

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE F

Mr V. P. Lester (Chair) Mr J. J. Hegarty
 Hon. P. J. Braddy Mr N. S. Roberts
 Mr S. D. Bredhauer Mr F. J. Tanti

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. R. J. Quinn, Minister for Education
 Mr F. Peach, Director-General
 Ms R. Sullivan, Deputy Director-General
 (Curriculum)
 Mr F. Young, Deputy Director-General
 (Corporate Services)
 Ms L. Hackwood, Director, Information Planning
 and Management
 Mr R. Williams, Director, Facilities and Services
 Mr G. Lamshed, Acting Director, Finance
 Mr J. Pitman, Director, Office of the Board of
 Senior Secondary School Studies
 Mr J. Tunstall, Director, Office of Queensland
 School Curriculum Council

The Committee commenced at 8.31 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee F officially open. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 1997 for the areas as set out in the Sessional Orders. The organisational units will be examined in the following order: Department of Education; and Department of Training and Industrial Relations.

I remind members of the Committee and Ministers that the time limit for questions is one minute, and answers must be no longer than three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning, and a double chime will sound the expiration of the time limits. The questioner may consent to an extension of time for answers. A double chime will also sound two minutes after an extension of time has been given. Sessional Orders require that at least half the time available for questions and answers in respect of each organisational unit be allocated to non-Government members and that any time expended when the Committee deliberates in private is to be equally appropriated between the Government and non-Government members.

I ask the departmental witnesses to identify themselves before they answer a question so that Hansard can record that information in the transcript. In accordance with Sessional Orders dated 4 June 1997, a member who is not a Committee member may, with the Committee's leave, ask the Minister questions. In this regard, the Committee has agreed that it will automatically grant leave to any non-Committee member who wishes to question the Minister. Also, in accordance with Sessional Orders,

each Minister is permitted to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

In relation to media coverage of Estimates Committee F hearing, the Committee has resolved that television film coverage be allowed for the first five minutes of each department. They must think we are very interesting; I do not even see any. We might have to upgrade our act—the lot of us! The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

I welcome you, Minister. Would you like to make a brief introductory statement?

Mr QUINN: Thank you, Mr Chairman. Education welcomes the opportunity to put before the Committee its budget Estimates for 1997-98. It is a significant budget in terms of Government resources—some \$3.3 billion, which includes \$273m in capital works. In this budget there are significant improvements both in terms of the number of new schools we are opening and in terms of the programs that we have put in place.

I think the Committee would know that, this year, there has been a significant refocus of the department onto improving student learning outcomes through a number of means. Our Leading Schools Program, which will commence on 1 July, certainly is a step in the right direction in terms of improving student learning outcomes. We have indicated that a pilot program will commence for a 12-month period, and further schools will come in in other drafts in the next two years. Allied with that, of course, is a significant restructure within the department itself. That involves the abolition of the old regions and the school support centres and bringing into being 36 district structures. With all of these changes there is an ongoing commitment to professional development within our teaching force because of the significant changes that will be occurring within the next two to three years.

In money terms—there is certainly increased money in areas where we know that we will need to focus within those two to three years. For instance, in technology, which is a significant expenditure for this department, we have allocated some \$27m for new information technology and teacher training. We believe that that will be an area where we will have to continue to invest significant amounts of money in the foreseeable future in order to bring new technologies into the classroom and bring our teachers up to speed with the impact of those technologies and how to use them in the classroom.

The Committee will also note the significant improvements in the Remote Area Incentive Scheme. This was one that we flagged last year, and it will be ongoing next year as well. There are continual improvements in the amounts of money and specialist teachers allocated for students with disabilities. Again, those are key issues for teachers in classrooms. Behaviour management also has a significant increase in terms of funding and the commitment by this Government. For the second year, gifted and talented students also receive dedicated funding of almost \$1m, up from slightly

less than half a million dollars last year. The ongoing program of airconditioning schools north of the 20th parallel is funded again this year to the tune of approximately \$20m. That is the second phase of the \$65m over four years to which we gave a commitment. Non-Government schools also have increased their funding to almost \$200m. They also, of course, share in the Cool Schools initiative.

So there are significant enhancements in many of the major programs within this particular portfolio. There are some cost-saving measures in terms of the reallocation of resources into areas more critical to the department's preferred direction. All those measures which we put in place last year and which are continuing this year are designed to put more money into schools, to give more authority and flexibility to schools, placing them at the centre of the action and allowing them to make the decisions that are in the best interests of their students.

Mr Chairman, as I said before, we would welcome the opportunity to expand on those programs that are indicated in the Program Statements. I understand that there may be some difficulty in deciphering some of the new portfolio areas—the papers themselves—because of the restructure, but we are more than willing to provide that detail to the Committee to enable it to understand what this department is doing.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Minister. We will now kick the ball off, as they say. The first period of questions will commence with non-Government members.

Mr BREDHAUER: Minister, during proceedings in Estimates Committee A on Tuesday, 10 June 1997, the Treasurer, Joan Sheldon, said that an extra 1,022 teachers would be provided in the 1997-98 budget; that this figure was provided by your department, and that it is drawn from your Ministerial Program Statements. I can provide you with a copy of the transcript where the Treasurer says that the figure of 1,022 comes from your Ministerial Program Statements. Do you agree that an extra 1,022 teachers will be provided and that this figure is substantiated by your Ministerial Program Statements? If not, why did the Treasurer use this figure in both her Budget Speech and the Estimates? And is it you or the Treasurer who is responsible for deliberately misleading the Parliament and the public about this issue?

Mr QUINN: I understand from the hearing of Estimates Committee A the other day that the Treasurer was comfortable with her explanation of the events. I can assure the Committee that we are more than relaxed about the numbers that appear in our Ministerial Program Statements. You would be aware that the figure of 1,022 is made up of the following components: 334 teachers have been allocated for enrolment growth; new facilities, 38; non-contact time, 412; LOTE, 20; student behaviour management, 67; students with disabilities, 60; and Reading Recovery, 91—bringing the total to 1,022. The figures are correct in that they represent genuine or additional extra teachers devoted to school-based activities.

Mr BREDHAUER: "Genuine or additional extra teachers"—so it is an increase in the number of teachers who will be employed?

Mr QUINN: They are genuine or additional extra teachers devoted to school-based activities. I made that quite plain in a statement that I released to the public. It is a mistake, however, to see those 1,022 teacher numbers as gross additional to the total number of departmental staff, because 109 teacher positions from the general pool of teachers were used for initiatives that have now ceased. Specifically, about 77 teacher positions were previously allocated to key learning areas—advisers in curriculum—and 32 teacher positions were allocated to education advisers. They are to be reallocated. So 109 teacher positions should be subtracted from the 1,022 referred to. That will give us the number of 913 net additional teachers. We have made that quite plain. It is in the Ministerial Program Statements. We have made that plain to the interest groups that we have briefed. We have never sought to disguise the fact that those 1,022 teachers would be additional to school-based activities. The net additional number would be 913.

Mr BREDHAUER: Given that you have not answered the question I asked, that is, whether or not the 1,022 extra teachers can be substantiated by your Ministerial Program Statements, I refer you to page 14 of your Ministerial Program Statements which shows that preschool teacher numbers will increase by 48, at page 19 primary school teacher numbers by 861, at page 23 secondary school teacher numbers by 271, at page 27 Special Ed numbers will increase by 114 and at page 37 Education Services teacher numbers will decrease by 426. The net increase in teacher numbers, therefore, is 868. Who in your department is primarily responsible for providing the figures on teacher numbers to Treasury? Is there a Treasury officer whose job it is to monitor and check those numbers? Why was the incorrect figure of 1,022 used? Will you admit that there is a discrepancy between your Ministerial Program Statements and every other Budget document?

Mr QUINN: The figures quoted by Mr Bredhauer should in fact be preschool 48, primary 590, secondary 271, Special Ed 114, and Ed Services a reduction of 110. That will give the net figure of 913.

Mr BREDHAUER: No, go to your Ministerial Program Statements.

Mr QUINN: Can I explain? You have asked the question and I will provide the explanation. The impending restructure of the department has meant that staff in 45 school support centres will be transitioned into new positions within the department. That is the difference of 45 between the 913 and 868, I think from memory. That is reflected, as you said, on page 37 of the MPS, where it shows that 45 senior guidance/assistant coordinator positions—currently there is one at each school support centre—will be expected to assume other roles. Although those positions are shown as teacher positions in the MPS and the occupants are employed under the Teachers Award (State), it

would be a mistake to regard those positions as teacher positions.

Mr BREDHAUER: They look like ducks, sound like ducks, but they are not ducks.

Mr QUINN: They are in fact public servants employed under the Teachers Award conditions. That has been going on in the department for quite some time, Mr Bredhauer. I am quite sure you are aware of it. It is not a new phenomenon. The department has been doing that for quite some time. Hence, by subtracting the 45 from the 913, a figure of 868 can be derived. That is the explanation for the difference. There is no misleading of anyone. The figures are correct in the MPS. The explanation is there.

Mr BREDHAUER: Who was the responsible officer? That was the key question that you overlooked. You did not answer the first question. You have now answered the first question in answer to the second question. Who is the responsible officer in your department for providing those figures to Treasury? Who was the person who provided the figure of 1,022 to Treasury? Who was the person in Treasury who was responsible for monitoring and checking the figures?

Mr QUINN: I cannot answer. I do not know the details of the communication. I am not aware of the extent of communications between my department and Treasury in the drawing up of the Program Statements.

Mr BREDHAUER: You are not aware of the extent of the communication between your department and Treasury over the documents?

Mr QUINN: I will ask the chief executive officer to provide the details that you require. I do not know the names of the individuals involved. I think it is absurd of you to expect me to know those names, the details, the level of communication and the extent of involvement. I will ask the Director-General to provide that information if he has it at his fingertips.

Mr BREDHAUER: Frank, who provided the information?

Mr PEACH: The 1,022 number was provided by Mike Keily, Director of Finance. Frank Young might be able to answer the question in terms of who is the Treasury contact.

Mr BREDHAUER: The Director of Finance. I do not see his name on the witness list. Where is the Director of Finance?

Mr PEACH: The Director of Finance is taking part in a study tour as my representative.

Mr BREDHAUER: Overseas somewhere?

Mr PEACH: I was invited to take part in a study tour of a number of places in the United States and Canada in relation to developing some financial expertise. It is a study tour sponsored by the Federal Government and was to involve one CEO of a State system, a representative CEO of the Catholic education system across Australia and one person from the independent schools. Because of these hearings, I was unable obviously to attend. I negotiated with the Commonwealth for Mike Keily to

be the person who took my place. Geoff Lamshed, who is the acting person, is here to answer all the detailed financial questions.

Mr BREDHAUER: The Director of Finance in your department, who is responsible for providing incorrect figures to Treasury—1,022, which is incorrect and is everywhere—is overseas on a trip when the Budget Estimates for the Department of Education are being debated in this Parliament. I think that is a contemptuous act.

Mr QUINN: You are putting the interpretation on that that the figures are incorrect. The Treasurer has indicated that she is comfortable with the explanation that she provided to Estimates Committee A. We are more than comfortable with the explanation that we have provided here today. I do not accept the assertion that you make that the figures are incorrect. That is simply the interpretation that you are putting on them. We have provided the exact details of what it means here today.

Mr BREDHAUER: You would not have thought that your Director of Finance was an appropriate person to have present during the Budget Estimates being debated by this Parliament? He is eighth on the list of the hierarchy of the department. You also candidly admitted that you did not know who had provided information to Treasury about important information like the teacher numbers. Then you send him away overseas. As I recall, Keily was here last year for the Budget Estimates. I would be curious to know when the arrangements were made for Mr Keily to travel overseas, particularly given that the Sessional Orders that prevented the Opposition from requesting that senior officers of the department be present were not carried by the Parliament until 4 June 1997. I would be particularly curious to know when the arrangements were put in place.

Mr QUINN: My memory of the circumstances is that the trip was on well before 4 June. Permission was granted for Mr Keily to travel well before that particular date. I made it plain that we ought to have an officer who can answer the questions in the same detail as Mr Keily present at the Committee hearing. We have Mr Geoff Lamshed here to provide those answers to you. I refute the allegations that he was sent deliberately overseas. That is patent rubbish. For someone to make those allegations about a senior officer within the department who is going overseas representing the chief executive officer on a very important mission does not stand this Committee in good stead. We came here today to provide the information for you. You have not asked about the information. You are more interested in the personal details of a particular officer. This Estimates Committee is not about that. It is about providing you with the details of the Budget 1997-98. If you wish to ask those sorts of questions, please refer to a line item in the MPS.

Mr BREDHAUER: When did you and officers of your department first discover that Treasury, and in particular Treasurer Joan Sheldon, had used the wrong figure of 1,022 additional teachers in Budget documents and in the Treasurer's Budget Speech? At what stage prior to the Budget being delivered in

the Parliament did you and/or your staff and officers of your department try to point out this serious error to the Treasurer and Treasury? If the Treasurer was aware of the error prior to the Budget, why did she refuse to make the correction than deliberately mislead the Parliament?

Mr QUINN: Mr Bredhauer, as I said to you before, the Treasurer provided the explanation in Estimates Committee A the other day. She is more than comfortable with her explanation.

Mr BREDHAUER: I am asking for your explanation.

Mr QUINN: We have provided the explanation here today, which sets out in detail what the figures mean. We are quite comfortable with those as well. There has been no misleading. There are no incorrect figures. It is simply the interpretation that you have been placing upon them.

Mr BREDHAUER: I think that it is important that the wrong figure has been used in the Budget papers and that of all of the Budget papers that have been produced, yours is the only one which talks about new teachers. Every other Budget document—and I will refer to them in a minute—talks about extra teachers and additional teachers. I am asking you again: at what stage prior to the Budget being delivered in the Parliament did you and/or your staff and officers of your department try to point out this serious error to the Treasurer and the Treasury, or are you telling me that at no stage did you try to suggest to the Treasurer and/or Treasury that the figure of 1,022 extra teachers was not correct?

Mr QUINN: I am simply saying that the Treasurer has provided the information to her Estimates Committee A. She is comfortable with that explanation. I think that we have more than satisfied your request here today about the meaning of the figures and how they are derived. We cannot do any more than provide the information that you are asking.

Mr BREDHAUER: I think that it should be noted that the Minister has refused to answer the question about when his department and his office sought to advise Treasury. I think that he knows that that is because before the Budget was brought down, they sought to advise the Treasurer that the incorrect figure was being used and that, despite that, she persisted using the incorrect figure.

Mr QUINN: Mr Bredhauer, even if we had made it plain that the 1,022 were additional teachers in classroom-based activities, the Treasurer has taken all of that on board—if that information was provided. She has provided her explanation to Estimates Committee A. She can do no more than that. She has made her explanation. We have made our explanation here. Both of us are comfortable with our positions. I just see it as futile to keep on with the argument of who said what to whom and at what particular time. The emphasis ought to be on the figures. We have provided the explanation as to what they mean and how they ought to be interpreted. We cannot add any more to that.

Mr BREDHAUER: Clearly the numbers do not add up and the question is: why?

Mr QUINN: They do add up.

Mr BREDHAUER: The question is: why?

Mr QUINN: We have provided you with the explanation as to how they add up.

Mr BREDHAUER: In Budget Papers Nos 1, 2 and 4, the documents state that an additional 1,022 teachers will be employed, the Ministerial Program Statements say an extra 868 teachers, your confidential briefing paper to Education stakeholders just before the Budget identifies 1,002 extra teachers, your letter to the editor of dozens of Queensland newspapers says the real increase in teacher numbers is 913 and on Monday your answers to this Committee's questions on notice says teacher numbers will increase from 29,675 to 31,001—an increase of 1,326. I have to ask: what is the correct figure of extra teachers funded by Treasury in this year's Budget? Why should we believe any figure when it is clear that neither you nor the Treasurer nor the department nor Treasury have given an honest answer to this question in over three weeks? Were your claims in the Courier-Mail earlier this year that the QTU fudges figures in its wages claim just a case of the pot calling the kettle black?

Mr QUINN: Mr Chairman, answering that mishmash is just absurd. Could I just clarify the issue of 1,002 which was mentioned? We admit that that was a mistake. It was provided in a confidential briefing to the interest—

Mr BREDHAUER: They have admitted a mistake. Did you hear that, Hansard?

Mr QUINN: It was a typing error, that is all. The 20 LOTE teachers were left out of the figure that we provided to the QTU and other interest holders on the day that the Budget was handed down. We have since rectified that initial error. We have made it quite plain that the net number of additional teachers will be 913. We have provided the explanation as to how you get 1,022 and how you get back to 868. We can do no more than that. If Mr Bredhauer has problems with what other people say, I suggest that he takes that up with other people. As I said before, we are more than comfortable with the numbers and the explanation that we have provided to this Committee.

Mr BREDHAUER: What about your answers to questions on notice where the figure of 1,326 emerges—a new figure that I had not heard of until Monday?

Mr QUINN: We can clarify that.

Mr YOUNG: This is the one about teacher FTEs employed by the Education Department in 1997?

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! I would be grateful if people other than the Minister who are talking identify themselves.

Mr YOUNG: Sorry. Frank Young, Deputy Director-General. Steve, the first note underneath, you will see that that is the work force download from HRMS on 9 May. That is purely the number of teachers that were on at that point in time. There are

additions that would be necessary to that. As you would be aware, when teachers take leave, it takes time for those forms to come from schools into regional offices to be processed. When that information comes on, then the HRMS total is adjusted. So that those sorts of adjustments—teachers who are not placed at that particular point in time—give the change that you are talking about there.

Mr BREDHAUER: How are we going for time?

The CHAIRMAN: I think that you have one more.

Mr BREDHAUER: Do you agree with the Premier's plan to send senior public servants overseas at a cost of \$300,000 each?

Mr QUINN: That is contained in the Premier's Program Statements, not mine. It would be inappropriate for me to comment on it.

Mr BREDHAUER: How many of your public servants are likely to participate in this scheme?

Mr QUINN: Whoever is eligible can apply. As I said, the responsibility for that resides with the Premier, not with me.

Mr BREDHAUER: I am interested in the issue of overseas travel. What is the departmental budget for overseas travel and what are the guidelines for accessing overseas travel?

Mr QUINN: I will ask the Director-General to answer that.

Mr PEACH: Can I take that on notice?

Mr QUINN: Can we take that on notice? We do not have the information. We will come back to that later on in the day.

Mr BREDHAUER: All right.

The CHAIRMAN: Before we started or once we started we were going to allow the television a couple of moments to take footage. They were late. They have asked on bended knee if they could come in to take some footage. I have ultimately consented to them doing so for the next few moments. I will suspend the meeting for a few moments and ask the television people to come in and to be quick.

Without officially opening the meeting, I can still record that I notice Mr Len Ardill, MLA, is here listening. He is a particularly good friend of mine. Over a number of years I have worked with him on the Travelsafe Committee and he is an extraordinarily dedicated person in that field. That Committee worked particularly well. I believe that between us we formed a partnership in saving a lot of people's lives by, hopefully, teaching people to drive more carefully and not to drink and drive. Believe it or not, we had a little bit to do with speed cameras.

Mr BREDHAUER: Should I move a formal vote of thanks?

The CHAIRMAN: I think we will leave the formal motions out of it, thank you, Mr Bredhauer. I reopen the Estimates hearings.

Minister, page 3 of the Ministerial Program Statements states that \$19.12m is being spent on administrative assistance in primary schools, yet on

page 76 of Budget Paper No. 2 the figure mentioned is \$26.66m. Which figure is correct? How will this amount be distributed?

Mr QUINN: The figure on page 3 of the MPS, \$19.2m, refers only to primary schools. The figure in Budget Paper No. 2, \$26.66m, refers to all schools. That is why there is a difference.

The Administrative Assistance Enhancement Program, or AAEP as it is known within the schools, was initiated in 1990. It provided for an additional 168 registrar positions in schools and funds directly to schools for the employment of casual administrative assistants. From January 1991, the schools were given flexibility in that they could use the funds to enhance the administrative performance of the schools by purchasing office equipment, computers, additional casual help and so on. It is estimated that 90% of AAEP funds are used for the employment of casual administrative assistants who can work for a maximum of 24 hours per week, although many work less. Negotiations are now taking place about ways to extend that time, because schools have told us that the maximum of 24 hours is no longer appropriate and they want to go a little further. We are looking at ways in which we can progress that.

In the 1997-98 Budget, a further \$4m will be available to primary schools for administrative support. Primary principals say that they need more administrative support in schools. The additional money will address some of the anomalies in the allocated formula and will provide support to schools entering the Leading Schools Program. The budget allocation this year of \$26.4m is up on last years' allocation, which was about \$22.4m. That is a significant increase and I think that it is well appreciated by the primary schools which, on a regular basis, complain about not having enough administrative assistance.

Mr HEGARTY: I understand that the capital works program also includes set-down areas to improve safety around schools; is this the case?

Mr QUINN: Yes. For the first time, we are negotiating with the local authorities in the area where the school is to be built to try to incorporate the bus set-down areas as part of the construction of the new school. In the past, Education would excise off the land and hand it over to the local authority. It would then be left to the local authority to construct the bus set-down area. The Government received numerous representations from various councils across Queensland saying that this was unfair because in many cases they had not budgeted for that additional expense. Sometimes the costs can be in the order of \$250,000, although last year a couple in my neck of the woods cost up to \$500,000. The Government took the in-principle decision that it would in fact move to assist the local authorities by putting in place a fifty-fifty arrangement.

All schools to be constructed from now on will benefit. The bus set-down areas will become an integral part of the construction of new schools. The Cabinet decision was made in November last year. We are in the process of confirming with councils that they will meet half of the cost, as I said.

Undoubtedly, benefits will flow to the councils and we think that the benefits will be in the order of approximately \$2m per financial year, which will assist councils. We have built that into a capital works budget. It will also be to the benefit of the school communities. In one particular case, we have been at loggerheads with the council for a number of years and that has not been to the benefit of students because of safety considerations. We have moved to resolve that particular issue with the council. From now, all councils will be on board, and bus set-down areas should be constructed as an integral part of new schools when they come on line.

Mr HEGARTY: In relation to capital works, I understand that the department is moving away from the single service provider. What processes have been instigated to ensure high standards of building?

Mr QUINN: Again, you are correct there; we are looking at moving away from using Project Services or the Department of Public Works and Housing as a single service provider. At the moment, we are in the process of developing guidelines for outsourcing our work to various private providers. I will ask Richard Williams to give you a little more information. Richard Williams is the Director, Facilities and Services. We have just commenced this project in the last month or so.

Mr WILLIAMS: Basic Government policy has untied most State departments from using the Department of Public Works and Housing as the single service provider for a range of capital works. We are taking advantage of that by using a range of service suppliers to support the department in the future. We see that as being very important to the department by creating a competitive marketplace in which we can buy a range of services and, hopefully, get good pricing mechanisms through that process. We will continue to use the Department of Public Works and Housing as a significant provider of works to us. At the same time, in terms of risk minimisation to the department, we see great benefits in using a range of service suppliers in the future.

The CHAIRMAN: I think you have all heard of the next gentleman. I call on the member for Mundingburra.

Mr TANTI: Minister, while the Opposition attacks the person, I would like to ask you about positive details. I am pleased to ask these questions, as they relate to the great achievement that occurred during the Mundingburra by-election, that is, the airconditioning of northern schools. On page 3 of the MPS, it states that \$18m is to be spent on airconditioning schools north of latitude 20. Page 76 of Budget Paper No. 2 mentions that this is part of a \$65m program. How much has actually been spent to date?

Mr QUINN: Mr Tanti, you would be aware of the history of this program. I think it is a terrific program for kids in north Queensland, because they will be able to learn in optimum learning conditions. We have sent the guidelines to schools and we have called for expressions of interest. To date, the 1997 round of nominations has resulted in more than 100

nominations from State schools, and we are still receiving nominations. The program has been particularly popular. Thirty-five State schools have had their approval for subsidy granted and to date that has cost in excess of \$1m. Thirty-six projects have been approved as new works in State schools at full State cost, that is, all new, additional accommodation which is north of latitude 20 will be airconditioned at full State cost. So far, that has an estimated value of about \$4.8m. Forward Estimates are based on the anticipated program life of some four years. We have appointed program coordinators. Of course, the non-Government sector is involved as well. I understand that we have provided some information via a question on notice that gives more particular details of where we are up to.

At the moment, it is hard to estimate exactly what the expenditure will be, because it is an ongoing program and schools can come in in the middle of the financial year. The amount of money allocated this year—in 1997-98—is some \$20m, with \$2m going to the non-Government sector. The first batch of non-Government sector schools has been approved for the Association of Independent Schools. My understanding is that the Catholic schools have not yet submitted theirs; I have not seen it. We are also in the phase of finalising the airconditioning of all resource centres within that zone and we hope to have that completed by the end of this calendar year, along with the electrical upgrading of all of the schools and some passive airconditioning measures as well. Our schools will have these benefits by the end of this financial year. As the money becomes available to P & Cs and as they prioritise airconditioning as one of their important areas, no doubt more of them will take advantage of the two for one subsidy that we have put in place.

Mr TANTI: That also answers my next question.

The CHAIRMAN: Page 5 of the MPS shows that in the Education Services Subprogram 580 positions will be lost—hopefully not from Rockhampton. How many people will lose their job as a result of downsizing and how much money will be put aside for redundancies?

Mr QUINN: The first point is that no-one will lose their job. We have made it plain to all of our staff that, following the restructure, everyone will have a job under the new arrangements. We have been at pains to travel around the State informing our staff in both head office and all of the regions about what the restructure means and how they will be transitioned into those new positions. That transition process has already started. We have also consulted with the major union concerned, the State Public Services Federation. It is comfortable with the process we have put in place. We have not allocated any money at all for redundancies, because we believe we can transition all people into their new positions. It may mean a change of title and a slightly changed job description, but at the end of the day we are confident that we can accommodate everyone within our work force.

We also have some dispensation from the Office of the Public Service to maintain salaries should we not be able to accommodate people at their current classification level. In that way, no-one will be disadvantaged by the transition arrangements. As I said, we are comfortable with the process we have put in place. It will mean a general downsizing in central office, because some of the responsibilities, particularly with respect to studies and curriculum development, have gone over to the QSCC. As you would know, the regional offices and the school support centres will be amalgamated into the new district structures. At the end of the day, we are comfortable with the process we have put in place and I believe our work force is quite happy and comfortable with the outcomes that we have indicated we will be able to achieve for them.

Mr HEGARTY: Page 3 of the MPS states that \$27.6m will be spent on the integration of technology into classrooms. How much will be spent on teacher professional development and will teachers be compelled to undertake professional development?

Mr QUINN: The answer to the compulsory nature of the question is: no, teachers will not be compelled to undertake professional development. We have allocated some \$6m to develop and maintain the IT competencies of our staff. That is critical, because we see technology as playing a key role in improving the learning outcomes of our students. There will be incentives and targets within the professional development programs in order to maximise teacher participation in those PD programs. We will be distributing some \$3.4m directly to schools to facilitate teacher release, and allied to that we will be running the Connecting Teachers to the Future project.

Under that project, over their school holidays teachers give up a number of days, are equipped with laptops and undertake a program that presents them with new ways of using that technology. For example, it teaches them how to connect to the Internet, how to use the technology presented to them and it encourages them to take that laptop and technology back to the classrooms to undertake curriculum projects. To date, some 200 teachers have gone through the project. I think we are targeting another 300 in the next financial year. We are also looking at establishing some "lighthouse" schools, which can be used as examples to other teachers of what can be achieved by integrating learning technology within their everyday classroom practices. This is an ongoing commitment by this department, both in terms of the expenditure on the hardware and also the additional funds we are putting into professional development with teachers to make sure that they are comfortable with using this new technology.

Mr TANTI: Page 9 of the MPS refers to school councils. When will they be introduced and how will they operate?

Mr QUINN: Mr Chairman, as you would be aware, we have a discussion paper out at present on school councils. It is generating a deal of debate within the general community, particularly amongst

parent groups. We have some suggestions contained within the document and we are waiting for the feedback to be finalised before putting in place a reference group to make some formal recommendations to us. The school councils are an integral part of the Leading Schools Program and legislative changes will be required before they come into being. The cut-off date for feedback under the consultation process is 20 June. That time is just about up.

As I said before, a reference group will be established. It will be chaired by Frank Crowther, a professor at the University of Southern Queensland. Its task will be to review the feedback, to make recommendations on the operational aspects of the school councils and to report to us by the end of July. The Centre for Leadership Excellence will then be funded to support professional development and training for those leading schools coming into the pilot program, and the funding for school councils will be included in that budget allocation. The funding will be made available for some members of school councils to receive the training, but only the elements of the training package related to school councils would be offered to council members who are not principals.

So some funding is being allocated to ease school communities into the concept of school councils so that, when they do come on line, people will have a better understanding of what their roles and responsibilities are, how the school councils work, how they interact with principals and their relationship with the department in general. As I said before, it is an integral part of the Leading Schools concept and it will provide some real community input into decision making at local school levels. It is not meant to be an onerous task. However, we think it is critical to the success of the Leading Schools Program.

Mr BREDHAUER: I return to the issue of overseas travel. Is it correct that there is no budget in respect of overseas travel?

Mr PEACH: Overseas travel is funded from the budgets of the particular unit in which the officer concerned works. We do not maintain a separate budget for overseas travel. Most of the overseas travel would relate to the Queensland Education Overseas Unit or the Languages and Cultures Unit, because they have ongoing contacts particularly in South East Asia. In the case of the Overseas Education Unit, the vast majority of that travel is covered by earnings.

I have just been given some figures for the costs last year which are not typed up which I would be happy to pass on to you later on and offset with the actual earnings as well. The exception would be individual school exchanges where different arrangements might apply. If you look at overseas travel across our department, I think you could divide it into a number of areas. There is a fair amount of activity involving exchanges between various schools in Queensland and overseas. There are quite a lot of excursions to other countries, largely related to Languages Other Than English, particularly to South East Asia but also to France and

Germany. Then there is a third category which I guess you could summarise as the broad educational experience where teachers and students might go on ski trips to New Zealand or various camping activities in other countries such as that. So that would, I suspect, account for the vast majority of travel within our organisation. The next biggest area would be the two units that I have mentioned.

In addition to that, in terms of the last financial year we have already raised Mike Keily's current trip, which is fully funded by the Commonwealth Government. I undertook a trip to Silicon Valley in January this year which was funded by our department in terms of the travel costs. Around about July last year Robin Sullivan was involved in travel, again involving the Commonwealth, at a round table in the United States. I am aware that the Director of Information Management has recently returned from travelling to Europe where we are exploring some of the new technologies which we will need to apply in our departmental network. Without the papers to back me up, I cannot be absolutely certain, but I would expect that that would be the totality of departmental officers' travel this year. In terms of the policy part of your question, we will get some—

Mr BREDHAUER: So it comes out of the budgets for the various divisions or, in your case, it would come out of—

Mr PEACH: The Office of the Director-General, yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: You have mentioned already that the Commonwealth pays from time to time. Is there ever commercial or private sponsorship of either travel or accommodation costs or any others by senior officers of the department?

Mr PEACH: That can happen from time to time. For example, in the case of my trip to the United States in January, the department paid for travel costs and accommodation and so on for the majority of the trip, but I was involved in a three-day conference in the latter part of that trip and the accommodation costs for that conference were paid for by one of the technology companies. That matter was declared in my declaration of pecuniary interests to the Minister prior to that taking place. So occasionally it might, but it is pretty rare.

Mr BREDHAUER: Which was the technology company concerned?

Mr PEACH: Computer Curriculum Corporation.

Mr BREDHAUER: Would a company like that have any commercial dealings with the department?

Mr PEACH: They would obviously be trying to in the future, yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: So has this particular company had any commercial dealings with the department?

Mr PEACH: Yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: Can you elaborate on what those dealings might be?

Mr PEACH: We are using one of their products in, I think, about 18 schools—but I will take

advice on the number of schools—as a trial at the moment. It is an interactive multimedia package which covers literacy and numeracy, essentially. I think that is probably the extent of our activity with them at the present time.

Mr BREDHAUER: Was that arrangement entered into before or after your trip overseas which was partly sponsored by the private company?

Mr PEACH: Before.

Mr QUINN: Well before.

Mr BREDHAUER: Before. But you do not see that there is a potential for a conflict of interest here, that you are having travel overseas sponsored by a private company when that private company is involved in contractual arrangements with the Education Department? Who would have signed off the arrangements in those 18 schools? Who would have approved those arrangements?

Mr PEACH: If you are asking whether I did, the answer is: no.

Mr BREDHAUER: But you are ultimately responsible.

Mr PEACH: Yes, that is true. The private company did not sponsor my overseas trip; it paid for accommodation for, I think, three nights.

Mr BREDHAUER: You derived a benefit, though.

Mr PEACH: Absolutely, yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: From a private company which has other commercial dealings with the department.

Mr PEACH: Yes, and it would be difficult to avoid that in totality, quite frankly. However, I also repeat the fact that I declared that interest beforehand. It was open, it was declared to the Minister prior to the trip taking place, and I do not believe that that had an effect on the decisions that were made by other people in the department.

Mr BREDHAUER: And were you accompanied by representatives of that company?

Mr PEACH: Not on the trip, no; I travelled by myself.

Mr BREDHAUER: What about at the conference?

Mr PEACH: Obviously there were people there, yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: Representatives of the company from Queensland?

Mr PEACH: No, I am not aware of that. I do not think so.

Mr BREDHAUER: Can you give as an indication of who might have been present from the company at the conference you attended?

Mr PEACH: Their representatives in Australia, I think, are Melbourne based—they are certainly not based in Queensland—and there were two representatives from there. Most of the people at the conference were educators—

Mr BREDHAUER: Namely?

Mr PEACH: Their names?

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes.

Mr PEACH: Dennis Dale and John, whose last name I cannot recall, I am sorry. But I think they were the only actual employees as such from Australia, to the best of my recollection. Most of the people at the conference were either people from the corporation themselves or educators from the United States. There were educators from New South Wales, including a deputy director-general from New South Wales, the President of the New South Wales Teachers Federation, district directors and superintendents from across the United States of America and senior officials in American education departments.

Mr BREDHAUER: I would be very interested in knowing what contractual arrangements that company has entered into with either your department or representatives of your department, including schools, and particularly when those arrangements were entered into, because I think there is a fairly serious possibility here of a conflict of interest between a company which is paying for the attendance at a conference overseas of the most senior Education Department officer in Queensland when that company is involved in commercial contractual arrangements with the department and with schools in Queensland. So if you have somebody who can provide that information, I would appreciate it. Can you provide that information?

Mr PEACH: We can get that information for you.

Mr BREDHAUER: Are there any other senior officers of your department or officers of your department who have undertaken overseas travel or attendance at conferences where all or part of those conferences or that travel or accommodation may have been paid for by a private organisation, companies or individuals?

Mr QUINN: I think we might have to take that on notice.

Mr PEACH: The answer is: no.

Mr BREDHAUER: The answer is: no. Are you sure about that?

Mr PEACH: To the best of the information I can find quickly, yes, I am pretty certain, but we will come back to you if it is not true.

Mr BREDHAUER: I would be happy enough for the Minister to take that question on notice as well if he is not absolutely certain. He can come back to me on that. I notice that in answer to question on notice No. 300, which I table, you advise that Williams Pacific Consulting have been awarded a contract for \$150,000, but the company is not going to provide a report. I am curious about what the consultant will be doing. Particularly, I want to know how many days will the actual contracted time cover? Did Mr Williams attend the Leading Schools conference at the Marriott on the Gold Coast and was he the facilitator for that conference? If not, why are we paying him \$150,000 as the change manager for the Leading Schools process?

Mr QUINN: Williams Pacific from my memory is employed as a consultant or a change agent, I think is the term being used, by Education Queensland to help manage its processes over the next 12 or so months. We have received, as you would realise, Government endorsement to move towards the Leading Schools Program. The transition is being managed by a team of senior executives working with a steering committee. Given the complexities of this operation and the need to ensure that the program delivers its goal within the allotted time frame, senior executives have identified the need for an independent person or independent advice from a change management expert who is external to the organisation. That is the reason for the consultancy and the employment of Williams Pacific.

Dean Williams has been employed by Suncorp at least for the last two and a half years as a change management consultant. He has been appointed to conduct 100 days of consulting for the senior Education Queensland executives on this task until the end of 1997. He has got a masters, and we can go through his qualifications if you like. His role really is to provide what is termed here as a "helicopter view", in other words, one from above—seeing what is going on within the transition process and making sure that all the bases are covered and that all the staff are taken with us as we move into this new structure. In other words, he is trying to provide some independent external strategic advice about issues concerning the implementation program. He reports directly to the Director-General, Deputy Directors-General and other senior executives.

His role really is to advise on transition implementation planning; internal communication strategies; the measurement of the cultural change and the perceptions within our organisation, particularly at school level and in some cases the new district office level; to advise on training and development, particularly for senior executives because they will need a substantial change in focus as well; and, of course, the working school-based management with improvements in student learning outcomes. In order to complete this task, he will make contact from time to time with key representatives to gather the data first-hand and he will also participate in some of the change processes such as the training programs for Leading Schools and for officers appointed to the new senior positions. My recollection is that he was, part of the time, at the conference at the Marriott.

Mr BREDHAUER: How many days? It is a \$150,000 contract; how many days was he the facilitator? If not, why are we paying someone \$150,000 if they cannot even do a simple thing like facilitate a conference?

Mr QUINN: As I understand it, the contract calls for a long period of time—some 15 months, probably in excess of 100 days.

Mr BREDHAUER: \$1,500 a day; that is not bad money, and no report to be provided at any stage.

Mr QUINN: I am just advised here that there would be more days than the number of days which I have mentioned. As I said, it is over a long period—I am informed some 15 months.

Mr BREDHAUER: And no report to be provided at any stage according to the advice I was provided with in answer to question on notice No. 300?

Mr PEACH: He has not been asked to provide a comprehensive report, which was what was referred to in the reply to you, but he will be providing regular reports to me on a weekly basis. He will be providing feedback to senior executives about things such as the quality of the transition plans, the quality of the work that is being done as we transition to the new organisation, and so on. But the information is intended to be advice to people who have to lead a major change process.

Mr BREDHAUER: I just think that people would find it extraordinary that we are paying someone \$1,500 a day to do a consultancy for the department and at no stage are we going to expect them to formally furnish the department with a report when they are identified as the change manager for the key initiative in the department in the next financial year, which is the Leading Schools devolution to school-based management and the massive restructure of the department. This person is going to go around and talk to senior officers and then report back to you verbally. They are not going to even do us the courtesy of writing a report which we, the public, can access so that we know what is going on in the department. \$1,500 a day!

Mr PEACH: His task is not to be sitting down writing reports. He will be facilitating sessions of conferences, giving speeches, being involved in planning groups and he will be providing ongoing reports to us. We have another process which was put out to tender recently to seek an evaluation of the whole process in a formal sense. There will be a report—

Mr BREDHAUER: Sorry, it was put out to tender recently, did you say?

Mr PEACH: Yes. There will be a report every six months, a formal report, which will incorporate his views as well as the views of a range of other people, including all of the stakeholders. That will be the formal evaluation of the process over the next couple of years.

Mr BREDHAUER: So we have established that this Mr Williams was not the facilitator of the conference at the Marriott on the Gold Coast. Is it true that you put the job of facilitator for that conference out to tender and then after tenders closed you advised the tenderers that no contract would be let and then you paid a Mr Sawatzki to do the job? I ask how much you paid and why you let tenders and then, having called tenders and having had companies go through the process of submitting tenders, you decided not to let the contract? On what basis did you allocate the job to Mr Sawatzki?

Mr PEACH: We did call tenders for the facilitation of that conference. The cost of those tenders was, in our view, inordinately high. Some of them were many tens of thousands of dollars to facilitate the conference.

Mr BREDHAUER: Presumably they would have been complying with the tender briefs, though.

Mr PEACH: Consultants can write replies to tender briefs in all sorts of ways.

Mr BREDHAUER: There is \$150,000 for one here. At \$1,500 a day, you do not even have to write a report.

Mr PEACH: That was a cheap one compared to other tenders that came in relation to that one, I can assure you. In relation to the conference, we believed—and there was a formal evaluation of the tenders when we called them on that occasion—that they were too expensive and did not suit our needs. We were able to engage Mr Sawatzki for under \$10,000, which—

Mr BREDHAUER: Under \$10,000?

Mr PEACH: Yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: Like \$9,999 or \$7,000?

Mr PEACH: I do not think it was \$9,999, but we can get those figures for you if you wish. That meant that we did not have to go back to tender; we could form the conference, we could shape the conference in a way that was more suitable for our needs, and we could do it much more cheaply. That particular contract was in fact one that was intended to save money.

Mr BREDHAUER: Is Mr Sawatzki currently doing any other work for the department other than that job he did of facilitating the Marriott conference?

Mr PEACH: I do not think so. Not to my knowledge. He is a consultant; he may have contact with individual schools, but I doubt that, too. I would be very surprised.

Mr BREDHAUER: I have some questions on another line. How many teachers are currently on secondment to outside organisations other than statutory authorities under this Minister's jurisdiction? Are there rules which govern the amount of time teachers can spend on secondment either within or outside the department? If so, what are they? Is there a time limit for the secondments? Do these organisations pay the salary of the teacher or, if the department pays a full salary, do any of the organisations pay an additional salary? If the department does pay the salary, does this not represent a grant to these organisations?

Mr PEACH: I have not got a briefing paper on that. The number of teachers on secondment in those sorts of circumstances has been reduced significantly over the last three or four years. It is a very small number. In most instances the organisation would pay the salary, but we will come back to you. We will take that on notice and give you precise details.

Mr BREDHAUER: You are not familiar with the case that was drawn to attention recently of a person who is apparently being paid a full-time salary by your department while on secondment to another organisation and is drawing a salary there at the same time? Your department was reported in the media at that time as having no concerns that you may be paying the salary of a person who is drawing a full-time salary from another Government department.

Mr QUINN: My understanding of that arrangement is that we are providing that person and paying that person's salary as a teacher at that particular organisation. The organisation itself promoted or put that person into a position of being in charge of that particular branch. In order to compensate for the extra duties that that person is now assuming, the organisation is topping up their salary with another component of its own funding. That is of no consequence, as I think the media report says, or of no concern to the department. We provided the person to do the job. If in fact they want to give extra responsibilities and pay for those extra responsibilities of that position, then that is a matter for that other organisation.

Mr BREDHAUER: So you have no concerns that a person would be drawing two full-time salaries from two Government departments?

Mr QUINN: They are not being paid twice. Let us be clear about that. The issue is that the person is not being paid two salaries. They are being paid one salary from the department and then are paid an additional amount of money for the additional responsibilities they are assuming.

Mr BREDHAUER: There was an offer from Frank to provide information about teachers on secondments to outside organisations—terms and how long they have been operating. If that could be taken on notice, I would appreciate it.

The CHAIRMAN: It is on notice, I understand. Minister, what is the Centre for Leadership Excellence and what are its achievements?

Mr QUINN: The Centre for Leadership Excellence has been in operation since January 1995. This time, you will notice that there is a small increase in the staffing allocation. The centre really coordinates, funds, delivers, outsources and evaluates professional development and training for leaders and aspiring leaders in both school and non-school sites. It is particularly targeted, I think, at key decision makers, that is, school principals and those people in our regional and head office structures.

During 1996-97, the centre published a document called the Professional Development and Training Agenda. They developed a benchmark for leadership performance. They consulted with providers of professional development and training to ensure their capacity to deliver professional development and training opportunities relevant to the enhancement of what we are trying to do. They developed guidelines for courses and the registration of providers, and designed and conducted conferences to facilitate our Leading Schools Program.

This coming financial year, they will be monitoring the implementation of what they call the Standards Framework for Professional Development and its capacity to enhance learning outcomes for students. They will be coordinating all the professional development and training emanating from central office and excluding that offered by the other associated centre, which is the Centre for Teaching Excellence. They will be designing and conducting further conferences for the Leading

Schools pilot, and they will be managing the provision of professional development and training opportunities to address the needs of leaders and aspiring leaders within our organisation. They will also be progressing the development of a credential for Education Queensland employees. This is a key component of the professional development program that the department has in place. As I said before, it is targeted at our current leaders—developing their skills—and also those who would be leaders, to try to get them on the road to enhancing their own professional status and delivering higher-quality outcomes for our students.

The budget this year is almost doubled. That emphasises the importance that we are placing on professional development for our key leaders within our organisation. I think it is one of those initiatives that ought to be applauded because, for quite some time, it has been recognised that we have not quite hit the nail on the head with regard to professional development. This is a genuine attempt to improve those facilities in those programs for our aspiring leaders.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, you say that the budget has been doubled in this financial year. How much can we expect to be allocated in the coming financial year?

Mr QUINN: In 1996-97 it was \$2.2m, and this budget makes provision for \$4.2m. So there is a significant increase. As I said, that is in line with the additional responsibilities that this particular unit within the department will be assuming over the next 12 months.

Mr HEGARTY: Minister, what is the Centre for Teaching Excellence? What has been achieved this year? How much has been allocated to the centre for the 1997-98 financial year?

Mr QUINN: This is an associate centre to the Centre for Leadership Excellence. It has just come into being and will be fully operational in July this year. It will start with a budget of about \$1.8m. The aim or the goal of this centre is to help coordinate the development and provision of training and professional development for teachers, whereas the previous one was concentrating on our principals and other senior officers in regional and head office. This one is teacher focused. It will also be helping teachers gain access to training and professional development and creating a teaching excellence framework which details certain key competencies, so that teachers can measure their professional development and improvement as they progress.

The centre will, in this coming financial year, develop programs for teachers in four focus areas. The first one will include syllabus implementation. We have coming on stream new preschool curriculum guidelines and also the Years 1-10 HPE and science syllabus from the Queensland School Curriculum Council. So they will be focusing on that particular area. They will be focusing on teaching excellence and developing a framework and standards there. They will also be focusing on some strategic issues, which I mentioned in my opening remarks: things like learning technology, its impact upon classrooms, and how teachers can harness

those new technologies to improve student learning outcomes; behaviour management, which has been a key focus of this Government in providing those additional resources to schools; and vocational education, which is one of those topics with which we are slowly coming to grips. There seems to be a bit of an ever-changing feast. We have the Cummings report before us at present. The Commonwealth has signalled its intention to become involved at the last MCEETYA meeting, and we are now trying to work in what the Commonwealth is asking of us with what we are trying to do ourselves, because the Commonwealth is providing certain funds there and we wish to keep those funds coming. There are other emerging issues that will come up from time to time.

The fourth of the focus areas is work force issues. That is identifying and supporting teachers wishing to engage in these sorts of activities. That will lead to employing teachers within certain specialised areas, for instance, guidance officers and things of that nature. The centre will become involved with a whole range of issues, but by and large its focus is on teachers and developing their skills, particularly at a classroom level, in order to improve student learning outcomes.

Mr HEGARTY: Where will it be located, as a matter of interest?

Mr QUINN: It is part of head office in Mary Street. It is within the Ed Services directorate at Mary Street.

Mr TANTI: Minister, in asking this question, I do not think Mr Bredhauer will get a story for the media out of this question.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! There has been a little bit of comment on both sides. I know that, in some ways, it has been a bit light hearted. However, we do not need it. Can we just ask the questions straight? That applies to everybody, including myself.

Mr TANTI: Minister, how much has been allocated to the Community Kindergarten Assistance Scheme, and what are the goals for this program this financial year?

Mr QUINN: You would be aware, Mr Chairman, that since the 1950s, the community kindergarten sector has provided educational services for children aged between three and five. They are really an adjunct to our preschools, and we think that community kindergartens provide an important service on that basis.

In 1996-97, we provided recurrent funding to approximately 338 community kindergartens; some money—a little less than \$1m—to assist the Creche and Kindergarten Association of Queensland to deliver some administrative and advisory services to those kindergartens; and about \$177,000 for capital projects in some 38 kindergartens. But the vast bulk of the money last year—almost \$16m—was spent on recurrent assistance with salaries and wages.

In this financial year, we anticipate that recurrent funding will grow to about \$17.5m or \$17.48m. That will meet approximately 80% of the educational staff salary costs, including some

anticipated enterprise bargaining costs. There will also be further funding for advisory services—almost \$900,000 there—to assist the Creche and Kindergarten Association to provide those advisory services, as they have done in the past, and a similar amount of money to that of last year for capital assistance to community kindergartens. The capital assistance is targeted mainly at assisting community kindergartens to meet some structural licensing requirements that are imposed upon them under the Child Care Act 1991. Those are the range of financial assistances that we provide. This year, the budget for that is \$18.558m—up slightly on last year—but it provides the same level of services to those kindergartens.

The CHAIRMAN: How much has been allocated for the Computers in Schools Project, and how will this money be spent this financial year?

Mr QUINN: This financial year, Computers in Schools will have a budget of about \$27.6m. That is up on the \$18.4m last year. Last year, about 515 schools were provided with funding under the Years 6 and 7 computer program, as well as some funding for maintenance, repairs and upgrades and some professional development of teachers. This year the funding will be provided to support staff again in schools, for professional development for education advisers or project officers to provide that professional development for teachers. There will be some money in the budget for geographically isolated student projects requested in remote area schools, some adaptive technology projects and a teacher/professional CD-ROM, which we will be producing. The Connecting Teachers to the Future Program, which I mentioned before, will provide funds for a further 300 teachers to be trained in the use of laptop computers, Internet training and assistance in developing curriculum materials specifically in the use of computers in their classrooms.

Another exciting initiative that is coming on line this year will be our agreement with Apple Computer about an ACOT centre at Springfield State School, which will open at the beginning of 1998. Springfield is that community in the western suburbs near Ipswich that has prided itself on the fact that every home will be connected to computers. Our new school out there will link into that infrastructure. We will be working with Apple. There are only two of those centres in Australia, and one of them will be in Queensland. That will be an exciting "lighthouse" school, if you like to use that term, for the department. No doubt when it gets on line and some exciting things come out of it, that will be one of those schools that a lot of other teachers will want to visit to see how the technology is integrated into the classrooms.

There will also be a continuing upgrading, maintenance and replacement of old computers. We have also started work on connecting all our schools to our departmental network. That will continue to roll out. Of course, we must mention that each of the new districts will have a systems technician placed within the district to help schools with their technical problems with the computers in the network. There is

a substantial investment here. The Government and the department are keen to provide the improvements that we think we will get out of schools in terms of student learning outcomes.

Mr HEGARTY: Why has the Corporate Services Program increased in cost when the rhetoric has been about downsizing?

Mr QUINN: You are right: the costs have increased by about \$6m. It has gone up from \$97m to \$103m. Under normal conditions that budget should have decreased by about \$3.2m. However, as I said, there has been an increase of about \$5.8m—roughly \$6m. Those are only temporary costs. They are related to the establishment of the district offices, which will cost \$7m, for items such as new computer lines, transfer expenses and supernumerary staff in the transition to that district structure. Two key computer development projects are also included in that figure, with the human resource management system, \$1.1m; the financial management system, SAP, almost \$1m; and leadership training and development, \$2m, especially for Leading Schools. It has to be made clear that the Corporate Services Program represents only 3.7% of the entire budget, which is lower than most similar organisations. So it is well within the bounds of reason. This year the increase is of a temporary nature due to those transitions associated with the new structure that I outlined before.

The 1997-98 budget includes a saving of almost \$1m under Stage 2 of the three-year commitment to reduce central office expenditure by 10% that has been imposed across Government in all bureaucracies. So there is an almost \$1m saving included in that figure. Staff numbers have been reduced. Last year it was 1,015; this year it is 857. That has been as a result of a three-year strategy to reduce the core central office staff by 10%. There has been a transfer of system technicians such as those 36. A lot of those are temporary costs associated with the establishment of the district offices, which I said would cost about \$7m. That is only a ballpark figure. We think it will cost a lot less. The additional expenditure this year of about \$5.8m may not reach that target.

Mr TANTI: What were the achievements in Distance Education last financial year? What are the goals for this year?

Mr QUINN: Distance Education is the ways and means by which we provide education to many of our isolated students in Queensland. This year the budget allocation is very similar to last year: about \$26.5m. The staffing allocation is up about 15. Last year we provided services to over 6,500 full-time and part-time students who live quite some distance from school, live overseas, are in the process of travelling, or have some sort of medical condition that prevents them from going to a mainstream school. It is worth while to know that many of the programs that operate in our mainstream schools also apply to distance students, such as the Year 2 Net. Over 65% of those distance education students who participated in the Year 2 Diagnostic Net achieved better results overall in writing, reading and number than students in other mainstream schools. A fact

that we tend to overlook is that, in the very basic areas, the quality of education that those kids get through Distance Education is very high. In fact, 65% of distance education students who participated in the Year 6 Test achieved slightly better results in reading, viewing and number tasks and slightly lower results in writing than in mainstream schools. So there is a slight variation there as well.

We continue to upgrade our HF radio equipment, because that is the means by which Distance Education is delivered. We have spent about half a million dollars so far upgrading the receivers at Charters Towers and Longreach. There are seven high-powered transmitters there that we are upgrading. We distributed 94 transceivers and 322 antennas to all schools of Distance Education. We have provided 524 power supplies for Capricornia, Mount Isa, Charleville and Cairns. They are all the properties that have access to power rather than batteries. We have also purchased two high-powered transmitters for Charleville and Charters Towers schools of Distance Education to support the extra radio frequencies that have been allocated.

This year we will continue with the Year 2 Net and the Year 6 Test intervention strategies to make sure that those kids who get their education by Distance Education continue to receive high-quality education. A draft five-year strategic plan for the development of Distance Education materials is in the process of being drawn up. By and large, our commitment to our rural and isolated students remains. That is evidenced in the funding allocation, the achievements last year and the program that we propose for this financial year.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Minister and ladies and gentlemen for the first session. We are now going to break for morning tea.

Sitting suspended from 9.58 a.m. to 10.15 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare the Estimates Committee hearing resumed. I now hand over to Mr Bredhauer, who will continue questioning.

Mr BREDHAUER: In the answers to questions on notice to the Committee, you have outlined where the money for Leading Schools is to come from. First of all, I note that \$100m of the \$150m you say that is going to schools is actually committed money. Minister, according to the answer, this year \$24m of the \$50m is basically coming from savings in cleaners, the establishment of the new district offices—I presume that means because you are closing down the regional offices—and the saving of 262 full-time equivalents in salaries, which I think is an interesting figure given your assertion before that there would be no job losses as a result of the restructure. I ask specifically: where will the remaining \$26m come from? I ask you to detail the \$1m of this year's allocation for Leading Schools that will be saved from low-priority programs. By how much will each of those programs be cut? I will start with those—where will the extra \$26m come from? Presumably you are not going to be able to continue paying off cleaners at the same rate and presumably the 262 full-time equivalent salaries that you have saved will not continue, so you will not be able to

continue making additional savings there. So I ask: where is that extra money coming from? There is no additional money in this Budget for Leading Schools. Where is it going to come from in the future?

Mr QUINN: First of all, the issue about the minor or low-priority programs—most of those are in Ed Services and Corporate Services. As I understand, there are some minor rationalisations there and that will save the \$1m. That is the amount of money that you referred to before.

Mr BREDHAUER: Can I get details about that? Could you take that on notice?

Mr QUINN: The other question is the remaining \$26m of the \$50m. We have indicated that there is \$24m here in this financial year. The \$26m will be in the next Budget for the next financial year. The best advice I can give at the moment is that it is obviously not included in this Budget. It will be a matter for consideration for the next Budget. It would be inappropriate to detail exactly where it is going to come from at the present time. It might change in the drawing up of the next Budget. My senior officer can provide you with further information.

Mr YOUNG: I guess to keep getting that money we keep looking at projects that are on. At the moment, we are working with the SAP project, with IntegHR and those things. They are using money at the present time. Ultimately, those stop and that money then becomes available to be allocated to other areas. What we have done is to look at the programs that are there, the programs that have a finite time line, and then that money is money that we can then use on other projects. There are a range of those things that we do within Ed Services and Corporate services—where the money is used for one Project and rolled over to another. So that money will become available for us to use.

Mr BREDHAUER: I guess you understand my concern. When the Minister announced the program in February, he said that there would be an extra \$150m for schools out of the Leading Schools Program. That is clearly a misleading figure. First of all, \$100m of that is just money that is already tied to programs like the Teacher Relief Scheme, the payment of utilities and those sorts of things. So there is not actually any extra money for schools in that \$100m. All it means is that the schools are going to take over the responsibility for administering those programs from the regional offices and, to a lesser extent, the school support centres.

Then you said that there would be \$50m in—I think you called it—new money. This is the new jargon in the department. You do not talk about extra money or additional money, you talk about new money. It is a bit like the teachers argument. You have identified only \$24m of the \$50m and, as I say, most of that has come from 503 full-time equivalents, reducing the cleaner numbers and a 262 full-time equivalents reduction in staffing despite the fact that we are not having any job losses as a result of the restructure. No-one can tell me where the additional \$26m is going to come from, despite the fact that you have announced already that you are going to spend it.

Mr QUINN: I make the point that, contrary to your assertions, there was no misleading about the \$150m. We made it quite clear at the outset that there, in fact, would be \$100m that currently schools do not have control over but which we would give them control over and the \$50m we term "new" money because it would be money that currently is not spent within schools at all. We have indicated that commitment to provide that \$50m to the schools at the end of the three-year phase.

This is the first phase. This budget contains the \$24m of the \$50m for the first phase. Where exactly the funds come from for the additional \$26m over the next couple of years will be a subject that will be addressed in the next two budgets. I think that it is inappropriate to ask us about the 1998-99 budget or the 1999-2000 budget when, in fact, we do not have the details before us and we have not yet drawn up those budgets in total. They will be issues that you can raise at the appropriate time in the foreseeable future. To ask us now where we are going to get \$26m from—it could be a direct grant from Treasury; there could be any number of ways in which we could get it. The answer will be in the forthcoming budgets, not in this budget.

Mr BREDHAUER: I am just curious about the certainty with which you are able to announce the \$26m.

Mr QUINN: It was a Government commitment. We have made the promise; we will deliver on the promise. You will have to wait until the upcoming budgets to see, in fact, how that promise is delivered.

Mr BREDHAUER: That is the point, isn't it? Schools out there are wondering what programs that they benefit from currently are going to be cut to help you achieve that \$26m.

Mr QUINN: We have never said that we would cut current budgets.

Mr BREDHAUER: The regions and the school support centres are going to close.

The CHAIRMAN: I call for order from both the member for Cook and the Minister. Can one ask a question and the other then answer? There is nothing wrong with having a conversation but just let each other finish, if you do not mind.

Mr BREDHAUER: Thank you, Mr Chairman. When the regions and school support centres close at the end of this year, what will happen to the minor capital works, school maintenance, Teacher Replacement Scheme and payment of utilities in bands 8 to 11 schools and in bands 4 to 7 schools? Specifically, what number of staff will be retained in each region? For how long? On what basis has that decision been made?

Mr YOUNG: The first part of the pilot project from July will be looking at ways in which some of those areas that you talk about will be able to be transferred to the Leading Schools. I presume that you are saying that that will continue on. Is it the schools that will not be in the Leading Schools Program from the beginning of next year that you are concerned about?

Mr BREDHAUER: What you have advised me in the answer to the question on notice is that the regions and the school support centres will close from 1 January this year. There are only 104 schools in the Leading Schools pilot program that will be provided with additional resources to manage issues like minor capital works, the Teacher Relief Scheme, the payment of utilities, and the other program, which I cannot remember now but which I have mentioned. I am asking: what happens to the schools other than the 104 schools which have the additional resources to cater for that? If you close down the regional offices and the regional offices are no longer performing those functions, for the balance of the bands 8 to 11 schools and the bands 4 to 7 schools, what arrangements are made for them? What staff, if any, are going to be retained in regional offices? For how long? How has that decision been made?

Mr YOUNG: For a number of months, all of the directors and the executive directors in central office have been working on transition plans. It may be more appropriate for Robin Sullivan to comment on the transition plans, because she is responsible for them. Transition plans do pick that up. As Robin deals with them, it may be more appropriate for her to give you the specifics.

Mr BREDHAUER: It has gone down the back line; it is down to you, Robin!

Mr PEACH: Before it goes to Robin, I would comment on one of your assumptions, Mr Bredhauer. It is true that support centres will close from the beginning of next year, but it is not quite accurate to say that regional offices will close. The current 11 regional offices will be 11 of the 36 districts. They will change their name and be called districts. However, a number of functions will remain with those 11 locations past the beginning of next year. Those functions will be carried out at those particular locations until such time as a smooth transition can take place. For example, until the new human resource management system, IntegHR, comes on line, the staffing will go from the 11 regional locations, even though they will be called districts, and will not go to the other 25 districts until it is all bedded down. In general, the same principle applies to the range of other things that you mentioned. There will be a formal change of name from region to district, but 11 offices will down size over time as we move to the new set of arrangements. That will not happen overnight and it will not happen in a rushed way that will cause any disruption.

Mr BREDHAUER: That is the question that I am asking. The answer to the question on notice states that the offices will close at the end of 1997.

Mr PEACH: That is true.

Mr BREDHAUER: I am asking what the temporary arrangements are.

Ms SULLIVAN: I would have made the same comments. However, I would add that a set of transition plans have been worked through at the moment. It is the intention that some people, particularly the staffing people, will still be placed physically in those 11 locations until not only the transition can take place smoothly but also the

technology is in place in the new district offices to cater for the needs of staff and the payment of utilities. We will soon deliver a paper on support services to the smaller schools. We have taken some pains to say that the smaller-sized schools will not have an increased delegation of responsibilities in these arenas; rather, they will have enhanced support from district offices. If you want to know about the district offices who will support those arenas, we can certainly provide that information if it has not already been provided. It is a transition according to the nature of the task and it is timed to fit in with the needs of schools and, particularly, the technical support that we will need to have in place in district offices.

Mr BREDHAUER: At this stage, do you know what the transitional arrangements are? That is the question I am asking. Can you tell me how many people will be retained in each of the 11 regions to support the functions in schools that are not in the Leading Schools pilot program and how long will they be there?

Ms SULLIVAN: There is some differentiation depending on what the regional office currently has in terms of technology and what the district offices will get. A critical point in the transition is when you change over from the people being physically located in the regional office to being located in the district office. It is highly likely that some of our regional offices will become district offices.

Mr BREDHAUER: That is what Frank said. Maybe I am not making myself clear: how many of the staff who are currently in the regions will remain there from the beginning of 1998? What is the process and what are the transitional arrangements? If you do not have them, that is fine; if you are still working them out, that is what I am asking; if you have the transitional arrangements, I would like them for the benefit of the Committee and, if necessary, I will place that on notice.

Mr PEACH: The regional transition plans will be available in a couple of weeks' time. The actual movement of staff to the other 25 district offices will occur progressively. Most of the movement will occur from 1 January. However, the time lines will be dependent on two major technical implementations. One is the new SAP R/3 financial system which is timed for April of next year. That will allow for another wave of people to move. The other will be the new human resource system which is timed to go on line in July next year. I envisage that, by the start of August next year, the transition ought to be complete. We can provide you with that detail probably within two or three weeks.

Mr ROBERTS: Minister, I refer to the Leading Schools initiative, and particularly to the process whereby schools, school councils and principals will be given control over minor capital works and maintenance. Who will supervise those activities to ensure that they conform with the relevant building regulations and maintain appropriate quality controls? Will a master plan of all those activities be kept and by whom?

Mr QUINN: I will ask Richard Williams to answer that question.

Mr WILLIAMS: Within the context of schools developing their own school property development plan, minor works and minor operational moneys will go into those schools. The schools will have the ability to manage those funds themselves or they will have the ability to call on facility service centres, which we are establishing to provide that level of support. Schools will still have the ability to go to the Department of Public Works to receive the traditional level of service through Q-Build if they require it.

All schools will still be subject to the State's Building Act and, therefore, will be required to comply with certain levels of building standards for what is constructed on school sites. There is a range of options. Schools will be able to handle the process themselves or they will be able to engage outside support. They will engage people who are certified or qualified to do the work and who have the ability to carry out what is required.

Mr ROBERTS: So the budget that will be allocated for minor capital works and maintenance will have to include additional amounts for supervision?

Mr WILLIAMS: It will be factored into the amounts that they get, yes.

Mr ROBERTS: Will there be a master plan or central monitoring of the sorts of maintenance or building activities undertaken throughout schools in the State?

Mr WILLIAMS: Basically, the monitoring process will be referenced to the School Property Development Plan. It will be picked up by financial expenditure in any particular 12-month period, in terms of how the chartered accounts within the department are actually established. There will be a major condition audit of schools, probably on a three-year basis, to assess the condition that schools are in. They will be the quality control processes that we have in place.

Mr ROBERTS: Will there be a central register of all works that might be carried out at individual schools?

Mr WILLIAMS: Yes, there will be a central register.

Mr ROBERTS: Minister, I refer to evidence given to the Public Works Committee hearings by public servant Eric Carfoot on Thursday, 7 November 1996. He stated—

"The funding went to hospital boards and individual hospitals. They had their own funds to undertake this work. As you say, although they meant well, they have made alterations which contradict the current Act."

He was referring to the Building Act. What guarantees can you give that exactly the same sort of thing will not happen to schools throughout Queensland and that workplace health and safety standards in particular will be adhered to?

Mr QUINN: I am not aware of the comments made by Mr Carfoot in that context, but I think that the problem might have been that the boards were totally independent and they could spend the money how they liked. The Leading Schools initiative

requires the schools to operate within a given framework. Richard has mentioned the plans that the schools must have in place and they will be expected to be signed off. It simply will not be an open go, as might have been the case with the hospital boards. Richard, would you like to make any further comment?

Mr WILLIAMS: As part of establishing Leading Schools, we will be doing a major condition analysis of all schools. That will establish a 10-year plan of works at those schools. We will expect that work to be carried out.

The CHAIRMAN: What are the goals of Education Overseas? Is it a financial success? What were some of its achievements in recent years?

Mr QUINN: Education Overseas is a part of the department and its goal is to gain recognition overseas of Queensland education. It does that by a number of means. It sells course places and curriculum materials which it markets successfully overseas. It conducts study tours and participates in consultancies in developing countries. There is a substantial level of financial return on all of these areas of commercial activity. A surplus of funds is returned. Departmental funds are sought for activities where the department is the client. That is done on a user-pays basis.

The 1996-97 achievements include maintaining a register of some 280 institutions for overseas students and maintaining a register of 44 organisations for exchange students. This financial year, it is anticipated that we will maintain those registers and that a commercial program will return sufficient revenue to cover costs and provide a surplus of funds. This is a critical program to maintain, because education is increasingly seen as an Australian export earner. We have increased the number of overseas students coming to study in Queensland, both in our State and non-State school system.

A number of interesting initiatives have been undertaken by us in South East Asia in particular. We have continued the Qi Lu Training School, which was started by the previous Government. That is a way of starting a flow of students into Years 11 and 12 and it will, hopefully, allow them to continue on to our universities in Queensland. The higher education sector is very enthusiastic about this sort of program, because it involves marketing our schooling system overseas. It sees that as a good door opener for marketing higher education throughout South East Asia.

As I said, this is one export industry that all Governments are placing an increasing emphasis on, because it is a good clean export earner. That knowledge base allows us to develop our own expertise and, at the same time, return export dollars to Queensland. The budget this year of \$1.8m is slightly up on the \$1m allocated for that activity in the previous year. We are still employing the same number of people, but we are competing in a very competitive overseas market, as anyone who has been over there will tell you. The program is looked upon by both our schooling systems and the higher

education as an activity that we ought to become increasingly engaged in.

Mr HEGARTY: The Department of Education produces a newsletter called Education Views. How much does it cost to produce and how many staff are involved in its production?

Mr QUINN: Education Views is a newspaper delivered on a fortnightly basis to every State school in Queensland. I understand that some copies are also made available to the non-Government schools sector. It has a staffing allocation of about 3 or 3.2 and a budget allocation of about \$470,000. There is a slight budget increase in the coming financial year over last year's to account for changes in postage and photographic cost increases. It is a publication aimed at providing teachers and other school staff with current information on curriculum, policies, issues, initiatives and resources in a user-friendly format. All schools are encouraged to submit stories and photographs of their activities for inclusion in the newspaper so that any good ideas available at one school can be spread throughout the education community. It also incorporates the Education Office Gazette, which is the official publication containing any job advertisements for vacancies in the department.

On average, it costs about 46c per copy to publish and is, as I said before, supplied free to schools. Former employees or other people can subscribe to it. On an average fortnightly print run, we publish about 46,500 copies. There are about 22 editions per year and it has anywhere between 16 and 24 pages. It contains colour photographs—spot colour and so on. Occasionally, it has included in it a four-page Sector Wide lift-out, which is the public service publication. About \$165,000 is raised through advertising. That advertising is restricted to equipment and resources which are appropriate for school settings. The paper maintains an appropriate ratio of education stories versus advertising. It is not simply produced to cover the cost of advertising. A significant amount of Government resources are involved.

The staff who turn out this publication are particularly dedicated. The level of staffing in this section is roughly half that of the nearest similar State production unit, that being New South Wales, which has eight staff to produce a similar publication. Other States have somewhat more staff and the publications are of a lesser quality. By and large, it is a very cost-effective way of spreading news, information and material around the State.

Mr TANTI: The single largest outlay in the Education budget is for teacher salaries. Page 39 of the MPS mentions that the department will implement the enterprise bargaining agreement. What is the Government's current offer to the teachers in the current round of this bargaining? Will any cuts need to be made in any other areas of the budget to accommodate the increase in teacher salaries?

Mr QUINN: The current offer has been conveyed to the Queensland Teachers Union. My understanding is that it has been rejected in public statements by the Queensland Teachers Union and in letters of correspondence to the Premier's

Department. I am not too sure whether it has been formally rejected with us. We are at a point in time when we do not know exactly what the situation is. The current offer endeavours to get four-year trained teachers with nine years' experience up to a salary ceiling of \$50,000. It is a differential offer, that is, it is not the same offer in percentage terms across-the-board to all classification and salary levels. From memory, it ranges from about 10% to almost 13% in some of the classification areas. It is an offer that is on the table, but we think it has been formally rejected—although we do not know for certain. We are currently speaking with the Queensland Teachers Union. I understand we were in the Industrial Relations Commission yesterday. There has been some progress since that time.

Mr PEACH: We were not actually in the commission; we were discussing it with the union.

Mr QUINN: I am informed that we were discussing it with the union and we were not in the commission. I think there is an acknowledgment on both sides that we will probably move to some sort of mediation. Whether that mediation is independent or under the aegis of the commission itself has yet to be determined. Hopefully, the issue can be resolved in the not-too-distant future. We realise that it is very debilitating and upsetting for the majority of our staff in schools, given that there have been concerns about strikes and things of that nature. Hopefully, the issue can be resolved and any of the concerns put to bed. At present, the issue is a bit of a moving feast. Until we have some hard data about the position of the union, we are not in a position to make any more comments.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the cost of the Equity Subprogram? What does it achieve and how many staff are specifically allocated to the program?

Mr QUINN: The Equity Subprogram has a staff of eight this financial year and a budget of \$686,000. It is targeted at areas such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, women, students from non-English speaking backgrounds and people with disabilities. There is a range of programs in each of those four subareas, which I will go through one at a time. For instance, in respect of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, we have recruited 11 Aboriginal teachers to try to increase the number of those sorts of teachers within our community schools. We have placed 24 Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders in the remote area education program and we have provided a range of career advice for those sorts of employees and to all salary levels.

Under the women's subprogram, we have had 52 women involved in a range of leadership programs such as work shadowing, mentoring, career development programs to support their career progression into areas of leadership such as principalships and AO8/SES positions. In the area of non-English-speaking background, 85 people were involved in orientation, and work shadowing and mentoring programs were provided for overseas-trained teachers to help with their understanding of education in Queensland. In the area of people with disabilities, there has been a substantial impact in terms of trying to put in place equal employment

opportunities and equity principles within the workplace, within school policies and practices and procedures within the department across all work sites. This is an area where we have maintained our commitment. It focuses on those areas where we have not had high participation rates in the past because of a range of factors and tries to influence those factors and eliminate some of the barriers that prevent those people from participating more readily in school communities.

Mr HEGARTY: What is the cost of the Facilities and Services Subprogram? What are its main purposes and what are its achievements?

Mr QUINN: The Facilities and Services Subprogram this year has a budget of just on \$22m, down slightly from last year, although the full-time equivalents are up by 5 to 116. The reduction in the budget is due mainly to the work on the FAMA system, our facilities and assets management system, which is being funded through the Schools Operations Program, so that explains the slight dip in budget allocation there. Its aims and goals are to deliver our public works program on time, the opening of new schools, the addition of new buildings in existing schools and the improvement of existing classrooms. It is interesting to note that last year, for instance, this particular section was responsible for the construction and opening of five new primary schools on time for the first day of the school year. They had two new secondary schools open, and these were particularly difficult ones because they were in north Queensland and involved the installation of airconditioning for the very first time in secondary schools. They also were responsible for the refurbishment of over 1,000 classrooms, the provision of 36 new classrooms in schools and the construction of increased shade for students as part of the Make Shade Program. They are responsible for and oversee the airconditioning program. They keep an eye on School Watch, which aims at trying to reduce school vandalism, and that has been particularly successful because the incidence of vandalism in our schools is down by something like 11% this year. They are taking on board the issue of how we can save water and energy in our schools. They are also looking at recycling paper.

This financial year, 1997-98, they have an even bigger task because we are targeting seven new primary schools to open at the beginning of 1998 as well as three new secondary schools. They also have to take on board the restructure which will see four new facilities centres opening around the State. They will continue with their program of school refurbishment, particularly classrooms, the building of shade and the construction of facilities which will make it easier for students with disabilities to access our schools. This is a particularly important part of Education Queensland. I think they have done an enormous job to date in getting the schools open on time, and I look forward to getting new schools built on time at the beginning of the 1998 school year.

Mr TANTI: What is the cost of the Financial Services Subprogram? What is its main purpose and what are its achievements?

Mr QUINN: The goal of the Financial Services Subprogram is to enhance departmental outcomes through the sound management of our finances. In other words, they are the gatekeepers for the money. Last financial year they put in place a range of strategies to help them improve that financial management. They have commenced Stage 1 of the SAP R/3 project, which is a computerised system. They have piloted the SIMS finance model, which is a module which is going into schools. They have developed a grant and allowance payment system called GAPS, which is another electronic system. They have continued with a range of other initiatives this year. All of those initiatives which I mentioned, particularly those related to technology, will increase. It has a budget this year slightly down on last year of about \$18m compared with last year of \$22m. It has roughly the same staffing allocation—up by some 20. By and large, as I said before, it is the part of the department that oversees the financial aspects of our operations and liaises with other Government departments, particularly Treasury, in drawing up budgets and things of that nature.

The CHAIRMAN: How many FOI requests did the department handle last year?

Mr QUINN: Last financial year we had 173 applications for access to documents. Those applications involved more than 33,000 documents. There were 84 personal applications and 89 non-personal, 4 amended, 38 in written internal review and 14 external. Most of the effort goes into a small number of people or organisations asking for information. We provided full or partial access to 26,000 documents. This is an extremely time-consuming task for the department. We have two people allocated full time on the task, and it consumes about \$138,000 in resources each financial year. The unit coordinates and processes the access to applications. It provides advice and training to departmental officers and to others accessing the documents, and it also ensures that we comply with the legislative process and the reporting requirements under the relevant Act. They had a busy year last year. No doubt that workload will increase as more and more people access documents. When you are putting on display or providing access to 33,000 documents, it is a fair workload through the year. As I said before, it is by a limited number of people, so a small proportion of the applicants are generating the vast majority of the work, which seems to be the trend these days in FOI applications.

The CHAIRMAN: You have partly answered my next question. I will still ask it, but please be brief as our time is nearly up. Have there been any problems with this administration? Do you want to enlarge on that at all?

Mr QUINN: The problem is that a small number of people or applicants generate the vast majority of the work for the unit. When you have 173 applications and they involve more than 33,000 documents, it is quite a workload to sift through the department's files, pull those documents together and make them available for the applicants to peruse and copy if they require. It is one of those tasks that

the department provides a service for under the legislation. We have no control over it. It is an ongoing administrative burden for the department. However, until there are changes we will be bound by what we have to provide and simply have to meet the resource requirements in order to provide it.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Minister. At this point I welcome Jon Sullivan, the member for Caboolture, who often makes contributions in the House on a great number of matters. Jon has requested that the Committee grant him some time to ask some questions. Welcome. You're on!

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, and can I say how much I appreciate the courtesy extended to me by the members of the Committee. Minister, I have some questions relating to Life Education Centres, which received funding in the 1996-97 State Budget. Before I ask them, I want to declare my own involvement. My wife, Karen, is the President of the Caboolture and District Life Education Association Incorporated. I am a member of that association, and my Caboolture electorate office is the mailing address for that association. I also understand that the Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated, the State headquarters of the organisation, is located within your own electorate.

My first question is this: the 1996-97 State Budget provided grant funding of \$390,000 to, according to you, "half fund the salaries of teachers who work within that particular program". How was that figure arrived at and has that money been paid to Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated?

Mr QUINN: Last year's?

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Last year's.

Mr QUINN: I understand that the money has been paid. The figure was arrived at by a commitment that we gave in the context of the election campaign to provide that level of funding over that period of time in order to achieve certain outcomes. There has been a resource agreement that has been signed by Life Education Centres to deliver certain outcomes, and we will be monitoring the outcomes to make sure that they, in fact, have complied with their resource agreement.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: You have previously indicated that this is a three-year commitment. What funding has been provided to Life Education in the 1997-98 budget?

Mr QUINN: The amount of money there is—excuse me, I have two numbers in front of me.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: How unusual!

Mr BREDHAUER: Try the Treasurer's, that will be the wrong one.

Mr QUINN: \$410,000 will be provided to Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated, I am advised.

Mr BREDHAUER: I say advisedly.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: What conditions were Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland

Incorporated required to agree to in order to receive grant funding from the department in 1996-97?

Mr QUINN: That would be included in the resource agreement that was signed. As I mentioned before, we can provide a copy of that resource agreement to you if you so desire it.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I actually have a copy. I would be interested to know if it is likely that there will be any different conditions required from them for the 1997-98 grant.

Mr QUINN: I would think that in the normal course of events we would review whether in fact they have complied with their previous agreement and, if that compliance is there, we will probably provide another agreement based on a similar set of circumstances. However, if they have not complied, we will be investigating.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: You are obviously satisfied with the standard of the program in order to commit funding in the first place.

Mr QUINN: Yes. It was an election commitment by the coalition in the 1995 election campaign. It was one that I think received widespread support because it was recognised that Life Education Centres provide a valuable service to schools. There have been similar financing arrangements for Life Education Centres in other States. We provide finance on a similar basis.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Are you aware that Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated has of its own volition imposed additional conditions on local committees before it will pass on grant funds intended for local committees?

Mr QUINN: No, I am not aware of that level of detail.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Are you aware that Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated has established a sliding scale on which the Government's grant will be passed on to local committees based on the distribution of workbooks by local committees—work books, I might add, that are sold by Life Education Centre Foundation Incorporated to local committees at a profit?

Mr QUINN: As I said before, I am not aware of that level of detail.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Would you hazard a guess as to what might happen to money not passed on to committees by Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated for the purpose for which you told Parliament the money was to be used, that is, half fund the salaries of teachers delivering the Life Education Program? Will it be retained by Life Education Foundation Queensland Incorporated or will it be returned to the Government?

Mr QUINN: I am not going to hazard a guess on anything here. If you have raised certain issues that you think need investigating about the way this program is being administered by Life Education, we are more than willing to take those concerns on

board and investigate the matters ourselves and, if necessary, get back to you with another reply.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: I would appreciate that. One final question for the record: are you aware that Life Education Centre Foundation Queensland Incorporated appears to be deducting money owed by local committees to the foundation before passing on the State Government grant to local committees, potentially therefore breaching section 5 of the service agreement, withholding some thousands of dollars from local committees to ensure compliance with the additional conditions imposed by Life Education and, in one case, not passing on the grant at all?

Mr QUINN: As I said before, we would not be signing the new agreement until we were satisfied that they had complied with the previous agreement. Obviously, there needs to be an evaluation of that made, and that would be done before the new agreement is signed. If there is any breach of the agreement, we will take the appropriate action at that time.

Mr J. H. SULLIVAN: Thank you, I would appreciate that investigation. Mr Chairman, thank you very much for the courtesy extended to me by the Committee.

Mr BREDHAUER: You have taken those questions on notice?

Mr QUINN: We will—

Mr BREDHAUER: Is the protocol that we put those questions on notice and after you have investigated you will get back to us in respect of those issues?

Mr QUINN: I think the problem might be that you are on a pretty tight time frame to produce your report and an investigation might take more than the time frame allows. However, I give an undertaking that, at the conclusion of that investigation, I will certainly be writing to the member concerned and providing the details of the result of the investigation.

Mr BREDHAUER: I want to come back to some further questions in respect of Leading Schools. What was the total cost of operating the school-based management unit in 1996-97 and how much has been allocated in 1997-98? I would like a detailed breakdown there. What is the advertising budget for promoting Leading Schools and what firm or firms have been involved in the advertising contract? I understand that there will be a longitudinal study of Leading Schools—and I think this is what the Director-General referred to previously—and a three-year evaluation of the program. How much will the study cost? When will the tender be let and what criteria will they use to determine the effectiveness of Leading Schools in improving educational outcomes? What tender process has been established and, finally, what budget has been allocated in 1996-97 and 1997-98 for the Leading Schools conferences at the Marriott, the Ramada in Cairns and other high quality conference venues? How much has currently been expended and where will these funds be sourced? Is it not true that the Director-General has criticised

principals for holding conferences in such luxurious venues?

Mr QUINN: You have got a multifaceted question there. Which one would you like me to start with?

Mr BREDHAUER: The first one.

Mr QUINN: Which is?

Mr BREDHAUER: The cost of operating the school-based management unit for 1996-97 and 1997-98 and a breakdown.

Mr QUINN: In 1996-97 the unit had an operating budget of \$672,000 and in this budget there is provision for \$780,000. The unit, of course, is charged with the responsibility of overseeing the general process and moving towards school-based management.

Mr BREDHAUER: Can you provide me with the detail of how that is acquitted, on notice if necessary?

Mr QUINN: I think we can probably do that, yes. The next one?

Mr BREDHAUER: The next one was the advertising contract—how much is the advertising budget for Leading Schools and what firm or firms have been involved?

Mr QUINN: The total for the advertising was \$46,302.36 for some advertising in the Sunday Mail, the Courier-Mail and further in the Sunday Mail. The contract was administered by AIS Media.

Mr BREDHAUER: How much will the longitudinal study of Leading Schools and a three-year evaluation of the program cost; when will the tender be let; and what criteria will be used to determine the effectiveness of Leading Schools? What tender process has been established?

Mr QUINN: I am advised that the tender has been called and we are waiting for bids to come back to the department, so we have no exact idea of what the cost is going to be at the present time. The evaluation committee is meeting on Friday afternoon, and my understanding is that a couple of the tenderers will be coming in to make presentations to that committee.

Mr BREDHAUER: On what criteria are you going to determine the effectiveness of Leading Schools?

Mr QUINN: That is in the tender documents themselves. The whole focus of Leading Schools has been to improve student learning outcomes. We made that plain from the very first day that we launched the program. The key criteria will be to what extent the program does that. We are not in the business of putting this program in place if, in fact, it does not achieve the stated policy objective in the first instance, that is, the improvement of student learning outcomes.

Mr BREDHAUER: I guess that is what there is a fair degree of scepticism about out there, particularly in the teaching community. That is why I am asking: on what basis will you determine whether educational outcomes have been improved by Leading Schools? What mechanisms and criteria will

the study use to determine whether educational outcomes have been improved?

Mr PEACH: The difficulty that all education systems across this country have is that we have had 25 years of systematic avoidance therapy as far as establishing hard data about student learning achievements is concerned. The first task is to establish baseline data. Starting next year, Leading Schools will produce an annual report in which it will report student achievements. I have to say, however, that we will need to work very quickly over the next couple of years in establishing a suite of assessment arrangements which give us baseline data on which we can build for the future.

As you know, we have had results at senior level that have been moderated ever since school-based curriculum decision making and school assessments have come in there. At Year 10, we have not had a fully fledged moderation system for a long time. In the primary schools, we have not had any systems to compare student results. It is only with the introduction of the Year 2 Diagnostic Net and the Year 6 Test that we have started to get baseline data there. There are processes under way at the national level to gradually introduce, over the next half a dozen years, literacy and numeracy benchmarks at Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. There are a whole lot of decisions that Government in this State needs to make as to the extent to which it wishes to participate in that program. Starting with Year 3 next year, where a decision has been made, they will begin the establishment of more baseline data. As well as that, the new syllabuses that are being developed by the Queensland School Curriculum Council will have a reporting framework—a standard assessment and reporting framework—which also will provide baseline data.

I do not want to minimise the difficulty of the work that we have to do to establish baseline data so that we can then say that we have improved and we have got better over time. In the first few years we are going to have to rely on the judgments of principals and teachers to some extent until we can be more definite in a qualitative and quantitative way about those results. At Year 12 level, we have some benchmarks from which we can work, but that is really effectively the only place at this time.

In terms of the tender document—if I can just speak generally, the tenderers tend to be university groups. We will be very interested to see how they are going to help us establish that baseline data initially. We want to work with them in terms of that. Clearly, we are going to need to look at teacher opinions and teacher views on these in the initial years.

Mr BREDHAUER: What is the cost of leasing and/or property acquisition to establish the 36 new district offices? Where will this money be sourced? What is the total establishment cost of the 36 district offices? How many premises will be leased? What are the terms of those leases and ongoing lease costs? How do these costs compare with the current costs for leasing regional offices and school support centres? What will be done with the departmentally owned buildings currently used for school support

centres and regional offices under the new structure if they are not required for district offices? What has been the cost of refurbishing central office space as quality office space in 1996-97?

Mr WILLIAMS: If I miss any of your questions, you might just prompt me. Basically, as part of the transition planning at the present time, we are putting the scope together as to what the costs will be in terms of establishing the 36 district offices, so I cannot give you an answer to that at this stage. We are anticipating in terms of—

Mr BREDHAUER: You do not know what the costs are going to be?

Mr WILLIAMS: No. We are out scoping that at the present time.

Mr BREDHAUER: You have identified what the savings are going to be, but you have not worked out what the costs are going to be?

Mr WILLIAMS: In terms of actually establishing the offices.

Mr BREDHAUER: You said in answer to question on notice No. 2 that the establishment of the new district office structure would save you \$3.8m in 1997-98 and \$9.4m in a full year. And this is how you—

Mr QUINN: I can clarify that. Last year, the budget for regional offices, if you like, was \$64.652m. This year, in 1997-98, we have allocated \$60.831m.

Mr BREDHAUER: But there may not, in fact, be savings if you do not know what the cost of establishing your district offices is.

Mr QUINN: We have estimated that the establishment of this new structure will result in savings of \$3.8m in this financial year, that is, 1997-98, and a full year's savings of \$9.4m in future years. These savings exclude the effect of superannuation. As we indicated before, these savings will be partly used to provide additional resources in schools. There will be some additional costs in 1997-98 as we go through the transition to the new structure. Provision of \$7.2m has been made for these costs, should we need them. But that is where you get the figures from.

Mr BREDHAUER: I understand that. I just find it curious that you can actually make a determination about how much you are going to save when you do not know how much it is going to cost you to establish the new district office structure.

Mr QUINN: As I said, about \$60m.

Mr BREDHAUER: Where does the \$60m come from?

Mr QUINN: I just told you. Last year, the regional budget was \$64.65m. This year, 1997-98, it is \$60.831m.

Mr BREDHAUER: So you do not have the details then about the leasing arrangements and what you are going to do with superfluous buildings?

Mr QUINN: We are six months away from moving into the new regional structure—the new district structure at least. A lot of those things are still being worked out.

Mr WILLIAMS: In many cases there will be no change to the office accommodation, and we will continue with the existing arrangements. Out of the 36, we are looking at 11 cases where we will probably have to lease accommodation from the private sector. We do not have a handle on exactly what that lease cost might be at this stage, but it will be contained within the current budget funding levels.

Mr BREDHAUER: Is there any budget for refurbishing the central office in 1996-97 and 1997-98?

Mr WILLIAMS: We have spent money on refurbishing Education House in 1996-97 to the amount of about \$700,000. That was basically done by consolidating a couple of floors within the building to free up another floor. That was done on a business case—that the payback from doing that would be paid back within about three to four years.

Mr BREDHAUER: Are there any plans to refurbish either your office or your Director-General's office in the current budget? If so, at what cost?

Mr QUINN: There would be no allocation for that in this particular budget because the building is not owned by Education Queensland.

Mr BREDHAUER: So there are no plans to refurbish your office or your Director-General's office?

Mr QUINN: Some time ago we received a delegation from Public Works and Housing, I think, from memory—Queensland Property Management, which control the building themselves—outlining to us the fact that they would like to refurbish our offices. They came with a set of schematic plans. We had a look at them. We made some changes. We thought much of it was over the top. We sent them away. They have come back since. We sent them away again. This is an ongoing thing. It is not reflected in our budget as we are not the owners of the building.

Mr BREDHAUER: What is the anticipated cost?

Mr QUINN: I do not know. I do not think one has been floated to us. All we have seen so far are a number of plans. I have indicated, from my ministerial point of view—where we are on half of the top floor—that we thought the plans were over the top and that they needed to go away and think about them again. I do not know what has happened on the other side. There has been a series of meetings. I have not heard the final outcome. In fact, I am sure that there has been no final outcome, because we have not been informed of what is going on yet.

Mr WILLIAMS: Could I just clarify that? Basically, the Department of Public Works and Housing has allocated \$600,000 in this coming financial year. That money is to be applied to refurbishing parts of the building, particularly floor 22.

Mr BREDHAUER: Who works on that floor?

Mr QUINN: It is the top floor.

Mr BREDHAUER: So it is \$600,000 to refurbish the Minister's office?

Mr QUINN: No. Richard said that it had been allocated. I said that they had been backwards and forwards twice. We have indicated that we thought it was inappropriate—the level of refurbishment that they wanted to do. Basically, we said that we wanted all the walls to remain the same. There is some question about the quality of the furniture. The bums are falling out of some of the seats, as Paul would know; he was up there. They want to provide some more updated furniture and do a bit of internal refurbishing. The final outcome has not been negotiated or settled. I have not heard that amount of money before. It has been allocated out of someone else's budget. It is not reflected in these Program Statements or in our budget. As I said, we do not own the building. We are a long way from finalising any refurbishments.

Mr BREDHAUER: As the Chairman might have said, a unit at Dockside would be cheaper.

The CHAIRMAN: Once we start getting on to Dockside it is time to change direction. I call upon the member for Redlands.

Mr HEGARTY: This question is in no way appropriate to follow the last remark. How much does the department pay in fringe benefits tax? What is the breakdown of that expenditure?

Mr QUINN: Last year the budget included provision for \$3.58m for fringe benefits tax liability. This year we have provided \$4.2m. That is provided on the basis that it will be applied across a number of areas: housing, motor vehicles, expense payments, car parking, electricity, vehicle hire, living away from home allowance and miscellaneous payroll tax things of that nature. We have put in this budget a growth factor of some \$50,000. We also include liability for some of the other organisations under our budgetary jurisdiction, that is, the Tertiary Entrance Procedures Authority, the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies, the Queensland School Curriculum Council and the Board of Teacher Registration. Hopefully, further reviews will be undertaken this year about specific fringe benefits types with regard to trying to reduce their impact upon our budget. It is a significant cost impost. We are always mindful of how it is applied and what its costs are and trying to keep them under control.

Mr TANTI: I have a question that I can relate to. How much is provided for Gifted and Talented Education? What are the goals this financial year?

Mr QUINN: Last time was the first time Gifted and Talented had a specific line item in the budget. We provided a touch over \$640,000 for that particular program. That was a half-year program. This year we moved to a full-year basis. We are providing a little over \$1m for Gifted and Talented. The idea, of course, is to develop the potential of all students, particularly those who excel—who quite often in some instances can be forgotten or tend to be invisible in classrooms. Last year we liaised with the Gifted and Talented Children (Queensland) Association about how we would allocate the money and how we would target it. The upshot is that we have identified or selected four schools for centres for whole-school implementation of Gifted and Talented Education. We call those Gateway Schools.

We will also be continuing a number of other projects that are running such as Unicorn and things of that nature. I think that is long overdue.

It is greatly appreciated by the Gifted and Talented Children (Queensland) Association and the parents of those students, who saw significant amounts of money going to other interest groups within the education community, such as those with disabilities and so on, and who felt that they were being somewhat neglected. This will provide some way to redress those inequities that have been there in the past. I know it is appreciated by the parents who were involved. Those who excel or have the potential to excel could be as many as 20% of the population. We are not talking about a minority group. It is a large group of kids to whom we are trying to provide extensive additional services to enable them to reach their full potential.

The CHAIRMAN: How much has been provided for guidance and counselling services? How many people are involved?

Mr QUINN: Currently we have 370 guidance officer positions in the department. That is supplemented by about 60 through regional initiatives. There are a few involved in behaviour management. We went out to schools and asked them what sort of expertise they require to assist in that initiative. They indicated that they wanted a range of expertise, and 18 of those happen to be guidance officers. That brings us up to about 385.5 positions across the State. There are also some 50 senior guidance positions. We have recently moved to change the way in which guidance officers are trained. The changes to the training model endeavour to overcome some of the historical difficulties in meeting the needs of schools outside the south-east corner of the State, where in the past they have been extremely hard to attract. Currently some 55 teachers are being supported by the department through university studies and in-service training. By the end of 1998, some 35 of those will be eligible for employment within the department. By and large, we are trying to meet the need for additional guidance officer services within the department. It is an historical problem, but hopefully we can get on top of that within the next couple of years.

The CHAIRMAN: Are any innovations to be pursued in the coming year?

Mr QUINN: We have a number of new initiatives on the horizon. They relate to providing career counselling services to students in Years 11 and 12. That is where quite a substantial proportion of guidance officers' work occurs, besides in primary schools. We are looking at providing access for students to the jobs and careers explorer, JAC, which is an interactive technology that we plan to provide. That will enable students to have specific advice on careers. That will help alleviate some of the pressures on our guidance staff in terms of career advice. We are also looking at trialling new and revised tests to make it easier for our guidance officers to identify those students who are in need of help.

We will be training our guidance officers in vocational education changes as they occur. That is an ever-changing environment because of the demands of the workplace. Guidance officers need to keep their skills up if they are to provide relevant information to students about job opportunities. Last year a range of initiatives was in place. We have allocated additional resources this year, both in terms of money and guidance officers. There is an increase of about 20 guidance officers this year in our schools. The budget for guidance officer services will increase by over \$1m. There is an emphasis now on trying to provide guidance officer services. We need to provide additional services as both enrolments and demands increase. However, the shortage is an historical problem. We are trying to overcome it.

Mr HEGARTY: What programs are provided for AIDS and HIV education? How much do they cost?

Mr QUINN: The allocation for HIV and AIDS education is the same as last year, roughly \$41,000. It is provided under the National Aids Strategy through Queensland Health. Last year the major achievements were preparing a report on Queensland secondary school student knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases, attitudes towards people with HIV infection and patterns of sexual behaviour and a comparison of two similar random surveys conducted in 1992 and 1995. That is an important research tool, because we need to know how young people think about those particular issues if we are to address them in the school settings. A report was published called Queensland School AIDS Prevention Strategy 91-96. They also plan to have a Statewide forum on prevention of AIDS and other STDs.

This year, there will be a project developed to assist primary school HIV/AIDS resources so that even at the primary school level there is some resource material or some information available to students and teachers should they need it. I think the major focus of the strategy is on the secondary schools in Queensland—in trying to make people aware of the dangers of HIV and their attitude to people with that infection.

Mr TANTI: What arrangements does the department have in place to house its employees across Queensland?

Mr QUINN: Teacher housing is an ongoing area where we need to provide suitable accommodation in remote and country areas of the State. Obviously, there is a shortage of available housing in the private rental market in those particular areas. In some cases, the rent charged by private lessors is way out of the ballpark figure, if in fact the rental properties are available.

This year, our budget is very similar to last year. A touch over \$3m has been allocated for teacher housing. Currently, the department owns about 1,180 houses or accommodation units and leases some 229 sole-tenancy designed dwellings. The department also owns 649 and leases 144 multitenanted designated dwellings. As you would probably know, there has been an ongoing program

to rationalise some of the teacher housing across the State. In the more populous areas where alternative rental is available, the program has been disposing of those assets over a time scale and reinvesting those assets in areas of the State where teacher housing is either not up to scratch or simply is not available. The department has been moving to purchase or provide rental accommodation in those particular areas. That will be ongoing. There were some concerns that, in fact, teacher housing will be taken out of the control of the department and assigned to the Department of Public Works and Housing or one of the other Government departments. I think that has largely been put to bed, although some of the principles that were espoused under that program, such as the rationalisation of teacher housing, will still be effected, that is, providing much-needed accommodation in remote and rural areas and disposing of some of the accommodation in areas where alternative rental accommodation is available.

The CHAIRMAN: Currently, the department is reviewing the human resources management system. What does that involve and what will it cost?

Mr QUINN: The HRMS or human resource management system is a sector-wide system administered by CITEC. That is used in conjunction with other systems such as payroll systems, EDPERS and MICROPLAN. I think that it would be fair to say that for quite some time in the department the way in which the data from it can be interpreted and used, the input systems and so on, has been a source of some concern. The department is now moving to integrate all of those into a new system called IntegHR. That is one that we are purchasing from Lend Lease and trying to modify to our own particular specifications. A project team has been established to customise this system. The new system will enhance the department's ability to effectively manage its work force. As I said, there have been some problems in the past. I think that has been highlighted in some respects by the Auditor-General's report, where we have been mentioned for the past 5 or 10 years in relation to the level of overpayments and things of that nature. So this is designed to overcome those deficiencies within the department and to put in place a more effective system of managing those critical areas such as human resource management, pays, EDPERS and things of that nature. I think that is about all we need to say, except that it is an ongoing program. This year, the budget is about \$5m. Because we are employing consultants to help modify the program, there is an increase in the staffing equivalents for the 1997-98 budget.

The CHAIRMAN: Leading on from that, what is the cost of the human resources services subprogram? How many staff are to be employed? What are its goals?

Mr QUINN: The human resources subprogram is the program that is designed, or has as its main function, if you like, tracking, retaining and developing skilled and competent people within our work force. Its budget this year is almost \$28m, up from \$22.5m last year, with a slight decrease in staffing levels. Last year, it was responsible for

reducing workers' compensation claims and time off for the second successive year. So it has been very concerned with that particular area. It has implemented the Remote Area Incentive Scheme which has been fundamental, I think, in trying to attract and retain qualified staff in some of the remote areas of the State. It is also responsible for the introduction of that new IntegHR system that I mentioned before.

An innovation last year was the provision of scholarships for those students who graduated with a Diploma in Education (Secondary). Through this program, we were trying to attract those graduates to come into a diploma of education in specialist areas such as science, maths, technology, business education—those areas where we have some critical shortages, particularly in country areas. This was a new initiative where we let out a contract to the University of Technology for 60 of these people to undertake a one-year course to try to meet that shortfall in those critical areas. This year, this particular subprogram will be providing again leadership and training for those key staff in the Leading Schools area. There will be funds available for that to service Education. We will also be looking at a review of that program where we were trying to attract those specialist teachers into a scholarship program to see how it went with a view to trying to do something like that again this year.

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer to the Corporate Services Program and in particular to SIMS. How much was the SIMS budget underspent in 1996-97, how much was it underspent in 1995-96, and why? I also ask: on page 39 of the MPS, the corporate services performance assessment 1996-97 says that all Government schools were connected to SIMS. Is this true? If not, what is the total estimated budget for SIMS and when will it be fully implemented?

Mr QUINN: You are asking me about whether, in fact, it was all expended?

Mr BREDHAUER: The MPS states, "The new standard Schools Management System was extended to all Government schools." That is part of the 1996-97 program performance assessment for Corporate Services.

Mr PEACH: SIMS is a school information management system. It has a number of components, including the establishment of standard information architecture; the establishment of consistent software in regional offices, schools, and central office; the establishment of a school management system; the establishment of an integrated network across the State and a couple of other factors. The reference at page 39 in the MPS to the Schools Management System is correct. All State schools were connected during the 1996-97 financial year. Obviously, it does not apply to that whole suite of programs that make up SIMS that are across several financial years.

Mr BREDHAUER: The other parts of the question were: how much was the budget underspent in 1996-97, how much was it underspent in 1995-96, and why? What is the total estimated budget for SIMS and when will it be fully implemented?

Mr QUINN: I think that you are right in saying that there was an underexpenditure. I think that occurred because the State Government embarked upon a strategic review of its communication needs throughout the year. We were asked to delay our implementation, our roll out of it, because of the impending results of the review.

Now that the review has been finalised and the strategy has been firmed up, Education will be one of the lead agencies in this particular area. We are liaising with Health and a number of other Government departments with a view to rolling out our technology. At meetings with suppliers, we indicated that we were not satisfied with how they intended to provide the services we required. They wanted to assist us in rolling out our technology along the eastern seaboard, whereas our tender documents required every school in Queensland to be connected. We have sent them back to rethink that. We believe that the fact that the telecommunications industry will deregulate from 1 July and that significant overseas technologies are available will assist our goals. I am informed that some \$12,750,000 has been carried forward into this budget.

Mr BREDHAUER: And what was the total budget for SIMS last year? That was the one where we had five figures. Did we ever work out which was the right one? It does not matter; I will work it out. What about the underspending for the previous financial year?

Mr QUINN: I am informed that we cannot provide you with the underspending figures for last year as we do not have that information with us.

Mr BREDHAUER: Can you provide it to me on notice?

Mr QUINN: We can do that. I will ask Lynne Hackwood to clarify the issue.

Mr BREDHAUER: I probably would have asked her myself, if I had been provided with the opportunity.

Ms HACKWOOD: In the previous year, the allocation for the SIMS project was \$22,207,000 and, as was indicated before, the carryover figure for the current year is \$12,750,000. We can get the previous year's figures for you on notice.

Mr BREDHAUER: So over half the budget was not expended?

Ms HACKWOOD: The major reason for that has been telecommunications, as the Minister indicated. The Government has taken the approach of recognising that infrastructure for the whole of the State, particularly remote and rural areas, is critical to providing services. Consequently, we have been held back. We have released a tender for our telecommunications network services. The second stage of that will be released in July. As the Minister indicated earlier, we anticipate that all schools will be connected to the network and that all schools will have Internet connection capability by the end of 1998. We are on target to meet that. I do not expect that the underexpenditure will occur over the next—

Mr BREDHAUER: That is in terms of SIMS?

Ms HACKWOOD: The Internet connection is for all schools. Yes, we are talking about the network connection that connects the schools to the departmental network, that is, SIMS.

Mr BREDHAUER: What is the total estimated budget for SIMS?

Ms HACKWOOD: I do not have the figure for the total estimated budget handy, but I can provide it. Are you talking about overall?

Mr BREDHAUER: Overall, from the start of implementation to when, hopefully—

Ms HACKWOOD: I will have to provide that on notice. I only have the figure for next year.

Mr BREDHAUER: Is it true that, by industry standards, SIMS hardware has an effective life span of only three years? If so, what provisions have been made for updating and/or the replacement of the system?

Ms HACKWOOD: In terms of the hardware provided to schools, it will certainly continue to meet their needs currently.

Mr BREDHAUER: Currently?

Ms HACKWOOD: Yes. In other words, the applications that we are running and the updated versions that we provide will run on the hardware that has been provided. How long hardware will actually last in any organisation, be it schools or any other Government or commercial entity, is debatable. According to the track record, the life span in schools tends to be five years. In commercial enterprises, it tends to be three years. I guess that you have to be a crystal ball gazer to predict exactly when the technology will need to be replaced.

Mr BREDHAUER: You can predict that it will be somewhere between three and five years. The program has not actually been fully implemented. Are we currently making provisions for the replacement of hardware, presumably some of which will need to be replaced soon given the duration of the program?

Ms HACKWOOD: Two factors impact on that. There is an allocation for the replacement of hardware. My understanding is that the funding for the replacement of computers has been increased in the coming budget by some \$12m. Secondly, technology changes are taking place in the marketplace. A device called a network computer will enable us to use machines that are about three years old to run applications both now and for at least the next five years. The department will put a project in place to test that technology. That has huge financial savings potential for us.

Mr BREDHAUER: What proportion of the \$78.2m allocated to the School in 2001 program over the next three years will be spent either on SIMS or administration related technology or training?

Mr PEACH: The allocation of \$78m relates to a three-year program called the School in 2001 initiative. That program was allocated approximately \$27m in the first year and we have not yet determined the actual breakup of the money for the

subsequent two years. The program is focused on learning technology in classrooms.

In the first year, \$19.578m was allocated for technology infrastructure, that is, for the maintenance of computers in classrooms, additional computers, networking in schools and connecting more schools to the network. As the Minister has already indicated, \$6.717m has been allocated for staff development, much of which will go straight into the schools in dollar terms. An allocation of \$1.25m has been made for the purchase of quality software to provide a range of interactive software programs for schools. An allocation of \$0.02m has been made for learning outcomes and \$0.035m for marketing the benefits of learning technology to principals and teachers in schools. Effectively, none of that is for SIMS as such. It is the beginning of a program to really focus the use of learning technology in classrooms to improve student learning.

Mr BREDHAUER: It is all classroom based; none of it is for administration?

Mr PEACH: Yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: What provision has been made to make Formula records accessible within SIMS? What is the annualised cost of this provision?

Ms HACKWOOD: Basically, there is a strategy in place for archiving Formula data. At this stage, it is intended that school Formula data will be archived in the regional or district office and that will be accessible from a device. This is the normal sort of strategy for replacing hardware that is actually becoming redundant.

Mr BREDHAUER: Is there any compensation to schools? Only a few years ago, schools spent a lot of money on Formula and now it is becoming redundant. Is there any program to compensate those schools for the cost of buying technology which, through no fault of their own, became outdated sooner than it should have or sooner than expected?

Ms HACKWOOD: I do not think that it became outdated sooner than it should have.

Mr BREDHAUER: Sooner than they expected?

Ms HACKWOOD: Basically, the technology is outdated and it would not matter whether Formula was running on that or not. It has had a reasonably long life span. I do not think that it would have any value if it was sold in the commercial marketplace any more than it would within the department. The department has actually provided hardware to schools, so I think that the schools have already been compensated to a certain extent.

Mr BREDHAUER: There is no compensation to schools that spent their own funds on Formula?

Ms HACKWOOD: The hardware has no commercial value. If it had a commercial value, they would be able to sell those devices elsewhere. Basically, the schools have been provided with funding to convert existing data. That has well and truly covered their costs. There is an archiving process to look after the rest of the data that is not

converted into the existing systems and that is maintained in district offices. From the schools' perspective, I think the department has taken appropriate action to ensure that they are not disadvantaged.

Mr PEACH: Mr Bredhauer, while on the subject of technology, I will give you the information on Successmaker that we promised you. I refer to the Computer Curriculum Corporation. The Australian company—and I mentioned Dennis Dale's name before—is called Telesystems. The expenditure on Successmaker in the department has been \$353,479. Payments were made for the purchase of software and initial training for the Successmaker trial in Queensland schools. Successmaker is a high-quality interactive multimedia package. It has no known quality competitor across the world at this time. A decision to trial Successmaker was made in September 1996. An agreement was reached to undertake this trial which involves Education Queensland bearing a third of the costs, participating schools bearing a third of the costs and Telesystems bearing a third of the costs. The schools participating were volunteer schools sought by their region. The contract for that undertaking was signed by the Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services.

Mr BREDHAUER: When was that?

Mr PEACH: Late last year; I do not have the date.

Mr YOUNG: It would have been before the end of the year. The schools had to have their applications in before the end of the year.

Mr PEACH: There will be a limited trial of Successmaker, involving the package being undertaken in 18 Queensland schools this year. Information packs were distributed to schools to assist in their decision to participate in the trial. The Queensland University of Technology's Learning and Teaching Technology Unit has been engaged for the purpose, firstly, of evaluating the impact of the use of Successmaker on student learning outcomes in English, mathematics, science, studies of society and the environment; secondly, to evaluate its effectiveness as an intervention strategy for students experiencing difficulties in literacy and numeracy; and, thirdly, to identify factors which influence the effectiveness of Successmaker as an instructional strategy. That evaluation will be a formal one done at arm's length from Education Queensland.

Mr BREDHAUER: Those arrangements were entered into in September of last year. Two-thirds of the cost was to be borne by either the Education Department or schools. In January of that year, you, as the Director-General, accepted sponsored hospitality from that organisation. Once again, I think there is very clear evidence of a potential conflict of interest there. I think it is quite a serious matter.

Mr PEACH: If I could defend myself briefly, I think it needs to be put on the record that this all occurred prior to any conference; that the department paid for the vast majority of the costs; that I declared the attendance and the payment of the conference up front; that Successmaker is not in

competition at this stage with others; that there was a need to find out more about it and to see whether it had other products that were appropriate to use; that the decision-making processes in the Department of Education were distant from me; that there will be a proper formal trial and evaluation at arm's length from me; and that there is no intention to expend any money until we can prove that the activities will be useful to students in the future. I reject completely any assertion that I was influenced prior to any decision being made in relation to Successmaker, or that there was any conflict of interest, given my prior statement of pecuniary interest to the Minister.

Mr BREDHAUER: I would expect that. In Queensland Government Gazette No. 4 of 2 May there is a designation for a position of Principal, Springfield (ACOT), which stands for Apple Classrooms of Tomorrow. What sponsorship has been received and from whom in relation to this position? What commitments have been made by the Government in exchange for the sponsorship? What research has the Education Department undertaken to justify its promotion of a particular company in Queensland State schools? Are there any special requirements for the position of Principal, Springfield (ACOT)? I am also interested in the relationship between IBM hardware and software, which is used almost exclusively by the department, and Apple-based technology, which is being used in the Computer Excellence System at Springfield.

Ms HACKWOOD: I will try to answer all of those questions. If I leave anything out, please indicate that to me. The ACOT centre is certainly an Apple-sponsored arrangement. It relies on a joint contribution between any educational institution globally that participates in this program and Apple itself. Apple's contribution is some hardware sponsorship for the professional development area of the ACOT centre, which is used to train teachers as they come through. That is all set out in an agreement between the department and Apple. It is consistent with the arrangement that it has in 10 countries throughout the world, apart from the US. It simply relates to the provision of hardware.

In relation to the ACOT centre itself—a coordinator looks after the professional development aspects of the centre. That person has just been appointed. The salary component for that person and for all of the staff at the school in which the ACOT centre resides are provided by the department. Apple does not pay anything for the salary component of staff.

In relation to the requirements for the principal of the school—my understanding is that that is a normal appointment similar to that of any principal in any school throughout the State. Certainly I would imagine that the interview panel is cognisant of the fact that the school will have a high commitment to using integrated technology within its classrooms, but that would be the only differentiation it would consider in making the appointment. That principal will be just like any other normal principal of a school. The position that is related to the ACOT centre is that of the coordinator of the ACOT centre, which

focuses, as I said, on the professional development aspects. I am relying on my memory, but I believe that the contribution in kind—that is, in hardware and in professional development opportunities that Apple provides—is somewhere in the vicinity of about a half a million dollars. As I said, we can make that agreement available, if you need to see it.

Mr BREDHAUER: What about the relationship between the departmental technology and Apple technology?

Ms HACKWOOD: Roughly speaking, in primary schools, about 60% of the machines are Apples, which are used for curriculum purposes, and about 40% are IBMs. In the high schools, it is pretty much the reverse. Those are the figures from probably about 12 months ago. Where we see educational benefits, we certainly would envisage working with any organisation to enhance research and development. I do not think that this in any way, shape or form gives Apple an advantage. If IBM wishes to enter into a similar sort of arrangement, I imagine that the department would certainly consider that.

Mr HEGARTY: Minister, with respect to institutional reform, how many centres come under the department's control?

Mr QUINN: There are a number of centres under the department's control—the Basil Stafford Centre, the W. R. Black Centre and the Leslie Wilson Home. As I said, they are the centres which come under our jurisdiction. Institutional reform is all about supporting students relocating from residential institutions so that they may have access to appropriate education. That support can be provided in a number of ways. The support can include such things as speech language therapy, occupational therapy, physio, nursing, specialist teaching, teacher aide support and specialist equipment and purpose-built facilities. Last year, we had a student from the W. R. Black Centre attending the Beaudesert Special Education Unit. We had a student from both the Leslie Wilson Home and the Basil Stafford Centre attending the Gladstone Special School.

Some delays have occurred as a result of factors outside of the control of the department, such as Unicare funding being suitable and available for families of the children. Some families choose not to relocate as originally planned and some children have completed their schooling but do not require support from this department. This financial year we have provided funding of \$200,000 so that a further five students can move from their current residence and school. Funds will be made available to maintain the level of education provision currently provided to those 10 students who will all have relocated, as I mentioned before. That is a move along the deinstitutionalisation process. In summary, I think there is an expectation by parents that, where it can be achieved, students will move out of residential care into a more appropriate school setting. The funds are made available in this budget to try to support that move.

Mr HEGARTY: That is going to be an ongoing change, is it?

Mr QUINN: Yes, it is an ongoing program. As appropriate, we try to move the students out.

Mr TANTI: How much has been allocated to the Instrumental Music Program, and are any changes anticipated in the year ahead?

Mr QUINN: The Instrumental Music Program this year will consume roughly \$14m, which is approximately the same as last year. It will support about 40,000 students studying instrumental music in our schools at about 720 primary and secondary schools across the State. Last year, we gave them a boost of about \$1m in salaries and some \$700,000 for instrumental kits and provided extra resources for about 103 schools. Last year we developed a package for new instructors and programs, and we employed some additional staff for new programs. This year we anticipate that all the new schools that came into line at the beginning of this year will consolidate their programs. There will be some induction kits distributed and we will continue to find qualified staff for vacancies as they occur across the State.

Instrumental music is one of the great success stories of Queensland education. There has been a commitment over a long period to provide both musical instruments and the expertise or the tuition for students. It is one of those programs that enhances the life of students at schools and provides in many respects a cultural heart for schools that has not been there before. Students who sometimes do not achieve academically at our schools can certainly find enjoyment and achievement in the Instrumental Music Program. One of the great delights of my office is that we get to see so many kids performing at school assemblies, special days at schools or school openings and making quite a deal of progress in their instrumental music. The culmination of that is the Musically Outstanding Students Program, which last year had a concert at the Performing Arts Complex where instrumental music was on display at the highest levels. Whether it be a jazz band, an orchestra or an ensemble, the level of expertise and professionalism displayed by students who go through these sorts of programs in our schools is to be admired. As I said before, it adds another dimension to life in schools.

The CHAIRMAN: We are constantly reminded of the availability of pornography and other less than desirable materials on the Internet. What sorts of guarantees can you give that students will not be able to access pornographic or other undesirable material?

Mr QUINN: One of the dangers of the Internet is that undesirable material and information can be available on it—anything from pornography to instructions for bomb making. We have a duty of care within our schools to make sure that students do not access that particular material. A number of guidelines have been put in place to make sure that teachers and school administrations are aware of the risks involved in using the Internet services. Broadly speaking, we obtain from parents or guardians their written agreement to a student accessing the Internet services under conditions set down by schools. If you have ever been in a school you will

know that, whether it be in a classroom with one computer or in a computer lab with many or in a library with a smaller number, the usual configuration is that all the screens face to the centre or they somehow are able to be supervised, so there is that ongoing supervision by teachers or teacher librarians in the school setting to make sure that inappropriate sites are not accessed by students. We make sure that our students are aware that it is illegal to access dangerous or offensive material and we try to limit that as much as we can.

We try also to limit uninvited electronic access to students by outside people, and where it does occur we try to prepare our students to be vigilant to the fact that this material is undesirable and they should not be using it. School principals also provide sets of guidelines and guidance to their staff about how the Internet services should be used. As I said before, there is a requirement on parents to give their permission that students can access Internet services. So whilst we cannot firewall those undesirable sites completely out of the Internet services provided to students, we do our best both at a school level and a system level to make sure that the risks are minimised when accessing Internet services.

Mr HEGARTY: How much has been specifically allocated to literacy and numeracy in this year's budget and how will it be spent?

Mr QUINN: This year's budget allocation for literacy and numeracy services is \$32.9m. It will be spent in a number of key areas. There will be \$6m allocated for the continual employment of key teachers to support classroom teachers in the areas of numeracy and literacy. There will be \$5.3m allocated to help students identified through the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. That is a critical stage of their education when they are identified and we can provide the necessary support at that early age to try to get them back on track. There will be additional money to the tune of \$1.27m allocated to help students identified through the Year 6 Test—that is the second hurdle our students have to pass. There is also \$9.5m allocated for the continued implementation of reading recovery as an intervention program to support Year 2 Diagnostic Net processes. I think this budget provides, if my memory serves me correctly, for an additional 91 reading recovery or 91 full-time equivalent reading recovery teachers.

This year a report will also be prepared on the appraisal trial of 55 schools for Year 6 students with learning difficulties and learning disabilities to try to focus on their needs as well. I think it ought to be mentioned that only a very, very small number of students fall through the Year 2 Diagnostic Net. In 1996-97, in a sample of about 9,000 students, 88% had improved as a result of intervention programs. For the Year 6 Test, the percentage of students who improved their results as a result of intervention programs was about 73%. By and large, I think these programs are very successful. They identify very early on those students who are having trouble, and they target the necessary resources to enable them to improve their outcomes at a very early age.

Mr TANTI: How much has the department allocated for litigation in the coming year and how many cases will be involved?

Mr QUINN: We manage litigation through a special unit within the department. That unit has a responsibility for managing legal action instituted against the department and myself as the Minister or the Crown in general. The unit prepares and reviews existing policy and procedures relating to litigation and legal operations and also provides advice on legal, legislative and related issues. Last year it had the same budget as this year—that is, \$1.646m—and it has a staff of three.

Last year we dealt with 102 subpoenas and 42 writs of one-party discovery applications and 15 Evidence Act applications. Currently before us we have 212 litigation cases including workers' compensation cases. The total potential value of these cases excluding the workers' compensation is in the order of \$16m. The department has also received notification that 149 other cases which have not yet been subject to court action are on the books. These cases may result in subsequent litigation. We try to manage the incidence of legal action by running seminars for principals and selected staff to make sure that they are aware of their legal liabilities and obligations so that we can avert or try to minimise these sorts of proceedings against the department. It is an ongoing role that the unit has. In today's more litigious society, it is one that we are not going to escape and it is a matter of managing the risks involved, and those are the responsibilities of this particular unit.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the Low Incidence Support Centre and how much does it cost to run?

Mr QUINN: The Low Incidence Support Centre, or LISC as it is sometimes known, coordinates a range of specialised services for students with low incidence educational needs. This year, its budget is \$3.6m and it has a staff of about 78 full-time equivalents. It had a number of successes last year. It had a World Wide Web site established to publicise the existence of the centre. It coordinated some guidelines for early education and special education services in response to requests from teachers and therapists. Last year there were over a thousand of those. It conducts professional development workshops for teachers to make them aware of the issues and how to resolve some of the problems for children with low incidence disabilities. They ran over 240 of those last year. They produced publications and packages to assist teachers in the classroom. Over 80 of those were done last year.

This year they plan to continue to produce that sort of curriculum support material. There will be six open learning packages to skill teachers and teacher aides about students with disabilities, so there is an ongoing commitment to bring our teaching force up to speed about the requirements of students with disabilities. They will be working with teachers and students in regular classrooms as well. Again, it is a significant part of the operations of Education Queensland and it consumes considerable resources, but it is one that the department

recognises it has to maintain in order to provide the necessary expertise to our teachers in a classroom setting.

Mr HEGARTY: What is the cost of the Information Management Subprogram and what are its goals for 1997-98?

Mr QUINN: In relation to the Information Management Subprogram this year, as I have said before and I think it had been raised in a couple of other answers to questions, we will be really concentrating on rolling out our electronic communication network to schools, providing the Internet and electronic mail, particularly for our first 100 Leading Schools which will kick off on 1 July. As Lynne Hackwood has mentioned before, we will be putting in place school finance systems—and I mentioned those before. That will eliminate a lot of the paper-based forms and procedures which are currently in place within the department. I mentioned the IntegHR which will be going out as well—the other financial systems. This program has a budget of almost \$13m this year and a staffing allocation of about 133. It is one of those areas which I think has been covered before in numerous questions and I think the Committee has a fair idea of what it is on about, what the costs are and what it hopes to achieve in the foreseeable future.

Mr TANTI: I have a three-part question. How much State money is given to non-Government schools and how many schools and students are involved? How much capital assistance is provided to the non-State sector? How much money is provided to non-State schools for students with special needs?

Mr QUINN: There are 421 non-State schools in Queensland. They have approximately 164,000 students attending them. That represents about 27% of the total school enrolments in Queensland. It is an increase of about 3% over the 1996 figures. There are about 6,000 in preschools, 80,000 in primary and 78,000 in secondary. Forty per cent are in the independent sector and 60% in the Catholic sector, to provide you with that sort of divide. We also provide funding to the community kindergartens of which there are about 340—and I think I mentioned those already this morning. There are about 16,000 children who go to those community kindergartens. You can see that the financial assistance that the Government extends to these non-State institutions covers quite a large number of students and certainly a large percentage of students.

This year the programs will provide almost \$200m for recurrent and capital assistance to non-State schools. The Creche and Kindergarten Association, which distributes the funds to the community kindergartens, will receive a touch over \$18.5m. There will be a textbook allowance which is ongoing; it has been in place for a number of years. That funding will be in the order of \$8.5m. There is also a living away from home allowance and a student hostel support scheme, which consumes \$4.8m. There is some funding also for approved non-special needs organisations of \$3m.

You mentioned capital before. I think \$20m in capital is being provided this year for non-

Government schools. There is also a component for meeting the needs of students with disabilities and we are also for the first time providing \$400,000 to assist in the transport of those students to non-Government schools. That has been of ongoing concern to parents of those students who in the past have borne considerable financial pressure in order to send their students to non-Government schools which will cater for their disabilities. By and large, the funding is in line with enrolment growth except for that one particular area that I mentioned in terms of increased assistance for travel that is due to disabilities.

The CHAIRMAN: I call the member for Kedron.

Mr BRADY: I refer to last year's Ministerial Program Statements relating to Primary Education where it was indicated that LOTE teachers would remain at 512 as it had been the year before. Then I refer you to this year's Ministerial Program Statements which shows in fact that LOTE primary teachers fell from 512 to 495. It has provided that an extra 20 will take their place this year and go up to 515, which means that over a two-year period LOTE primary teachers will have increased by 3 while general primary teachers increased by 1,300. This means that the LOTE primary program is in fact drowning and is not keeping pace with the increased number of students. At a time when Dr Stephen FitzGerald of the Asia Australian Institute tells us that China will have the world's largest economy by 2020, what are you going to do to restore the vibrant LOTE program that you inherited when you came to Government?

Mr QUINN: I will just clarify the figures for you. The program this year actually provides for an additional 20 LOTE primary teachers.

Mr BRADY: That is right. That would take it up to 515; you had 512 last year. They fell if you look at page 19 of your Ministerial Program Statements.

Mr QUINN: We will seek clarification as to why they fell. That is not my information, but we will seek clarification.

Mr BRADY: Your own statement shows that it does.

Mr QUINN: I do not dispute what you are saying, I am just seeking some clarification on the figures themselves. We said last year that we would maintain the current level of LOTE teaching in the schools and an additional 20 would take account of some enrolment growth, the opening of new schools and so on. That is why the 20 had been allocated—to maintain the program in its current mode. I indicated last year that we were in maintenance mode because of the implications of the Federal Government's review on the NALSAS program where we derive—

Mr BRADY: It actually fell if you look at page 19.

Mr QUINN: I said I would clarify the numbers. Can I just say to you that overall the Commonwealth Government from MCEETYA recently has just finalised the NALSAS review and we are still in the process of compiling a report. We are not yet certain

which way the Commonwealth is going to go and, because we derive significant Commonwealth funding under this program, we want to be in tune with what the Commonwealth is doing otherwise we will miss out on the funding altogether. Hopefully, we will have some clarification on the numbers.

Mr BRADY: I have the books here, if your officers would like to have a look at them. Last year's book shows what you had last year, that is, 512. This year shows that you are down to 495.

Mr QUINN: We are not in a position to clarify that at the moment. We could speculate, but I would rather give you an accurate response to the question. I was not aware of the figures you have quoted. The information that has been provided to me, as I said before, is that we have provided an additional 20 LOTE teachers to keep pace with enrolment growth. If, in fact, there was a fall, and it is indicated in the figures, I will ask for some advice from senior officers and we will reply before the Committee.

Mr BREDHAUER: Minister, page 4 of the MPS indicates that the capital works budget in Education will be underspent by \$29m. If we take into account the Corporate Services overspending of \$2.4m on page 41 and the transfer of the interest assistance subsidy in non-Government schools on page 51 from current to capital, with a net effect of almost \$12m, the actual underspending in the schools capital works is \$45m. Where was this money underspent and why, given your claims last year that this would not happen?

Mr QUINN: Are you referring to capital works or capital?

Mr BREDHAUER: I am talking about capital works.

Mr QUINN: My information is that, on the latest assessment of expenditure, we will not underspend; we will either come in on target or overspend our capital works program for the 1996-97 financial year. Information to date indicates that we will, in fact, overspend in the order of \$15m. These figures were drawn up some time ago. As you would realise, there is a bit of a pipeline effect in terms of capital works. We have really made every effort to make sure that we expend our capital works budget that was allocated in 1996-97. The officers have done such a good job that advice now says that we will be overexpended to the tune of \$15m. With that in mind, we will probably be going to the mid-year Budget review—as everyone knows—and asking for additional funds to cover that overexpenditure. The Premier has made a public statement, "If you don't spend it, you lose it." Obviously, there will probably be some departments out there who have not spent it, so we will be mounting a good case for an additional \$15m.

Mr WILLIAMS: The \$30m reference relates to a couple of items. It is the underachievement on our sales program this year by about \$18m and one of the items that you talked about before, which was the SIMS, which is carried forward into next year. They basically make up the vast bulk of the underexpenditure. If you actually discount the non-

achievement against the sales program down to what the capital program is this year, our overall capital program is about \$251m. This is on capital works, of course.

You have to bear in mind that the capital description in there covers a range of things above and beyond capital works. As the Minister said, we are expecting to overachieve against our capital program this year. At the end of last month, the actual achievement of expenditure against the \$251m target was about \$218m. We expect that, by the end of this month, we will probably have gone through the \$40m mark and, therefore, there will be an overexpenditure on the capital works program.

Mr BREDHAUER: That contradicts figures that have been provided by the Premier in answers to questions which were taken on notice at Estimates Committee A on Tuesday, 10 June. The advice he has provided to Estimates Committee A indicates that the Education capital works expenditure details were \$275.43m estimated actual for 1996-97 and that, to the end of May, it was \$225.57m, still leaving you \$50m short on your estimated actual. So you have to spend \$50m, which is 20% of the budget, in one month.

Mr QUINN: No. The figures are to the end of May. What we are saying to you is that the capital works program has been ramped up to such an extent that the advice I am receiving from my officers is that we will overexpend in terms of our budget allocation to the tune of \$15m.

Mr BREDHAUER: So are the Premier's figures wrong?

Mr QUINN: No, they are not wrong. It is an issue of timing.

Mr WILLIAMS: The Premier's figures are beginning of the year figures. You have to discount from that the underachievement on the sales program.

Mr BREDHAUER: No, the Premier's figures talk about the actual expenditure to 31 May. I am not talking about projections. He had an estimated actual for 1996-97 of \$275.4m, but expenditure to 31 May of \$225.57m.

Mr WILLIAMS: You have to bear in mind that on top of that figure, of course, is the tertiary expenditure, which is another \$16m.

Mr BREDHAUER: How much has been allocated to the Building Better Schools Program in the 1996-97 budget? How much was spent in 1996-97? What proportion of the budget allocation does this represent?

Mr WILLIAMS: The program for Building Better Schools in 1996-97 was effectively about \$85m. That reflected the underachievement on that program in the previous financial year. In 1997-98, we are anticipating \$60.8m being spent on the capital works program. That is against an overall capital program for us of about \$267m in 1997-98.

Mr BREDHAUER: How much of the \$85m did you spend?

Mr WILLIAMS: All of it.

Mr BREDHAUER: Minister, how many schools in each region have been audited to assess risk levels relating to asbestos and which schools have not been assessed? What is the 1997-98 allocation to complete the audit and to remediate any problems identified?

Mr WILLIAMS: I understand that all schools that have asbestos in them have been audited. That is a function that has been carried out over the years by the Department of Public Works and Housing, and the department has been funded to carry out that audit exercise. In terms of this financial year—if I understand it correctly, we spent about \$4.5m on asbestos removal across schools. That addressed asbestos in schools that were termed to be in the high to medium risk levels. We are currently reviewing the program to see what we might actually make provision for in terms of asbestos removal in 1997-98, but that is not a defined program at this stage.

Mr BREDHAUER: So you do not have a budget for it?

Mr WILLIAMS: If we look at our prioritisation process, there might be particular circumstances that we want to address at schools, but we have not defined a budget at this point.

Mr BREDHAUER: Given that when dealing with asbestos in schools, or when dealing with asbestos generally, it is often determined that the asbestos materials should remain in situ and undisturbed, and given that under Leading Schools the management of maintenance and minor capital works will be devolved to school councils, what guarantee is there that the remaining asbestos in schools is not or could not become a health hazard to students, staff and parents into the future? What training will be provided to school councils in dealing with issues related to asbestos in schools?

Mr WILLIAMS: Courtesy of the Department of Public Works and Housing, all schools which have asbestos have management plans on how to deal with and manage that asbestos in the schools. They are all aware of exactly where it is on school sites. In terms of management of that situation—anybody who is doing work at the school should be aware of where it is. We have had very few incidents over the years where there has been a problem of work taking place—at school sites anyway—in relation to asbestos.

Mr BREDHAUER: Yes, but you did not have Leading Schools in the past, where the responsibility for the capital works and maintenance was devolved to the school councils. If I could bring back to your attention a comment that you made previously in answer to a question from a Committee member that the minor works or maintenance would be undertaken by a qualified person, I might just point out that the Minister is on record as saying that if the schools want to receive the money for painting the schools and then get the P & C and the mums and dads to come up on weekends to swing the paintbrush and spend the money somewhere else, they will be at liberty to do that. That does not augur well and give me confidence in the quality of the work that is going to be undertaken. It is not a

guarantee that the work will be undertaken by qualified tradespeople or that, in a serious situation like this, a person might not inadvertently disturb asbestos in schools.

Mr WILLIAMS: You have to distinguish between a quality management approach in terms of who actually manages the process as opposed to the people who actually physically do the work. I cannot see a great level of risk if somebody is managing a process such as painting and people are doing it out of the goodness of their hearts. I do not see any great risk in that process.

At the present time—getting back to the point you make—a lot of the asbestos in schools is in a non-friable state and, therefore, there is not a huge risk associated with it. There are management plans in place. The onus is on the schools to point out to anybody doing work at a school where that asbestos is located. They should technically be using people for those works. Most of that work would be done on the basis of certified tradespeople doing the work, and they should take care and ensure that they do not create a safety problem.

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer to an article that appeared in the Reporter, which is a newspaper in the Logan area, on 4 June 1997, which indicates that the Edens Landing set-down area dispute with the Gold Coast City Council has been settled. The article indicates that Education Queensland will pay for the set-down area and be paid back by the Gold Coast City Council over a two-budget period. Is that the new departmental policy on funding set-down areas? Will all local governments be treated equally? If so, what is the budgeted cost to the department, or is this just a special deal for the Gold Coast?

Mr QUINN: You would be aware that we inherited this problem from your lot. You could not resolve the issue with the Gold Coast City Council with respect to bus set-down areas.

Mr BREDHAUER: You have a new policy. That is what I am asking about. Will that apply to all local governments?

Mr QUINN: We have. You would not provide any funding for bus set-down areas. You made the councils provide 100% of the funding. We have provided 50% of the funding. There was an issue with respect of the Gold Coast City Council area, in particular Edens Landing. There have been two examples prior to that where issues had been fully funded by this department because of the safety aspects for children. What we have done with the Gold Coast City Council is sit down and talk to them about Edens Landing. There are a number of proposals about the set-down area, which were not supported by the Gold Coast City Council, particularly in respect of the cost. There were a number of issues about the development and the allocation of parking on a public road and the use of that parking which had to be resolved as well.

The upshot is that we have come to an agreement with the Gold Coast City Council about Edens Landing that we would proceed to develop additional off-street car parking and use the additional car parking that was on the street site,

which was intended to be allocated towards the school by the developer when the Government purchased the land in the initial stages. The arrangement is that the Gold Coast City Council will provide half of the funding for the bus set-down area in accordance with the Government's policy. They said to us that they had a problem with their budgetary position because they had allocated budgets already. We said, "We will help you out, providing you maintain your financial commitment." They will provide their half over two financial years instead of over one financial year. On that basis, they will come into the scheme. We think that that is an enormous improvement on the position that you left us in, in which there was no agreement with the Gold Coast City Council on that particular issue. We are providing half the funding for all bus set-down areas and all councils are in agreement with the scheme.

Mr BREDHAUER: So that same arrangement will not apply to other councils? I refer to page 48 of the MPS, where the budget for the Queensland School Curriculum Council has fallen from \$11.5m to \$6.3m. The footnote states that the reduction is due to the timing of syllabus development. How many syllabuses have been completed and implemented? Given that some of the syllabuses are currently 20 years' old, what is the program for syllabus development and the implementation timetable?

Mr QUINN: I will call up Jim Tunstall, the Executive Officer of the Queensland School Curriculum Council Office, to answer that.

Mr TUNSTALL: The amount of money that is mentioned there is the general fund for the running of the office and also includes a carryover figure. As you probably are aware, the funds for the office include carryover funding or total funding for projects that last for the life of the project, so it extends over a number of years. Negotiations are continuing for next year's carryover figure. The amount of money that you see there for 1997-98 will be increased by whatever that amount is that is negotiated after the end of this financial year.

The timing of the syllabuses—it is intended that health and physical education and science will be available for implementation in schools at the beginning of 1999, studies of society and environment and languages other than English at the beginning of 2000, and the arts and technology at the beginning of 2001.

Mr BREDHAUER: What new resources will be available for the professional development training of teachers in support of the new Queensland School Curriculum Council syllabuses? Is that additional money or part of the allocation to QSCC for the syllabus development process?

Mr TUNSTALL: The responsibility for professional development as far as the council is concerned pulls up at the stage of providing initial in-service materials. The work of implementation then rests with the respective school authorities. In the case of Education Queensland, the Director-General is required under the legislation passed earlier this year to institute an implementation plan in respect of those syllabuses. I defer to him to respond to that.

Mr QUINN: I think I covered that earlier when I spoke about the Centre for Teaching Excellence and the need for professional development with respect to the implementation of new syllabuses.

Mr BREDHAUER: Is that accessible by the non-Government sector and particularly by the smaller non-Government systemic schools?

Mr QUINN: No. My understanding is that each of the employing authorities is responsible for its own in-servicing of teachers.

Mr BREDHAUER: So there are no funds for in-service for new syllabuses for non-Government schools.

Mr QUINN: They pay their own.

Mr BREDHAUER: The allocation for the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies in 1996-97 is estimated to be overspent by \$150,000. Why was there that overspending? Where did the money come from to meet the shortfall?

Mr QUINN: I will ask John Pitman from the board to explain that.

Mr PITMAN: I would like to state that that figure is not ours. I think the department director of finance can actually give you the information.

Mr BREDHAUER: He is not here; he is overseas.

Mr PITMAN: He has an acting replacement. My understanding is that that figure is our allocation plus what the department holds in its standing fund.

Mr BREDHAUER: So there is no overspending of the budget of the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies?

Mr PITMAN: We will not be overspending at all. We will come in on budget and, in fact, slightly under budget, according to our necessity for the accrued liabilities, which we have to provide for each year.

Mr BREDHAUER: Given that page 46 of the MPS indicates that the Board of Senior Secondary School Studies expects to increase its outputs this financial year yet its budget allocation will drop by \$260,000 on the estimated actual for 1997-98, how can your board hope to deliver an increased level of service with less money?

Mr QUINN: Work smarter.

Mr PITMAN: I guess a long answer is required but to cut it short—

The CHAIRMAN: It has to be fairly short; the time is up.

Mr PITMAN: Two sentences?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr PITMAN: It is not possible to actually increase the total amount of service, that is for sure. What we can do is keep core business up and make sure that we provide the base or core service to students.

Mr BREDHAUER: So you cannot do what the MPS says you will do with the money that is available? Thank you.

Mr PITMAN: Yes—

The CHAIRMAN: How much money will be spent on the Open Access Support Centre? How many staff are involved? What are some of its achievements?

Mr QUINN: The Open Access Support Centre develops and delivers programs, materials and services for schools. It has a budget this year of \$9.2m and a staffing equivalent of 149. To a large extent, it focuses on distance education. Last year, it was instrumental in developing new materials for junior English; senior maths A, B, and C; senior ancient and modern history, and a whole range of other curriculum areas as well. It is also revising distance education for Years 1, 2 and 3 in terms of language across the curriculum, and maths in Years 1, 2 and 4.

It continually monitors its performance by obtaining feedback about its services. It also includes under its umbrella the film and video and open learning curriculum libraries. It provided eight initial resource centre collections for the new schools. Of course, eight started up at the beginning of 1997. Those resource centres can have anything up to 2,000 items in each new resource. It also provides a fully operational computerised catalogue. During the year it opened a Web site on the Internet, which I attended.

In terms of its functions, some of them have been transferred to the QSCC. That is the reason why there has been a slight decrease in staffing. It is also subject to some reorganisation within the education services directorate. In the 12 months ahead it will continue to review those distance education materials that I indicated before, it will continue to look at language and maths across the curriculum in particular year levels, it will continue to develop some professional development programs based on CD-ROM, it will put its open access library on its Web site and enable interactive bookings via the Internet, and also provide other services. So it is an integral part of Education Queensland, particularly where distance education and isolated students are concerned. It is located over at Gabba Towers and provides ongoing support not only to those distance education units but also to mainstream classrooms around the State.

Mr HEGARTY: What is the situation in the department with respect to overpayments?

Mr QUINN: I mentioned before that for some time the department has had trouble with its human management resource and pay systems. Each year we seem to get an honourable mention in the Auditor-General's report. I am happy to say that we continue to clean them up in increasing numbers. As at the end of April, we had 788 files outstanding covering \$880,000. Certainly, the rate of recovery has improved. There has been an increase in instances of hardship claims which require the payment periods to be extended. There is an increase in the number of overpayments being recovered via fortnightly instalments through the payroll deduction system—132 cases. So we have been successful there. There was also an increase in the number of overpayments being recovered by credit card payments—58 cases there. There is

ongoing recovery and action in place to try to recover all overpayments. The average monthly number of debtor files raised has decreased from 146 to 133. So it is slowly coming under control. That is compared with an average of 148 which are being finalised each month.

As I mentioned, the outstanding debt, which is \$880,000, represents about 0.055% of the annual payroll. So even though it is close to \$1m, in terms of the overall payroll amount paid to teachers, it is a minuscule amount. However, we are aware that we need to be vigilant and keep up the recovery mechanisms to try to recover this funding. This year, the recovery rate has gone up to 97.5% compared with some 85% in previous years. So we are slowly getting it under control. Hopefully, when the new computerised systems come into play, instances of overpayments will decrease substantially.

Mr TANTI: What is the role of the new Performance Measurement Office and what will it cost?

Mr PEACH: The Performance Measurement Office was established in February of this year. Its primary function is the collection, analysis and recording of data relating to the achievement of our organisational goals that are listed in our Partners for Excellence strategic plan. During the coming financial year, we anticipate that we will be reporting performance information relating to schools, districts and the system. That information will be collected from those places, analysed by the Performance Measurement Office, and fed back. They will be fed back to schools, to districts and to central office directorates for the system as a whole.

We will be using the Performance Measurement Office to develop benchmarks of performance. We will be looking to see that, for example at school level, the performance of students at particular schools is at a certain level. We will be able to compare the level of performance in that school with a benchmark performance—on average performance initially—across the State. We are looking at ways of being able to compare individual school student performance with schools of a similar type. For example, we will be able to find medium-sized, rural, isolated high schools with a certain profile of population and compare those sorts of schools so that they can see how their students are travelling in comparison to others.

We are looking at ways of being able to track the performance of students, for example, from Year 2 to Year 3, to Year 4 and to Year 5 so that we can measure the value-added contribution that school makes and to just see how much they learn over time. That information will then be able to be used by schools themselves for better teaching/learning approaches in the school. The information will be able to be used by the system so that we can alter policies or resourcing allocations to assist where need be. The information will also be used for management. We intend to maintain a position that a certain level of performance is mandatory. There will be intervention, if need be, in cases where schools are unable to improve their performance over time.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the role of the Public and Media Relations Branch? What does it cost and how many people are involved?

Mr QUINN: The Public and Media Relations Branch of the department has a budget of just over \$1m—roughly equivalent to last year. Its staffing is exactly the same as last year. Its main activities include publishing the fortnightly Education Views, as we mentioned before; publishing the annual report; publishing the statement of affairs about the department; supporting and conducting special events, such as Education Week and things of that nature; undertaking special projects, including the annual Back to School Media Kit which we distribute to the media prior to the beginning of every school year in order to publicise that event and make people aware of school openings; and preparing special publications such as calendars of special events, guides to our services and education updates—those sorts of materials that keep the public informed about what the department is on about and the various policies. It also participates in the RNA exhibition in terms of providing information to the public. It arranges market research activities and it provides media training to principals and other staff—how to handle the media at the local level. As I said before, it also assists with Education Week activities. The branch also provides a media and advertising consultancy service to all sections of the department to ensure that all work in this area is consistent and cost effective. As I said before, the staffing is exactly the same as last year. In fact, it compares more than favourably with its interstate comparisons. New South Wales has roughly 20 in its public and media relations branch; Victoria, 16; WA about the same; and South Australia, 12. As I said, this is an integral part of the department, one that consumes about \$1m and one that is marking time in terms of the staffing equivalents.

Mr HEGARTY: How many corporate cards are used in the Education Department and what are they used for?

Mr QUINN: At the moment, exactly 718 corporate cards are used within the department. That is an increase over the past couple of years. The number of transactions recorded is 1,799 and the average amount of money spent at each transaction is approximately \$162. The number of cards and transactions has increased, as the figures show, with the average transaction amount increasing only slightly. More schools are being introduced to the benefits of the card, especially remote schools where purchase can easily be made by phone or fax. Recent streamlining of administrative processing requirements should encourage greater use of the card.

There have been no reported cases of misuse, because the many checks and balances in the system provide the accountability necessary to detect such instances of misuse. A recent review by the Public Accounts Committee into State Government credit card usage found the cards to be an efficient and economical way of purchasing services.

Mr BREDHAUER: Were there no breaches in schools or no breaches across the department?

Mr QUINN: There have been no reported cases of misuse within the department, I would say. I cannot vouch for the other Government departments. The Public Accounts Committee recommended that we review the guidelines and procedures to ensure that they are standardised across all departments. In particular, guidelines are required for credit card purchases via the Internet, a method of payment that I think will increase. That is particularly relevant as schools are connected to the Internet and wish to purchase resources or subscriptions via the Internet. To ensure that the use of the cards is watertight and that we do not have any misuse, further training sessions have been planned to introduce the new guidelines and to encourage greater usage of the cards, leading to enhanced efficiencies.

Even though within the department more cards are being used more often, there have been no cases of misuse because the guidelines are fairly stringent. However, there are plans to upgrade the security and accountability process to ensure that it is even tighter in the future.

The CHAIRMAN: I recognise the presence of Merri Rose, the member for Currumbin. I now hand over to Frank Tanti.

Mr TANTI: How much does the department anticipate it will spend on the Remote Area Incentive Scheme this financial year and what are the details of the new arrangements?

Mr QUINN: The Remote Area Incentive Scheme was introduced in 1991-92 and was significantly expanded and upgraded in last year's budget. The new scheme provides enhanced cash-compensation benefits, induction programs and additional emergent leave. In 1995-96, the budget for the Remote Area Incentive Scheme was \$3.268m; in 1996-97 it was over \$5m; this year it will be over \$8m. The current RAIS incurs a fringe benefits tax liability of about \$1m a year, which will cease at the end of the 1996-97 financial year with the introduction of the new scheme.

Of course, the RAIS provides a range of benefits—I will not go into the details—for teachers in remote and rural areas across Queensland. Significant numbers of teachers are picked up by the new scheme. The number of teachers has expanded from 500 to about 2,500, I believe. In terms of area, the scheme probably covers 90% of Queensland. It is meant to attract and retain suitably qualified and experienced teachers in the areas where, in the past, we have not been able to provide these sorts of benefits. We have yet to see exactly how effective the scheme is. Towards the end of the third year we will carry out an investigation into the scheme to ensure that it is achieving its objectives. If necessary, we will make changes to ensure that the scheme remains focused on the areas where we really want to achieve benefits.

The CHAIRMAN: What is the Resource Replacement Scheme? How much has been allocated to the scheme in 1997-98?

Mr QUINN: The Resource Replacement Scheme has been developed to provide compensation to schools for the loss of certain resources as a result of theft and vandalism. As I mentioned before, as a result of the School Watch Program and the installation of electronic surveillance equipment, the instance of vandalism is down by about 11% across our schools. Hopefully, that is reflected in a reduction in the need to replace our resources as they are destroyed by fire, break and enter or other means that vandals may use.

The scheme provides cover to all schools, all school support centres, the central office and other non-school locations such as the regional offices or the new district offices. In 1996-97, approximately 3,500 incidents of security breaches were reported and the total payout was about \$2.4m. This year, we hope to see a continual reduction in the number of break and enters reported and, hopefully, we will also see a reduction in the amount of money that we have to spend. A similar amount to last year, that is, \$2.4m, has been allocated. Of course, the School Watch Program, the upgrade of school security through electronic surveillance and, in some cases, the hire of private firms will be ongoing to try to keep the issue under control. This is an area where we have hit the high-cost spots in the past and are now branching into areas that have not been a problem but may come on line in the future. By and large, the scheme replaces all the resources and equipment destroyed by vandals or fires. It is welcomed by the school communities.

The CHAIRMAN: How many claims were processed last year?

Mr QUINN: Approximately 1,100 claims were processed for malicious damage. There were 2,336 illegal entry claims and 64 fire claims. As I said before, we expect those numbers to decrease in 1997-98, although we have allocated resource replacements on the same basis as last year. You can never estimate exactly how much you will need. It is simply a matter of keeping a watching brief on it.

Mr HEGARTY: The retention rate for girls is higher than for boys. Is this a problem? What is the department doing to address the issue?

Mr QUINN: It is a statistical fact that the retention rate for girls is higher than for boys. There are a number of factors that influence that. The collapse of the youth employment market has certainly impacted heavily upon jobs for young women, probably more so than on jobs for young men. Of course, that would have a corresponding impact upon the retention rate for girls.

A number of studies have been done by academics—MCEETYA and so on—which try to address this issue. One of the underlying factors that we can never discount is the employment market. It is a fact of life that apprenticeships for boys continue to be available for a variety of occupations and skills that are usually not accessed by girls, who take up apprenticeships in differing occupations. In many cases, apprenticeships for girls remain confined to areas such as hair dressing, personal grooming and so on.

In one respect, you could say that the disparity in the figures is a result of the increase in girls' participation rather than the decrease in boys' participation, because the boys are in the job market. As we move to a greater convergence of vocational education, that will become more apparent. Boys will go into the job market earlier and the retention rate will fall away again. As I mentioned before, a number of documents try to address those sorts of issues. It is an ongoing problem that we need to keep monitoring.

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer to media reports, including one in the Toowoomba Chronicle last Saturday, which canvass a proposal to merge Laidley North, Laidley Central, Blenheim, Mulgowie and Thornton State Schools. It also states that a public meeting was held last Thursday night. Submissions were going to be forwarded to you and you were expected to make a final decision after submissions closed next week. I also refer to question on notice No. 6 from the Opposition which asked: what schools have been identified for closure/merger and/or discussions with the local community for closure/merger, and I ask: why were none of those five schools listed in the answer to the question on notice provided to members of the Committee? How many other schools were left out of answers to questions on notice?

Mr QUINN: The issue that you raise about the merger of the schools around Laidley is a very recent one. The department approached me about it and said that it would like to start talking to the local school community about possibilities in that area. There has been no ministerial approval for closure, amalgamation or anything of that nature. The department would simply like to start talking to the communities about it, and I gave the approval on that basis. There are some issues there that the department thinks need to be addressed. There are a number of schools on sites which are substandard in terms of size, and the buildings themselves are fairly old in terms of physical quality. Those schools were built to the standards of a previous era and may be considered to be educationally obsolete.

The proposal put to the community is that there could be a better environment for teaching students in that area if we were to obtain a critical mass in terms of the number of schools. As I understand it, there is a crying need for a special education unit or facility in the area as well, which is not possible under the current arrangements. Senior officers of the department have raised the issue in the community to generate some debate to gauge people's feelings. They will report back to me. At the end of the day, if the report by the senior officers states that the school communities want to stay where they are, obviously I will be taking that on board. I am not aware that it was omitted from the list given to you, but that is probably because there has been no formal decision to close or merge. They are not under consideration.

Mr BREDHAUER: No, the question was: what schools have been identified for closure/merger and/or for discussions with the local community about the closure/merger? There was a public

meeting on Thursday night. This question was sent on Wednesday. The answers were provided on Monday and none of the schools appeared on the list. I was wondering whether any others are missing.

Mr QUINN: If there is an omission, I apologise for that.

Mr BREDHAUER: There is not much point putting questions on notice if you do not get accurate answers.

Mr QUINN: It is good to see that you are on the job.

Mr BREDHAUER: At least one of us is.

Mr QUINN: There is no intention to mislead. We have been open about it. The fact that there was a public meeting indicates that it was no great State secret. I am not aware of the reasons why it was omitted, but I have indicated that I gave approval for departmental officers to speak to the community on that basis. There will be a report back to me and we will make the decisions after that.

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer to the debate about the proposed location of a new school at Jimboomba, in respect of which the Education Department would be required to purchase land. However, free land has been offered to establish a school at Flagstone Creek. Given that the Flagstone Creek site is preferred by the department and as this land will be donated—potentially saving taxpayers and the department a considerable sum of money—why does the Government continue to pursue a school sited at Jimboomba, in the electorate of the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, who owns the land being considered for acquisition? Is it true that the sites being considered at Jimboomba are all flood prone?

Mr QUINN: Are we talking about primary or secondary school sites?

Mr BREDHAUER: It is a new high school site.

Mr QUINN: I take it that you are referring to high school sites?

Mr BREDHAUER: That is right.

Mr QUINN: Yes, we are looking at sites in that area to provide relief to Beaudesert High. My information is—and I will ask someone to provide further information—that we are looking at a number of sites, not just one. The assertion that we are going to get a piece of land for nothing is wrong, because we would be required to buy the primary school site beside it. A bit of a deal was proposed—buy one, get two.

Mr WILLIAMS: We are leaving our options open in that area. Beaudesert High School needs some relief. We are looking at potential sites for acquisition in the Jimboomba area. None of the sites we are looking at is flood prone. There is not a lot of point in building a school on a flood prone site.

Mr BREDHAUER: That is what I would have thought, too.

Mr WILLIAMS: We are leaving our options open with respect to Flagstone, too. There is some question about the rate of development in the Flagstone area and about timing in respect of the

requirement for a secondary school in that location. At this stage, we are taking a strategic view and leaving our options open.

Mr BREDHAUER: When will the decision be made on the site, given that an announcement has been made about a new high school opening in Jimboomba?

Mr WILLIAMS: The department has not made an announcement to open a school in Jimboomba.

Mr QUINN: We have made no announcement.

Mr WILLIAMS: As I said, we are looking at the options. We would probably look to acquire a site in the coming financial year.

Mr BREDHAUER: On 19 February, in the Beaudesert Times, under the heading "New high school to open in Jimboomba", an article stated—

"The State Government has announced \$20 million in education funding for Beaudesert Shire, with a new high school at Jimboomba as the major project.

Member for Beaudesert Kev Lingard said the funding was part of the 'accelerated capital works program' for the area.

The announcement that a \$10 to \$11 million Jimboomba State High School will be open by the year 2000 was welcomed by local educators."

Has the funding been allocated or not?

Mr QUINN: I can only make the point that I have made no statements about opening new high schools in Jimboomba. As you have heard, we have not purchased any land in that area. I suspect that you should take up that matter with the member for Beaudesert.

Mr BREDHAUER: I probably will. The Department of Education has a new logo, which I understand has a variety of forms. What company was contracted to develop these logos? How much has been paid to date for those services? Is this the end of the contract, or is further work to be done? If so, what is the total expected cost? Why was the work not done internally?

Mr QUINN: I have just been informed that Concepts Australia did the initial design. We will have to get back to you about the cost. I think the contract has finished.

Mr PEACH: I think so. It was developing a booklet for us for distribution to schools which discusses how schools might implement it. As I understand it, that was the final stage. We will get the costs.

Mr BREDHAUER: Will you take that on notice?

Mr QUINN: Yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer to the decision by parents and teachers at the Emu Park State School in the last term of 1996 to establish a committee to restructure class sizes and provide more positive and workable situations for students and teachers, who have to deal with the problem of a highly transient student population. I also refer to the decision of

your department to withdraw a teacher from that school, which will mean another reorganisation of classes. Does this not fly in the face of your so-called commitment to involving parents and the school community in important decisions about the deployment of resources in their schools, and is it not a fact that under Leading Schools hundreds of school councils will be forced to make such decisions because of inadequate resources to meet their specific needs?

Mr QUINN: I am not aware of those details. I would be interested to find out the details. That is probably as a result of a fall in enrolment numbers.

Mr BREDHAUER: That article was in the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin.

Mr QUINN: The staffing model is applied. As occurs in every other school, if you do not get your enrolments, you do not get your teachers.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, the simple fact of life is that 270 students are required for 11 teachers; they have 250 students. It is as simple as that.

Mr BREDHAUER: I refer to the \$65m program to aircondition Queensland schools north of the 20th parallel. I also refer to the decision by the Premier to allocate \$300,000 to assist with airconditioning in Moranbah, south of the 20th parallel, and I ask: did this money come from the Cool Schools Program, or does the Premier have his own special fund for airconditioning schools?

Mr QUINN: The money did not come from the Cool Schools Program.

Mr BREDHAUER: So you do not know where the money came from?

Mr QUINN: Ask the Premier.

Mr BREDHAUER: I will do that, too. I refer to the closure of the Acacia Ridge State High School because its enrolment had fallen below 300. What are the anticipated enrolments at the new high schools at Kuranda and Wilsonton? What impact will these new schools have on the enrolments of existing high schools in the same areas? How many students does the department estimate are currently eligible for proposed new schools at Tamborine Mountain and Burpengary? Why is there an inconsistency in the application of enrolment criteria to justify the continuing of existing schools or the establishment of new schools?

Mr QUINN: You talked about inconsistencies. It was your Government that initiated the purchase of the land at Kuranda and was going to build a high school there. What we have done is finalise the purchase of the land and put the building on site.

Mr BREDHAUER: We also agreed not to close the Acacia Ridge State High School.

Mr QUINN: You cannot have it both ways.

Mr BREDHAUER: We also agreed not to close the Acacia Ridge State High School.

Mr QUINN: You also promised a high school at Wilsonton, and we have simply delivered on that commitment that both your Government and our Government made. So there are no inconsistencies

there. With respect to Acacia Ridge and Salisbury high—that is one of those instances where, again, senior officers of the department came to me and said, "We think we can provide a better quality education for kids in that particular area if we put in place some asset rationalisation and provide a new school for these children." We again followed the processes of consulting with the community and made decisions on that basis. I have to say that the feedback I have had from the community in that particular area has been highly supportive. In fact the newspapers and the press out there think it was the right decision to make in the best long-term interests of the kids in that area. So there is no inconsistency about the establishment of new high schools or the amalgamation of existing high schools in order to provide better facilities for students.

With respect to Tamborine high—I am aware and you are aware that there has been an ongoing campaign for quite some time to get us to establish a high school up there. We have written back to the school communities and those making representations outlining some of the problems with building a high school on Mount Tamborine, including the fact that it will affect the school transport scheme and low enrolments and things of that nature. It is one of those areas where we will continue to monitor possible enrolments in that proposed school, and if in the future it stacks up we will embark upon the construction of the school. But there are no inconsistencies across-the-board. You have put together a mishmash of reports and assertions which just do not stack up.

Mr BREDHAUER: Can I get the figures on the enrolments and anticipated enrolments? Is that possible?

Mr QUINN: I think normally a high school has to have about 150 Year 8 students, from memory—about that.

Mr BREDHAUER: I am after the anticipated enrolments for the new high schools at Kuranda and Wilsonton specifically.

Mr QUINN: We can provide those.

Mr BREDHAUER: You will take that on notice then?

Mr QUINN: Yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: The Tamborine Mountain high school has not been announced by the local member, by the way. I understand that up to 500 students enrolled at the Brisbane School of Distance Education in specific course areas are students from private schools. Government funding to non-Government schools is the equivalent of \$1,000 per student per five subjects studied, and the non-Government schools also charge parents fees for those students. Does the Education Department have a policy of charging non-Government schools for the services provided by the School of Distance Education? If so, what is the revenue? If not, what is the cost?

Mr QUINN: This is an issue that we are currently looking at, that is, the enrolment of

students in the School of Distance Education who are currently enrolled in State schools or non-Government schools and are availing themselves of that particular service. We realise that it is a drain on the School of Distance Education. We are having a look at ways in which we can offset some of those costs at the present time.

Mr BREDHAUER: So are there currently students enrolled from private schools who are not making a contribution to the cost of the courses that are being run there?

Mr QUINN: I would think so, yes.

Mr BREDHAUER: I have a question about departmental structures. It is in a number of parts, actually, and you may want to take it on notice because it requires some detail. How many SES and at what levels were employed in the department in 1995-96 and how many are employed and at what levels now? How many SES and at what levels were employed by the Studies Directorate and how many are employed by Education Services and the Queensland School Curriculum Council? How many SES and at what level are currently employed at the Centre for Leadership Excellence?

Mr QUINN: We will take that on notice.

Mr BREDHAUER: I would also be interested to know how many people were employed in the Ministerial Correspondence Unit in 1995-96 and how many are there now.

Mr QUINN: The answer is: the same—three.

Mr BREDHAUER: I am interested in how much has been expended by senior officers in the SES on interstate travel in this financial year and the destinations of that travel and how much has been expended by senior officers on intrastate travel in this financial year and the destinations of that travel. I think you were going to provide me with the information about overseas travel previously.

Mr QUINN: Yes, we will provide that.

Mr PEACH: I can give you the answers to a couple of questions that were asked before.

Mr BREDHAUER: Okay.

Mr PEACH: The amount of money involved in Max Sawatzki's consulting for the Leading Schools conference was \$7,000. The underexpenditure for SIMS in the 1995-96 year was \$10.915m. The estimated overall cost of SIMS going from 1994 to 1999 is \$50,650,000—that is the whole bundle of those projects.

The CHAIRMAN: I have given the Opposition more time than us purposely to ensure fairness. At that point, I will close. The time allocated for the consideration of the Estimates of expenditure for the Department of Education has now expired. I thank the Minister and his officers very much for their attendance. The hearing is now suspended. It will resume at 2.15. The Committee will then examine the portfolio of the Minister for Training and Industrial Relations.

Sitting suspended from 1.11 p.m. to 2.15 p.m.

DEPARTMENT OF TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

IN ATTENDANCE

Hon. S. Santoro, Minister for Training and Industrial Relations
 Mr C. Thatcher, Director-General
 Ms S. Knowles, Deputy Director-General
 Mr C. Hooper, Executive Director, Corporate Services
 Mr P. Henneken, Executive Director, Labour Market Reform
 Mr S. Sielaff, Executive Director, TAFE Queensland
 Mr B. Carlon, Executive Director, Training Queensland
 Mr J. Hodges, Executive Director, Workplace Health and Safety
 Mr J. Hastie, A/General Manager, WorkCover Queensland

The CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, Minister and ladies and gentlemen, the hearings of Estimate Committee F are now resumed. The next item for consideration is the Estimates of expenditure of the Department of Training and Industrial Relations, and the time allotted is four and a half hours. For the information of new witnesses, the time limit for questions is one minute and for answers is three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the expiration of the time limits. The questioner may consent to an extension of time for answers. A double chime will also sound two minutes after an extension of time has been given.

Sessional Orders require that at least half the time available for questions and answers in respect of each organisational unit be allotted to non-Government members and that any time expended when the Committee deliberates in private is to be equally apportioned between Government and non-Government members. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they first answer a question. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the Department of Training and Industrial Relations to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, do you wish to make an opening statement and, if you wish to make a statement, I ask you to limit that to five minutes.

Mr SANTORO: Thank you very much. Yes, I would like to take the opportunity offered to provide a brief statement. Once again, the Government looks forward to participating in these sessions. I welcome any question to examine the proposed expenditure within my portfolio and believe that this process provides an excellent opportunity for Government and non-Government members to analyse and understand the Budget decisions that have been announced.

This has been another very exciting year for my portfolio. Key initiatives were the reforming of the industrial relations system and implementing the recommendations of the Kennedy inquiry into the workers' compensation system, including a review of the workplace health and safety program to identify strategies to restrengthen and refocus the program.

As all honourable members would appreciate, this Government acknowledges the importance of planning to ensure services provided meet current and future needs for all Queenslanders. This Government has therefore developed a State Strategic Plan, the first clearly articulated long-term plan for a Queensland Government. As you are aware, the Government has set its strategic goal for the State, that being to progressively increase the standard of living and quality of life for Queenslanders. The DTIR corporate strategic plan therefore must support this through its mission of contributing to Queensland's economic strength by developing an internationally competitive work force for 1997 to the year 2000. The plan clearly identifies key results, areas and strategies necessary to achieve our mission which in turn ensures progress in achieving the Government's strategic goal. The 1997-98 Estimates of expenditure, I would suggest to you, reflect these.

The key issues influencing the department's environment and strategic direction in the medium to long term include the need for a work force which achieves and maintains international competitiveness relative to Queensland's future economic performance; the demand for a more highly skilled, productive and flexible work force responsive to change; departmental services to be more responsive and accessible to the needs of business, particularly of small and medium enterprises; unemployment, particularly among young people, and therefore the need to maximise work force participation by creating opportunities for workplace-based and life long vocational learning; national reform agendas focusing on increased value for money and responsiveness to industry needs; equitable access to services for women, indigenous people and members of the ethnic communities of the State; and providing VET opportunities for rural and regional Queensland.

The 1997-98 budget has a range of initiatives to ensure significant progress towards the department's key result areas: increasing work force skills, improving work force flexibility, reducing the risk of work related injury and disease, improving the satisfaction of clients and customers cost effectively, and developing our people and our organisation. Some of the highlights of this budget's initiatives are implementing a range of initiatives as part of the 1997 Year of Training, reforming the VET legislation, expanding the number of VET places with priority for young people through flexible work-based training for people in rural and remote areas, providing greater technology and increased competition in the delivery of VET, implementing the new industrial relations reforms in the public and private sectors and, of course, enhancing workplace health and safety in Queensland. There are initiatives that support the Government's commitment to providing

better service for small business, creating one-stop shop arrangements, reducing red tape and also making systems fairer and more cost effective. The underlying State funding excluding Commonwealth funding and carryovers has increased by \$18.8m, or 4.6%, and the department's capital works program totals \$40.5m.

I think that I will probably leave it at that and I will be pleased to take questions, but before doing so can I introduce the officers from the department who are here to advise me where necessary? Going from right to left and starting on my far right we have Mr Chris Hooper, our Executive Director of Corporate Services; Mr John Hodges, who is the Executive Director of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety; Mr Peter Henneken, who is the Executive Director of the Division of Labour Market Reform; and the Director-General, Mr Colin Thatcher, on my immediate right. On my left is Mr Bernie Carlon, the Executive Director of Training Queensland; Mr Stan Sielaff, Executive Director of TAFE Queensland; and the Deputy Director-General, Susanne Knowles, is on my far left. I welcome the scrutiny of the Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The period for questions commences now and I invite non-Government members to participate.

Mr BRADY: I note the awarding to Carroll Delaney Advertising of the contract for a concept development work logo for TAFE, Go For It, at a cost of \$9,990, and I ask: what departmental processes were involved in the awarding of the contract to Carroll Delaney Advertising? For example, were tenders called or, if not, what were the processes involved in that firm obtaining the contract?

Mr SANTORO: Before referring it through to the Director-General, I can assure this Committee—because I suspect that this question may come up several times—as I have assured the Parliament, that all processes that were proper and due were in fact followed in awarding contracts not just to Carroll Delaney Advertising but in fact to anybody else. There were many other people within the advertising agencies and consultancies who were in fact awarded work. But all the proper procedures have in fact been followed. The concept development work logo Go For It occurred because of specialist skills that were available within that particular agency. The proper process of how I have been advised was followed. I would invite my Director-General to perhaps elaborate further on that.

Mr THATCHER: In relation to that particular matter, the contract was awarded in accordance with the State Purchasing Policy. Carroll Delaney Advertising was already on the departmental preferred supplier list. In that particular case, I took the decision to waive the arrangement to seek three tenders on that occasion because of the circumstances involved.

Mr BRADY: What circumstances were involved that were instrumental in your waiving the tendering process?

Mr THATCHER: I recall on that occasion—I have not got the approval in front of me to refresh my memory—it was to do with the urgency and nature of the timing at the time.

Mr BRADY: Is it true that the cost of the Carroll Delaney campaign, the Go For It campaign, was funded by way of a charge on the institutes' budgets after those budgets had been settled and without consultation with the institutes?

Mr SANTORO: I am not quite sure of the technical aspects of the answer that you require. I think not, but again I will ask my Director-General to respond—or Stan.

Mr SIELAFF: No, that did not occur. The institutes were not levied in terms of the funding of that particular initiative.

Mr BRADY: Minister, what were the main elements of the Carroll Delaney TAFE Go For It campaign? What were the results? How many additional TAFE places resulted from it?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Braddy, you would be aware that when I became the Minister for Training after the change of Government, there certainly existed within TAFE Queensland the very urgent necessity to reform TAFE Queensland so as to bring it more in tune with community—and particularly small business—expectations of a major public training provider. It was a very small level of expenditure. I do wish to stress to you and the Committee that it was less than \$10,000. One of the major reasons that I am referring to my officers for detail is that, as you would appreciate, it is not the role of this Minister—and indeed, it should not be the role of any Minister—to become directly involved in working out the detail of advertising contracts or being involved in the tendering process or even in the form of commissioning, as occurred this time—as the Director-General explained—under some fairly stringent rules.

Basically, the major reason why that work was commissioned was to come up with a logo that could position TAFE within the public consciousness and within the training market as a leading provider of training. It is a logo which I launched at the opening of a TAFE facility in the city. I launched it at that time because basically the work had been done. There had been quite a few people who were interested in adopting the logo, which was regarded as a very good slogan, I suppose, and logo. We just wanted to acquire the intellectual rights that we have acquired as a result of that particular launch.

In this the Year of Training there are many exciting initiatives which will help promote TAFE Queensland as the major provider of training in Queensland and certainly as the major public provider. I see that particular logo and that particular slogan as being a very important part of the marketing process for TAFE during the next two to three years, which will encourage younger people in particular. If you have seen the logo and the slogan you would appreciate that it has—from my point of view and in my opinion, and certainly in the opinion of other officers who have looked at it—a particular appeal to young people. So I suppose that, in

answering your question about how many extra places it has generated—it is to become part of a major marketing strategy which is currently being finalised. I believe that at that stage the answer to your question will be very obvious, and that is: considerable numbers.

Mr BRADY: Minister, I note the awarding of a further contract to Carroll Delaney Advertising for \$10,000 for a marketing strategy for industrial relations reforms. What departmental processes were involved in the awarding of the contract to Carroll Delaney Advertising? In particular, were any tenders called—considering the amount of the contract—and how were they evaluated? If not, why were tenders not called and what processes were followed?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Braddy, while the Director-General is in the process of acquiring some notes to assist in the answering of your question, I again stress that many of these items that do appear on the engagement of consultants information, which has been provided to you in response to a question, are amounts of less than \$10,000. There are particular circumstances that apply to the commissioning of work that is of a value that is less than \$10,000. I will now ask the Director-General to enunciate some of those.

Mr THATCHER: On this particular occasion we were seeking a proposal to engage the services of a consultant who would advise the department on appropriate strategies to promote the Government's new industrial relations legislation. The role of the consultant was to oversight the development and implementation of a communication strategy in relation to the proposed IR reforms, to provide advice on appropriate media and promotional activities, and to identify avenues to market and promote the reforms.

The approval was sought in terms of the DTIR's administrative instruction No. 10 and State Purchasing Policy that CDA be invited to submit a proposal for the services required. This was because of two factors: firstly, there was a short time frame in which this assistance was required, and it precluded our obtaining and evaluating additional proposals; and secondly, the high regard in which the company, Carroll Delaney Advertising Pty Ltd, was held in relation to providing the type of assistance sought. This company had been used on previous occasions by other areas of the department and came highly recommended. Therefore, on 30 November I received a recommendation from the appropriate executive director to proceed on the basis of waiving the normal requirement because of the factor to which I have already referred and on the basis that it was a very competitively priced proposal which would not exceed \$10,000. I approved those arrangements on 4 December 1996.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Braddy, perhaps to again give some reassurance to the Committee—you are obviously intent on pursuing a certain line of questioning. I sincerely do welcome that line of questioning, but can I just advise the Committee that Carroll Delaney Advertising has considerable work experience throughout a range of Government

departments, including the Department of Education, the Department of Main Roads, SEQEB, the Queensland Electricity Commission, the Queensland Investment Corporation and Queensland Transport, and that a lot of that work was conducted under Labor Party Governments.

Mr BRADY: In relation to that then, Minister, can you tell us when Carroll Delaney Advertising was placed on the list of preferred suppliers for PR and marketing programs for your department?

Mr SANTORO: I will ask the Director-General to answer your question.

Mr THATCHER: I have not seen the actual approval, but I have been informed that it was in August 1996. In relation to the previous question—we have currently advertised for a standing offer arrangement. That has been advertised in the media, and quite a number of applications have been received. There is going to be an appropriate merit selection process in deciding which one will be selected. It is for that reason that the Go For It campaign has been put on hold.

Mr BRADY: Minister, I refer to your comment that the previous Government, of which I was a member, had used this agency. It appears from the Director-General's answer that, in your department, it was placed on the list in August 1996, some months after the succession to power by the Borbidge/Sheldon Government; is that correct?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Braddy, again I can only say to you that I will keep on deferring to the officers for specific answers to your specific questions on the basis that I have definitely not involved myself in the detail that you are requiring of me. As I have indicated to you in the Parliament previously when you have asked questions suggesting that perhaps I had been involved, and I asked you to supply some evidence of that and you have been unable to do so literally—it is not that I am trying to score a political point, I wish to assure you, but purely because I have stayed away from involving myself in any meeting or in any communication—whether it be direct, or by telephone call, or in any formal written advice to my officers—in relation to the process about which you are seeking to extract some information.

When you have a look at the amounts that are involved, you are normally looking at amounts of under \$10,000. There are provisions within the State Purchasing Policy for certain discretion to be exercised by senior officers of the department in relation to awarding those types of contracts. I would suggest that that particular provision was put into the State Purchasing Policy and adhered to, I would suggest, by the previous Government for very good reasons, including—and in particular—economic reasons. Cost-wise, it becomes a pretty ineffective exercise to call tenders. It can be a costly process if it is properly carried out. If it is not properly carried out, it becomes a farce. That sort of detail can be made available if we cannot do it today, but I think that the answers should prove to be satisfactory. I ask the Director-General to seek to assist you again.

Mr THATCHER: Shortly after I began acting as Director-General I became concerned about the management of consultancies within the department. On 3 June 1996, after making inquiries and seeing some reports, I sent a submission to Mr Hooper, the Executive Director of Corporate Services, talking about the past practice. I said—

"From the material supplied I am not satisfied with the arrangements for managing and controlling the engagement and use of consultants. In particular:

I can not be certain that the need to engage a consultant is being clearly established before a decision is taken to seek expressions of interest.

There are instances where the State Purchasing Policy requirements have not been fulfilled and this could give rise to a doubt as to whether there has been open and effective competition for the work. There are also instances where members of staff on leave have been engaged as consultants without reference to the requirements of the State Purchasing Policy.

There are inadequacies in the record keeping which result in some documentation not being available even though it is required to be eg. invitations to quote ..."

Mr BRADDY: I think that was the end of your time, Mr Thatcher.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the Committee want to grant an extension?

Mr BRADDY: No.

The CHAIRMAN: They do not want to grant an extension, so I cannot do anything more.

Mr BRADDY: What are the details of the cost and the detailed WorkCover procedures involved in the awarding of a contract to Carrol Delaney Advertising for the promotion associated with amendments to the workers' compensation legislation in 1996-97? I understand from the material that I received that Mr Hastie, who is not at the table, was to be present today and would be available to give you details if again you are not familiar with those details.

Mr SANTORO: You raised a question with me on the last day of the last parliamentary sittings. I think we came up with a figure of \$875.

Mr BRADDY: No, I did not; I never mentioned a figure.

Mr SANTORO: I know you did not, but I came back and made a ministerial statement when you were absent from the Chamber to give you the information that I was unable to—

Mr BRADDY: I understand that Mr Hastie was to be here. I do not know whether he is here.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Hastie believes that he may be able to be of assistance to the Committee. I would ask him to assist if he can.

Mr HASTIE: At no stage has WorkCover involved Carrol Delaney Advertising in marketing exercises to do with the promotion of the new WorkCover legislation. However, just prior to or about the time that the Kennedy inquiry into workers' compensation and related matters in Queensland was being finalised and we were about to table the report in the Parliament, there were some discussions with the then secretary of the inquiry, Mr Peter Hall, about what we, with the inquiry people, should do to address any issues that were raised as part of that tabling. We have a letter on file—which I think was mentioned in the response in the Parliament by the Minister—from Mr Hall recommending CDA advertising. At that point in time, I did not know of CDA advertising at all, and I took their advice. We did engage them just to do a couple of press releases and things like that. The amount involved was \$875 or thereabouts.

Mr BRADDY: I take it that prior to Mr Santoro becoming the Minister, CDA had not been involved at all with workers' compensation matters and WorkCover.

Mr HASTIE: No, we did look back over a period. I could never remember anything like that. There was a consultancy firm called Carroll, but they were information technology consultants that we engaged in the past.

Mr SANTORO: If I could finalise that answer, I wish to assure the honourable member for Kedron and the Committee—and I am following up on your statement that you wished to be assured that, before I became the Minister, Mr Delaney had had no contact with WorkCover—I again assure the honourable member that until the honourable member raised a question which suggested some improper interference by me, which I totally—

Mr BRADDY: No.

Mr SANTORO: Your question to me in the Parliament on the Thursday was certainly not what I would call a friendly question and one that sought information. You got your answer.

Mr BREDHAUER: You are a sensitive little petal.

Mr SANTORO: I am very sensitive, particularly when my reputation is besmirched in a way that cannot in any way be substantiated. I thought that I had provided a very comprehensive answer. If the awarding of a contract worth \$875, of which I knew nothing, can be considered doing a favour to a mate, I reckon that—

Mr BRADDY: There were a few more since then, obviously.

Mr SANTORO: You are welcome to keep on asking questions about each and every one of those contracts. We have been open and accountable. We will be able to answer each and every one of them. Keep on asking and we will give you the answers.

The CHAIRMAN: Last year as Chairman my first question to the Minister related to the Government's shift in emphasis from employment programs to focus on training. Last year I asked the Minister about the curtailment of certain employment

programs outlined in the budget. I asked: how many staff are affected and what processes does your department have in place to manage the resulting staff changes? This year, my first question to the Minister is: how successful were you in achieving your aim in using relocation, redeployment and VERs for those staff affected by the changes in focus.

Mr SANTORO: The Committee will recall that last year during the Estimates hearing, particularly when the Treasurer brought down the Budget, the decision was announced to cut out most of the labour market programs. I again assure this Committee as I did last year that the decision was based on a policy decision and policy direction. It was not a reflection on the performance of the programs or the individual projects. Basically, it showed that the Government was refocusing its activities away from employment programs to vocational education and training. At that stage, the Opposition made great ado about the number of sackings and the number of people who would be displaced. I again assured the Committee that the transition from labour market programs to vocational education and training programs would be conducted in a most sensitive manner, with the social and economic dislocation being heavily minimised. I remember two months after the decision was announced that we came under some attack—not major attack, but some attack—from the Opposition. I am pleased to report to the Committee that the assurance that I gave to the Committee, the Parliament and, more importantly, to the people directly affected has been fulfilled.

A total of 162 staff were affected by the decision and 63 accepted voluntary early retirement packages. Perhaps the Opposition members might be interested in this statistic: 90 have been placed in permanent Public Service jobs. Of the 162 staff, only nine are currently registered for redeployment. The total cost of the VERs to the department was \$2,383,750. To manage the impact on staff, the department instituted a very comprehensive management plan. The process included individual action plans for each affected program, a human resources management plan and a communication strategy. The human resources management plan included training, voluntary early retirement packages, internal redeployment and sector-wide redeployment. Individual training packages contained financial planning sessions, which over 187 staff attended—obviously, that is more than the 162 staff who were directly affected—resume writing workshops, in which 47 staff participated; as well as career path planning workshops, in which 101 staff participated. Initially 45 staff were deemed surplus to requirements and registered for sector-wide redeployment. As a direct result of the support and training by Training Queensland, only nine of those staff remain registered for redeployment. I conclude by saying that this Government is very committed to looking after its public servants and we have done that in this case.

Mr HEGARTY: Minister, in last year's Estimates debate the honourable member for Kedron referred to underexpenditure of the fixed capital works budget. Can you inform the Committee of the

expected end-of-year position of capital works within TAFE under the first full year of the Borbidge/Sheldon coalition Government?

Mr SANTORO: I thank the honourable member for his question because it does give me the opportunity to, in fact, debunk one of the major pieces of political mischief that has been peddled by the Opposition in relation to my department. I can assure this Committee, and through this Committee the whole of the Parliament, that TAFE Queensland will expend in total its 1996-97 capital works budget.

To ensure the full expenditure for 1996-97, I have approved additional capital works for the Institutes of Yeronga, Brisbane, South Bank, Wide Bay, Far North Queensland, Southern Queensland, Barrier Reef and Bremer. Again, without wanting to sound too political, I stress that most of those particular institutes service Labor electorates which, again, proves how fair this Government and this Minister are to the needs of communities irrespective of the colour of the political representation.

The emphasis of the works has been to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the institutes and their facilities, including the provision of new facilities and the extensive use of refurbishment to upgrade and to make better use of facilities. Funds have also been allocated in the program for the improvement of planning processes to ensure the optimal delivery of the TAFE Queensland capital works program to meet the vocational education and training needs of the State.

One major innovation that I wish to stress to the Committee, which I think should be of interest to everybody including members on the opposite side of the House, is that technology will increasingly play a very important role in the delivery of services and particularly in the facilitation of the delivery of training services by TAFE Queensland. I foreshadow to this Committee that maybe further questioning later on will provide me with the opportunity to talk about the increasing role of technology. In fact, if members of the Committee scrutinise carefully the Estimates, they will realise that a key feature of the budget is the emphasis on technology, which is designed particularly to increase access to training for people in regional and remote areas and to also provide flexible learning alternatives for people in metropolitan areas.

One of the more innovative initiatives within the Budget is that TAFE Queensland has established two rural key centres at the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE and also at the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE to coordinate and develop flexible on-the-job delivery strategies utilising modern communication and learning technology such as Videolinq and the Internet. I could go through the long list of capital works which has been provided to me but I will not use the next 15 seconds to do that; maybe some other time during the hearing.

The CHAIRMAN: I appreciate you keeping within the time limits. It is very important.

Mr SANTORO: Mr Chairman, is that first bell 15 seconds? I think it is. I have 15 seconds to go after that and I promise you that I will stop on that.

The CHAIRMAN: That is fine. We have just had a very cooperative Committee all day and we do not want any bother.

Mr SANTORO: I will just ask again the question. When that bell goes, I have 15 seconds to wind up my answer. Am I in order to keep on going until the 15 seconds or would you like me to stop then?

The CHAIRMAN: No, the 15 seconds is fine.

Mr SANTORO: I will restrict myself to 15 seconds. I wish to assure you and the Committee that you will have a most cooperative Committee following the one that you took on this morning.

The CHAIRMAN: Right. Thank you very much.

Mr TANTI: Minister, in last year's Estimates debate you pledged that disadvantaged and long-term unemployed people will be targeted through competitive funding. Did this occur last year? What initiatives are planned for this year?

Mr SANTORO: The commitment of the Government to the principles of equity and access—and I use the word "equity" more so than "social justice" for reasons which the Committee may wish to probe—is that we have through the budget in a very deliberate way sought to provide assistance to those groups of people whom you have outlined in your question. An amount of \$6.2m has been targeted at the long-term unemployed and other disadvantaged people through the 1996-97 year. The Competitive Funding Program in consultation with industry developed specifications and invited numerous tenders for training that specifically targeted long-term unemployed and disadvantaged people. As I have just said, my department has committed approximately \$6.2m for this financial year.

The department has also made available a further \$3.5m to assist long-term unemployed and disadvantaged people in 1997-98. The additional \$3.5m will go towards the Apprenticeship and Traineeship Access Program. Procurement methods have also been developed to assist special groups that traditionally have been disadvantaged in labour markets with vocational courses that will result in an apprenticeship, traineeship and employment outcome. There also has been for this year a \$1.7m allocation for the delivery of training to indigenous Queenslanders. This training will give these people the skills and technical knowledge that will enhance employment and further vocational opportunities.

In 1997 for the first time—and I stress "for the first time"—training that targets specifically Australian South Sea Islander people was competitively tendered. The tendering process involved specifications being developed in consultation with various South Sea Islander community groups throughout Queensland to ensure that it accurately reflected their needs. As I said, this training totals approximately \$125,000 in total.

This year, we have also allocated \$2.9m to people in rural and isolated communities and half a million dollars for training for people with a disability has also been allocated. In fact, the training will improve their access to the vocational education and

training sector and will enhance opportunities for participation in that sector. An amount of \$128,000 has been allocated to people within ethnic communities. This particular allocation has been arrived at in consultation with the Bureau of Ethnic Affairs, and it has been committed over three years. There has also been a range of funding initiatives for women which perhaps I can outline later on during the Committee's consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. What is the Government doing to increase the level and quality of industry-based training in the rural sector?

Mr SANTORO: That is a question that is very dear to the heart of the Government, obviously, because of its make-up and its very strong commitment to rural and regional communities. It is an answer that could probably take more than the three minutes allowed to me. As a Government, we seek to recognise clearly the increasing complexity of farming and what that means to farming communities. Obviously they need to gain skills in the areas of finance, marketing, property management, information technology and the sustainable use of resources. I think that, in these very competitive days, gone are the times when farms can just be regarded as farms. In fact, in my view and in the view of the Government, they are small businesses and they need to be looked at in that way when Government is considering the delivery of services to rural communities, particularly in the area of training.

The rural sector also covers diverse farming practices. These diverse practices require different training skills and different training needs. We have sought to develop a system where coordination and cooperation in the provision of rural-specific training is able to be achieved. We have established the Rural Industry Task Force. That is one of the major initiatives of the year for training. The task force is made up of representatives from primary producers, the Queensland Rural Industry Training Council and the chairs of the four Queensland agricultural boards. Most of those agricultural chairs, that is, the chairs of the agricultural colleges, are themselves farmers and pastoralists. We also have TAFE Queensland and the university sector involved in that task force. I pay particular mention to the university sector, which is doing very good work in that area.

The role of the task force includes an assessment of the rural training infrastructure, the development of mechanisms which will enhance the provision of rural industry training, and the strengthening and broadening of advisory mechanisms. It is the role of the Rural Industry Task Force to identify the ways in which training provision can be enhanced. It will provide expert industry advice to the Government so that the policies that the Government delivers in terms of rural training are consistent with the needs of the rural sector. To date, a preliminary issues paper is being produced and is undergoing further development. During July and August, a series of information and consultation sessions will be conducted around the State prior to the development of final outcomes and the recommendations of what I hope will be a very useful

report. I am grateful for the question, because it has enabled me to illustrate the Government's commitment to rural and regional Queensland.

Mr HEGARTY: Can you inform the Committee about the Budget initiatives that will encourage women to take part in vocational education and training?

Mr SANTORO: I went short a little while ago, because I thought that you might have an interest in the area. In the 1997 State Training Profile, we have recognised that workplace productivity can only be achieved by the appropriate training being made available and accessible to all members of the community, including women. The profile detailed some fairly good strategies to enhance opportunities for women to participate in vocational education and training. These were identified through consultation with representatives of women's organisations and, in particular, the Office of Women's Affairs.

For example, as part of a range of initiatives, the women re-entering the work force initiative will break down the barriers which are experienced by many women wanting to re-enter the work force. The initiative will provide them with the skills and confidence needed to gain employment and access to further training. The initiative clearly recognises the unique and very real difficulties experienced by women in rural and remote areas.

During 1997, training will predominantly be delivered in rural and remote locations for women who, because of where they live, face greater difficulties in accessing training. During 1997, \$200,000 has been allocated to the women re-entering the work force initiative and it is expected that 400 women will be assisted by the initiative. This is only the second year that the initiative has delivered these services. The Committee may be interested to know that, during 1995 and 1996, 1,632 women participated in the scheme and were trained. I have no precise statistics on employment outcomes from the program. However, the available qualitative data suggests that the success of the program is very encouraging.

We have continued the Tradeswomen on the Move Program, which aims to encourage young women aged between 10 and 13 to consider careers in trades that traditionally have not been accessed by women. The program has evolved in its current format over the last eight years. I give credit to the previous Government for giving the program the boost that it did. Given the need to start the process of the consideration of non-traditional careers at an early age, it is extremely difficult to quantify the outcomes of the program, particularly as it has been targeted within 200 schools across the State. Nevertheless, the Committee may be interested to know that the proportion of females commencing in non-traditional apprenticeships has risen from 5.3% in 1992-93 to 7.3% in 1995-96. That is not a bad result for an outlay of \$200,000.

Mr BRADY: Minister, I refer you to the establishment of a cruise ship facility in Brisbane and to the offer made by the State Government to the company selected to run the cruise operation of \$2m in training funds, and I ask: was TAFE given the

chance to tender for this \$2m contract? If not, why not? What elements of the private tenders received precluded TAFE from gaining the contract? Which private training firms have been selected for this work? What is the breakdown of the contract? Is the \$2m coming from the State Government or is it CES money—in particular, is it vocational training funding from the Commonwealth Government? Is the Commonwealth Government aware that \$2m of taxpayers' funds have been promised to a company, two directors of which are discharged bankrupts and which, at this stage, does not even own a cruise ship?

Mr SANTORO: Obviously, this issue has recently arisen. I am advised that TAFE has no involvement in the issue. At this stage, the Executive Director of TAFE is unable to help me provide further information. I undertake to answer whether or not TAFE tendered for the contract. During the course of the Committee hearing, we will seek to get that information for you or provide it, if necessary, in the Government's own time.

As late as yesterday evening, I had discussions with the Honourable Minister for Tourism, Small Business and Industry. I assure the Parliament, through the Committee, that the Minister is very optimistic about the fact that some very good and specific training will be provided by a private provider to about 320 people. The course will commence next Wednesday. Although some questions surround the initiative, I think that it is an initiative—

Mr BREDHAUER: Sure!

Mr SANTORO: The honourable member for Cook can make sly remarks under his breath. I was invited by my ministerial colleague to pose for a photograph in front of 320 people and to participate in the commencement of their training next Wednesday. That training will equip them with some very specific work and life skills that will place them in a far better employment position within that particular project or, indeed, any other project. Perhaps the honourable member for Cook, if he wipes the smile off his face, will turn up and tell those 320 people who will be trained as a result of the initiative that they should go home because the whole thing has a bad smell about it. He is welcome to do that if he wants to and we will see the sort of reception that he receives!

I would have been quite happy to turn up to that commencement day, but, unfortunately, I am involved in a farewell ceremony for a retired senior officer of the Gold Coast TAFE. Then I shall be talking to TAFE staff on the Gold Coast. I will also be at the launching of a new hotel chain on the Gold Coast. Only because of that will I not be attending the program's commencement next Wednesday. I encourage members to take a more positive attitude towards the project.

Mr BRADY: My question asked for more detail, so I think it requires an answer on notice. I will leave a copy of the question for the Minister.

Mr SANTORO: We will try to get that detail today; but, if not, we will supply it.

Mr BRADY: I refer to your answer on the cruise ship facility, particularly the letting of a major portion of this contract to an office training academy, and I ask: what access does this company have to industrial kitchens and laundries to allow candidates for cruise ship employment to be properly trained? Is the Minister aware that, for the two weeks of maritime training, all 300 trainees will be flown to Singapore and back at taxpayers' expense? Is the Minister satisfied that the training aspects of this issue are being properly handled? If not, what does he intend to do about them?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Braddy, I will pay you the courtesy of not going for any longer than approximately 30 seconds by reminding you that your question has absolutely no applicability to the Estimates that we are considering. The question does not relate to any items of expenditure which my department is involved with. The question is better referred, perhaps by formal correspondence, to the Minister whose views I represented somewhat in the last question. I could abuse the courtesy of the Committee by giving another three-minute answer in a different way. Because I am the sort of fellow that I am, I will not do that.

Mr BRADY: Minister, how many Queensland workplace agreements have been registered since the new legislation came into place? Are you satisfied with the number, given the immense importance that you have constantly placed on the existence of these agreements leading the way into a brave new world of employment and growth in the Queensland economy and community?

Mr SANTORO: I have been advised that to date three Queensland workplace agreements have been finalised. My information is that a considerable number more are being processed. I can inform the Committee that I will be appointing an Enterprise Commissioner in the near future. I can also inform the Committee that there will be more Queensland workplace agreements than there were enterprise flexibility agreements that enabled non-union agreements to be negotiated under the previous Government's legislation. After all, the Committee should not forget that the major reason why Queensland workplace agreements have been included as part of the legislative armour of the Government is to enable individuals and companies to enter into non-union agreements. The dismal record of the previous Government in terms of non-union agreements was 37 agreements. I can assure the honourable member that there will be many, many more non-union agreements by the time the first term of this Government has concluded.

Shortly after the appointment of the Enterprise Commissioner, it would be my intention to undertake a fairly extensive promotional campaign. The member should not necessarily take that to mean television advertising. I see smiles on the faces of Opposition members of the Committee. If they ask me what the results of that campaign were, I would be happy to—

Mr BRADY: You got three agreements.

Mr SANTORO: As you say, it is a brave new world. If your leader, Mr Beattie, stopped

scaremongering and telling people that these agreements will be abolished and instead sought to enhance the spirit of cooperative workplace relations, that may assist the process. I do not expect that assistance and, with due respect to his abilities, I do not require it. It is early days. By the end of the first 12 months, I can assure you and the rest of the Committee that we will be looking at many more than that. I am aware of the rough number of agreements being considered. I think agreements covering about 100 employees are being considered. That is not a bad start. We look forward to keeping the Parliament informed of the progress in that area.

Mr BRADY: As the unemployment rate in Queensland has become progressively worse under your Government, I note that you seem to be taking over the responsibility for making comments on unemployment from your leader, the Treasurer. In last year's Budget Speech, Mrs Sheldon promised that an estimated 45,000 new jobs would be created in Queensland during the year. However, so far this financial year, trend employment growth in Queensland has been only 15,000 positions, and those are all part-time jobs. With one month to go, you are 30,000 jobs behind your Government's pace. I ask: in light of your Government's abject failure to meet last year's target, do you agree with the Treasurer's Budget Speech forecast that 50,000 new jobs will be created in the next financial year?

Mr SANTORO: Firstly, I refute and reject outright your suggestion that this Government's employment policies have failed. As to your asking me to make comments about statements that the Treasurer has made—I never pretend to speak on behalf of any ministerial colleague of mine, let alone the Treasurer. You are most welcome to ask her questions about employment and unemployment when the Parliament next meets. However, your question gives me the opportunity to talk about the Queensland Government's performance in terms of jobs. It may be of interest to the Committee to hear the facts rather than the propaganda.

The facts are that in May an additional 1,300 positions were created within Queensland's labour market. As the honourable member would recall if he paid attention when the figures were released, that occurred during the same period that 40,300 positions disappeared from the Australian economy. Some people may say that 1,300 jobs are not very many. However, when we look at what happened nationally, we see that that is not a bad one. Since March 1996, 33,000 extra jobs, or approximately 40% of all jobs created in Australia, have been created in Queensland.

I want to go on the record as saying that Governments do not create jobs; the private sector creates real long-term sustainable jobs. In light of the extra 33,000 jobs, you cannot criticise this Government's record in comparison with that of the rest of Australia. If you have a look at all of the indicators being published at the moment in relation to jobs growth, you will see that they show that there is growing optimism within the Queensland economy. People say that this Government's policies

have failed the unemployed. We have been in Government for only one year. We have had to undertake absolutely massive reform, including the reform of Labor's iniquitous and unfair dismissal laws. More than anything else, that is now helping to create confidence with respect to the biggest employer in the economy, that is, small business. I always say to Oppositions and to the general public that you judge a Government not by the number of unemployed but by the number of jobs that it creates.

Mr BREDHAUER: You've got to be joking.

Mr SANTORO: The honourable member for Cook may ask me to elaborate on that if he wishes.

Mr BREDHAUER: No.

Mr SANTORO: I know he will not; he will not like the answer.

Mr BRADY: I have already asked you that.

Mr SANTORO: You have to look at other factors, such as the participation rate, which in Queensland is one of the highest in Australia, and it affects the unemployment figures very substantially.

Mr BRADY: The question that I asked gave you that opportunity. As I pointed out, your Government's own papers indicate that, although you claimed that you would be the cause of the creation of 45,000 new jobs last year, only 15,000 were created and they were all part time. As you are the Minister responsible for this brave new world of legislation in which all of these new jobs will be created, can you tell the Committee how you think the 50,000 new jobs will be created this year—jobs which your Government claims in its Budget papers that it will create?

Mr SANTORO: I will take the opportunity provided to me by Mr Brady to elaborate on my previous answer and refer him to the statements made previously by the Treasurer and the Premier in relation to who has responsibility for employment issues in this State under the new Government. The Government adopts the attitude that employment issues are basically a matter for a whole-of-Government approach. Whenever Ministers go to Cabinet, they are asked to be very cognisant of the employment-creating opportunities of proposals taken to Cabinet. It is a pretty facile approach for a Government to have a Minister for employment and for all of the responsibility for employment growth and creation to be focused directly on that one Minister.

In his previous question, the honourable member made reference to the fact that the Treasurer sometimes makes statements on the unemployment figures and that I also sometimes make statements. I do so because employment creation is a reasonable concern to all Ministers. I comment on the figures irrespective of whether they are good or bad. Obviously, as the leader of my party and as the Treasurer and Deputy Premier, Mrs Sheldon is also entitled to make statements on employment, as is any other Minister whose portfolio responsibilities impact on the employment and participation figures. I again wish to refer the

honourable member to the notion that you do not solve the problem of unemployment in 12 months. Perhaps one of my officers could give me a copy of a media release from the former Premier, Mr Goss, who today, I am informed, has decided to jump ship.

Mr BRADY: No, he is going to run Federally; I think there is a difference.

Mr SANTORO: He has certainly jumped ship from the State scene.

Mr BRADY: No, you have the cruise ships; he goes to work.

The CHAIRMAN: Let us return to the subject.

Mr SANTORO: The former Premier is looking for another job. If I linked it directly to the question, I—

Mr BREDHAUER: Minister, he is not relying on you for job creation.

Mr SANTORO: I suppose there might be job creation for him but not for the retiring member for Rankin, if my information is correct. I wonder whether it is a forced redundancy or whether it is a voluntary early retirement.

Mr BRADY: It is very voluntary.

Mr SANTORO: It is voluntary? We may read about that in the factional gazettes and bulletins one day. This Government has a commitment to bring in policies: industrial relations, workers' compensation, red tape reduction, the increase in training places which we will undoubtedly go through as we progress through this hearing, enterprise bargaining, unfair dismissal laws. They are all policies which during the remainder of this Government's term will help to create real, long-term, sustainable jobs within the Queensland economy. I reiterate the major point that I was making at the end of my last answer: a Government should be judged on the number of jobs that it creates. I am confident that this Government's performance at the end of its first term going into its second term will be judged to be a very exemplary—

Mr BRADY: You wish.

Mr SANTORO: We are not wishing; we are actually working very, very hard to achieve it.

Mr BRADY: The second term, you wish.

Mr SANTORO: No, we are working very, very hard and we will achieve our second term as a result of those policies creating jobs which, despite the very heavy participation rate, will make sure that the majority of Queenslanders who want jobs will have jobs.

Mr BRADY: In answer to a previous question from a Government member, you referred to spending all the capital works funds. Why have so many major capital works projects at TAFE institutes been scrapped or massively scaled back? What criteria were used by the Government razor gang that made these decisions? For example, why has the \$12m consolidation and refurbishment for the Rockhampton campus of the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE disappeared from your capital works program?

Mr SANTORO: I will ask for some assistance on that question because it refers to detail. Mr Sielaff, do you have some specific points in relation to that question?

Mr SIELAFF: The major issue with regard to capital works relates to the need to review the planning processes associated with capital works. In terms of the central Queensland project, within TAFE Queensland there will be undertaken planning and proposal development which will go to VETEC. A submission will go from TAFE Queensland to the employment and training commission with a view to establishing priorities on those particular projects. As the Minister referred to earlier, there has been a change in the way in which capital works planning would occur. As a result of that change in planning and the opening of the training market, the intention is that all TAFE projects—and, indeed, all vocational education and training projects—would be the subject of a submission to the Vocational Education, Training and Employment Commission. At that time, then TAFE will compete for planning funds. If we are successful in terms of securing those funds, those planning funds would be allocated to that particular project. It is then the intention that if the plans were successful a fully detailed estimation of the costs of the project would be developed, and that estimation then would be considered along with the capital works budget for the whole of the department.

Mr SANTORO: Maybe I can add to that. What has been occurring in the past is that over the years incredible wish lists have appeared within budgets, and what you have are nominal amounts allocated. If you refer to last year's budget, the total estimated cost of the consolidation and refurbishment project that you referred to was \$12m and the budget for 1996-97 was \$200,000, mainly for planning purposes. The advice that I have been given is that the project does not appear in the 1997-98 budget due to the decision to remove all projects in the planning phase from project budgets, with further expenditure on planning activities in this location to be met from planning funds. Removing items from wish lists and actually being realistic in the way that we report to Parliament, I think, is a more accountable way of going about matters.

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

Mr TANTI: Minister, now that you are warming up, can you inform the Committee of what the Government is doing to ensure that the agricultural colleges are meeting the challenges of the changing training environment?

Mr SANTORO: When we took over Government, one of the really sad stories that we took over was the utterly dilapidated state of agricultural colleges. I suppose some people will think that I am a little bit mean spirited when I say that the previous Government had a fairly mean attitude towards issues that related to the rural sector and that they had deliberately allowed the welfare of agricultural colleges to be run down. For example, I inherited an agricultural college system that had not had a pay increase, apart from the safety net increases of \$8, for six years. What we very

quickly did at that stage was to implement an enterprise bargaining agreement which provided for a wage increase for all college staff of 12% over two years. This was ratified by the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission on 2 April 1997. The 6% Stage 1 payment and a further 2% Stage 2 increase have been applied and the third is scheduled for October 1997. I again stress that the colleges had not received a wage increase since 1991 other than the safety net adjustment of \$8 and, as a result of that, an incredible brain drain had occurred from the agricultural colleges to other parts of the training market. Agricultural colleges were also previously denied funding entitlements. This practice by the previous Government has been overturned, and the colleges will now receive their full funding escalation from Treasury. That is something that was negotiated very strongly with Treasury by this Minister. Colleges will also be accommodated in the capital development plan for 1997-98 and therefore have access to capital development grants in the vocational education and training budget. They will now be able to compete with other training providers for capital funds. What this will effectively do is release existing pressure on colleges to fund capital development by way of loans and release revenue from the college commercial activities for diversified training purposes. We have also appointed a dedicated departmental liaison officer to work and liaise directly with colleges. Additional marketing and promotional strategies are currently being developed. An \$11.4m allocation to the colleges will enable the colleges to provide tuition for around 500 live-in students and run numerous short courses for the rural community. A \$1m allocation to fund necessary minor works in the colleges has also been allocated. They are just some of the initiatives in relation to agricultural colleges. I thank the honourable member for his interest in the matter.

The CHAIRMAN: I acknowledge the presence of the member for Bulimba, Pat Purcell, who displays quite an interest in industrial relations and other matters.

Mr SANTORO: He is one of the more sensible members, and I will welcome his participation. That just killed his career in the Labor Party; I can see that.

The CHAIRMAN: We might proceed with the business of the day. Can the Minister inform the Committee of what the Government is doing to increase further employment opportunities in our fair State of Queensland?

Mr SANTORO: I have already outlined extensively to the Committee the Government's initiatives in this regard. They include: 50,000 extra jobs from economic growth in Queensland in 1997-98, including 4,530 full-time jobs created by the State Capital Works Program on top of the 42,290 continuing jobs already supported; 14,000 extra Government-funded places in vocational education and training; 1,022 extra teachers; 500 more health workers; and 252 extra police and 200 extra civilians as part of the coalition commitment to 800 extra police and 400 extra civilians by August 1997.

In addition, the Government has a number of employment initiatives to raise employment levels,

including \$183m in tax cuts over three years to small business and training; rationalisation of business licences, saving business \$36m in compliance costs; 71,000 small and low-risk workplaces—and I am particularly proud of this initiative because it relates to my area of ministerial responsibility—to be exempted from workplace registration fees in 1998 and construction notification fees for non-civil construction work which is down by 12.5%. Also, \$130m over three years has been allocated for rural and regional development; \$125m over three years for mining, transport and high-technology initiatives; and \$23m over three years for youth development. I particularly commend the initiatives for youth within the Budget.

I just want to get back to the Committee on a point that I was going to make. I will just simply quote the now exiting member for Logan, who on Thursday, 11 February 1993 said in one of his media releases that unemployment would remain a serious problem in Australia regardless of the outcome of the Federal election. I suppose that was one of the former Premier's more candid and more honest moments. He was basically saying that unemployment is a serious problem and that politicians of any political colour can make any statement that they wish but, unless sensible policies are implemented, the problem will remain. What I have been emphasising to the Committee this afternoon is that this Government is serious about implementing sensible policies to resolve the problem.

Mr HEGARTY: I refer you to the issue of field-based staff in the Workplace Health and Safety Program. Can you outline what steps have been taken by your department to address the issue of staff turnover of professional field-based staff?

Mr SANTORO: I thank the honourable member for his question, and I am particularly pleased to see that the honourable member for Bulimba is here to listen to this answer. One of the really proud aspects of this Budget—certainly from my point of view—is that this is the first Budget in about six years that is increasing the amount of money that has been allocated to the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. I do not say that to be utterly and totally political, even though one is tempted to really go full bore here because the previous Labor Government—and Labor prides itself on workplace health and safety being one of the really holy cows, really sacrosanct—allowed that division to run down to the point where in a lot of areas in Queensland there has been a real scarcity of workplace health and safety inspectors.

I am pleased to announce to the Committee—and perhaps all of you would know because you have had the Budget documents before you for quite a while—that in 1997-98 we will see a very significant increase in the number of field-based staff and that overall there will be 24 new positions in the field. This is made up of eight additional inspectors—which is not bad for a Government that is accused of not liking inspectors—and the conversion of 16 existing positions which up to now have been committed to administrative functions associated

with workplace and construction registrations. The new streamlining of collection arrangements has allowed the staff to be released from revenue collection and to be actively involved in the preventive effort. I am sure the honourable member for Bulimba would agree that that is a good way of transferring effort away from the bureaucracy into the field where the real work should be occurring in terms of preventing workplace injury.

The priorities require that the eight new positions be located right throughout Queensland. I am in the process of having some recommendations put to me as to where they should go. Eventually it is an operational decision. But if the honourable member for Bulimba has any suggestions—because I appreciate his very sincere interest in this area—I make to him the offer that I have made to him during previous discussions, including discussion at this level: if he wishes to have any input into that I would urge my officers now to take note of his comments, if they are forthcoming, without any reference to myself.

In the 12 months, an analysis of the work force demographics against improved compliance statistics will be conducted by the division to determine the most appropriate placement of inspectorial staff. One area that has been of enormous difficulty is Emerald where I inherited a situation where there just was not a workplace health and safety inspector. I see the Honourable Chairman nodding. That is a real achievement from my point of view, because this year we have managed to place an inspector in Emerald—an area which requires an inspector. That is the first time in a long time that they have had one. I think the Committee should be happy with that achievement; we certainly are.

Mr TANTI: Now referring to the Industrial Relations Program, I ask a similar question regarding funding provided for the Employment Advocate and promotion of the new industrial relations reforms to benefit clients in rural Queensland.

Mr SANTORO: I thank the honourable member for his question. Additional funding in 1996-97 basically enabled the department to expand the range of industrial relations services available to all—and I do stress "all"—areas of Queensland. The services were provided through the Queensland Employment Advocate, Wage Line Inquiry Service, Awards Management Branch and the Workplace Information Unit. Collectively these units have a total of 146 officers primarily focused on the delivery of services from 21 centres throughout the State. The Awards Management Branch has 19 existing regional officers but co-sponsors a client service officer on Thursday Island who provides basic service on behalf of the Labour Market Reform Division.

The 21st centre would be Citibank, which is the building within which my office is located and within which the majority of LMR is located, where services are provided by the AMB and WIU staff to clients in regional Queensland. Services available across Queensland include information and advice on the new industrial relations legislation, education and training for employers and employees, consultation on workplace reform matters and compliance

activities. By incorporating the function of the Employment Advocate into the operations of an established regional network, clients across Queensland can now access a range of services, including advice and assistance on QWAs and freedom of association matters; the filing of QWAs at 19 regional offices; and the investigation and enforcement action for contravention of QWAs and freedom of association provisions. I am sure that I do not have to tell the honourable member that this decentralised service has some very clear advantages over the Federal system, which of course has to be, because of necessity and definition, more centralised.

During the 1996-97 financial year, awareness-raising seminars on the new industrial relations legislation have been run across most of Queensland, including the larger regional centres. I am sure honourable members from the coalition parties would be interested in this. In community such as Cunnamulla, Roma, Warwick, Emerald, Mount Isa, Cooktown, Weipa, Ayr and Thursday Island. We do work in those areas, even on Thursday Island. The honourable member for Cook may be interested to know that we are meeting as a Cabinet on Thursday Island this coming Monday.

In 1997-98 additional funding will support the six positions established to undertake activities on behalf of the Employment Advocate in respect of QWAs and freedom of association matters, and an extra seven positions within the Workplace Information Unit to assist in the promotion of workplace bargaining. Again, that is a demonstration of genuine commitment to rural and regional Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer you to the Workplace Health and Safety Program and ask if you can detail what services and initiatives are provided in the program for rural communities in addition to what you were talking about before at Emerald?

Mr SANTORO: Again, the Government supports a range of initiatives to protect the wellbeing of farmers, pastoralists, their families and employees. For example, we have a number of specialist rural advisers—rural health and safety advisers—who are based in Toowoomba, Maryborough, Nambour and Brisbane. These advisers promote health and safety through Farmshare talks, industry forums, farm visits, field days, school visits and other activities throughout the State. As the Committee would note just from that brief explanation, most of the activities are conducted on site on the farms.

We also have child farm safety programs. The DTIR workplace health and safety Safety on the Land initiative teaches children about hazards on farms and advises visit-targeted schools to make presentations on health and safety issues relevant to their age group. Since starting in late 1994, the Safety on the Land program has reached more than 16,000 children in more than 200 schools throughout Queensland. I think that honourable members would agree that that is a remarkable achievement. Child farm safety demonstration days are conducted throughout southern Queensland by the southern

Queensland rural division of general practice in conjunction with the Division of Workplace Health and Safety and other service providers. More than 2,000 children attended six demonstration days in 1996, and 17 days are planned for this year.

We also have a range of offices in regional areas—19 offices, as I have just mentioned in answer to another question—including the new office which is being established in Emerald. These offices offer a full range of services, including inspections, accreditation audits, technical support and industry talks. Advisers and inspectors in each office give regional communities the specialist support that they need to create safe and healthy workplaces. There is an industry committee, the Rural Industry Workplace Health and Safety Committee, which is made up of key industry workplace health and safety community representatives, which provides me, as the Minister, with advice and oversees the development of strategies to reduce injury numbers and severity.

The Division of Workplace Health and Safety also works very closely with rural industry to develop the relevant and practical workplace health and safety legislation, including the advisory standard on storage and use of chemicals at rural workplaces and the advisory standard on rural plant in rural workplaces. There is an extensive range of practical workplace health and safety information, including hazardous substance and plant safety alerts. Fact sheets and brochures are available from the office and on the Internet. \$50,000 has basically also been made available to support the rural women pesticides awareness program. I could go on for another few minutes, but I hope that indicates to the Committee the Government's commitment to rural workplace health and safety.

The CHAIRMAN: I think we will have one more question from Government members and one more from Opposition members before afternoon tea.

Mr HEGARTY: Minister, I refer to the last dot point on page 30 of the Ministerial Program Statements relating to the 1996-97 performance on the promotion of opportunities for workers to balance work and family responsibilities. Can the Minister detail the 1996-97 achievements by the Government in this area? Also, can the Minister outline the Government's commitment for the 1997-98 year?

Mr SANTORO: I am pleased to again stress to the Committee that the level of funding has increased from \$75,000 in 1996-97 to \$90,000 in 1997-98. Funds were basically provided as a result of a new initiative in the 1996-97 budget. The Work and Family Life initiative is supported by the Queensland Workplace Relations Act 1997, which has as one of its principal aims "helping employees balance their work and family responsibilities effectively through the development of mutually beneficial work practices with employers." Another aim of the Act seeks to respect and value the diversity of the workplace by helping to prevent and eliminate discrimination, including discrimination based on family responsibilities.

In 1996-97, the budget has been utilised to engage a project officer and to fund promotional activities. The DTIR has liaised with stakeholders, including employer and employee organisations, and provided advice and assistance to Queensland organisations and individuals on work and family matters. The honourable member may be interested to know that the department has also been proactive in raising awareness about the positive outcomes for companies and employees in achieving a balance between work and family responsibilities. A publication and poster *Work and Family Life* has been developed. In fact, it will be launched by me on 27 June 1997. I will show it to the Committee. We will be doing something with that on 27 June 1997.

The national corporate work and family awards were held in Sydney on 23 April 1997. A number of Queensland organisations were encouraged to apply. Two Queensland winners were announced. Honourable members may be interested to know that one was the Brisbane City Council and one was our very own Queensland Rail. I congratulate those two organisations on that achievement.

Cooperation with the Queensland Working Women's Service through activities includes the delivery of a seminar presentation and workshop on family friendly agreements. Also, for the DOLAC working party on work and family, the department contributed to the development of a framework for national cooperation on work and family issues, which will include information sharing, work and family projects, and promotional activities. The department also participated in the development of a collaborative research proposal with the private sector and a tertiary institution. The Government's position was developed for submission to the QIRC on 16 July 1997 in relation to the Crown's position on the ACTU of Queensland and the Australian Workers Union of Queensland application to vary the Family Leave Award—State. That position was very supportive of working families.

Mr BRADY: Minister, I refer you to your answer to the last question you received from me when you made what I found to be an incredible statement that when we are looking at the State Budget papers, Budget Paper No. 3, for last year, items that appear in there are on a so-called wish list. Minister, it has been my experience in Government and in Opposition that when items appear in the Budget—and sometimes they have an allocation for planning—that means that they will go ahead and that they are by no means on a wish list; they are actuality and they have to commence somewhere. Do you wish to persist with that nonsense about the wish list? And do you, therefore, put the removal of the \$8m refurbishment of the bayside campus of the Moreton Institute of TAFE, which was in last year's Budget Paper No. 3, in that category as well?

Mr SANTORO: I urge the honourable member not to get too stirred up about any answer that I have given. I am just trying to illustrate simply the fact that money has been spent in the planning process. I am happy to seek to get some detail as to how that money was spent and what point that particular project is at.

The total estimated cost for the expansion of the bayside campus was estimated at \$8m. The project is still in the planning stage. As I stated to the Committee in a previous answer, all projects in the planning phase are removed from the project budgets with expenditure to be met from the planning funds. From my point of view and, I believe, from anybody's point of view, that should be a more acceptable and accountable manner of going about the allocation of funds and the completion of projects. I refer the honourable member to some detail that has just been drawn to my attention by the Director-General. It is the State Budget Paper No. 3, Capital Outlays, wherein an allocation has been made to future planning costs of \$1,606,000.

Mr BREDHAUER: What page?

Mr SANTORO: It is on page 74 "Policy Area—03 Education" under "VETEC" about halfway down the page. So moneys are allocated. I suppose that if I wanted to draw a parallel with something that is going on in my electorate—I remember that, just prior to the last State election, a State Government Minister came out to my electorate and announced that \$35m was going to be spent on some road project within my electorate when, indeed, not even an ounce of money had been put aside in terms of planning, feasibility studies, environmental impact studies or anything else. What this Government is seeking to do is to be accountable by being up front about what it is doing while not denying what the estimated cost of a project is. I believe that honourable members should be happy with that degree of transparency and accountability. I do not know that I can help the honourable member any further. I am happy to get some more detail for him in terms of the expenditure of that planning money to date.

The CHAIRMAN: The hearing is now suspended for afternoon tea. Members should bear in mind that we have a three-hour run then to 7 o'clock.

Sitting suspended from 3.45 p.m. to 4.03 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I gather that we all are refreshed and ready to go. I hand over to Mr Roberts.

Mr ROBERTS: I will ask a few questions about unfair dismissal laws. The Ministerial Program Statements estimate that the number of dismissal applications for 1997-98 will be 1,700, which is down from last year's actual of 1,930. The notes at the end of the table that outlines that on page 37 say that that is mainly due to the provisions of the new Workplace Relations Act. Could you firstly explain the basis of the estimated reduction and also what proportion, if any, of that reduction is related to the proposed regulation that exempts employers with 15 or fewer employees from those provisions of the Act?

Mr SANTORO: I thank the honourable member for his questions, because they enable me to talk about one of the most essential reasons for and philosophies underlying this Government's industrial relations legislation that we put through the House earlier this year. We make no apologies for

showing that the number of dismissal applications will be reduced, because that is the major reason why those amendments were made—to reduce the number of dismissal cases going before the Industrial Relations Commission. I am sure that the honourable member would have received much feedback from small businesses who have basically been saying to people such as me and other members of Parliament that the unfair dismissal laws were grossly unfair to employers as they existed and as introduced by the Labor Party. They allowed an enormous number of frivolous claims to be brought before the Industrial Relations Commission. Some of those unfair actions were regarded to be of a trivial, malicious nature. The legislation seeks to discourage unfair dismissal claims on the basis of triviality, maliciousness and no essential validity.

The other underlying philosophy of the legislation is that it seeks to have parties solve their problems before they become a full blown unfair dismissal case. In other words, there is an intent within the legislation that seeks to have the parties come together as a result of the tightening up of the unfair dismissal legislation and regulations and force them to sort out their differences before they become a full blown unfair dismissal case. As to what number will be affected by the recent amendments that I put through in the Parliament in relation to the legislation affecting workplaces with 15 employees and under and casual employees—I really cannot say because we have no experience. I certainly can give the member a guarantee that we will report very fully to the Committee and the Parliament as experience does become obvious.

I want to stress that this is not legislation that seeks to penalise employees. The type of provision that you are referring to, in my view, does represent a fair go for all. It certainly places the focus on conciliation and there are provisions in there that seek to discourage trivial, malicious actions. For that reason, the dismissal applications are expected to decrease while still having legislation that affords protection to those who need it.

Mr ROBERTS: The Minister did not answer the question, but I will try to get some information some other way. How many dismissal applications have been lodged with the commission so far this year? How many dismissals have been lodged with the commission since the passing of the Workplace Relations Act?

Mr SANTORO: That is very technical information.

Mr ROBERTS: I note that the registrar is here. He may be able to help us.

Mr SANTORO: Would the registrar be able to assist the member? Mr Henneken, would you perhaps like to address the issue?

Mr HENNEKEN: For the period 27 March 1996 to 16 June 1996, there were 382 unfair dismissal cases filed. For the same period this year, 27 March 1997 to 16 June 1997, there were 416 cases filed. As you can see, that is an increase. My suspicion is that the publicity relating to the unfair dismissal provisions when the legislation was changed may

have encouraged a number of people to make application; but I think, as the Minister has pointed out, there are a number of provisions of the new legislation—particularly the focus on conciliation, the focus on the fair go all round, the focus on reinstatement rather than compensation, and the limit on high-paid people getting access to unfair dismissal—that would seem to indicate that, as the statistics settle down, probably the numbers should decline as has been estimated in the Ministerial Program Statements.

Mr ROBERTS: The position so far this year under the new laws, as you have stated, is that there have been more applications than under the previous laws for the same period. The other part of the question was: how many dismissal applications have been lodged with the commission so far this year? I am referring to 1 July 1996.

Mr SANTORO: That information does not seem to be easily available.

Mr ROBERTS: If you can pick out the figures for the periods we have talked about, you should be able to provide the total.

Mr HENNEKEN: The data that we have show that, from 1 July 1995 to 16 June 1996, there were 1,773. For the equivalent period the following year, 1 July 1996 to 16 June 1997, there were 1,866. That is an increase of just under 100, which is about 6% or 7%, I suppose.

Mr ROBERTS: Given that there are more applications in the corresponding period this year than there were last year, what is the basis of the claim in the Estimates that there will be a reduction of 230 over last year? Based on those figures, how is that arrived at?

Mr HENNEKEN: Obviously, the bases are an estimate. They are based in a sense on what I have mentioned before, that the procedures of the legislation or the requirements of the legislation have changed. As I said, there is a focus now on a fair go all round test. There will be from 1 July of this year an exclusion for persons employed by enterprises that have 15 or fewer employees while they are in their first year of employment with that employer. So while they are estimates and they may go up or down, I think the belief of the departmental officials is that the indications are that they should really go down.

Mr ROBERTS: Minister, with reference again to the unfair dismissal laws and the apparent reliance in the Budget papers on these laws to assist in meeting certain performance targets and also with reference to recent unemployment statistics which show that Queensland's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has risen over the past 12 months from 9.2% to 9.7%, given your claims that the changes to the unfair dismissal laws would lead to immediate employment growth, how many jobs do you attribute to this legislation since the commencement of the new Act?

Mr SANTORO: Before I answer your question, could you refer specifically to where I said "immediate" job creation? Could you quote an

interview, an article, a ministerial statement or anything else where I have said that?

Mr ROBERTS: I think the Minister is on the record—

Mr SANTORO: No, you either think or you know.

Mr ROBERTS:—on quite a number of occasions as indicating very clearly that these new laws would lead to employment growth.

Mr SANTORO: That is true.

Mr ROBERTS: What I am asking you is: where is the evidence that there has been employment growth since the passing of these new unfair dismissal laws?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Roberts, let me answer your question in this way. First of all, you have no evidence to say that I said that it would lead to "immediate" job growth. So that is the first one.

Mr ROBERTS: I am saying that you have said that it would lead to employment growth. I am asking you: where is the evidence?

Mr SANTORO: I have definitely said that. I note for the sake—

Mr ROBERTS: Where is the evidence?

Mr SANTORO: Hang on. I note for the sake of the Committee that you have retracted the word "immediate" from your question, because you sought to misrepresent my position. However, you are correct when you say that I believe that these laws will, in fact, lead to employment growth. A few minutes ago I quoted from a media release put out by your former Premier, Mr Goss, which is a very useful media release to quote from because he at least had the grace to acknowledge—which I do not think at this point in time you have; perhaps you will develop it as this hearing continues—that a simple change of Government does not always lead, from a community point of view, to favourable outcomes. I repeat—

"The Premier, Mr Wayne Goss, today said that unemployment would remain a serious problem in Australia regardless of the outcome of the Federal election."

Just because a law changes does not mean that immediately—as you sought to imply—you are going to have a reaction.

As you would be aware, these laws came into operation on 27 March. I believe that there are lead times that are involved in terms of the impact that policies have on macro-economic aspects of the economy such as employment. I can certainly say to you that after we got the legislation through the Parliament, I travelled throughout Queensland and addressed a great number of functions—and the departmental officers also did the same in terms of promoting the new aspects of the legislation—and I can assure you that business welcomes with open arms these laws. They stated that the unfair dismissal laws, as introduced by Labor Governments at a State and Federal level, represented one of the main disincentives to employing people. We as a Government have responded to that.

The laws were so inequitable that former Prime Minister Hawke, in the dying days of the campaign, stated in one of the debates that if he was re-elected Prime Minister—sorry, Keating, not Hawke; they were both the same. I suppose if I had to make a comparison I would say that one was worse than the other, but I do not quite know which way to go. Even Keating acknowledged the need to give business a break by amending the unfair dismissal laws. The previous Government, of which you were a member, refused to do anything about it and we have done it. It is up to business to take up the additional opportunities in terms of incentives. We have done the job. If you are not getting that feedback, I strongly recommend that you go out to the small businesses in your electorate and they will tell you that they welcome these laws.

Mr ROBERTS: Minister, I might pursue that point because I think that there are two distinct issues here. One is the Federal industrial relations unfair dismissal laws and the way in which they were applied by the Federal commission and the State industrial relations unfair dismissal laws and the way in which they are applied by our State commission. At page 30 of the Ministerial Program Statements it states that one of the hallmarks of the Workplace Relations Act is to give a fair go all round—which we have heard ad nauseam about these particular laws. I ask: how many examples or cases in the State commission—not the Federal commission—can the Minister provide which say that, in terms of the application by our commission of the previous unfair dismissal laws, both employers and employees did not already get a fair go all round?

Mr SANTORO: You are looking into the past and I am looking to the future. I suppose, really, in terms of this particular discussion that we are having in relation to unfair dismissal, that is the main difference between us. I again reiterate for your benefit, and I believe that this experience would be supported by the experience of the vast majority of small-business people in this room—there may not be many, but those who are of a small-business background would have to support what I am saying, and I am sure that my parliamentary colleagues would also support me when I say this—that, clearly, the perception by industry and by small business of State unfair dismissal laws—which, as you know, were practically identical to the Federal Labor Government's unfair dismissal laws, and I take your point that there may be some differences in application but the perception in terms of the impact on the motivation of business was there—was such that they stated constantly, and by "they" I mean small business, that they represented a disincentive to employ.

One of the major reasons why the Prime Minister and Minister Reith sought to exclude small businesses with 15 or fewer employees from the application of all unfair dismissal laws is that that perception is very, very strong, particularly among small businesses. As long as that perception is there, their reluctance to make employment decisions will continue. The Government has responded by bringing in legislation on unfair dismissal laws that represents a fair go for all whilst still maintaining the

protections in the legislation for employees who may be treated in an unlawful way by employers.

So this one is a basic point of difference between the Opposition and the Government. I can understand where you are coming from because I believe it is a philosophical position but, from a practical policy point of view, I believe that the Government had no option but to amend unfair dismissal laws whilst still maintaining reasonable protections for employees. I believe that the benefits will become obvious as employment growth within the Queensland small-business sector occurs. That may not be immediate. Maybe it is not to your satisfaction that it did not occur in April, May or June, but these policies will work their way through the economy. I believe that by this time next year you will see the very positive impact of the policies on the economy.

The CHAIRMAN: The time has expired. I call the member for Mundingburra.

Mr TANTI: I refer to the Industrial Relations Program, and I ask: what initiatives are being provided in this budget that will benefit women?

Mr SANTORO: There are many initiatives that are of benefit to women within the Industrial Relations Program. For example, under the provisions that relate to women and enterprise bargaining, the Queensland Workplace Relations Act of 1997 seeks to ensure that agreements do not discriminate on the basis of sex and that the particular interests of certain groups, including women, are well and truly taken into consideration when agreements are being struck. The Workplace Relations Act clearly supports non-discriminatory outcomes for women. Sections 3H and G, which I shall read for the benefit of the Committee, provide for respecting and valuing the diversity of the work force by helping to prevent and eliminate discrimination, and by helping employees balance their work and family responsibilities effectively through the development of mutually beneficial work practices with employers. In my view, the legislation provides women with real choice in the employment arrangements that they may seek to enter into.

Whether women choose a certified agreement or a Queensland workplace agreement, the legislation ensures that their basic interests are protected. For example, the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission cannot certify an agreement if it considers that the provisions of the agreement are discriminatory. In fact, the Industrial Relations Commission must take into account the provisions of the Anti-Discrimination Act. A certified agreement must also satisfy the no disadvantage test, so that there must be no reduction in overall employment conditions. I think that that is also a very useful provision. The terms of the agreement must be explained in an appropriate way, having regard to the person's particular circumstances and needs. Such persons identified in the Act are women, people from non-English speaking backgrounds, people with limited literacy and numeracy skills and, in particular, young people.

The Industrial Relations Commission must also refuse to certify an agreement if the agreement is

inconsistent with the provisions in the Act relating to minimum wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value which is based on ILO conventions. The Act provides for equal remuneration for work of equal value. The objects of the equal remuneration provision give effect to anti-discrimination conventions, the ILO equal remuneration recommendation and the ILO discrimination in employment and occupational recommendation. Similar provisions also apply within the Queensland workplace agreements aspects of the Act. Provision is also made for access to part-time work for women. I believe that those provisions are also very useful.

The CHAIRMAN: In March, the State Government's landmark industrial relations reforms were introduced. Minister, I refer you to the Workplace Information Unit Subprogram, referred to on page 34 of the Ministerial Program Statements, and I ask: will the Minister inform the Committee of the details of his initiatives to ensure that the public understands the new legislation? What support is the department being given in this budget to further this noble cause?

Mr SANTORO: Honourable members would appreciate that in January 1997 the Parliament passed legislation to provide for the reform of the industrial relations system in Queensland. Initial promotions of the reforms commenced in February 1997 through a campaign comprising print and electronic media advertising. This campaign was underpinned by the Statewide promotional activities of the Department of Training and Industrial Relations, including the production of a range of publications, the creation of an information hotline, a series of public seminars and the provision of advisory services. The additional allocation of \$500,000 to the Workplace Information Unit in 1997-98 will be used to ensure that the Queensland public is kept aware of the reforms and the potential for improving the business climate of the State.

In 1996-97, the Workplace Information Unit of the Labour Market Reform Division expended \$595,000 on promotional and advisory activities, including an estimated \$105,000 on print and electronic media advertising. Since February 1997—and I refer to my comments when I have sought to provide the information to a previous question—media advertising generated in excess of 2,700 calls to the free-call hotline, the attendance of over 2,000 people at public presentations, the distribution of over 75,000 publications and the provision of assistance to 300 individual clients. Additionally, the Employment Advocate and the Awards Management Branch have distributed 5,000 employer guides and 9,000 information statements for employees, employer organisations, regional offices and clients.

Obviously, much is planned for 1997-98. A further awareness program and advertising which will highlight the potential benefits of workplace bargaining and options are now available to business operators. That will be undertaken during the year. In addition, a print advertising campaign in early 1998 will remind employers and employees that the award system will be moving towards a minimum safety net of allowable matters effective as from 27 September

that year. The awareness program and advertising activities will also be underpinned by enhanced services from the Workplace Information Unit. The Workplace Information Unit will employ an additional six workplace advisers to be located in Cairns, Mackay, Maryborough and Southport as well as Brisbane. The unit will coordinate the awareness program and the provision of information and advisory services in conjunction with the Employment Advocate and the Awards Management Branch. Collectively, this work force will ensure access to information and advice in all areas of the State. The planned promotional activities of the Workplace Information Unit are designed to raise the awareness of all Queensland employers and employees, obviously not only in the major metropolitan areas but throughout Queensland, as I stated previously.

Mr HEGARTY: Can you outline the initiatives that have been implemented in 1996-97 by TAFE Queensland for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities? What have been the outcomes of those initiatives?

Mr SANTORO: As I mentioned in an answer to a previous question, the principles of access and equity underpin all of the policies of the Government. I am pleased to tell the honourable member that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student enrolments have increased by 767 from 4,950 in 1995 to 5,717 in 1996. This increase was largely due to increased State profile funding being allocated to institutes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific purposes. In 1996, 635 students achieved awards ranging from certificates to diplomas as a result of studies in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander specific and mainstream courses. This represents a 30% increase on the 1995 figures.

Specific initiatives included that of the Barrier Reef Institute of TAFE, which has just established a campus on Palm Island. Mobile training units in the form of specially fitted-out sea containers continue to be used to good effect in the Torres Strait. The Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE recently won a sizeable CES contract to conduct literacy and numeracy programs at Doomadgee in the lower gulf area. Over 130 students are involved in literacy and numeracy programs that have been built into welding, carpentry, cooking, art, music and plant operator courses. Training will also be delivered in a joint venture with the Mount Isa Institute of TAFE, and the total value of the project is \$1.77m. The Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE has won funding of approximately \$200,000 to conduct training for homework tutors throughout the northern peninsula and Torres Strait regions.

The outcomes of a Remote Area Teacher Education Program are also very encouraging. Fifty-one Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students recently graduated from the Remote Area Teacher Education Program conducted by the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE. Justice studies are also very much a part of the training program for people whom the honourable member is concerned about. The Far North Queensland and South Bank Institutes of TAFE continue to prepare Aboriginal

and Torres Strait Islander people for employment in the justice system through the associate diploma in justice studies for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. There were 65 enrolments for these courses in 1996.

Various joint ventures are also occurring between the Southern Queensland Institute of TAFE, the Murgon State High School and the University of Southern Queensland. These joint ventures are slowly but surely being nurtured. For example, the University of Southern Queensland proposes to have six persons from the Cherbourg community begin as candidates for this program and that is proposed to commence in semester two of this year.

Mr TANTI: To what extent has TAFE Queensland supported small business in the community?

Mr SANTORO: These days TAFE Queensland is doing an enormous amount to support small business in the community. Perhaps the best example is that small businesses have been given a voice in helping TAFE to determine what training output they want from their local TAFE colleges and institutes. As a result of that understanding, one of the first initiatives that I undertook as the Minister for Training was the reconstitution in September 1996 of the 40 TAFE college and institute councils for a term of three years. The council membership has been varied from a maximum of 19 members to a minimum of 11 members by maintaining the director, the staff and the student representatives together with eight representatives from industry and the community.

As I mentioned, the changes to the composition of the councils were made in response to concerns that small business was underrepresented on the former council membership. The councils were re-established to maximise the participation of small business in the decision-making process of TAFE. They provide small-business advice and advocacy. The TAFE councils also help to inform the State training profile process to ensure that the delivery of vocational education and training meets local community needs and in particular small businesses' needs.

These days, councils are also beginning to contribute to the decision making associated with resource allocation across the TAFE network. It is appropriate that that occur, because the people we have appointed as chairs and as members of the college and institute councils are outstanding in terms of their small-business expertise and, in some cases, big business expertise. Very capable people are on those committees. These days, with greater frequency, institute and college directors are beginning to use the advice available from those people.

There are also other initiatives, such as the Better Business Centre of the Logan Institute of TAFE, which in conjunction with the North Point Institute of TAFE was awarded a contract to deliver services to women operating or intending to open small businesses at 12 sites throughout Queensland. Training specifications outlined in the tender were developed after consultation with the Queensland

Small Business Corporation. As a commitment to regional and rural Queensland, training will be delivered at sites in Cairns, Mackay, Townsville, Rockhampton, Bundaberg, Toowoomba, Ipswich, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast, Logan, Brisbane south and Brisbane north. Small business has been very heavily involved in the formulation of the modules, which are comparatively short, nationally accredited and supported by resources that can be used in a self-paced manner. TAFE is doing a lot with small business and it will certainly be encouraged more and more by me and the Government.

The CHAIRMAN: That is very good. Can you inform the Committee of what initiatives have been implemented across your department to provide training services to the rural community?

Mr SANTORO: A lot has been done to provide training services to rural communities. For example, we are looking after the interests of the agricultural colleges. I have already covered the role of agricultural colleges and the provision of training, so I should be a little more specific. I commend TAFE Queensland, which has responded to the needs of rural industry by implementing several very important processes. For example, I refer to the establishment of two rural key centres at the Southern Institute of TAFE and the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE, and also the establishment of collaborative links with the Department of Primary Industries, Queensland agricultural colleges, the University of Queensland and Education Queensland.

Rural key centres will coordinate and develop flexible on-the-job delivery strategies, utilising modern communication and learning technology such as Videolinq, the Intranet and the Internet. Funding of \$377,000 has been provided to the key centres to boost flexible learning arrangements and communication and learning technology. Together with profile moneys, this funding will amount to approximately a \$1m allocation to the Toowoomba and Innisfail centres. Rural training will focus on the 25 to 40 year old age group who are owner/managers/operators in rural industry.

As I have mentioned previously—and I will not go into any more detail now—a Rural Industry Task Force was established. I have detailed the good work that that task force is doing. I have mentioned the good work that the Queensland agricultural colleges, with the very strong encouragement of this Government, continue to do. I particularly wish to take this opportunity to say thank you to the members of the board. In spite of the very difficult times that board members go through on the land—and we know that rural Queensland has suffered enormously over the past 10 years, be it because of low commodity prices, floods or fires; rural producers have been doing it hard—I commend and acknowledge the tremendous contribution that they make to the running of agricultural colleges. They keep turning up to meetings despite very adverse conditions on their properties. They keep lending their skills, knowledge and expertise to the running of the colleges. Last Friday, I was in Dalby. I

can say that they are very pleased with the amount of attention they are getting. We will continue to give them that level of attention.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from Government members has expired. We now move to questions from Her Majesty's Opposition.

Mr BRADY: How can there be, as claimed by the Treasurer at page 14 of her Budget Speech, an additional 14,000 Government-funded places in Vocational Education and Training when the total appropriation for Vocational Education and Training this year will fall by some \$28m?

Mr SANTORO: There are many ways that I can answer that question. However, if you have a look at the total budget for the VET system, you will see that there is a very good explanation as to why the total VET system budget has decreased by \$26m. I can give you the detail, if you wish. Firstly, the State Government has injected an additional \$23.3m into the VET system through new initiatives and growth funding. The commitment by this Government—as compared with the funds we are getting from the Federal Government—is a clear one. We have put in an extra \$23.3m.

In relation to the Commonwealth Government, there have been reductions. The increase that I have just talked about has been offset by reductions in funding from the Commonwealth due, for example, to closures of labour market programs, including the Aboriginal Employment Strategy and SETI, and a reduction in capital works funding. Another reason why you have the \$26.217m reduction that you have mentioned is that there has been a reduction in the carryovers, for example, from 1996 through to 1997-98, of \$28.397m. Those carryovers represent unspent funds from previous years. Therefore, in my view and in the view of my officers, that should be excluded from any comparison with the funding of the VET system this year. If you wish, I can go through the individual items. I will not go through all of the new initiatives.

Mr BRADY: I am concerned about your claim regarding an additional 14,000 Government-funded places. We both agree about there being a diminution in funding. With \$26m to \$28m less funding, how can you provide an additional 14,000 Government-funded places?

Mr SANTORO: For the very simple reason—and I am happy to elaborate further if we run out of time—that the VET system is becoming more efficient. In other words, as the system becomes more efficient the cost of purchasing a student contact hour decreases. Even if we acknowledge the point that there has been a decrease of moneys allocated to VET, which I have hopefully explained to your satisfaction, as the cost of student contact hours decreases we therefore can buy more student contact hours for fewer dollars. This is part of the continuing debate—and I hope that I get some questions about it—that is occurring in relation to enterprise bargaining. I am sure that Mr Bredhauer will put his head up in relation to that very shortly. But if you have a look, for example, at the Ministerial Program Statements, the whole aim of the Government initiatives in training is to make the

system more competitive so that the same dollar buys more student contact hours. There may be a bit of a philosophical difference in terms of the way the system has been made more efficient, and I will accept the nodding of the head as perhaps being a confirmation that that is the case, but the system—

Mr BRADY: Not from me.

Mr SANTORO:—has to be made more efficient. About six or seven years ago there were only 20 or 30 major private providers for training. These days there are over 900. The public is expecting that the taxpayer dollar be spent in a more efficient and more productive manner. As a Government we are seeking to respond to that pressure but, as I am sure I will be given the opportunity to explain shortly, we are seeking to respond in a sensitive and inclusive manner. I am happy to elaborate on that statement if you wish.

Mr BRADY: Talking about student contact hours—is it true that TAFE will fall short of its student contact hours target in 1996-97—the year about to finish—by about 4%, that is, by more than 2 million student contact hours? Why has this occurred?

Mr SANTORO: Are you referring to any particular line item that we may be able to look at?

Mr BRADY: No, it is just material that we have gleaned from all the information available to us. The question is: is it true that you will be down 4% on student contact hours—2 million student contact hours?

Mr SANTORO: The statistics that we have produced in the Ministerial Program Statements indicate that the 1996 estimated measures in units in terms of Government funded student contact hours is 30,053,060 and the estimated actual is 29,517,500. In the absence of your being able to refer to a line item, I honestly cannot answer your question other than by referring you to the figures I have just quoted. But perhaps Mr—

Mr BRADY: You might take that one on notice.

Mr SANTORO: I am happy to take that on notice. The Director-General just suggested—and I will quickly finish on this—that the decline in Commonwealth funding may have had an impact on that, but I will take that on notice and provide you with information as soon as possible.

Mr BRADY: In view of the fact that in April 1997 the budget for the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE was more than \$3m in the red, what are the sources of the funds to make up the deficit? Were there any loans involved and, if so, when do those loans have to be repaid by the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE?

Mr SANTORO: I will ask Mr Sielaff to gather his material and his thoughts to answer your specific questions because I think that we are able to do so today—if not precisely, certainly in a fairly accurate manner. Just in relation to far-north Queensland, let me inform the Committee of what I have told the public of far-north Queensland. The problem in far-north Queensland goes back six years, and in my view the problem that was identified, the almost \$3m

shortfall, was due to senior management instability where that institute for almost six years did not have a permanent institute director. That had real consequences in terms of—well, the member for Cook shakes his head. He can ask me another question if he wishes, but I am going to tell the story because it is the true story. What happened was that as soon as this Minister became aware of that problem some time in March/early April, we put in a package which involved the financial package that you were referred to—and Mr Sielaff will talk about that in a minute because I have no objections to providing you with the information—we sent in a relieving acting director, one of our more successful relieving acting directors, we put in an audit team made up of crack financial people who very quickly sought to make sense of the financial circumstances of that institute, and we also moved very, very quickly to appoint a permanent director for far-north Queensland. That has occurred. The new director, Mr Hackett, has taken up his role. He is a former director of one of the TAFE institutes in Tasmania. From all reports he has been well received because he represents the first full-time permanent director who has made a commitment to the Cairns area, and we are very happy with that.

Mr BRADY: I think we are running out of time. I am a bit keen to know about whether they have to repay a loan.

Mr SANTORO: I will now refer the specific answers that you require to Mr Sielaff.

Mr SIELAFF: In terms of the funding and the financial difficulties in far-north Queensland, we have been able to accommodate those or to manage those by the reallocation of funds from within the department, and it will not be necessary for those funds to be repaid. There were funds which we had allocated in terms of the department which we had set aside for things like legal problems which may occur, and those funds in fact were used.

Mr SANTORO: If you want more detail about that, you can take part of one of my questions. I am happy for that to occur.

Mr BRADY: No, it is all right. Which other institutes in TAFE, if any, will not meet their budget objectives for 1996-97? Will you provide details of the extent of that and how those deficits have been overcome?

Mr SANTORO: You would be aware that there are a number of institutes that make up the TAFE system of Queensland. What I can do for the members of the Committee is to assure them, as I have done in one of my prepared answers, that TAFE will certainly not exceed its budget allocation as a whole system for 1996-97. The only institute that at this point in time we believe will exceed its budget is the institute that we have just discussed. The other two institutes where we identified some difficulties were South Bank and the Central Queensland Institute of TAFE. Some difficulties were identified there; I do not mind admitting that to the Committee. In relation to those institutes, as indeed in relation to the Far North Queensland Institute of TAFE, I publicly commend the efforts of the new Deputy Director-General, who has done an enormous amount

of work with the local institute directors to help to rein in the overexpenditure in those two institutes. The honourable member may in fact recall that in Opposition I gave the TAFE system a bit of a hard time, and in particular I mentioned South Bank, but then South Bank is so monolithic in terms of its operations that it would be a very complex, a very difficult institute to run. But I am told that despite its unwieldy and dispersed nature and the complexity of the business, it is going to come in on budget. If it does not, I will be very happy to inform you personally as well as the Parliament. But remedial action has been undertaken. The other leadership that has been displayed at South Bank is that of the community council. I do not say that in a trite manner. Mrs Ann Garms, who is the chairman of the committee, has been working very, very well with the acting director, the Deputy Director-General and the other senior officers to gain the trust, the confidence and the support of the staff to help resolve what was potentially a deficit situation.

I suppose the point that I am making now reinforces and backs up the point that I made in answer to a previous question from the Government members, that is that there is enormous business and management acumen that resides within the people who make up our TAFE advisory councils. I think that, in the case of Southbank, it honestly proves the wisdom of the decision to reintroduce college and institute councils, but not just to put cronies or to put mates on—I saw the smile of the honourable member for Cook as I mentioned Mrs Garms—but to actually put people with real management—

Mr BREDHAUER: I am not getting under your skin, am I?

Mr SANTORO: You are not getting under my skin. I am making sure that you understand that I understand what you are thinking—and you are wrong.

Mr BRADY: You could very well be wrong about that.

Mr SANTORO: We put on these institute councils people who actually can make a genuine contribution in the financial and administrative management of colleges and institutes.

Mr BRADY: He is smiling about something else; you are wrong.

Mr SANTORO: Tell me what you are smiling about and I will tell you if you are right.

Mr BRADY: Is it true that TAFE Queensland has budgeted \$150,000 a year to employ consultants to manage the outsourced information technology function?

Mr SANTORO: There is certainly an amount allocated for that purpose. Mr Sielaff, would you perhaps like to provide Mr Braddy with some more detail on that one?

Mr SIELAFF: I cannot provide you with details of the actual amount of money proposed in terms of consultants.

Mr BRADY: I am more interested in the principle.

Mr SIELAFF: In terms of the outsourcing project, there will be a need to involve particular expertise in various aspects of it. The outsourcing project, as you may be aware, is not only about the oversight of the computing hardware and the computing systems, it is about the development of business information systems and the improvement of systems within TAFE. So consequently it is possible that, within the overall budget for that particular project, some consultants will be employed. The overall project is aimed, though, at taking that broader focus to outsourcing.

Mr BRADY: In light of that answer, how many staff are to be made redundant as a result of the outsourcing of TAFE information technology?

Mr SANTORO: In relation to that question, I again refer to my officers. I am not aware of the specific detail, but it is hopefully being got out at the moment.

Mr SIELAFF: There is no intention in terms of making people redundant as a result of the outsourcing project. The contract is still being finalised, but part of the requirements of the outsourcer is to take on the staff. The arrangements in terms of the details of the conditions under which those people will be employed are still being negotiated, but the principle which was espoused in the accepted tender was that people would be able to transfer to the outsourcer with improved employment conditions.

Mr HEGARTY: Can you detail the initiatives implemented by TAFE Queensland in the last year to achieve efficiencies and what impacts they have had on program delivery?

Mr SANTORO: I thank the honourable member for his question. One of the first projects that I undertook in terms of training was to seek to have TAFE achieve efficiencies in terms of program delivery which would improve its competitiveness within the training market. If you have a look at the level of savings or maximum funds to direct service delivery and other strategies, I believe that TAFE under some very difficult circumstances has done very well in that area. In 1996-97 TAFE Queensland has taken major steps to improve its productivity and efficiency through the implementation of measures which have resulted in reductions to outlays from the Consolidated Fund in the order of \$6.771m.

The changes in the delivery and support for vocational education and training at TAFE Queensland I believe are leading to a more productive and competitive TAFE system, one which is becoming increasingly client focused in response to the demands of the competitive training market. The productivity efficiencies I believe will genuinely lead to TAFE becoming more competitive. The strategies are focused on ensuring that maximum funds have been made available to support direct delivery of training in institutes. In 1996-97, \$278.4m, or 67.8% of the direct TAFE Queensland budget, was allocated to the delivery of Government funded VET courses as determined by the State training profile. That budget ensured the continued availability of important Statewide support services for students. These included, for example, library

network, job placement officers as well as leading edge technology and training delivery.

Also among the strategies implemented have been measures to optimise the use of resources across institutes and to also reduce the cost of delivery, which will lead to better quality programs through consolidation of both physical and intellectual expertise. As an example, the certificate in carpentry and joinery has been transferred from the Brisbane Institute of TAFE to the North Point Institute and will use the newly constructed carpentry and joinery facility located at the Bracken Ridge campus. The ability to optimise class numbers through the use of large facilities is one example of what I would term good rationalisation.

As a further means of achieving efficiencies, TAFE Queensland institutes are also developing centres of excellence, allowing them to specialise in particular areas of training. Two quick examples of where we are seeing that happen is at the North Point Institute of TAFE, which contains a shift towards business administration and economic areas, and in Far North Queensland which has an increasing emphasis on tourism and hospitality.

Mr TANTI: Your MPS refers to your Working Better Together initiative for TAFE Queensland. I now ask you to detail the outcomes and how the initiative has benefited TAFE.

Mr SANTORO: It was an initiative that I instituted with the intention of providing a morale boost to the staff within TAFE Queensland, who really had been looking forward to the type of initiatives that eventually came from them. I suppose I acted as the catalyst in implementing a ministerial initiative, but in the end the credit for those ideas clearly belongs to the management and to the staff of TAFE who contributed to the initiative. I have spoken about the reconstitution of the 40 institute and college councils and I will not take the Committee through the outline of that initiative again.

However, another key element of the initiative was the establishment of eight quality improvement project groups to examine issues that really were of concern to TAFE staff and issues which arose out of the 1996 employee benchmark survey. The group addressed key issues such as teaching and learning, staff tenure and mobility, educational team work, positioning the TAFE business, corporate decision making and communication staff skills, currency and renewal, devolution, and staff performance and recognition. I received a final report containing 75 recommendations which are currently being implemented right throughout TAFE Queensland. Also TAFE Queensland's national business activities have been reviewed and the resultant consultant's report is now subject to consideration and implementation by myself.

All of the issues that I have mentioned really could devolve into a long answer, but basically a communication strategy is being developed which provides a framework for improved corporate and local level decision making and communication, an increased skills base amongst TAFE staff through a system-wide investment of 2% of salaries in professional development—that particular initiative

was a need that came screaming through, that staff were looking for far more assistance in terms of professional development than what they had been getting—and a reduction of red tape through a task group of directors who have to date eliminated 15 administrative instruction policy advice circulars. An integrated policy framework has also been established to reduce complexity, prescription, cost and inefficiency associated with expensive red tape. Also—and this is very close to the heart of TAFE people—there is increased tenure for TAFE Queensland staff with 77 staff members translating from temporary to permanent positions as at 10 January 1997.

That figure may seem a little bit low but I can assure you that it is a very good start to making sure that one of the most important requirements of an apolitical permanent Public Service, that is, increased tenure security, is instilled within TAFE Queensland. We are very pleased to be a Government that is keen to observe that particular aspect of the Westminster system of public service in practice.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I refer you to the last dot point on page 7 of the MPS and ask you to outline the benefits to business flowing from the budget decisions to reduce compliance and notification costs for construction projects and workplace registrations.

Mr SANTORO: This initiative again displays a commitment by the Government to small business. We made some commitments to small business in relation to workplace registration requirements. We said that they would be changed from the beginning of 1998 to exempt low-risk workplaces and workplaces with fewer than three people from workplace registration fees. As I have already informed the Committee, based on the 1995-96 workplace registrations, this exemption will encompass over 71,000 Queensland workplaces and, of these, 48,000 will no longer be required to register. I am sure that all honourable members will have received many representations from small businesses within their electorates about that registration fee. It is not a large fee, but I think that it clearly indicates to small business the commitment by this Government to reduce unnecessary charges and red tape.

In order to address the significant underreporting of construction work projects and the avoidance of fees, it is proposed to integrate collection of these with those of the Building and Construction Industry (Portable Long Service Leave) Authority. Unreported workplaces cannot be targeted for divisional services, including auditing. In addition, avoidance also contributes to a non-level playing field in competitive tendering processes through the price disadvantaging of tenderers who comply with notification and fee requirements.

I suppose that we can also talk about the benefits of new collection arrangements, including reduction in building and construction notification fees. This arrangement will have a number of benefits. It will increase compliance with notification requirements, provide better workplace health and safety coverage of what is a very high-risk industry,

free workplace health and safety inspectors from administrative and revenue collection requirements and enable a reduction in the fees charged for non-civil construction work from \$2 per \$1,000 of value to \$1.75. Again, I could keep on talking ad nauseam about this, because I do regard it as one of the more imaginative and one of the more helpful Government initiatives in the budget for small business, but perhaps we can move on to another question.

Mr HEGARTY: I refer to page 11 of the Program Statements and your Working Better Together initiative with regard to the reconstitution of the TAFE college and institute councils. How do these activities of the councils benefit the business of TAFE Queensland?

Mr SANTORO: Again, I appreciate the question. Obviously, there is a lot of interest on the Committee in terms of the TAFE councils. Perhaps this gives me the opportunity to talk a little about how the councils have operated. You can have councils and not give them powers, and you can have councils and not give them access. But when we reconstituted the advisory councils and invited serious business people to become members of the councils, what we wanted to do was to actually say to them that their advice would be taken seriously.

Two of the requirements that I made in terms of the councils was that, first of all, they would need to meet with the Minister on a six-monthly basis. The meetings with this Minister have not been token meetings where you bring all these people down, say, to Brisbane for a day or two, as we have already done on two occasions, the Minister appears for half an hour and then disappears. I have made a commitment of days and weekends to make sure that the input of the local community, as represented by the institute and college chairs, was listened to directly not only by me but also by the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General and the institute directors and college chairs. So they had, I believe, for the first time—by "they" I mean the councils as represented by their chairs—very real direct access to the Minister, who very much appreciated the advice that he was getting from them. I did not always agree with what I was hearing but, nevertheless, I am sure that they were satisfied with the process.

The other initiative in terms of the reporting and the accountability function that I sought to introduce into the process was a strict quarterly report that has to come to me from the institute councils as well as the college councils. The reports need to be countersigned by both the institute and the council chairs as well as the institute and college directors, so that if the institute chairs are saying something that the college directors and institute directors, for example, do not particularly like, they are nevertheless going to have to sign off on it—and the Minister, as well as senior management, including the Director-General—and the Executive Director for TAFE can then ask the awkward questions.

So what you have there, I believe, for the first time since the concept of institute and college advisory councils came into existence is that the role of those particular councils has been very much

valued and very much taken seriously. For example, during the most recent meeting of council chairs, I received advice that they believe that institutes should be heading towards institute-based enterprise agreements. The reason we delayed the establishment of the overall framework was that I wanted to hear the views of the local community. I found that advice invaluable and, as recent public debate has indicated, I accepted that advice as well as the advice of others in terms of enterprise bargaining at an institute level within TAFE Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: I thank the Minister in relation to permission to form a TAFE community campus on the Capricorn Coast. I inform him that we have had our public meeting. Nominations closed this Friday, and we will have it all up and running early in July. I now hand over to the member for Kedron.

Mr BRADY: How many TAFE staff, on an institute-by-institute basis, are to become redundant in 1997-98? If you prefer it, you can give that to me on notice.

Mr SANTORO: I do not believe that we can give you that figure, because the staff reductions that have been identified within the Ministerial Program Statements are indicative only and they still have to be applied across the TAFE system. The major reason that those reductions appear is that we are realigning the business of TAFE. The adjustments that we are making in terms of TAFE Queensland are adjustments that I believe have been let go over the last five or six years and were necessary. When you have an increasingly competitive environment that is developing within the training market, clearly TAFE Queensland needs to adjust. So I will take your question on notice and we will make the information available to you as it becomes available.

Having said that, and without wishing to sound as if I am deliberately trying to take up your time—a reduction in TAFE numbers does not necessarily relate to a decrease in enrolments and a decrease in, say, student contact hours. If you have a look at the MPS, you are looking at Government-funded student contact hours, for example, decreasing from 29,517,000 to 27,488,000, but there is no reason why TAFE Queensland cannot pick up, under the user choice provisions within our budget, under the competitive funding provisions and other provisions, the bulk of that business. I believe that is possible and will take up that slack.

If you have a look also at Government funded enrolments—and I do not mind saying that the words "Government funded" are probably a bad description, because that means straight out of consolidated revenue—in the end, Government makes available either by user choice principles or competitive funding all of the money, so ultimately it is the taxpayers. The Government, as their agent, makes available those funds. Despite what some people are saying, I believe that TAFE Queensland still has within its ranks the most qualified and the best providers of training and skills in Queensland. I again reiterate my commitment and that of the Government to a strong public provider of training. There is no

way that I can accept the nonsense that the unions are peddling that we are out there to destroy TAFE. Everything that I am doing seeks to make TAFE more competitive in a competitive market, with a view to making sure that it gets as much of that Government-provided money as possible, whether it is consolidated revenue money or user-choice competitive tendering money.

Mr BRADY: In the document, DTIR Budget at a Glance, we are told that 23,790 apprentices and traineeships are expected to commence in the coming financial year, an estimated 19% more than last year. Of those, how many are apprenticeships and how many are traineeships? Is it not true that apprenticeship levels are dropping and that the increase in the figures masks the fact that three to four-year apprenticeship intakes are falling and that the increase really lies in the area of one-year traineeships?

Mr SANTORO: Firstly, let me without acrimony reject your statement that we are seeking to mask anything. You will find that, in the last couple of years of your Government, when the Labor Minister for Training and Industrial Relations talked about increases in apprenticeships and traineeships, those figures were not presented to the Parliament and to the Estimates committees as one figure. I suppose the then Ministers were also cognisant of the fact that, during your time in Government, apprenticeship numbers were decreasing. You will recall that I asked many a question on notice and without notice trying to probe the reasons as to why apprenticeship numbers were declining under your Government. I freely acknowledge that this Government has inherited the challenge of arresting the decline in apprenticeship numbers. I am not trying to run away from the problem. I have the problem that you gave to me.

The major way that we are seeking to address the problem in terms of apprenticeship numbers is by making apprenticeships more relevant to industry. That goes to the core of the activities of the Year of Training. I have heard a few members on your side of the House say, "This Year of Training is not serious; it can't be serious because apprenticeship numbers are declining." I refute that assertion for the very simple reason that we are in the process of implementing, for example, the MAATS system, which finds its origins, but with State support, at a Federal level. It seeks to make traineeships and apprenticeships far more flexible and far more conducive to the needs and requirements of small business. We are also amending the VET legislation in Queensland with a view to giving the system a more small business and industry friendly apprenticeship system. As I have mentioned in answer to previous questions from both your side and my side of the Parliament, we are seeking to involve industry and particularly small business, which is the major employer of apprentices and trainees, in how those changes are to take place so that they can have confidence in the system.

We have a problem with apprenticeships because the apprenticeship system is out of date. The traineeship system was encouraged

tremendously by your side of politics when you were in Government. I acknowledge that was a good move, because traineeships by definition are far more flexible and they suit small businesses far more than apprenticeships because of their greater flexibility. We encourage the maintenance of that flexible traineeship system, that is, the sharp, short courses that up-skill people, but we need to fix up the apprenticeship system. We are very keen to do that.

I wanted to give you the philosophy behind the moves. I will supply to you the figures in great detail. I will take that part of your question on notice. We are not trying to mask anything. We are just doing what you did. We are trying to fix the problem that we inherited from you.

Mr BRADY: How many of the increase in traineeship numbers in 1997-98 involve traineeships where there is no off-the-job training? How will you ensure that the training occurs on the job? Is there an increase in Training Queensland staff to maintain training quality?

Mr SANTORO: You identify, and rightly so, a very important emphasis in the development of training across Queensland and in Australia, that is, the component that sees the imperative of switching from a classroom, say, in TAFE, to the workplace. In terms of what the State Government has done this year in its Budget, I am very pleased that the Government has made a very real commitment to giving people access to on-the-job training. For example, the Government will make an additional \$6.5m available to provide an additional 3,790 trainees. That additional money will be specifically directed at an employer assistance program, which will assist employers, particularly small-business employers, directly with the employment and training of trainees in work-based traineeships. That is an indication of the Government's appreciation of your concern and also industry's concern. Small-business operators have been calling for a long, long time for the ability and the opportunity to train trainees directly. They have been enormously discouraged by the necessity brought about by legislative, regulatory and administrative decision making to have to send their trainees and apprentices away from workplaces and into places such as TAFE and more formal places of learning.

I assure you that the Government understands the requirement of industry to have the training undertaken in workplaces. From a Parliament point of view, all parties should support that, because if we can use the up-to-date capital and equipment that small businesses have directly in their workplaces, formal training institutions such as TAFE Queensland do not have to upgrade equipment every year, which can be a very costly process. We know that consolidated revenue is having more and more demands placed on it every year. The other important point is that the trainees and apprentices will be trained by industry-based trainers on up-to-date equipment. That must be good in terms of giving industry back a trained product that it really wants and can use within the workplaces.

Mr BRADY: How is it possible to justify more than 40 staff in the Purchasing Branch of Training Queensland to administer the competitive funding program and user choice? Is that not a case of replacing the TAFE monopoly with a purchasing bureaucracy and a new overhead imposed on vocational education and training in Queensland?

Mr SANTORO: I suppose that the best way to answer that question is to say that we are looking at a change in the way that the training market has been run. For example, previously, half a billion dollars was made available to the training market out of consolidated revenue. That went mainly to TAFE Queensland as a big block. \$500m went straight over to TAFE, which would divvy it up to colleges and institutes to spend as they wished. That was basically the way it used to happen under your Government in the initial years and certainly under previous Governments. I am not trying to score a political point when I say that. It was given to the TAFE administrators and the senior managers of my department, and it was distributed.

Competitive training principles were introduced by your Government. The competitive training agenda is not a creature of my Government, and I give credit to people like you for showing initiative in that very important area. It was Hawke, Keating and Goss who started seeing the value of the competitive training market. The reason they succumbed to the pressure was that the public wanted that \$500m-plus to be spent far more wisely. In reality, the only way that you can spend the money wisely is to introduce elements of competition into the way that that money is spent.

For example, this year the competitive training budget—and I am now going to the core of your question with a specific answer—is about \$110m, which is a big increase on last year. There will be over 900 private training providers as well as TAFE Queensland that are going to seek to access that extra competitive funding. Therefore, you literally need an increased number of people in a transparent and accountable manner to administer those extra funds. I believe that that move towards a purchaser-provider model is perhaps best reflected in this part of my Ministerial Program Statements.

The advantages must be obvious: there will be greater clarity in the specifications of the outputs that are to be delivered; there will be increased efficiencies, greater accountability, increased transparency in the decision-making process and a reduction in the conflict of interest. As I mentioned previously, when TAFE Queensland got all of the budget, there were enormous allegations as to all sorts of people getting moneys because they knew the Director-General or the Executive Director of TAFE or whatever—not that I am making any allegations against anybody current or past. This new purchaser-provider model seeks to introduce the transparency in the accountability that is necessary.

Mr BRADY: Minister, how much did the department spend on recruitment search consultants in 1996-97? For example, I note from the material given in answer to a question on notice that more

than \$25,000 was spent in the case of the search for the Deputy Director-General and there was \$20,000 spent for another position. I presume some moneys were also spent in relation to some of the WorkCover positions. Can you please give the totals and the details of that?

Mr SANTORO: Absolutely. Mr Braddy, while the officers are getting for you some specific information—I think most of which should have been provided already in that comprehensive answer to a question on notice that came from one of your members—let me say that, obviously, we are in the process of restructuring. For example, we are in the process of introducing new initiatives such as the Enterprise Commissioner and the Employment Advocate. I remember Ms Bligh, the member for South Brisbane, asking me a question about an advertisement that we placed via a consultant. One of the major reasons why we did so is that when we placed an ad in relation to, I think it was, the Deputy Director-General—the traditional type of Public Service ad—the response that we got was really very, very limited. We thought that out there in Australia—and eventually we went Australiawide—there must have been many more people who would be interested in becoming part of a very dynamic department and a very dynamic team such as the department for which I was the Minister. So we advertised Australiawide and the response that we got was absolutely exceptional.

Whilst the costs are being determined for you—because obviously we have no problems with letting the Committee and, through the Committee, the Parliament know—we got some very good people who applied for the job. I wish to say to you at this Committee hearing that we are going to continue that practice of getting professionals to help us identify the best apolitical talent that can assist the Queensland Public Service, and certainly my department, to move into the 21st century. I do not intend to discontinue the practice, even though one of your members in the Parliament was critical of it. I think that there was some imaginative reference to me as the being chairman of the board or something like that, which I think we all had a bit of a laugh about. I would never discourage any Government or Opposition from, in fact, pursuing the method of recruitment that we, in fact, have.

Mr BREDHAUER: It hid the fact that was a Public Service position?

Mr SANTORO: What was that, the member for Cook?

Mr BREDHAUER: I said that it hid the fact that it was a Public Service position.

Mr SANTORO: Can I say this to you: we did not seek to hide it. When people rang up and expressed an interest, they were told. So we were not trying to hide it from anybody. Despite the fact that we told them that it was a Public Service position—maybe it is because they realised that they were going to be working for a department such as the Department of Training and Industrial Relations and under me—they still kept their interest and they applied in droves. We got a very good Deputy Director-General out of it.

Mr BRADY: Are you going to give me the detailed figures?

Mr SANTORO: We are going to continue with that practice. They are all in the question on notice that was asked by the Opposition, so we will refer you to the question on notice.

Mr BRADY: They are scattered through it.

Mr THATCHER: Mr Braddy, there are only three: Morgan and Banks, which was indicated there, and that was for the executive search for the institute directors, \$35,836; Northern Recruitment for the executive search for the position of Deputy Director-General, which was \$25,332; and Hines Management Consultants, which was a search for a non-public servant, which is a total of \$81,168.

Mr SANTORO: I do stress that there are more coming.

Mr BRADY: In relation to the position of Deputy Director-General—and this is in no way personal—previously the position did not exist. You have downsized the department in that the workers' compensation function is no longer part of the department and clearly TAFE is getting fewer staff, unfortunately. Therefore, why did you create the position of Deputy Director-General in the first place—in a department that was becoming smaller and with fewer duties to carry out?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Braddy, the thing about the Department of Training and Industrial Relations is that I wake up in the morning and I honestly do not know on any particular day—

Mr BRADY: We all wake up in the morning.

Mr SANTORO: It is a pretty good sign, is it not? I reckon that it beats being at the back of the Courier-Mail. I agree with you there. The point that I make is that it would have to be—and I think you will have the good grace to acknowledge it—one of the most complex departments that you will ever come across. When I became the Minister, I looked around and it was practically the only department that did not have a Deputy Director-General. There are a stack of departments that are much simpler, which are much more streamlined, and which deal with functions far less complex than industrial relations, workers' compensation, training, TAFE, trading hours, workplace health and safety. I could bore everybody silly here by just going—

Mr BREDHAUER: You will, too.

Mr SANTORO: You reckon that I will. Do not tempt me. The point that I am making is that it is an incredibly complex department that interfaces with one of the key sectors of Queensland, and that is industry; you have an organisation such as TAFE, which is an almost half a billion dollar organisation; over 7,000 full-time people and God knows how many other part-time people and overall the department has 22,000 people scattered right across Queensland; institutes and colleges; and I have talked today ad nauseam about the regional offices and I have talked ad nauseam about the necessary complexity if we are to service rural and regional Queensland through the departmental structure. I had a Director-General come in, and he would have

had less hair on his head if we had not gone around giving him some assistance in terms of managing some fairly unwieldy business. How the previous Ministers managed, I do not know. Perhaps that is one of the reasons why I inherited such a stuffed-up situation. I had an almost moribund—

Mr BRADY: They were smarter.

Mr SANTORO: You reckon they were smart, do you? I suppose that is why the votes came towards us at the last State election and at the Mundingburra by-election.

Mr BRADY: I do not think so.

Mr SANTORO: The point I am making is that when you analyse the enormous range and complexity of the functions that the senior managers are expected to perform, it is a very complex department. We have undertaken a huge reform agenda. We have reformed workers' compensation, we have reformed industrial relations, we are in the process of rewriting the Workplace Health and Safety Act, we are in the process of rewriting the VETEC Act and we had a close look at retail. Have I convinced you that we need a Deputy Director-General. Can I say that she is doing a great job and may the good Lord preserve her in good health for many years to come.

Mr TANTI: Minister, you touched on the Year of Training. Can you give more details on how the Year of Training will contribute to improving Queensland's skills base?

Mr SANTORO: The Year of Training is perhaps the most exciting project that I have got going this year, without in any way wishing to diminish the importance of, for example, what we are doing in terms of workplace health and safety. It is a very exciting part of my responsibility this year. Unless we get training right in this State, we are not going to have a competitive work force that will enable us to move the Queensland economy into the 21st century. For example, we are rewriting the VET legislation, and because I have already spoken about it I will not go into it in too much detail. The VET legislation simply needs rewriting because small business—business generally—tells us that it needs to be brought up to date in terms of their requirements. We will be implementing a great range of initiatives in the Year of Training. We will continue to implement the Working Better Together strategy, which I have spoken about in terms of the TAFE initiative. We want to promote a training culture.

Professor Wiltshire looked at what people in Queensland think about training. He found that many people, particularly those from the small-business sector, did not appreciate that training was an investment. The Commission of Audit, established by the Government soon after it took office, clearly demonstrated that Queensland really lacked a training culture; we need to promote one. We will spend dollars to create logos and slogans that will interest people in TAFE Queensland and in the value of TAFE. We make no apology for that. Basically, we want to look at how we can match the aspirations of small business with the reality of delivering training. We are also developing a vocational education and

training disability strategy to increase the number of people with disabilities who are accessing training. That number is woefully low in Queensland, more so than in many other States. We need to look at that aspect of the training market.

As I have said in answer to a previous question, in what I regard as a very personal issue, at Federal ministerial councils I am pushing the other State Ministers to take what I consider to be a more up-to-date and realistic view of technology and the value of defining "capital" beyond the traditional definition of bricks, mortar and buildings that make up TAFE colleges. I am urging them to adopt a more imaginative definition of "capital" so that we can use technology in a more flexible way to deliver training, for example, into rural and regional Queensland. The implementation of the Modern Australian Apprenticeship and Traineeship System, the Small Business Training Strategy developed by the new Small Business Advisory Committee appointed earlier this year, the opening of the one-stop apprenticeship shops—it is all very exciting and I could talk ad nauseam about it. I hope that that gives you some idea of the excitement that I feel over the Year of Training. You will hear a lot more about it; if you are sick of it now, you will be well and truly sick of it by the end of the year.

The CHAIRMAN: On page 31 of the MPS, you refer to the protection and maintenance of the State industrial relations system from the Federal jurisdiction. Why is that necessary? What provisions have been made in the Budget in this particular area?

Mr SANTORO: The 1997-98 Budget allocation to fund legal representation is \$150,000. I have never apologised for the fact that I am a strong State jurisdiction Minister. I am very pleased to acknowledge that there is bipartisan support for that. I believe that the unions, the employer organisations and, in particular, the small businesses of Queensland prefer to have an industrial relations system that is clearly embedded within State jurisdiction. We need to have funds available to, from time to time, indulge in the vigorous protection of State jurisdiction. Unions will make application to attain Federal awards, particularly where jurisdiction issues arise. Test cases will be needed to ensure that the legislation operates in a way that is consistent with the objectives of the Federal and State Governments. Also, freedom of association issues arise, and they need to be looked at within the various State and Federal industrial courts. Therefore, an allocation has been made for that.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that the Queensland Government has been successful in those cases which have already been decided. They include bulk coal ports, printing in Government agencies, and Cairns Airport. Some cases are still pending and are under appeal, including Queensland Government departments and agencies, port authorities, the furniture industry, agricultural colleges and River Cats Ferry Service. The department will seek unashamedly to prevent Federal incursion into the State industrial relations system to enable the State to control its activities in matters of constitutional and industrial law, maintaining

Queensland industrial relations jurisdiction, resisting industrial claims seeking Federal award coverage over the Government, its agencies or their employees and influencing and regulating the economic, industrial and social outcomes for the people of Queensland.

There are 36 cases with the potential to either give Federal unions coverage of Queensland workers or to remove Queensland workers to Federal jurisdictions. At the present time, one matter is before the High Court and five are before the Federal court, which was previously known as the Industrial Relations Court. I hope that that gives the Committee sufficient faith in the willingness of the Government to protect State jurisdiction.

Again, I acknowledge that bipartisanship does exist. Despite opinions to the contrary, and I know that some people will not like to believe this, I have amicable discussions with unions and union officials practically every day of my ministerial life. The most pleasant discussions relate to those where we agree on jurisdictional matters. I am pleased to assure people that I am happy to continue that attitude.

Mr HEGARTY: Minister, I refer to the Schools Development and Recognition Program, and I ask: what strategies has the Government adopted to support and promote adult and community education?

Mr SANTORO: I am pleased to answer that question, because it is a very progressive and imaginative decision by the Government, reflected in the Budget, that the honourable member refers to. The \$1m Budget initiative in the 1997-98 financial year will give an extra 5,000 Queenslanders, from rural and remote areas in particular, the opportunity to participate in adult and community education or, as it is commonly referred to, ACE programs. This is in addition to the funds which provide for an equivalent of 100,000 student contact hours already allocated under the 1997 State Training Profile.

The good thing about this initiative is that the funds are going to be made available through a competitive tendering process. This will enable private providers in particular, and also TAFE Queensland providers, to access funds for markets that are very thin. In other words, they will be able to deliver a very wide range of training products under the ACE banner across Queensland. Community-based organisations will be able to gain VETEC registration and this will also enable them to gain access to those funds. They will be able to offer their clients accredited programs leading to nationally recognised qualifications. In other words, these are not mickey mouse programs; they will be nationally recognised programs. The program will help participants to gain further access to higher education and employment.

The ACE program will basically cater for skills deficits in local and regional areas; I cannot stress that point enough. It will support and encourage local communities to identify, respond to and meet their educational needs. As the Committee will gather, I am quite excited about this program, which was very well received by the Budget Committee. It

again demonstrates the commitment of the Government to rural and regional Queensland.

The Adult and Community Education Council will be established by my department in 1997. While the ACE system does not seem to have a central reference point, the ACE council will draw a membership that will give focus to that particular sector. It will build on the support for the sector that has already been established through Queensland's commitment to the national policy for adult and community education. On Sunday, 1 September, I will be launching the Adult Learners Week. We hope to give the whole concept and practice of ACE a profile through the launch and the involvement of community organisations.

Mr TANTI: What assistance is the Government providing to employers, particularly small business employers, in the employment and training of trainees?

Mr SANTORO: In some ways, I feel that I have answered that question. Let me take the opportunity to refer again to the Employer Assistance Program and how it will work. If my memory serves me adequately, in my previous answer I spoke about the allocation and the principles. For the benefit of the Committee, I will be a bit more specific about how the Employer Assistance Program will work. Basically, employers who employ a trainee in a work-based traineeship which allows for all of the training to be delivered in the workplace will be able to choose a registered training provider to assist them in the delivery of the training. The registered training provider will be paid a fee to visit the workplace and to develop a training plan for the trainee, to monitor the training delivered, validate assessment and also to issue qualifications. In other words, there is a very close monitoring and purposeful evaluation role.

The Employer Assistance Program will be a partnership arrangement between an employer, trainee and a training provider. Employers will contribute to the training effort by the provision of training resources, human and physical, from their workplace. Trainees will be contracted to achieve the competencies prescribed in the traineeship agreement. Where necessary, the program will also fund the acquisition of skills which are unable to be provided solely by the employer. The experience to date from a pilot program indicates that employers will, on average, require assistance in training delivery in 65% of cases. In addition, the average total amount paid to providers for the delivery of traineeship training will be less than the amount paid currently for the delivery of the traditional on-the-job, off-the-job traineeship format.

The training is designed to assist all sections of industry, with particular benefits for small business. In other words, the whole emphasis is on assisting small business. Under certain circumstances, in particular small businesses, the absence of a trainee for a block of college attendance is a burden that some employers are not prepared to accept. Those employers have expressed dissatisfaction with the existing block-release system of training and even frustration at not being able to employ trainees

because of those rigid arrangements. Traineeship training products have been developed that allow trainees to be delivered 100% of their training in the workplace. In turn, that will allow small businesses to participate in quality training arrangements that suit their circumstances. Mr Braddy, I am adding this information in answer to a question that you asked in terms of what the Government is doing to get trainees into workplaces. I hope that that part of this answer has also been of assistance in answering your previous question.

Mr ROBERTS: I have some questions about the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. What is the status of the report prepared by Dr Leivesley, particularly in the context of the purchaser/provider arrangements as recommended by the Commission of Audit? What recommendations from this report will be implemented by the department and when will it be made public?

Mr SANTORO: I must admit that, when Jim Kennedy delivered his report into the workers' compensation system in Queensland, I was taken by surprise when he recommended a review of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. As the incoming Minister, I had absolutely no intention of undertaking a review of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety because all of the reports to me, as the Minister, basically indicated that there was reasonable and bipartisan satisfaction with the way in which the division was operating. I was surprised when Commissioner Kennedy recommended a review of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. We did so because we decided to implement the Kennedy recommendations in total. I did not want to be accused by those on the member's side of the political fence in particular of fixing up workers' compensation to suit employers and, to the detriment of employees, not looking into a recommendation to review the Division of Workplace Health and Safety.

We took Jim Kennedy's advice. We appointed Dr Sally Leivesley, an eminent person who is very capable in the area of workplace health and safety, as a consultant. I also wanted to make sure that she had working with her a bipartisan reference group made up of employers, union representatives and professional workplace health and safety representatives. I wanted the results and recommendations of Dr Leivesley to be bounced off the reference group. Dr Leivesley delivered her report to the chairman of the reference group, my Director-General, in late February. I then said to the reference group, "Those are the recommendations of the consultant. Will you now please tell me what you want in terms of the implementation of those recommendations?"

The reference group has now completed its consideration of the Leivesley report and the reference group's recommendations will come to me. I wish to stress that it is a bipartisan, professional, industry and union-based committee. It will be making recommendations to me. As the Minister responsible for workplace health and safety, practically everybody who made recommendations to the Leivesley review and to the consideration of

that review by the reference group has sent me their submissions. I think some of the thrusts of the submissions are reflected within the budget. However, the final decision about the implementation of the recommendations is two to three weeks off. I would like to prepare a Cabinet submission. Once I get Cabinet approval, I undertake to make it available to the Parliament via a ministerial statement. It will be about four to six weeks before I come back to the Parliament with that.

Mr ROBERTS: One of the key parts of my question was whether there are any difficulties with this report in the context of the purchaser/provider arrangement recommended under the Commission of Audit.

Mr SANTORO: Concurrent with the delivery of Dr Leivesley's proposal, my department announced an intention to realign its functions to provide better quality services and improve accountability. The proposed realignment in accordance with the purchaser/provider model recommended by the Queensland Commission of Audit is expected to provide, in my view, benefits to DTIR clients commensurate with those expected from the model advocated by Dr Leivesley. I am aware that she wanted a move towards a purchaser/provider model. As somebody who is carefully studying what is happening within my department, you would be aware that we are moving towards a purchaser/provider model. However, we are going to seek to achieve that without in any way diminishing the strength of the interface between the stakeholders within the workplace health and safety industry and the department.

I think that I now know from where you are coming. If what I am thinking is correct, I will allay a concern that has been expressed to me by people such as Nick Boss and other union representatives that, somewhere along the line, the introduction of a purchaser/provider model may diminish meaningful contact between the stakeholders and the departmental officers administering the workplace health and safety programs. I can assure you that that is not the intention. We want to maintain an intimacy and a level of access to the officers and administrators of the workplace health and safety programs that enables feedback. A workplace health and safety system will not operate in the best interests of workplace health and safety unless there is an intimacy of exchange. This is a concern that has been expressed in particular by the unions and some employers. I am happy to provide a guarantee that, as we move towards a purchaser/provider model across the department, including within the Division of Workplace Health and Safety, that interface and intimacy will be preserved. I hope that satisfactorily answers your question.

Mr ROBERTS: I take it from your answer that the Leivesley report does not present any difficulties in respect of the purchaser/provider model. I now wish to move to the costs. In the answer to question on notice No. 10, a table outlines that the cost was \$90,000 to date. Is that the total cost of the preparation of the Leivesley report, or is it more likely to be in the vicinity of about \$180,000-odd, plus

another \$120,000 in terms of departmental support, including that of the executive director, John Hodges?

Mr SANTORO: The \$90,000 relates directly to the fee paid to Dr Leivesley. There are other associated costs. However, according to the advice that I have, they amount to approximately \$180,000. I am able to confirm that that is in fact the case. Obviously, that would have involved things such as meeting costs and travel. One of the requirements that I put on the consultancy was that it not just be a Brisbane-based consultancy; that, in a very real sense, the stakeholders had to be consulted. That required as a direct instruction by myself that the consultant travel in regional and rural Queensland, and that occurred. There were costs associated with that consultancy role that I have just described. There were also costs associated with the secondment of officers and other costs which are involved with a review. I am happy to take that question on notice and provide you with fine detail, if you so wish.

Mr ROBERTS: Included in that would be the actual costs of departmental support.

Mr SANTORO: I am happy to provide you with that specific detail on notice. I will be as fulsome as all the information that is provided to me, and I will ask for the full information.

Mr ROBERTS: Did the Leivesley report recommend that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety be corporatised and that the executive director become the Commissioner for Workplace Health and Safety?

Mr SANTORO: That was certainly one of its recommendations. I have thrown that back to the reference group and asked the reference group to provide me with its opinions on the whole Leivesley report, including that recommendation, which I am sure you will agree is a fairly dramatic and, some people would say, drastic recommendation. I will just wait and see what the reference group recommendations say to me before making a decision as to what I take to Cabinet. As I said in answer to a previous question asked by you, I did not perceive a great amount of difficulties in the way that the Division of Workplace Health and Safety was run. Some of the problems that were identified by Kennedy related to permanency issues—to the number of acting positions and the shifts and the frequent changes of senior staff from one position to another—and to the way that the various advisory committees were being serviced.

I would have thought—and I suppose I am giving the Committee the benefit of an initial opinion that I have without necessarily declaring a final attitude or decision on the matter—that those sorts of problems did not require the corporatisation of the Division of Workplace Health and Safety and the creation of, say, a Workplace Health and Safety Commissioner. I think that perhaps the strengthening of the role of the advisory committees, the better servicing of the advisory committees and perhaps more streamlined management structures may be a way to consider the reform of the division, and again I am acting without the benefit of the advice of the

reference group. I am not sure that corporatisation was the way to go.

Another point that I will elaborate on—and it is of interest to anybody who has a long-term future in Government, particularly someone as young as you who may be in Government in 20 years' time—there has been much discussion in terms of, for example, amalgamating the Divisions of Workplace Health and Safety and Workers Compensation. Most other States are moving towards that. Most other States started moving in that direction under Labor Governments, so I am not suggesting anything radical, I would hope, from your point of view. But it would be far more difficult, for example, to amalgamate the Division of Workplace Health and Safety if it was corporatised with a quasi corporatised structure such as the Division of Workers Compensation. That is one of the reasons—not necessarily the major reason, but one of the reasons—why within me at the moment there is perhaps a little bit of reluctance to seriously consider that recommendation.

Mr ROBERTS: Again with reference to the division—are all general manager and SES positions in the Division of Workplace Health and Safety having their position descriptions rewritten by July, and will you then spill all of those positions?

Mr SANTORO: You will find that as a result of the departmental restructure the senior positions within the department will be redefined, and they will, obviously, be advertised. I want to stress, though, that as this process of restructuring of my department is occurring, you will appreciate that it is occurring without any visible acrimony, without any visible gnashing of teeth. I would hope that one of the major reasons why that is occurring is that the Director-General, the Deputy Director-General and our senior managers are working very, very closely with all staff, but particularly with the senior staff who will be directly affected, in what I would describe as a very genuine consultative manner. I am very grateful to the senior officers who are sitting next to me and some of whom are behind me for the very constructive way they have approached this matter. It is a big department, there are a lot of people, and a lot of mischief could have been created in terms of the restructure. But I am grateful for the way that they and the staff have gone about embracing the need for change. I think that everybody realises that there is an enormous need for change.

The Director-General gave me this idea, so I will not steal it from him because I think it is an original idea that illustrates the dilemma that I faced when I became the Minister of what was a very complex department. The Director-General likened my department to a collection of silos where you basically had a Division of TAFE, a Division of Training Queensland, a Division of Industrial Relations and a Division of Workplace Health and Safety. The silos never really talked to each other, even though the silos were vitally concerned with providing service, particularly to the business community, to the economic base of Queensland—basically providing economic, industrial and workplace health and safety advice to the economy,

if I can put it in that broad sense, but yet there was not that cross-fertilisation of ideas, of policy development and of structural reform that really should have been occurring.

I have to be honest with you: I thought that the whole process of restructuring that you have touched upon in your question was going to be far more traumatic than it has been. The people behind me should really appreciate that as the Minister I am very, very grateful for the very mature way that it has been handled. My commitment is that we will handle the sensitive issues of redundancies and redeployments and appointments in an apolitical, merit-based manner—in the way that, for example, we handled the restructuring of the labour market programs in last year's budget, where most people have been looked after, and hopefully that is appreciated by everybody, including the Opposition.

Mr ROBERTS: In the Ministerial Program Statements there is no direct reference to an intention of the department to abolish the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. Why is there no reference to this significant proposal? Does the Government not run the risk that this move will signal to the community that it regards workplace health and safety as a second-order issue?

Mr SANTORO: I cannot accept the conclusion that you draw from your reading of the Ministerial Program Statements, and I will tell you why: because the functions are not going to change. There will still be programs which will have the workplace health and safety content in there. With respect, I cannot see how you would draw that conclusion, particularly when, as I stated in answer to a previous question, this is the first Government in five or six years that is actually increasing the budget for the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. I remember coming to this Committee hearing last year and being criticised for bringing forward what looked at the time to be a reduction in the budget for the Division of Workplace Health and Safety. I think that you might have been one of the people who criticised me.

I tried to explain to the Committee that the reason why that reduction occurred last year was that there were major items of capital and major one-off items that had been included in the 1995-96 budget which were not included in the 1996-97 budget which showed a nominal decrease in the division's budget. I deliberately made the decision on advice—and I took a lot of advice—not to go overboard with the budget for the division last year because I knew that we were in a review process subsequent to the Kennedy report making its recommendation that we should have a look at the structure of the department. But once I got a feel for what was coming out of the Leivesley report and what was coming out of the reference group recommendations, mainly based on what the stakeholders were telling both the consultant and the reference group, I then made the very deliberate decision to increase the budget for the division to the point at which, without again wanting to sound too political, I can claim that this Government is the first Government in five or six years to be increasing

in real terms the budget of the division, where we are putting in 26 extra field staff and where we are putting in extra inspectors.

That is not making a political point, but it is the reason that I say no, we are not sending out a bad signal to the community. What we are doing by having the type of budget and the type of programs that are reflected, particularly in the area of workplace health and safety, is ensuring that the community will have every confidence that we are fair dinkum about workplace health and safety. For example, we had to advertise nationally to get somebody in Emerald. We could not get anybody even after we advertised nationally. I then had to make the decision to increase the status of the job to pay more so that we could get somebody in Emerald. If that is sending out a signal that we are not interested in workplace health and safety, I might as well resign my Ministry position now because I will be regarded as an abject failure in my area. I am sure that not even you would admit that.

Mr ROBERTS: In the 1995-96 annual report, it is said that TAFE Queensland intends to increase its proportion of funds in the competitively tendered segment of the vocational education and training market to 65%. The 1997-98 Ministerial Program Statements reveal that TAFE Queensland won only 57.2% of funds allocated under competitive funding arrangements. What are the reasons for this significant shortfall in performance?

Mr SANTORO: That is what this Working Better Together initiative, that is what the enterprise bargaining initiative is all about. There is no doubt that the training market is becoming increasingly competitive. There is no doubt that the reason it is becoming increasingly competitive is that there are a lot of more training providers coming into the market. As I said, the increase in private training providers is phenomenal. We are used to thinking of The Office run by Sarina Russo or the academy run previously by Lorraine Martin and these days by Kathleen Newcombe. We tend to think of those big monolithic private training providers which are the largest in the State, but right across Queensland including in regional centres, which have been traditionally serviced by TAFE, we have an enormous growth of private training providers. They are very competitive.

With the assistance of TAFE Queensland, we are trying to make TAFE more competitive. That figure reflects TAFE Queensland's intention to become more flexible and by becoming more flexible, to become more competitive. The whole idea of enterprise bargaining at an institute level is not about cutting costs, it is about adopting flexible work practices that will enable our teachers, our tutors and our ancillary and support staff in TAFE Queensland to provide a competitive product. If they do not provide it, the public of Queensland just will not cop it, that TAFE Queensland provides an uncompetitive product, because there will be people who will shift out of TAFE Queensland into the competitive market if they are offering a better quality product.

I suppose the statistics in the Ministerial Program Statements reflect the confidence that the

management of TAFE by working together with the staff of TAFE have in the type of reform that this Government is seeking to introduce. We are not seeking to introduce it against the wishes of the staff at an institute level. That is a furphy that has been put around by people who should know better, because in the end it will be the staff of Queensland TAFE at an institute level who will have to vote on a bargain, on an agreement—call it whatever you want—that will be put to them by the local negotiating groups. It is at that stage that I believe that people in TAFE Queensland will see the sense of what has been done. We have not been reducing their salaries, conditions and wages in an overall sense, but we have been trying to introduce flexibilities that will make them more competitive and more successful in getting competitive funding.

Mr ROBERTS: The Minister did not address the question I asked which was: what are the reasons for what is an 8% drop in the targeted performance from 65% down to 57.2%, but I will go on to another question. On page 14 of the Ministerial Program Statements, it states that a public benefit test is to be undertaken on TAFE. Can you outline what factors will be taken into account during that public benefit test?

Mr SANTORO: Clearly, the public benefit test will need to address all sorts of issues including, I would suspect, the community service obligations of TAFE Queensland. One of the reasons I strongly favour—and I cannot stress the point sufficiently—the maintenance of a strong public training provider is that there are certain community service obligations that need to be included within the consideration of any funding of a public training provider. The issues that you are addressing relate to competitive neutrality, and I am sure that all honourable members, particularly those opposite who introduced the National Competition Policy in this State and across Australia, will appreciate that competitive neutrality is a key policy element of National Competition Policy agreements. It basically refers to the process of removing any advantages and disadvantages that Government businesses incur as a result of the Government ownership. That is a two-way street.

How often do I go to talk to private providers and they talk about the enormous advantage that TAFE Queensland has, particularly in terms of its critical mass in terms of buildings and Government support? Yet, you go and speak to TAFE and they say, "If only we had the flexibility that the private providers have", which of course is the heart of the debate that is going on in terms of enterprise bargaining, that is, to introduce flexibilities not even at a college or campus level, but at an institute level.

The Queensland Treasury policy statement lists TAFE Queensland as a candidate for reform in relation to its commercial activities of competitive tendering for publicly funded programs and full fee-for-service activities. In response to that, DTIR has formed a competitive neutrality steering committee that was charged with the first stage of identifying the advantages and disadvantages that accrued to TAFE Queensland as a result of its Government

ownership. I am advised that a draft report is being prepared for this identification stage, and the steering committee will report through the Director-General to myself on this matter.

The next stage to be undertaken this year is to undertake, as you have stated, a public benefit test which will analyse the competitive advantages and disadvantages identified and to determine whether or not competitive neutrality reform should be applied to TAFE and, if so, what level of reform should apply. I hope that that is an adequate answer to your question. If you want more, I am happy to make an officer available to you after the Committee hearing to go into more detail.

Mr BRADY: I understand that the Government members are waiving their rights to further questions. I have one block of questions that I have prepared.

Mr SANTORO: Since when did that happen? I want to have an extension of time.

Mr BRADY: You can stay back with them after school, Minister, and talk to them. I understand that the draft departmental restructure for TAFE makes provision for two general managers at SES 2 or 3 level. What can the justification be for such a proposal introducing problems at that level to have two of them competing with each other? Is it realistic or is it a misprint?

Mr SANTORO: What you see is actually an accurate reflection of the intention in terms of the restructure at TAFE. When the proposal was put to me by my Director-General, I asked the same question that you just asked me and I had to be convinced. I should stress right from the word go that I did not take much convincing once the logic was put to me. As I mentioned to the Committee in a previous answer, the TAFE Queensland business is very complex. You have an Executive Director such as Stan Sielaff who, if I feel sorry for anybody in my department, I really feel sorry for. I do not wish to be gratuitous or facile when I say that because it is a very complex business. You have 17 institutes. How many colleges do we have, Mr Sielaff?

Mr SIELAFF: Sixteen.

Mr SANTORO: Sixteen institutes and how many colleges?

Mr SIELAFF: Sixty campuses.

Mr SANTORO: You have 16 institutes in a decentralised State such as Queensland. Previously we have addressed questions of financial accountability, overblown budgets, executive directors of institutes who have not been replaced on any permanent basis for God knows how many years, and I particularly refer you to the situation in Cairns—the business has been so big, \$500m plus, so complex and so dispersed that what we need is really the collaborative, compatible approach that has been developed under this restructure. I do not see it as a competitive structure that we are setting up. I certainly hope that, under the current structure that we have for TAFE, we have not moved down to a level which, for example, reflects the Victorian experience, where institutes and colleges are at each other's throats competing with each other. I believe

that we have a compatible structure that will assist, under a broad and consistent policy structure and direction, the running of the TAFE business.

I suppose that is my answer to your question. I will not elaborate, because you may have other questions to ask about the issue. I think it is an imaginative approach that will help to better manage a very complex, geographically dispersed business. That is the best answer that I can give you. It is worth a go. It is my view that, under the previous Government, and even under this Government, the TAFE business can be better run. We will see how it works. It should be worth a go.

Mr BRADY: I refer you to expenditure for TAFE in all Queensland colleges and ask: what funding is being made available for justices of the peace (Qualified) training courses in the TAFE system and what funding has been allocated to private providers for training of justices of the peace (Magistrates Court) in all electorates across Queensland? What funding is being set aside for the training of justices of the peace in the rural and remote areas of Queensland, and will Walker Pender solicitors be the preferred training providers?

Mr SANTORO: The honourable member for Murrumba, Dean Wells, has asked me several questions on notice in relation to that. I cannot recall the detail that I gave to him.

Mr BRADY: Perhaps you could take that on notice.

Mr SANTORO: Yes, if you do not mind. In relation to Walker Pender—from memory, that particular firm, on a competitive tendering basis, seems to get quite a bit of that business. I am happy to give you all the detail. I am just not on top of that one at this stage.

Mr BRADY: How much was spent on hospitality in 1996-97 by the department, the Director-General and VETEC?

Mr SANTORO: Do we have those figures available? If there was a lot spent, it certainly was not spent on the Minister. And I want to know why, if that is the case!

Mr THATCHER: We do not have VETEC with us. My own entertainment expenses from 1 July 1996 to the current time are an amount of \$789.60. As far as the department as a whole—I would have to defer to Mr Hooper.

Mr HOOPER: For the department for 1996-97—this is estimated to 30 June—it is \$604,973.

Mr SANTORO: If the Director-General was depending on that amount of expenditure to keep weight on, he would be a much thinner person than he is now.

Mr BRADY: The department obviously makes a contribution.

Mr SANTORO: We are happy to provide that detail on notice.

Mr BRADY: How many staff are employed in your office who are actually on the departmental payroll as distinct from the ministerial payroll?

Mr SANTORO: I have employed three liaison officers to assist me to perform my ministerial functions. I should say that I commend the professionalism with which those officers have undertaken their duties. I thought that, given the complexity of the reform that I have had to undertake as a result of coming to Government, and because of the complexity of the department and the type of reform that we were putting through, I would take on three liaison officers. I think that they reflect the same number as those who were employed in the combined ministerial offices under the previous Government. You may recall that Minister Foley was the Minister for Industrial Relations. I think he had one liaison officer. Mrs Edmond may have had two. I will take some advice on whether that is correct. I do not want to mislead the Committee in any way. Am I correct when I say that, Mr Hooper?

Mr HOOPER: I would have to check. I think it was two.

Mr SANTORO: Under the previous Government it might have been two.

Mr BRADY: Do you have any other staff who are departmentally paid?

Mr SANTORO: No. All staff members other than the three I have mentioned, who were seconded from the department, are all being paid by the ministerial program budget. I need to say, too, that I intend to continue to maintain liaison officers for two reasons. One is that I appreciate the advice that I am able to get from the department via their tenure within my office. Secondly, I also believe—and I stress this—that in an apolitical manner those officers in turn were able to enhance their own appreciation, skills and knowledge of the department. From speaking to them, I think that they appreciate the opportunities for learning in those positions.

Mr BRADY: What departmental money was expended on refurbishment, fit-out, furniture and security in and around the offices of yourself and the Director-General? What was the total expenditure in relation to all of those matters: refurbishment, fit-out, furniture, security and the like in and around your office and the Director-General's office?

Mr SANTORO: While that detail is being put together, I will just mention to you that, when I moved into my offices, they were very cramped in terms of the number of people who were employed by the previous Minister. With my willingness to take on liaison officers, we literally had to reorganise the office. If a workplace health and safety inspector had come in and noticed the way that my ministerial office was operating, I reckon that I would have been closed down. So I wanted to make sure that if I was going to ask people to do quality work under some fairly extenuating circumstances, particularly relating to the pace of reform, I wanted them to be comfortable. So we eliminated a boardroom which was, in my opinion, generally underutilised, and we expanded the office so that people had comfortable conditions in which to work.

In terms of my own ministerial office—the previous office was set up in an adversarial role,

where I sat at my desk and everybody sat opposite me. I got my desk extended so that I could have conferences with my senior officers rather than looking like a schoolmaster lecturing the people in front of him. I do not know how much that cost. We can get that for you. I got new couches. The ones that I inherited looked as if it had been well and truly—I receive a lot of people in my office, other Ministers, directors-general, ambassadors and God knows who else, and I wanted to make sure that I had decent couches, which I gather that we got minus sales tax. Somebody in my office negotiated a good price, anyway. It will be there for the next 10 to 20 years for whoever follows me—if anybody is going to follow me.

In terms of security up the front—we do not employ guards. I think that I am so loved that nobody would want to knock me off. The point that I make is that we have not gone to extremes in terms of security. Nevertheless, we established a counter to make sure that people did not start walking through to ministerial offices and the Director-General's offices. In terms of the actual figures, which is what I think you really want, they are not available. We will undertake to give them to you. I will take your question on notice. I will not let you down in terms of providing you with the full information.

Mr BRADY: I understand the Government members do not wish to take up the time allocated for them. I have a final question. In the figure that you are going to provide on notice, will you make it clear whether that includes the \$68,156 identified by the Minister for Public Works and Housing as having been spent on redesigning your office?

Mr SANTORO: Do you mean the total office?

Mr BRADY: When you give me the figure for refurbishing, fit-out, furniture and security for yourself and the Director-General, will you make it clear whether that \$68,000 that the Minister for Public Works has already said in Estimates hearings was spent on redesigning your office is included in the figure?

Mr SANTORO: I will give you all the information that is available. We are happy to oblige.

Mr Chairman, there was a question asked about the cruise ship. I wonder whether the Committee may be interested in some information. I am advised that \$2m has been provided by DEETYA to fund training for 340 trainees for the cruise operation. For the benefit of the Committee, I stress that DEETYA is a Federal department. Training is being coordinated by a Victorian TAFE college, the William Angus College. It is delivering it directly. DTIR has not been involved in any way.

Mr ROBERTS: I have one quick question, which you may need to get information on. There is a significant increase in funding allocated to the Workplace Information Unit. How much funding has been allocated towards educating both employers and employees about their obligations and rights under the new unfair dismissal laws?

Mr SANTORO: Mr Henneken, can we talk about unfair dismissal laws specifically or do we need to give a general answer to that?

Mr HENNEKEN: There is no specific allocation for advice on unfair dismissal laws, but the Awards Management Branch, which includes the Wageline service, provides a considerable amount of advice to people ringing up about unfair dismissal laws. There are brochures available on the legislation. If they are not running a training program at the moment, they have run training programs in the past. There will be training programs in the future on unfair dismissal. The information available in that area is not in any way being diminished.

Mr SANTORO: Does that answer your question?

Mr ROBERTS: I was wondering whether there was a specific allocation towards that project.

Mr SANTORO: There is not.

The CHAIRMAN: The non-Government members are one minute under the agreed time allocation. That is very commendable of them. We have at least 70 questions that we could ask here, but I do not think we will worry about it.

Mr SANTORO: I am available to the Committee for as long as it wants me to be available. We can extend time, if you wish.

The CHAIRMAN: At this point I would like to sincerely thank everybody for taking part in the hearing. I thank everybody for their cooperation. I thank the Opposition for being one minute under and

us for not pursuing all that we have in the interests of time and commonsense. There being no further questions, that concludes the examination of the Estimates of the expenditure of the Department of Training and Industrial Relations. I thank the Minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance. I also thank the Committee members, Hansard, research staff, caterers and attendants for their valuable contributions to the Estimates process. That concludes the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 4 June 1997. I declare this public hearing—

Mr SANTORO: Before you declare the meeting closed, may I say thank you to my senior officers and their back-up officers for the assistance that they have afforded to me, as well as all members of my ministerial staff and liaison officers for their assistance in helping me to prepare for this Committee hearing and enabling me to be of assistance to Committee.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you Minister. With the way you have spoken today, I offer a public invitation to come to the Capricorn Coast to meet my new TAFE council. I am sure that you will do very well with them.

Mr SANTORO: As soon as I approve it, I shall do that.

The CHAIRMAN: You have approved it.

Mr SANTORO: Have I?

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much.

The Committee adjourned at 6.25 p.m.