greatest skill level and qualifications deficits. These deficits are due partly to the underfunding of the VET system, which was prevalent during the previous State and Commonwealth Labor Governments, which we respectfully suggest had not addressed them as adequately as could have been the case. The training effort will be maintained in skilled vocational courses to boost the State's performance in that area.

During 1997, I can inform the Committee that approximately \$28m will be allocated to expand user-choice arrangements for apprenticeship off-the-job training. Under this arrangement, the apprentice and employer choose the training and institution most appropriate to their needs. We have also taken a leading role in the development of the Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship System, affectionately known around the place as MAATS, which will provide the skilled work force that industry in this State and across Australia needs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. I now call upon the member for Mundingburra.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, the budget provides \$1.175m of initiative funding for implementation of new industrial workplace relations legislation. What plans are contained in this initiative to ensure that business and workers are informed of changes to the industrial relations legislation?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Tanti. As the Government's new industrial relations legislation passes through the Parliament and is enacted, obviously there will need to be a fairly comprehensive communications strategy developed to ensure the promotions of changes to industrial relations legislation. A \$100,000 initiative has in fact been provided for. Part of this funding will be spent on promotion and the provision of information necessary for employers and employees to be aware of the new opportunities available.

The strategy includes a media campaign, which will be obviously very apolitical and very much geared towards providing the basic information that is necessary for the understanding of the provisions of the new legislation, brochures and information

sheets, an Industrial Relations Act overview booklet, an Internet home page and seminars. The Industrial Relations Act overview will be published once the Bills have been passed. It will provide an overview of the changes to the legislation and it will be available free of charge. Obviously, the brochure and information sheets will be developed covering the main changes to the legislation. Topics, for example, may include the way certified agreements may work; the role of the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission, which I stress will be a very strong and a very fair dinkum role; the role of the employment advocate, which will again further beef up the role of the commission; unfair dismissals; minimum conditions, and so on. I am very pleased to see the honourable member for Bulimba happy with everything that I am saying.

**Mr PURCELL:** I am smiling in sorrow.

**Mr SANTORO:** You are smiling in anticipation, member, of the benefits that will come from what we are doing. The media campaign, obviously, will be a range of articles that will be released to the media once the Bill has been passed. In addition, articles will be written for industry, business, employer specialist magazines and other publications. The seminars will be very factual. A series of free, two-hour seminars is proposed to be held in regional and metropolitan Queensland to brief interested parties on the new Acts. So as you can see, we are very committed to getting the information out. On top of that, we have allocated \$400,000 for a new Workplace Information Unit, which will again provide much information out there to the marketplace.

**Ms SPENCE:** Chairman, can I ask a supplementary question?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Time has expired.

**Ms SPENCE:** Then I ask: can the Minister give us a timetable for the proposed industrial relations legislation and all that follows?

**Mr SANTORO:** That is a very good question by the honourable member and I am pleased to have the opportunity to answer it. One of the real commitments and objectives of the State Government is to create an industrial relations system in Queensland that harmonises with the Federal system. We must do that because basically business, particularly small and international businesses, want to have an industrial relations system throughout the Commonwealth that is not a hotchpotch composition of different industrial relations systems.

The honourable member for Kedron has been slightly critical of the fact that we still have not introduced legislation into the Parliament. I address that issue in this way: it is not because our ideas are not developed and it is not because we do not know what we want to do. It is because in the Federal Parliament Mr Reith's legislation is stalled within the Senate. We literally do not know what is going to come out of the Senate. If we want to implement the principle of harmonisation, which is a principle which I think has bipartisan support, particularly from the point of view of small business, then we need to wait at least until the Senate is fairly clear in its intent in

terms of the amendments to Peter Reith's legislation. That is the general context within which we are proceeding to draft our legislation.

To be more specific, I would hope that the Senate will have its legislation amended and I am told that hopefully it will be through by the end of October or early November. Within that period, we are still consulting with unions, employer organisations and other interest groups. I sincerely hope to have the industrial regulations legislation within the Parliament some time in November, and let it sit on the table of Parliament for at least a week or two so that people can—

**Ms SPENCE:** That's not much time.

**Mr SANTORO:** When your Government was in power, I remember it introducing legislation one day and then seeking the suspension of Standing Orders the next day to debate the legislation. It is going to be fair and reasonable legislation. To give it a week or two to sit on the table of the Parliament and then debate it, perhaps in late November or early December, is a most reasonable thing. That is particularly so when you consider the most extensive program of consultation that we have taken on, not only with employer organisations—because in Government, we undertake a dispassionate and fair approach to consultation—but also particularly with the union movement. One of the things that really hurts my considerable sensitivities is the way that the unions within this State are refusing to acknowledge the tremendous amount of input that they have been able to have in the drafting of our legislation.

**Mr BRADY:** I note that there does not appear to be any budget provision for the Remote Area Incentive Scheme for teachers in TAFE, although we know there are problems in attracting teachers to places like Roma, Mount Isa and Normanton. Is it true that the new Remote Area Incentive Scheme for teachers in the Education Department will not apply to TAFE teachers in remote areas?

**Mr SANTORO:** That is a very good question because, as the honourable member would appreciate from the trends that were started by his Government when it was in power, the whole issue of the Remote Area Incentive Scheme basically, like many departmental management incentive functions, has been decentralised to the various departments. Every department is in the process of working out its own specific schemes to be able to attract to and maintain in remote locations their own skilled work forces.

The honourable member may also be aware that we are in the process of entering into negotiations for the enterprise bargaining agreement Mark II. That particular issue will be well and truly covered within those negotiations. The honourable member would be aware that my department has played a leading role in terms of enabling a whole-of-Government approach to the Remote Area Incentive Scheme, and we will continue to look after our staff within the context of the Budget.

I stress that TAFE Queensland has not had a forced teacher transfer policy since 1994. The policy

was rescinded largely due to successful appeals from teachers who were facing transfer to non-preferred locations against their wishes. At the time, it was not considered good practice in the management of human resources to force employees and their families to relocate in this way, anyway. We also have other strategies to encourage transfers and relocation. If you wish, I am happy to go through a fairly extensive brief note to inform yourself, Mr Braddy and the Committee further?

**Mr PURCELL:** Does that mean "no"?

**Mr SANTORO:** I again say to the honourable member for Bulimba that we are about to enter into EB II negotiations where the issue, I am sure, will be on the table.

**Mr PURCELL:** I do not want to know any more; that is fine.

**Mr SANTORO:** You asked the question, so I will finish the answer.

**Mr PURCELL:** I made a comment. I did not ask a question.

**Mr SANTORO:** I will then comment on your comment. By a deliberate Cabinet decision, the Government has addressed the issue of remote area incentives within six months of coming to Government. I have tried all day not to be political, but let me make a political point. One of the sores that we came across within the Public Service when we came to power was the previous Government's inconclusive handling of the issue of remote area incentives. The other day in Parliament the Minister for Emergency Services outlined how his department is on track and the Minister for Education has outlined how teachers will benefit from the Remote Area Incentive Scheme being implemented at his departmentally-specific level. As I have said, if you wish to ask me the question in a different way, I have a very extensive briefing note that I can go through practically department-by-department and really give you all the information.

As late as 9 September, Cabinet seriously considered the issue. It decided that the principle that remote area employment conditions be primarily directed to the attraction and retention of skilled staff in remote areas be endorsed and that all agencies, including departments and statutory authorities, be permitted to implement their own arrangements which focus on the most effective way to attract and retain quality staff. I do not want to take up any more time, because I know you have other questions that you wish to ask, but we have genuinely and seriously addressed the issue.

**Mr BRADDY:** Mr Sielaff, page 23 of the Program Statements shows that the adult and community education budget last year was underexpended by more than a half. Can you explain why that was and why the expenditure is continuing at the reduced level for this financial year?

**Mr SIELAFF:** The Adult and Community Education Program is funded primarily from the revenue raised from courses. You will recall that the definition that has been accepted for adult and community education courses is that they are short, non-award courses which are fully funded from the

revenue earned. The statement really provides the balances of the account at those particular periods of time, so it does not provide detail of the revenue that actually goes through the account. The issue is that the amount of money that was spent on the Adult and Community Education Program is in line with the fees that are earned from a particular account or from the particular courses. In addition, the amount of money which was associated with the voluntary organisations has been transferred across to Mr Carlon's division of skills and development and recognition.

**Ms SPENCE:** Mr Sielaff, what funding has been provided for pre-employment courses for women in Queensland wishing to enter TAFE? In asking the question, I make it clear that I am not interested in funding for curriculum development or policy, but particularly for courses for women.

**Mr SIELAFF:** The funding for women's programs is in fact part of the State Training Profile. At this stage, a number of those funds will come through Training and Employment Queensland, and they will come out through competitive tendering. So it is probably more appropriate, in terms of the actual funding that is provided, for my answer to be supplemented by Mr Carlon. Within the budget, there is \$210,000 which is tied specifically for programs and pre-employment type programs for women. The other programs, though, are part of the profile. Those access-type programs are part of the profile, and I am not able to give you specific details on that. But my colleague might be able to help me.

**Mr SANTORO:** I have just been provided with some specific advice which may assist Ms Spence and the Committee. The participation of females in TAFE has increased from approximately 37 per cent in 1983 to 43.6 per cent in 1995. Currently, a number of initiatives are being implemented to increase the participation by women in vocational education and training. In 1995, Queensland was involved, as the honourable member may be aware, in the development of the National Strategy for Women in Vocational Education and Training. The strategy was endorsed by the MYCEEETA meeting on 18 July. A primary outcome sought by the national strategy is, as I am sure the honourable member is interested in and supports, an increase in the number of women completing vocational education and training programs. To meet this outcome, Queensland is currently involved in the National Equity and Change Project, which will enable each State to pilot one or two initiatives to improve women's participation in training outcomes in 1997. In addition to this—

**Ms SPENCE:** Minister, you are just taking up my time for asking questions. I directed that question to Mr Sielaff. I have the answer: \$210,000 only has been allocated for pre-employment training courses for women. I am happy to take it on notice if you can provide further information specifically on that subject. However, I have only a limited time, and I did direct that question to Mr Sielaff. My next question—

**Mr SANTORO:** Hang on, you can't—

**Ms SPENCE:** Mr Chair, I believe I have the right to direct a question to anyone on the panel and

not to have all the answering time taken up by the Minister on each occasion.

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Chairman, what has happened is that the executive director of TAFE provided part of an answer. It is available under the Standing Orders of this Committee for the Minister to make supplementary statements. I am providing the honourable member, if only she would listen, with a very—

**Ms SPENCE:** Mr Chair, I ask for your ruling on this. I understand that, under the Standing Orders, as a member of this Committee, I am quite within my rights to ask a question of any member of the panel and to have that question answered only by that member.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am going to suspend the sittings. I think we should talk about it.

**Mr SANTORO:** Is it morning tea time at this stage?

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is morning tea time. We will commence again after the Committee has met at 11 o'clock.

Sitting suspended from 10.43 to 11.03 a.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I want to make a short statement before we start. Minister, the Committee has met informally. It has not gone to a vote but rather it has been agreed generally that it would be best if, when a question is asked of a particular departmental head, that departmental head be allowed to answer the question. It is considered that when that question is answered, leave it at that. Non-Government members believe that if they need to pursue the matter further with you, they will ask you directly. We do agree that the area is a little bit grey, and it is in that spirit that we ask that this be done. It has basically been a pretty good hearing this morning with people cooperating. We really want to try to do this in the best way we possibly can. We do not want to have to go out and be voting on issues if we can avoid it.

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Chairman, it is certainly not my desire to see that happen, either. If I could just draw your attention to 4.5.5, which says that public officials are not to be asked and are not required to answer any questions which seek comment on Government policy—

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is a different matter. There is no problem there. The public servant can refer that to you and say, "I believe that that is an issue of policy and I do not feel qualified to answer that."

**Mr SANTORO:** I think if we could live within the spirit of those provisions, I am quite happy with that, Mr Chairman.

**Ms SPENCE:** My next question I direct to Mr Sielaff. What budgetary provisions have been made for new child-care initiatives in TAFE this year?

**Mr SIELAFF:** I can get you that detail. As you know, the issue of child-care facilities—there are a number of child-care facilities under construction, and one is at the Bremer Institute. The number of places that are already in place in terms of child-care facilities is 363. There is a new child-care centre that

is being developed at the South Bank Institute, and that facility will be completed in December 1996. The new facility which is at the Bremer Institute has provision for 43 places and that facility is expected to be completed in 1997. As you know, there are places that we are purchasing in a number of limited hours child-care centres.

**Ms SPENCE:** Can you provide me with a figure on that, Mr Sielaff?

**Mr SIELAFF:** In terms of the number of places in the limited child-care centres?

**Ms SPENCE:** No, just generally your child-care budget for this year in TAFE.

**Mr SIELAFF:** I am not able to provide you with an actual amount of money from the data that I have with me but, if you wish, I can provide you with that.

**Ms SPENCE:** On notice?

**Mr SIELAFF:** Yes.

**Ms SPENCE:** My next question I also direct to Mr Sielaff. I believe that something like \$100,000 was allocated to support services for women last year in TAFE. How much is allocated this year?

**Mr SIELAFF:** The actual allocation for women's support officers has not been determined at this stage.

**Ms SPENCE:** How is that so, Mr Sielaff?

**Mr SIELAFF:** The issue is in terms of a resolution between the activities which are funded through the competitive funding programs conducted or managed through the Division of Training and Employment Queensland and through our own division, and at this stage some of those negotiations are not final. There have been various departmental documents prepared that have come to the Executive Management Forum, but at this stage there has not been a resolution of those issues.

**Ms SPENCE:** Would it not be usual for a department to have resolved issues like that before a budget was brought down, otherwise how much money might there be in the budget for initiatives like that?

**Mr SIELAFF:** I can understand the nature of your question, but one of the things that is behind this is the funding for the State Training Profile. The State Training Profile for 1997 is not yet resolved and a number of these activities, or a number of these support services, are dependent on the actual determination of the 1997 State Training Profile. I am sure you are aware that we live between the two financial years, that the Commonwealth runs a financial year system and TAFE, or the Queensland system, runs a financial year basis, if I have not confused myself in answer the questioning.

**Mr CARLON:** If I could add to that—the planning for the system is done through the State Training Profile, and that is done on a calendar year, which aligns with the way training providers tend to operate. They operate on calendar years, so the money from the Commonwealth comes through on a calendar year and we have got to then readjust that back into financial year budgets. The money that was there for 1996 for child care is there. We are in the

final phases now of putting the 1997 State Training Profile to ANTA, and the ANTA ministerial council is due to consider that and endorse it at their November meeting.

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Carlon, I refer you to the Minister's earlier answer in which he talked about the extra \$31m and identified about \$4m of that extra \$31m in vocational education and training coming from the abolition of labour market programs which, under our Government, used to total about \$13m. Is it not a fact that that just means that the other \$9.5m has just disappeared? That amount of money was previously spent on labour market programs for the long-term unemployed. So we get \$3.5m to \$4m of it going into this increase. The balance has just disappeared, has it not, and is not being expended on labour market programs or training programs for the unemployed—long-term or otherwise?

**Mr CARLON:** The \$30m is made up of a number of sources. There is \$13m of Commonwealth funds, there is \$6.171m of State growth funds, there is \$4.3m of State new initiatives and \$6.673m in additional TAFE fees.

**Mr BRADY:** Yes, you have identified again where the Minister got those from. Those moneys come from the Commonwealth, from previously budgeted State funds, and so on. We were told in Budget speeches that the moneys from the labour market programs are being directed towards new training places. In fact, only \$4m of the extra \$31m comes out of the abolition of the labour market programs, does it not?

**Mr SANTORO:** I am very happy to answer that question.

**Mr BRADY:** It is not a policy question, it is a fact. Of the \$31m extra, only \$4m has been identified by the Minister and by the budget as coming out of the abolition of labour market programs. Is that correct?

**Mr CARLON:** It is correct that there is \$4.3m which is new State funds there, but I suppose the other thing we should be looking at is that the growth funds have been honoured.

**Mr BRADY:** Yes, but where has the balance of the \$13m from the abolition of labour market programs gone? If only \$4m of it has gone into the extra funds for training—the extra \$31m—where has the other \$9m gone?

**Mr CARLON:** I cannot tell you where it has gone. What I can answer for you is that there were around \$15m worth of labour market programs which are no longer being funded.

**Mr BRADY:** And you are spending \$4m of them in the extra \$31m. The rest of it has just disappeared, has it not, into consolidated revenue?

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Chairman—

**Mr BRADY:** No. You can get one of your members to ask you this later, if you wish. I am asking Mr Carlon, who is the director of that particular division.

**Mr SANTORO:** You can get a very quick answer from me, if you care to ask it. It is a bit unfair to be picking on a public servant. That is a question that goes to the heart of—

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Chairman, we have had a ruling on this. I do not wish to debate it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I do believe that the Minister is giving a policy answer as to where it has gone. The public servants cannot answer the question.

**Mr SANTORO:** The question that the honourable member for Kedron asks strikes at the heart of Government priorities.

**Mr BRADY:** Policy.

**Mr SANTORO:** It is. You can be sceptical about the start of my answer, but it is a new Government and we have reprioritised. I can start talking, for the benefit of the Committee, about the extra \$17m that this Government has allocated to the funding of maternity leave. Some of the public servants within my department, for example, will be benefiting from that \$17m. If you want to have a look at where some of that money has gone, you should be looking at that. The departments and, in fact, the whole of Government have been asked to make contributions to the funding of \$35m to help make up the shortfall within the Workers Compensation Fund, which is a shortfall created by your Government. What has happened there is that, when we came to Government, we had to adopt a whole approach to Government.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Mr Chairman, could you rule on the relevance of this answer to the question that has been asked?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Could the Minister just answer the question as directly as possible and as quickly as possible?

**Mr SANTORO:** There is an extra \$30m that has been allocated to the VET market, \$24m is directly funded from Government funding, while the other \$6m will be raised through the additional TAFE fees. The Government funding includes \$13m of Commonwealth growth funding, \$6m of State growth funding, and over \$4m in State new initiative funding. At a time when both the Commonwealth and the State Governments needed to find billions of dollars in savings, due to the mismanagement of the previous Government, both the Commonwealth and the State Government have ensured that there is an increase in funding to the vocational education and training system in Queensland. Not only have previous commitments been met in this very difficult fiscal environment, but they have actually been exceeded by \$4.3m. That is my answer to the honourable member. I have chosen to provide it because the budget, and particularly this part of the budget, represents a clear shift in Government policy and consequent funding.

**The CHAIRMAN:** At this point I wish to acknowledge and welcome the presence of a special Select Committee from the Parliament of the Solomon Islands led by Mr Michael Maina, MP. I say a very big welcome. Give them all a hand.

**Committee members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr BRADY:** My next question is to the Minister. Given the total abolition—and the policy that the Minister has admitted—of the programs for the long-term unemployed, how will these new



training places assist the long-term unemployed when they are not targeted at the long-term unemployed and are available to all comers?

**Mr SANTORO:** The first point that I dispute is that we are looking at the total abolition of employment programs.

**Mr BRADY:** I said "long-term unemployed".

**Mr SANTORO:** Let me address that very specific. The following amounts have been allocated to special employment programs. We are continuing with these employment programs: \$400,000 to the expansion of Queensland's enterprise centres network to foster the establishment of small businesses, which will undoubtedly go on to employ unemployed people; \$650,000 to continue the Young Offenders Program to help at-risk youths re-enter the work force or undertake training; \$0.2m to help women re-enter the work force after a lengthy absence; \$0.6m to build on the Queensland Public Sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy; and \$0.3m for the Torres Strait Employment and Career Development Strategy, which aims to improve public sector representation of indigenous people in the Torres Strait and north peninsula area.

The first point that I wish to make is that I refute that we have abolished all employment programs. It is one of those mischievous pieces of misinformation which is peddled by certain members of the union movement and, obviously, by the Opposition. There are some very real opportunities for long-term unemployed and disadvantaged individuals within those programs to avail themselves of assistance. That is the first point that I wish to make.

I also remind the honourable member of an answer that I have previously supplied, wherein I said that the funds that have been made available on a competitive basis and via various tendering methods will have to include specifications which specifically target long-term unemployed and disadvantaged people. I again refer the honourable member to the very detailed answer that I gave to a question previously. But just to reinforce it—the tendering process will involve the development of specifications, in consultation with industry, to determine the training required and the target group to undertake the training. This will allow and make possible the assistance of those groups already mentioned by developing tenders that specifically request training to best suit their needs and to encourage their participation.

**Mr BRADY:** Minister, Budget Paper No. 2 suggests that labour market programs are primarily an area of Commonwealth responsibility. This is used in your budget to argue for abandoning many of the long-term unemployed programs. Can the Minister tell the Committee the details of the Commonwealth programs that are available to assist the 80-plus community organisations and the 21,000 long-term unemployed who received assistance under these programs in 1995-96?

**Mr SANTORO:** I thank the honourable member for his question because it really is quite a simple one to answer. As the honourable member

would appreciate, there has been much restructuring that has occurred or is occurring within the Federal sphere of this part of policy development implementation. What is happening federally is that \$1.5 billion has been allocated to this whole area of policy, with particular heavy emphasis being applied to case management. There are initiatives that are being developed and there are programs that are being finetuned and the Queensland Government is assisting the Commonwealth to develop programs which will take up where the duplicated programs at a State level in fact leave off.

If you have a look at the Youth Employment Service, that particular program is a clear duplication of the Federal Government's recent and proposed new initiatives. Commonwealth case management, which is delivered through private, contracted case managers, Employment Assistance Australia, EAA, in the recently proposed Employment Placement Enterprise, along with the new youth service strategy will provide intensive employment assistance to young job seekers. That is the traditional client group and service area of YES.

If you have a look at the Self Employment Venture Scheme, which is another program that we have not continued with, the savings forecast for 1996-97, as the honourable member would know, is \$3.882m. A recent review of the program by DTIR internal audit indicated that, when compared with other States where SEVS loans are not available, the SEVS program provided little value adding for people establishing new businesses. In fact, DTIR found that the success rate of the Federal program NEIS-supported business in Queensland was the same as the national average of 72.7. So, I would suggest to the honourable member that, in fact, the major reason that the Queensland Government has substantially vacated the grant in that area of policy is that this area of policy is duplicated at a Federal level, that sufficient funds have in fact been allocated at a Federal level, particularly with a case management emphasis, to assist those who are genuinely disadvantaged and long-term unemployed. I would suggest that, as a result of our cooperation with the Federal Government, we will meet our obligations.

**Mr BRADY:** I refer to your abolition in the budget of the Public Sector Traineeship Program. Why have you axed such an important program? Without the subsidy, what inducement will exist for departments to employ disadvantaged young people into traineeships in the public sector? Are you planning to maintain quotas for such young people to be employed in traineeships in the public sector?

**Mr SANTORO:** As the honourable member would know, when he was a Minister this particular aspect of policy had varying success. Even with the availability of subsidies, it had varying success across departments. In fact, I am pleased to say that the department for which I am the Minister was one of the more successful departments; in fact, it always achieved its quota. When we came to Government, there were quite a number of departments which clearly were dragging the chain. It does not matter sometimes how much incentive, including subsidies,

you provide, you can bring a horse to the trough, but you can't make the thing drink.

To be more specific—the savings forecast, as the honourable member would appreciate, is approximately \$4.434m. Approximately 500 permanent positions are available annually with some 15,000 applications for appointment, and more cost-efficient methods of filling these vacancies are available through devolving the recruitment process to individual departments, which, of course, we have done. A recent review of the recruitment branch identified savings and efficiencies in the devolution of base-grade recruitment and the Graduate Development Program be devolved to departments. The review also recommended that the redeployment units be transferred to the Office of the Public Service.

With the Commonwealth Government additional subsidies to employ long-term unemployed job seekers as trainees, there is no longer a necessity to offer, in our view, a similar subsidy at a State level. As a result, the Government is retaining those employment programs that do not duplicate Commonwealth initiatives. Those programs include the Public Sector Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Strategy, the Young Offenders and Enterprise Centre programs, and the women re-entering the workforce initiative. The emphasis in those programs will be on training and skills development for unemployed to allow them to compete for real long-term jobs.

**Mr BRADY:** Does the Minister's answer mean that the Queensland Government will no longer be playing its part in having quotas for young people who are long-term unemployed to receive traineeships in the Queensland public sector?

**Mr SANTORO:** I again reiterate that the department for which I am the Minister will continue to promote the value of traineeships. After two years of a Government-imposed traineeship quota which, as I said, in some departments was successful and in other departments—and perhaps the majority of the departments under your previous administration—was not successful, many agencies have become familiar with the benefits of the traineeship system and are likely, with our encouragement, to continue to support entry-level training as an integral part of their human resource strategies. Benefits of additional State Government incentives are diluted by the necessity to navigate both the State and Federal administration systems needed to claim subsidies relating to one individual.

I am reminded that we also are very much participating within the MAATS system. As I said, the new Modern Apprenticeship and Traineeship System, MAATS, will further improve choice and flexibility for employers in organising mutually suitable working and training arrangements for new entry-level workers. We believe that we are capable under the new arrangements to meet our obligations in terms of Public Service traineeships and we look forward eventually to reporting progress to the Parliament.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time has now expired for questions from non-Government members. I call upon the member for Redlands.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Could you outline what initiatives are proposed to ensure freedom of choice for union membership?

**Mr SANTORO:** If honourable members look at the Budget documents, they will notice that \$1.75m has been allocated as a new initiative to the administration and implementation of the new industrial relations system. That particular allocation provides for the enforcement of new freedom of association legislation. The freedom to choose whether to belong to a particular organisation, I would respectfully submit to the Committee, is a fundamental principle of democracy. Being forced to join a union or, indeed, any other organisation, including an employer organisation, is a very undemocratic practice indeed. Honourable members would appreciate that, despite the prevalence of preference clauses and industrial practices promoting and enforcing closed workshops, workers are voting with their feet and union membership is in fact declining.

In 1990, 38.5 per cent of working Queenslanders were union members, but by 1995 the percentage declined to 33.8 per cent. Union membership in the private sector in Queensland in 1995 was even lower at 24.2 per cent. Obviously, the Government of which I am a member is totally committed to the principle of freedom of choice, which is critical to the development of a fairer and more productive industrial relations system and workplaces within that system. The coalition's industrial relations reform agenda does recognise the very important role responsible unionism can play in the industrial relations system. However, we also submit that the recognition of this role for unions should not mean that individual rights are disregarded and that compulsive legislative coercion back up the undemocratic provisions and principles that have applied up to now. This is why a responsible Government, in my view, must outlaw preference provisions and encourage voluntary unionism.

Genuine voluntary unionism is not an attack on the union movement and we totally refute any suggestions by members opposite or anybody else in Queensland that we do not support a strong and viable union movement within Queensland. But genuine voluntary unionism is all about allowing employees to choose to join or, importantly—particularly from the perspective of many individuals—when not to join. We have made a very substantial allocation in the budget—as I said, \$1.75m—to reform and subsequently promote an industrial relations system that will again restore dignity to the whole principle of freedom of association of people, particularly within workplaces. The days when closed shops were the norm in Queensland, the days when bullying tactics are employed by various union leaders to force people into closed workshops are well and truly gone.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. I will ask the next question. There is increased funding for competitive tendering and service provision for vocational education and training. What do you see as the benefits of competition in this market?

**Mr SANTORO:** One of the points that I have been making as I go about, particularly promoting the TAFE initiative, is that people should, in fact, not be scared of competition. One of the points that I have been putting to the staff within TAFE Queensland and, indeed, right throughout my department is that the whole competition agenda is one which enjoys bipartisan support. A lot of people within Queensland, in fact, relate competition as being perhaps an ideological goal of non-Labor parties, but I just wish to take this opportunity to remind honourable members opposite—and to remind anybody else who cares to listen to what I am saying—that the Hilmer reform agenda was, in fact, an agenda that was embraced by the previous Hawke and Keating Labor Governments together with the Labor Governments in every other State. They introduced a system of implementation and a timetable for implementation which seeks to unleash the maximum competitive forces within all State and Federal economies and including within the provision of public services by all Governments. So when we are talking about competition, whether it is in the VET market or whether it is within any other area of Public Service delivery, we should always remember that this particular issue, at least if the actions, the very deliberate actions of previous Labor Governments Federally have anything to do with it, enjoys bipartisan support.

The major benefit, of course, that will accrue is that as a result of competition, public servants and politicians, as they go about making policy decisions, will be making decisions which will lead to a more efficient delivery of public services which, in turn, means that the taxpayers who support committees and political parties and Parliaments through their taxpayers' dollars will get better value for their taxpayers' dollars. So I see the increased competition within the VET market as being a more efficient delivery of services—in this case, training services. I see the benefits as being a more in-touch VET market, particularly with the needs of small businesses which, ultimately, are the largest employers of the people who are trained within the system and I think that that augurs very well for the VET market.

I again—apart from stating the obvious—state that the expansion of competition will result in more client-focused and client-responsive training services and wish to stress the bipartisan support for competitive forces within the provision of public services. It is something that these days, which I think for political convenience and for political reasoning, we are seeing some of the members opposite run away when, in fact, it was they who unleashed competition well and truly into the marketplace.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. I now call upon the member for Mundingburra.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, can you explain why the Budget papers indicate a reduced number of applications for recognition of work or training and the impact that will have on revenue gained from fees for this area?

**Mr SANTORO:** I thank the honourable member for his question. The Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 1991, as the honourable member would be aware, provides for the State Training Council to, in fact, recognise work or training. Recognition of work or training is more commonly known as trade recognition.

In all the circumstances, trade recognition or trade qualifications are required by means of completing a formal apprenticeship, usually of four years' duration. During that time, an apprentice not only accepts a training wage reflecting his or her reduced skill level but also has to attend college, pay some fees, study the theory aspects of the trade as well as pass some pretty elaborate competency tests. Those people who apply for skills recognition have to clearly demonstrate that they have worked at a trade level for a number of years and that they also have the required competencies for the trade in which they aspire to practise. They have not had to attend college, pass examinations and accept reduced wages, but the qualifications that they seek puts them on the same level as a former apprentice. Possession of a trade certificate greatly enhances the employment and income prospects of an individual and that is why people who have not been through the formal apprenticeship system are, in fact, attracted to having their skills recognised.

It is expected that from 1 January 1997, applicants for trade recognition will pay an application fee of \$250. If the services of an industry assessor are required, a further \$100 will apply. In the rare instance where a trade test is still needed to decide an application, the cost of that test to a maximum of \$250 will be worn by the applicant.

It is expected that 900 applications for trade recognition will be determined in 1996-97. This will result in an increase of revenue of \$60,000 to a total of \$136,475. In recent years, the biggest source of applications for trade recognition has been people needing to establish their skills to obtain licences from the Queensland Building Services Authority. That reduced level of activity from last year, when 1,249 applications were finalised, is due largely to the end of the period of interim Queensland Building Services Authority licences and that explains the diminution of effort in that area.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I now call upon the member for Redlands.

**Mr HEGARTY:** With reference to vocational education and training, concern has been expressed about the reliability of the counting of student contact hours. At page 28 of the Ministerial Program Statements, it is reported that 36,725 million student contact hours are to be delivered in 1996. Could you inform the Committee as to the reliability of this estimate?

**Mr SANTORO:** I thank the honourable member for his question. Honourable members who recall some of the statements that I made as the shadow Minister over the last few years in this area will recall that I was quite rightly critical of the way that the statistics to measure effort were compiled.

I am pleased to say—and my modesty prevents me from stating this point any stronger—that probably as a result of the fairly consistent questioning by the Opposition of this area of policy, I am happy to say that these days the advice that I have got, and it is backed up by empirical research and assessment, is that the estimated delivery of student contact hours is considered to be very reliable. In recent years, the method of counting and estimating student contact hours has been the subject, as I have just stated, of much scrutiny and variation. Since 1994, the reporting of student contact hours to ANTA has been based on Government-funded activity rather than total VET activity. This means that activity arising from fee for service and special program funding was excluded and the effect of this was a lower reported level of activity when considering the original estimates for all VET activity in 1994.

In 1995, ANTA further clarified its reporting requirements to exclude some Government-funded activity which had previously been counted. This activity related, for example, to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander and migrant activity, to literacy programs, industry placement and learning support. Again, this has the effect of reducing the reported level of activity when considering the original estimates.

At the same time that changes to that type of counting activity occurred, ANTA conducted through the National Centre for Vocational Education and Research audits of data of all States to ensure accuracy, integrity and consistency. The audit of 1994 data for Queensland revealed that a number of deficiencies in the data-collection procedures had been undertaken. What happened was that those deficiencies, obviously, were addressed in a very significant way here in Queensland and the figures that we are supplying in terms of effort in that area, student contact hours, has led to reliable figures being made available. The analysis of 1994 data, using the same rigorous approach applied to 1995 data, demonstrates that there is a real growth in the level of VET delivery in Queensland. You can be confident, Mr Hegarty, that the estimated level for 1996 is both reliable and achievable. I think that that is good for those people who wish to enter the training market.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. I just require a fairly short answer to this in view of the time constraints. How will reforming the industrial relations system reduce the level of industrial disputation?

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Chairman, I think that honourable members would appreciate that the industrial relations system, which we as a new Government wished to preside over, is a system that is based on an air of cooperation and on principles which seek to engender trust and cooperation within Queensland workplaces. In fact, it has often been the lack of trust within Queensland workplaces that has led to the breaking of relationships within workplaces which eventually lead to industrial disputation. I think that it is a matter of national and State disgrace that, under the Goss Labor Government, Queensland was the strike capital of

Australia, recording the highest number of days lost of all States and territories, 182,700. For the purposes of comparison, this means that in 1995, Queensland made up almost 18 per cent of national wage and salary earners but contributed 33 per cent of days lost in Australia.

I could obviously go on for the full three minutes on this issue, because, as you have heard me state in the Parliament, industrial harmony within Queensland workplaces is an issue that is very dear to my heart. However, in view of your request, the short answer is that our policy is not based on compulsion. Our policy is based on cooperation and on freedom of association. I think that the principles which underline our policy will indeed lead to a better industrial climate in Queensland. Of course, we cannot underestimate the role of the Industrial Relations Commission, which will still act as an independent, well-resourced umpire. It will ensure that harmony is preserved and that strike action and other industrial disputation is prevented through the various mechanisms available to the parties within the industrial relations system of Queensland, particularly the use of the Industrial Relations Commission.

**Mr TANTI:** How will the provision of \$1.691m to the Public Sector Consultancy Subcommittee Program benefit the people of Queensland?

**Mr SANTORO:** This is obviously a very important part of the new Government's Budget. I am sure you would appreciate that one of the fundamental barriers to achieving public sector productivity has been the impediments that have existed in the formal industrial relations arrangements. While there has been quite a lot of rhetoric advanced over the last several years as to the reform of the public sector, this Government will, in fact and in reality, free-up the constraints imposed by the previous Government so that the service can focus on more competitive delivery. Over the next 12 months, my department will put into place the operating framework that will allow for a much more dynamic and flexible Public Service, one where workplace relations are shaped by local needs—and that particular requirement will become the norm—and where deliberate efforts are made to move away from notions of employment conditions which embrace the principle of one-size-fits-all.

As a precursor to the new era of Queensland workplace relations, my department has already commenced developing an industrial framework that will allow future workplace bargaining to be devolved as far as it is required to ensure that the real needs of structural reform and performance improvement are addressed. For example, I have spoken in the Parliament previously, and I will not elaborate further at the Committee level, on issues such as flexible working hours. Family friendly policies will also produce concepts of service, as employees seek to enter into working arrangements that no longer are transfixed to the concept of a 9 to 5 job day. Cultural change, streamlining of terms and conditions, and a greater link between a unit's performance and paying conditions will provide the focus that will see service delivery and productivity growth, which is the new focus of public sector industrial relations in

Queensland. We are very committed to involving the work force fully in all of those reforms. That will become evident as the Government continues in terms of its reforms.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As the time has expired for the questioning by Government members, I now call upon the member for Kedron.

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Carlon, what are the details of the staff cutbacks, either sackings or voluntary retirements or transfers to other positions, associated with the abolition of the labour market programs? In particular, I believe 153 jobs have been lost in those programs. What are the numbers in each of the department's offices throughout Queensland?

**Mr CARLON:** There are 152 staff positions, but only 125 staff are affected because of vacancies in some of these positions which, in preparation, we did not fill.

**Mr BRADY:** Although some of them might be temporarily vacant, there are 152 positions and I am anxious to know which offices they are in around the State.

**Mr CARLON:** I am not certain I have the number of positions with me.

**Mr BRADY:** Can you give us the 125, and forward the rest later if you would?

**Mr CARLON:** Yes. There are seven staff affected at Strathpine, five at Milton, four at Chermside, three at Woodridge, two at Capalaba, seven at Mount Gravatt, six at Beenleigh, five at Southport/Palm Beach, six at Maryborough, six at Maroochydore, two at Bundaberg, six at Rockhampton, five at Mackay, three at Gladstone, three at Emerald, nine at Townsville, two at Mount Isa, four at Cairns, four at Toowoomba, three at Roma, one at Dalby, four at Ipswich and 28 at the head office in Brisbane, where I do believe the majority of the extra positions that were unfilled probably are as well, but I will need to come back with that.

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Carlon, what is the cost of leasing accommodation for the department at Maroochydore, Ipswich, Townsville and Maryborough? Is it correct that these centres are basically only there for employment services? If the Government gets its way and this Budget is passed without amendment and these employment services will be surplus to requirements, will you be retaining the leasing of the premises at the centres I have nominated?

**Mr CARLON:** We are planning a strategy to handle that. A whole range of things is occurring. A number of existing offices are experiencing overcrowding, and a reduction in staff would allow those offices to operate within existing tenancies without incurring expense in terms of refit. The offices affected there are Cairns, Mackay and Gladstone. The Ipswich office comprises only employment staff. This office is on a month-by-month lease, so it will create no problems for us. We can finalise the lease. Townsville was due to move to a fully departmental, co-located site based on revised staffing figures. Again, we have no problem

there. The lease of the Maroochydore office, which is employment only, is due to expire in December. Milton's lease is due to expire, I think, in November, so we do not have a problem there. With the remaining ones, we will be looking to sublet where possible, but the majority of them are either near the end of leases or we can use.

**Mr BRADY:** Minister, I refer to the fact that in 1995-96, 679 young, long-term unemployed people received real traineeships in the Queensland public sector. How many traineeships do you believe will be available this year for the same group of people in the Queensland Government public sector? Will you guarantee that you will provide traineeships of at least the same number this year for the young, long-term unemployed as applied last year?

**Mr SANTORO:** Obviously the answer to that question is a complicated one. It would depend on whether or not the Government would impose a quota. It is a question to which I can seek more specific answers for the shadow Minister. I undertake to do so.

**Mr BRADY:** For the record, will you guarantee that you will employ as many trainees as were employed last year—679 young, long-term unemployed?

**Mr SANTORO:** As I said in answer to a question from another honourable member, there has been a devolution of the intake of trainees to all departments. Obviously, as the Minister for my department, I cannot speak on behalf of all other departments. The implementation of traineeship policies by the previous Government over a number of years, I believe—and I state this sincerely—has created a traineeship culture which, I think, is inculcated to the maximum possible extent within the Public Service. But, as I said in answer to a previous question, even when the previous Government imposed quotas on traineeships, a great number of departments under your administration clearly failed to reach those quotas, despite the imposition of quotas by the Government of which you were a member.

What that demonstrates to me is that, even under a strict enforcement of a quota system by your Government, you could not guarantee the achievement of those quotas. And that was within a very highly prescriptive policy framework. Within the devolution framework that we are implementing, which again was initiated by your Government—and I think that was a good initiative—the guarantee that you are asking for cannot be given for the very practical reasons that I have mentioned. What, however, I can reiterate is that we are implementing a more flexible industrial relations system which will encourage and make it easier for arrangements between employers and employees, including employers and trainees, to be put into place. I stress: the guarantee that you ask and the guarantee that I cannot give you is something that the Government of which you were previously a member, in a very prescriptive environment with the application of quotas, could not deliver on. I think it would be unreasonable to ask this Government to do so under the new circumstances.

**Mr BRADY:** Minister, how many traineeships will your department supply this year for the long-term unemployed?

**Mr SANTORO:** Obviously, as I said, the Department of Training and Industrial Relations will seek to play a leading role. We will seek to employ as many trainees as we possibly can. I will be pleased to report fully to the Parliament as the experience comes into place.

**Mr BRADY:** Minister, I refer to pages 14 and 15 of the Ministerial Program Statements, and I ask: how do you reconcile the projected increase shown on page 14 in the number of persons completing work and safety training programs—a 5 per cent increase—with an acknowledgment on page 15 of the Ministerial Program Statements in Note 3 that there will be a cessation of the subsidies paid to seed fund for the training, and a significant decline in funding of training organisations to undertake the training? On page 14, you say the number of people will go up from 5,565 to 5,843, yet in program outlays there is in fact a decrease in funding. Note 3 makes reference to—

"Greater than anticipated WHS Officer and Representative training; and cessation of the subsidies paid to seed fund for this training."

How by cutting moneys and funding for this organisation and this training will you hope to increase the number of employees who will receive training under the seminar program?

**Mr SANTORO:** The advice that I am receiving is that obviously the money which we were talking about and which is now being cut out is seed money. The establishment is set up and obviously will still be able to provide for an increase in the number of persons who are completing workplace health and safety training courses. But perhaps for more detail I may refer to the executive director of the division.

**Mr HODGES:** Funding for subsidies has covered only a proportion of the cost of training since it began. In the case of workplace health and safety officers, that proportion is relatively low, in fact about one fifth of the actual course cost, and nothing for the wages and salary costs. In other words, up to four-fifths of the course costs and all of the wage and salary costs are borne by the employer. That is not a particularly strong incentive. About half of the numbers are coming through in that area.

Secondly, there is a requirement for workplace health and safety officers to be in place at workplaces where there are 30 or more persons employed. As the number of workplaces in that category grows, so will the number of workplace health and safety officers trained, as they must by law. In relation to workplace health and safety representatives, it is open, and it has always been open, for workers at any workplace to elect a workplace health and safety representative. It is then open for that representative to be trained. In the past, the subsidy has covered a very high proportion of the training costs. In many cases, it has covered all of the actual delivery costs by Safe Work Queensland, the combined union training

organisation. The only cost that has to be covered is the salary cost. So in that area, as people elect representatives, they will continue, we hope, to be trained. But that is not now, nor has it been, compulsory. So the question is really one of anticipating the continued growth in this area that we have seen in recent years, that is, to the 18,000 people who have been trained in both areas over a period of time.

**Ms SPENCE:** Minister, I refer you to page 105 of Budget Paper No. 2. The Training and Industrial Relations budget for this year is \$625.3m. Next year's estimate goes down to \$575.9m. In the year after that, it will be \$587m. Can you explain the reasons for the predictions of these massive budget cuts to your department in the years ahead?

**Mr SANTORO:** I would dispute that we are looking at massive budget cuts. In fact, overall the Department of Training and Industrial Relations budget for 1996-97 totals \$1.529 billion. Excluding \$903.242m for the Workers Compensation Trust Fund, the budget for the department of which I am the Minister is \$625.319m, which is an increase of 8.4 per cent on 1995-96. So if you have a look at what in fact has happened this year—as I mentioned before, despite a very tight budgetary situation and circumstances that the new Government found itself in, we have been able to increase the overall budget for the Department of Training and Industrial Relations by 8.4 per cent on 1995-96, which clearly is far and above the rate of inflation.

The advice that I am receiving is that forward estimates obviously are able to change and are subject to variation, as undoubtedly the honourable member for Kedron will recall when he was a Minister, and I will stand by the performance of the department in terms of financial allocations this year which, as I said, has seen an increase of 8.4 per cent on the experience of 1995-96, which was basically the result of the previous Government's budgetary allocations.

**Ms SPENCE:** My next question I direct to Mr Henneken. It is a question about labour market reform. I refer to page 39 of the Ministerial Program Statements, where it says at the bottom of the page—

"Initiatives will be undertaken to promote opportunities for enabling workers to balance work and family responsibilities."

Could you tell me: what are these initiatives, and how much has been budgeted for each of these initiatives?

**Mr HENNEKEN:** The Government has allocated for this year \$75,000 to initially do some research and then some promotion of best practice for work and family initiatives. The promotion will concentrate primarily on employer associations and on unions so that the promotional work of the department is spread as wide as possible.

**Ms SPENCE:** I have one more question to Mr Henneken. \$75,000 for work and family initiatives over the next year does not sound to me to be very much money. What would one get for \$75,000?

**Mr HENNEKEN:** As I said, one gets some research of best practice initiatives, and then it is a question of promoting those initiatives to workplaces, employer associations and workers.

**Mr BRADY:** Can the Minister inform us what the number of long-term unemployed in Queensland currently stands at? What is the Minister's projection of the number of long-term unemployed by June 1997, and how will this Budget do anything at all to assist the reduction of that number?

**Mr SANTORO:** We will get the specific figures for the long-term unemployed, but from memory the unemployment rate, particularly for youth unemployment, stands at an average of 29 per cent. We will get you the specific figures as soon as they become available. But let me answer your question in this manner: under your Government, the rate of long-term unemployment kept on increasing. Despite the creation of labour market programs and despite the enormous amount of funds that you kept on placing within temporary schemes, the rate of long-term unemployed kept on increasing. Part of your question is: what is the Government going to do in terms of getting the long-term unemployment rate down? I suppose I could take up a little bit more time in terms of the answer that the Honourable Chairman was requiring of me—and that was a short one—in terms of how the industrial relations system will be of benefit to the long-term unemployed in particular. I think that the flexibilities which are contained within the industrial relations policies of the new Government and the amendments to the legislation, particularly in the area of unfair dismissal, will greatly increase the propensity and the inclination of employers to take on more unemployed. It is important to go on the record as saying that I believe that the amendment of the unfair dismissal laws in particular will soak up a lot of unemployment.

In terms of making a prediction as to what the rate is going to be—I am not prepared to do that. All that I can say is that I believe that our policies will impact significantly on the rate of unemployment. It is one of the objectives of the new Government and all Ministers to in fact look at initiatives which do create employment. We have a massive Capital Works Program that was announced in the State Budget. \$58m of capital works in fact has been allocated to and against the TAFE budget. Through freeing up the industrial relations system and through a Capital Works Program that focuses and concentrates on infrastructure, I believe that we will create a significant number of new jobs, which will assist the unemployment rate to go down rather than up, as occurred under the previous Government.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. The time for questioning by non-Government members has expired for the moment. I now call the member for Redlands.

**Mr HEGARTY:** There were a number of criticisms of workplace health and safety this morning from the member for Bulimba and also from others in relation to the report of the Kennedy inquiry into workers' compensation and related matters in Queensland. What has been your response to these criticisms?

**Mr SANTORO:** To summarise a good number of points that have been made in answer to various questions—first of all, we have launched a review into the Division of Workplace Health and Safety, which, as I have indicated, I don't believe can be challenged as being anything other than a fair dinkum, independent review. We are proceeding with that as quickly as we possibly can. The terms of reference of that review clearly focus on two principles: the prevention of workplace injury and illness and the enforcement of workplace health and safety laws.

I think it is important in the context of your question—and without in any way being repetitive, which this won't be, in terms of previous answers—to read into the record the terms of reference of the review, because they do show that the spirit of the Kennedy recommendations is being implemented by the review. The terms of reference are—

- review arrangements for the delivery of the Workplace Health and Safety Program in the Department of Training and Industrial Relations to ensure maximum impact of the program objective, that is, to reduce the risk of injury and disease at workplaces;

- examine the report on all aspects of program delivery in the light of world best practice in the field of workplace health and safety;

- review strategies and make recommendations to improve the prevention of injury and disease to persons from workplace activities and enhance compliance with workplace health and safety legislation and standards;

- recommend administrative and organisational structures, arrangements and resources necessary for improving the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in all areas, including industry standards and field operations, including inspection and audit subprograms;

- make recommendations on future program delivery within the constraints of the existing resources available to the program;

- recommend a performance monitoring framework to assess the division's future efficiency and effectiveness in achieving the program's objectives.

I am sure that the honourable member for Bulimba in particular would appreciate that those terms of reference are tough terms of reference. They are comprehensive terms of reference and will very clearly give effect to the recommendations of Mr Kennedy in relation to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety.

I again stress that we want this review to be a fair dinkum one, and I am sure that all officers of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety will extend to it their full cooperation, and the independent consultant will make sure that the terms of reference are well and truly adhered to.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Kennedy report said that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety

should be fully and adequately funded. Why has the division's budget been reduced, and is this related to the reduction in funding from the Workers Compensation Fund?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Chairman, for the question, because it does provide me with the opportunity to address in very specific terms a concern that has been expressed in terms of the reduction of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety budget from \$25,914,000 in 1995-96 to an estimated expenditure of \$25,307,000. First of all, I need to stress as I go through the reasons one by one that there has been no reduction in permanent staff of the division and no reduction in service delivery, particularly within the inspectorate.

The budget bottom line is down for a number of reasons. In 1995-96, the budget figure included one-off expenditure on technology to establish mobile office facilities for field staff, which included computing technology and mobile phones. What this shows up as in the budget is a significant reduction in plant and equipment expenditure, and, of course, honourable members would appreciate that this technology is being used to expand and improve client service and inspectors are obviously now able to spend more time and more efficient time in the field working with workplaces with improved access to information. Administrative savings, of course, are being made through technology, for example, the use of Statewide network information databases to give clients better access to standards, the use of the Internet and reduction in head office overheads by relocating staff and services to regional offices. Following, of course, the review of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety program, a reorganisation of the division's head office structure is expected to deliver even further efficiencies and promote a stronger industry focus.

Because the new Workplace Health and Safety Act was introduced in July 1995, a great deal of work also went into the developing of new standards under the Act. In fact, 17 new compliance and advisory standards have been introduced since July 1995. This work, as honourable members would appreciate, is now tapering down and contracts with temporary staff recruited to help with this work have expired. Obviously, that also sees the budget bottom line for this year decrease. Not continuing with an initiative of investigating options for externalising serious bodily injury investigation represents a \$100,000 saving. However, I do hasten to add that this particular initiative will be integrated with a new initiative to help industry self-manage health and safety. As has already been acknowledged in questions from the Opposition and Government members, there is also a substantial reduction in the 1995-96 subsidies for grants. They are the major reasons for the decline in the bottom line.

**Mr TANTI:** In 1996-97, the budget provides for expenditure of \$84m for capital works for TAFE. How would this expenditure contribute to the more flexible delivery of services by TAFE Queensland?

**Mr SANTORO:** I thank the honourable member for his question because it does actually

give me the opportunity to correct the record. I stated before that the capital budget for TAFE Queensland was in the order of \$58m. In fact, it is closer to \$84m on capital works in 1996-97. Of course, one of the major focuses of TAFE Queensland in terms of the delivery of its training output, particularly within a competitive environment, is geared towards enhancing and increasing flexible delivery of training. In fact, TAFE Queensland is regarded by other States as having made a very real commitment to the adoption of the concept of flexible delivery from the very early 1990s, and in the spirit of bipartisanship, I will extend credit to the previous Government for embracing that competitive agenda and the requiring flexible delivery methods that that entails very early in their Governments.

In 1994, the National Flexible Delivery Working Party published guidelines for physical facilities for flexible delivery. As one of the six resources produced by the national working party, its concepts have been adopted by TAFE Queensland in the development of its physical resources since that time. All of the new physical resources in TAFE Queensland are now designed to provide improved client service access and computerised enrolment services. Increasingly, teaching areas are being resourced with computer-based teaching resources, which also helps to answer one of the questions in terms of expenditure on equipment and infrastructure put to the executive director previously. There has been an enormous amount of money spent on bringing up to date our various facilities in terms of computer back-up. Institutes obviously are applying these technologies, and better services to people who are isolated in remote areas and provincial areas outside of the capital are being achieved.

TAFE Queensland also has a practice of constructing all new facilities to ensure that they provide for flexible delivery and self-paced learning and competency based assessment, as well as being able to meet any requirements for traditional learning methods. There are many examples of facilities with flexible delivery—learning centres on TAFE campuses. I could outline what is happening in the area of carpentry and joinery, engineering workshops, tourism and hospitality kitchens and mobile learning facilities at various campuses, but perhaps I will make that sort of detail available to the Committee via correspondence because it is quite extensive detail that I have been provided with. I am sure that when it is received by the Committee, it will be very impressed indeed.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, what are you doing to ensure enhanced industry and community input to TAFE?

**Mr SANTORO:** When I took over as the Minister for my department, I was visited by many people within the business community, particularly small-business, and one of their laments was that the input which they were having within the training system of Queensland, particularly within TAFE Queensland, had basically been diminished and diluted by the previous Government. You would be aware that the Act provides for some very specific formal mechanisms through which small-business and



business generally can have input, and the advisory committees which were established by the National Party Government in 1989 were basically allowed to fall into a state of disuse and disrepair and they needed to be rejuvenated.

As I mentioned in an answer to a previous question, those committees have now been established. There are close to 480, if not in excess of 480 members of the community, including business, including trade unions, including rural interests, various interests that are specific to the economic and social hinterlands that the TAFE colleges and institutes are meant to serve that are being brought on board within a very formal advisory committee structure. I think that those 480 plus people will provide an enormous boost to the Government's attempts to make TAFE Queensland very relevant to local communities. That initiative is being applauded not because people like the idea of serving on committees for the purposes of curriculum vitae or just massaging egos, they very genuinely wish to have an influence as to what type of courses and what type of curricula is offered within TAFE Queensland. We welcome that input in a very formal fashion.

I will be meeting with the council chairpersons in a week and a half's time for a full day and we will have two of those meetings which will be attended by the Minister every year. On top of that, the council chair will be required to formally, and in writing, report to the Minister, with reports countersigned by the institute and college directors, which means that their input will have to go past the college directors and the institute directors then through to me as the Minister so that the contentious issues which are of concern and of interest to local communities cannot be swept under the carpet because the Minister or his senior advisers will never see it.

A handbook has been prepared which clearly outlines the duties and responsibilities of the council, and I have to say that one of the more satisfying aspects of my Ministry is the way that initiative has been embraced by the community, which I think will now have a very significant role in its advisory role to TAFE colleges.

**The CHAIRMAN:** What will the proposed reforms to the Queensland industrial relations system contained in this year's Ministerial Program Statements do to improve the economic prosperity of our State?

**Mr SANTORO:** I will be very brief in terms of answering this question because I think the question is a very good one and I suppose I could go on for ever because it allows me to talk about freedom of choice and flexibility, about cooperation and about the lack of legislative compulsion. I think that I have covered many of those particular points in answers to previous questions, so at the risk of giving the Opposition an extra two and a half minutes of question time, I am pleased to do that and refer honourable members on the Committee to previous answers.

**Mr TANTI:** What action has the Government taken in this year's Budget to promote the adoption

of workplace-level industrial relations and workplace reform, particularly to small and medium-sized businesses?

**Mr SANTORO:** I am able to provide the honourable member with some very specific detail in relation to his question. A new Workplace Information Unit has been established to assist employers and employees with work matters. There is new initiative funding of \$400,000, which has been provided to this unit. The unit will have four full-time staff, which includes two workplace relation advisers. The unit will provide advice and support to small and medium-sized businesses and their employees about various aspects of their operations, including opportunities available under the new industrial relations legislation; options for workplace industrial arrangements that suit the needs of business in the interests of both the employer and the employee; the process of workplace bargaining, including consultation with employees; the role of employers, industry associations and unions; the role of the employment advocate in the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission; and, of course, developing a team culture at workplaces. The unit will provide these services throughout the State through a program of workplace visits and consultations, publication materials, training programs and seminars. Of course, the unit will work very closely with employer organisations.

The other point that I wish to make in relation to small businesses is that the Government is very much wishing to encourage practices within a workplace that clearly recognise the growing demands on families in terms of employment. Clearly, more people these days need to balance their work and family lives. The introduction of family friendly policies clearly needs to become a greater priority for Government. For example, it may be of interest to the honourable member to know that Esso Australia has estimated that the cost of replacing a female accountant with five years' experience who resigns due to the unavailability of maternity leave is \$70,000.

I would suggest that few companies, particularly the small-business sector, are aware of the potential benefits of family friendly working arrangements and of workplace flexibilities which would enable employees to balance their work and their family lives. To elaborate on an answer to a question by Ms Spence—the budget does provide \$75,000 for a work and family advice service for employers and employees, particularly in small and medium-sized businesses. Even though it is a small start, nevertheless it is a start, and we are very keen to build upon that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is not quite time for Opposition members to ask questions, but I will declare expired the time for Government questions and call on the Opposition.

**Mr BRADY:** I address a question relating to workers' compensation to Ms Pashen as the acting general manager. I note that page 6 of the Program Statement says that there was an unfunded liability at the commencement of the 1995-96 financial year of \$114.25m. But the Program Statement does not tell

us what the unfunded liability was at the end of the financial year. In other words, we have been given the 1994-95 figure. Would you please tell us what the 1995-96 figure was, that is, as at 30 June 1996, before the unfunded liability—whatever it is—comes into play? In other words, if it is \$1 billion, what cash and financial assets are available for liabilities before the unfunded liability applies?

**Ms PASHEN:** Certainly. I am happy to answer that. We have just been looking at the final accounts for 30 June 1996. Into those final accounts this year, one of the most important figures has been an increase in provisions for outstanding claims liabilities of \$406m. The unfunded liability that will exist with that figure being added into the accounts is predicted to be \$312.5m. The important thing about that figure, of course, is to notice that that is based on a central estimate of the outstanding claims position. It is important always that we can choose what is an appropriate figure to put into our accounts. We take some advice from our actuaries in that regard. Certainly this year a central estimate plus a 10 per cent prudential margin to allow us to get to a position of being 70 per cent certain that the amount of funds is going to be adequate to cover our outstanding liabilities brings us to the position of \$312.5m.

I guess I should also make comment on that point, because it is sometimes a difficult issue to address. In the actuaries' report this year, they have made a comment that to take a 70 per cent probability figure is at the lower end of what the insurance market could consider to be an appropriate decision. They have recommended that, in the future—if the uncertainty about common law claims continues to exist—we should look at increasing the probability margin to 75 to 80 per cent. If we had done that this year, that would increase the unfunded liability in our accounts to well over \$400m. But by the choice we have taken, it is going to be \$312.5m.

Just to come onto the second part of your question—our total assets picture at 30 June 1996 indicates that we have assets worth \$1.25 billion. The total liabilities at 30 June show that we have total liabilities of \$1.56 billion. So the result is \$312.5m.

**Mr BRADY:** From 1 July 1995, Government departments and agencies moved in relation to workers' compensation to a premium-based system under the control of the Workers Compensation Board. Will you report to the Committee on the performance of this initiative, which has now been in operation for one year?

**Mr SANTORO:** The honourable member may recall or may have read that, last year, this particular aspect of the Committee's consideration also drew my attention. Firstly, I will go to Government department claims performance for 1995-96. Both statutory claim numbers and costs for the year ending 30 June 1996 reduced over the previous year. A total of 9,191 new Government statutory claims were intimated, which is a reduction of 8.2 per cent. Statutory claim payments for Government departments totalled \$27.94m for 1995-96, compared

to \$33.2m for the previous year, representing a 15.9 per cent decrease. However, common law claim numbers to 30 June 1996, which the honourable member would appreciate is an area of considerable concern to the Government, increased significantly. There were 321 new common law claims intimated in 1995-96, which represents a 45.9 per cent increase over the 1994-95 year. The corresponding increase for the private sector was still what I think is a very high level of 37.1 per cent.

In terms of the premium rates for Government departments in 1996-97—as required under section 9(4) of the workers' compensation regulation of 1992, the State Actuary was asked to conduct an analysis of the claims performance for 1995-96 and make recommendations as to the premium rates to apply for 1996-97. Following discussions with Government departments and Treasury, it was decided to calculate the Government premiums based on the implementation of the inquiry's recommendations. Departments have been advised that, if proposed changes are not implemented within the specified time frames, 1997-98 rates will need to be adjusted upwards to compensate.

The rates to be applied to the Government departments for 1996-97—I can provide you with the detail if you wish, but the average premium rate increased from \$1.52 to \$1.60, which is a 5 per cent increase on 1995-96. The most significant change in premium rates for 1996-97 is the large increase in rates for Family Services, 60 per cent; Administrative Services, 28 per cent; reduced rates of about 5 per cent for the smaller departments; and the rates for other departments vary between an increase of 14 per cent for Primary Industries and—you will be pleased to note—a notable reduction of 10 per cent for the Department of Training and Industrial Relations, which indicates that this department has been very successful in implementing effective claims and risk-management systems. I take this opportunity to compliment Mr Hooper and all the executive officers here who are providing such good leadership and advice in relation to this matter.

**Mr PURCELL:** I would like to preface my remarks by saying that I have a fairly long question for the Minister. If he does not have the time to answer it, I would like those parts that he cannot answer to be put on notice. How many employees are there in Queensland as defined in the Workers' Compensation Act 1990 and the Industrial Relations Act 1990? How many employees were paid for in the Workers Compensation Scheme funded by employers in the last financial year? How many employees will be covered under the definition of PAYE employees as recommended by the Kennedy inquiry? Who in your department did the deal with the Queensland Master Builders to let 30,000 employees of Queensland MBA members not be covered by workers' compensation in 1995-96 in breach of your own Act?

**Mr SANTORO:** I do not want to waste the Committee's time by trying to give a long-winded answer. I think it is best, Pat, that we take that question on notice.

**Mr PURCELL:** Thank you.

**Mr SANTORO:** There is a little bit of political stuff in there, in particular about the MBA, but I will not address that. I will give you a written answer and some written information about those three specific questions.

**Mr PURCELL:** I appreciate that.

**Mr SANTORO:** It is just the sort of fellow I am, mate.

**Mr PURCELL:** I get two questions.

**Mr SANTORO:** You get good value from me.

**Mr PURCELL:** Do you see that you have a moral responsibility to cover employees adequately under the Workers' Compensation Act—a responsibility that would flow through to the families, children and grandchildren of people who are employees in this State?

**Mr SANTORO:** Pat, the answer to your answer, of course, is: yes. I suppose what you are leading to—and, after I have given that very short answer "Yes", I am happy to stop and get you to ask me what may be the supplementary question, "Well, then why are you proceeding headlong into implementing the Kennedy reform package?" Is that your next question, or would you like me to continue answering?

**Mr BRADY:** Yes.

**Mr SANTORO:** I will answer it then. I'll assume that that is what you are leading to.

**Ms SPENCE:** Where there's hope—

**Mr SANTORO:** There's always hope with me, Ms Spence.

The Government is faced with a very, very difficult problem in that, as the Acting Executive Director of the Workers' Compensation Division of my department has said, we have, at best estimate, a \$312m unfunded liability. Somewhere along the line Governments have to start acting responsibly in terms of coming up with solutions that will provide the best possible cover not only to the workers of Queensland who are in employment today but also to those workers of the future. Let me make it clear that we do not have a cash-flow problem with the worker's compensation system. We have lots of money come in, but we also have an incredible backlog of liabilities, particularly as a result of increased common law actions and successful common law actions that are building up.

Kennedy travelled throughout Australia. He travelled throughout Queensland. He indulged in the largest consultation process and the most comprehensive inquiry process in relation to workers' compensation in the entire history of this State. He has come up with a package which the Government, on consideration, believes is a balanced package. Obviously it is causing some heartburn for some individuals, and I've got to say that it has caused some considerable heartburn for the Government, because we went to the previous election, as you know, making a commitment that we wouldn't touch common law. I do not mind making that admission.

Of course, what has happened is that, when we came to Government, the advice was to have an

inquiry—to have a fair dinkum one—and find out what the true state of the fund was. We are faced with the choice—and it is a political decision that we have made, but it is also a decision that we have made based on a great amount of empirical, statistical and considered opinion research—that we need to go down the Kennedy road in terms of the reforms. Kennedy recommended, obviously, some revision to access to common law, and that has been debated, but he also recommended some very substantial increases in statutory lump sum benefits.

I think it is important that we reiterate those increases, because it is not the unbalanced package that honourable members opposite and some other members within the community make out that it is. For example, the maximum lump sum available under the table of injuries has increased from \$100,000 to \$130,000. The additional lump sum of \$100,000 previously available for workers who sustained a 50 per cent work-related impairment for spinal cord and brain injuries is now extended to all—and I do stress "all"—workers who have suffered injuries above 50 per cent. There is a new payment for gratuitous nursing care services provided to an injured worker by friends or family of up to \$150,000 in lieu of gratuitous care awards at common law. The connection between weekly benefits and lump sum will be broken if the Kennedy reform packages get through, meaning that lump sum entitlements will not be eroded by the payment of weekly benefits, as is the case now. The weekly benefits will no longer be subject to the financial cap of \$100,000.

To answer your question—the answer is "Yes, we are concerned", and, secondly, we also have the responsibility to have a workers' compensation system that will survive beyond this year and the next few years. I think you have heard all that before.

**Ms SPENCE:** I direct my question to Mr Thatcher. It is regarding the Industrial Commission. I noticed that the staff at the Industrial Commission has been reduced. I am looking at the figures on page 47 of the Ministerial Program Statements. How will you manage the staffing cutbacks in the Industrial Commission in 1996-97, particularly in light of the fact that your predictions on page 45 are that the workload of the Industrial Commission will increase in the next year?

**Mr THATCHER:** I suppose the first thing I should say is that the department and myself do not take too directly an involvement in the activities of the Industrial Commission and the support which goes to it. To a maximum extent, the commission is organised through the Chief Commissioner, Mr Hall. As far as I am aware, some of the initiatives that are coming into place are really not going to reduce the services to any extent. They are not going to reduce the services to the clients of the Industrial Relations Commission. Basically, there are administrative efficiencies that are going to occur within registry, which relate to things such as way the industrial relations certified agreements are going to be published and so on.

So at the moment, the total staff for the Industrial Registry will be 37 positions. There will be new legislation which will come along, but at this

stage it is unknown to what extent that will actually have an effect and impact directly upon the operations of the commission. I feel not inclined to answer the question in more detail without talking to the Chief Commissioner, after which I could respond to you in more detail.

**Mr BRADY:** I direct a question to Mr Sielaff. Page 21 of the Ministerial Program Statements says that the cost per Government funded student contact hour in TAFE in 1995 is \$9.37. How does that relate to the 1994 figure, expressed in 1990 dollar terms, of \$7.24 per student contact hour? That shows an increase of some 15 per cent. Between 1990 and 1994, costs per student contact hour decreased some 15 per cent. Has this trend continued or is it going in the opposite direction? Where do we stand in this matter in relation to the other States and Territories?

**Mr SIELAFF:** Mr Braddy, the costs per student contact hour have changed with reference to the 1994 figure mainly due to the rebasing of the statistics that the Minister referred to before. So the trend, I think, is more indicative now that you are seeing in this particular budget statement and in the Commission of Audit the \$9.37 figure. So the difference between the two figures is a rebasing of what, in fact, comprises a student contact hour.

The next issue that you raise in terms of trend and how we compare nationally—the data that has been produced by ANTA in recent times indicates that Queensland is, in fact, one of the more cost-effective deliverers of vocational education and training. I think it records us as being the second-most cost effective after Victoria. I am just corrected by Mr Carlon that we are, in fact, the third-most cost effective. The issue of trend is that the TAFE Queensland system is becoming more and more cost competitive and it is, in fact, becoming a more productive system. That has been acknowledged in the Commission of Audit document.

**Mr BRADY:** Thank you.

**Ms SPENCE:** Mr Sielaff, could I ask how much budgetary allocation has been allotted to the Tradeswomen On the Move Program this year, please?

**Mr SIELAFF:** Thank you for the question, but I think that that question really should be with Mr Carlon because that area of responsibility is now with Mr Carlon.

**Ms SPENCE:** Fine. Thank you. I will direct the question to Mr Carlon.

**Mr CARLON:** Yes. I am desperately trying to find it—I think I have it here—but there is no reduction in the amount of money at all.

**Ms SPENCE:** Could I ask you to put that on notice then—the exact budgetary figures, please?

**Mr CARLON:** The actual amount of money?

**Ms SPENCE:** The actual amount.

**Mr CARLON:** I have just been told what the figure is: it is \$150,000 of State funding and \$50,000 of Commonwealth funding—for \$200,000.

**Ms SPENCE:** Thank you very much.

**Mr SANTORO:** Do you want more information?

**Ms SPENCE:** \$200,000 is the figure?

**Mr SANTORO:** \$200,000 is the figure.

**Ms SPENCE:** That is fine, thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The last question by the Opposition.

**Mr BRADY:** Mr Sielaff, I understand that there are about 17 TAFE staff on Thursday Island but that they currently service fewer than a dozen students. Can you confirm that this is, in fact, correct? What measures have you put in place to ensure that the situation is corrected because it is difficult to believe that there are not extensive training needs in the Torres Strait.

**Mr SIELAFF:** Mr Braddy, I cannot confirm the numbers that you have mentioned but I can indicate to you that I am aware from advice that I have received from the Acting Director of the Far North Queensland Institute that a range of actions have been taken to ensure that there is a better level of participation through the Torres Strait campus. You may be aware that there has been a mobile training facility, which is operating out of the Torres Strait campus, which will substantially improve the capacity of the Torres Strait campus to service the islands. In terms of the actual number—the 17 that you mentioned—I would need to come back to you and just confirm what is the actual enrolment, if you do not mind.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I now declare that the non-Government's section is concluded for this part. We have got about a quarter of an hour to go. We will roughly split that down the middle in questioning. I now call upon the member for Redlands.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, you touched on the need to provide a balance between work and family lives for employees. What has the Government done in this budget to facilitate that initiative?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Hegarty. You obviously picked up on the fact that I wanted to still outline some more of the initiatives by the Government in this very important area of policy development. I think it is probably important to note that 59 per cent of all two-parent families with dependent children have both parents within the work force. The other thing, of course, is that with the ageing of the population, many workers are also assuming responsibility for elderly parents and relatives. In other words, the demographic—the social and the labour market trends—have significantly changed the nature of work and the traditional approaches to the overlap of work and family.

As I sought to indicate before time interrupted me, I think that Government has got a very real responsibility to help achieve within Queensland workplaces a balance between work and family responsibility. As I was saying to the honourable member for Mount Gravatt before, the budget does provide for \$75,000 for a work and family advice service for employers and employees. This will be particularly targeted to small and medium-sized

businesses. The advice, as I have indicated previously, will be provided in a variety of manners. I will not risk repetition by going through those various forms.

The service, however, will provide advice on the potential benefits of family-friendly work arrangements and I think will be well received in workplaces, particularly when it is able to provide a practical example of successful practices in workplaces. I think that, once the practicality is understood, they will be pretty well embraced, I think, across-the-board.

The initiative means that Queensland will be at the forefront on the issue with really the only two other jurisdictions that are going into this area, or pioneering, being Western Australia and the Commonwealth. I should place on the record here that Queensland is being looked at very closely particularly by the Commonwealth in terms of what progress we make.

An associated measure, which I think the Committee should be made aware of, of course, is that the Government has provided \$60,000 for the Queensland Working Women's Service. The Queensland Working Women's Service, as members would be interested to know, provides an information referral service for women on work-related issues such as pay and conditions, workplace bargaining, employment and training opportunities, child-care services and harassment and discrimination in the workplace.

**The CHAIRMAN:** On page 7 of the Ministerial Program Statements reference is made to the client service initiatives implemented by the Division of Workers Compensation in 1995-96. What specific initiatives are planned for client service improvements in the 1996-97 year?

**Mr SANTORO:** Thank you, Mr Lester. Again, I need to compliment the Division of Workers Compensation for some great work that has been done. They really are at the cutting edge in terms of client service initiatives. The board is continuing to develop improved interaction with clients through the restructuring of its service delivery to incorporate workplace injury management teams. These teams are arranged by employer groups, and I think that that is important, and they provide all the necessary workers' compensation services at one point of contact.

During 1996-97, it is planned that premium management staff will be integrated into the team with the current claims and rehabilitation management staff. Complete work units in the future will include claims and rehabilitation management staff, insurance contract staff, damages claims staff, account managers and also medical staff.

We are also in the business of decentralising as much as possible the administration of these initiatives. As a result of a demographic analysis of the client needs in south-east Queensland during 1995-96, the new district offices were opened at Palm Beach and Strathpine. In 1996-97, a review of the number and location of regional offices will be undertaken, which is expected to result in further

decentralisation of functions from the head office in the city. I think that this is good news for small business, in particular, because people do not always appreciate coming into the city to avail themselves of the services that the division is able to offer in a very efficient manner. As a Government, we are pleased to do whatever we can in terms of the devolution of services and functions into the suburbs and provincial and rural areas.

**The CHAIRMAN:** With the agreement of the Opposition, they can ask two questions and then we will conclude.

**Mr BRADY:** Minister, in relation to the Industrial Relations Commission, what is the current backlog of unfair dismissal applications and what resources have been provided to ensure that the backlog is quickly overcome?

**Mr SANTORO:** Mr Braddy, I do not believe that I have the number of outstanding unfair dismissal cases with me. I have taken a nod from the Registrar who tells me that they are not available. I undertake to make those available to you. In terms of the workload itself, I think it is fair to say, without in any way delving into the political arena, that the unfair dismissal laws will be simplified, and I think their simplification has considerable bipartisan support. I stress that prior to the last Federal election, even the former Prime Minister acknowledged the need for simplifying those laws.

The feedback that I get from the commissioners, without in any way wishing to impute any political motive to what they have told me, is that they genuinely believe that the handling of unfair dismissal claims under the laws that we are proposing will make it much easier for them to get through the existing backlog and future claims. The workload will be a more manageable one. I will undertake to provide you with the detail that you requested in your question.

**Mr BRADY:** Minister, given the abolition specifically of the designated programs for the long-term unemployed, do you acknowledge that clients in those programs are feeling abandoned and angry at your decision? Have you received such information, over the phone and/or by letter, from clients? What process are you suggesting you will undertake in relation to the substantial anger in the community?

**Mr SANTORO:** I wish to provide you with an honest answer to that question, as I always seek to do. I have received contact from one client since the Government announced the initiatives. Yesterday afternoon, that client sent me a fax from Lowood State School. To the best of my knowledge, that is the only correspondence that has come across my desk, and there was no outstanding correspondence as of approximately 9.45 p.m. last night in my office.

I have, however, received some considerable feedback from the staff affected by the policy shift that the Government has instituted in the Budget. As I have mentioned to the Committee in answer to previous questions, I spent a considerable amount of time talking to staff from my department over the

weekend. I admit that that was not the most pleasant of interchanges, and by that I only mean the nature of it and not the level of discussion between myself and the staff within my department. I will tell you what I told them, which is that we will do whatever we have to do to look after their individual needs within the department. I think that most of the staff have accepted that we are fair dinkum in doing that. I predict that the majority of them will, in fact, retain employment with the department or with the broader Public Service.

I also told the staff that I want their continuing feedback as to how this shift of Government policy, when taken in conjunction with what will be happening federally with the implementation of the new framework for labour market assistance, will affect the clients that they have been liaising with so well over a period, in some cases for years. I told them that just because a Government makes a decision in an area of policy such as labour market programs does not mean that the responsible Minister and the Government walk away from that decision and never look back on what it has impacted on.

I have only received one response via a facsimile message from an unidentified person from the Lowood State School. Undoubtedly, as the impact of the Government decision takes shape or becomes more widespread, I will receive more comment. At that stage I will refer them to the very substantial bucket of money that is available through ESRA, which, as you know, is the Federal mechanism through which tenders will be called to assist private providers and other providers which assist the clients whom you are obviously concerned about and about whom the Government is also concerned. That is the best answer that I can give. I have only received one piece of feedback, but undoubtedly I will be getting more.

**The CHAIRMAN:** There being no further questions, that concludes the examination of the Estimates for the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations. I thank the Minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance. The hearing will now adjourn until 2:30 p.m., when the Committee will examine the portfolio of the Minister for Education. I thank everybody.

Sitting suspended from 1 to 2.30 p.m.

**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION****IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. R. J. Quinn, Minister for Education  
 Mr F. Peach, Director-General  
 Mr F. Young, Deputy Director-General  
 (Corporate Services)  
 Ms R. Sullivan, Deputy Director-General  
 (Schooling)  
 Mr M. Keily, Director (Finance)  
 Mr J. McGowan, Director (Human Resources)  
 Mr L. McNamara, Director (Audit Operations)  
 Mr B. Rout, Director (Studies)  
 Mr R. Williams, Director (Facilities and Services)  
 Mr G. Duck, Acting Executive Officer (Office of  
 non-State schooling)

**The CHAIRMAN:** Ladies and gentlemen, the hearing of Estimates Committee C is now resumed. The next portfolio to be examined relates to the Minister for Education. I remind members of the Committee and the Minister that the time limit for questions is one minute, and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A single chime will sound a 15-second warning, and a double chime will sound at the end of these limits. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. A double chime will also sound two minutes after an extension of time has been given. The Sessional Orders require that at least half the time be allocated to non-Government members. The Committee has agreed that the first 20 minutes of questioning will go to non-Government members.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask witnesses to identify themselves before they answer a question. A resolution to grant leave to members other than Committee members to ask questions has been made by the Committee. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Department of Education to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

At this point, I advise everybody that we had quite a happy time this morning. I hope that this afternoon can be the same. It was pleasant and all courtesies were extended. It was great. Minister, we would be grateful if you would make a brief introductory statement.

**Mr QUINN:** The Department of Education and I welcome this opportunity to lay open the books for public examination, as it were. This year, the department plans to spend over \$3 billion on education in Queensland. The statements that you have in front of you, or those provided by the Treasurer, outline the program of expenditure. The expenditure this year takes account, of course, of growth in enrolments and also builds on a number of programs which were in place prior to the change of Government. There is also a range of new initiatives, such as the first tranche of non-contact time for

primary school teachers, improvements to the Remote Area Incentives Scheme, and a range of other initiatives which are outlined in the Ministerial Program Statements. I will not go through them in detail.

All in all, the department has tried to focus on outcomes rather than processes with the aim of delivering more resources into the schools and getting a higher standard of education for our children. Mr Chairman, as I said, the department and I welcome the opportunity to lay in front of the Committee the relevant details as required.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. At this point, I shall ask non-Government members to proceed with their questioning.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Minister, my first question is: what is the Education Department's share of the proposed \$500m savings in the Forward Estimates announced by the Treasurer? What areas are targeted for savings? What are the implications for staffing by program area? What savings were identified in the earlier round of efficiencies demanded by Treasury?

**Mr QUINN:** The savings made were in the order of \$53m. A breakdown would be along these lines: occupational stress management, \$600,000; School Uniform Allowance, \$29,330,000; NALSAS, \$4,048,000—

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Sorry? Could you tell me what that acronym stands for?

**Mr QUINN:** Good question. I suspect this is NALSAS, which is the money from the Commonwealth for Asian languages. For behaviour management/school discipline, \$3,134,000; supporting people with disabilities, \$14,800,000; Flying Start, \$5,064,000; Exporting Queensland campaign, \$15,000; Say No to Drugs, \$300,000; and cultural heritage renewal, \$529,000. The point I would make in providing these figures would be that the money hasn't disappeared out of the Education Department. You would realise that, with an increase of \$266m, the money has simply been redirected into other initiatives. It is not a cut; it is a reduction of funding within the budget itself.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What is the estimated effect on Education funding of Queensland's commitment made at the 1996 Premiers Conference to contribute \$114m to the Commonwealth for its deficit reduction program? What is the estimated effect on subsequent Education budgets of the three-year commitment of \$289m in contributions to the Commonwealth by Queensland?

**Mr QUINN:** I do not have those details. That is more of a question that should have been directed to the Treasurer. It is a global figure, as I understand it. What we have done is provide the Committee with the savings that we were asked to make. We cannot go on past that. I have no idea of what it is in global terms.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Will you take that on notice and get back to me with the information?

**Mr QUINN:** It is not within our area of responsibility to start with.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Okay. The Treasurer's Budget Speech states that the Education budget has increased by 8.9 per cent. That figure is confirmed by Budget Paper No. 2 at page 168, which states that there has been an 8.9 per cent increase to \$2.77 billion. Your post-Budget media release says that the Education budget has increased by 9.3 per cent to \$3.1 billion. Which figure is right and which figure is wrong?

**Mr QUINN:** They are both right, and I will explain why. The 8.9 per cent increase relates to the Consolidated Fund. Once you put the Trust and Special Funds in with the Consolidated Fund and you compare apples with apples, the increase is 9.3 per cent. This department has a budget of over \$3.1 billion, when you put in the Trust and Special Funds. And that is why, as I said in the press release, the total Education spending in this financial year over the previous budget will be in the order of 9.3 per cent.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have a couple of questions about ministerial staff. Is it a fact that the senior staff in Ministers' offices were all placed at SES 1 level after the Borbidge Government came to office? Is your senior ministerial policy adviser being paid at the SES 4 level and, if so, who gave her that promotion? Was the Premier consulted, and are any other senior ministerial policy advisers in the Government paid at that level?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, can I take that on notice? I do not have the details. The answer to the first part of the question about whether they were all placed on SES 1 is: no. I understand the answer to that is: no. I am not too sure about the next two. I will take those on notice.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have some further questions in relation to staff. I refer again to your senior ministerial policy adviser. In the Estimates Committee A hearing the other day, we were advised by the Treasurer that there are two ministerial staffers who are provided with accommodation by the Government in Brisbane. I ask: is your senior ministerial policy adviser the person other than Mrs Sheldon's driver who has been paid to stay in places such as Quay West and Novotel in Brisbane? Could you provide me with details of the costs to the Government of providing accommodation for your senior ministerial policy adviser?

**Mr QUINN:** I can confirm that she has in fact been staying occasionally in Brisbane on my behalf performing duties which I have been unable to perform. That has been mainly because of my own personal circumstances on several occasions. I can provide the details as you request.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I assume that appropriate members of your staff have access to an Ampol petrol card for Government vehicles. Have any members of your staff ever had inquiries from the Ministerial Services Branch in relation to improper use of such cards?

**Mr QUINN:** Not that I know of.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** My next question is in relation to the Ministerial Program Statements. I would like, if I could, to direct a question to Frank

Young. The Ministerial Program Statements identify that 900 fewer cleaners will be employed in 1996-97, but there is no mention of an allocation for voluntary early retirements or redundancies in the budget. I ask: on what basis is the figure of 900 determined, and what provision has been made in the budget for voluntary early retirements?

**Mr YOUNG:** The agreement between the Premier and the Miscellaneous Workers Union accepted that there could be voluntary early retirements so that the cleaners in our schools could meet the targets in the enterprise bargaining agreement. The expected number of VERs would be 900 to enable the cleaners to meet the EBA targets. The money for those is within the budget. As those cleaners leave, the savings that would accrue from that would offset the amount of money to be paid for the VERs for the 1996-97 year.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So what you are saying is that the voluntary early retirements will actually be funded by the fact that you are not paying those 900 salaries.

**Mr YOUNG:** In the first year, there will be an offsetting of the savings in the cleaning to pay for the VERs. In future years, the full savings will then flow on into the department.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** On a related matter, and again to you, Frank, if I might—what savings do you anticipate making in the school cleaning budget between now and the end of 1996?

**Mr YOUNG:** Between now and the end of 1996? I don't think the savings would be very great. I couldn't give you an exact figure. We have letters out with the cleaners at the present time asking for expressions of interest in VERs. We won't get that information back for a couple of weeks. Then we have to sit down and look at the requirements of the schools where the people are who have asked for the VERs. We have a process established with the union for the order of priority of offering those VERs. We also then have to look at the transfer of cleaners across schools so that schools still have the appropriate number of cleaners to deliver the enterprise bargaining agreement. We anticipate that all of that will take us probably until about mid-November before we can actually offer the VER package to those cleaners who will take it. I guess the savings would be from about the end of November by the time people take their package through to the end of the year. So the savings in 1996 will not be very great at all.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Not very great.

**Mr YOUNG:** No.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** A question to the Minister. I refer to media reports on 5 September by the Premier and yourself where the Premier states that cleaners would have until the end of the year to achieve \$30m in savings. Given Mr Young's answer to the previous question, did you and the Premier deliberately ignore the advice of your department? Given that the annual budget for school cleaning is \$113m, how can the cleaners be expected to save \$3m per week in the remaining 10 weeks of the



school year? What advice did you and the Premier use to arrive at the \$30m figure?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, we are here to examine the Estimates of the Department of Education, not discuss press releases. I seek your ruling on this.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Well, Mr Chairman, I think it relates to the Forward Estimates for the Department of Education. The Premier and the Minister have clearly gone on record and said that they expect the cleaners to achieve \$30m in savings by the end of the year. I have asked a question of one of the senior departmental officers, who tells me there won't be any savings practically, and I am just asking what the true situation is—where the Minister got his advice from.

**Mr QUINN:** Perhaps I could clear up the matter. The savings refer to a full year. You are talking about a partial year from now until the end of the school year, the end of December. Mr Young has explained how the savings would be offset by the VERs. When the full savings are made across either a full calendar year or a full financial year, they are in the order of \$30m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I note the Minister's answer, but I should just point out to the Minister that the statement is that—

"Premier Rob Borbidge said under the agreement reached after talks with union leaders yesterday the State's 6,000 school cleaners would be given until the end of the year to achieve \$30m in savings."

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, we are not here to discuss someone else's press releases, surely.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** It was your press release. I have a further question, Mr Chairman, if the Minister is finished with that one. What contingencies do you have in the budget if you fail to achieve either the projected savings or the projected number of voluntary early retirements from school cleaners?

**Mr YOUNG:** Steve, the issue there will be that, in terms of the agreement, the amount of money that we will be able to save should be at the \$30m mark, because the union has agreed that they will meet the target of the enterprise bargaining agreement, and the target of the enterprise bargaining agreement would see savings in the year of \$30m. They have given that agreement. They are working with their members in terms of ones who will put in an expression of interest for voluntary early retirements. If there aren't sufficient, then the union will need to enter into negotiations, I suggest, in terms of how we are going to meet that target. But the agreement from the union was that the target would be met.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** But you do not have any contingencies in the event that that target is not met within the next financial year?

**Mr YOUNG:** In this financial year, as I said before, it will be an offsetting of the VERs against the savings. If there are less VERs, there will be less savings, and so the amounts will still stay proportionally the same. The effect would be in the longer term, where the savings that we were wishing

to achieve would not flow from the reduced number of VERs. But in that case, the agreement says that if the EBA is not met by the end of December, a trial of contract cleaning can take place and that that will be judged and that the outcome of that judgment will then determine the type of cleaning that will take place in the schools.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** But having a trial is not going to save you any money if you have not reached your targets.

**Mr YOUNG:** Well, if it is more efficient through the contract, then the contract will show that the savings can be achieved, and then the issue is, in terms of the agreement, that there will be a judgment whether we continue with the employment of cleaners or whether the contract system is then the favoured way to clean, and that judgment will be made by the union with ourselves.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Thanks, Frank. A further question to the Minister. Other than school cleaners, what other services or sections of your department have been identified for potential outsourcing in the next financial year, either to generate revenue or reduce costs?

**Mr QUINN:** None.

**Ms SPENCE:** Given your commitments prior to the last election to double the number of guidance officers and counsellors from 396 to 792 and given the importance of behaviour management to parents and teachers, how do you reconcile this year's budget allocation for behaviour management of \$6.9m in comparison to the \$11.4m provided in last year's budget? Can you tell us how you plan to provide the extra guidance officers that were part of your pre-election promise?

**Mr QUINN:** I make the point again, Mr Chairman, that we are here to discuss the Estimates of the Department of Education for the 1996-97 financial year, not election promises or anything else that has occurred outside of these particular Estimates which we are examining. In relation to the behaviour management that you did mention—last financial year, the department had a budget of \$2.5m for behaviour management initiatives. In this financial year, 1996-97, that will jump to \$6.8m, and a range of additional resources will flow as a result of that funding. When we actually put forward the behaviour management package and spoke to principals and teachers about what the staffing initiative should contain, the word that came back to us was that, even though we were saying we thought they should be guidance officers, the principals were saying, "Give us a mixture of staff", because there are a range of problems out there in the schools which cannot all be addressed by guidance officers, and therefore they did prefer a mix of staff.

What we have done is ask the regions to determine what sort of staff they would like. They have come back and said to us, "Well, we would like some guidance officers, some family workers/social workers, some other types of people—youth workers with various skills who can help with behaviour management problems in schools." That is why the initiative has moved away from guidance

officers only to a broad mix of staff, so they can best meet the needs of schools that have these particular problems.

**Ms SPENCE:** My next question is also to the Minister. How many more guidance officers do you intend to employ in the next year?

**Mr QUINN:** I understand that there will be 45 new ones coming out from university studies into the service, and 20 will be eligible to apply for a suitability rating at the end of 1996. But the initiative itself contains some 18 guidance officers, some 46 behaviour management or support teachers, and other types of teachers or support workers total 16. So all in all, there are roughly about 70 full-time equivalent teacher numbers in that particular initiative.

**Ms SPENCE:** I just want to clarify that. So there are 65 new guidance officers coming on board next year; is that correct?

**Mr QUINN:** No, 18 will come as part of that package, but there will be 25 coming out of the course, if you like, who will apply for an eligibility or suitability rating. You can only train a certain number.

**Ms SPENCE:** So you can confirm at this stage that there will only be 18 additional guidance officers in the Education Department in the next year?

**Mr QUINN:** Yes.

**Ms SPENCE:** How will they be dispersed?

**Mr QUINN:** Across the regions, and I can give you a breakdown, region by region, if you like?

**Ms SPENCE:** Yes, please.

**Mr QUINN:** Capricornia, zero; Darling Downs, 2; Met East, zero; Met West, 2; Northern, 1; Peninsula, 1.3; Sunshine Coast, 3; South Western, 1; South Coast, 2.8; Wide Bay, 3; North Western, 2.

**Ms SPENCE:** Do you intend retaining the Year 2 Net and the Year 6 Test in schools?

**Mr QUINN:** The Year 2 Net and the Year 6 testing regime, yes.

**Ms SPENCE:** Just moving on to a different subject, that of preschools—I notice in the MPS that the number of State preschool students fell by over 300,000 last year. Do you predict that the enrolment figures will increase next year?

**Mr QUINN:** Sorry, the number of students fell by over 300,000 in the preschools?

**Ms SPENCE:** Page 10.

**Mr QUINN:** I do not think there are that many enrolled in total.

**Ms SPENCE:** Sorry, I have probably got the wrong figure there. Sorry, it was only by 300. Do you predict an increase next year?

**Mr QUINN:** Yes, preschool enrolments this year, at the beginning of 1997, are expected to increase by about 800, I am informed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Any other questions?

**Mr QUINN:** Can we just correct something on the guidance officers? I understand there are some more. Just to clarify the question Judy asked, there were 18, as I indicated, under the behaviour

management and 20 would be employed, as I said before, coming out of the training—out of the universities—making a total of 38 altogether.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I refer to the—I am not sure what name it goes by now—Leading Schools Project or School Based Management Devolution, which involves substantial devolution of administration to schools and the abolition of the Education Department regional offices and the reduction in the school support centres from 45 to around 35. How many staff in regional offices in school support centres are anticipated to lose their jobs? How many jobs will go in the downsizing of head office? Which head office or regional office functions will be outsourced, and how much will be spent on developing and promoting the new corporate image and logo?

**Mr QUINN:** The short answer to how many jobs will go is that no decisions have been made on this particular issue, as I made a number of public statements about it before. We are simply continuing the path of the department that it has followed for the past couple of years in devolving decision making to schools. As this occurs naturally over the next 12, 18 months, it starts to bring into focus the roles and responsibilities of head office and regional offices and how we can best use school support centres. Those sorts of issues are out in the public domain at the moment and I understand the director-general has been around talking to various regional offices about this process. I indicate again that no firm decision has been made.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Non-Government members, your time has expired for the moment. Minister, the retention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students is virtually static. Page 40 of the MPS shows that spending on Aboriginal and Islander education is rising, in fact doubling from year to year. Where is this money going and why do the results not show that this spending is well directed?

**Mr YOUNG:** The additional funds that are going into Aboriginal education are going into the area of giving permanency to a class of employees, notably the community education counsellors who were temporary people within our department for some 20 plus years. These people are people who are employed within secondary schools to provide guidance and assistance to secondary students and to teachers and to the parents of the students in an attempt to encourage those students to stay on in schools. Over many years, that project has been very successful and in fact the retention rate in Queensland is the best in Australia, and the best by far. So that additional funding is to give permanency to those people who have provided a very valuable service to the department over those 20 years. Instead of being temporary, they are now permanent.

In addition, there have been a large number of Aboriginal teacher aides who were also in a temporary capacity and they have been performing a valuable role in working with students in primary schools. The Aboriginal teacher aides also have now gained permanency, so the funding that is there is to provide recognition to those two important categories of people within our system. In addition,

the department has a program called the Aboriginal and Islander Tertiary Aspirations Program, which provides support to Aboriginal students who are showing ability within secondary schools, and that has been extended into primary schools as well. So there are a number of efforts that are going on in terms of taking the retention rate, which you are correct in saying has plateaued for a number of years, to a higher level.

In addition, the department is increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers who are employed in the teaching work force, and we now have something in the order of approaching 200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers in the work force, with increasing numbers coming on, in fact. At the end of this year, we should gain about another 30 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers into the department. These issues, I guess, of increasing the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander teachers, of giving the status, the permanency, to the counsellors and the teacher aides, are efforts that are being made to enable that retention rate to improve.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, on page 3 of the MPS there is a list of major priorities for enhancement; however, there is no dollar amount shown. Could you provide financial details associated with those priorities?

**Mr QUINN:** On page 3, the list of priorities starts with numeracy and literacy, and we intend to spend \$5.43m on that particular initiative; students with disabilities, \$12.09m; behaviour management, \$6.88m; convergence of general and vocational education, which is just getting off the ground now as a result of the Cummings report and a few other initiatives, \$478,000; provision of airconditioning in schools north of the 20th latitude parallel, \$65m; phased introduction of the second hour of non-contact time, \$8.166m; Remote Area Incentive Scheme, an additional \$2.3m; the Global Classroom Project, \$2m; school technology infrastructure, \$7.175m, and I understand that takes in SIMS as well; gifted and talented students, \$467,000; resources for primary and special schools—this is a boost to their grants, I understand—\$3.43m; drug education, \$390,000; resources for detention centres, since we have assumed that from the Department of Justice, I think, \$510,000; assistance to non-State schools, \$3m; an additional \$1m for students with disabilities; airconditioning has a \$2m budget; curriculum reform is \$1m; additional capital works, \$3.113m; capital works for the tertiary sector, \$16.688m; and the establishment of the Queensland School Curriculum Council, \$11,546,000.

**Mr HEGARTY:** You have already provided a further \$400,000 for Life Education. Why is this money provided for a program that has been discredited by both the Department of Education and the Department of Health? Secondly, is this money ongoing? Thirdly, how much has been allocated for next year and the year after?

**Mr QUINN:** This initiative was one that was in the coalition's election campaign in 1995 and consequently also in Mundingburra. It is one that we

had a commitment to. We have provided the money here on the basis that it is——

**Mr BREDHAUER:** You are not referring to election promises, are you?

**Mr QUINN:** Only when it is convenient. It is one that, as I said, we had a commitment to. The funding is provided to half fund, if you like, the salaries of teachers who work within that particular program. It is an ongoing program. We have given a commitment for three years. It starts at \$390,000. At the end of that particular time, we will reassess whether or not we have value for money and what the outcomes are with respect to how it has improved drug education and drug awareness in schools. At that time, we will make a determination whether or not to continue with the funding.

**Mr HEGARTY:** You mentioned a moment ago about the \$65m for airconditioning over three to four years for schools north of the twentieth degree. Why was the twentieth degree chosen? Secondly, is there any proposal to aircondition schools in other parts of the State that suffer that same extreme of temperature?

**Mr QUINN:** When we looked at the need for airconditioning in schools in Queensland, it was realised that we could not afford that particular project in terms of all of Queensland. Therefore, we started to look at where the money could be best spent and where the conditions were the most extreme. North Queensland quite obviously was the choice. At that stage a line had to be drawn on the map somewhere in order to start that particular project. It seemed that the twentieth parallel was an affordable section of the State in which we could address the issue first. The \$65m is over a three-year period. The exact conditions are being worked out in respect of existing schools. We have already committed money in this Budget and subsequent Budgets to airconditioning new schools and airconditioning new buildings in existing schools. The final phase is how P & Cs access the funding for the retrospective fitting, if you like, in existing buildings. So that will continue to be sorted out in the next month or so with a view to starting it as soon as possible.

We are conducting a pilot program of some of the suggestions that schools which have set aside money have indicated that they would like—not what we would call refrigerated airconditioning, but to explore other options which may alleviate the situation in a much cheaper manner. We are currently conducting a field trial with 35 schools, and a further six schools are under consideration to go into that trial as well. We hope that the outcome will be a range of measures which we can offer to schools on a subsidy basis that they will be able to access to improve the cooling prospects within schools in north Queensland. If money becomes available later, we will look at moving the line further south to include other schools, or perhaps march a line in from western Queensland towards the coast to try to help those schools as well. But at the end of the day, the amount of money is the determining factor on how far we can go.

**Mr HEGARTY:** I understand that the method of funding is on a \$2 for \$1 basis with the community. Given that some of those communities will have difficulty in finding that funding, particularly in north Queensland, what are you going to do to assist those communities?

**Mr QUINN:** We have said that we would provide the funding on a two-for-one basis. As I indicated previously, some schools have already put aside a sum of money. They are keen to look at options under that scenario. We also said that we would be helping smaller schools, because we realise that the cost of airconditioning may be disproportionate to their ability to raise funds. We will take that on board as well. We have not yet finalised the exact details of how the subsidy scheme may work. We might include some mechanism to assist schools which have a lesser capability of raising funds. But until we address that issue, I cannot give you any definite indication, because this aspect of the initiative has not yet been finalised.

**Mr TANTI:** On page 30 of the MPS there is a mention of guidance officers. How many guidance staff are employed by the department? What did guidance officers and counsellors achieve in 1995-96? Has any money been set aside for employing more?

**Mr QUINN:** Currently there are 307 guidance officers in our regions providing assistance in regional initiatives. There are 349 positions across the State altogether. The budget this year for guidance officers will be \$17.625m. That is roughly the same as last financial year. As I said, we are providing additional guidance officers in behaviour management initiatives. Last year, there was a full range of guidance officer activities provided to schools. They provided tertiary counselling support to secondary students during the Christmas vacation period—I would think in career options and things of that nature. We are currently updating the tests used by guidance officers and developing training packages for guidance officers. That will be ongoing in 1996-97. As I said, there is no reduction in the number of guidance officers. Those initiatives which did occur in 1995-96 will continue. Basically, in terms of guidance and counselling services by guidance officers, which is a distinct program from the behaviour management initiative—that remains as it was last financial year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Page 30 of the MPS shows that an extra 95 teachers will be employed in special education. Does this mean that more children will be sent to special schools?

**Mr QUINN:** We are not intending to open any new special schools at the beginning of 1997. There will be some enrolment growth with children with special needs. That may occur in special schools, in mainstream classrooms or in special education units attached to mainstream schools. The additional teachers will be used wherever the enrolment growth occurs. I would think that, given the policy of the most appropriate placement of students, most of that enrolment growth will probably be in mainstream schools or special education units.

In 1996-97, the students with disabilities initiative provides for an additional 69 teachers, 22 therapists, four nurses and 226 teacher aide hours. As I mentioned in our opening remarks, that is one of the areas where we are keen to see that students receive an increased level of support, because not only is it fair to those students who have disabilities but it is equally fair to those students in the mainstream classes that those students who have disabilities receive the appropriate level of support so that their impact in classrooms is not exaggerated. You would be aware that there has been an ongoing debate within the public about the most appropriate means of placing those students. It is no secret that there have been several court actions or legal actions, if you like, against the department to try to determine what the most appropriate placement is. Until those issues are resolved, what we are doing is trying to alleviate some of the impacts upon ordinary classroom teachers and students, but at the same time ensure that the most appropriate placement is forthcoming.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Page 75 of Budget Paper No. 2 refers to \$34m to support continued implementation of curriculum reforms to enhance the literacy and numeracy skills of students. How much of this is for the State system? How much is for the non-State system? How much will be spent through the Queensland School Curriculum Council?

**Mr QUINN:** For this financial year, 1996-97, in the State school system, the numeracy and literacy initiatives will cost \$36.933m. In terms of teachers, it will mean 511 teachers. In terms of the reforms flowing to the non-Government sector, last year the budget was for \$4.05m. That will be a jump to a neat \$5m this year to assist non-Government schools.

**Mr HEGARTY:** What about the Curriculum Council.

**Mr QUINN:** The Curriculum Council—its budget this year will have a carryover of \$7m from the previous year. That was unspent. Its budget, I think from memory, is almost \$4m. The total budget will be \$11.546m and I think \$7m is a carryover from the previous year of initiatives that were started but have not yet reached fruition.

**Mr HEGARTY:** On page 37 of the MPS reference is made to the Year 2 Net and the Year 6 Test. The department proposes a rewrite of Year 2 Net guidelines and to develop Year 6 Test Intervention Guidelines. Shouldn't that task be done by the QCC? Secondly, who was given funds to do that work originally? Thirdly, when those are rewritten, will they be made available to the non-State sector?

**Mr PEACH:** The Intervention Guidelines are being developed for the department by the Department of Education Studies Directorate this time. We would intend, if appropriate, to be able to share those with the non-Government sector if they wish to have access to them under the normal sorts of arrangements that we use.

The other possibility would have been for QSCO to develop the Intervention Guidelines, but at this stage the decision is that QSCO develops the

actual Year 2 Net and is responsible for the Year 6 Test, but because of the wide range of different circumstances across Queensland, it would be easier for the department to develop Intervention Guidelines so that we can take account of those varying differences across the State. Clearly, different strategies will be needed for the department in Thursday Island, say, from Brisbane. It may well be that the Catholic system would want to do some things differently as well, so they may well add on to what happens themselves also.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for Government members has expired for the moment. I now call upon Mr Bredhauer.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** My next question is to Frank Peach. I refer to the question on notice about consultants employed by your department. Can you give an assurance to the Committee that the guidelines set out in the Queensland Government State Purchasing Policy and the Queensland Department of Education Policy Information Statement No. 169 have been adhered to in each case?

**Mr PEACH:** To the best of my knowledge, that is absolutely correct, Mr Bredhauer.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** My question is to the Minister. I refer again to the question on notice regarding consultants employed by the department. I ask: which of the consultancies refers to the review undertaken by Kevin Donnelly? What budget have you allocated for the implementation of the recommendations of the Donnelly review?

**Mr QUINN:** The answer to the first part, Steve, is the Collins Hill Group. It is known as the Donnelly report. The report itself was a snapshot of the Department of Education—where it is at the present time, what its structures are, how it spends its money, where it could go in the future. That report has been considered by Cabinet. It is a matter for Cabinet to determine when it wishes to implement the recommendations in the report.

Basically, in broad terms, you could probably say that the report says that the department is at a point in its history where it needs to make up its mind in which direction it wants to go. It is noted that school-based management is an issue in other States of Australia and overseas; it is a worldwide trend. It simply says that the department ought to look at refocusing its activities in certain ways to make sure that, if we go down the school-based management path, there can be sufficient resources provided to allow schools to implement school-based management in a reasonable fashion.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So is there any budget allocation for the implementation of the recommendations?

**Mr QUINN:** No.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I will direct the next question to Frank Peach. In relation to the consultancy undertaken by Kevin Donnelly, were tenders called and at least three quotations evaluated? If not, why not?

**Mr PEACH:** Under the processes that are required for the amount of money involved, it was possible to seek expressions of interest from a number of different consultancies. That was done according to the guidelines. I can't tell you the exact number, but from recollection five or six expressions of interest were sought. They were evaluated and a decision was made in the normal, proper way.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Back to the Minister—I must admit to having some confusion in this area. Your media statement "Record teachers and capital works Budget" claims \$25.6m has been set aside to implement the SIMS program in addition to \$6.7m for hardware. Your media statement "State schools launched into twenty-first century" claims \$34m for technology, including \$24.7m for SIMS. Education budget briefs claim \$22.2m has been allocated for SIMS. Budget Paper No. 2, page 75, says that \$31.4m has been allocated for technology. If you go through Budget Paper No. 3 and add up the technology allocations around the regions, it comes to \$37.7m. I admit to being a bit confused as to just how much you are spending. I am wondering if anyone knows what is happening with SIMS.

**Mr QUINN:** I am a bit confused, too. I'll see if we can find out.

**Mr YOUNG:** Steve, I am not too sure of all the figures you quoted, but the figures that I have here would be that SIMS would be \$22.207m, that there is a budget of \$17.4m which is for the continued supply of computers in the Year 6/Year 7 Project, plus an additional \$7.2m for computer infrastructure, plus \$2m for the commencement of a global classroom project. They would be the three amounts that you are referring to. If we put them into combination—what were you looking for?

**Mr QUINN:** I think what has happened is that we have batched them in different ways for different purposes and used a variety of language to indicate in the press release and in the Budget documents the different emphases in the program. I would take the figures that Frank has given as the gospel figures in raw terms.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So we ignore the figures in your media releases and in the Budget papers; is that right?

**Mr QUINN:** As I said, what has happened is that we have batched them in different ways to put a different emphasis on them. In hindsight it might have been better just to use one set of figures as "across program technology support initiatives", if you like, and use a global figure. But in different areas we have broken the figures up and used them in different ways. That is where it has occurred.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I understand that. It is just that the language is quite specific—"The Statewide network for information and management, known as SIMS, \$22.2m." "A further \$25.6m has been set aside to implement the Schools Information Management System, which will link all Queensland schools in addition to \$6.7m." Over here it talks about a figure of \$34m. "Schools launched into the twenty-first century . . . \$24.7m allocated for the implementation of the Schools Information Management System."

**Mr QUINN:** I said that it is the way the different components have been batched together in different circumstances.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So we take your word for it, Frank?

**Mr YOUNG:** I think, Steve, as the Minister said, some of it comes within the program—the Management Information Services subprogram—and some comes within a Studies program. I guess that is where some of the confusion may be, and also in putting together sometimes things which are school based and some that are in different categories.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Thank you. I have a question to the Minister. Will you give an undertaking that SIMS will be secure against any improper or criminal use, especially guaranteeing the privacy of custody, medical and other personal information?

**Mr QUINN:** I think we can give that guarantee as far as we can. I understand we are letting it out to contract and that contract yet has not been fulfilled. I think that is one of the requirements—that it be a secure system. Now, I cannot give a 100 per cent guarantee that something is not going to happen. As sure as night follows day, there is going to be an accident or something will happen further down the track, but as far as humanly possible, the department is conscious of security of data in its information systems and that is one—as I understand it—of the components of the contract.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** In 1995-96, the previous Government allocated \$11.1m for its Computers in Schools Program and was attempting to achieve a target ratio of one computer for every 10 upper primary and secondary students. In this budget this year, you have allocated \$7.2m to the Computers in Schools budget, which is actually a cut of 35 per cent. Given that it would appear impossible to achieve the 1 in 10 target, could you please advise what is your Government's new target?

**Mrs Sullivan:** I believe that there is \$3.73m there to finalise the Year 6 and Year 7 program.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Where did you get that from, Robin? Is that in the Program Statements?

**Mrs Sullivan:** No. That program is almost complete. We only need a small amount of money to complete that and, in fact, the rest is enhancements. So the total figure that I have got here is \$11.875m for computers in schools in the 1996-97 budget. What we are going to do with that is to actually upgrade and replace some older computers in secondary schools to implement the Computer in Schools initiative, which you referred to earlier, to commence some work on connecting schools to the departmental network and to increase the number of systems technicians to support school computer networks. So that particular funding that you referred to earlier actually provided funds for 461 schools for the Years 6-7 project. So that initiative is virtually complete. There was just a small amount of money to finish it off. The rest is enhancements or new initiatives.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** On 27 June last year, a pre-election policy statement from the Opposition—the

then Opposition—promised a budget of \$25m to \$30m over three years for the Global Classroom Project. I notice that this year's allocation in the budget is only \$2m. What are your prospects of honouring your election promise in providing this important basic tool for modern education?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, the budget for 1996-97 is \$2m. I am not speculating on what may or may not happen in the future.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Given your concern regarding inappropriate material on the Internet expressed on 18 May 1995 in the *Hinterland Sun*, in which you said, "We have to be sure students cannot access unsuitable material", can you guarantee that the \$2m allocation to the Global Classroom Project will provide adequate resources to ensure useable access to the web and the Internet as well as high-quality insurance against inappropriate material being accessed by students?

**Mr QUINN:** You would be aware, Mr Bredhauer, that the Commonwealth, in conjunction with all the States undertook a project called EDNA through MYCEETA, which was designed to provide that sort of facility to all schools throughout Australia. At the last MYCEETA meeting, the Commonwealth, which provides a certain amount of funding for it, undertook to conduct a review of it. That is where it lies at the moment. The general notion was that EDNA would be a service provided to all schools throughout Australia and that that would provide a secure network which one on-line service provider would be, if you like, an editor of the Internet material and, in effect, firewalling schools from that unsuitable material. That currently lies with the Commonwealth, as I said, because it is reviewing the project.

Part of the problem has been that EDNA, whilst it was a good idea many years ago, has been overtaken by the technology itself in the explosion of the web and the proliferation of private providers on the web itself. Consequently, the debate now resides as to whether or not private providers themselves can give the schools that sort of service which EDNA was going to provide many years ago. So it is a bit in limbo at the present time.

**Ms SPENCE:** Minister, can you tell me the budgetary allocation this year for the Instrumental Music Program?

**Mr QUINN:** I do know we have increased it by \$1m, because the Commonwealth Bank, which provides banking services to schools, in fact, has an exclusive agency with the department and we put the \$1m agency fee back into providing musical instruments this year. I think it bought something like an extra 700 musical instruments.

This year's budget in the program itself—and that is leaving aside the extra musical instruments which I have just touched on—the program itself this year will cost something in the order of \$14.225m and have a staffing equivalent of about 249 specialists. There will be in the order of 40,000 students involved in the program across 713 schools. We will be, as I said, providing almost another extra \$1m to provide the extra 700

instruments. I am informed that the increase in the program is in the order of \$2.7m.

**Ms SPENCE:** Very good. I am pleased to hear it. Given the election commitment to provide separate facilities and staff to cater for students with behaviour management problems, what capital works allocation has been made for the establishment of appropriate facilities in schools?

**Mr QUINN:** The budget provides additional money for what we call alternative programs. I think from memory there are 22 and we were going to take the alternative programs available in schools to 45 and with a commensurate number of extra teachers. The notion is that rather than go and construct expensive additional facilities, we would devolve the moneys to the regions. The regions in consultation with the schools would then determine how best they want to spend the money. We are setting some broad parameters such as that the alternative programs must have an educational focus, they must have broad community support and interagency support, parents must be involved and a few other conditions yet to be determined. By and large, the notion is that the schools will determine the alternative program—what constitutes the alternative program. It may, in fact, be resident in a disused building within the existing school; they may decide to attach it to a school support centre and they may, as already occurs, use buildings which are in the general community. I have seen some which reside in houses within general residential areas. I have seen another one which is in an unused, if you like, principal's residence and I have seen some others in separate wings of schools which have fallen in enrolment. So the issue of additional capital works is not a problem as far as I can determine because the schools themselves will determine where they want to site the alternative programs to their best advantages.

**Ms SPENCE:** I would like to go back to the whole issue of the extra staff that are going to be funded under the behavioural management money. We have determined that there are 30 extra guidance officers in that budget. You also mentioned before that there will be additional social workers, youth workers and other kinds of therapists. Can you provide me with numbers of people in those areas?

**Mr QUINN:** Yes, I can. Do you want these region by region or just in total?

**Ms SPENCE:** Would you be happy to table that for the Committee?

**Mr QUINN:** Yes. It gives a breakdown of region by region and type, if you like, of teacher.

**Ms SPENCE:** I am concerned that these additional guidance officers will be used for behavioural management. The biggest complaint that I hear in schools, particularly in primary schools, is that there are not enough guidance officers available to do the testing of students and that there is a great backlog in our primary schools. Will additional guidance officers be employed in this particular area?

**Mr QUINN:** I understand that to date over 7,000 students with disabilities have been

ascertained. I think that that is the vast bulk of students. The number still to be ascertained is relatively small compared to the number that has been done. Therefore, the issue of employing additional guidance officers in order to cater for students who have not yet been ascertained is one that we have under control.

**Ms SPENCE:** You would not want to come to MacGregor primary school and say that, Minister. They will shoot you!

**Mr QUINN:** You are asking whether we need to employ additional guidance officers to ascertain those students who have not yet been ascertained. All I am saying is that the vast bulk of students who need to be ascertained have, in fact, been ascertained.

**Ms SPENCE:** Will there be additional guidance officer support in primary schools in the State next year?

**Mr QUINN:** Providing guidance officer services as distinct from behavioural management services?

**Ms SPENCE:** Yes.

**Mr QUINN:** I mentioned before that there would be 20 extra officers coming out of university who will be going into schools. There are 18 officers within the behaviour management initiative and, as I told you, the total number of new guidance officers employed will be 38. Twenty officers will go into schools and 18 will go into the behavioural management initiative.

**Ms SPENCE:** You said before that there are 349 guidance officers in the State at the moment. This year, the budget for guidance officers is the same, the number will be the same and the 38 officers are under the behaviour management initiative. That is why I am concerned that they will be taken up with that and not mainstreamed into primary schools, for example.

**Mr PEACH:** The issue for us is not a budgetary one. If we thought we could get more guidance officers, then the issue of putting them into schools would be dealt with fairly easily. For a lengthy period, the problem with guidance officers has been getting trained guidance officers when, across Australia, there is a shortage of people with those sorts of skills. In particular, it is very difficult to get people to move outside of the metropolitan area or away from the east coast. Our biggest difficulty is, in fact, west of the Great Divide.

In recent years, we have advertised interstate to try to attract people from elsewhere. We have changed the training models so that people do not have to come to Brisbane or Townsville to be trained as guidance officers and we lifted the ceiling on the number we could train in any one year. That has resulted in a modest increase in the number of people prepared to undertake guidance training, but it has certainly given us more people who actually live in places west of the Great Divide and who are prepared to train as guidance officers. Over the next few years, we will certainly be impacting on the lack of service that we have been able to provide west of the Great Dividing Range.

Nevertheless, there is an overall shortage of guidance officers. As fast as we train them, other systems employ the people we train because we are the only system in the State which is training guidance officers and, of course, people retire. Therefore, if we train 40 officers in a year, that does not mean we are going to get 40 additional guidance officers after we take the people who resign away. Our increase each year is modest. If we could get more guidance officers, the budget issue is such that we would find the money to put them on. Our trouble is finding them and then providing the service in those places where there are difficulties.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So you probably will not be doubling the number over the next couple of years?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Order! The time for non-Government questioning has expired. I call upon the member for Mundingburra.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, literacy and numeracy feature in the MPS, in particular at page 4, as key initiatives for enhancement. In relation to this, testing of Year 2 students in Queensland has been carried out by the department using what is known as the Diagnostic Net. How effective has the Year 2 Diagnostic Net been in identifying the children who require additional support in this development?

**Mr QUINN:** The Year 2 Diagnostic Net involves a number of parts. I think it has been most successful in identifying students who are at risk early on. The next step after identification is ensuring that the resources that are needed to provide the remedial programs are in place. Funding for the intervention procedures which follow the identification of problems will be \$5.3m, which is an increase on the \$3.1m allocated last year. We are providing extra funds for the students identified in the Net.

Most teachers would say that the Net is very successful in helping them identify students and being able to report to parents on their students' developmental processes. It is time consuming, I admit, and I think most teachers would admit that it is time consuming. However, I think the value is there and we are determined to keep the Net going and to keep resourcing programs for those students who are identified within the Net itself.

**Mr TANTI:** Could you elaborate on the testing of Year 6 students? You have already answered a question on funding.

**Mr QUINN:** The Year 6 Test also confirms teacher judgments about students, much the same as the Net does, and it is valuable in that regard. Also, it enhances public confidence in the standards that are achieved in schools. I think most parents realise that, by the time students get to Year 6, they need to have confidence that they have skills in numeracy and literacy and are able to go onto high school. It does provide parents with a basis for comparisons with other students throughout the State and it gives details on their children's standard of numeracy and literacy. Really, these two programs give a certain degree of public confidence in the standards that are being attained in the school system.

This year, quality assurance officers are undertaking a process to evaluate how effective the intervention strategies have been in the Year 6 Test regime. It will be interesting to see the data that comes back from that. By and large, those two initiatives came out of the Wiltshire review and, I think, enjoy broad cross-party support. Governments of both persuasions realised the value of the two initiatives and are committed to funding them to keep them going. We realise the outcomes of the programs are very valuable for students and parents alike.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Page 30 of the MPS shows that there is a big difference in the cost of building special education units. Why does a special education unit built at Beaudesert cost more than double a unit built in any other area?

**Mr QUINN:** The unit at Beaudesert is really a specialist special education unit, if you like. It has a lot of additional equipment in it because of the children enrolled there. That is why when you look at the figures its cost of \$600,000 is disproportionate to some of the others. It is a purpose-built, specialist special education unit.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, page 75 of Budget Paper No. 2 refers to \$11.5m for the establishment of the Queensland Schools Curriculum Office. How much of this is new money and how much of it is money allocated by the previous Government?

**Mr QUINN:** As I indicated in one of my previous answers, there is a certain amount of carryover here from previous years. I remember I have mentioned the figure of \$7m. That sticks in the back of my mind. I will just confirm that now to make sure that it is correct. I am informed that \$7.1m is the exact carryover figure.

**Mr HEGARTY:** In relation to syllabuses, how many have been developed to date and what is the reason for any hold-up?

**Mr PEACH:** There are two syllabuses currently under development by QSCO and the council. The two syllabuses are health and physical education for Years 1 to 10, and science for Years 1 to 10. The present plan is for those syllabuses to be developed in 1996, to be trialled and piloted in 1997-98, and to be available for general implementation the following year. In 1997, the development on the next two syllabuses will get under way. Two years after that, the final two will get under way. The syllabuses have been a little slow in getting under way because of the difficulties associated with getting the staffing of the office under control. That has now been sorted out and it is anticipated that the syllabus development will be delivered on time according to the strategic plan of QCC.

**Mr TANTI:** On page 43 of the MPS there is mention of the Assessment of Performance Program. Does this program complement or duplicate the work and information gained from the Year 2 Net and the Year 6 Test?

**Mrs Sullivan:** Yes, the Assessment of Performance Program complements and does not duplicate the other two things you have mentioned—the Year 2 Net and the Year 6 Test. The



purpose of the Assessment of Performance Program, which actually started in 1990, is to provide system-level measures of student learning outcomes in key areas. In fact, the focus in the coming year is going to be on Year 7. So there will not be any duplication. As to the sorts of things we have been looking at—in 1995-96, we focused on science. In 1996-97, we are going to be looking at reading, viewing, writing and maths in Year 7. It is going to be interesting because we are going to look at the relative performance of girls and boys, non-English speaking background students and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. No doubt those are some issues in which people are interested. We are also going to compare the current Year 7 reading and writing performance with that of students in 1992. So we will have a historical aspect to it as well. We also out of this program prepare and distribute some teacher resource kits of assessment items, which teachers find particularly helpful.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Page 51 of the MPS shows that there is a significant cut in the salaries for the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority and the Queensland Schools Curriculum Office. How can these organisations be independent when they have suffered such a savage cut in funds?

**Mr KEILY:** The 1995-96 actual decrease in salaries relates to the delays in the establishment of QSCO. In relation to the 1996-97 budget, part of the salaries are shown in the line "Salaries, Wages and Related Payments". It is about \$3.2m. The balance for project staff is actually paid as a grant to that organisation—QSCO—and is reflected under the current "Grants and Subsidies" line, which is actually an increase from last year.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Page 5 of the MPS shows that the Education Services subprogram was allocated \$75m last year, yet almost \$95m was spent. Why was there a blow-out? Secondly, what went wrong? Why is the allocation so high this year?

**Mr KEILY:** There was not in fact a blow-out in funding in the Education Services subprogram in 1995-96. The majority of the increase relates to funds received from the Commonwealth for specific purpose programs, and those funds were received after the budget was finalised in May of 1995 and, of course, are not factored in, but the expenditure is shown.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Grants and subsidies are also way out by \$60m. Does the Minister have any explanation for that?

**Mr KEILY:** Sorry, which page are we on?

**Mr HEGARTY:** This follows on from page 5 of the MPS. The grants and subsidies, which I presume also come from the Commonwealth, were also way out by \$60m.

**Mr KEILY:** The increase in grants and subsidies relates to the implementation of the Back to School Uniform Allowance in 1995-96, the budget for which was not originally included. But, of course, the expenditure is included.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, there has been some detail mentioned on computers. Page 38 of the MPS

states that money has been spent on putting computers into schools. I wish to know how many schools have benefited from this spending in 1995-96? What additional support will be provided to help teachers with computer technology?

**Mr QUINN:** Four hundred and sixty-one schools will benefit from the Computers in Schools project. There will also be funding provided for repair, maintenance, upgrade and replacement of classroom computers. Professional development and support for teachers has not been forgotten. As this budget also indicates, there is money there for investigating using the Internet as an educational tool. That I think explains where the money has been spent.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Page 51 of the MPS under "Capital Outlays" shows that there will be almost a tenfold increase in the program. Note 4 states that some of this relates to an office fit-out. What is the actual cost of the fit-out? Has the Minister personally endorsed this show of opulence? What is the average cost per employee, and would it not be cheaper to give them each a unit at Dockside?

**Mr QUINN:** Whose side are you on, Vince? Mr Keily will answer that.

**Mr KEILY:** I believe that the fit-out costs in relation to the office accommodation at QSCO are in the order of \$700,000, and this is based on commercial fit-out rates and will be subject to negotiation. In fact, I believe it is currently subject to negotiation by QSCO itself.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Can you run that by me again?

**Mr KEILY:** It is \$700,000. Funds were also set aside for associated costs which would not be included in that contractual figure, such as furniture, computer and communications technology and other office equipment.

**Ms SPENCE:** I have a supplementary question in relation to QSCO. I would like to ask Mr Keily where the office will be located.

**Mr KEILY:** I believe they will be at the MLC Building.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Page 51 of the MPS shows that the Curriculum and Assessment Services Program was underspent by \$9m last year. Why did this happen? Secondly, can the Minister give an assurance that the full \$26m is actually needed this time?

**Mr QUINN:** Basically, the underexpenditure last year from the budget number of \$24m down to about \$15m is the \$7m that QSCO underspent which is carried forward into this year. That is basically the difference.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, it would appear to be rather easy for schools to gain access to the Internet. Indeed, page 38 of the MPS suggests that the department is going to join the Web. Is this an appropriate step to take, and can the Minister give an assurance that the Internet will not be used by students or teachers to access pornography or information on the manufacture of bombs or drugs?

**Mr QUINN:** I did not give an absolute guarantee last time. I am not going to give one this time, either—even to my own side!

**Mr HEGARTY:** We apologise for the explosive question!

**Mr QUINN:** It is widely recognised that the Internet provides a really tremendous opportunity for students to access data which is not normally available to them through normal means—through library services, whether it be in terms of normal print material or electronic data, whether it be hard disk or whatever. As I mentioned before, we were exploring the possibility with the Commonwealth of providing those sorts of services through EDNA. That is now under review. We will be looking at what the Commonwealth proposes fairly closely. I understand they should have the results of the review or it should at least be completed by the end of this year, hopefully, and we will know exactly where we travel after then. What we have done here is provide the money so that later on we can determine exactly where we need to go.

**The CHAIRMAN:** On page 34 of the MPS, there is an increase to capital outlays in the Distance Education Program from a mere \$103,000 in 1995-96 to \$1.959m in 1996-97. With very little change in staffing numbers, why has such a large increase been necessary?

**Mr KEILY:** In relation to fixed capital, there is a need to replace airconditioning at the building occupied by the Brisbane School of Distance Education, and that cost of in the order of half a million dollars is included. In addition to that, there are funds of in the order of \$800,000 related to open learning infrastructure, an initiative known as Connecting Teachers. The third aspect of that increase relates to the provision of fibre-optic cabling at the Mount Isa School of Distance Education.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, page 59 of the MPS shows that the Assistance to Tertiary Institutions Program was overspent by \$21m last year. Firstly, where did the money come from? Secondly, what was not done elsewhere to make these funds available? Thirdly, can the Minister assure the Committee that the full \$20m is actually needed this year?

**Mr QUINN:** Last year, there were quite a number of large capital items included. For instance, there was the carry forward from 1994-95 for the Conservatorium of Music, and that was in the order of \$9.6m. There were some other accelerated capital works within that program area to the tune of \$6m and various others as well. That largely identifies why the increase is there. The Sunshine Coast University got \$5m; we paid out \$4.5m for the acquisition of the Logan University site, and other various bits and pieces largely made up the amount of money.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for Government members' questioning has expired. I say good afternoon to the member for Archerfield—a very good friend of mine, actually. Mr Ardill, you might like to lead off.

**Mr ARDILL:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I have a question for the Minister for Education. I refer to your plans to close three schools in Acacia Ridge, including the high school, which is recognised and acknowledged as the Queensland leader in work experience programs and is in an area of high youth unemployment. The question is in three parts: (a) given the commitment by the previous Education Minister, Mr Hamill, to allow a two-year moratorium—this year and next year—to enable numbers to build up, why have you moved now to close these schools against the wishes of the community, destroying any chance of those numbers building up; (b) how much would the department save by this move; and (c) what support would you provide to parents for fares to access alternative schools, again in a low socioeconomic area?

**Mr QUINN:** First of all, what we have done is start the process of community consultation. As you would be aware and as previous Education Ministers would be aware, the regions monitor the enrolments at the schools in their respective areas. They have identified schools in the Acacia Ridge area as being low in terms of enrolments, particularly with respect to the high schools, where they have an enrolment of 150 to 200.

**Mr YOUNG:** Two hundred and sixty.

**Mr QUINN:** Two hundred and sixty—that is very small in terms of high schools, which means a restricted range of subject offerings to students. The view is that, if you could put the two high schools together, you would have a much better or broader range of subject offerings to students and better opportunities for them. You would also be aware that there is a consultation period that goes on between the school communities and the department, and it is not as though this has not happened before. It has happened under Governments of all persuasions. I instance here the Richlands/Inala example, where the communities agreed that, because of the circumstances surrounding those two schools, there would be an amalgamation of the school communities, and one school would be provided with additional resources based upon the sale price of the existing facility that was not required. I understand that similar sorts of things will take place in the consultation with regard to the community at Acacia Ridge.

You asked me about the moratorium that the previous Minister had given. I was not aware of that moratorium, and the previous Minister has not spoken to me about it personally.

**Mr ARDILL:** But I did advise you of it.

**Mr QUINN:** You advised me of it, but you would be aware that when I was discussing it with you, I told you I had already asked the department to start the consultation process. So your advice came after we had already, if you like, started down the track.

With regards to savings—the savings have not yet been quantified, because we are only in the initial stage of this particular process. But in terms of ongoing savings—of course, it is in regard to the salaries and wages of staff where the duplication can

be eliminated and also with regards to the disposal of the site, if in fact it occurs in the future.

You mentioned the support for parents. That is all part of the negotiation process. It may or may not come to fruition. However, I instance the Inala example again, where extra facilities were put into the school. The existing school has been enhanced. They have facilities at that school that they would not normally have had, and everyone agreed that the outcome was far better than the two previous schools by themselves. In some cases, transport arrangements have been made over a transitional period to allow school communities to ease into the new arrangements.

**Mr ARDILL:** May I ask a supplementary question just on that aspect, Mr Chairman, please?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr ARDILL:** You would agree that the two high schools in Inala were within the same community, whereas there is no other high school within this community and it means bussing students to another community.

**Mr QUINN:** I am not aware of all the particulars in this case. What I am relying upon here is the advice and opinions of the regional officers, who are undertaking this particular project. They have made certain recommendations about how the process should go. I have agreed that we should at least start talking to the school communities to see if we can manage this. If we cannot and it is a situation where the school communities really want to stand there and say, "We think we can improve our enrolments over the next two years" and can justify their stance through demographic studies and statistics and so on, we are more than willing to consider those options. But as I said, it is early days. The community consultation period has just started.

The overwhelming drive in this particular instance—and in all these instances—is to make sure that children have a better range of educational opportunities before them. That is topmost in everyone's mind: what we are trying to do is improve educational outcomes for kids. It is not a money-saving operation, quite frankly, because at the end of the day this department is committed to providing high-quality education for students. That is why we are very aware—and we approach these things very cautiously to start with when the initial proposal comes before us—that we really do have to convince the local communities that what is best for their children might in fact be the amalgamation.

As I understand it, it can be very distressing for some parents who, over a long period of time, have supported a school through dim and dark days, provided funds through P & C activities and so on, and those are the sorts of things that the department and its officers have to work through, but at the end of the day you really have to ask yourself what is going to be in the long-term best interests of the children who attend those schools, whether you want to maintain two very small schools—and it is particularly relevant when you talk about high schools—or whether in fact you can have a medium sized high school which can offer a much broader

range of subject offerings and provide enhanced facilities on one site. It may mean some travelling for students and it may mean some other arrangements, but at the end of the day, if in fact the facility is much better and the children are much better off there, then the department I think is on safe grounds to try to at least convince the local community that that is the case.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Could the Minister advise the Committee of what other schools the department might be contemplating closing?

**Mr QUINN:** No, there are no more. This year I think we have closed Taringa, Richlands, of course, Newmarket State High, which has been on the cards for quite some time, and Toowoomba Special School—we are talking to the school communities up there at the moment—and Tansey State School as well. They are the ones which in all probability will close at the end of this year.

**Ms SPENCE:** Tansey?

**Mr QUINN:** Tansey.

**Mr YOUNG:** It is outside Goomeri, about 4 kilometres inland.

**Mr QUINN:** And also Chermside. We have been talking to the school communities at Chermside, you would be aware as well. I think the school support centre out there is most probably in the final stages of completing its report about what is going to happen with Chermside State School as well. All those schools have been looked at over a long period of time and we are just starting the same sort of process over at Acacia. As I understand it, there are no more that have been brought to our attention. Sorry, I am advised Newstead Special School might be another one we are looking at, too.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I would like to come back to the QSCO accommodation and the answer Mike gave earlier in relation to the fitting out of QSCO. You said it would be \$700,000 for the accommodation plus associated costs, furniture, airconditioning, computer, that sort of stuff. Have you any idea of a figure of how much those fit-out costs are likely to amount to?

**Mr KEILY:** I am afraid that is the only figure I have, Mr Chair.

**Mr QUINN:** Perhaps Richard Williams from Facilities and Assets might be able to throw some light on that.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** In terms of total costs, I understand the actual fit-out cost is certainly within commercial parameters, in terms of the expected expenditure on a square meterage basis. Sorry, would you mind picking up your question again?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** It was \$700,000 for the accommodation and then there was additional costs for fitting out airconditioning, furniture, computer cabling and that sort of stuff. I was wondering what sort of figure you would be looking at—a total figure—to provide the accommodation. I am just concerned that the cost of this office seems to be extraordinarily high.

**Mr QUINN:** Are you asking the total figure?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Yes.

**Mr QUINN:** As I understand it, \$1.537m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So it is another \$800,000 for fit-out? What about recurrent costs? What are the recurrent costs in relation to the office?

**Mr QUINN:** QSCO itself could answer that question. Can we take that on notice? We will come back later in the afternoon and try to answer that for you.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Sure. A final point in relation to that—the Department of Training and Industrial Relations has space down in Education House, as I understand it, for its Employment branch which it will probably no longer be needing.

**Mr QUINN:** In Education House?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Yes. I do not see why we would go and spend all that money if there is space available or if there might be cheaper space available than the \$1.5m we are spending finding offices. We have schools out there with vacant blocks and wings and heaven knows what else.

**Mr PEACH:** The issues surrounding that are: having the amount of space available that is required for QSCO when it gets fully operational and, secondly, of course, Education leases Education House—we do not own it—and the cost is relatively expensive there. So I would speculate that what we are looking at here is probably cheaper than Education House, but we can come back to you on that part of the question later, too.

**Ms SPENCE:** Mr Peach, why was a school not considered as the accommodation for QSCO? You are going to have some empty ones around the place soon, I think.

**Mr PEACH:** Well——

**Ms SPENCE:** Seriously.

**Mr PEACH:** I think there are matters to do with the standard of the accommodation, the security, particularly when dealing with such issues as security to do with Year 2 Net and Year 6 Test and, again, the size of the accommodation that is available. Those sorts of options appear attractive at first glance. We have looked at them on a number of occasions in the past, for example, when we established school support centres, but in terms of long-term economic good practice, they do not bear up at the end of the day.

**Ms SPENCE:** Some of your school support centres are in old school buildings; are you saying that that has not been successful?

**Mr PEACH:** Not as a general rule. We have done that in a couple of places, but not as a general rule. I guess the other issue in relation to QSCO is that it is an intersystemic body. If it was in one of our school properties, that may not necessarily be well received by other school systems, too.

**Ms SPENCE:** I have just one more question about QSCO. I am concerned that a lot of the work done by QSCO seems to be duplicating the curriculum work that is done in the Studies Directorate in the Education Department. Is this in fact duplication? Is it necessary, or are you

downgrading the Studies Directorate as a result of the establishment of QSCO? What is going to happen there, Mr Peach?

**Mr PEACH:** I would not choose to use the word "downgrading", but there has been a long time understanding since plans were put in place to put QSCO in operation that the Studies Directorate would be made smaller and that it would change the focus of its operations. QSCO has a clear mandate to develop the Year 2 Net, the Year 6 Test and syllabuses for Years 1 to 10, as well as advise the Minister on curriculum development issues and strategic planning issues for Years 1 to 12. Therefore, the Studies Directorate will cease to develop any one-term syllabuses and it will change its role in the coming months to one which supports the implementation of those syllabuses after QSCO has developed them.

**Ms SPENCE:** Can you give me the figures on the staffing numbers in the Studies Directorate in this year's budget?

**Mr PEACH:** There is an intention to have Studies a little smaller, and Mrs Sullivan is getting me the figures for that. We have been aware of this issue for nearly a little over 18 months now. As a result of that, we have not filled positions which have become vacant in the Studies Directorate. There is a significant vacancy rate at the present time and we would intend to move in that direction at a time when we can do so without people losing their jobs. I think there is probably a total in the budget figures this year of around about a dozen people, but the numbers will be greater—the number of positions will be greater than that when we re-organise the Directorate, but I repeat that, when that happens, because we have got a 26 per cent vacancy rate in that Directorate at the moment, we will do it without any individual people hopefully losing their jobs.

**Ms SPENCE:** Minister, I refer to Budget Paper No. 2 and the Forward Estimates for consolidated revenue for Education. The estimated expenditure for this year is \$2.776 billion. Next year's estimate goes down, and the year after that is also a reduction on this year's. Basically, the Government is forecasting a declining Education budget in the next two years. Can you explain that decline in the Forward Estimates?

**Mr QUINN:** I think this ought to be a question to the Treasurer, who has the overview of the whole Budget.

**Ms SPENCE:** We tried that.

**Mr QUINN:** I suspect that the reason they have forecast a reduction next year is a cutback in Commonwealth funding. The Commonwealth has indicated that we will receive less money than last year. That is my understanding from the Treasurer. That is it. I have no further information to add, I am afraid.

**Ms SPENCE:** Would it be fair to say then, in examining these Forward Estimates, that Queenslanders can say that this is the best it is going to get so far as an Education budget is concerned under your Government?

**Mr QUINN:** I do not think that is a fair summary. There may very well be additional moneys coming into the budget next year. But they are only Forward Estimates to give you an indicative idea. It is not the budget itself, so I think that is a premature statement to make in light of the fact that the 1997-98 budget is nowhere in sight. There are no new initiatives budgeted into that. That would be on a current policy basis with no new initiatives factored in. If we have new initiatives in the next financial year, they will be in addition to the Forward Estimates there. I would put one initiative in there, that is, the continuance of funding for the second hour of non-contact time for primary schoolteachers and special teachers. We have outlaid in here, from memory, about \$8m or \$10m for the first hour. But when it goes across-the-board for all primary schoolteachers, that will mean a significant increase in funding of \$32m or \$33m in total for the full second hour of primary and special schoolteachers. So that would be a net increase of, say, \$23m, which is not in the Forward Estimate. So that gives you an idea that that Forward Estimate is on a current policy basis without any new initiatives factored in.

**Mr ARDILL:** Minister, in view of the outstanding success in preventing vandalism and fire damage as well as theft at schools connected to the State security surveillance network in the Archerfield electorate and surrounding electorates, why are you proposing to transfer the responsibility for the cost of this system from the Education Department to school communities which are unable to bear the burden in lower income areas? In what is clearly a proposal that is penny-wise and pound-foolish, why would you countenance a proposal to reduce the effectiveness of security devices in a high-risk situation when most people are arguing for funding for an extension of the service as a cost-effective insurance against fire, vandalism and theft in high-risk areas? Do you believe that the police would be able to react in the five to seven minutes, which is the present situation, to prevent these activities?

**Mr QUINN:** The first point I make—and I will hand over to Mr Young in a moment—is that, when you are talking about fire damage, the people you want are not the police or a security service; the people you want are the fire brigade, quite frankly. They have a very good record of responding within given periods. I think Mr Young will have more to say on that.

**Mr ARDILL:** I referred to fire. The fact is that none of the schools that have that surveillance system have suffered from fire damage in the time that it has been in. That is an aside. It is a million-dollar aside in each school. But the problem is vandalism and damage to kids' property and disruption to the school which has been saved by this system. How can you justify that being handed over from you, where you receive the savings, to the community, which does not?

**Mr YOUNG:** Basically, that is not what is going to happen. At the present time there are 103 schools in the Brisbane area—based around Logan City, Beenleigh and the Inala area—that cost approximately \$1m for the State Government

Protective Services to respond, as you have suggested. There will be no change to that. Across the rest of the State, the State Government Protective Services monitors the security systems that are in schools in the Brisbane base. If there is a break-in or any other alarm in, say, Mount Isa, then the State Government Protective Services contact the police in Mount Isa, who respond. That operates across the rest of the State outside those 103 schools, except for one group of 50 schools which are not in the highest risk areas that I mentioned before—the 103—but are in areas around Brisbane that also are seen to have had a risk that may be a little bit higher than some of the other schools. In the past, we have spent an extra \$100,000 for those 50 schools to provide a service less than there is for the 103 schools but a little bit better, I suppose, as you pointed out, than the Police Service, who may take longer to respond.

The suggestion in the letter to which you are referring from the facilities section of our department was an issue to those schools to see whether they wished to continue to get that service or whether those 50 schools should be treated in the same way as the rest of the schools across the State and rely upon the Police Service for their response rather than the Government Protective Services. So it is only 50 schools. It is \$100,000 for our department. We pay for that. The police have indicated that they would find some difficulty at the present time in providing a more effective response to those schools in terms of what you were stating there. We will continue to pay that \$100,000 for those schools until suitable arrangements can be made with the police, as we have across the rest of the State. So it applies to only 50 schools. There is no change to what happens in the 103 schools in high-risk areas in Brisbane. There is no change to what happens across the rest of the State. We are prepared to look at putting on hold any action with those 50 schools on the basis that the police have indicated to us that they may have some difficulty in picking that up in the time frame that we were looking at.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We shall now adjourn for afternoon tea.

Sitting suspended from 4.17 to 4.33 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Ladies and gentlemen, I will just give you a moment, but we are about to start. We will resume the hearing. We have got the long haul now. We are scheduled to go through until 7.30, but if you are all good boys and girls in class we may consider a small break at 6 p.m. So it will depend on everybody's behaviour.

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, to clear up one of the questions that was asked before—the QSCO one—we have finally got the accountants to agree and we can provide that detail.

**Mr KEILY:** The split up of the allocation of \$1,537,000 for fit-out for QSCO is as follows: the fit-out of the building, which includes offices, partitions, workstations, electrical and telecommunications, is \$575,000—these are estimates—the cost of equipment, including photocopiers, computers, printers and other office equipment, \$125,000, and included in the figure is also the lease cost of the

space, which is \$240,000, and there is a figure of about \$597,000 which relates to operating costs of QSCO, which is shown in that line of plant and equipment and it should have been shown as a non-labour operating cost, giving a total of \$1,537,000. It is in the wrong place. Essentially, that figure should be more in the order of about \$900,000 for plant and equipment and the balance of about \$600,000 as part of QSCO's ongoing operating cost budget.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Is that issue cleared up?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Yes. That is fine. Thank you.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I now move on to the member for Mundingburra.

**Mr TANTI:** Information management and information technology is listed on page 2 of the MPS as a key issue. Also on page 44 of the MPS, the Management Services subprogram lists its 1996-97 planned performance. How much money will be spent in this area and what will be achieved?

**Mr QUINN:** The Management Information Services subprogram contains a budgeted amount this year of \$12,623,000. Last year, it focused on implementing standard office automation systems, putting in 550 schools a standard school administration system and a number of other initiatives as well. This year, we hope to complete that school administration installation across all schools and extend the existing electronic communications networks to schools right throughout Queensland. Twenty-four new positions will be created in regions to improve the support and maintenance in the use of this learning technology in schools and we will also be putting in place a new human resources management and information system and other modules to help facilitate, or speed up, if you like, transfer information between schools and head office.

A new Grants and Allowances Payments System, nicknamed GAPS, will also be developed and there will be some preparation for the implementation of the SAP financial system. This is, as I understand it, additional modules to the schools information system and it goes to complete the package, if you like, of technology that connects schools to head office. Over a period of time it will eliminate a lot of the paper transfer that goes on between schools and regions and head office. I think it is an initiative which over a long period of time will, in fact, save the department money and produce outcomes in terms of the quality of the data that is available that we do not have at the present time.

**Mr TANTI:** Also on page 44, funds have been set aside for developing a Facilities and Assets Management System. How much has been put aside for that project? How will it improve the delivery of education in Queensland?

**Mr QUINN:** FAMIS—Facilities Assets and Management Information System—that is one of the modules of SIMS that I mentioned before, and it is really designed to assist in strategic school planning and works programming within the overall budget itself. I think this year this module has a budget of \$1m. A facility and asset registration package will

also be developed and implemented and some way of forecasting school enrolments will also be added to it. So it is part of that integrated technological approach to school information services or information gathering that the department has embarked upon.

**Mr TANTI:** At page 42, mention is made of the commencement of the GAPS project. Can you explain what that is, why it is being developed and what are the associated costs?

**Mr QUINN:** This is another module of the Schools Information Management System—GAPS—Grants and Allowances Payments System. I mentioned it before.

**Mr KEILY:** The GAPS system is being developed for the finance directorate to be used for the payment of grants and allowances for State and non-State schools, for parents and organisations and will be implemented during the third quarter of 1997. The budget for the design and development of GAPS is \$614,000 and the majority of the costs will be expended on meeting program costs in the development phase.

The implementation of GAPS will provide accurate and timely information about entitlements and applicants for grants and allowances which will improve financial management. It will support financial planning and improve efficiency in the payment process of grants to schools and allowances to parents who are entitled to same.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. Minister, on various pages of the MPS relating to capital works, information is presented that shows new schools are to be built to meet increasing demand. However, it is also very important that existing schools are maintained in an appropriate condition. What type of minor works is undertaken in existing schools and how are these priorities determined?

**Mr QUINN:** Of course, you have mentioned minor works and that has a financial upper limit of \$100,000 for individual projects. These projects are meant to include such things as covered walkways, ground improvements, security measures, playground equipment, floor covering, computer cabling, sun screening, concrete paths—all those things which make schools more enjoyable environments in which to work, teach and learn. The budget for 1996-97 is estimated to be \$10m, which is an increase of about \$3.3m over last year's allocation. It is split up amongst the various regions. It is actually devolved to regions, as I understand it, on a formula basis and the regions then prioritise within their own area as to how the money is spent. I understand that there is some sort of forum process that sets the priorities within the region and they access the money on the basis of the formula that is used to devolve that particular money for the schools.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Page 6 of the MPS shows that in 1995-96 staff levels were at 40,739 for school operations, with a predicted rise of 113 for 1996-97. Given that there will be an increase in teacher numbers of 934, does this mean that 821 public servants or teacher aides are to lose their jobs? If so,

will they come from regions, schools or central office?

**Mr KEILY:** The figure that you have referred to is a net increase in staffing in the Schools Operations Program and, of course, in addition to numbers for enrolment growth of something like 450, for new facilities of 66 and non-contact time of 309, as well as some 180 for behaviour management and student disability initiatives, there is also an offset in reduction related to the numbers of cleaners which were referred to earlier. That provides a net figure, but, of course, there is a very large increase in teacher and other numbers related to those initiatives.

**Mr TANTI:** For a number of years now, the department has been seeking funds for a school management system, as you mentioned before. Page 44 of the MPS indicates that funding will continue. What exactly are the objectives of the system? Can the Minister explain why there is a delay in this project? When will the system be available in schools?

**Mr QUINN:** This year, the Schools Information Management System, SIMS, will have a budget of some \$22m. As I mentioned before, the new modules are coming on stream. As well as the modules which I mentioned before, we are also investigating the use of VASAT satellite for distance education to try to improve the reception that Distance Ed students receive. Some problems have been conveyed to me by parents whose children receive education via Distance Ed. Because of interference at certain times with VHF radio, as you would probably know, we are conducting a trial at the moment using V-Sat and other technology to try to improve that reception so that those students have a better quality of education.

I mentioned before that we have the other modules and SIMS on line. We have budgeted for that and hopefully they will be up and running in the not-too-distant future. The \$8m contract for the human resources centre has been let. It will take some time to be fulfilled, but hopefully within the next 18 months to two years the whole system will be up and running.

**The CHAIRMAN:** School fires still appear to be a problem in Australia generally, and we have had our share of school fires in Queensland. When a building is destroyed by fire, how does the department determine whether a replacement building is provided? What steps have been taken to reduce the incidence of arson?

**Mr QUINN:** Last year, we spent approximately \$1.9m in replacing schools damaged by fire, and that occurred in eight primary schools and four high schools. The cost of repairing damage by fire ranges from about \$40,000 to upwards of \$0.5m. The department puts a sum of money into the budget on a contingency basis. There is no way of planning for this, but that amount of money has proven to be appropriate in the past. The sum was \$1.9m last year and we have put \$2m in this year on the same basis. As well as that, of course, we have programs such as School Watch and the Security Upgrade Program, which was mentioned before by the member for

Archerfield. Those programs try to improve the physical security of schools by involving the community in keeping an eye on them and hopefully reducing the incidence of school fires. It is one of those things where you can never plan sufficiently ahead. All you can do is make the contingency arrangements and hope that the past record does not exceed itself.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Turning to page 6 of the MPS, in 1995-96, \$7.292m was estimated for receipts for goods and services and the actual figure was \$6m less. Could you explain why?

**Mr KEILY:** During the course of 1995-96, we were able to negotiate a revenue retention arrangement with Treasury which now sees a larger portion of receipts that we received during the course of the year come back to the department rather than to the Consolidated Fund. Hence, there is a decrease in the line for receipts for goods and services. If I refer you to a couple of lines below, under "Retained Revenue—Goods and Services", that figure has increased commensurately, reflecting the change in designation for the receipts. It is an accounting treatment of those funds.

**Mr TANTI:** Many school communities are rightly concerned when they do not have a principal in their school. Indeed, many schools go without a permanent principal for extended periods. Minister, how many principal positions are currently vacant? What has been done to improve the situation regarding vacancies? In particular, what has been done in the band 4 and band 5 schools where there would seem to be a special problem?

**Mr QUINN:** Currently, there are 126 vacant principal positions throughout the State, of which 69 are in bands 5, 9, 10 and 11. These were advertised in the *Queensland Government Gazette* in July this year, with a closing date of the middle of August. Appointment to these positions should occur at the beginning of the new school year. Most of the remaining 55 principal vacancies are in bands 6, 7 and 8. They will be filled either through merit selection or relocation in term 4, with appointments being effective from 1 January 1995.

With regard to bands 4 and 5 principals, of whom you made specific mention, a couple of years ago in October there was a revision of conditions for the appointment processes for the band 4 principals. If you need them, I can provide you with the revised conditions. Basically, what we are trying to do is to retain those principals in their schools longer. There has been a high turnover rate in the past. We now try to keep them there for a minimum of about three years. Similar conditions apply to band 5 principals. We are trying to retain them in their schools for a much longer period of time. These are the principals in the small country schools. Rapid turnover of principals in those schools of course affects the local community. So these improved retention rates hopefully will settle down the angst that those communities feel when their principal either transfers out or applies for a promotion and receives a new appointment. It has been of particular concern in country schools for quite some time. Hopefully, these new procedures will settle that problem down.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Page 42 of the MPS shows that funds have been set aside for the School Watch Program, although the amount is not clear. Is the money well spent, that is, has there been a reduction in damage to schools?

**Mr QUINN:** School Watch is one of those programs that, as we indicated before, was part of the strategy to prevent damage, fires, vandalism and so on in the schools. This year, we plan to increase the funding from \$471,000 to \$582,000. Last year, the number of, if you like, incidents of vandalism, thefts or arson was reduced by 11 per cent across Queensland in our schools. I think by that measure you could say the money was well spent in achieving its stated aims and objectives. We do receive some sponsorship for this. Commercial Union Insurance, Channel 10, Q-Fleet, Video Pro and so on help us in that regard.

What we plan to do this year is to put in place four area coordinators and a promotions officer, who will be employed for one year, to assist the State coordinators. Hopefully, we will get another 400 schools into the program. I think most people would agree that that is a good way to spend the additional funding, that is, trying to protect schools from acts of vandalism and other related acts.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time allotted for questioning by Government members has expired.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** My first question in this session to the Minister relates to the Capital Works Program. In the Ministerial Program Statements for Education, I notice that primary education fixed capital expenditure was underspent by an amount of over \$15.5m, which I think was well over 18 per cent of the budget. In secondary, an amount of over \$18m was underspent, which I understand was in excess of 25 per cent of the budget. What explanation can you give us for the fact that both of those capital works programs were so substantially underspent? In the questions on notice, I did ask for a detailed breakdown of the projects which were planned in 1995-96. I did not get that information in the answer that was provided. I ask the Minister to have another look at that aspect of the question on notice. What measures will you take to make sure that this year's capital works program is delivered, and that any project approved in the 1995-96 budget will be completed? We would all expect that in capital works there would be some carryover from one year to the next. However, most people would find extraordinary figures of 18 per cent in primary and 20 per cent in secondary.

**Mr QUINN:** To start with, it would help if we had a page number to refer to.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I was on page 18 of the MPS in relation to subprogram outlays on primary education, and then on page 24 for program outlays on secondary education.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** You are right: the capital program was underspent last year. I think the actual budget appropriation was about \$176m and we spent about \$152m. The principal area of underexpenditure was actually in the Building Better Schools Program—some \$25m. The program is a

five-year program and the apportionment of money against that five-year program is on the basis of \$50m each year. A substantial part of last year was taken up with doing the necessary planning to actually put the program in place. This year, we will be looking to spend about \$80m, so there will actually be a catch-up on the underexpenditure last financial year. In terms of actually addressing the structural issues to make things happen faster, the Minister has obviously taken a direct interest in the acceleration of the program which we have undertaken in terms of fast-tracking a number of the projects. But at the same time we are also looking to overcommit the program with public works to ensure that by the end of the 1996-97 financial year we have actually hit the thing on the button.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Will projects which were planned for 1995-96 but which were not completed be given priority in 1996-97?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Yes, certainly. A substantial part of the underspend in the Building Better Schools Program, particularly in the primary area, was in relation to what they call the primary classroom upgrades. We are looking certainly at an accelerated program there. We anticipate by the end of this financial year some \$44m will have been spent on primary classroom upgrades.

**Mr QUINN:** When there was a change of Government, on average the monthly spending on the Building Better Schools Program was about \$300,000, I think from memory. Over an eight-month period, about \$2.5m had been spent of the \$50m. Since that time, we have tried to accelerate the expenditure. We are not going to get anywhere near the \$50m that has been programmed for the 1995-96 year. I think we will get about \$28m or something, and we will still fall \$25m short. It was in that period that we had, as I understand it, a long lead time and could not get the whole project up and running in time.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** A lot of it was doing scoping work and doing field work to identify where the money had to be spent. Most of that has been completed in 1995-96. The project has started but will be completed in large part by the end of this financial year.

**Ms SPENCE:** Who will be doing the work? Will you be using the Public Works Department for that, or will you be putting that type of work out to tender?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Public Works is our project manager on the exercise. It basically puts a lot of work out into the private sector to be done using contractors.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** On page 6 of the MPS, the revenue table indicates a budget estimate in 1995-96 for asset sales of \$7.5m and actuals of \$36.4m. Then there is a 1996-97 estimate of \$23.8m. Can you give me an explanation for the discrepancy between the budgeted figure and the actual figure—\$29m in 1995-96. Also, can you provide me with a breakdown of what assets are intended for sale to realise \$23.8m in 1996-97?



**Mr WILLIAMS:** Last year we had a major program. To some extent the program is market driven, so it is quite hard to actually estimate what you are going to sell. It depends on the health of the marketplace. Last year was certainly a good result for the department, particularly as it gets to keep 100 per cent of the revenue for reinvestment in properties and other capital requirements. Last year we sold quite substantial properties around the country—sorry, around the State. We are sort of spreading our horizons there a bit! At Southport, we sold a property for \$6.2m; Cairns Central, \$9.6m; the Bardon Conference Centre for \$3.7m; a property down at Surfers Paradise for \$6.1m; and a property at Sunnybank Hills for \$6.7m. We are sort of keeping the momentum going on the Property Sales Program. This year, while the papers indicate a \$23m sales program, that in fact is just Treasury cover. It is almost like a line of credit that we can call against in terms of selling properties. We anticipate in reality that we will probably sell about \$17m worth of properties in this financial year. If we can achieve up to \$23m, that will be a good result, too.

In terms of the properties themselves—there are probably over 100 properties that we will be selling off this year. They do not tend to be as substantial as the Property Sales Program we had last year—a range of small properties, excisions from existing sites to sell. But I think we would be fairly comfortable, Minister, to provide a list of those properties for sale.

**Mr QUINN:** Yes.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** If that could be provided, that would be appreciated. My next question relates to the new high school in Townsville. The previous Government proposed a Government precinct to be built in association with the new Deeragun High School. The precinct was to include police station, fire station, community health centre and other Government services. Is the present Government committed to this project and, if so, what funds are provided in the current budget?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, we are providing the school; we are not providing anything else.

**Mr PEACH:** There are still some discussions going on with a couple of other departments to see whether they have a continuing interest in providing facilities on the site so that it does become a community school, but those decisions are not ones which we can control, as you would appreciate. We are still interested in seeing that that vision eventuates, and we ought to be able to tie it down by the end of the year one way or the other.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Mr Chairman, with your permission I would like to invite the member for Mackay to ask a question.

**Mr MULHERIN:** My question is to the Minister for Education regarding capital works. I refer the Minister to page 24 of the Ministerial Program Statements and the increase in the expenditure for improving facilities catering for enrolment growth in secondary schools. Would you please indicate how much, if any, of the program allocation will go to replacing two old tinnie demountables at North

Mackay High School in the electorate of Mackay with two computer-specific classrooms, staff room and two general learning areas? What other facilities will be provided to meet the projected increase in enrolments from the current enrolment of 1,240 to 1,350 in 1997 and 1,415 in 1998, and when will these facilities be provided?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, we do not have that level of detail, but we would be more than happy to take it on notice and provide the answer.

**Mr MULHERIN:** That is fine.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have had a look through the Capital Works Program and I cannot find any mention of funding to upgrade the home economics block at Wynnum High School. Is any of the minor works allocation to be used for a minor upgrade of the existing home economics kitchen facilities at Wynnum High, or even for planning associated with such works, or is there any money for this purpose in the budget? Has any planning work been done for a proposed upgrade of home economics facilities at Wynnum High? Is there any allocation for any upgrading or remedial work for student toilet facilities at Wynnum North High School?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The situation at Wynnum High at the present time in relation to the home economics block is that I think there was an undertaking previously to spend a significant amount of money at the school—up to the tune of about \$1m. I do not think that was a State Government-supported construction or project. What we are doing at Wynnum High is looking at the situation there and seeing if there is potentially a lower-cost solution to their home ec problems. In fact, we are using it as a planning study to see whether we can actually use the methodology we want to use at Wynnum High in terms of actually upgrading the home economics area as something we use across the rest of the State. So we are using it as a bit of a trial. We hope to be able to try to do something for the school, but there are no guarantees at this stage.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** My next question relates to the proposed fourth high school at Toowoomba at Wilsonton, which the Budget papers indicate may open in 1998. Given the advice to the former Government that a fourth high school was not justified, have departmental criteria changed, or is there a change in attitude to the departmental advice? What will be the implications in staffing and curriculum terms for the other three State high schools in Toowoomba? Do you intend to build a standard State high school?

**Mr QUINN:** This was an election commitment of the Government, and that is why the funding will be made available. It has nothing to do with the priorities within the department itself. It is simply an election commitment that will be funded. A working group has been convened in Toowoomba, and on that working group are representatives of the various State high schools working to find out what configuration of high school would be best for Toowoomba. It is a fact that the State high schools in Toowoomba have, if you like to put it in this term, about 30 to 35 per cent of the high school market. The non-Government sector has the rest, and that

quite obviously is disproportionate to the rest of the State. We are keen to put a high-quality facility there to give State schools in Toowoomba a boost along. The principals of the existing high schools in Toowoomba will work to make sure that the facility that we do put there will in fact add to the State school facilities already in Toowoomba and contribute to a higher standard of education being available in the State school system.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** A supplementary question there, if I might, Mr Chairman. Do I take it from your answer to the first part of the question that essentially you are building a high school there irrespective of the advice from the department about whether a high school is justified or not?

**Mr QUINN:** The advice from the department was that it was marginal and that they would not proceed while it was marginal. However, I made it plain before that not only did we give an election commitment—and you kept coming back to election commitments before—but also previous Governments gave election commitments. It appears that you can be hung for either keeping election commitments or not keeping election commitments.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Or providing a service on the basis of need, as the case may be.

**Mr QUINN:** This is an election commitment. Part of the funding is included in this budget, and the remainder of the funding will be included in the next budget.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am not sure if you answered the last part of the question about what sort of high school you are going to build there.

**Mr QUINN:** As I said, there is a working group looking at the requirements for the high school up there. The working group has on it the principals from the other State high schools, I think the member of Parliament who represents that area is on it and it also has parent representatives on it. They are currently investigating the best design or configuration for that high school.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am wondering if someone can advise me what money was allocated in the last budget and the actuals in the last budget, as well as the Forward Estimates for planning of the new high schools at Tannum Sands and at Kuranda particularly.

**Mr QUINN:** In this budget or in the previous one?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** There was money allocated for planning in the previous budget, and I am wondering how much of that was expended. Then I am wondering what the budget is for each of those schools in the current budget and when you anticipate commencing construction of those schools.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** We are looking at a full expenditure on Tannum Sands of about \$7.745m. This year we have programmed \$500,000, which will be for planning and site preparation works. Therefore, the balance programmed in 1997-98 is \$7.245m. Sorry, what was the other one?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Kuranda.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** It is expected that Kuranda will require about \$8.8m. To 30 June 1996 we spent \$92,000. We expect to spend about \$500,000 this year and the balance of \$7.2m in 1997-98.

**Ms SPENCE:** Minister, much of today's discussion has been about closing schools because of falling numbers and building schools in places where they may or may not be needed. I am just wondering whether your Government is considering adopting an enrolment policy of zoning schools to overcome, I think, one of the greatest problems facing our State schools today, that is, oversized and undersized State schools existing just kilometres away from each other?

**Mr QUINN:** As I understand it, whilst numbers in schools are comfortable, then there is no enrolment management policy put in place as such or restrictive enrolment policy. However, once schools become pushed for facilities on a particular site, whether because of a lack of area in which to build new facilities or for any other reason, it is usually the P & C or the school community itself that asks the department to consider an enrolment management policy. Sometimes the regions themselves initiate that sort of move.

There are a number of schools around the State where enrolment management policies are in place because of those sorts of pressures. I have one in my own area, there is obviously one I can name on the north coast, I think there is one in Townsville and no doubt there are others around the State. That is the way the department tries to make sure that schools do not become inundated, if you like, with students and tries to manage its assets in the most responsible way. Not all the time do they suit all the parents at the school, and conditions obviously are put in place to make sure that parents of children at the school—those children remain at the school and their siblings are allowed to attend that school as well. So it really is a negotiated enrolment plan with the parent and the general school community at each particular school.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Minister, last year's budget allocated \$51.3m to support the Shaping the Future curriculum reforms, focusing especially on improving literacy and numeracy. I notice that the coalition parties pre-election indicated that they were also committed to implementing the Wiltshire reforms. What is the total allocation in this year's budget for Shaping the Future reforms?

**Mrs Sullivan:** There is no specific allocation of funds to Shaping the Future. What we have done is integrate that into the mainstream budget, as it were, and I think the Minister has indicated earlier the allocations to literacy and numeracy, for example. We could give you some figures, for example, of the continued employment of education advisers, but we do not have a specific budget line now that is called Shaping the Future.

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

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, page 13 of the MPS shows an increase in teacher numbers in preschools of 10. How many of these are to cater for enrolment

growth and how many are to be used for increased non-contact time?

**Mr QUINN:** The increase in teacher numbers for the new facilities or increased enrolments will amount to 10. There is no provision there for non-contact time because non-contact time is being implemented for Years 1, 2 and 3 teachers in this budget and will flow through to other teachers in the next budget. It is guaranteed, the second hour of non-contact time, in the next budget.

**Mr TANTI:** Page 53 of last year's PPS states that a centre for leadership excellence for principals was established, but I cannot see where it is mentioned in this year's MPS. Can you tell the Committee of the objectives of the centre and what the centre has done over the last 12 months?

**Mr QUINN:** It is still there, Mr Tanti, we have not abolished it; that is the first thing I can tell you. Last year, it had a budget of \$1.034m, this year it has more than doubled to \$2.172m. It is a facility within the department that last year focused, if you like, on the professional development of school principals and for others who aspire to be school principals. So it played a very critical role in that field. It also has responsibilities for designing, coordinating and promoting professional development for leadership for public servants within the department itself. It had a number of successes last year. This year, we will be asking the centre to concentrate really on developing a cohesive program for again training principals and senior public servants. There will be a stronger emphasis on the training aspect of its work so that the centre offers a range of professional development programs and training modules, and it will assume also some of the coordination of training in the areas of accrual accounting, which as you realise is a Treasury initiative, risk management and financial management in the school accountability—a framework which will flow as we move to a more devolved model towards schools.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I understand that the majority of work undertaken to upgrade security in schools so far has occurred in the south-east corner of the State. Why are rural schools being neglected?

**Mr QUINN:** It is a function of the risk, if you like. In the past, the risk has been determined as occurring in the south-east corner. However, I think there is a recognition now that we should be moving out of the very high risk areas into other parts of the State. There is some work that has been undertaken in Cairns, and obviously there are a number of other hot spots along the coast. In future, we will be looking wider than the south-east corner. However, it will always come back to the risk management aspect of it. I might mention that, this year, we are providing almost the same amount of money—\$4.85m. Last year it was \$5m, so it is almost the same amount of money again in the program as it was last year.

**Mr HEGARTY:** On page 13 there seems to be an inconsistency in the cost of new preschool units. Could you explain why a double unit preschool at The Willows and Emerald South costs more than others?

**Mr QUINN:** If you note where those two units are built, The Willows in Townsville and Emerald, of course, in the Central Highlands, when you compare the cost of construction between those two centres and the south-east corner, that is the reason for the difference. It is simply a higher construction cost as you move out of the south-east corner and into western Queensland.

**Mr TANTI:** On page 3 of the MPS, work force planning in relation to teacher positions is highlighted. There are many young people currently undergoing teacher training who would obviously be concerned about their employment prospects. How many teachers are currently seeking employment with the department and what opportunities are there for employment in the foreseeable future?

**Mr QUINN:** The prospects are really terrific for the beginning of next year. We are putting on, as I said, roughly 934—exactly 934—additional teachers, but because we have a substantial attrition rate in our teaching work force, something in the order of just over 4 per cent, that means we will in fact be trying to employ more than the additional teachers. My information is that there is something like 6,000 teachers who are actually seeking employment currently—2,500 of those are new graduates and the rest are established or older teachers.

In answer to your question, because the department is putting on additional teachers, because, as I said, we have this attrition rate, we can virtually guarantee anyone who wants a job. So long as they are prepared to move anywhere within the State, we could just about guarantee them a job at the beginning of the next school year. My understanding is that the universities turn out something in the order of 2,500 to 3,000 graduates per year. As I said, the attrition rate combined with the expanding opportunities in terms of additional teachers will mean that, as I understand it, for the first time in quite some time the employment prospects of teachers will be fairly good this year.

**Mr TANTI:** Just elaborating on that, with regard to planning for future teacher supply and demand, how does the department predict the supply and demand for teachers and can the department determine how policy changes affect future demands?

**Mr QUINN:** We have a recruitment program. In fact, not so long ago, we released a video called "Out in Front", which was designed to try to attract young people into the teaching profession. We also run a program of advertising nationally at least twice a year to attract teachers to Queensland, and also teachers with specific skills, such as in the areas of science, maths, manual arts, and so on. They are not only in shortage in rural and regional Queensland, of course; we have some of those shortages in the Brisbane area as well. We are very conscious of that. That is why we run those advertising campaigns at least twice a year.

You would also note that we have beefed up the Remote Area Incentive Scheme to try to attract and retain experienced classroom teachers in the rural and western areas of the State. I understand

that, since the beginning of last year, we have appointed over 2,000 new teachers. Most of them come from graduates—1,200 were graduates, and the others were established teachers. As I said before, it is very difficult to plan ahead. The universities try to speak with us as often as possible as to what our policies will be in the future to give them some idea of what their intake levels ought to be in the future. They have to plan three or four years ahead, so it is difficult for them. You may remember that, some years ago, we had debates about teacher shortages and oversupply. I suspect that will be a debate in the future as well. It is very difficult for us as a department to say what our requirements will be three or four years in advance. All we can really do is give the universities some indication as to where we will be in three or four years' time.

I am also informed that the HR directorate has recently completed an evaluation of tenders for the development of a computer-based work force planning model. So there is some work being done in that area to try to give a more accurate prediction of teacher numbers that will be required in the future. No doubt the universities will be keen to hook into that data when it is available.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Most departments do engage external consultants. Did the Department of Education engage external consultants last financial year? Why were these external consultants engaged rather than using officers of the Public Service? Have any former public servants been engaged as external consultants, particularly those who have received severance benefits?

**Mr PEACH:** In terms of engagement of former departmental employees as external consultants—I think the answer to that question is that they have not been. Some former departmental employees were engaged on short-term contracts to do specific jobs, but they would not be defined under the regulations as external consultants as such.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, page 18 of the MPS shows that non-labour operating costs in primary education ended up being \$29m more than predicted. Could you advise the Committee why? Why is the Estimate for this year \$44m less?

**Mr KEILY:** The reason for the apparent overexpenditure in the non-labour area in primary education relates to the charging of school cleaners. The budget for school cleaners was established under the salaries and wages line at the beginning of the year. However, due to the transfer of that function to the former Department of Administrative Services in 1995, that cost became a non-labour cost because we paid the equivalent of their wages to that department. So the cost was incurred as a non-labour cost but actually budgeted as a labour cost. You will see that there is a commensurate variation in the salaries and wages line.

**Mr TANTI:** Minister, you mentioned changes to the Remote Area Incentive Scheme for teachers. Can you explain exactly how teachers and other staff in the department will benefit?

**Mr QUINN:** What we have done is to cash up the benefits, whereas before they were a mixture of leave entitlements, study entitlements, and so on. We have taken some of the recommendations out of the working party's report—that working party being between the Department of Education and the QTU, the Queensland Teachers Union. We have cashed up the benefits. We have also put in there a component for the fringe benefits tax and some other liabilities, if you like, and linked it in.

The Remote Area Incentive Scheme, as it was, had its own area designations. We have now linked it into the teacher transfer scheme and come up with a scheme which, over the next two years, will substantially improve the benefits payable to teachers in rural and remote areas. Basically, it will now apply from about the Great Divide west. As I said, over the next two years we will see the scheme extend from transfer rating level seven right down to four. It will be a much simpler scheme to implement because it will not require the same administration on behalf of the department, and all of those benefits in terms of savings will flow to teachers in terms of cash benefits. So they will get much more flexibility in terms of how they want to use their money, rather than being tied into the conditions of the old scheme.

**The CHAIRMAN:** All departments have set aside an amount for fringe benefits tax. How much has been set aside in 1996-97? Is this an increase or reduction? Is there any possibility of reducing the amount of fringe benefits tax paid by the department?

**Mr QUINN:** This year we have budgeted for an increase in fringe benefits tax. Last year's budget was \$3.55m. We have put aside a sum of \$5.58m this year. Mike will give us the reasons.

**Mr KEILY:** The major reason for the increased provision for FBT in 1996-97 relates to that tax that we pay on housing. As you would be aware, we provide concessional housing for teachers, and that attracts fringe benefits tax. It is quite a considerable amount. Due to a tax ruling during the course of 1995-96 related to the corporatisation of the State's electricity provider, we are now obliged to incur a tax on that payment to our employees, which we were not required to do previously. So that has substantially increased our liability for FBT in 1996-97.

The other issue in relation to that is the market rental. Again, according to taxation law, within every 10 years we are required to reassess the market rentals. As we reassess the market rentals, the gap widens somewhat between what the market rental is and what the teacher pays, and that is the taxation area that we have to pay.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, it is obvious from reading the MPS that a considerable amount of money is to be expended on teacher salaries. Although this subject has been touched upon before, could you clarify how many extra teachers will be employed in 1996-97? Could you give a breakdown by sector? Also, why does the total of the Schools Operations Program show only 903

extra teachers, when the Budget Speech talks about 1,000 and your press release refers to 934?

**Mr QUINN:** The real increase, I am reliably informed, is 934. The press release was right. I can give you a breakdown by sectors. This year, preschools will receive an additional 10 teachers; primary, 546; secondary, 252; special, an additional 95; education services, an extra 5; curriculum and assessment, an extra 49; and Corporate Services will lose 23. So the net effect of that is a gain of 934.

**Mr TANTI:** On pages 4, 26 and 42 of the MPS it is mentioned that funds will be allocated for non-contact time. What will be the additional full-year cost to the department of implementing two hours non-contact time in primary, special and preschools? What has the department done to allow special education teachers to have non-contact time?

**Mr QUINN:** This Budget contains a provision for guaranteeing the first hour of non-contact time to all those teachers—preschool, primary and special. It also provides a start, if you like, to the implementation of the second hour of non-contact time for years 1, 2 and 3, as I said before. The next Budget will contain additional funds to complete that arrangement. My understanding is that the cost in a full year is \$31.3m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** In previous reports, the Auditor-General has mentioned problems in the department with overpayments. With regard to overpayments incurred by the department, how much was outstanding on 30 June 1996? What were the major factors contributing to the outstanding balance? What action is in place to ensure that overpayments are prevented and, when they occur, recovered?

**Mr KEILY:** At 30 June 1996, the outstanding balance was \$887,000. That was mainly due to delays resulting from problems introducing the leave module related to the Government's HRM system, and also some delays in processing extended leave applications. Also, during the course of 1995-96, we have become aware that more employees are claiming hardship and requesting extensions to the repayment of overpayments. In relation to action being taken, we could refer to our Director of Audit Operations, Les McNamara.

**Mr McNAMARA:** We have reviewed overpayments over the last few years. We have put in place a whole series of processes to try to, let us say, prevent it—eliminate it as much as possible. We have processes whereby all overpayments are—there is an attempt at recovery. The area of why overpayments are occurring is identified. Individual managers, including schools, are written to about what the problems are in an attempt to have them rectify the situation.

I think you need to understand that—when you consider that we have about 1,500 locations—we still haven't got a fully integrated computer system whereby we can download information direct from schools to head office. There is a long paper trail, and one of the major causes of overpayments is the length of time between something occurring and its actually being reflected in the payroll. Consequently,

people have departed the scene; leave comes in after they have separated from the department—issues like that. They are all the types of things that we are attempting to address with revised systems.

We have just done a major audit of the whole HR area within central office to pick up again on that particular issue, but there are some other major issues to do with the actual HRMS system, which is a whole-of-Government system, which, when we went to a computerised leave module, created quite a degree of problems for us with overpayment.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for Government members' questions has expired. I call upon the member for Cook.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What method will be used in the current financial year for the allocation of key teacher time? I understand that currently there are 550 resident and 74 full-time visiting key teachers. I ask: will they continue to be employed for 1997 at that level?

**Ms SULLIVAN:** What we have warned schools about is that the one and a half hours that they have been allocated to date will be reduced to one hour for the 1997 school year. We will re-allocate a cash equivalent of the half hours that we have garnered to further support literacy and numeracy in Year 2 and Year 6. Having said that, we have also agreed to undertake a review of the method of operation of key teachers. That's currently under way through the studies forum process, and the QTU have been involved in that discussion as well. So, yes, key teachers will continue. They may or may not continue in the model of delivery that we've currently got. That is up for debate. We have had some very creative suggestions, given the range and nature of our sites, as to how we can do that. The allocation of time will be pulled back somewhat but those funds will still be devoted to literacy and numeracy support.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So some of the money that is in the budget that is allocated to literacy and numeracy programs is actually coming from a reduction in the time for key teachers?

**Ms SULLIVAN:** You could put it that way. You could argue that key teachers support literacy and numeracy, and you've got a number of strategies that support literacy and numeracy of which that is one.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** In October last year, the previous Government announced that \$72m over five years would be spent providing services to students with disability. I note in your answer to the first question today that you have identified savings in the area of Disability Services of \$14m. I ask: how will those savings be achieved? In particular, which parts of the previous program announced in October last year—which targeted additional teaching staff, teacher aides, therapy services, capital works and transport—will now not be delivered?

**Mr QUINN:** The answer to the last part of your question is that none of it will not be delivered, if you like to use two negatives. What we did in identifying that area this morning in the first question was to say

it was a savings. Last year, as you rightly said, that program was funded to the extent of about \$14m. This year, students with disabilities will be funded to the tune of \$19.74m. So in fact we have increased the funding.

What I instanced this morning, if you like, is a budgetary process that you go through when you are formulating your budget: you look at what you might take out in terms of what the previous Government's initiative was and then you replace your own where that one was. It is a slick accounting procedure—a Treasury procedure. We have moved out a \$14m program and put a \$19m one in its place. That is essentially what we have done. That is reflected in the budget figures. Your notion that those funds have been cut out of programs for students with disability is wrong. In fact, the funds have been increased by something in the order of almost \$5m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** With reference to school transport for students with disability, I refer to your election promise to review the 16 kilometre limit on free taxi travel. What provision have you made in the budget for the review and for any additional costs associated with freeing up the system as a result of the review?

**Mr QUINN:** The additional funding which I mentioned also includes a portion to assist those students. This year we will increase the number of students attending local schools. That will reflect the need to increase the taxi transport component. We have also increased the limit from 16 kilometres to 25 kilometres, so that is part of the additional funding that we have allocated for students with disabilities.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What proportion of the additional funding then goes for taxi travel as a result of the extension from 16 kilometres to 25 kilometres?

**Mr KEILY:** The additional for transport for students with disabilities is \$750,000 for 1996-97, which is a part-year effect. It is more in the full year, of course. That is for all transport initiatives. New transport initiatives—I do not have a breakdown of the component just related to the increase in the taxi allowance from 16 to 25 kilometres.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** In last year's budget, there was an allocation of \$5.24m for recurrent expenditure on vocational education. I cannot actually find any reference to vocational education in the budget documents other than the figure that you mentioned earlier today of \$0.5m for convergence. I am wondering if you can explain the difference.

**Mr QUINN:** Vocational education last year had a budget funding of \$13.45m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** That is capital and recurrent. I was referring to the recurrent.

**Mr QUINN:** I have not got a breakdown of that figure. If your assertion is true, then I have not got in front of me a breakdown of the figure at the moment. We will just try to get that figure for you.

**Mr ROUT:** In terms of the recurrent, we have got funding for 10 regional education advisers and six senior policy officers. We have got a particular vocational education project of \$0.158m. We have

the \$478,000 mentioned for the convergence training and we have got a recurrent in the cooperative programs and the senior schooling programs which go direct to schools in grants of a total of \$5.3m.

**Mr BRADY:** My question is to Mrs Robin Sullivan. I refer to page 19 of the Ministerial Program Statements, Staffing Resources—Primary Education. I note that whilst there will be an increase in primary teachers of 544, the number of LOTE teachers is frozen at 512—the same as last year—a decision which, no doubt, will bring joy to the heart of Ms Pauline Hanson and her supporters but to other more progressive citizens not necessarily so. Does this freeze indicate the department's abandonment of bringing LOTE education to the lower grades of primary schools, or what is the position?

**Mrs SULLIVAN:** Yes, it does not reflect that. In fact, there are two, I guess, reviews that are under way, Mr Braddy. We are awaiting the outcomes of those. One is the review of NALSAS that was referred to earlier—the Asian language strategy—which is being undertaken by two directors-general currently and, I think, a Federal representative. They are due to report before the end of the year on some recommendations. The new incoming Federal Government had some concerns about the current NALSAS strategy and in concert with the State Ministers, undertook to have that review. So that is one reason.

The second reason is that the Minister has also indicated that he is seeking advice from the Queensland Curriculum Council as to the nature of the core curriculum and the role of LOTE in that area. So that would be the current reason for the status quo in those teachers.

**Mr BRADY:** Just a brief supplementary question: when are those reviews likely to be completed and when are we likely to get decisions in relation to them?

**Mr QUINN:** I can answer that. The review that has been conducted by the Commonwealth, of course, is out of our control. I understand they are trying to get it done by the end of the year. With regard to QSCO in its review, they have given me some preliminary advice which says—bearing in mind QSCO is representative of the various stakeholders—that their preliminary advice is that there are some concerns about how far you extend LOTE down the primary curriculum area, how far you take it into the secondary, and whether or not it ought to be compulsory for all students in the full range from, say, Years 3 to 10 if you want to go that far. They have now come to me and said they need more time to examine what the priority, if you like, of LOTE within the broader curriculum should be. I understand they are putting together an advisory group to try to come to grips with some of the issues there.

I have indicated that it has to be resolved ASAP, but I think what they are trying to do is look at it in terms of all the key learning areas and not take it as a one-out instance. That is, when they look at the time allocation for all the key learning areas, LOTE will be considered within the broad parameters of

that. I understand that is what QSCO is doing at the present time.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Page 76 of Budget Paper No. 2 indicates \$65m available for airconditioning north Queensland schools and page 77 refers to a \$2m allocation for airconditioning in non-Government schools. I am not sure whether the \$65m includes the two or whether the two is additional. In either case, your document, Education Budget Initiatives, at a glance says that the allocation is \$73m for airconditioning north Queensland schools. I am just wondering if you can explain.

**Mr QUINN:** I think the \$73m not only takes into account the \$65m plus the two—and they are two separate numbers; two separate buckets of money, if you like—the \$73m you have referred to is the \$65m plus the \$8m, which is the total, the two totals. Sixty-five million dollars is the total for the State schools, \$8m is the total for the non-Government. So you have added those two together to get the \$63m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Seventy-three.

**Mr QUINN:** Seventy-three, sorry. The \$65m for the State schools over a period of time and the \$2m you mentioned is \$2m in this budget of a total of \$8m over a period of time.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** How much of that \$73m do you actually intend spending in this budget?

**Mr KEILY:** I believe the figure is \$10m for State and, of course, the \$2m that the Minister has mentioned in relation to non-State.

**Mr QUINN:** Yes, \$12.25m in total.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Does the funding for airconditioning appear in the capital works area of the Budget?

**Mr KEILY:** It is in the capital budget.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What I am getting at is that you have used the figures \$65m and \$73m in the Budget documents; does that mean that the actual figure for capital works has been inflated by using that figure when the figure that should have been used, because of what we are going to spend in this budget, is \$10m?

**Mr KEILY:** I believed that the documentation—the press documentation—talks about the program, the Airconditioning of Schools Program.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** But in the Budget document itself it also mentions \$65m. That is not \$65m being spent this year?

**Mr QUINN:** No.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am looking at the amount that you are claiming to spend on capital works. A substantial proportion of that is unspent capital works, which has been rolled over from the previous year. I am just wondering whether you have also included the \$65m in the total figure for the capital works.

**Mr QUINN:** No.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I will go back and check that again. You answered some questions in relation to airconditioning previously—and if you have not

worked out the details of how the program is going to work, then you might perhaps just say so—but I am wondering what existing schools are to be airconditioned, not new schools, in the current financial year. You mentioned the fact that you have not actually worked out what you are going to do yet for schools where the P & C cannot afford a one-third contribution. So we will just have to wait for that, I suppose. What proportion of the budget is allocated for modifying buildings which do not lend themselves to efficient airconditioning and also to the upgrading of electrical installations?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Just in terms of where the money sits with the capital program—it is in a number of locations. It is actually factored against some of the new schools within north of the twentieth latitude. Some of it is actually apportioned against new buildings going into areas north of the twentieth latitude, too, and the balance of it would sit in just general works and the capital program.

In terms of the actual apportionment, the big items for us in terms of airconditioning this financial year relate to airconditioning the new school at Deeragun and The Willows in Townsville. There are a number of new buildings taking place, for example, new classrooms going into schools in Bohlevale and Bluewater, which also have airconditioning money apportioned against them as part of the Government's decision in terms of the introduction of the initiative.

Earlier in the year, we wrote to the 170-odd schools in the north to establish their interest and their capacity to put airconditioning in this year. Of those, some 44 schools responded, indicating that they had some money to contribute towards the initiative in terms of the two-for-one subsidy process. Of those 44 schools, 36 have indicated an interest to proceed with the program this year, of which about half have put their hands up to be in there as part of a trial process. The others have just said that they have gathered the money and they are really just interested in receiving cash in the hand. Once they have initiated the projects themselves on the ground, we will come to the party with the money after the event.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What about for modifying existing buildings?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** We will only modify buildings as we go in terms of actually putting the airconditioning in place. A number of things will happen. Once airconditioning is initiated at a school or in a building, then there will be the necessary upgrade that goes with it to make it an effective process, and that could cover things like electoral upgrading as well.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Minister, I think you can see that the concern is that the schools that do not have the financial capacity to meet any part of the cost of airconditioning feel as if they are languishing, while the schools which perhaps are in better off areas or which have a greater capacity to raise money through their P & Cs, or whatever, are getting in for the first chop. In some places, there are schools within kilometres of each other in remote areas and

one is being airconditioned and one is being left alone.

**Mr QUINN:** I can understand those concerns.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Will the department meet increased operating costs through the school grants associated with airconditioning plants provided for schools and what allocation has been made, including electricity, in the budget?

**Mr KEILY:** An allocation is provided for the schools in receipt of the capital funds for electricity. That starts in this year at a level of \$350,000 and, of course, rises commensurately with the implementation of the scheme to a figure in the order of \$2.8m on a recurrent basis.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** That is the full cost of maintenance and operation?

**Mr KEILY:** As best can be calculated at this stage, yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** With everybody's agreement, we will have a 15 minute adjournment. We shall meet here again at 6.10.

Sitting suspended from 5.53 to 6.10 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare the hearing resumed. I think the Minister wants to make a comment first.

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, we have got an answer to a question that was asked by the member for Mackay. I ask Frank Young to read it into the record.

**Mr YOUNG:** The question related to the Mackay North High School. The evaluation of the accommodation needs of this school in meeting its 1997 enrolment is currently being undertaken. Should this evaluation show that a minimum requirement will exist according to the department's standards and entitlement, to that degree action will be initiated to provide that accommodation. Demountable buildings, or "tinnies", as the member indicated, are replaced with modular classrooms on a continuing basis across the State. Where it can be shown that the classrooms are still required, then they are replaced by those modular classrooms. The demountables due for replacement at the Mackay North High School are being considered as part of the accommodation evaluation currently being undertaken for this school, and the decision will be made on whether they are replaced or removed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I shall now allow Mr Bredhauer, the member for Cook, to continue questioning.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Government members have fallen over with their questions, apparently.

**The CHAIRMAN:** No, we have not fallen over. We just decided not to worry about asking any more questions. We are starting to get repetition, so there is just no point in doing it.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Okay. We will take that for the record: Government members are repetitious.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That includes questions from Opposition members, too. We better not pursue that. If you get cheeky, we will just crank up again and ask some more.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I refer back to the staffing issue and the 934 additional staff in the budget. I understand about 425 of those are earmarked for enrolment growth. I think the figure I have seen for non-contact time is 309. Then there are other specific allocations, such as the 83 for behaviour management. With those, you already have 817 of the 934 teachers committed to specific tasks. Can you provide me with information about what the average class sizes are in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary classes? What target do you have for reducing class sizes? Are the additional teachers likely to impact at all in reducing class sizes?

**Mr PEACH:** I do not believe we have got the information in front of us, but I can assure you that the information we have is that there is a very small proportion of classes that are oversized in terms of the expectations we have. But probably more significantly than that I can say to you that the student to teacher ratio is a more appropriate measure to make judgments and decisions about the appropriateness of school staffing. We would believe that schools are staffed with a student to teacher ratio to allow them to meet class size targets in the vast majority of instances. Where schools can indicate that the particular arrangements are impossible to put in place because of the different numbers in a year level, for example, then we have indicated in the past we are prepared to look at those as special cases. However, as you would probably be aware, we do not require school principals to adhere rigidly to our class size expectations.

School communities have got a capacity to make decisions about the most appropriate class sizes and class arrangements in their local circumstances. On many occasions, a principal in consultation with his or her staff and school community will indicate that the best arrangements for them are to have some classes larger than what our expectations might be in order to have smaller cases in some other circumstances. However, overall the student to teacher ratio is such that the expectations we have ought to be able to be reached. We undertook a process two years ago at the beginning of the year to examine where classes were over the recommended numbers. On close examination of that and discussion with people in schools about that issue, there were almost no instances across the State where class sizes could not be timetabled to accommodate the expected class sizes. In a couple of instances where that did appear to be impossible, we were prepared to intervene and sort it out.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Can you provide me with that information about class sizes? You said you haven't got it here. Can you provide me with that information on notice?

**Mr PEACH:** Yes, certainly, Mr Bredhauer.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am wondering if you can tell me, of the additional 934 teachers, how many will be allocated to each region.

**Mr QUINN:** We will take that on notice.



**Mr BREDHAUER:** That is fine. I have a fairly detailed question which you may also wish to take on notice which talks about the Ministerial Program Statements at various pages—13, 19, 25, 30, 40, 47, 52—and talks about the additional teacher numbers. Preschool, page 13 of the MPS, shows an increase of 10 teachers. This is something that was raised before. I am interested to know how many of those are for new facilities, enrolment growth, other issues. Please specify. Do you want to take it on notice?

**Mr QUINN:** We can answer that now if you like, if you give them one at a time. What is the first one? Preschools.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** How many for new facilities, how many for enrolment growth.

**Mr QUINN:** Preschool—all for new facilities.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** That is 10. Primary, page 19 of the MPS, shows an increase of 544 teachers. How many of those are for new facilities?

**Mr QUINN:** New facilities—14.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Enrolment growth?

**Mr QUINN:** Enrolment growth—199. Non-contact time—309. Behaviour management—15. Suspension options—that is the alternative programs—11. Subtract 4 for closing schools.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Any for reading recovery? Any additional teachers, I guess, for reading recovery or Wiltshire?

**Mr KEILY:** Not in the Educational Services Program.

**Mr QUINN:** Not in the Educational Services Program, my advice is.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Secondary—252 extra teachers. New facilities?

**Mr QUINN:** What page?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Sorry, page 25.

**Mr QUINN:** New facilities—6. Enrolment growth—169. Behaviour management—44. Suspensions—12. State regionalisation for sports, ex Studies—

**Mr KEILY:** That is the transfer of the sports officers out of the Studies Program into the Schools Operations Program—15 officers.

**Mr QUINN:** Fifteen, and others is 5, giving a total of 251.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Page 30, special education—an increase of 95 teachers.

**Mr QUINN:** Enrolment growth—27. Students with disabilities—69. School rationalisation—minus 1.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Doesn't it show an increase of 95?

**Mr QUINN:** That is 95.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Right. Page 40, education services. The Ministerial Program Statements show an increase of 5 teachers.

**Mr QUINN:** Ed advisers—they are the maths ed advisers. They will cease at the end of this year. That is negative 90. Ed advisers in English will be appointed. That is an additional 45. Literacy and

numeracy initiative—71. Sports officers transferred—minus 15. The "Say no to drugs" has ceased—minus 5. Other items—minus 1. A net effect of plus 5.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Corporate services, page 47 of MPS shows a decrease of 23 teachers. What are those positions?

**Mr QUINN:** Sorry, what was the—

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Page 47.

**Mr QUINN:** Quality assurance officers curriculum is ceasing at the end of the year, that is the negative 23.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So what is happening with the Quality Assurance Program?

**Mr PEACH:** The Quality Assurance Program will remain, but the role undertaken by the Quality Assurance Officers Curriculum will cease from the beginning of next year. Their task was largely to monitor the effectiveness of the beginning of the Shaping the Future Program. Now that that is under way, we believe that that can operate without those people doing that. There will still be, of course, the review officers in each of the regions. The supplementation, though, that the QAOs provided for a couple of years now is not needed because we have passed that hump.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I refer now to QSCO. Page 52 of the MPS states that there is going to be 49 teachers. Is that anticipated to be the full complement of teachers working in QSCO?

**Mr QUINN:** I am advised that for this year only the additional staff will be 45, but it can vary from year to year as projects wax and wane.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** In each sector—preschool, primary, secondary and special—can I get figures on the total current enrolment, the projected enrolment for 1997, the teacher numbers for 1996, the projected teacher numbers for 1997 and the pupil/teacher ratio used for staffing purposes in 1996-97?

**Mr PEACH:** The pupil/teacher ratio will remain constant across that time. The teacher numbers for, say, 1996—we would need to specify a date because clearly it varies on a day-to-day basis, but the predicted enrolments and predicted numbers for next year we can certainly provide.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Can you take that on notice?

**Mr PEACH:** Yes.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Can I pick a date like 30 June?

**Mr PEACH:** Okay.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I come now to the Remote Area Incentives Scheme. The suggestion has been made that the RAIS will increase by \$3.4m to \$5.6m next year. The Budget paper says that there is \$2.3m extra for RAIS on top of the current \$2.2m. I am wondering where the discrepancy is.

**Mr QUINN:** My understanding is that it is due to the fact that we have factored in fringe benefits tax and emergent leave considerations in it as well. The \$2.235m is the total of new additional funding

this year, but when you put in the fringe benefits tax and the emergent leave considerations which are currently in the existing scheme and cash them up and put them back into the total package, that brings it up to the \$5.6m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So the \$5.6m represents the cost to the department, not the benefit to the teachers? The benefit to the teachers actually is a lower amount?

**Mr QUINN:** No, the benefit to the teachers is \$5.6m. Everything is cashed up.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** But did you not say that you were including the FBT?

**Mr QUINN:** In the old scheme, the department used to pay the fringe benefits tax and the emergent leave was a consideration within the budget. That was never reflected in the \$2.1m, but now that we have cashed up those aspects—the fringe benefits tax and the emergent leave—put them in with the \$2.1m and added on an additional \$2.35m, that brings the total to \$5.6m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Sorry, I still do not understand why. If you have included in the \$5.6m a figure for fringe benefits tax, that is surely not a benefit to the teachers in remote areas?

**Mr QUINN:** We have cashed it up; they get the dollars.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Sorry, I am with you now. Budget Paper No. 3, in relation to capital works, talks about teacher accommodation. It is page 75. It talks about the provision for teacher accommodation which is said here to be a total of roughly \$1.6m, which includes only two new units of teacher accommodation, a three-bed house and a twin dwelling unit on Saibai Island, both scheduled to cost \$341,000 each. I ask whether those two projects have been rolled over from previous budgets because of difficulties in finding appropriate sites for houses, whether in fact the budget for teacher accommodation has been substantially reduced in 1996-97 and whether in fact what you have done is taken money away from teacher accommodation and redirected it into the Remote Area Incentives Scheme cash allowances?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** To address your first question there, I am not sure whether it is rolled over from a previous year, I would have to check on that and get back to you on that one.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** One of them has been on the program for about three years, four years.

**Mr YOUNG:** The issue of title—

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Native title was the issue in both cases, I am sure.

**Mr YOUNG:** I think we are probably held up on some other projects still.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** The other issue at the moment is that there is a review under way in terms of the Government Employee Housing Scheme. As you might be aware, the previous Government had intended to set up a Government Employee Housing Scheme which centralised all staff housing within the Department of Public Works. At the present time,

there is a review under way to assess whether that is the place it should be for the future or whether those housing responsibilities and housing funding should come back to individual departments.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Sorry, that does not explain the question I am asking. The question I am asking is that the last budget for teacher accommodation was, I think, \$2.6m, including funds for the completion of about 23 units of accommodation, and that it has gone down to \$1.6m, which includes \$700,000 for two houses that are unlikely to be built in this program anyway, and that effectively what you have done is redirect resources away from teacher accommodation into the Remote Area Incentives Scheme?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** If we could take that one on notice?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am happy for you to take it on notice. The next question I have is another fairly detailed one in relation to the Remote Area Incentives Scheme, and you can make a determination yourselves about how you take it. Could you indicate which of the following areas were counted as part of the RAIS in 1995-96 and 1996-97 respectively, and could you provide a breakdown of budgeted 1995-96, 1996-97 budget expenditure and actuals for 1995-96 in the area of study assistance, scholarships and HECS? Can you provide me with that information, or do you want to take it on notice?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, can we take it on notice? We cannot get that level of detail.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have had a lot of concern raised with me by teachers in very remote areas about the potential disadvantage that they will suffer under the new scheme, especially if they are put into a higher tax bracket, and that cash incentives actually mean they are unable to access things like family allowance supplements and those sorts of things. I seek your assurance that the basis of the new arrangements of the Remote Area Incentives Scheme is that no teacher will be disadvantaged.

**Mr QUINN:** We have put out an indicative proposal for RAIS and we have invited the QTU to come in and talk to us about it. The two non-negotiables are that the amount of funding is non-negotiable because it is included in the budget and that no teacher in an existing Remote Area Incentives Scheme will be disadvantaged. We are willing to talk—and we have invited the union to come in and talk to us about all the details, and we will work through that with them.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I do not know if you have your FitzGerald audit report with you, but in the list of recommendations on page 31, it talks about overall planning and contract budgeting arrangements under which the Education Department operates. It says that the department should have full management and control over the allocation of resources, including the purchase of school transport, and I notice that the budget has once again transferred the school transport budget back to the Department of Transport. I also note from the MPS for Transport that the budget has been cut by \$470,000. Does the Education Department have

policy responsibility on school transport matters and will all students entitled to transport assistance retain that entitlement on an equitable basis, given the transfer of the responsibility back to Queensland Transport and the funding cut? I wonder whether the Government has ignored the advice that FitzGerald has given. Will the key education stakeholders be involved in decisions about FitzGerald recommendations, which FitzGerald recommendations are implemented and which are not implemented?

**Mr QUINN:** To give you an idea of the funding for the School Transport Program—last year, it was \$96.7m. This year we have budgeted for \$98.47m. As you rightly said, it has been transferred back to the Department of Transport. There is no change in policy. So the issue of who is going to be disadvantaged does not arise, because there is no policy change. There is an issue highlighted in the report about who should have responsibility for it. We are still to work our way, as a Government, through the FitzGerald recommendations. No doubt this will come on the agenda some time in the future again—as to who takes responsibility for school transport.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** On what basis did you make the decision to transfer it back to the Department of Transport?

**Mr QUINN:** You are probably aware that that was included in the coalition's election policy.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Despite expected enrolment increases and the establishment of new schools, the Public Service numbers for primary schools have declined by 11. I have ascertained that from the Ministerial Program Statements on page 19. Could this be explained? The AAEP numbers for primary schools have increased by only 12. This does not seem enough to match enrolment growth, new school openings and a reduction in Public Service numbers. Can that be explained? Similarly, the increase of only eight in AAEP numbers for secondary schools seems small given the enrolment growth. That is on page 25 of the MPS. Can the Minister confirm that the formula for allocating AAEP hours to schools will be the same for all sectors as it was at the beginning of 1995?

**Mr QUINN:** With regard to the primary one—the new facilities will receive an additional six public servants. There are two for other various reasons. The reduction is in fact associated with the completion of the SIMS project, or part of the SIMS project, and there is a reduction of 19 public servants there. That is where you get the negative 11 from. But in terms of the necessary public servants—or AAEPs, if you like—in terms of new facilities, the necessary public servants have been accommodated for. In terms of AAEPs for enrolment growth—there are an additional 13 included in this budget. Do you want the same ones for secondary?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Page 25 is the secondary.

**Mr QUINN:** Public servants—new facilities, two; and there are five in terms of student behaviour management. That brings the total to seven. Was the other part of the question about AAEPs?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Yes, an increase of eight. There are only eight additional AAEP numbers for secondary schools. It just does not seem enough.

**Mr QUINN:** No change in secondary.

**Mr KEILY:** There has been no change made to the AAEP formula. It is the same as in previous years. So those two growth figures in AAEP represent the entitlements of schools under their new enrolment projections.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** That was the latter part of my question. The formula for allocating the hours has not changed?

**Mr KEILY:** No.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Mr Peach, how many departmental staff are employed in the Minister's office or have duties directly relating to ministerial requirements? What is the cost of those staff?

**Mr PEACH:** I do not believe there are any departmental staff employed in the Minister's office.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have a question about school grants. Could the Minister provide the actual and budget allocation for school grants for 1995-96 and the budget for 1996-97? In particular, I would like to know if any additional financial responsibilities have been devolved to schools, or are planned to be devolved to schools, such as utilities or others?

**Mr QUINN:** Last financial year, 1995-96, including Helping P & Cs with the Basics, the school grant total was \$61m. This financial year it is estimated to be \$68.9m. The grant this year includes moneys for additional resources to primary and special schools to meet identified needs. That is an increased funding allocation of \$3.4m. There is \$4m of a \$7m program to be provided to meet a backlog of orders for tractors and ride-on mowers in schools. The funding also is directed towards equipment replacement in schools. Recurrent funding obviously needs to be maintained to meet projected enrolment growth. Those are the reasons for the increase in funding.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** And the latter part of the question about the devolution of financial responsibilities for utilities—is there any plan for the forthcoming year?

**Mr QUINN:** They are not included in the budget.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So you are not saying whether or not there are any planned?

**Mr QUINN:** They are not included in the budget.

**Mr PEACH:** Mr Chairman, could I just clarify my previous answer to Mr Bredhauer slightly?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr PEACH:** It is true that there are a couple of people who work in the Minister's office who are technically departmental employees who are on leave from the department. However, their salaries are paid for by the Minister's office. I just thought it was worth clarifying that issue.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Two, is it?

**Mr PEACH:** The Minister's senior policy adviser is a departmental employee. There is a ministerial press secretary and, I think, two secretaries. But they are on leave from the department and are being paid by the Minister's office, not by the department.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am just wondering what has happened to the Sunsmart program, which was allocated \$2.9m in the last budget.

**Mr QUINN:** It has been rolled over into the school grant.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Will the Sunsmart program continue?

**Mr QUINN:** Not as such. The money has been preserved but put into the school grant.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So you have knocked over the Sunsmart program?

**Mr YOUNG:** An additional \$6.50 per student in primary schools and an additional \$1.10 per student in secondary schools will be added to the amount of money into the school grant. That is equivalent to the amount of money that was provided for Sunsmart. That will enable schools themselves to decide what it is that they want to spend that money on in the Sunsafe program—whether it is hats for the kids in the earlier years, buying more sunscreen, or whatever. But the amount of money has been put into the schools.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** And if they want to spend it on photocopier paper, they can spend it on photocopier paper?

**Mr YOUNG:** No. There will still be advice going to the schools, and it will be identified separately in this year's grant. Certainly there will be an expectation that they will continue to use it to make sure that students are protected.

**Ms SPENCE:** There is no requirement that they have to use it for Sunsafe?

**Mr YOUNG:** No, but there was no requirement that the students wore their hats, either, which were given out in the Sunsmart bags.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** A lot of them did, though.

**Mr QUINN:** A lot of them brought their own, too.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What allocations have been made in the budget to account for any possible wage rises that might occur through enterprise bargaining agreements?

**Mr QUINN:** There are none in this Budget. Those things are normally handled through a Cabinet Budget review process.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I refer to a comment that you made earlier in relation to the Treasury Forward Estimate savings that you were identifying. I am conscious of the pea and thimble trick that seems to go on, as you mentioned in respect of disability services. You have mentioned that you were cutting 600,000 from the occupational stress program. Given that teacher-related stress is a significant and growing issue, have you taken it away and replaced it somewhere else? I understand that it was \$800,000

last year in the Budget. Have you taken \$600,000 out? What is left?

**Mr QUINN:** Your notion that stress claims are increasing is actually not borne out by the figures. In actual fact, in 1995-96 the cost of stress claims reduced by 25 per cent, and the actual number of claims reduced by 9 per cent. Of course, we realise that teacher stress impacts upon the quality of educational services. The figures bear out the fact that stress is not as high an issue in terms of budgetary considerations as it was before, because there has been a reduction in claims by a certain factor. Also, one of the major concerns with regard to teacher stress is school discipline or behaviour management in schools. One initiative in this Budget is a substantial allocation of funds to address those issues in schools, in terms of specialist teachers going into schools, the area of alternative programs, those sorts of things. We think they will have an impact on stress levels in the classroom. As I said, the notion that stress levels are responsible for more claims simply is not true.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Just in conclusion, can you tell me what has happened to the Occupational Stress Program that was set up? Has it been abolished?

**Mr YOUNG:** No. As part of that, the department appointed a number of officers in regions—nine officers—and those officers will continue to work in terms of rehabilitation with staff. There is also a teacher survey which is being undertaken, which will provide us with data. That is not just across the State but that is national as well in terms of teacher stress. Projects were undertaken under the occupational stress initiative which have provided us with information that can be passed on to teachers, say in projects dealing with students with disability in terms of lifting—those sorts of issues. So there were a number of things that were done under the occupational stress initiative which will continue. But certainly the nine people will continue. Jim McGowan has just reminded me that we are continuing the employment of an additional six and a half people in the regions until the end of the year to ensure that the impetus in the program continues.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So what is the budget for the Occupational Stress Program for 1996-97?

**Mr YOUNG:** It is \$1.1m compared with a budget of \$1m last year.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** One of the other issues that I think you mentioned in answer to that first question was in relation to the Drug Education Program, "Say no to drugs". Given the comment that you made in relation to that first question, where does that stand now?

**Mr QUINN:** The funding for that "Say no to drugs" program has been used to fund the Life Education Centres.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So the Drug Education Program has stopped and you have transferred the resources over to the Life Education Centres.

**Mr YOUNG:** Robin may be able to answer this better than I, but there are a number of officers who

are involved in drug education. There were simply those ones who were involved in that additional part of the program that have been terminated. But Robin may be able to answer that better.

**Mrs SULLIVAN:** The budget for this year for drug education is \$770,000. What we are planning to do is to give some grants to regions—between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a grant—to do specific local activities. There is a Marijuana Education Project to be completed. We are going to do some more work in the prevention of binge drinking and smoking. A survey of student drug use will be completed and there will be the money that the Minister has already announced going to Life Education Centres. There are four full-time equivalent people working in the area.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What is the budget within the department for gender equity issues for 1996-97? How does that compare with last year's budget?

**Mr YOUNG:** There is an Equity subprogram, with a budget of \$656,000 last year and a budget this year of \$758,000. That ranges across the issues of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders, women, people with a non-English-speaking background and people with disabilities. That subprogram looks at all of those issues and allocates money to projects that they would see as being important. They are talking about, in terms of 1996-97, an increase in EEO practices in schools and other work sites to enhance opportunities for all staff, an increase in the employment and career progression of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, people with non-English-speaking backgrounds and women. They are aiming to work towards eliminating discrimination against target group members. They are also aiming to integrate employment principles into policy practices and procedures. So there is an increased amount of money in this year's budget for the Equity subprogram.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** My next question to the Minister relates to the review that was established of Student Performance Standards. I wonder what SPS will finish up like after the review. What processes have you put in place to ensure that parents are given a uniform and consistent report on their children's learning achievements?

**Mr QUINN:** I asked the Queensland School Curriculum Office to undertake that review. My understanding is that the initial review is completed. There is a document out for consultation among the relevant stakeholder groups. I think some of the documents have also gone to the regions and some schools probably have them as well. I understand QSCO is waiting for feedback by 23 October. Obviously, if adjustments need to be made in the document between then and the beginning of the year, they will be done. I remind you that QSCO, or QCC, has broad stakeholder representation, so there is plenty of opportunity for the relevant interest groups to participate in the review.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What about the issue of guaranteeing parents uniform and consistent reporting on learning achievements?

**Mr QUINN:** Once the scripts for each of the levels is written, they will be implemented in all

schools. That is the idea of SPS, or whatever its name is going to be. There are recommendations in the report about consistency of reporting.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Is there a budget for implementing the recommendations of the review?

**Mr PEACH:** Mr Bredhauer, as far as the department is concerned, we have maintained the employment of various advisers and so on across the State in our support centres in anticipation of a remodelled SPS becoming available from the start of next year. Our planning for the next couple of years takes that into account, yes.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** The non-State school assistance budget has risen by roughly \$17.7m, or 8.7 per cent. I am wondering how much of this allocation is going to kindergartens, particularly, and how much is allocated to the Living Away From Home Allowance Scheme.

**Mr QUINN:** Yes, in this budget, to the C and K Association, \$18.1m has been allocated. The Living Away From Home Allowance and the Student Hostel Support Scheme will receive \$4.4m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What proportion of the increase is incorporated in those two figures?

**Mr YOUNG:** It is the community kindergarten that you are talking about specifically?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Both of them. Has the C and K budget gone up? You are saying that there is \$17.7m extra for non-State schools. I am just wondering how much of that \$17.7m is going to C and K and how much is going to the Living Away From Home Allowance.

**Mr QUINN:** If you are asking proportions, we do not go to that detail.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Can I take that on notice? Can you provide me with that information?

**Mr QUINN:** The C and K last year got \$16.9m; this year, \$18.05. That looks as though it has been rounded up for the previous figure I gave you, \$18.1m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** With reference to the Treasurer's announcement regarding tyre and oil taxes, what account has been taken of these tax increases in your budget forecast? How much does the Education Department expect to pay in additional oil and tyre taxes?

**Mr KEILY:** It was not possible for us to factor those in because they were only announced with the Budget.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So will you be making an assessment of your liability for tyre and oil taxes?

**Mr KEILY:** When we see the legislation and know what the effect is. I do not know what the effect will be, but once we have the opportunity to peruse that, we will make an assessment of the cost.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** It might have to be a question on notice in the Parliament at some time. Minister, you have commented that you support school councils, or you think the idea of school councils has merit. You have put out media statements to the effect that the Government is intending to pursue school councils. I have a range

of questions. What area of the department will be responsible for school councils? Which senior executives in the department will be responsible? How much has been allocated to support the implementation of the development of school councils? How many staff are likely to be involved? What development and training will be provided for schools both for principals and school communities who are implementing school councils?

**Mr PEACH:** Mr Bredhauer, there is no allocation in the budget for school councils. Any consideration of that matter is very much at an early stage and will be developed over time. So there is nothing in this year's budget in relation to school councils.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** So we are not likely to see school councils in the 1997 school year?

**Mr PEACH:** I think the development of the concept needs to be progressed to a stage where it can be discussed openly and consultation can occur. Those things would take time. So there is no budget arrangement in place and whether or not that progresses is, of course, a decision for Government in due course when the Minister chooses to take the matter forward to Government.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I could not actually find the specific reference, but the Ministerial Program Statements refer to the evaluation of a range of reform initiatives linked to an EBA in approved trial schools. I am just wondering what the reform initiatives are, their anticipated savings and which schools are in the trial. I could find it if you want it.

**Mr YOUNG:** It may well be that you are talking about the workplace reform initiatives.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Yes. Page 8, the second last dot point, was the first reference. I think it is in a number of places.

**Mr MCGOWAN:** The initiatives referred to in the MPS are those arising out of last enterprise bargain for the operational areas, which included the Queensland Teachers Union, the SPSFQ and the Miscellaneous Workers Union. They are based upon initiatives from schools referred through that to the ECC, which is the Education Consultative Committee. They require the endorsement of the department and those three unions before being put in place. They are not about cost savings in general terms; they are about increasing flexibility, freeing up some of the resources. Indeed, the department has supported some of those initiatives at a cost of, I think, somewhere in excess of \$600,000 in the last financial year, but they are linked to the last enterprise agreement.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Thank you, Jim. In the MPS on page 24, the current grants and subsidies to secondary schools went from a budget of \$15.5m to an actual of \$22.5m and back to a budget of \$15.2m. I am wondering if you can explain those discrepancies for me.

**Mr QUINN:** Yes, it is the school uniform allowance.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** The school uniform allowance? While we are on the school uniform

allowance, when you announced the review of the school uniform allowance you indicated to schools that you were considering reallocating those resources to individual schools. Have you not done that? Is it one of your straight-out savings that you nominated to Treasury?

**Mr QUINN:** Obviously, we have not done it. What we did was to use the funding in other program areas. The fact that this budget has an increase of \$266m says that the money is there; it has just been used in a different way. I took the view that it was more effective used in the ways that we have done it in this budget than to allocating it to schools.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Specifically, how much has been allocated to the Helping P & Cs with the Basics Program for the next financial year?

**Mr KEILY:** The figure is \$9m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am wondering what the budget for environmental education centres and programs is for the next financial year.

**Mr YOUNG:** Environmental education centres, the budget is \$507,000.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am wondering if the department will be conducting any energy or waste management initiatives in the current financial year. If so, how much money is expected? How much is expected to be saved and will any external consultants be used to undertake the management initiatives?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** We will certainly be undertaking some recycling programs. We have a program under the Better Asset Solutions Program in the department called the SCRAP program which is about encouraging paper and cardboard recycling. We have actually engaged a company called Visy Recycling, which does a lot of recycling in Queensland, to manage the program on our behalf.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I am sorry; I missed that last bit.

**Mr WILLIAMS:** We have actually made provision for \$125,000 this year for what we call a SCRAP campaign in Queensland schools about paper recycling. A company called Visy Recycling has been engaged to manage the program on our behalf. We are commencing with a pilot program in the Brisbane metropolitan area this month and we intend to extend that as a Statewide initiative in 1997.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** You mentioned earlier in your answer the Better Asset Solutions Program which is, I understand, a fairly wide-ranging program which will be undertaken on a voluntary basis in the first instance, whereby schools will be encouraged to take much greater responsibility for managing all of their property assets. What budget has been allocated for additional resources to schools to help them to undertake that work?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** This year is probably the initial year of the program. The first initiative we have going is our program for a \$250,000 information kit that we are going to develop to put into schools to try to encourage them to manage some of the resource issues associated with the facilities

themselves. There is no actual budget associated with the program this year.

One of the things that the department will be taking responsibility for from 1 July next year is the Repairs and Maintenance Program, which will be a \$55m program. Currently, that program is managed by the Department of Public Works but will come back to us from next year. A component part of that will go into schools, just as Minor Works money has, to give the schools themselves a degree of flexibility in terms of what they do with their facilities. It is a developmental program over a number of years.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Will they continue to use the Department of Public Works to undertake that work when the money is given to the schools?

**Mr WILLIAMS:** Technically, we are now untied from the Department of Public Works in a number of areas. In the future, the choice will be theirs as to whether they want to use Public Works or some other service provider.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I come back to the issue—and jump in if you want to—that there is a lot of concern in schools about what they see as the substantial move which is about to occur in relation to school-based management—in terms of leading schools, the devolution of utilities and the Better Asset Solution issues as I mentioned before—which is going to generate a considerable additional workload in schools. There is not a lot of confidence in SIMS, I can tell you, to empower them to deal with a lot of those additional administrative tasks. Has the budget allocated any additional resources for schools that might be used on a trial or voluntary basis in any of these programs? Is it anticipated in future budgets that those resources would be provided?

**Mr QUINN:** Because there has been no decision made about school-based management, that is reflected in the lack of funding within the budget itself for these sorts of initiatives. I am aware that there is concern that, if we move towards a skill-based management approach, that responsibilities will be devolved without appropriate resources. Those are some of the issues we have to resolve as we start looking at school-based management in detail.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What is the funding for the ESL program for the next financial year?

**Mr QUINN:** The budget for ESL for the 1996-97 year is \$6.393m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** How much has been allocated to the old Interest Assistance Subsidy Scheme for non-Government schools?

**Mr QUINN:** To meet the continuing claims under the old Interest Assistance Subsidy Scheme, the budget contains provision for \$4.5m.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** How does that compare to last year's budget?

**Mr DUCK:** I think last year's was about \$5.5m, but the Interest Assistance Scheme is winding down. It is being taken over by the Capital Assistance Scheme. Therefore, the money for the Capital

Assistance Scheme has gone up and the money for the Interest Assistance Scheme is coming down.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What is the budget for the Capital Assistance Scheme?

**Mr DUCK:** There is \$20m for capital assistance in total—\$15.5m for the Capital Assistance Scheme and \$4.5m for the Interest Assistance Scheme.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** What are the 1995-96 budget and actual amounts and the 1996-97 allocations for Commonwealth General Recurrent Grants for Government and non-Government schools in Queensland?

**Mr QUINN:** Can we take that on notice?

**Mr BREDHAUER:** There are a few other questions associated with that. Take them all on notice.

**The CHAIRMAN:** At this point, the time for non-Government members has expired. I call upon the member for Redlands.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Minister, page 23 of the MPS shows that the retention rate for males is well below that of females. It is something in the order of 11 or 12 per cent. What steps is the department taking to address this problem? How much is allocated to funding it?

**Mrs SULLIVAN:** As the only woman on the panel, I would like to respond on behalf of the boys. This is a nationwide phenomenon, in fact. There is quite a bit of investigation going on in relation to the issue. However, our initial thoughts are that it may be that the boys are leaving school early when they have the opportunity to undertake either full-time employment or courses at TAFE. Therefore, it is our thinking at the moment that it is some upturn in the economy, particularly in the kind of jobs that are available to boys. However, I need to acknowledge that it is an Australiawide trend and it has been decreasing over the last few years.

The sort of actions that we are taking are first of all research into the reasons why and, secondly, I think you have already heard today about some of the significant achievements in vocational educational and training in our schools. Currently, State secondary schools contribute over 3 million hours worth of training to the State training profile. I think that is an acknowledgment that many of our boys, and girls for that matter, are achieving significant employment skills while still at secondary school.

We also have some initiatives for what I call "permanent part-time" work in schools. This involves students who may be working two days and attending school three days. That does not necessarily show up in this data. We are currently working with the new Federal Government on the Modern Australian Apprenticeship Trainee Scheme, which is looking at paying a youth wage, as you are probably aware, to further increase the training of our young people. Those are some of the initiatives that we are looking into to address this problem.

**Mr HEGARTY:** I will follow that up with a supplementary question. The same table also highlights a very low retention rate for Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander students—again around 40 per cent. What is the department doing to address this problem, and is the Government intending to use hostels such as might be the case in Western Australia?

**Mr YOUNG:** The answer to the latter part of the question is: no. As to the retention rate—as I said in answer to an earlier question, the retention rate is the best in Australia by far. What we have done to try to improve that is to give permanency to the community education councillors and to the Aboriginal teacher aides within our schools. Both of those two categories of employees who have been working with us for over 20 years are now permanent and therefore we feel, as do they, that they can work form a more solid base in that they are permanent rather than temporary. We are increasing the number of Aboriginal teachers that we have on staff—190. Another 30 will graduate at the end of the year. And all of those are starting to add to that process as well. That would be a basic answer. There were some other issues that I raised in an earlier answer to a similar question.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Where are the Aboriginal and Islander teachers being trained?

**Mr YOUNG:** In a range of places—in universities. We also have a project that runs with James Cook University for the training of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in their home communities. It is very well known in the remoter communities and in the Torres Strait islands that the Aboriginal and Islander people are often very reluctant to move away to a city to attend university for a period of three or four years. In 1990, the Department of Education took the teacher education programs to the islands. Across the Torres Strait, we now have somewhere in excess of 30 Torres Strait Island people who have graduated as teachers through James Cook University by studying on their own islands. We are currently expecting 30 to graduate, some from the islands and some from Aboriginal communities across the State. We have programs that operate at Cherbourg, Woorabinda, Cunnamulla, Mount Isa, Dajarra and in Aboriginal communities right around the cape and gulf. That program will turn out about 30 graduates at the end of the year. Other universities would be turning out something like 10 to 20 graduates.

**Mr TANTI:** Page 57 of the MPS states that there will be a new university campus in the western corridor. I understand that campus will be located in Ipswich. Where will the new campus of the University of Queensland in Ipswich be located? What will the University of Queensland do with the student places allocated for 1996 for Ipswich before any new campus is constructed?

**Mr QUINN:** Mr Chairman, you would probably be aware of the ongoing discussions and toing-and-froing about the proposed site at Ipswich that the University of Queensland is committed to embark upon. There was the earmarking, if you like, of the old railway yards workshop at Ipswich, which has been proven to be unsuitable because of its heritage listing. The university indicated that it was not prepared to proceed on that basis and has another

preferred site—Challinor. We currently have a working party in place with representatives of the Office of Higher Education, Family Services and Treasury working on acquiring the Challinor site. That will be conditional upon, of course, family services being able to find alternative accommodation for the residents of the current Challinor Centre.

We are hopeful that they will have a report to us by the end of this month and the issue can be resolved as soon as possible. You will know that this budget contains a sum of \$4.4m for the site acquisition. I understand that Family Services may indeed be seeking additional funds in order to provide alternative accommodation for the residents of Challinor. In regard to the places, they have been secured by the University of Queensland, which has given a commitment to take the students on board its St Lucia campus until the new facility is in place at Ipswich.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Considerable expense has been incurred in previous budgets establishing the Wiltshire curriculum review, which identified that a charter of values should be developed. Has the charter of values been developed and, if so, what is being done with the document?

**Mr PEACH:** Mr Chairman, thank you for that question. You are correct that a charter of values was to be developed and it was to flow from the vision of the Queensland Curriculum Council. That vision was established and the department then set about to develop a charter of values for State schools. A draft of that was developed. However, the Minister became concerned when that draft charter was presented to him by me, because of the plethora of values that were being developed around the State and which have the capacity to impact on teachers. I would cite the charter of values itself, the Code of Conduct for Teachers in State Schools, the organisational values in our strategic plan, the Board of Teacher Registration's set of values, a code of conduct that is being developed, and the Queensland Teachers Union Code of Conduct. I think I have left one out. But it is quite clear that, if you are a teacher in Queensland in 1996, there is a potential risk of being beset with a whole range of sets of values which you may be expected to adhere to in your daily working life. The Minister therefore asked that I try to institute some process to bring some sense of order and commonsense to that, and I would hope that we can achieve that some time by the end of this financial year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will find that information valuable.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Occupational and physiotherapists provide essential services for many students with special needs. Page 30 of the MPS does not show numbers for this group, although I notice that guidance officers rate a separate mention. How many occupational and physiotherapists are employed?

**Mr QUINN:** The budget for occupational therapy and physiotherapy services this financial year will be \$3.563m. That is a slight increase on last year. Essentially, the allocation this year will be in



terms of State-funded places for occupational therapists—34.5. There is a small component of Federal funding that supplements that, and that will purchase 1.6 additional places. State-funded physiotherapy services provide 35.7 places. The Commonwealth will weigh in with 5.1 places as well. We also anticipate there will be an additional 10 funded places made available through the Students with Disabilities initiative. That will boost the numbers again.

**Mr HEGARTY:** Speech language pathologists also provide a valuable service for these students. Similar to occupational and physiotherapy services, no mention is made of them in the MPS. Can the Minister also give a commitment that the services provided by speech language pathologists will be continued?

**Mr QUINN:** The budget allocation this year shows a slight increase to \$5.377m. These are critical services in terms of literacy and numeracy communication skills for students with disabilities and so on. The budget this year provides for 108.5 places across the regions in Queensland. There should be a further five, I understand, positions to enhance services to students with disabilities. They are also developing draft guidelines for the provision of educational speech language therapy services to schools, and they will be distributed to schools in the foreseeable future. The short answer to your question is: yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The non-Government members have indicated that there are two more questions they would like to ask.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Or maybe three.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Okay, maybe three. In the spirit of the hearing, we will declare that in order.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** One of them might go on notice, I think.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Let us see if it does.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** It is a detailed question about Commonwealth specific purpose funding. Page 34 of Budget Paper No. 2 states that Commonwealth specific purpose payments for education total \$257m for 1996-97. Page 6 of the MPS states that the amount is \$466.6m. I am wondering if that discrepancy can be explained. Would the Minister please identify the specific purpose programs which have been terminated and the amount of funding provided, budgeted and actual, for each of these in 1995-96? Can the Minister identify any new specific purpose programs and the amounts provided for them in 1996-97? Could the Minister list continuing specific purpose programs with their respective 1995-96 budgeted and actual funding and the amounts allocated for them in 1996-97?

**Mr QUINN:** It is too detailed. We will take it on notice.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** I have a question about curriculum coordination time. Will curriculum coordination time continue in its present form in 1997? What was the budgeted and actual expenditure on CCT in 1995-96, and what is allocated for 1996-97?

**Mr QUINN:** There should be no change.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Okay. Finally—I have a few more, but nevertheless—page 75 of Budget Paper No. 2 under "General" states—

"The Department is examining options to realise significant savings through increased efficiencies in administration which will be redirected to enhance educational services at the school level."

I wonder what the "options to realise significant savings through increased efficiencies in administration" might mean.

**Mr QUINN:** I understand that the use of technology is being considered. We mentioned the SIMS program before and the impact it will have on regions with respect to teacher leave and teacher pay and things of that nature. As those initiatives roll forward, then obviously there will be less reliance upon personnel in the regional offices.

**Mr BREDHAUER:** Okay, I have got that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Mr Bredhauer. As we have agreed that the time has expired, that concludes the examination of the Estimates for the Minister for Education and the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 3 September 1996. I thank the Minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance.

We just have to move a motion. It will not be a motion that is going to cause great debate. I move—

"That pursuant to section 4.2 of the Parliamentary Papers Act 1992, the Committee authorises the publication of all documents presented to it in the course of its hearings and authorises the publication of written replies and other documents which have been forwarded to it."

I understand that the member for Cook, Mr Bredhauer, has seconded that. Are all Committee members in favour of that? We are all in favour of that. The motion is carried. Our next meeting will be at 10 a.m. on 1 October.

**Ms SPENCE:** But they don't have to come.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That does not include everybody! We are just doing our homework here. Having made that little declaration so that our members know when we are meeting next and having finalised all of these things, I declare this public hearing closed.

The Committee adjourned at 7.24 p.m.