

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

Mr P. D. Purcell (Chair)

Hon. J. Fouras	Mr G. E. Malone
Mr M. J. Horan	Mr L. J. Springborg
Mrs L. D. Lavarch	Mr G. J. Wilson

**ATTORNEY-GENERAL, JUSTICE AND THE ARTS****IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. M. J. Foley, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts

Ms J. Macdonnell, Director-General

Mr R. Newton, Director Financial and Asset Services

Ms S. Mackie, Acting Executive Manager, Cultural Delivery Unit, Arts Queensland

Dr K. Levy, Deputy Director-General

The Committee commenced at 9 a.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee B now open. I welcome the Minister, public officials and members of the public who are in attendance today. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 1999, the area set out in the Sessional Orders.

The organisational units will be examined in the following order: the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts will be examined from 9 a.m. to 12 noon; the Minister for Police and Corrective Services will be examined from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; and the Minister for Emergency Services will be examined from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

I remind members of the Committee and the Minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning will be given at the expiration of those time limits. If you are coming down to the wire, you will be warned. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. If you think it will add to the question, by all means ask for an extension. The Sessional Orders require that at least half of the time be allotted to non-Government members. I ask departmental witnesses to identify themselves before they answer questions so that Hansard can record that information in the transcript.

In the event that those attending today are not aware of the fact, I point out that the

proceedings are similar to those of the Parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In that regard, I remind members of the public that, in accordance with Standing Order 195, strangers, that is, the public, may be admitted or excluded from the hearing at the pleasure of the Committee.

I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, would you like to make a brief introductory statement and then my colleagues on my left, the Opposition members, will have 20 minutes to ask questions.

**Mr FOLEY:** Thank you, Mr Chairperson. The Budget for this year includes a number of important initiatives designed to address problems confronting our system of justice and problems and opportunities in the area of the Arts. Significantly, the 200 or more people in prison at the moment for non-payment of fines represents a major challenge. For that reason, we have allocated \$20.7m over two years for a system to keep fine defaulters out of prison and to recover those funds. That is good economic sense and it is good humanitarian sense.

For people with an intellectual disability or with a decision-making disability generally, we have allocated \$1.5m for the establishment of a guardianship tribunal. This is designed to respond to the needs of people with a disability and the needs of their families, to make a much more accessible and user-friendly way of dealing with decision making in that area.

With regard to the crisis in legal aid that has been caused by the unscrupulous slashing of funds by the coalition Federal Government, we have boosted legal aid funding by a total of \$5m, that is, an extra \$2.5m in this Budget and an extra \$2.5m in last year's Budget, in order to respond to the right of citizens to have access to justice.

With respect to the position of children, we have sought to put in place funds to assist in the implementation of the Child Protection Act. This Act is the responsibility of another Minister, but the issue requires a whole-of-Government response. We need to do better in our justice system with respect to children.

With regard to the problem of drugs that is challenging our community, we have allocated \$1m over three years within this portfolio in order to work together with the Departments of Health and Corrective Services so that we can trial a drug court to make a better response to break the cycle of crime.

With respect to the challenge facing the higher courts, we have allocated an extra \$1.5m to information technology. With respect to the Director of Public Prosecutions, we have put in place a system for the provision of cadetships for law students, to give them some opportunity. Those cadets will be selected on merit. Indigenous students in particular will be encouraged to apply.

In the area of the Arts we have a number of important initiatives, including the \$5m that has been set aside for the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre, which is part of the overall initiative with regard to QCC 2000. We have a number of significant regional initiatives, including the enhancement of the Regional Arts Development Fund. This reflects a strong commitment on the part of the Government to supporting regional Queensland in its desire to have access to the arts and to express itself in its own special cultural and diverse ways. Across a range of measures, we have sought to enhance opportunities for young people in the arts, so that we affirm the value of young people and give them an opportunity to obtain jobs in the arts and music industries.

Those are some of the important initiatives designed to assist in bringing art to the people. Part of that also entails a commitment to public art, as 2% of the capital works of Government buildings, subject to certain exemptions, are devoted to public art. That is all about trying to make sure that the ordinary person in Toowoomba or Townsville has access to art, and that it is not just the province of a gallery that is tucked away in the capital city or the regional cities. It is about trying to ensure that the public has ownership of public buildings and their precincts.

Our emphasis has been to bring art to the people and to recognise the fact that this is a very diverse State. That raises questions of equity, and it also raises questions of the cultural diversity and strength that underpins Queensland culture. As a Government, we are trying to do our best, notwithstanding the shameful underfunding by the Commonwealth coalition Government of the arts and, in particular, orchestral services. Both in the area of justice and in the area of the arts, we are battling against a Canberra bureaucracy that does not want to know about the problems

and challenges that we are facing in Queensland. We have sought to address those through a number of important budgetary initiatives.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before I let my colleagues on my left loose, if anybody has a mobile phone, turn it off or we will drop it in a bucket of water. No mobile phones will be used in here.

**Mr FOLEY:** That reminds me of the trial by water in the old days. Our justice system has moved on from that.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My first question relates to the Anti-Discrimination Commission. I commend the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner, Karen Walters, and her staff for the great job that they do. I refer to page 2-7 of the MPS. The MPS indicates that the commission invested \$750,000 on 29 June 1999, which is due to mature in 1999-2000. What was this investment? What is the expected return to the commission from this investment? From which program within the commission did this funding come?

**Mr FOLEY:** While we are turning up the details of that, I can tell you that for a number of years now the commission has sought to relocate from its former premises in the State Law Building where it was placed by the previous Government. The commission saw this as a compromise of its independence. It has used part of the savings that it has made in order to help fund a transfer out of the State Law Building, where it could be seen as being not at arm's length from the Government, to the current premises along Coronation Drive. In addition to the savings that it was able to make, there has been also a contribution from the department to fund that.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I appreciate that, Attorney-General, and we welcome it. However, I only have a certain amount of time for my question to be answered.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am told that those investments were on a 30-day term. They were, as it were, kept to one side in order to enable the transfer to occur in a fashion which would not entail too much of a drain upon the public purse. I did ask my director-general, "Which bank?" and she tells me that it is the Commonwealth Bank.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** So it was as a consequence of savings made due to the transfer?

**Mr FOLEY:** It is a consequence of savings made over the last couple of years. They were in anticipation of recurrent savings that would be made in future. Part of the

problem is that the transfer that the previous Government made from an independent office over at South Brisbane to the State Law Building, where they were seen to be under the wing of the former Attorney-General, was something that caused them some disquiet. They wanted to be able to relocate. We made a pre-election promise to enable them to do that and we have honoured that promise. Those expenses, however, need to be considered in the light of the longer term savings. Apart from it being better for the victims of discrimination to be able to go somewhere different from the State Law Building, particularly, for example, if they are complaining about sex discrimination or race discrimination by the State Government, it is also cheaper when you can pay rent slightly out of town and not right in the heart of the CBD. They will save some money on rent. They have had to put in about \$100,000 to make provision for disability access, but I am sure you would agree that that is a very worthy investment so that it is accessible to members of the public. Where they are, along Coronation Drive, is quite accessible from a public access point of view. Although I am sure parking is not easy, it is perhaps a little easier than it is in the heart of the city.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I refer also to page 2-6 of the MPS. Earlier this year when I met with the commissioner and her deputy I was impressed to learn of the services that the commission was providing to the corporate sector on a user-pays basis. However, I note on page 2-6 that the expected revenue from user charges is expected to drop from \$98,000 last financial year to \$57,000 this financial year. Can you explain the reasons for this projected drop and, as an aside, can you also explain why the \$98,000 in user charges revenue in 1998-99 is identified as \$71,000 on page 2-8? There seems to be a little inconsistency there.

**Mr FOLEY:** These figures are a little lumpy. As you will see, the previous budget contemplated not \$98,000 but \$69,000. They were a little more successful than they thought they would be. I am grateful for the Committee's drawing attention to this, because the development of expertise in that commission has enabled them to do training programs and to offer services to the corporate sector to ensure that the corporate sector delivers a better service and saves money. It is a fact of modern life that modern corporations have to ensure that they do not engage in sex discrimination or race discrimination. That is not just a question of turning a blind eye. They have to be proactive. Indeed, the Anti-

Discrimination Act requires them to be proactive or they will cop a liability under the Act. The sums obviously vary from year to year and they are relatively modest sums in the scheme of their budget.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I appreciate that.

**Mr FOLEY:** But they did much better than they thought they would last year.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** But there is inconsistency between the \$98,000 in user charges in 1998-99 and the figure of \$71,000 identified on page 2-8. It might just be a typographical error.

**Mr FOLEY:** The difference in the figures for 1998-99 is due to invoices for receipts which have not yet been received, in particular for training. The figure on page 2-8 is the actual receipts received during the relevant period.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I have another question regarding the commission. I note the number of cases to be closed by the tribunal is expected to drop from 87 to 65, in part because fewer cases will be referred. I note also that the number of complaints closed by the commission is also expected to drop, and that is on page 2-3 of the MPS. Instead of telling me how many cases will be closed, can you tell me how many cases you expect the commission and the tribunal to investigate this year as compared with last year?

**Mr FOLEY:** That statement on page 2-3 is an output statement. You will appreciate that this year we have been asked to approach it on a budget for outputs approach. That particular table relates to what they get through, and they somewhat underestimated the number of complaints that they were going to be able to deal with last year. Their estimate was 1,356. In fact, they got through 1,590. What they are surmising is that they will be about that next year—1,550.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Are you comfortable that the increase by one administration position will assist in any perceived or expected increase in workload this year?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. When you are looking at a staff of 32, the difference of one staff member or another is not hugely significant. Indeed, it is even less significant when it comes to Legal Aid. I note some misguided comments in the media about the staff numbers in Legal Aid. In fact, you need to look at this in terms of efficient and modern work practices. Notwithstanding the \$2.5m cut from the coalition Government in Canberra with regard to Legal Aid, fortunately the Queensland Labor Government has come to

the rescue and put in an extra \$5m. But that has enabled these bodies, including in particular Legal Aid, to invest in better technology and programs so that they can reach more people. With regard to the staffing numbers there, we are concerned to ensure that there are enough staff to deal with some of the areas that have been a bit neglected.

For example, last week, together with my colleague the Minister for Families, Youth and Community Care, I launched a report on age discrimination. That report related to a phone-in survey. It is clear from that, at least anecdotally, that there is a good deal of age discrimination. For example, we had people of 20 and 21 complaining that they were victims of age discrimination because someone younger was wanted—something those of us of more mature years find somewhat daunting. There is a modest increase in the staff number there, but they do run an effective shop and they do try to liaise closely. To their great credit, Commissioner Karen Walters and her staff have very good relationships with the non-Government community sector, which helps them to do their job.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I appreciate that. I turn now to alternative dispute resolution and refer the Minister to page 1-19 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements. I notice that the number of facilitations held is expected to increase to 1,400 and that the number of reports produced is expected to almost double from, I think, about 600 to 1,200. However, I notice also that the number of first contacts will drop from 8,900 to an expected 8,000 and that the number of files opened is expected to drop by 80 to 3,600. Can you explain how the number of files opened and the number of first contacts will fall when the number of facilitations is expected to increase and the number of reports produced is also expected to increase?

**Mr FOLEY:** Alternative dispute resolution is, to some extent, bearing the burden of being very popular. What we have noticed over the past couple of years is that the expertise developed through the Alternative Dispute Resolution Branch has produced a surge in the number of people who would like to use it. I think most members of Parliament would have experience of it being used in neighbourhood disputes and personal disputes. But we are finding now some people with commercial partnership disputes and that sort of thing actually approaching it. It is very popular.

On the other hand, we have to be careful because this is essentially a service delivered

in the public interest and not simply to serve the private interests of the marketplace which can well afford to pay for its own services. What we have sought to do is to try to ensure that they plan their intakes in a way that enables them to deal with the matters promptly, which means having to give consideration up front to the sort of matters that are referred for alternative dispute resolution.

In the best of all possible worlds, it would be great to simply open the door and have more and more people go through. But because they are so popular and they are very efficient—indeed, this was one of the great initiatives of my predecessor the Honourable Dean Wells, who saw this as a very important way of people having an alternative to the costly and delaying exercise of going to court. That reflects a desire to manage the handling of matters through the alternative dispute resolution at a time when they are embarrassed by their own popularity amongst the community.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I hope those things come to pass. I turn now to the Director of Public Prosecutions, an issue of some topical note over the last month or so. I just ask: why did the Director of Public Prosecutions write to you in December last year expressing significant concerns regarding underresourcing within that office and also requesting additional significant resources? I think the page relevant to this in the MPS is 1-6.

**Mr FOLEY:** The short answer to your question is that there is a Cabinet mid year review process where we seek from each part of the portfolio their bids for melting the tender hearts of the Cabinet Budget Review Committee in the post-Christmas period. So that means that we go around to various members or we invite from various sections of the portfolio their wish list of what they would like.

I am pleased to say that we got an active and enthusiastic response. One of the things for which I commend the Director of Public Prosecutions is that he is a strong advocate for extra resources for his portfolio. May I say that amongst the various areas of the department, including the courts, he has some stiff competition because there are some very eloquent advocates for extra resources for the courts. Not surprisingly, there are some very eloquent advocates for extra resources for legal aid, and the arts community have a number of very powerful ways of putting their case, too. He and his office put forward a

request for extra resources within the context of the mid year Budget review.

That, of course, needs to be seen in the light of the extra \$1.4m that the Beattie Labor Government made available to the Director of Public Prosecutions in last year's Budget, although that needs to be taken carefully, because it has a number of one-off components in it. I would expect all sections of my portfolio to set out their case as best they can. As a consequence of that, it gave the department an opportunity to look at ways and means of trying to respond to their concerns.

It is not just a question of going to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee and asking for an extra pot of gold. It means that the department then looks at ways and means of trying to enhance the better delivery of services. As a result of that, a number of management measures were put in place to enhance the number of legal officers, to enhance the number of victims support services by cutting overheads in other areas. So it is part of the Cabinet Budget review process and it then set in train a number of management reforms to—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** In this year's Budget, what does it actually mean?

**Mr FOLEY:**—try to deal with the concerns and to try to make sure that public moneys are put into those areas of highest need.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** In this year's Budget, what does it effectively mean insofar as additional resources are concerned for the office of the DPP? Also, I notice that on page 1-24 of the MPS it was stated that in 1998-99 the Office of the DPP reduced its overheads and redirected its resources. What overheads were reduced and did any staff leave the office as a result of this direction and, if so, what positions did they occupy?

**Mr FOLEY:** In terms of extra staff, there have been a number of extra legal officers put on, there have been a number of extra victims support service staff put on. There has also been a reallocation of some of those staff into regional areas—victims support services, for example. Some of the areas where economies were made were things like subscriptions to various journals and so on where there was an assessment made that it was not a priority that the office needed to put its energies into—service delivery rather than overheads.

Just in terms of staff movements, there were six positions that went into central corporate services instead of being corporate services there engaged in administration. One SO1, that is Senior Officer 1, was declared

surplus. But set off against that there have been a number of extra legal officers and extra victims support service officers to try to give the emphasis to the service delivery aspect of the delivery of services by the Director of Public Prosecutions.

The Director of Public Prosecutions has a very important role in terms of ensuring that the courts are able to deal with these matters promptly. Let me give you an example. New practices and procedures were implemented in the Brisbane office that resulted in an increase of 13% in the number of pleas of guilty that were either notified before or at the first callover in the District Court. One of the most problematic areas for wasting resources is late pleas of guilty. Why do they happen? Because the relevant parties do not necessarily have all their cases prepared early. If we can concentrate the minds of prosecution early and concentrate the minds of defence early, then it means that those matters where there were going to be pleas of guilty happen earlier in the system instead of at the door of the court just prior to the trial. That makes a lot of sense, but you have to work at it and you have to engage in these sort of management exercises. There was a considerable amount of effort put into legal practice manager positions in order to achieve those sort of commonsense and just outcomes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It is now time for the Government members to ask you some questions. The first questions I would like to ask are some that are fairly dear to my heart that I have spoken to you about in regard to the collection of court imposed fines. Can the Minister outline his new approach for the collection of court imposed fines and penalties for statutory infringements that ensures fines and penalties are enforced and imprisonment is a last resort?

**Mr FOLEY:** The budget makes provision for \$20.7m in this year and next year to set up a State Penalties Enforcement Register. This is absolutely desperately needed. It is desperately needed because the previous Government announced an intention to go down this path but simply failed to put in place any budgetary provision to make it happen. We had a Fines Bill introduced into the Parliament by the previous Government but no budgetary provision. This is a major logistical exercise.

Let me say how important this is, not only in humanitarian terms but also in economic terms. Over the last financial year we saw an increase of almost \$8m over collections from the previous year through greater use of

technology, through the SETONS electronic court and through an improvement in the number of warrants successfully executed by police. That is the upside of the equation. But the downside of the equation is that during a roughly corresponding period the number of people imprisoned for non-payment of fines jumped from 180 to 262. On average we have about 220 people in prison for non-payment of fines. Had the previous Government put in place the budgetary provisions, all of that shocking waste of money and shocking humanitarian problem need not have continued.

What we are seeking to do is use a bit of commonsense and modern technology. We are going to establish a call centre. Modern technology now has call centres being used across a wide range of exercises. In addition to the legal measures—fine option orders, garnishee or attachment of wages, attachment of debts owed to the offender, warrants of execution for real and personal property, imposition of a charge on property such as shares and debentures, registration of interest on any register of title or dealings, for example registrar of titles of the motor vehicle security registry, and in certain limited cases driver's licence suspension—the call centre will ring people up, nag them, chase them. The problem at the moment is that people only come into contact with the law enforcement authority when the warrant is issued. They may be pulled over to the side of the road for a traffic inspection and find that they have an outstanding warrant, perhaps from a couple of years ago, and they are carted off to watch-houses and in some cases put in prison. There has to be a better way.

One of the other measures that is important to avoid is the blanket suspension of drivers licences that was proposed under the previous Government. Western Australian experience tells us that they now have an additional problem. It can be used in certain limited circumstances, but Western Australia has found that they now have thousands of people driving around unlicensed and getting into more trouble.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, I might get you to expand on that a little. As you said earlier, you have \$20.7m in the budget to implement this in this financial year. Could you tell us some of the things that you will use to see that fines are paid by people getting followed up about payment? Could you also expand on what other facilities have been put in place to see that fines are collected—such as credit facilities and so forth?

**Mr FOLEY:** The \$20.7m is over two financial years. I think the single most important aspect is actually not the legal stick; it is the call centre. It is a funny thing. Bankcard and MasterCard seem to be able to chase people down and get the money out of their pockets left, west and crooked. But for years we have had the Crown chasing money and doing so in a way which makes us pale in comparison with the private sector. We will be having more commercial collection practices such as credit card, EFTPOS, direct debit, pay at post and garnishee facilities.

This proactive call centre will nag people to death. If someone gets a phone call from their friendly bank to say, "Excuse me. You're a few days late with paying your Bankcard or MasterCard", then that can often prompt people to go and pay it. But what happens at the moment is that once people pass the critical date for due payment of the fines it goes into limbo land and people tend to forget it. The experience of a couple of my constituents is that they get pulled over by police for some traffic matter and a warrant, which might be four or five years old, is then executed on them and if they do not have the ready cash then they are in more trouble than they know.

The time line for completion of the project is October 2000, but an interim call centre will be established in late 1999 to chase people up. That costs money, but I think in every walk of life now we are seeing the emergence of call centres. It is a sensible use of technology and it is one that can be quite effective. We need to use the carrot and the stick.

At the end of the day, people who do not pay their fines will go to jail, but we have to do all that we can to create options. If people cannot actually pay for financial reasons, then fine option orders will be made available, but the emphasis will be, for those who can pay, on paying their fines. After all, they are imposed by the courts in the first instance or in this case imposed as a result of a ticket which people have the opportunity to challenge in court if they wish.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The previous Attorney-General and Minister for Justice sought to introduce similar proposals. Can you outline how this initiative is different? I think you touched on that. Can you tell the Committee what savings this scheme will make for the Government?

**Mr FOLEY:** A significant difference is this proactive call centre, where the effort will be made to reach out to these people and to try to encourage them to pay their fines. I have

dealt with that. The other significant area relates to suspension of drivers licences. It is superficially attractive to say, "If someone does not pay their fines by the relevant date, then their driver's licence can be suspended." Take for example the case of a breadwinner who needs his or her car to go to work. There is a lot of pressure on that person to simply use their car to go to work. What happens is that they get apprehended by police and they are in more trouble again. They have another fine which they cannot pay. So we will be a lot more selective about the use of those driver's licence suspensions. It will be confined to motor vehicle related offences and it will be a little later in the process.

Fine option orders will still be available but will be only available for those who genuinely cannot afford to pay. Of course, fine option orders cost money to the taxpayer to enforce. They can be a useful way of people doing community service.

Garnishee of wages is common to the current and former Government's approach. However, under the Fines Bill it was available only with the consent or at the request of the offender. Under this regime, once the matter reaches the third stage, the civil enforcement stage, the registrar of the State Penalties Enforcement Registry will be able to issue a notice to the employer without the consent of the offender, as long as the registrar is able to obtain the relevant information necessary to issue the notice.

Under the previous set-up, the potential existed for enforcement officers to attempt to seize property in many more cases because the issue of warrants was an automatic step with no conditions placed on the enforcement officer to attempt other methods of enforcement or collection, such as will occur under the SPER arrangements. The new regime will specifically provide that the issue of an enforcement warrant to seize and sell property may be made conditional on the enforcement officer first interviewing or attempting to interview the fine defaulter and obtain the information necessary for the further enforcement of the fine by garnishee, direct debit of accounts of financial institutions or by fine option order. Those are some of the significant differences.

**Mr PURCELL:** You did not get time to answer the second part of that question in relation to cost savings.

**Mr FOLEY:** It will save an arm and a leg.

**Mr PURCELL:** I know it will save a lot of grief for people in jail. I know because I have had personal experience with people in jail.

**Mr FOLEY:** It is a bit difficult to say exactly how many. We have over 200 people in prison. It costs us an absolute fortune to keep them in prison at the moment. As I am sure my colleague the Honourable Minister for Police and Corrective Services will tell you later today, the taxpayers have had to invest a fortune in building new prisons. Once they are built, there is the recurrent cost of servicing them. It is difficult to say exactly how many this will divert from the system, because it is not in operation. We expect it to make a significant impact. With more than 200 people in prison at any one time, it is a very expensive exercise.

Also, it is a very expensive exercise for police officers, because to enforce a warrant police officers often have to go to a place once, twice, three times to find out who is home. Frankly, I think it is important that we make efficient use of our police officers to detect criminals and bring them before the court. Chasing up warrants is something that I know many police officers find arduous, simply because there are often changes of address and so on. Although at the end of the day police will have to enforce it by way of taking people into custody if they do not pay the fine, we are optimistic that this will result in considerable savings.

I am informed that some \$65m is recorded in the financial statements as outstanding fines. The anticipated saving is approximately \$10m per annum in fines currently uncollected. As I mentioned a little earlier, in the last year we have seen an increase of \$8m, but one has to set that off against the fact that we have had a lot more people in prison and that costs the taxpayer a great deal of money, too—not to mention their families and not to mention the dangers to which such people are exposed by going into the environment of a prison.

**Mr FOURAS:** The budget indicates an allocation of \$1.5m to expand the use of information technology in the State's higher courts. Can you outline whether this initiative will improve court management? If that is so, will that result in tangible savings?

**Mr FOLEY:** I hope so in the long term. It will basically result in better management of cases. In every walk of life we see technology used in order to make better communications and more efficient systems. I know I might surprise some in saying this, but the law is a relatively conservative institution. It does sometimes take a little time to move. May I say this, however: the Queensland courts in this respect are showing a very progressive

approach. The Chief Justice has made a number of public statements urging the Government to make this money available, and we have done so. This means things like cabling for the higher courts to enable local networking capability for the judiciary. Standard judicial desktop will be made available. The Court of Appeal system will be enhanced to replace the existing Court of Appeal. The on-line court transcription service will be enhanced. We have already seen the State Reporting Bureau making a number of steps to use better technology. The judgments and the sentencing database will be enhanced within each court within the higher courts complex.

We know the tax department has had provision for electronic lodgment for years. We want to work towards the provision for electronic lodgement of documents in the courts. The \$1.5m this year may not be sufficient to enable that to be a general practice. I should pay tribute to my predecessor, the honourable Denver Beanland for his hard work in helping to make the uniform civil procedure rules available. The uniform court rules have to be backed up with technology. That is what we are seeking to do in this exercise.

Essential audio equipment for the higher courts complex will provide required voice-enhancing equipment for the judiciary and witnesses. This is a bit of an aside because this is mainly to do with information technology, but one of the things that we have learned in recent years is that we are pretty bad at producing an environment in a courtroom for children and people with soft voices. A very modest expense of putting in microphones or even microphones that are attached to the person can make a big difference to the confidence of a child witness or somebody who has been traumatised. There is also provision for a multi-agency teleconferencing initiative and judicial support software. We hope it will make life a bit easier for the judges and hence the clients.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I will ask a question about a matter in which I have always and will always have a particular interest, that is, legal aid. In the past few years, there has been growing concern over the gap between funding for legal aid and the demands being placed upon the legal aid system. The Minister has mentioned this morning that additional funding has been allocated to legal aid. Could you give us some more detail about this additional funding and what it will mean for the provision of legal aid for Queenslanders?

**Mr FOLEY:** An extra \$5m has been made available by this Government over funding made available from the previous Government. That is in accordance with the pre-election promise. We did that for two reasons. Firstly, we believe that it is important for ordinary citizens to have better access to justice. Secondly, we did it because of a scandalous cutting of funds to Legal Aid by the Commonwealth coalition Government. It cut \$2.5m. My advice from the Legal Aid Office is that if one goes back to 1996-97 and 1997-98, considers the \$19.8m, which then became \$18m, and applies the 3% index, one will find that that underlying shortfall from the Commonwealth even on those figures was \$3.6m.

In other words, what we are seeing here is a callous indifference on the part of the Commonwealth Government to a crisis. There are people who are seeking access to the Family Court in particular who are not getting it because the Commonwealth Government has chosen to cut back its funds. It is an open scandal. It is one that we are trying to do something about. We have put an extra \$5m in and that helps us to achieve a number of positive initiatives. However, as we pour the water into the top of the bucket, I am afraid there is a hole in the bucket draining out to the Commonwealth Government. That impacts not only on purely family law matters but also upon the criminal system, because the Commonwealth did a double shuffle: it used to pay in accordance with what were termed "Commonwealth persons", including persons in receipt of social security benefits; then, by a sleight of hand, it reclassified its funding as "Commonwealth matters". So it slipped out of that. Legal Aid estimates that that costs them alone about \$2.5m from the moneys that are going to fund the public defence of people going through the courts. Now, the Queensland taxpayers have had to pick that up. Those funds have been used to keep the show going at Legal Aid and to make a couple of other positive initiatives to reach out into particular areas of terrible need, such as the position of indigenous women and children who are the victims of violence.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Government's time for questions has expired. The member for Warwick will continue.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My question to the Attorney-General is: does your department have a code of conduct for employees? And if so, does it allow for officers of the department to make private use of frequent flyer points accrued as a consequence of official travel or

retaining for private use any moneys saved by obtaining discount air travel?

**Mr FOLEY:** There is a code of conduct that applies generally across the Public Service. Frequent flyer points are part of the department's use of funds to fly people around to do their various duties as part of their travel, and there is a code of conduct that relates to public servants generally. The financial procedures manual deals with frequent flyer points, and that is observed within the department.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My next question relates to the arrangement for your director-general leading up to her appointment and immediately subsequent to that appointment as director-general of your department. I understand that the arrangement was six full economy air fares.

**Mr FOLEY:** That is right.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Has your director-general been reimbursed for travel costs not incurred during that particular time?

**Mr FOLEY:** As I indicated to the Parliament in response to a question earlier, the arrangement in respect of the director-general's appointment involved a package which included the equivalent of six full air fares.

Indeed, I refer to the question on notice from last year—on 30 September 1998—where information was given in respect of that. The answer I gave in the Parliament indicated that, as part of that package, six standard return air fares would be payable. Now, a number of those were able to be obtained at discounted rates. So the difference between those and the standard air fares was reimbursed to the director-general as part of the package which I disclosed to the Parliament.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Going on from that, does that mean that a senior public servant from your department—or any other department—who is entitled to fly business class could book a business class air fare, turn up at the airport, downgrade that air fare to economy and then wish to pocket the difference?

**Mr FOLEY:** No, certainly not. And may I say that, as a matter of choice, the director-general, although she is entitled to travel business class, in fact does not do so. She travels economy class in order to make savings for the department. That is not a matter which goes into her pocket at all.

The question really quite mischievously confuses—and perhaps is intended to

confuse—two quite separate and different propositions. One was the package in respect of relocation of a chief executive officer, which included the equivalent of six standard air fares, and that is what was paid. The other relates to the use of travel, and there is no personal reimbursement. On the contrary, I might point out that our department and the taxpayers have saved some thousands of dollars—over \$4,000—as a result of my director-general having exercised a frugal approach, notwithstanding the snide, untrue and vicious attacks which have been made by the Opposition upon her in a manner which, I must say, is absolutely deplorable. The director-general is to be commended for her use of a frugal approach in her interests to keep costs down when she would otherwise be entitled to do it. Indeed, the honourable member for Warwick would well know this, had he read the answer to question on notice No. 7 asked by non-Government members, where I made it clear that, in spite of an entitlement to travel business class, the director-general has always travelled economy class and made use of discount economy fares when possible. The resultant saving to date to the taxpayer on her official travel is \$4,410.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** With due respect, I am very much aware of that. But my concern, and the concern which has been raised with me, is that the calculation for your director-general as a consequence of that package, which included six full return flights, was a total value of \$5,532, of which I can ascertain \$3,319.06 was actually expended by your director-general as a consequence of, in one case, a one-way flight which seems to have been paid in another way and as a consequence of discount economy air fares which left your director-general receiving a cash reimbursement of \$2,212.94. The simple point I make is that the arrangement was supposed to be for travel to allow your director-general to make return trips to Queensland to take up her appointment. Now, if economy air fares can be achieved—or discount economy—then that does not mean, as I would read it, that your director-general would be entitled to pocket the difference.

**Mr FOLEY:** Let me say this: the difference was reimbursed to the director-general so that she could make her own arrangements—instead of booking through the department—to purchase travel to and from Melbourne, her previous place of residence, which she has done. But she was able to do that in order to obtain those discount fares as she saw fit, and her entitlement was exactly what I outlined to the department.

But in view of the honourable member's interest in the director-general's expenses—those expenses were disclosed to the Parliament and were part of a perfectly legitimate package to attract a senior executive officer. I note that the former director-general under the Attorney-General Beanland spent some \$710.34 for the purchase of drinks for a social gathering and, on 12 June 1998, as a last supper on the eve of the last election, spent \$955.50 on the purchase of cocktail foods. I table the invoices in respect of the Johnny Walker Red, the Bundaberg Rum, the chardonnay and the cabernet sauvignon, which was purchased by the former director-general, Mr Kevin Martin, during the time of Mr Beanland as Attorney-General. Why? Not as part of a legitimate package approved by the Public Service Commissioner to relocate a senior executive officer but as part of a squandering of taxpayers' money to run a social gathering, described as such in these documents, on the eve of an election when, presumably, he well knew that the Government was to be voted out.

It is this sort of financial mismanagement and squandering of funds that we have had to deal with. I told this Estimates Committee last year about the problems that we faced in dealing with the costs of political advertising. In view of the honourable member's concern about the director-general's expenses—which have been perfectly legitimate and have been disclosed—let me, for the interest of the Committee, table this document concerning the purchase of drinks for the social gathering approved by Kevin Martin, together with the invoice from the Morrison Hotel and related documents for the purchase of cocktail foods provided to a social gathering on the eve of 13 June 1998, namely 12 June 1998.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I would also seek to do the same regarding the documents which I have. As a person most learned in the law, the Attorney-General is obviously aware of the Financial Administration and Audit Act 1977 which establishes his chief executive officer or director-general as the accountable officer. At section 36.1 the Act states—

"Every accountable officer—

(a) is to manage the department under that officer's control efficiently, effectively and economically and avoid waste and extravagance;

...

(c) shall ensure—

...

- (ii) that expenditure is incurred for lawful purposes and is made in compliance with the prescribed requirements;
- (d) shall ensure that procedures within the department, including internal control procedures, afford at all times adequate safeguards with respect to—
  - (i) the correctness, regularity and propriety of payments made."

Whilst saving that by using economy air fares was very noble, I would have thought that under section 36.1(a), which refers to the efficient, effective and economic control of those sorts of things, that saving should have been made to the department.

**Mr FOLEY:** The saving of the money to which I referred was made to the department. Let me say it again. The \$4,410 which was saved by the director-general—who has had to suffer the slings and arrows of these repeated vile attacks by yourself and by the member for Clayfield in an utterly unfounded and unprincipled way—was returned to the department. The other matter is a separate matter. It is a matter which was personal to the director-general as part of her employment package where, as I disclosed to the Parliament, the agreed sum was the equivalent of six standard economy return air fares to Melbourne. That is what she was promised and that is what she got.

I am glad that the honourable member has finally read the Financial Administration and Audit Act, because the honourable member saw fit to make much of his requirement that the Director of Public Prosecutions be compelled to attend today. May I remind the honourable member that the accountable officer under the Director of Prosecutions Act 1984, which was introduced by a coalition Government, is indeed the Director-General of the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.

Considering that the honourable member wishes to pursue the matter of entitlements in relation to the transfers of directors-general, might I also raise this matter. Let me contrast the modest sums that were paid as part of a normal management practice with the previous Government's payment to Mr Col Thatcher, Director-General of the Department of Training and Industrial Relations in 1996-97. His appointment expenses were \$5,575.81. His removal expenses from Perth to Brisbane were \$8,435. That is a total of \$14,010.81. I mention that, not by way of criticism of Mr

Thatcher, but to point out that that was what was approved as part of a relocation package.

The honourable member would well know that it is standard practice to make provision for a relocation package for the chief executive officers of these very responsible departments. If the honourable member showed a shred of ethics in his approach he would understand that it is important that public confidence in the administration of justice not be subverted by irresponsible and misleading suggestions such as the one that the honourable member has made.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** If the Attorney-General would like to cast his mind back to the late 1970s, an investigation was undertaken within the Queensland Parliament called the Peel investigation. It related to members of Parliament who were entitled to air travel vouchers cashing in those vouchers or taking a lower category and cashing in the difference. That created some ethical problems. I am asking the Attorney-General whether he feels absolutely comfortable in allowing a person to acquire a lower cost air fare by booking early and pocketing the difference. Does the Attorney-General believe that this practice is ethical and is morally correct? Should we move to ensure that, when we are dealing with air fares, we should pay for the air fares that the people have actually taken and that there should be no ability to cash in on the difference between the cost of the air fare and some nominal amount which is allocated or noted by the department?

**Mr FOLEY:** With respect, the differences were not pocketed; the differences were applied by the director-general—as she was perfectly entitled to do—to purchase return air fares at the best rate that she was able to obtain. The package entailed the equivalent of six standard economy air fare returns. If, as a result of having entered into discount arrangements, the director-general could obtain more flights, well, that is a matter of commonsense and prudence. To make a comparison with the Peel report is really very offensive and unfair and it reflects no credit on the honourable member.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I would like to turn very briefly to a question which the Chairman asked earlier this morning regarding the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. It says on page 1-2 of the MPS that a total of \$20.7m has been allocated to the SPER program over the next two years. On page 36 of Budget Paper No 2, table 3.5 states that SPER will have a total cost of \$37.9m, with \$6.2m to be spent this year. On page 60 of the same

document, in table 5.6, we see that SPER will have a total cost of \$10.5m, with \$7.1m to be spent this year. On page 48 of Budget Paper No. 5 we see that the total estimated cost of SPER is \$9.461m, with \$6.03m to be spent this year. There may be a perfectly good explanation for this, but can you explain the four variations in projected total funding and funding for this year?

**Mr FOLEY:** In some places it is in cash accounting, in some places it is in accrual accounting and in some places it picks up three different financial years. Some of these are references to capital expenditure and some are references to current expenditure.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My next question refers to pages 119 and 127 of the MPS. You predict a substantial increase in the number of criminal and civil cases being lodged with the Magistrates Court and the higher courts. Can you inform the Committee of additional judicial officers of all levels of jurisdictions who will be appointed to cater for this increase, and also your forward plan for additional appointments in subsequent budgets?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. The Magistrates Court and the District Court are the two main courts that deal with criminal trials. With respect to the Magistrates Court, the budget makes provision for an extra two magistrates. One of those will be involved with the trialling of a drugs court. That involves an attempt to divert offenders, in particular repeat offenders. The other relates to the implementation of the Child Protection Act.

With regard to the District Court, we have taken steps to reduce the workload in the District Court. We have done so because of a bungle in the legislation by my predecessor, the former Attorney-General, Mr Beanland, when addressing the issue of assault occasioning bodily harm. There is a great concern on the part of the District Court in that they are now being obliged to deal with a host of matters that they previously did not have to deal with prior to that legislation being introduced, namely, assaults occasioning bodily harm. The reason for that is that the legislation, as drafted by the coalition Government, was ambiguous with respect to the jurisdiction of magistrates to deal with assaults occasioning bodily harm, with a large number of magistrates taking the view that they did not have the jurisdiction to deal with that. As a consequence, that has been clogging up a number of the courts which really are having to spend week in week out dealing with pub brawls that should have been dealt with in the Magistrates Court. We have

sought to rectify that. Indeed, currently I have legislation before the Parliament to do that in order to reduce the workload on the District Court.

The other thing that we did, of course, was in the previous budget put an extra Court of Appeal judge in place. That is, effectively, an extra judge of the Supreme Court but allocated to the Court of Appeal. It is important in the flow of criminal matters that we have not only a speedy determination at first instance but also that we have a speedy determination of any appeals that arise out of it. Given that a large number of appeals arise out of the criminal area, in last year's budget we moved to address the appeal system and, in this year's budget, we have made provision for two extra magistrates and we have introduced legislation to reduce the workload on the District Court.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for questions by non-Government members has expired. I now ask my colleagues to question the Minister.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** My question is in relation to community legal centres. As no-one would doubt that they are a valuable service to our communities, can the Minister outline his initiatives to support and enhance community legal centres?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. The first thing that we have done is to give them an extra half a million dollars over what was done by the coalition Government. We did that as part of honouring our promise to provide an extra \$5m for legal aid. That has meant that the legal services throughout the State have had a benefit. The other day, I was at the Cairns Community Legal Service to talk with them and, indeed, the Women's Legal Service in Cairns have had a similar benefit.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders Women's Legal and Advocacy Service has received an additional \$43,000; the Bayside Community Legal Service has received an extra \$10,000; the Cairns Community Legal Service has received \$63,000; the Caxton Legal Centre has received \$42,500; the Community of Inala Legal Service has received \$6,000; and the Environmental Defenders Office has received \$55,000. As an aside, I might say that that is going to be particularly welcome to them, because we have the Yes, Minister paradox with the Environmental Defenders Office in that, with the money they get from the Commonwealth, they are forbidden to undertake any cases with it. It is a bit like the hospital that runs best without patients: the Commonwealth were not

game to knock off their funding altogether but decided that they could not use it to take any cases. It seems an odd approach to community legal services. The Highway Legal Service has received \$10,000; the Logan Youth Legal Service has received \$45,000; the North Queensland Women's Legal Service has received \$43,000; the Peninsula Community Legal Service has received \$7,000; the Petrie Community Legal Service has received \$5,500; the Prisoners Legal Service has received \$53,000; the South Brisbane Immigration Community Legal Service has received \$38,000; the Sun Coast Community Legal Service has received \$5,000; the Taylor Street Legal Service, Hervey Bay, has received \$500; the Tenants Union of Queensland has received \$11,000; and the Women's Legal Service has received \$63,500.

They are extra funds. That means that they can get on with the business of helping people. Part of the problem with the community legal centres is that, with the relatively low levels of funding that they have had, they wind up spending half their time writing submissions for grants and the other half of their time acquitting the grants to the relevant funding authorities. We want to make sure that they have the chance to get out there and provide access to legal services in the case of unmet legal need and offer opportunities for emerging legal issues to be identified. That includes law reform. After all, these people are picking up those cases when people cannot afford to go to a private solicitor or cannot afford to go to Legal Aid. So community legal centres play an enormously valuable role. We have honoured our promise to put in an extra half a million dollars to support them.

**Mr FOURAS:** You would be aware of my support and even advocacy in the Parliament for drug courts. I refer to the allocation of funds for a trial of drug courts in this budget. Are there any projections about the numbers that will be diverted to the drug court trial on a monthly or annual basis?

**Mr FOLEY:** We are still working that through, but we would like to see about 300. That needs to be worked through with the magistrates themselves, with the Corrective Services authorities and with the Health Department. My own preference is to start modestly and to ensure that we deliver the service fully and effectively. There is absolutely no point in having a diversion for drug offenders unless we can deliver the services to them. That involves not just keeping an eye on them through the Corrective Services authority

and through urine testing to see whether they have lapsed back onto drugs but also it involves access to treatment. It also involves having enough judicial resources in the way of a magistrate to ensure that he or she can keep a close eye on them, almost like a case worker. That has yet to be finalised, but we expect to have it working in the first half of next year, that is to say, in the latter half of this financial year.

The important thing to remember about the drug court is that, even though you may be dealing with a small number of offenders, these are often offenders who commit a large number of offences. If a person has a heroin problem and is doing break and enters in order to service that problem, that person can be doing scores and scores of offences, namely, break and enters and stealings in order to service that habit.

The other thing to be said is this: the feedback from the Australian Institute of Criminology teaches us to be cautious in this area. This is not necessarily the be-all and end-all of responding to drug offenders or people committing drug-related offences. That is why we are trialling it. However, we are seeking to trial it in a way that could then be rolled out throughout the State, because there is not much point having something in south-east Queensland if, for example, the people in Townsville or Cairns cannot access it.

**Mr FOURAS:** It is necessary to provide backup services and allow for the involvement of the community at large if drug courts are to work successfully. For example, a lot of drug addicts are homeless and they need housing. They need drug detox centres and we must provide training as a part of the rehabilitation process. We must provide mental health services and so on. Is there an agreement across all Government departments to provide those services on an ongoing basis and increase them if the trial proves to be successful? Is there a process to make that happen?

**Mr FOLEY:** There is. You will find in the budget of my colleague the Minister for Police and Corrective Services that there is additional funding for Corrective Services staff to supervise and there is additional funding in respect of the undertaking of drug testing, particularly urine analysis, and there is additional funding provided in the Health budget for that also. However, I do not think that we should approach this problem purely from the point of view of the Government delivering Government services. One of the things we really have to work hard at is building

the links between the court and the community. Community services are in a position to make enormous contributions.

I commend the Prime Minister, John Howard, for his allocation of funds for drug diversion. However, that was done basically by the Commonwealth Government directly to a range of community groups without funding the States, which have to pick up the tab themselves, and without ensuring that the community organisations that have received funding would plug into things like the drugs initiative. As part of the planning and consultation leading up to this, we need to sit down and talk with those groups. There is a lot of goodwill there, but we need to ensure that if some person with a heroin problem comes before a court and is referred for assistance, then that is done promptly and effectively.

I would like to try to encourage a building of networks and cooperation with the community sector. I know that there is a lot of goodwill there, but the critical thing with the drug courts is that assistance is provided in a timely fashion. A little later this year I will be introducing legislation to give courts extra powers to deal with this, because it does involve some pretty fundamental questions of jurisprudence once you shift a person out of the conventional system of fines and imprisonment into a controlled and managed system of rehabilitation. There are some pretty tricky issues to be considered in that regard. We have to equip our courts with sufficient power to manage that system. We also have a big job to build links between the health services, the community services, the corrective services and the courts in order to make sure that those projects work effectively.

**Mr FOURAS:** I note that the funding for victims of crime has been redirected from your department to the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care. I presume that that decision was taken because it would be advantageous to all concerned. Can you indicate the administrative arrangements and can you assure the Committee that this change will be effectively administered?

**Mr FOLEY:** I can give that assurance. May I say that I welcome the opportunity to discuss this with the Committee, because a blatant untruth in this regard was told by the member for Warwick. I table a report of the Courier-Mail on 15 September, where the member for Warwick, Mr Springborg, said this—

"Last year the State Government committed \$1.14 million in funding for victim support groups, however that

funding has been slashed to just \$136,000 in 1999-2000."

That is a blatant untruth. It caused considerable concern and alarm amongst victims groups, and Mr Springborg should apologise publicly for misleading the victims of crime with regard to that issue.

Had Mr Springborg looked at page 1-30 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements, he would have seen in footnote 9 that the function of administering grants to victims of crime associations was transferred to the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care. That was made abundantly clear in the Ministerial Portfolio Statements of the Department of Families, Youth and Commune Care, which states on page 18—

"Community grant funding of \$6.3M over four years, including \$1.9M in 1999-2000, has been transferred to this Department from the Department of Justice and Attorney-General for services for victims of crime. These funds will be added to the \$0.2M currently funded by this Department for similar services."

I table a letter dated 6 April 1999 from none other than the Queensland Homicide Victims Support Group, in which that group sought this very change. The second-last paragraph of the letter states—

"It is suggested that consideration be given to the transfer of the administration of grants to the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care who have considerable corporate knowledge of the issues associated with the administration of grants to community organisations."

Other groups such as Protect All Children Today expressed the same view.

This is an area upon which reasonable people can disagree. I am aware that the Victims of Crime Association had a preference for it staying with the Justice Department. Other victims of crime groups had a preference for it to go to the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care. The bottom line is that that department has considerable expertise in the administration of grants to community organisations. They are in the business of doing it, they are helpful at it and they are positive at it. We will be working in close cooperation with them in the allocation of those grants, as we have done in the past. We have honoured our promise to boost those funds by an extra \$1m over what was provided by the previous Government, which promised to do so but which failed to do so.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, could you tell the Committee how much the State received in the last financial year for the confiscation of funds from crime? Has it been the boon that we thought it would be to get our hands back in the criminals' pockets and put the money pack into the public purse?

**Mr FOLEY:** The State received \$1,048,000 from the confiscation of funds for crime from the enforcement of pecuniary penalty orders and from the obtaining of forfeiture orders in 1998-99. There is provision under the Crimes Confiscation Act for the recovery of those moneys and the Director of Public Prosecutions has a confiscation section under the supervision of a legal practice manager, which consists of two legal officers and two clerks.

The estimated total value of forfeiture orders outstanding at 30 June 1999 was \$636,000. The total value of the pecuniary penalty orders outstanding at 30 June 1999 was \$34.287m. During 1998-99, 91 pecuniary penalty orders were obtained to a total value of \$1.707m.

It is impossible to achieve full recovery of all outstanding pecuniary penalty orders. Most of the small irrecoverable pecuniary penalty orders are made against persons who have dissipated the proceeds of their offences very soon after receiving them, often in the purchase of drugs for their own use. Very few of these people's own assets against which the Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act makes a judgment debt owing to the Crown can be recovered. Most of the larger irrecoverable pecuniary penalty orders are in relation to proceeds that have been successfully concealed often prior to arrest. These defendants rarely use the proceeds of their offences to purchase traceable assets, such as real estate or motor vehicles. However, the point is this: it is not good enough just to impose fines upon serious criminal offenders. We need to hit them where it hurts—in the hip pocket. That is why the Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act exists. We recovered over \$1m last year. The DPP is active in seeking to recover those funds where it can so that the criminals do not get the benefit of their illicit proceeds of crime and taxpayers can have some offset against the considerable funds they invest in the criminal justice system.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Minister, I refer you to your answer to question on notice No. 7 from non-Government members in which you reveal that your director-general was paid \$4,331 for furniture hire in respect of transfer expenses. My question is: was this furniture placed in

rental accommodation obtained by your director-general or was it located in her own home?

**Mr FOLEY:** It is for the director-general's personal use in accordance with the package that I disclosed to the Parliament. It is in her residence which she uses for her own personal use.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It is in her private residence? It was hired for her private residence in Brisbane?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Is that normal? Can you point out to me some precedent where that has occurred in the past? I have before me Department of Training and Industrial Relations Directive No. 9 of 1997, published in July 1997, which refers to what public servants or Government employees can expect as part of their transfer and appointment. There are certainly aspects which cover the type of accommodation and the transportation of furniture, pets and plants, but I am unable to see anything that allows a person to hire furniture to be placed in a private residence. Where is that provision? Or is it part of a special deal?

**Mr FOLEY:** It is really a cost-saving exercise. It made sense to avoid the costs of renting furnished accommodation. Let me put this in context. The removal expenses of Mr Thatcher, the Director-General of the Department of Training and Industrial Relations, from Perth to Brisbane were \$8,435.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** That may be so.

**Mr FOLEY:** The director-general obtained accommodation and, as part of the package approved by the Public Service Commissioner and disclosed to the Parliament, there was provision for the hiring of furniture. That could be done in a range of other ways. It could be done by providing rental accommodation at a significantly higher sum, as appears to have been done in the case of your previous Government. On this occasion it was done in a more frugal way. Accordingly, those are arrangements entered into between the Public Service Commissioner and the relevant CEO when you have to relocate people from another State or another place.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I will again return to the point that I was trying to make with respect to this directive. I thought that most costs relating to the relocation expenses of people from interstate or even from within the State are met. That includes the cost of transporting their furniture, pets, plants and possibly other things. I have had some difficulty finding a

precedent for this, particularly when, as I understand it, the furniture hired was to be placed in the person's home which they owned in Brisbane. That is the point.

**Mr FOLEY:** The position is simply this: if one cannot relocate one's family immediately, one has to live somewhere. On this occasion, a more frugal means was used instead of the more expensive means, namely, that of providing rented accommodation, as has been done previously. That arrangement, as I said, was made clear to the Parliament and it is part of the sort of package that one puts together in order to relocate a chief executive officer from one State to another. Those arrangements are made in a perfectly proper way and approved by the relevant statutory office holder.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Notwithstanding the fact that the rental furniture was placed in one's own home?

**Mr FOLEY:** I am not sure where else the furniture is to be placed. Is it to be placed in the street or in some warehouse? Of course the furniture is to be placed in a premises where the person is living. That is pretty obvious. It is not going to be located in some other place and rented out to a third party.

In respect of the continued attack by you and by the member for Clayfield, I wish the day would come when the coalition would actually appoint a woman as director-general. So far in the history of Queensland the coalition has not done that. The coalition has not appointed a single woman as a judge to the District or Supreme Courts in the history of Queensland. The coalition seems to wish to make an attack upon women who wish to succeed in accordance with the usual rules and who do so in a more frugal manner than has been the case previously. This is really very unfortunate and it says a great deal about the attempts that you are seeking to make to politicise, in this case, the administration of justice. Public confidence should be upheld when things are done in a perfectly proper and open way.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** With due respect, I would suggest that your sights are trained on the messenger rather than the message. The issue is simply one of transparency and accountability. I am bringing forward some concerns that have been raised. The other day on Carolyn Tucker's program the Premier indicated that we can pursue these matters at Estimates committees for as long as we like. If there are issues that concern us, regardless of the agenda of a director-general or any other

person who works within Government, we will do that. I will return to the earlier issue—

**Mr FOLEY:** I respect absolutely your right to ask questions. But I note also that you bear responsibility for the discharge of your office in an important and responsible way. This system is set up to ensure that you and the rest of the committee has a right to ask questions. I absolutely respect that right. But it brings with it certain responsibilities.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I appreciate that, and it also brings with it the responsibility to receive answers as well from the elected Government of the day. I just take you back to the previous questions that I was asking regarding the flight arrangements for your director-general. I refer to an attachment from Anthony Keogh, Principal Project Officer, Executive Services, which states that Ms Macdonnell had been offered by the Premier full payment of reasonable travel between Melbourne and Brisbane and return until she and her family had permanently relocated to Brisbane. Do you believe that the Premier, in approving that, would have envisaged that that would mean that the director-general would be able to claim as a cash payment the difference between the amount of the actual cost of the air fare and the amount calculated within the package?

**Mr FOLEY:** Again, you misstate the foundation of your question. The sums that were involved were used for the purpose for which they were approved, namely, the purpose of travel. Whether the director-general wishes to book it through the department or to book it privately through whatever discount arrangements she can negotiate with the airlines is entirely a matter for her.

With regard to the agitation by the Opposition on this matter, I was asked in the Parliament to furnish specific details, because the arrangements were left at that which was reasonable. I did so, and that figure of six standard return air fares—not trips, fares, standard economy return fares—was what was disclosed to the Parliament.

It makes good sense, if one has an entitlement to economy return fares, for them to be applied in the most economic way possible. That was what was done. You are perfectly at liberty to continue to ask questions to your heart's content about the matter, but that is the simple answer. There was an arrangement entered into for reasonable fares. Because it was the subject of agitation, it was given a specific sum and that sum is what has been delivered.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Would it not be a better arrangement to some time in the future

adopt a situation where the actual cost of the air fare was claimed?

**Mr FOLEY:** Not necessarily, because it is a matter entirely for the parties concerned as to how they can organise their travel. I am sure one arrangement that might be a useful thing for coalition Governments to keep in mind is to prohibit their directors-general from using taxpayers' money to put on alcohol at parties as a last supper prior to their being elected out of Government. That shows, I think, a disturbing lack of fiscal control and one not approved by proper process, one not disclosed and one that I would hope the coalition would take steps to ensure that it avoids in the event that it is returned to Government at some stage in the next millennium.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I am sure that there will be a lot of people within the Public Service and without who will find the precedent set by this arrangement very interesting. If I could just—

**Mr FOLEY:** May I say that that arrangement is that which was disclosed to the Parliament almost a year ago when this matter was raised, and it is something about which the Government is perfectly happy to be open and accountable in relation to. If one wants senior officers to pursue a career in the Public Service, then one has to pay for relocation expenses.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mr Chairman, I will conclude the Attorney-General's concern on this issue by simply asking one further question regarding this particular matter. Considering that he and his Government profess an interest in openness and accountability, would it be possible to provide a breakdown to this Committee by way of a question on notice the actual furniture which was hired and also the period for which that furniture was hired?

**Mr FOLEY:** I have disclosed to the Committee the cost to the public purse. I do not see the relevance of specifying the particular furniture. I think that is a matter entirely for the person concerned. I am accountable to this Parliament for the expenditure in relation to these matters. That has been disclosed. It was disclosed to the Parliament last time. It has been disclosed in my answer to your question on notice. It is a dressing table, a bedside table, two lounge chairs, a dining room table and four chairs, and a TV.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** That was hired for \$4,000? For which period?

**Mr FOLEY:** The period as asked in the question. May I just say this—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** That does not include a quantum of time.

**Mr FOLEY:** You asked for it in the question on notice and I have answered your question with respect to it. Let me go on and say this: you are entitled to ask questions and we are entitled to answer them, but what we are seeing is a continued attack upon a public servant—a senior public servant. It is analogous to the member for Warwick writing to individual public servants in my portfolio seeking their email addresses. This is a new approach to politics. This is an approach where the individual public servant is targeted. Indeed, the member for Warwick even adopted the practice of direct mailing the judges of the Supreme Court in one of his earlier exercises. May I say that the honourable member has sought to descend to the individual details of individual furniture in my director-general's house. That information has been asked for and it has been forthcoming. But there are some limits of privacy to which ordinary citizens are entitled.

These are public moneys and we must account for public moneys. We must account to the Parliament and to the people of Queensland for public moneys. But this is an odd path for the Parliament of Queensland to be going down at a time when Legal Aid needs funds, at a time when the coalition authorities in this State might spend some of their time urging their colleagues in Canberra to give us back the \$2.5m or \$3m that they have ripped out of Legal Aid and do something for ordinary citizens, instead of mounting a sustained invasion of the privacy of individual public servants.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mentioning precedents, I think it is very interesting that the Honourable Attorney-General when previously in Opposition was party to a hotline established by his party to invite public servants to ring up and express their concerns. I refer the Attorney-General to page 1-14 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement in relation to the Law Reform Commission. In the MPS I notice that you claim that the Law Reform Commission will this year publish a report on the evidence of children. Yet I also notice on page 1-18 of last year's budget that you then claimed the same report would be completed in that financial year. It is obvious that this report was not completed because you failed to fill vacancies within the commission once they became open. Considering it was known three years ago and on 12 July 1996 when Commissioners McDermott and Mullins were appointed that their terms would expire on 11 July this year, why were their replacements not

already advertised and decided at that time and filled when the vacancies became available, and did this hold off those crucial areas of law reform and the subsequent reports?

**Mr FOLEY:** The honourable member is misinformed. Commissioner Mullins has in fact been reappointed. That occurred some weeks ago. The position with respect to the full-time member was advertised some time ago. With regard to the presentation—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** They were not appointed at the time the vacancies became open, were they?

**Mr FOLEY:** The relevant officer, the full-time officer, resigned and the Law Reform Commission subsequently advertised the position. A selection committee has been formed. I am not sure whether they have actually interviewed applicants yet. To the best of my knowledge, I have not received a recommendation from them.

I am greatly looking forward to their report on the evidence of children, because it highlights an area of important need. One of the reasons we have spent this extra \$710,000 on the Child Protection Act is to make better provision for children, to provide extra legal representation where separate representation for the children is ordered under the Child Protection Act. The Law Reform Commission in fact has received \$24,000 in extra resources in this budget to carry out its important work.

The Law Reform Commission published its report on the review of the Limitation of Actions Act. The pace at which they report depends upon them—they have the relevant resources—and it is not surprising that in these areas of considerable delicacy they need to consider the matter carefully. No doubt they hope to get that report on the evidence of children published during the financial year. There has been, as you may be aware, a considerable degree of interest.

I might say in that regard that I think it is to be commended that they did put out a discussion paper on the receipt of evidence by Queensland courts with respect to the evidence of children, a discussion paper on electronic records, a discussion paper on the role of JPs, a discussion paper on the administration of the estates of deceased persons, their annual report and that they engaged in teleconference meetings of the National Committee for Uniform Succession Laws, where they are doing some quite important work. They received an extra

\$37,000 in the budget, if you look at it on a cash basis.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for Opposition questions has expired. I now ask Government members to put the witnesses on examination.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Minister, I take you to the MPS for the Public Trust Office, and in particular page 11-3. On that page it is indicated that the Public Trust Office had a \$6.189m operating result in 1998-99 financial year and an estimate of \$1.332m for this financial year. I presume they are profits. Can you advise how these profits are applied?

**Mr FOLEY:** When one looks at those figures, one sees that the actual operating result for 1998-99 includes an abnormal gain of \$4.6m from the sale of bonds. The operating profit is used particularly for the Public Trustee's community service obligations and partially to build up reserves to guarantee the performance of the common fund—that is, to cover deficit situations and to maintain the true value from year to year.

Their community service obligations cover a number of things, one of which is managing the commercially uneconomical affairs of people with a disability and prisoners' estates. There is a net cost to the Public Trustee during that year for providing protective management services of just under \$3m—\$2,929,675. The Public Trustee also administers some commercially uneconomical deceased estates. Some of these estates are commercially viable. However, for many the cost of administration exceeds reasonable administration charges.

The Public Trustee also provides as part of its community service obligations legal aid assistance to enable Queenslanders with limited financial means to pursue civil law actions in the courts. Quality legal aid is provided by the funding of the civil law legal aid outlay scheme and by the provision of rent relief to the Legal Aid Commission. The net cost of this service was \$223,633.

The Public Trustee allocates to the Adult Guardian financial or other resources necessary for the Adult Guardian's services or activities. That is about \$886,827. An important thing is that the Public Trust Office offers a free will-making service. The cost for this last year was over \$3m—\$3,372,000.

The management of estates with prisoners includes responsibility for defending applications by victims of crime who exercise their right to sue prisoners. The other thing that is quite important is that it provides free advice to the public. Those funds are put to good use.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Recently the Queensland Law Society has taken out advertisements in major newspapers outlining their concerns over proposed legal profession reforms. I note one of their concerns is over the allocation of funds from the interest on solicitors' trust accounts. Are you aware of these concerns and can you outline how those funds—that is, the interest on solicitors' trust accounts—are presently allocated and whether the reforms propose any changes to these arrangements?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Law Society takes the view that interest on solicitors' trust accounts should not be used to fund legal aid. That is not a view that the Government shares, nor is it a view that the previous Government shared. It is a bit arcane, so I will table an appendix which sets out the flow of moneys earned on solicitors' trust accounts. In short, the money is in two lots of accounts—interest on trust accounts and the general trust accounts contribution fund. With regard to interest on trust accounts, two-thirds of the minimum balance of each trust account for the previous calendar year is deposited to the interest on trust accounts held by the Queensland Law Society. Interest earned on the ITA is distributed as per section 10(5) of the Legal Assistance Act.

I will just check that point and get back to you if there is a correction. Firstly, it goes to the Queensland Law Society for the administration of expenses. The balance goes to the legal aid fund or to the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Guarantee Fund, which receives as much distribution as will restore the balance to \$5m. In that flow chart, I have set out the figures that were distributed during the course of 1997-98. Under the heading of General Trust Accounts Contribution Fund, the interest earned on the balance of funds held in solicitors' trust bank accounts, that is, trust moneys that were not required to be deposited in the ITA, is paid by banks to the General Trust Accounts Contribution Fund, or GTACF. The distributions from that fund are set out in section A of the Queensland Law Society Act—firstly, to the law society for administration expenses and then to the Legal Aid Commission, the Supreme Court Library, the Grants Fund and the Queensland Law Society for expenditure as approved by the Minister. The details of the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Guarantee Fund distribution are also set out in that chart.

**Mr PURCELL:** I will roll a couple of questions into one, because we want to get to your much softer side in the arts. We want to get some of these legal questions out of the way, if possible.

**Mr FOLEY:** They are all dramas generally, whether in the courtroom or on the stage.

**Mr PURCELL:** The Budget papers indicate that an additional \$0.46m has been allocated to Magistrates Courts to safeguard children at risk of abuse and neglect. Can the Minister advise how that amount will be spent? The second question relates to that to a certain extent. There has been a recent concern over the treatment of children as witnesses, especially in cases of abuse. Can the Minister advise what steps have been taken to protect the child witness in court?

**Mr FOLEY:** The funds for the Child Protection Act include provision for an extra magistrate. They include provision for an extra depositions clerk, a registry clerk and a conference coordinator, although transfer of responsibility for funding the position of the conference coordinator has come from the Families, Youth and Community Care Department to this department. It will also be used for modifications to courts' information technology and databases. It will also be used for training for stipendiary magistrates. In the budget we have \$560,000 set aside for the courts and an extra \$250,000 for legal aid. The extra money for legal aid includes the greater emphasis of the Child Protection Act on representation of children, who can often find the court a difficult and forbidding place. That will be of assistance to them.

The training for stipendiary magistrates and justices of the peace (Magistrates Court) and court staff is equally important, because it is not just a question of trying to encourage the courts to adopt a sensitive approach. It is also a hard management question of getting these matters through the courts in a prompt way. That involves better listing of matters and making sure that there are not unnecessary adjournments. The additional magistrate will help in that regard.

The Child Protection Act does give stipendiary magistrates and justices of the peace (Magistrates Court) power to make orders for the investigation of reports of child abuse and neglect where a family denies permission for access to the child and where the assessment cannot proceed on a voluntary basis. This is part of a process of trying to make sure that our courts are there to do justice for all and not just for some. Children should be entitled to the full protection of the law when they come to court. That means that the provision of extra resources in that area hopefully will enable the courts to do their job, but to do so in a way that is a bit more sensitive. We are putting in things like

microphones to assist kids to give their evidence. We also have provision in our new courts for separate rooms where they can give their evidence by video.

**Mr PURCELL:** If you need more time to answer the question in regard to the protection of child witnesses, I will give it to you. Would that be a costly exercise?

**Mr FOLEY:** I hope that at the end of the day it will save money, but it does involve some cost. In some respects, the costs are not great. For example, I had the pleasure of opening the refurbishment of the court at Roma. Although it is a magnificent old court building, the acoustics are not great. If a child or a person with a soft voice is giving evidence, then that person needs some amplification of their voice. In most of our courtrooms we have microphones, but they are not amplification; they are simply for the purposes of court recording. We are doing that. That does not cost a fortune. The use of video technology is part of it.

This is an area where I am very pleased to see that the courts, the judges themselves, are taking a much more active interest. For example, just last week I had the honour of visiting Bamaga together with the Chief Judge of the District Court and the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate. We are in the process of building a Magistrates Court there. We sat down with the local indigenous community, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community from the northern peninsula area, to talk about ways and means that that court could be more accessible to the community, more user friendly. Part of the things that they talked about was the position of children, in particular those children who commit offences, get sent off to the Cleveland Detention Centre at Townsville and then come back and perhaps get into further trouble.

One of the other areas that does involve better technology but also better approaches is the shameful delays that sometimes occur between the making of the complaint on the part of a child witness and the hearing of the matter in the committal and the hearing of the matter in the trial. The problem there is that such children may be encouraged not to undertake therapy, because the therapy itself may be seen to taint their evidence. We need to do better.

**Mr FOURAS:** I refer to the indications in the Budget papers that the further recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission in respect of substitute decision making would be implemented. Can you advise the Committee what the

recommendations are about, the time frame for their implementation and their impact?

**Mr FOLEY:** This is the implementation of a Guardianship and Administration Tribunal for people with a decision-making disability. It is an area that is sorely needed. It entails the establishment of a tribunal to exercise some of the powers and functions currently exercised by the Supreme Court. At the moment if a person is caring for an adult son or daughter who has a decision-making disability, then much of the responsibility for handling that person's financial affairs is done through the Public Trustee. This will enable the guardianship tribunal to make appointments of a person effectively to act as a guardian and it will be much more user friendly.

At the moment, there is provision to go to the Supreme Court and make an application for a declaration of what is called a comity of the person. That system, however, is very seldom used, because it is cumbersome, it is expensive and the Supreme Court, for all of its great attributes, is not a very user-friendly place for dealing with matters of that nature.

So this was one of the recommendations of the Queensland Law Reform Commission, to move to this model. We have accepted that we will do so. I will be introducing legislation, hopefully later this year or early next year, and we hope to have it up and running in the first six months of next year. This is something for which people with families, caring for people with decision-making disability, have been waiting for a long time, and we have made funds available in the Budget for it to happen. As with all of these reforms, it is no use just having the relevant legislation; one has to have the budgetary provisions to make it happen. But it is something, I think, that will be enormously important.

I remember one of the first things I did on entering Parliament was to represent the then Minister, the Honourable Bill Eaton, at a meeting of ADARDA, the then Alzheimer's-related disorders association. They wanted two things: powers of attorney legislation and guardianship legislation. That was in 1990, so it is about time that we delivered. The powers of attorney legislation was introduced by Mr Beanland, and that is a very important reform. But this is really the next step—to give those people better access to justice.

**Mr FOURAS:** Thank you, Minister. I applaud the fact that the guardianship legislation will be implemented. I think it is overdue.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, I have one last question from the Government on this part of

your portfolio at this stage. It is to do with justices of the peace. I have about 500 or 600 who live in my electorate, which is an inner-city electorate, and I know how important they are. What initiatives are provided in this Budget to enhance justices of the peace services across Queensland?

**Mr FOLEY:** One of the most important areas is in providing training and support to justices of the peace (Magistrates Court) in rural and remote areas. I mentioned that I had the chance to visit Bamaga last week with the heads of jurisdiction of two of our courts. I also visited Kowanyama a few weeks ago in discussing the establishment of the courts there. In both of those places we have a number of indigenous justices of the peace (Magistrates Court). That is extremely important. For example, at Bamaga, they constitute the Magistrates Court there every Thursday, and that gives people access to justice. It means that they do not have to wait around until the end of the month for people to have their matters heard.

The JP training program has met with community leaders from Hope Vale, Wujal Wujal, Palm Island and Kowanyama. Training will be conducted for the Kowanyama community in the last week of October 1999. Training is scheduled for Hope Vale and Wujal Wujal during November 1999.

Just on the question of training—officers of the department are working with a range of members of Parliament to provide training seminars in their areas. I know the member for Indooroopilly, Mr Beanland, has held such a training session. The member for Aspley, Mr Goss, has recently held one or two of those. Indeed, just last night I attended one with the member for Murrumba. And the member for Kurwongbah has also had one. So those will continue.

In addition to that, in February 1998, during the term of my predecessor Mr Beanland, negotiations were finalised with a company, Pacific Access, to have the names of JPs and CDecs published in the Yellow Pages and regional directories. I note that, on the department's Internet site, justices of the peace and commissioners for declarations can have their names published, and that can be accessed at local libraries or by personal computers. That is important, because when a citizen wants to get access to a JP or a commissioner for declarations, it is important that they be able to do so. There is also a review currently under way by the Queensland Law Reform Commission. I think submissions

on that review have been extended to 22 October.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. I would now like to ask our first question with regard to the Arts portfolio, which you cover. I refer to page 1-3 of the MPS, which sets out the key strategic direction of Arts Queensland and, in particular, the indication of increased funding to the Regional Arts Development Fund. Can the Minister give some detail on what the Government is doing for regions in respect of arts?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. The Regional Arts Development Fund has been boosted in the current Budget, up from \$2m in last year's Budget to \$2.25m in this year's Budget, having received a boost of an extra half a million dollars in the previous Budget. The Regional Arts Development Fund is a terrific program. It involves a cooperative approach between the State Government and local government. I have to commend local governments throughout the State for their active participation in this.

Indeed, on Sunday, I had the honour of visiting Innisfail to formally open an exhibition there, set along the river bank, of ceramic tiles setting out the history of the town and of the river. That is a good example of where some funds can be applied through the Regional Arts Development Fund. They also receive funding from a number of other quarters, as well. That is one important initiative.

Others include things like the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, which we shifted from being a Brisbane-based thing. It was scrapped by the coalition Government. We reintroduced it and made it a Queensland-wide thing. Why? Because the great strength of Queensland's culture lies in its diversity, and that means not just the concert halls of the capital city, but it means things like Rock on the Back of a Truck going out through Hughenden and Longreach and reaching out to some of those people who do not otherwise get a fair go. It has involved things like supporting Townsville and their School of Arts in their desire to have a great home for Dance North. It involves things like the funding of the Far North Cultural Industries Association to provide industry support for the development of the arts industry in far-north Queensland.

Basically, there is a strong emphasis throughout the various programs on supporting the regions, both in terms of giving them a fair go and giving them access to justice, and also in terms of playing to our strengths. And our great strengths in this State are the diversity. When I was in Quilpie for the

cultural summit there, I met with interesting bush poets. I met with people doing terrific pottery. And the world looks different there from the way it looks to the Tjapukai Dance Company in Cairns and the way it looks to the cappuccino set in West End over their poetry. That diversity is to be celebrated, and that is what we are trying to do.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for questions from the Government has expired. It is now the non-Government members' opportunity to ask questions.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Chairman, members, Minister and departmental officers, I refer to Budget Paper No. 5 and the capital statement on page 49 in relation to the Queensland Cultural Centre 2000. There is a sum there of \$28.458m. I ask for details of how this is to be expended.

**Mr FOLEY:** I thank the member for the question. That will entail expenditure on the establishment of off-site facilities for the Library and the Museum. We have a problem in that the Library and the Museum are bursting at the seams in terms of their facilities. We estimate some \$19m will be devoted to that. A sum of \$5m will be allocated towards the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre.

As a result of the review that was undertaken, we had discussions with the indigenous community and they made the very strong point to us that, if we are celebrating a cultural centre for Queensland, we should affirm our connection with the indigenous community. They have been making efforts for some 16 years to get a cultural centre and we have expressed our support for that. There is some further work to be undertaken in order to ensure that that is responsive both to the Turrbal people and to the committee which established the Musgrave Park Cultural Association.

Funds are also set aside for the acquisition of a parcel of land right at the end of the site which is next to the Pauls milk factory. The reason for that is that it is used as a truck parking depot. In the fullness of time it is important that that be available for cultural centre purposes. We are entering into a 10-year lease-back arrangement with them so that they can support the very important jobs that they generate at Pauls. Funds are also available in order to ensure that we have funds for an architectural competition which is to be undertaken.

May I say in this regard that we have been faced with quite a difficult prospect because the previous Government announced a \$320m cultural centre, but in the last Budget

that it passed it did not allocate any funds for the centre. It referred to some \$10m coming out of the Treasurer's reserves. We have had to look at what is provided. We have had to deal with matters of urgent priority, and those are the priorities. We have also made provision for the outer years for ongoing expenditure in that area to deal with the other things which are under consideration, such as the Gallery of Modern Art and the Queensland Cultural Heritage Centre and so on.

**Mr BEANLAND:** What are the locations of these facilities? May I have a breakdown of the costs? Whilst you have indicated some costs, namely \$19m and \$5m, we still do not have a breakdown of the costs. You mentioned extensions to the Museum and the Library.

**Mr FOLEY:** There is some discussion about locations. At one stage it was considered that it would be desirable to locate it on the old Boggo Road prison site, but there are some question marks in regard to that. A preference has been expressed to have it at some other site close to the centre. We have an open mind on that. Because they are largely off-site storage facilities, they will have some sort of provision for offices and so on. Because they are off-site it does not matter a great deal whether they are at West End, South Brisbane, or somewhere else, but they have to be somewhere close. The notional budget of \$20m—which was revised to \$19m—was when we had the Boggo Road site in mind. That has to be considered in the light of a possible shift. The \$5m for the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre is based on figures that were furnished by the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre Association.

The details of the architectural competition have yet to be finalised. It depends, to some extent, on the sequencing of the outer years. Part of the problem is that the idea of a Gallery of Modern Art and the idea of the Queensland Cultural Heritage Centre, which is part of it, entails prioritising over time. The pie-in-the-sky figure of \$320m was set out and it included \$80m for a Gallery of Modern Art, \$20m for off-site facilities, \$160m for the Queensland Cultural Heritage Centre and relocation of the administration of the Performing Arts Trust and display costs at a cost of \$21m. That brought it up to \$341m.

The problem is that all of that was illusory because the only budgetary provision that was made—and it was never actually passed by the previous Government—was in the outer years. We have retained the \$30m in the outer years and added an extra \$30m in the

Forward Estimates for the year one further out. That is the only budgetary provision that was made. In the course of this financial year we will be able to engage on those projects. We hope that the lion's share of those projects will be dealt with in the course of this financial year. Some of them may have to be carried over, depending upon the delay that we have run into with regard to the Boggo Road site. Basically, we have had to go back to square one and try to make this into something that could work as opposed to something that was pie-in-the-sky.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I did not ask the Minister to talk about ancillary matters. What I want to know is exactly where the extension to the Museum and the Library is going to be. I also want a breakdown of the costs in relation to this matter and the other matters that make up the Minister's budget of \$28.45m. Despite having put the question on notice and having now asked it twice, I still do not have those details, with respect, from the Minister. What is the location and what is the breakdown of the money? I asked that question before, with respect, Minister.

**Mr FOLEY:** I join with the member for Indooroopilly in expressing respect. What I have said to the member is that it was contemplated that it was going to be on the Boggo Road site at Dutton Park. However, some further consideration is being undertaken in regard to that.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Does that mean that at this moment no specific locations for the extensions of the Library and the Museum have been decided? Is that what this Committee is being told?

**Mr FOLEY:** It means that the provisional location of Boggo Road is being reconsidered with a view to finding alternative sites in the West End/South Brisbane area. To some extent it does not matter because, provided it is reasonably close to the Library and the Museum, it will provide considerable relief. The problem is that the Library and the Museum are bursting at the seams with these materials which they hold in acquisition.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Is this purely for the Library and the Museum? You mentioned the Art Gallery.

**Mr FOLEY:** The \$19m is for the Library and the Museum. The sequencing of those other matters—namely the Gallery of Modern Art and the Queensland Cultural Heritage Centre and so on—has to be determined in the light of the available funds. We have had to translate the simply mythical projections for those things totalling \$320m, for which

budgetary provision was just not made, into things that are pressing and urgent. During the course of this year, we have done that. In the outer years, we have \$30m next year—that is the financial year after this one—and \$30m in the financial year after that and \$30m in the financial year after that to see how we could try to sequence those things.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I appreciate—

**Mr FOLEY:** If I can just say, when I said "30,000", I meant \$30m—\$92,136,000 in the period post 1999-2000.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Short \$28.458m. We have identified the fact that there is no location for these two buildings, or one building—whatever it might be—so we do not know where this \$28.458m is going to be spent. However, you have not yet given me an estimate or a breakdown as to how you arrived at that figure. You have told us about \$5m for Musgrave Park and there is \$19m for these two facilities, or one facility—whatever it might be. Do you have a breakdown for that? Where is the other \$4.458m going to go? Some is going to the architectural. How is it made up?

**Mr FOLEY:** As I mentioned to the honourable member, some of it is going on the acquisition of that land. There is some \$1.8m odd for that. There is provision also for the ongoing planning for the rest of this very, very major project, including provision for an architectural competition.

**Mr BEANLAND:** How much is that? What is the estimate of funds? There must be some funding allocated in the budget.

**Mr FOLEY:** Sure, and the sequencing of that funding throughout this year and next year and the years after depend to some extent on the decision in regard to the sequencing of the Gallery of Modern Art and Queensland Cultural Heritage Centre. Basically, there is a discussion about when and in what sequence those things can be done. The reason there is that discussion is that there was simply no plan put in place to reconcile the public statements of \$320m with the budget provision. We inherited—

**Mr BEANLAND:** How much is the architectural competition? That is the question that I am asking.

**Mr FOLEY:** Let me finish. We inherited \$10m, followed by \$30m, \$30m and \$30m.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Not too good, Minister.

**Mr FOLEY:** That does not follow any particular sequence. That is what we have been seeking to establish.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Something to hide.

**Mr FOLEY:** The first thing that we have had to do is to deal with that which is urgent and pressing. The things that are urgent and pressing are—

**Mr BEANLAND:** That is the \$28m in the budget. That is urgent and pressing. How are you going to spend that? You still have not told me. I am not trying to badger the Minister; I just need a simple answer to this question. This is about the fifth or sixth go I have had now, including putting questions on notice. You still have not answered how you are spending the \$28m. It should be simple enough. You have your chief accountant with you and you have your director-general and other staff with you. How is the \$28m arrived at? That is the question.

**Mr FOLEY:** With respect, I do not feel badgered.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Good.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am more than happy to make information available to the honourable member.

**Mr BEANLAND:** You have not yet.

**Mr FOLEY:** Perhaps if the honourable member would care to listen.

**Mr BEANLAND:** I have been for six questions now.

**Mr FOLEY:** The storage facilities are an important item. They have had to be brought on early, because the library and the museum have considerable pressures upon them. For example, the \$20m, which was proposed by the previous Government for a Queensland Theatre Company 500-seat theatre, is simply not a priority. We are not going to be able to fund that during the course of this term. One of the things that we have sought to do to deal with that is to invest \$1.5m through the funds made available in the Premier's budget to the Gardens Point Theatre. As a result, the Queensland Theatre Company and, indeed, a whole range of other groups will be able to get access to a smaller theatre. As you may be aware, when we commissioned the Optus Playhouse, the—

**Mr BEANLAND:** Could I ask the Minister again, since he still has not answered the question? He has obviously allocated funds and he does not know how he is going to spend them. That is the Minister's words. He has not given me a straight answer on the matter.

**Mr FOLEY:** Quite to the contrary.

**Mr BEANLAND:** You have had some 15 minutes or more on it now. It is a simple matter, Minister. It is up to you. You either

know how you are spending it or you do not. I will move on. I now ask the Minister: does any of the additional land that he is acquiring for the Queensland Cultural Centre belong to the Commercial Rowing Club?

**Mr FOLEY:** There is land owned by the Commercial Rowing Club. At this stage it is not our intention to purchase that land during the course of this year. There has been consideration given to that. The land in question is right at the end of the point and it involves some discussion because, if in the fullness of time the Gallery of Modern Art is built there, notwithstanding the failure of the previous Government to make budgetary provision for it, it probably would raise a few eyebrows if our icon Gallery of Modern Art was smack bang next door to a truck depot. I know that there are some post modern theorists who would think that that was particularly poignant, but the weight of opinion from my department was that we should try to do something else. That is why originally an appeal was lodged before the Planning and Environment Court. In fact, I think that it may have started during the term of the previous Minister. Eventually, we were able to arrive at a settlement, which was the lease and buyback. There has been consideration given to the Commercial Rowing Club land.

**Mr BEANLAND:** When are you acquiring the Commercial Rowing Club land? Is that next year? The next financial year? Three years down the track? Five years? It is straightforward.

**Mr FOLEY:** It remains to be seen.

**Mr BEANLAND:** Soon?

**Mr FOLEY:** It really depends upon the sequencing of the construction of the other items, which we have to decide in regard to the competing interests of the Gallery of Modern Art and the Queensland Cultural Heritage Centre.

With respect to the facilities, the \$19m or \$20m, if it is not Boggo Road, there is some land of about \$1.8m, there is Musgrave Park, \$5m, there is the competition, which we estimate at about \$850,000, there is documentation in the order of \$200,000, there is site works in the order of \$100,000 and there is the development office itself in the order \$350,000. Those figures come to some \$28.3m or \$28.4m. I have gone through those matters a number of times, but I want to try to explain to the Committee that the so-called Queensland Cultural Centre 2000 that was described—

**Mr BEANLAND:** Which you promised as an election commitment.

**Mr FOLEY:** With great respect—

**Mr BEANLAND:** I have heard—

**Mr FOLEY:** With great respect—

**Mr BEANLAND:** You promised to continue that project.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am more than happy to answer that question and I will take it as a question. What we promised to do was not—

**Mr BEANLAND:** Minister—

**Mr FOLEY:** You have asked a question and I am more than happy to answer it. As I said in the Courier-Mail, we should not approach it as an edifice complex, which is what the previous Government did. We promised that we would undertake a review of it, which is what we have done and—

**Mr BEANLAND:** But you have not honoured your election commitment, have you, Minister? That is what you said you were going to do.

**Mr FOLEY:** You obviously do not want to hear the facts, but I remember it well and truly because it was published as an article in the Courier-Mail with extensive quotes from me. Firstly, we expressed broad support for the project. Secondly, from the outset we said that this was a gross misleading of the Queensland people because Arts Minister Sheldon, although she made a number of very fine contributions in a number of areas, announced the \$320m not as a serious project but in order to bump off page 1 of the Courier-Mail the story about job losses associated with the Suncorp/Metway merger. Thirdly, we said that we would undertake the review with particular regard to the regions. Fourthly, we said we would undertake it with particular regard to the impact of jobs in the arts industry. I invite the honourable member to read the record and not to reinvent it. One thing we never promised to do was to build a \$320m centre without giving a cracker in the Budget, which is what the previous Arts Minister did.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for Opposition members is up. It is the Government's opportunity to ask some questions in regard to the arts. Minister, I take you to the reinstatement of the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, one of Queensland's achievements for 1998-99. Can the Minister advise the Committee of the success of this festival after it has been reinstated for Queensland arts?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Queensland Biennial Festival of Music was held concurrently in three major centres, Mackay, Townsville and Brisbane, over 10 days in July 1999. The festival involved an extraordinary number of

artists—2,382 artists including secondary school students. Over 59,000 people attended the events. The State Government made a basic allocation of \$2m cash, and in kind sponsorship was also forthcoming. Other grants from other areas of the State Government were made, including, as I was very pleased to see, support from Queensland Rail and the youth section of the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care. The final financial result is likely to be a deficit of just under \$50,000, which will be met through an indemnification through Arts Queensland.

The great success of the biennial was its willingness to go out to regional Queensland and to celebrate our diversity. It achieved remarkable links through Rock on the Back of a Truck, which went to Hughenden, Longreach and Mount Isa. The people of Mackay saw the indigenous Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and the South Sea Islander communities coming together. The people of Townsville worked closely with the Army, the boating community and so on. As well as that, there was a soul contest.

The biennial was really all about trying to celebrate Queensland culture from the grassroots, rather than simply importing artists, although a number of magnificent international and overseas artists did take part in the festival. However, we were seeking to affirm the international excellence of Queensland rather than simply importing people. People such as Rafael Wallfish, who performed the Bach cello suites, made quite a remarkable contribution. The links with youth, the regions and the indigenous communities made the festival something special. It restored to Queensland the biennial that, regrettably, had been scrapped by the previous Government in an act of cultural vandalism.

**Mr FOURAS:** We would all be aware that the GST is looming on the horizon. In fact, in many cases it will mean a double whammy for performing arts and exhibitions, as the costs of staging will go up appreciably and the ability to get the returns from either the performing arts or, for example, from an exhibition at the art gallery will be made more difficult because 10% more will have to be paid to get in and you have to get the money back. It appears to me that there is a double whammy for the arts under the GST. What is your view on that and how can we overcome the problems for funding exhibitions in the performing arts?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Commonwealth's own figures indicated that the GST will impact on the arts industry very significantly. Indeed, after the tobacco industry, it was going to be the

industry most damaged by the GST. I have made representations to Senator Alston, the Federal Arts Minister, on that. He and the Federal Government have refused to make special provision for the GST. It is quite clear that this is going to hurt the arts industry hard. That is important from a jobs point of view, because the arts industry generates a lot of jobs in Queensland and it has the potential to generate more. The Nugent inquiry into the performing arts does not have the impact of the GST in its terms of reference. The difficulties faced by performing arts companies throughout the State are very considerable indeed.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that many in the arts industry are small operators. They are not big businesses that can have an accounting system in place that does this as a matter of practice. The small artist or the small arts group will have to put a lot of effort and energy into the paperwork of it. The response from Senator Alston and the Federal Government has been to wait and see. That is particularly disturbing because many of these arts organisations are working at the margins and simply will not be able to cope with it.

Also, in the arts industry we are dealing with discretionary expenditure. The tax on books, the tax on set design and the tax on people going to live performances is a matter of very real concern. The arts industry is likely to be very hard hit by the GST. Although the Queensland Government supports strongly the arts and cultural organisations, it is something that is going to be a matter of real concern for the arts community.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Can you outline the Government initiatives in this Budget relating to youth arts?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. We are honouring our promises in regard to a range of areas in youth arts. With respect to the music industry, I might say that this is Australian Music Week, which I had the pleasure of launching a couple of days ago. We will boost funds to the Tute Music Mentor Program, we will provide funds for youth radio traineeships, we will provide funds for the A Venue initiative and we will provide funds for the youth entertainment scheme. This is about honouring the pre-election promises that we made to try to support people in the arts. In addition, we are working on a contemporary music strategy to ensure that the tremendous job opportunities in this field are encouraged.

One has only to look at the enormous success of Powderfinger, Regurgitator and

Savage Garden to see the tremendous potential for jobs, exports and income substitution in respect of young people in the arts. It is for those reasons that we think this is important. We do not intend to spend public money as was done by the previous Government in its communications with youth. It put advertisements on the side of buses telling youth that they would be locked up and it used slogans such as "new bars for teenagers" and "no more kid gloves". We think it is a lot better that the Government, on behalf of the community, does something to help young people to get jobs. An important area of getting jobs is in the youth arts and youth music business. For example, the Youth Arts Mentoring Program supports young arts workers through skills-based training and education for a professional career.

For example, at one of the Community Cabinet meetings—I think it was in Mount Isa—I met a young Aboriginal bloke who was doing cartooning. He was able to work through the mentor program with an experienced professional artist and he was doing up a series of cards that he was going to sell as Christmas cards. That is an opportunity that he would not have had but for the fact that he was able to be in contact with this professional arts worker and establish a link between his own creativity and the business of making a dollar in the marketplace. Our focus is on jobs and on trying to ensure that young people have access to jobs.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Bearing in mind the focus that the arts industry has on job creation, I refer you to pages 1-37 and 1-38 of the MPS, which list the recent achievements and the assistance to the Arts Queensland output. Can the Minister give more detail in respect of the research conducted and the links and partnership opportunities between arts and industry? What job opportunities does that present for Queenslanders?

**Mr FOLEY:** A number of projects have been undertaken to try to generate jobs and to make a clearer link between arts and industry. For example, in Cairns \$10,000 was provided to Cairns-based furniture designer Michael Epworth to establish a business to design and manufacture a range of furniture based on the traditional style of Tasmanian furniture maker Jimmy Possum. This will provide training opportunities for indigenous people. In Maryborough in the Walkers Engineering plant we are working with wooden moulds, which are works of art in themselves. They have been used to make clay moulds and are then used to pour molten metal for engineering parts. In Mount Isa we are working with the rodeo

community on an exhibition of buckles. But this is an important way also of linking in with the marketing of the beef community. I have the pleasure to say that, within your electorate, Mr Chairman, we are working with a company that has a particular interest in public art and sees that as an important way of giving an identity or an expression to the work that it does, which is otherwise not able to be clearly understood and seen out in the marketplace.

This is not just about building links between work and art. This is about generating jobs. For example, if you look at the efforts that have been made in the Tasmanian fishing industry, you see that they have used this arts initiative to contribute to marketing. When the fish is purchased in American supermarkets, people have some idea of the fishing community from Tasmania from which the fish product has come. It has tremendous potential and it is important to make sure that we keep the link with jobs and industry. Art is not something to be tucked away in the winter palaces of the capital city, it is something to be made part and parcel of the workplace. I compliment the very fine work being done by that project team, headed so ably by yourself, Mr Chairperson. What we are seeing is a creative and innovative link between arts and industry in a way which will help generate jobs.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Minister, you mentioned earlier the Nugent inquiry. Could you give us some detail about the inquiry and what impact the findings may have on the Queensland arts industry?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Nugent inquiry was set up by the Commonwealth Government to look at the problems in the major performing arts companies. Many of those performing arts companies have had increasing costs and static or decreasing revenues. The crucial aspect for us is to note the scandalous underfunding of Queensland by the Commonwealth Government. Let me look, for example, at the Commonwealth funding of orchestras. The Commonwealth Government contributes only \$3.8m to orchestral services in Queensland. By contrast, it contributes over \$10m to Victoria—more than double—and over \$13m to New South Wales, which is more than triple what is funded to Queensland. This domination of Commonwealth arts funding by an elite in the Canberra/Sydney/Melbourne triangle is something that has to be stopped. I am hoping that out of the Nugent inquiry the spectacular inequities of Commonwealth funding to Queensland are revealed, and I hope that will produce a change of heart on the part of the Commonwealth Government. I have gone down there and spoken directly to

Senator Alston and Mr Peter McGauran, the senior and junior Ministers for the Arts. In addition to that, I compliment Helen Nugent and her team for working bottom up in trying to work with those companies, for example, the Queensland Ballet Company and the others that are trying to balance their books and build a strong and secure future.

From where I sit as the Queensland Arts Minister, if we are looking at the debate about amalgamation of orchestras and at the debate about the future, what it means is that the systematic unfairness of the Commonwealth coalition Government's funding of the arts has to be blown away. The Australia Council regularly underfunds Queensland artists. Its excuse is that it does not get enough applications from Queensland. But my concern is that the information and support networks around Double Bay and Toorak work overtime to the disadvantage of people in Queensland. That is also a problem in some of the other States. But I am hoping that the fine work being done by the Nugent inquiry will turn the spotlight on this historical injustice of underfunding by the Commonwealth Government to Queensland arts and in particular to the orchestras. I know that a lot of people in the philharmonic orchestra and the symphony orchestra would like to see justice in terms of funding from the Commonwealth Government.

**The CHAIRMAN:** In respect of art in public spaces, can you give examples of capital works projects that have seen this commitment implemented?

**Mr FOLEY:** In this regard, I pay tribute to the previous Government and to Mrs Sheldon, the former Arts Minister, who helped make it part of the Neville Bonner Building. We have honoured an election promise. We promised a 2% for public art policy. We have delivered it. That has been set out publicly. There is a range of exemptions for certain matters to do with utilitarian purposes and so on. We are working on things like the courthouses that we are building at Kowanyama and Bamaga, the projects at 381 Brunswick Street and the Neville Bonner Building, of course, for which the credit must largely go to the previous Government. We sought to take it from being an ad hoc arrangement to actually making it part and parcel. The 2% for public art is not art tacked on, it is art built in. There is a whole range of other things, such as the Brisbane arrest courts, the Land and Resources Tribunal, the Cairns Convention Centre and so on.

Let me give you a practical example, because I think this will bring it home. When I went to Kowanyama to talk with the indigenous community about the Magistrates Court that we are building there, as well as talking to them about what they wanted to call it—they wanted to call it the community justice centre—we talked about what sort of art should go in there. The three different tribal groups there expressed a desire to be part of that. Two per cent of the project is going into that, which is something in the order of \$20,000. It might be a little more. That includes administration costs, which are kept to a minimum. But it means that those communities have a chance to participate. I was deeply honoured by the fact that the Aboriginal groups there were keen about it. They did not just see it as a white fella court where a magistrate flies in, sentences them to prison and flies out. They saw it as an opportunity to put in their art, to be consulted about the design and to have it made part and parcel of that.

When my mum grew up in Kuranda, she was very proud of the railway station, as people were in those days. But nowadays for some reason we have become used to public buildings and public facilities that are purely functional, utilitarian, bland and boring. We have to get back to basics and back to the old days, where people can feel proud and have a sense of ownership. That is what we are trying to do in a range of buildings. It is not a question of being flash, it is a question of ensuring that the art is built in through furnishing, fabric, relevant tiling and so on, and that the art is not just tacked on.

**The CHAIRMAN:** At Kowanyama you will probably get more than your \$20,000 worth when they put up their hand to do the job. The time for questions having now expired, that concludes the examination of the Estimates for the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for The Arts. I thank you, Minister, and the portfolio officers, particularly the Director-General, Jane Macdonnell, for your attendance.

**Mr FOLEY:** May I take the opportunity of thanking my director-general and the departmental officers, who have worked very hard to be of assistance to your Committee in furnishing the relevant information as part of our accountability to the Parliament.

Sitting suspended from 12.02 p.m. to 1 p.m.

**POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES****IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. T. A. Barton, Minister for Police and Corrective Services

Queensland Police Service—

Mr R. McGibbon, Acting Commissioner

Mr P. Freestone, Acting Deputy Commissioner

Mr R. Warry, Executive Director, Corporate Services

Mr J. Just, Director, Finance Division

Queensland Crime Commission—

Mr T. Carmody, Crime Commissioner

Corrective Services—

Mr F. Peach, Director-General

Mr P. Rule, Executive Director (Corporate Services)

Mr R. Pulsford, Acting Director, Finance and Administration

Ms A. Hunter, Executive Director, Policy and Program Services

The Committee commenced at 1.03 p.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I apologise for being a little bit late. The next portfolio to be examined is the Minister for Police and Corrective Services. I remind members of the Committee and the Minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning will be given when your time is about to expire. The Sessional Orders require that at least half the time needs to be allotted to non-Government members. I ask departmental witnesses to identify themselves before they answer questions so that that can be recorded in the Hansard. I declare that the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Police and Corrective Services be opened for examination. The question before the Chair is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Minister, would you like to make a brief opening introductory statement before the Opposition have their 20 minutes?

**Mr BARTON:** I would like to do that. I am very pleased to have this opportunity to highlight the achievements gained over the past year within the Police and Corrective Services portfolio and explain some of the initiatives the Beattie Labor Government has

planned for this financial year. The achievements are many and varied and this year's Budget is aimed at consolidating those achievements in a fiscally responsible and balanced manner. In both Police and Corrective Services, the past year has been a period of unprecedented stability and growth. Police and prisons have largely been taken off the front pages of our newspapers. They have not been an issue, unlike the troubled times under the Borbidge Government. This is largely due to the good management teams we have in place.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank both the management structures under Commissioner O'Sullivan and Director-General Peach for the hard work each of their teams and their troops on the ground have put in place over the past 12 months and, of course, I would also add to that the Queensland Crime Commission under Tim Carmody and his team.

As I move around the State opening new police facilities, the continuous feedback I get from the public is not only about the need to provide more police but a more visible police presence. I am therefore pleased to be able to report on the range of Beattie Labor Government initiatives that have been supported, and we will continue to support that emphasis.

Each region has seen an increase in their operational budgets which will deliver more police on the streets and a more comprehensive response from our dedicated Police Service. The planned net growth in police numbers will result in the allocation of an additional 1,968 police throughout Queensland by the end of the financial year 2004-05. To achieve these net increases, the QPS will average increases of 325 extra police each year over the next six years.

Since coming to office, the Government has also focused its attention on improving police practices and funding additional Police Beats, Police Beat shopfronts and initiatives to enhance the capacity of the service in problem oriented policing. Over the past year we exceeded our election promise of 10 new Police Beats by implementing 12 new beats. Across Queensland there are currently 28 officers working in 22 Police Beats. In addition, six new shopfronts commenced operation last year and a further four Police Beat shopfronts will be established in this financial year at Townsville, Mackay, Cairns and Chermerside, bringing the total number of shopfronts in Queensland to 39. All these initiatives are designed to enhance both the presence of

police across the State and the relationship between police and their local communities.

In Corrective Services I told this Committee last year that the Beattie Labor Government had inherited a prison system in crisis due mainly to unprecedented overcrowding and mismanagement by the previous coalition Government. Under the coalition, Queensland had to endure unprecedented escapes from secure facilities, including the infamous Brendon Abbott break-out. During this time, the coalition seemed more concerned with headline grabbing gimmicks than fixing the real cause of the problems, such as underresourcing and understaffing of our Corrective Services facilities. Since then the most far reaching reforms in corrections in more than a decade have been implemented and more are still being implemented.

Under the new Department of Corrective Services set up this year following an exhaustive review of Corrective Services by Frank Peach and his team, we have instituted a more accountable and responsive structure within Corrective Services aimed at fixing the problems which have plagued Queensland in recent years. The Department of Corrective Services has been allocated a total budget of \$422m for 1999-2000, with \$119m of this earmarked for capital expenditure.

However, there is more to Corrective Services than just building prison cells. We are an essential player in the criminal justice system and have a role in crime prevention through offender rehabilitation programs and prisons industries. This Budget has allocated \$600,000 for the supervision of community projects for offenders in the Brisbane metropolitan region and \$530,000 to expand the St Vincent de Paul Community Correction Centre at South Brisbane. There is also \$200,000 for the extended pilot program in court advisory services in the metropolitan region. Over the next year, substantial legislative reform is planned based on the recommendations from the Corrections in the Balance Review. Like the Police portfolio, this year will be an exciting year of consolidation and growth in Corrective Services.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you. We will now have 20 minutes for the Opposition to examine your budget.

**Mr HORAN:** I would like to say good afternoon to the Minister and the senior officers and administrators of the Queensland Police Service. In my first question I want to refer to the Ministerial Portfolio Statements on pages 1-32 to 1-36. In the output performance

for ethical standards and public accountability there has been the creation of the Ethical Standards Command, which is responsible for ethical behaviour, discipline and professional practice. In the output statement on page 1-35 in terms of quality, the opinions under "Public perception of police professionalism and image" include "Police perform job professionally"; "police are honest"; and people "have confidence in the police". In light of the newspaper revelations on Saturday that a senior staffer in the Police Minister's office has a string of criminal convictions—and this was confirmed and defended by your office—on the one hand, we have \$17m being spent on this particular output and enormous effort by the police to maintain standards and public perceptions, so I ask you: what are you going to do with regards to your office and the employment of staff in your office to maintain the standard that the police themselves are setting?

**Mr BARTON:** What I am going to do, and what I expect that you would also do, is follow the laws of this State of Queensland. The law of this State of Queensland is the Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act as it was amended in September 1986. It was National Party legislation, because the National Party was in Government in its own right at that point in time. So it is not some fluffy, soft legislation brought in by a Labor Government that you might be trying to portray it as. It is legislation that was introduced by the then Minister for Justice and Attorney-General, Neville Harper. In that debate he said—

"The Act not only prohibits the disclosure of convictions after a person has been rehabilitated but also entitles him to deny he has been convicted."

That was strongly supported by the then shadow Justice Minister, Wayne Goss, who indicated that Labor supported the legislation, and by the then Leader of the Liberal Party, Angus Innes, who said one line in the debate, "The Liberal Party supports the legislation". The Bill was passed without amendment.

I put on the record that there is no employee on my staff who has any disclosable offences under that legislation. If in fact anybody has had any criminal convictions, they certainly fall within the protection of the Criminal Law (Rehabilitation of Offenders) Act. That does mean, in effect, that they have no requirement to tell me of any such convictions. That Act not only prohibits the disclosure; it also in fact makes it illegal for me as their employer—although there is some question about whether I am their employer, because

my staff are employed by the Premier, as you would be well aware from your period of time as a Minister—to even ask about it and it makes it illegal for me to take that into account, even if I am made aware of it.

I want to put this in the strongest possible terms, Mr Horan. I find it shabby that you have asked this question when we are here to look at the detail of these two departments and the Crime Commission, because I expect that you will follow legislation, introduced by one of your own Governments, which gives people in such circumstances a second chance. There are a great many Queenslanders, and many great Queenslanders, who erred in their younger days who are entitled to that second chance. If I have any employee who is covered by that rehabilitation of offenders Act, they are entitled to the same protection of the laws of Queensland as every other citizen.

**Mr HORAN:** As the Minister, you are responsible for really setting the standards in your portfolio area. Really, it falls on your shoulders to make a judgment that is good for the vast numbers of people who work within that department that you are responsible for. You mentioned that this was a shabby question. In this department we have some \$17m and a great deal of personal effort and integrity going into maintaining the public perception of the Queensland Police Service. People are not able to join the Queensland Police Service or the Queensland correctional service if they have a string of criminal convictions. That is the point I am making.

The revelations in the Courier-Mail—they were confirmed by your office—are that such a person exists in your ministerial office. It is a pretty poor standard for you to set for your department, when the people who work in the Queensland Police Service would be unable to obtain a job there if they had a string of criminal convictions. It behoves you as the Minister responsible to set the ethical standards.

**Mr BARTON:** I accept that I am the Minister responsible for a great Police Service in this State that sets exceptionally good standards. I find it unacceptable that the Courier-Mail set a very bad standard in this regard as well. It did not set a good standard in running that article. I question whether in fact it was confirmed that such a person did exist in my office in terms of what was said to the Courier-Mail.

I will repeat this for you, Mr Horan: the standard that every member of Parliament, and certainly every Minister, is required to set is in line with the laws of this State as passed

by this Parliament that we are all proud members of and of which I am very proud to be the Minister responsible for police and corrective services in this State. I intend to ensure that the Police Service sets the highest possible standards. I intend to honour my responsibilities to honour the laws of this State. I intend to support any person who has the protection of that legislation who may have erred in their younger days and done something silly but who has rehabilitated themselves and not offended again for a period of more than 10 years. That is what this legislation is all about. Frankly, I am shocked that you are not prepared to defend the laws of this State—ones passed by a National Party Government even at the height of the worst excesses of the Bjelke-Petersen era.

**Mr HORAN:** What we are really discussing here is the personal judgment that you have made in this particular situation. We have a parallel, I guess, with the Treasurer and some of the personal judgments he made in the net bet affair. There may well be a number of police officers currently serving in the Queensland Police Service who have been arresting officers in the case of this particular person. Is there any possibility that this senior ministerial staffer could be involved directly or indirectly in any discussions or negotiations which may affect directly or indirectly those arresting police officers? How do you think those police officers would feel if on visitations to stations or meetings or deputations they are involved with a person they had arrested in the course of their duty?

The point I am making is that you have shown very poor personal judgment. You might like to quote the legislation, but you have exercised poor personal judgment with regard to the men and women of the Queensland Police Service, whom you are supposed to set a standard for. They have such high standard to meet themselves and you continue to defend this particular position you have taken.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We are examining budgets. The Minister can answer that question if he so wishes, but it is not related at all to the budget.

**Mr HORAN:** Mr Chairman, I am concerned that we have spent this \$17m and personal effort to get the image of the Police Service to the high standard it has reached at at the moment, and I believe that the revelations in the paper are destroying that effort by the Police Service.

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Horan, revelations in the paper which do not set the standard are a

poor standard for you to determine what you believe the standard should be. Police officers, under the example that you gave, are also bound to respect the law of this State—the same as you are and the same as I am. That is not a choice. There is no personal choice in whether we abide by the law of this State. It is a requirement on all of us. I am very sure that police officers in that position, if it did come to pass, would be very pleased that a former offender had rehabilitated themselves to that point. This is all about giving people a fair go. It is the Australian way of ensuring that people who have erred are corrected. That is what the whole basis of our processes of law and order in this State are about. It is the whole process of rehabilitation of offenders in the correctional system. And, Mr Horan, I am amazed that you would take this view.

I simply close by saying that I intend to abide by the laws of this State, and I intend to also set the highest possible standard for ethics of the Queensland Police Service. And the best way to do that is by abiding impeccably by the laws of this State. I am doing that. Your questions this afternoon show that you are not prepared to do that; you are prepared to engage in a grubby exercise.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister—just to make a comment as I ask my next question—obviously, you are not prepared to set the same sorts of standards for your Police Service as they have to go through themselves. You have obviously indicated here today that you are not prepared to make any adjustment to the position or the stance that you have taken, even though this senior staffer may be privy to highly confidential sensitive documents and may be involved in face-to-face meetings with various police officers. I think the police officers serving throughout the State, and the public, will be very concerned about that.

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Horan, your question is offensive. I have repeatedly said that I intend to abide by the laws of this State impeccably. And your saying that that is not an appropriate action by me does not make it inappropriate; it says more about your poor standards than anything else.

**Mr HORAN:** The point I was making was about your judgment of the people you lead—that you would continue with this particular stance. The next question is regarding question on notice No. 3, which the Opposition asked, which referred to the amount by which costs have to be reduced in the eight Queensland Police Service regions and headquarters in order to work within the 1999-2000 budgets. And in the answer, Minister,

you said that these regional budgets have increased on average by 10.6%, based on comparable 1998-99 budget allocations, and that the headquarters budget allocation increased by 6.4% on a comparable budget allocation. Minister, I ask: as your media releases and the Budget papers show, there is a budget-to-budget increase of only 4%. If there was a budget-to-budget increase of only 4%, how can the regions' budgets increase by 10.6% and the headquarter's budget increase by 6.4%? What other parts of the Police Service are there other than the regions and the headquarters?

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Horan, I think you need to go and do your homework across all of the various cost centres of the Queensland Police Service. What we have done this year—which is a fairly difficult budget year; it is a year when we are consolidating, rather than making huge leaps forward in police expenditure—there is an overall increase in police expenditure. But what we have ensured that we are doing is putting the resources out in the field where they are most needed.

**Mr HORAN:** But the question I asked was that the 10.5% and the 6.4% do not add up to 4%, which is the increased budget-to-budget figure in your media releases and in the Budget papers. Where did you get those figures from?

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Horan, I get my figures from the Queensland Police Service, which we work with very thoroughly through the budgets. You have to have a good look at all of the cost centres of the Queensland Police Service—

**Mr HORAN:** What cost centres are there other than—

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Chairman, I do not intend to be badgered by this shadow Minister.

**Mr HORAN:** I would like an answer to the question.

**Mr BARTON:** Well, if you would shut up, you would get it.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I think you need to let the Minister answer the question. You can ask a subsequent question, if you so wish. But the Minister gets three minutes to answer each question you ask. So that is about nine minutes that he has up his sleeve at the moment.

**Mr BARTON:** I will give you a few examples, because it is obvious that you cannot read the Budget papers. I will repeat it, because it is important. We have ensured, in a tight budget year, that the bulk of the expenditure that we have available to us has gone into the service delivery areas—into the

regions. Police headquarters, of course, is not just the management of the Police Service; it is also many of the support services—the very important support services for the police in the field.

But in addition to the regions and headquarters commands, there are a range of other cost centres and provisions. There are other Statewide services. There is information technology. There is capital works. Obviously, we have had to trim in some other areas so that we can make sure that we keep the service delivery aspect of the Police Service right up front this year, which is a year when there is only a small increase in the overall budget of the Police Service, but we have made sure that we put the bulk of that small increase out into the service delivery functions. And it is not my job to tell you how to read the Budget papers, Mr Horan.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, just to follow on from that—out of the total budget for the Queensland Police Service—the budget that is shown in the Budget papers—what percentage of that budget covers the budgets for the regions and headquarters? In other words, those cost centres amount to how much and what percentage?

**Mr BARTON:** I am reluctant to take questions on notice, but we will take that one on notice and we will get back to you.

**Mr HORAN:** You can see what I am getting at.

**Mr BARTON:** I can see what you are getting at, Mr Horan. But it is pretty clear to me that you do not understand the basic fact that what we have done is made sure that the resources of the Police Service this year are going out into service delivery for the public, which is what you espouse, but clearly are objecting to now.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, my next question is regarding capital works and question on notice No. 5, which the Opposition asked, and the reply that you gave. The question asked in terms of cash accounting was: what was the actual capital works expenditure and carryover for 1998-99 for the Police Department and the Corrective Services Department? I only ask this in relation to the Police Department section. In the answer you said that the service achieved a 99.9% spend of its capital works program, exclusive of vessels. Then you said that the adjusted capital works budget for 1998-99 was \$40.5m and the expenditure achieved was \$40.5m. The Budget papers of last year show that the cash budget—and I asked the question about the cash budget—was

\$88.9m. So the real figure would seem to be \$88.9m—the capital budget—and \$40.5m the expenditure achieved. Could you explain to this Estimates Committee what you mean by the "adjusted capital works budget"? Why have you not maintained the figure of \$88.9m?

**Mr BARTON:** I think we would have to go back to the actual piece of paper. What the \$88.9m figure includes is all of the plant and equipment—motor vehicles. The actual capital works budget figure that we are talking about, and which you asked about in your question on notice, is actually the bricks and mortar—the buildings. It does not include the computers. It does not include probably even the airconditioning that goes in in some cases, because we are upgrading a lot of older stations by airconditioning them. We are constantly putting in new information technology. I mentioned motor vehicles. We have had to wreck a few motor vehicles in catching some bad people in the last couple of weeks, too. That is also one of those major expenditures. So I want to make it very clear.

We have fully expended our capital works budget for last year—in the bricks and mortar. We have also fully expended the other expenditure that is important—the plant and equipment, the motor vehicles, etc. Of course, what we are running into this year, too, is the change in accountancy methods that we have between a cash budget of last year and an accrual accounting budget this year. There were some things that I am told were considered to be expended that really probably should have been noted down as having been capital works, too. We have made those adjustments in the figures, and I am sure that my team here would be able to lead me to them if it is necessary.

But if you are trying to imply—and that is what I take it you are trying to do—that I have spent only half of the available money for capital works, then let me assure you, sir, that you are barking right up the wrong tree. We have fully expended our capital works budgets last year.

**Mr HORAN:** With regard to question on notice No. 6, which was a question about the net assets of the Queensland Police Service as at 30 June 1999 and the estimated net assets as at 30 June 2000, you have stated that as at 30 June 1999 it is \$425m and the estimated net asset value as at 30 June 2000 is \$516m. That is a difference of \$91m. At the equity tax rate of 6%, this means that on 1 July next year the Queensland Police Service will be up for a \$5.5m payment to Treasury.

Can you tell this Committee where this \$5.5m will be found from within your budget?

**Mr BARTON:** I think you need to be aware of the way in which that process is working this year. My advice is that it is essentially an accounting exercise.

**Mr HORAN:** It is this year. I am talking about the payment next year.

**Mr BARTON:** May I make this point to you, Mr Horan? We are doing the budget estimates for this financial year—

**Mr HORAN:** But the liability is in this financial year. It is the change in net assets in this financial year. The capital works that you undertake—

**Mr BARTON:** That is not my advice.

**Mr HORAN:** The capital works that you undertake this year contribute to the payment that you have to make.

**Mr BARTON:** No, we will not have to make a payment out of this financial year's budget. It comes in and it goes out exactly the same. If you want to make assertions about what that will mean for next financial year's budget—for 2000-2001—I suggest you come back next year and ask me the question at that point and I will make sure that I have an answer for you.

**Mr HORAN:** The point I am making is that the liability is established this year because of the construction of new facilities which create the increase in net asset value. That liability will be payable and deducted by Treasury one day into the new financial year out of your budget.

**Mr BARTON:** I want to make this very clear to you, Mr Horan. It is covered in this year's budget. The payment has been paid, as I am briefed, in advance. This is the same for every department. We will be expected to pay it back into Treasury at the end of the financial year—exactly the same payment that has been made to us. Yes, this year we intend to increase our potential liability for the following financial year because we are going to keep building police stations. If you are lucky, Mr Horan, you will get a really decent one built in your electorate. That is a matter for next financial year. The Government has to determine its position in relation to that as an overall Government when we frame the budget for 2000-2001. I am not trying to be funny about this. That is a question that relates not to this financial year but the following financial year. When the budget estimates for that year are in front of us it will be appropriate to answer the questions. It is not appropriate now.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for non-Government members to ask questions has expired. Government members may now ask questions.

**Mr FOURAS:** I understand that the Queensland Police Service is planning three pilot programs to assess transferring responsibility for ATSIC community police to the service. Can you explain for the Committee how the transfer of responsibility for community police came about?

**Mr BARTON:** These pilot projects—and we are looking at doing three of them this year—have evolved as a result of a comprehensive review of the demands for service in those communities. There has also been very extensive consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. In fact, I have been to two of the Aboriginal Coordinating Council meetings. They are very keen to see it happen as soon as possible and would like to see it happen across all communities. We are not in a position to do that at this point, but it goes back some time. It goes back to the previous Goss Government where, in 1993 and 1994, there was a review conducted of policing at remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. That review raised the whole issue of how we more effectively utilise community police.

That review recommended the transfer of responsibility from local councils, who currently have that responsibility and which is funded through another Government department, to the Queensland Police Service. In 1997, the Queensland Police Service, in consultation with the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, the Island Coordinating Council and relevant individual Aboriginal and Islander community councils, assessed the possibility of the Queensland Police Service assuming responsibility for these police. In 1998, a steering committee was established. That steering committee comprised representatives of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board, the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, the Criminal Justice Commission, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Development, the Department of Local Government and Planning, the Island Coordinating Council and the Queensland Police Union of Employees.

The committee proposed that there be three pilot sites and that we assess the implications of this proposal at Yarrabah, Woorabinda and on Badu Island. That gave us an Aboriginal community in central Queensland, one in far-north Queensland, and

Badu Island, of course, is one of the Torres Strait islands. Funding of \$1.1m has been provided in this year's budget. We intend to start the process very soon because it is very important to us. The steering committee will monitor the pilots which will run for 12 months. We will have an evaluation at the end of that pilot period. There are very significant budget implications in this matter because it means a significant amount of additional training for the community police will be necessary. It will also require a significant amount of training and support from the Queensland Police Service itself, and this will be over and above current resources because the community councils do not have the funding to provide for this. That will be something that we will have to very closely look at in the budget context as well after the completion of the 12-month trials.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I refer you to page 123 of the MPS in which the issue of illicit drugs is referred to. I note that the Queensland Police Service has developed a new methodology to assist in reducing the impact of drugs on Queensland communities and that a closer liaison with Asian communities has assisted in the investigation of drug-related offences. Would you please provide the Committee with further details in respect of these two initiatives?

**Mr BARTON:** The methodology that you are referring to, Mr Chairman, as part of this project is known as the illicit market scan. In essence, the scan treats the drug markets as commodity markets. It will also allow law enforcement agencies to analyse the illicit drug markets in particular areas and identify the forces that affect demand and supply. We will then be able to apply police resources in a manner that will have the most impact on those local drug markets.

We already have in front of us the results of a pilot study in Ipswich. We will be in a position to release the results of that study in the near future. The project will next be conducted in an area characterised by a different set of socio-demographic and drug use patterns from that of which we have already been made aware in Ipswich.

This project and its methodology has received considerable interest at the national level. The Australian Bureau of Criminal Intelligence approached the Queensland Police Service to expand the project nationwide. In addition to that, the Queensland Police Service is establishing closer ties with the Asian community because of concern about potential drugs in that area. During October last year, the State Drug

Investigative Group hosted the 7th Multi-Jurisdictional Asian Crime Seminar. That seminar was attended by 120 delegates from various law enforcement agencies in Australia and New Zealand. The conference emphasised the necessity of a cooperative law enforcement approach to investigating Asian crime and crime against Australia's Asian communities. In particular, the conference highlighted the need to exchange intelligence and crime trend information.

The State Drug Investigative Group has invested a significant amount of time in developing links with Queensland's Asian communities and putting this proposal together. The effectiveness of these links was demonstrated during the high-profile murders which occurred in the Vietnamese community earlier this year. Members attached to the State Drug Investigative Group have been funded to undertake Asian language and cultural studies because it is important that the Queensland Police Service is not only able to communicate effectively with Asians but to also understand the cultural aspects of those groups. The studies have proved most useful during the preparation of relevant information packages designed for Queensland's Asian communities and in promoting direct interaction. I might say that this is another step in the Police Service's very strong and determined push to make sure that we address crime at every level. It is only one aspect but one that we are quite excited about, because it is a very important pilot project.

**Mr FOURAS:** I note with interest—and, in fact, with some envy because I would not mind a Police Beat shopfront in my electorate, because I am fortunate to have a police beat—I think one in the Ashgrove shopping centre would be absolutely brilliant—that it is intended to have 10 new Police Beat shopfronts up and running by the end of the 2000 financial year. Could you provide the Committee with details of the progress that has been made towards your target of 10 new shopfronts?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes, Mr Fouras, I can. I know the great interest that Mr Fouras has in police beats and shopfronts, because in Opposition he and I worked on ensuring that the police beat at The Gap—I think that is in your electorate, Jim—went into place at that point in time and we got good cooperation with the—

**Mr FOURAS:** Minister, it is a resounding success. It is going brilliantly.

**Mr BARTON:** It is a resounding success and one that I know that you are as proud as I am to have played a part in. We were able to convince the previous Minister that he should put a police beat into The Gap.

They provide a policing presence at selected shopping centres and malls. Obviously, they increase public access to police and seek to reduce the fear of crime in the community. Currently, the success of the program is being evaluated, but if the community demand is an indicator we believe that, very clearly, they are a success, because where every single one of them is located they are working exceptionally well. Usually, we are able to get the accommodation provided rent free by shopping centres. The Queensland Police Service provides the staff, the fit-out and the ongoing cost. At the end of the 1998-99 financial year, we had 35 Police Beat shopfronts operational across Queensland. This figure includes six of the 10 new shopfronts that were promised by the Beattie Labor Government prior to the last election. Six of those are in situ already. They are at Garden City Shopping Centre at Upper Mount Gravatt, Booval Shopping Centre at Ipswich, Peninsula Fair Shopping Centre at Redcliffe, Capalaba Shopping Centre, Arndale Shopping Centre at Springwood and Logan Central Shopping Centre at Logan City. In addition to the six new shopfronts in 1998-99, the shopfronts at Fortitude Valley, Strathpine and Toowoomba were relocated to more appropriate venues and the Inala community policing network was converted to a shopfront. It is to be relocated to more suitable premises later this financial year.

One point that I should make is that we not only promised those in the election campaign but also we provided the additional funding in last year's Budget and in this year's Budget to provide for these shopfronts. The final instalment on our commitment to establish 10 new shopfronts will be delivered in full this financial year. There are four new shopfronts to go with the six that went up last year and are very soon to be established at Canelands Shopping Centre at Mackay, Grand Central Shopping Centre in Cairns—which I inspected about a fortnight ago—Westfield Shopping Centre at Chermside and Townsville, where we still do not have a firm site but we have a site under negotiation with the relevant shopping centre, which we anticipate we will have finalised very soon. Following evaluation by the service, we expect that there will be further expansion and, given the positive manner in which the shopfronts have been received to date, I would expect to be making

further announcements on the location of additional shopfronts later this year from within existing budget availability.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Before we move on to the next question from the Government members, the reason I was a little bit late was that I was taking some advice in regard to a sick member. The member for Kurwongbah, Linda Lavarch, has gone home with a very bad back. She is in a fair bit of pain. I have some advice, and I will just point it out to those here. The Sessional Orders state that, in the case of illness or inability to attend by a member of the Estimates Committee, when the member is a Government member, the Leader of the House may appoint another member to attend that Committee. Where the member is a non-Government member, the Leader of the Opposition may appoint another member to attend that Committee. We have taken that option. I have a letter from the Leader of the House, Mr Terry Mackenroth, the member for Chatsworth, appointing Geoff Wilson, the member for Ferny Grove, as the other Government member. Thank you.

**Mr FOURAS:** I have a further question in relation to the Police Beat program. Page 1-8 of the MPS indicates that, in 1998-99, the QPS invested about \$2.1m on the Police Beat program, including \$1m allocated to establish 10 new police beats. Could the Minister inform the Committee as to how many police beats there are throughout Queensland and where they are located?

**Mr BARTON:** I certainly can, because police beats, along with the shopfronts, are two of the programs that I am very proud of, as I know that the service is very proud of, in terms of their implementation in the past year. The beats typically involve one or more police officers looking after a defined local area, or beat, similar to the one at The Gap that you are very familiar with. Calls for service are monitored and problem areas identified and targeted. The appropriate policing responses are then implemented in cooperation with the community and other agencies.

As your question indicated, in the last financial year we invested approximately \$2.1m in the Police Beat program. This included the \$1m additional allocation from that budget to establish 10 new police beats. I must say the Government's commitment to 10 new beats has been delivered in full and with additional interest. Within the funding made available, by prudent management of those funds, we were able to provide 12 new beats, which are now established and which are now all operational. Across Queensland, this brings

the total to 28 officers working in 22 police beats.

The 12 new police beats that we have put into effect last year are located at South Townsville; Rasmussen—and that is also in Townsville—Trinity Beach, which is near Cairns; Riverview, which is near Ipswich; Kallangur; Urangan; Kelso, which is in Townsville; Garbutt, which is also in Townsville; Eagleby, which is on the northern end of the Gold Coast City; Bray Park; Margate; and Slade Point. These 12 add to the 10 existing beats, which are located at Agnes Water, Leichhardt, Silkstone, East Toowoomba, West Toowoomba, Harlaxton, Springfield, West End, The Gap and Kenmore.

Currently, the project team is developing and delivering appropriate training for police beat officers. We have an ongoing evaluation of the program. Mr Fouras, again I indicate that we are looking at every opportunity for new beats. We are not in a position in this budget to provide additional funding for those beats but, where possible, we anticipate that, within the existing the funds available, the service may be able to fund some additional police beats at appropriate locations throughout Queensland.

Again, I consider these to be one of the most important initiatives that I have been involved in and the service has been involved in. They work. The public love them. As we have changed policing methods to larger police stations with police officers being more mobile and with mobile patrols for response, if there was a risk that we were losing a link with the community, then these beats put them back and the shopfronts put them back. The police beats put the officers out there in the community, rubbing shoulders with community organisations and rebuilding that very important link with the mums and dads and the kids in the area. The public love them, we love them and they work. Wherever they are, they are dropping crime levels.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Minister can take it on notice that he might get a few requests from this side for some police beats if he has a bit of extra cash.

**Mr BARTON:** Mike reckons that I do not have the money. I think that I have, but we will do a good job with what we have.

**Mr WILSON:** I note with interest the launch of the Problem-Oriented and Partnership Policing initiative, which appears on page 1-7 of the MPS. Would you please provide an example of that initiative to demonstrates its benefit for the police and the community?

**Mr BARTON:** This is another one of our very important initiatives in ensuring that we are giving what the public want from their Police Service. In May this year I was very proud to launch the Problem-Oriented and Partnership Policing initiative—known as POPP. At that point the acting commissioner was also acting as the commissioner. Certainly, he was involved in this launch with me. It promotes a flexible approach to recurring policing problems. We are putting the emphasis on treating the problems rather than their symptoms, because officers can waste a lot of time going back to the same locations for the same problem over and over and over again. That has been very much the experience of policing not just here in Queensland, but worldwide. So we are putting the emphasis on treating the underlying problem and trying to address that.

The system provides a systematic and targeted approach to analysing and addressing crime trends and associated community problems. In 1998-99 we provided \$0.24m for the development of information and other systems, which has provided additional tools to assist police in problem solving. Two distinctly different examples come to mind: Project Wipe-out, which was conducted in Townsville, and Operation Chain, which was conducted in south-west Queensland.

Project Wipe-out is a joint project with a number of Government and non-Government agencies. The project uses demographic and reactive strategies to target the causes of domestic disputes and property offences. The strategies put into place include the beat patrolling of troubled areas during peak offending times and revisiting addresses that were regularly visited by police. The police are not waiting for something to happen, but are getting there first. The project contributed to a reduction in crime in the area where the initiative was put into place.

As I indicated before, Operation Chain is distinctly different to Project Wipe-out and it demonstrates that this approach is extremely flexible. We targeted the disposal of stolen stock through major abattoirs and feedlots in south-west Queensland. The program was run in cooperation with the Department of Primary Industries. In one three-day operation, the project inspected 13 abattoirs with a combined daily processing capacity of 7,600 cattle and 5,500 sheep, and four major feedlots involving 10,000 head of cattle and 5,500 sheep. I do not want to go too much into the work of the Stock Squad. That project has been most helpful in identifying some of the problems that

our Stock Squad and the police in western Queensland need to address.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Government's 20 minutes for questions has expired. It is now the non-Government members' time.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, in looking at the Police budget, the 4% budget-to-budget increase is the lowest for a number of years, although the actual-to-budget figure is 0.1%, or \$1.2m. Obviously, there are a lot of new costs to cover within that modest budget increase. There is the additional staff that will be employed and the additional vehicles to go with those staff, the enterprise bargain agreement, some new initiatives that have been put in the Budget papers involving, for example, information technology and the Aboriginal pilot scheme at three communities. All of that shows that this is going to be an extremely tight budget. Reports are coming in already that some regions are looking at cutting overtime, cutting travelling time and cutting any possible costs to stay within the limits of this tight budget. Could you tell the Committee to what extent regions are going to have to cut and trim their operating budgets to stay within this very modest budget?

**Mr BARTON:** I thought I had already answered that question, but I will reinforce it. All of the regional budgets have had quite reasonable increases applied to them. I think you quoted them before. We have the figures here somewhere.

**Mr HORAN:** You used the figure of 10.5% or 10.6%.

**Mr BARTON:** We will give it to you region by region. Every single police region in this State will receive a reasonable increase in their operating budgets. I will run through them for you. Before I do that, I will say this: everybody has to work within a budget. This year, every Minister has had to defend their budgets and argue to hold on to what they have, let alone obtain funding for new initiatives. That is as it should be. When we train senior managers whom we pay well, we expect them to work within their budgets. I know that your predecessor in the shadow Ministry had a little bit of fun one day, talking about some people not staying within their budgets on fuel for police vessels.

We are very sure that we have given everybody in the regions a decent increase. I will go through them one by one. The Far Northern Region has been given \$3.4m, or a 10.5% increase. Northern has been given just over an additional \$2m this year, or a 6.1% increase. Central has been given a \$2.4m increase, or a 6.7% increase. The North Coast

has been given \$7.7m, or a 16.2% increase, in its regional budget. Metropolitan North has been given \$4.6m, or an 8.8% increase. Metropolitan South has been given nearly \$4.7m, or a 10.8% increase. South Eastern has been given a \$6.7m increase, or a 13.1% increase. Southern has been given almost \$4.5m, or a 10.6% increase.

I expect that the regions are going to be able to work very effectively, taking into account the additional police who are coming out of the academies and who will continue to come out of the academies, the additional police vehicles and the additional resources that we are providing. However, we are going to expect them to work within their budgets. You talk about stories that are coming out of the regions. I do not know who is inventing them, because those are most significant increases in the budgets of the regions. I expect the very senior managers and the assistant commissioners in the regions to work very effectively within those budgeted amounts.

**Mr HORAN:** I turn to the output statements on pages 1-15 and 1-10 of the Ministerial Program Statements. I have just asked about the very modest increases and I recognise what those increases have to actually cover. I have mentioned staff, cars and so forth. However, let us look at the output statements and the targets that have been set. For example, page 1-15 sets out the targets under "Quality" for the rate and number of cleared personal safety offences and the percentage change in the rate and number of cleared property security offences. None of these targets shows any increase or any direction towards an increase. This is probably the third or fourth year in a row following on the coalition's implementation of a massive recruitment program. There are hundreds more police and budgets are increasing year after year, yet your Government has not provided any increase in performance in terms of the rate and number of cleared offences, despite all the additional staff and money that is provided. Would there not be an expectation that the reason for the actual employment of all those additional officers has been to achieve an improvement in clear-up rates of personal and property offences or, going back to page 1-10, the perceived levels of personal safety and property security?

**Mr BARTON:** You must be looking at a different document, because target parameters have always looked very similar to how they look now. This is my fourth Budget Estimates hearing in the Police portfolio. I

have been involved in two hearings as a Minister and two as a shadow Minister. I have been around the Estimates process literally from day one. I chaired the very first Estimates Committee hearing into the Police portfolio.

These are solid targets. When it comes to performance indicators, the service has developed and implemented a strategic plan for 1999-2001, based on the Government's Managing for Outcomes initiative and its new output structure. Mr Warry has just handed me a copy of it which you can take away and read. You might find it enlightening.

The plan is supported by a suite of performance indicators that provide information about the quality, quantity, cost, timeliness and location of the services provided. When considered together, the indicators address the various aspects of performance across the discrete outputs and provide a holistic view of the performance for each output. If considered in isolation, however, performance indicators may present a distorted and inaccurate view of performance. The indicators need to be considered together when gauging the service's performance across an output.

My view on this is supported by the very solid performance of the Queensland Police Service, as evidenced by surveys of the victims and the public. Every time we receive the results of a new survey, they show that the Queensland Police Service is held in even higher regard by the public of Queensland, including the victims of crime.

In this period of 1999-2000 the service's performance will be monitored on a quarterly basis in terms of several key performance indicators and annually across all performance indicators. The service's performance indicators are also regularly considered to ensure that they are appropriate and adequately cover the range of services provided. I hope you are not trying to imply that the service is not doing a great job and is not improving. I assure the member that it is doing a great job. All of the hundreds of additional police that the Beattie Labor Government has put in place over the past six months—and we have another 36 coming out this Friday—are increasing clear-up rates and building better links to communities. Every survey shows that the community is responding to that, with even higher levels of satisfaction not just in the general community but also particularly among the victims of crime, who are the people who really see at first-hand the police at work. Those performance indicators are very appropriate.

**Mr HORAN:** Can this Committee be given a copy of the QPS Statewide activity survey mentioned in the documents? Also, I wanted to ask you a question—

**Mr BARTON:** Before we move to another question, can we clear this up? You have asked for a document?

**Mr HORAN:** Footnote No. 2 on page 1-10 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements states—

"Actual and target data are based on the results of the QPS State-wide Activity survey."

Is this Committee able to have a copy of that activity survey?

**Mr BARTON:** We can provide that. I just wanted to be clear about this, because we were looking at page 1-15 and suddenly you jumped to 1-10. We can provide that. I am assured that we will get that to you today.

**Mr HORAN:** At last year's Estimates in relation to the north Queensland academy you mentioned that you were determined to see that the recruits were no longer housed in a resort hotel at high cost. What is being done this year about maintaining that excellent facility in Townsville? Are there any plans to purchase the training facility that is currently being used? What plans and funds are there to provide accommodation for the recruits?

**Mr BARTON:** I will have to check my brief as we go. Certainly, we are considering that further. We have the CJC currently doing an assessment of the viability of the north Queensland campus. The north Queensland campus has been doing an excellent job. I am the first to acknowledge that. I also have to say that we have had some problems associated with having recruits being housed in a resort. We would like to be able to purchase the land and buildings. They are being leased at this time, but fairly soon that opportunity will present itself. I cannot give a definitive answer at this time. What we are working towards and would like to achieve—and this comes back to our ability to achieve these things within budgets—is the purchase of the site that we are currently leasing so that we can build an accommodation block on it for recruits and also for a small number of the permanent staff. We need to develop a funding strategy to achieve that, because that is also a significant cost. I make no bones about the fact that, in a tight budget year, which this year is, we do not have the wherewithal to do that at this point. We are working on that funding strategy at this time. We hope to purchase the site and build the accommodation block on it. I am not sure whether we have the projections on what that

means. That will be achieved at a significant cost. I think it is a bit over \$7m to both purchase the land and build the accommodation block. I still believe that is what is needed in the medium to long term for the Townsville academy. We have significant additional costs per recruit in accommodating the Townsville recruits, in comparison with the Oxley Police Academy, where accommodation is provided. Many of the other costs that we have to meet come about, for example, because we have to fly them down to Brisbane for significant blocks of their training as well. As Mr Warry has pointed out to me, we have the plans and the costings. We need to be able to implement it, but it is a question of our being able to provide those funds, which are not insignificant.

**Mr HORAN:** Can you provide the Committee with the cost of the operation of the Weapons Licensing Branch? Can you explain to the Committee why it is that you are not able to provide information concerning a question on notice I asked a couple of months ago in the Parliament regarding the number of offences that occurred involving firearms? I sought also a breakdown of how many of those offences occurred using firearms that were held legally and how many occurred with firearms that were held illegally or stolen. The department was not able to provide that information. As a result of the recent weapons legislation, we would expect that we would be able to get information on whether the legislation was working and an indication of how many offences are being committed with legally held or illegally held weapons.

**Mr BARTON:** I do not like taking questions on notice so I will make some comments. I would like to be very clear about your question. I think we would need you to write it out. I think those are the rules. I want to be clear that it is consistent with what you have just said. In terms of the weapons area, we also are very concerned to make sure that that weapons legislation works as effectively as it can. I do not recall your question. You are saying that it was a question on notice in the Parliament?

**Mr HORAN:** Yes. It was said that CRISP did not keep those records and it was not able to provide details of how many of those offences occurred with legally held or illegally held weapons.

**Mr BARTON:** We will have to double check that. We do not keep records on how many people with the little toe on their left foot missing commit offences, either. But I take your point about weapons. If we have those

statistics, we will provide them. If we do not, I have to put on the record that we will not be able to provide them, because we will not invent them simply so that we can give you an answer.

**Mr HORAN:** You mentioned the Toowoomba Police Station previously.

**Mr BARTON:** Obviously, this is dear to the member's heart.

**Mr HORAN:** With respect to that budget allocation of \$2m, is all of that money available for the actual planning, design and commencement of construction or is any of it for the purchase of additional land or will that purchase of additional land be separate through the Department of State Development?

**Mr BARTON:** I understand that it will be separate. In effect, this \$2m is for the building. I think you are almost as aware as I am of the circumstances at Toowoomba. It has been one of the most frustrating processes that I have been through. We would have liked to have had a start on what we wanted to do in Toowoomba before now. What we will end up with in Toowoomba is a far greater cost for our service simply so that we can be good corporate citizens and allow that major development to happen, which would be very good for Toowoomba, and to which the Government, in taking a whole-of-Government approach, is committed. But over the next two years that will cost something in the order of, I understand, an additional \$3m. It was frustrating to the extent that this potential project was floating around, but no-one could ever nail it down. I think you would accept that that was true. We now have reached the position where a heads of agreement has been signed by the Deputy Premier, in his role as the Minister for State Development, with a Malaysian developer, whom I have met on several occasions. Initially they wanted only part of the existing Police Service site. We had purchased a site for a new police station to be built adjacent to the existing police station, which would have been refurbished and used as the district and regional headquarters.

It came to pass that the developer now wants our existing site—our existing building and the site of our existing watch-house. That means that we have to go and purchase additional land again. I do not want to be saying too much that might end up breaching some commercial in confidence material, but we will have to purchase additional land in order to allow the developer to proceed. If when he finishes his due diligence he is still prepared to proceed, we will have to build a

temporary watch-house because we cannot do without a watch-house in Toowoomba because it is, in essence, a regional watch-house for a number of the small outlying towns. Our \$2m this year will go towards the building. Any further land purchases will be separate cost and funding from proceeds of the sale of our existing site. If this comes to pass, we will get some funding from that developer which we will fund additional land from. Do you want me to complete this answer?

**Mr HORAN:** That is fine.

**Mr BARTON:** Do you want me to run for a little while, give you a bit more?

**Mr HORAN:** No, that is fine.

**Mr BARTON:** What I have given you is enough?

**Mr HORAN:** Yes, thank you. Can you provide the details—you may or may not have these on you now—of how many police officers were seconded to the Criminal Justice Commission during 1998-99 and are currently seconded at today's date and, if possible, can you give me a breakdown by rank of that secondment? I also wanted to know are these officers paid out of the QPS budget or the CJC budget?

**Mr BARTON:** We will check this figure. We will give you the exact figure. Let us just talk about a few of the basics first. As at 30 June 1999 we had 89 police attached to the Criminal Justice Commission. I do not have all the ranks here at this point, and I think that is a moving feast that would change week by week.

**Mr HORAN:** My only reason for that was to get an idea of the seniority of police.

**Mr BARTON:** They would vary. I think any group of 89 police officers—we have an assistant commissioner, who is permanently attached to the CJC. I would expect that we would have one chief superintendent, one superintendent, a line of inspectors and we would have people, I imagine, through all ranks in the mix of sergeants and senior sergeants. From my experience when I was on the PCJC, I would have thought that they are probably a little more experienced at the upper level rather than the average that you would expect in a police division that had, say, 89 officers attached to it. But it does vary all the way down, as we have said. The assistant commissioner is there, there is a chief superintendent, there is a superintendent, there are a number of inspectors, senior sergeants and sergeants. There would be

some at senior constable and probably a few at constable level—probably not, because the CJC needs experienced investigators.

As at 30 June we had 89. In terms of the budget, they are paid for from the CJC budget. My recollection is that we pay them and then we get an allocation back. At the end of the day we get the money back off the CJC, but they are in our payroll system. We would pay them on a weekly or fortnightly basis—fortnightly pays—in our own systems and we would get, I think, a one-off allocation back. Actually, we do a monthly bill. That is the beauty about bringing John along. We give them a bill every month and we get a cheque, I presume. It is a significant number of people attached to the CJC. While I have an interest, I am not responsible for it, and I am glad I am not.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for non-Government questions has expired. It is now the Government's opportunity to examine the budget. I refer the Minister to the Capital Acquisition Statement on page 1-38 of the MPS which shows a budget amount of half a million dollars for this financial year, but an expenditure of \$1.1m for the Queensland Police Service Housing program, and I ask: could you please advise the Committee whether some of this money was spent at Dayboro, why more than twice the budgeted amount was spent last financial year and why there was no allocation for the 1999-2000 year?

**Mr BARTON:** The 1989-99 budget allocation was half a million dollars. However, as you have indicated in your question, we did spend, in fact, over double that amount. This was largely due to a couple of windows of opportunity that arose. Sometimes a bargain comes along that is just too good to knock back and sometimes a need arises that you cannot possibly have foreseen. We had a couple of those last year and it was not possible to wait for this year's budget to be able to do it.

During 1998-99 we did purchase a residential property at Dayboro at a cost of \$156,158. I will not go into all the detail of why, but there was a need from an operational point of view to purchase a second house at Dayboro. It is a growing community essentially with two officers operating in the area. We needed to put both in the town. We spent a further \$90,857 at Tara to pick up a similar opportunity, and at Thursday Island we have spent a really big bite—\$861,657. Both Dayboro and Thursday Island were purchased at the end of the 1998-99 financial year.

Police housing is provided to officers of the service where no commercial alternative is available, particularly in outback or remote areas or to keep officers within the communities they serve close by in case of out of hours call-outs. That was very much the need with the Dayboro one. Dayboro was an excellent example of that. Prior to the purchase of the police house at Dayboro, the second officer lived at Redcliffe. This meant that, when the officer was on call after hours he had to travel to Petrie, collect the police vehicle and then proceed to Dayboro, which was a nonsense. This could often take as long as one hour, and in the interim local people would frequently, because they knew where the other officer lived, go around and give his door a hiding. Now we have both those officers living at Dayboro. They are both paid the 19% operational shift allowance and they both equally share the call-outs and the needs of that community.

At Thursday Island they are residential units in a two storey complex. Individual units can be occupied by a family or easily converted to single person's barracks accommodation. This is critical to maintaining adequate staffing at Thursday Island. This amount of \$861,657 alone exceeded the year's budget by over \$350,000. That was before we bought any other housing. However, the availability of that complex was a window of opportunity that was simply too good to miss out on. Can I finish this question?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes.

**Mr BARTON:** It was not possible to delay expenditure to the current financial year. We just could not wait till then. You asked why there is none allocated this year. It is not there under its own line item, but we do have two houses and one duplex that will be delivered this financial year as part of the Bamaga Police Station/courthouse project at an approximate cost of \$1m. So police housing is not missing out. It is simply how we have allocated it within the budget figures this year. Last year we more than doubled up on what we were doing. Last year and this year, police housing is doing pretty well.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The MPS refers to the continuation of the highly successful civilianisation program. Can the Minister please detail what improvements are planned for the 1999-2000 financial year?

**Mr BARTON:** Civilianisation was advocated very firmly in both the Fitzgerald report and the 1993 Public Sector Management Commission review into the service. It is a means of increasing the number

of police officers available to serve in operational positions. The more police that we can get back out into the field and the greater availability of trained officers, the better. Civilianisation has three elements: one for one substitution of civilians into existing positions occupied by police officers, placement of a civilian in a position previously filled on a rotational basis by a number of police officers withdrawn temporarily from operational duties, and new positions created to cater for growth or the expansion and improvement of services occupied by civilians from inception.

In 1995, the service planning document, *Towards the 21st Century*, proposed increases over 10 years from 1995-96 of 1,420 police and 795 civilians. The police targets have since been doubled. Both the coalition and this Government increased them. Of the 795 new civilian positions, a total of 570 will be used to civilianise non-operational positions currently occupied by police officers. The remaining 225 civilian positions will accommodate general growth, such as new police stations or expansions, district offices, the academy, as well as specialist civilian positions in areas such as investigative financial analysis, which we are doing more and more of, intelligence data entry and analysis, statistical analysis and surveillance. More than 300 of the 570 police positions identified for civilianisation are located within areas such as communication centres, computer training, property rooms, rostering and administrative support. That is freeing up a lot of sworn police officers for normal operational work.

In 1998-99 the overall budgeted increase was for 73 civilian staff. Thirty-three were employed in positions previously held by police. In 1999-2000 there will be 65 additional civilian staff employed. On the face of it it might seem as though the civilianisation is slowing down, however, 40 of this year's 65 civilians will fill positions currently occupied by police. So the overall numbers are down, but the numbers of those releasing operational police are improving. We are getting better bang for our buck.

Last year 33 police moved out from behind desks. This year 40 will move out from behind desks. Civilianisation has had a dramatic effect on operational numbers. Some time ago, only 77.7% of police were operational. Under the Goss Government it improved to 90% and under the coalition it improved to 90.8%. This year, 91.4% of the service will be operational. That will continue to improve.

**Mr WILSON:** Arguably the most talked about issue in recent times is the potential implications of the millennium bug for the State. In the MPS on pages 1 to 19 you state that the service has undertaken detailed contingency planning to address this issue. Could you please elaborate on this assurance?

**Mr BARTON:** The year 2000 problem certainly is a significant issue for business and for services, particularly for emergency services such as the police. It is not limited only to information technology. The extent to which the millennium bug will affect the State is difficult to determine, but the service has been conducting detailed contingency planning for a long period of time. We aim to reduce the impact of any adverse Y2K related effects or incidents.

A year ago, the 2000 Major Incident Task Force was established to research and assess external influences and to devise risk management strategies and contingency plans. We have been constantly working through with other agencies that we interact with on that, to ensure that we have a coordinated response.

All available staff will be engaged during the critical Christmas/new year period—not just for the normal nonsense but also to make sure that we are well positioned should Y2K come to pass as some people believe it may. We aim to ensure that an effective and timely response can be provided to Y2K issues while maintaining all normal policing services.

The service established an Information Systems Year 2000 project to facilitate and coordinate compliance testing. Critical areas of risk in the Queensland Police Service have been identified and addressed. They include information systems used throughout the service—we are a very high-tech service these days—police equipment, and buildings owned by the service, in particular from a security, fire control and building service systems angle. Testing and rectification and replacement of equipment and facilities that are not Y2K compliant will be finalised by the end of this month, by the end of October. I must say, it is at some significant cost. We anticipate the total costs to be in the order of \$3m.

We have a continued internal awareness of Y2K issues by promoting them through the service's Intranet. External awareness is being addressed through the development of a year 2000 readiness information page to the people that we interact with. The package is available on the service's Internet home page, which is at [www.police.qld.gov.au](http://www.police.qld.gov.au). So we are

out there putting our point of view. The service's year 2000 projects have been audited internally and externally and we are very, very confident. I know that the service has to report to Cabinet through Terry Mackenroth on a monthly basis. We get the strap if anyone thinks we are not right up to speed as to where we should be. But we are very confident that we will achieve full readiness prior to 31 December this year.

**Mr FOURAS:** I refer to the fact that since 1997 the Police Service has intensified the random breath testing program in an effort to deter drink-drivers. Can you explain the rationale for this and how this has affected the level of drink-driving?

**Mr BARTON:** The sad reality is that approximately 30% of fatal road crashes this decade have involved alcohol or drugs. So it is a big problem. The service has been committed to reducing involvement of alcohol and drugs in Queensland's road crashes. Increasing the random breath tests was a key strategy.

Two reports have guided the service's policy in this regard. They are the 1994 report for QPS and Queensland Transport entitled *Enhancing the Effectiveness of RBT Operations in Queensland*, and a 1996 Travelsafe Committee report entitled *Queensland's Road Toll: Drink Driving*.

The 1996 Travelsafe Committee report identified that RBT testing levels had fallen slightly since 1993. The committee recommended targets for 1998, 1999 and 2000. It started with seeking to have the equivalent of 70% of all drivers tested in 1998. That will increase to 85% this year and to 100% in the year 2000. By then we aim to ensure that everybody gets pulled over at least once. I think they are working, because I know that in the last 12 or 15 months I have been pulled over three times. I have been totally clean every time.

Very clearly, we have a big emphasis on ensuring that we do in fact increase the levels of RBT, because we are determined to get the drink-drivers off the road. That equated to 1.7 million breath tests in 1998. They exceeded their target in 1998 by 200,000. We are on track at this point in time to exceed the 1999 target. 980,000 breath tests were conducted between January and June this year. Seventy per cent of all breath tests since January 1998 have been by high profile booze bus or other stationary operations. That is important, because they are more visible to the public as a deterrent.

Increasing the RBTs is having a substantial effect in deterring motorists from drinking and driving. In 1997, despite a 56% increase in the number of breath tests only a 7% increase in drink-driving offences was recorded. In 1997, that dropped to one offence for every 52 tests. In 1998, there was only one offence detected for every 76 tests. It is a very substantial drop, which means that the public is responding to the fact that there is a very high enforcement level out there.

The first six months of this year saw a further drop to one offence for every 90 tests. That strongly suggests that drivers have become more aware of the dangers, more aware of getting caught, and a key result has been a decrease in alcohol related crashes since this very heavy enforcement angle has been put in place. In 1998, alcohol related crashes were down by 4.1% on 1997. They are now down by 6.2% when compared with the last five years. We are very confident that this joint strategy of Queensland Transport and the service is working well.

**Mr WILSON:** The issue of police numbers is rarely out of the spotlight and the Government has provided assurances that police numbers will be maximised. The MPS on page 1-12 discusses this very issue. Will you please outline the Government's plan for optimising police numbers?

**Mr BARTON:** The Beattie Labor Government is very strongly committed, as I am personally as the Minister, to putting more police on the streets. And this is continuing in this year's budget—as of last year's budget. At 30 June this year, there were 2,808 civilian staff and 7,178 sworn officers, and 91.4% of those sworn officers are performing operational duties. The planned net growth in police numbers will increase police throughout the State by 1,968 more by the financial year 2004-2005. That means we will be recruiting and training approximately 600 per year.

To optimise police numbers, 33 civilian staff were employed to release police for operational duties. And as I said earlier, there will be 40 more this year. Those 73 civilian staff provide assistance to operational support, administrative responsibilities and specialist support. We are about optimising police numbers, not only by increasing head counts—by having more of them—but also by ensuring that more and more of them—higher percentages—are employed in operational areas.

We have a staffing allocation model which is used to determine approximate police strengths for each region, district and division.

The model takes into account the population demographic profile—the old police to population ratio that we hear so much about—crime levels, traffic incidents in the area, domestic disputes in the area, extraneous factors, isolation of the area, the service delivery and specialist support services requirements. This ensures that sworn police are distributed on the basis of the relative need of the area.

I might just add a little to that. We are putting in—and have put in in the past 12 months—more police than Queensland has seen since, I think, the first and second years of the Goss Government. We intend to keep those numbers coming through the academies. We intend to make sure that they are deployed. This is not something that I get involved in politically, because this is the job of Ron and his senior team. The Commissioner is currently on leave. Ron is the Acting Commissioner and the new Deputy Commissioner. We are well led in this service. They are well supported by their senior management structure—both sworn officers and civilian staff—who specialise in this area.

We do have a review of the model taking place to make sure that we get the allocations fairer, if that is possible, but we have never had more police on the streets in Queensland. We are going to continue with that trend this year, and we are going to make sure that they are deployed where they are actually needed. And at times, that will offend a few people because they will think that they should have some more in their area than they actually need. But there is a lot to go around, and we are making sure that they are deployed in a very fair way.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time allotted for Government questions has expired. The Opposition now will ask questions. We have about 20 minutes left.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, it was arranged that we would be able to ask some questions through you of the Queensland Crime Commission in this 15-minute period.

**Mr BARTON:** Could I just clarify that? I was contacted, and I was told in very clear terms that you did not want the Crime Commission here—or you did not want to ask them questions. Notwithstanding that, I have made sure that Tim Carmody and his people are here. Are we talking police or are we talking Crime Commission?

**Mr HORAN:** Crime Commission.

**Mr BARTON:** We will need to do a bit of a changeover then, because I would want the chairman here.

**Mr HORAN:** Yes. On behalf of the Opposition, I would just like to thank the police officers for their assistance and courtesy.

**Mr BARTON:** Do you have any more questions on police at all?

**Mr HORAN:** The time I have could be taken up by the Crime Commission.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will ask one question. On page 1-38 of the MPS, the Minister will notice something there that is fairly close to my heart. I note that a further \$2.3m is to be spent on a replacement of the Morningside Police Station. I might add that that is not before time. For 40-odd years we have been waiting to get something other than a shed on water pipes, which is what it was. It was a safety hazard and a disgrace. I thank you, Minister, for starting that police station. This is a significant amount of money—\$2.3m—that the Queensland Police Service has made available for this police station. Could the Minister outline the current progress of this initiative?

**Mr BARTON:** I now know why you were so keen to get in another question on police. That, of course, is certainly something that the member and Chairman lobbied me very long and heavily on as the shadow Minister, and he put me on the griller the minute I became the Minister.

In 1998-99, the land was acquired for the Morningside Police Station. I think we spent something in the order of \$426,269. We were able to commence construction on this new 24-hour police station facility. We did allocate in 1998-99 \$1.1m. In this budget there is a further \$2.3m to complete the station. That is part of this year's capital works budget of \$37.4m.

The construction of the new Morningside Police Station is expected to be completed this month. Mr Chairman, I am very sure that you have been maintaining a close eye on the progress that has been made out there. We are very proud of the fact that we were able to put that significant new facility into those suburbs. It was—and has been—needed for quite some time. I know I have not only been lobbied by yourself but by very many citizens in that area while I was the shadow Minister and, subsequently, as the Minister.

That new station, which will be completed literally within a matter of weeks, will house the Criminal Investigation Branch, the Juvenile Aid Bureau, administration staff and a significant number of general duties officers. At full capacity—and I am not suggesting that we are going to have these numbers there when we

open it up, Pat—but at full capacity we can accommodate up to 151 police in the new Morningside facility.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That is what I am advertising.

**Mr BARTON:** I just want to be very clear that I am not suggesting that we are going to have 151 there from day one. With these modern new facilities, they are built for the future, and this is a most significant new facility. I certainly would want to congratulate our property division for the excellent job that they have done. It will allow for considerable staff expansion into the future.

So I am looking forward, Mr Chairman, to being able to come out there—after we have got the final tiles in place and the equipment in place within a matter of weeks—within the next couple of months to officially open that station. I know how badly needed it has been in those suburbs in your electorate and the neighbouring electorates.

**Mr FOURAS:** This is my last question on police. Minister, I refer to your earlier statements about record recruitment of police officers. I specifically wanted to ask about women policing. Could you advise this Committee about changes in the number and percentage of women graduating as police officers? What has the trend been? What have the changes been in the past 10 years or so?

**Mr BARTON:** I can certainly give you that information. In 1969, the service had only 22 women police officers. By 1989, just under 300, or 5%, of the State's police were women. By 30 June this year, we had almost 1,200 women out there as police officers. Today, almost one in six of the police are women. That is in the area of 16.6%. That still looks fairly low. It does indicate that we still have a long way to go in addressing that gender imbalance. But we are well on the way to doing that, and 35% to 40% of the various graduating groups are women. That has been increasing. I know that the shadow Minister is also very keen to attend graduation ceremonies. It is great to see the women shining through as the new recruits. It is not uncommon for the women to be the dux of the class. And when you have the people out there receiving the major prizes, the eight or 10 who get the major prizes for better than 50% on most occasions are women. So they are shining through. They are the ones stepping up to the podium to accept the prizes and the medals. And that is not just for academic achievement—and I want to stress that—but also for physical fitness, driving skills,

firearms training. They are right up there with the men.

As I say, we have a long way to go. I would like to see more women in the higher ranks. I think I saw in today's news clips that we have one woman who has achieved the rank of Chief Superintendent. I am referring to Kath Rynders who has just been promoted from the Logan area to officer in charge of the police academy. It is good to see that Kath has been promoted to that rank. We have one or two women who are superintendents and we have a number of female inspectors. We have very many women at the senior sergeant and sergeant level. The women are coming through but, sadly, we cannot redress 150 years of imbalance overnight.

We have a plan to increase the number of women who are being recruited and trained. I do not think we are going to see the magic 50% reached in my time—probably not in my lifetime—because it is going to take a long time to come through. The numbers are increasing with every graduation parade. We will continue to strive to get more women into the Queensland Police Service. We will continue to try to make sure that we get some of the best women into the most senior ranks of the Queensland Police Service, which is where they deserve to be.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. That concludes the time allotted for the Queensland Police Service. The Committee would like to thank Peter Freestone and Ron McGibbon for coming along. We would also like to thank the Minister's liaison officer and the serving officers for coming along today.

**Mr HORAN:** The Crime Commission has a joint involvement with the Queensland Police Service. Perhaps those officers could remain for a while.

**Mr BARTON:** I hate to keep butting in, but if we keep them here while we deal with the Crime Commission, Mr Horan, are you happy for them to then leave and then go back to work or do you want me to keep a few of them here?

**Mr HORAN:** No, they can go back to work then.

**Mr BARTON:** At this point, I would like to express my thanks for the very professional way in which the police have conducted themselves and for the great support they have given me in the preparation of this material for the Budget Estimates, as well as a great Budget paper.

**Mr HORAN:** The Queensland Crime Commission budget has been increased by

approximately \$1m. I would like to ask where that amount will be spent. Could we have an indication of the results that the Crime Commission has been able to produce in 1998-99? What are the expectations in view of the fact that we have an increase of \$1m? What improvements will this achieve in the forthcoming year?

**Mr BARTON:** I might throw to Tim in a moment, but I will start.

**The CHAIRMAN:** While the Minister is getting his thoughts together, I want to remind people that we have no name tags for the Queensland Crime Commission. For the benefit of Hansard, if you do speak could you please identify yourself and your position before you answer a question?

**Mr BARTON:** We have increased the Crime Commission's budget for this year and that will allow, as I understand it, the Crime Commission to put on several additional staff in the analysts area. Your question probably involved a few questions rolled into one, Mike, but we are very happy with the performance that the Crime Commission achieved last year with the very frugal budget that it had to work within. That budget was identical with the coalition's budget which fell over with the election. It was the budget that the Beattie Government put into place.

The appropriation for the year 1999-2000 is just over an additional \$1m. It provides for four positions which will expend something in the order of \$570,000. I might let Tim expand on the areas where he intends to use those people. There has been a 4% increase in the lease costs of the building, plus additional security enhancements which will cost \$28,000. The provision of after hours electricity will cost an additional \$5,000. It also allows for travel and training and for more investigative hearings.

A significant amount of that increase involves additional people in the hands-on role of the Crime Commission. I must say that some of it is purely to consolidate the position of the Commission in terms of building costs because those costs have increased. Everything increases as life goes on. If the Committee will bear with me, I will turn it over to Tim Carmody, the Crime Commissioner, who can give you some detail about his aims and objectives for the additional staff, which I fully support.

**Mr CARMODY:** The Crime Commission published a report on organised crime and its scope and extent and impact on Queensland throughout the year. Part of the aim of the report was to put in place strategies and

initiatives for dealing with organised crime. Part of the additional money allocated in the Budget will be spent on making the Project Krystal document a living document and implementing its recommendations, part of which include an enhanced strategic intelligence approach to organised crime.

One of our current projects is really an intelligence-based, almost research-driven approach to looking at the criminal environment from a marketplace perspective so that we can apply the risk assessment methodologies that we developed in Project Krystal. What we propose to do is to rank on a priority basis those criminals who, in the past, have been untouched because of various reasons and apply to them the new initiatives that the Crime Commission has developed. This will allow us to look at their activities from an enterprise approach to see what assets have been accumulated which cannot be explained from legitimate sources. We can then deal with them on that basis.

In order to take Krystal forward, we need the services of additional intelligence analysts and investigators. To cope with the additional work that comes out of this I need the assistance of an Assistant Crime Commissioner on a part-time basis, at least, to help with hearings. Under the legislation, I am the only member of the Commission and I am the only person who has the power to conduct investigative hearings. Sometimes I have conflicts that cannot be resolved and it means that I cannot conduct the hearing myself. I need someone to conduct those hearings on matters in which I have been involved in a previous life. We also want to have parallel hearings so that time is spent more efficiently and effectively. That is part of the explanation for the costs. The rest are just operational support costs. Does that answer your question, Mr Horan?

**Mr HORAN:** That is fine. The reason why I asked for the police officers to stay was because I was going to ask the Crime Commissioner through you, Minister, about the estimated value of drugs coming into Queensland. I also wanted to know about the proceeds from the sale of drugs. I wanted to relate that to the output statement on page 1-25 which deals with combating major organised crime. That was the program statement for the Queensland Police Service which gave a value of assets and proceeds of crimes seized at \$988,000. The target for the next financial year is somewhere in the same order—between \$800,000 and \$1m. We will probably have 1,000 extra police by the end of this year. We should be able to see an

increase in clear-up rates. With the extra \$1m that the Crime Commission receives, and with the extra funds that will be going into the Queensland Police Service program statement, is there any expectation that we could seize assets of a greater value than \$1m? This would act as a deterrent.

**Mr BARTON:** I will start on this and then I will hand it back to Tim. The fight against crime is a joint effort between the Queensland Police Service, the Crime Commission and State agencies. Graham Williams' division in the Queensland Police Service, the State Crime Operations Branch, put in a major effort on drugs in this State. I have to be cautious, too, because Project Crystal has been provided to the Government. In addition, there have been major submissions from what I call the big four—the Crime Commission, the Queensland Police Service, the CJC and the National Crime Authority—put to the Government, through me, for a range of options, one of which includes civil confiscation of the profits of crime. That is something that has been very successful, particularly in New South Wales with the New South Wales Crime Commission.

**Mr HORAN:** This is actually what I am referring to.

**Mr BARTON:** The Queensland Government has not made a final decision on that yet. Currently, we are in the process of working up a policy position—and we are not far away on that—and as well there are a number of other matters on which the big four have also put submissions to the Government, through me, including one that has been the topic of the week, telephone intercepts. I would like to think that we can reach a position with the confiscation of the profits of crime where we can see a lot more money clawed back from the organised crime people in this State. I do not think that it is appropriate to go into a great deal of detail. I might throw over to Tim now about how he sees the confiscation of profits of crime on a civil basis being potentially used—without us going too far, because currently we are in the process of developing a Government policy on that; it is a very good tool. I will throw it over to Tim.

**Mr CARMODY:** Thank you, Minister. To answer your question, Mr Horan, I will just set the context. Last year, our study showed that the size of the Queensland heroin market alone can be conservatively estimated at between \$400m and \$548m. It is estimated that there are about 10,500 regular users of heroin. They consume about 325 kilograms of uncut heroin or 750 kilograms of street-purity heroin to satisfy their demand alone. In

respect of money laundering, it is estimated that each year there is about \$3.5 billion derived from organised crime in the domestic area laundered in Australia and more than that amount exported overseas for laundering.

The Crime Commission and its partner agencies see organised crime as a profit-oriented, market-based activity, which reflects the way the underground economy reacts to external forces, including law enforcement activity. Our approach is to disrupt and undermine the profitability of crime. The best method of doing that, obviously, is to take the proceeds of crime and the wealth that they have built up from criminal activity away from them. Often they act like remote controllers: they tend to stay right away from the activity itself but very close to the money. Where their dirty money intersects with the clean economy, so that they can enjoy the proceeds of their work, is where they are at their weakest. It is where the black economy and the open economy intersect that they are most vulnerable to law enforcement action. This is where the civil-based confiscation has its most effective application.

Unlike the existing arrangements where a criminal offence of a specified type has to be proven before assets can be confiscated, under the proposed scheme, the individual is not the target of the application. His or her criminality is not the matter under investigation. The property becomes the target of the investigation. Therefore, because liberty and other such concerns are not involved, it becomes simply a civil-based argument as to whether or not that property belongs to that person or should be given back to the State because it is the proceeds of illegal criminal activity. The people who know where their money comes from and who can explain the provenance of their assets, like you and I, are the people who own them or possess them. It is often difficult for us to prove a negative and easy for people who own property to prove where it came from. That is simply all the civil confiscation arrangement does: it puts the onus back on the owner to explain how they came by it and why it is that they can drive around in a BMW and not have a job.

**Mr HORAN:** Thank you. They were the only two questions that I had.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I thank the Crime Commissioner and his band of merry men very much for coming along and making themselves available.

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Chairman, I thank the Crime Commissioner and his team and also the acting Police Commissioner and his team

for their support this afternoon. They were most helpful to me.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will now examine the Corrective Services part of the budget. The non-Government members have the first 20 minutes. Thank you.

**Mr HORAN:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I want to say a good afternoon to the director-general and his senior officers who are here this afternoon. My first question to the Minister relates to a reference to the Queensland Treasury Corporation loan at page 3-34 of the Ministerial Program Statements. It is referred to in notes 10, 14, 23, 27, 35 and 37. I ask the Minister to tell this Estimates Committee how much money has been borrowed from the Queensland Treasury Corporation, for what particular projects that money is for, when those loans commenced and what is the interest rate on them?

**Mr BARTON:** Let us see if I can give you the complete answer. The reason for that loan from the Queensland Treasury Corporation was to follow the policies very firmly of this Government that we were not about to privatise prisons to finance future prisons infrastructure. At the time the coalition Government went out and we came in and I became Minister, it was busily going down the road of selling the Borallon correctional facility and the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre so that they could fund the massive infrastructure that has been required since then. The Beattie Labor Government went to the electorate with a very firm policy position on no privatisation of prisons. Although we have supported and continue to support the private operations of those two others and a number of private operations in community corrections, notwithstanding that, we had to fund the massive cell building infrastructure that is out there now. So last year there was a loan taken out with the Queensland Treasury Corporation. I think at that point it was \$130m—the budget for 1998-99 includes an estimated loan of \$138m. There had been significant interest and capital paid off that loan. The estimate for 1999-2000, because last year we still had a net figure left of that \$138m loan of \$97.89m—there had been significant amounts paid off—is a further top up of that loan of an additional \$44m less the capital repayment, which leaves a net figure in the Ministerial Program Statements for this year of \$36.243m.

I stress—and we make no apologies for this—that this is all about the public of Queensland owning the correctional facilities. It is about providing funding for the massive cells

building program that we have undertaken in the past 15 months and will continue over the next year or two. We will ensure that the Government and the public, rather than private companies, owns those facilities, which is the road that the previous Government was taking. We have funded that through loans from the Queensland Treasury Corporation. We are paying those loans on the projected lease costs that we would have had to pay to the private providers to lease our own facilities had we not received funding through a Treasury Corporation loan.

**Mr HORAN:** I wish to get this clear: you said a \$138m loan was taken out last year and a \$97.9m loan will be taken out in 1999-2000.

**Mr BARTON:** No, there was a net figure in the MPS of \$97.889m.

**Mr HORAN:** That is a net figure after payments off the \$138m?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes.

**Mr HORAN:** And then a further \$44m will be added to that during 1999-2000.

**Mr BARTON:** Yes.

**Mr HORAN:** Can you provide the interest rate?

**Mr BARTON:** I do not have it in front of me. It is a floating rate. As you know, because of Queensland's AAA rating, the Treasury Corporation can get its money at a very good rate. I cannot give you a definitive rate, because it floats with the money market, depending on the corporation's capacity to borrow at very good rates.

**Mr HORAN:** It is interesting that you mention the AAA rating. One of the reasons for it has been a very strict Queensland Government policy, through different Governments -

**Mr BARTON:** Certainly since 1989, with two crook years in between.

**Mr HORAN:** No. The policy that has enabled that AAA rating to exist has been that the Government of the day, regardless of its political colour, has paid for social infrastructure and only borrowed for the sort of infrastructure that provided a return to the State. This is quite a serious change from that normally very strict policy. My question on notice No. 6 looked at the net assets. The answer that you provided was that there would be an increase in net assets at the end of this financial year from \$378.6m to \$464.9m. That is a total increase of \$86.3m. That is going to attract an equity tax of 6%, being the increase in net assets. Are we left with the situation where the Corrective Services is paying interest on

moneys borrowed from the Queensland Treasury Corporation and, because that borrowed money has increased your net asset value, you are also paying another 6% equity tax?

**Mr BARTON:** Let us go back to where we started with Police on this one. The reality is that with that particular funding equity return regime for this year, there is no cost to this department, just as there is no cost to the Police Department, as I explained several hours ago, as a result of that implementation this year. In fact, if there is to be a cost, it will be in next year's Budget. That is something that the Government will have to consider in framing next year's Budget, not this year's Budget. I will cross that bridge when I come to it.

If you are suggesting that we should not be increasing the Government's asset base in corrections, all I can presume is that you are going back to the failed policies of the coalition when last in Government of privatising the prison system. This year, our capital works budget is in the order of \$117m to \$119m, and I will get the exact figure for you in due course. We are going to have a much more valuable asset in terms of correctional centres, simply because of the construction that has taken place this year. Our capital works budget for this financial year is \$117.765m. Of course we will have a bigger asset.

That whole regime is also predicated on giving departments the capacity to devolve themselves of unused assets and, potentially, to get a gain out of them. I can give you a full brief on that if necessary. For the purposes of your question, I would say that, yes, we are funding our own prisons rather than funding them by selling the farm, as the coalition was well on the way to doing. We are funding them with a loan through the Treasury Corporation at very advantageous rates. However, we are funding them from within the department on the basis of what the costs would have been to lease our own prisons off a private owner had they been sold as the Government that you were a Minister of intended to do.

I will not get into what might happen in the Year 2000-01 Budget other than to say, yes, if we have an equity return basis or some form of equity bonus applying on the assets, I will make absolutely no apology for increasing the State-owned assets in the prison system this financial year and doing that through attractive loans that are paid off on costs that we would have otherwise incurred to lease our own buildings back had you sold them out from underneath us, as you were trying to do.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, you continually say that you do not want to answer the question about—

**Mr BARTON:** I did not say that at all. I want you to take that back, because I have not said that I will not answer it.

**Mr HORAN:** When discussing the Police portfolio and now, you have said that the equity tax of 6%, because it applies on 1 July next year, is not applicable to this Estimates Committee. I say that the liability for that equity tax is earned between 1 July this year and 30 June next year, is payable on 1 July next year and will be deducted by Treasury on that day out of your budget. The Treasury papers in this Budget show that the equity return has only been funded up to and including this Budget and will not be funded after 30 June next year.

The point that I made in my last two questions is this: the Government has gone outside the normal parameters of Treasury fiscal responsibility and borrowed money for a social asset and you are paying interest on that. In addition to that, because it increases your net asset value, you will also be paying a 6% tax to Treasury, so it is a double whammy for the Department of Corrective Services.

**Mr BARTON:** You do not seem to understand plain English. In plain English, your question relates to the next financial year's Budget and not this financial year's Budget. This year there is no cost to this department as a result of that 6% tax, because this department will be fully funded this year. As for what happens next financial year—if you are still in that seat, I will invite you to ask me that question next year. It is not a question of me refusing to answer. I simply am not going to speculate on what will be in next year's Budget because I have not a clue what will be in next year's Budget. We will cross that bridge when we come to it. This year, that equity return is fully funded for this department.

**Mr HORAN:** The Budget papers say that, and they say that that is the end of it.

**Mr BARTON:** Sorry?

**Mr HORAN:** The Budget papers say that it is funded.

**Mr BARTON:** Yes, it is fully funded.

**Mr HORAN:** But it is only funded up to this year and then it will no longer be funded. You have to take it out of your budget.

**Mr BARTON:** That is right, but we will address how we handle that in the Budget of the following 12 months' when we get to it. We are not here to examine the Budget of 2000-01. I do not have a crystal ball. I know you like star gazing but, frankly, I am not going to

speculate on something that has not even been considered yet. I will not speculate on the context in which that equity return will apply in 12 months' time.

As for you saying that this is simply to fund some social issue—I think I know a bit about this Government's policies. In 1990, before I entered Parliament, I was on CEDOQ. That was during the years of the Goss Government. The budgeting aspects have not changed. We are funding for infrastructure. We are funding for bricks and mortar for which we would otherwise have been paying the private sector to lease back for our own use. Any assertion by you that my department and I are in breach of the fundamental budgeting policies of this Labor Government is a fairytale story.

**Mr HORAN:** Question on notice No. 5 concerned cash accounting and what the actual capital works expenditure and carryover for 1998-99 was for the Corrective Services Department. In the response you said that capital works expenditure was \$141.8m and that the capital works carryover was \$11.8m. But the Budget papers for the last financial year show that the actual capital works budget was \$179.6m. Can you explain the difference in your answer of about \$37.8m?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes. The original target budget for the past financial year was \$178.439m, which does not include \$1.170m for plant and equipment. The capital target increased during the year to \$181.374m, with the inclusion of land purchased at Wacol for the SEQ project. We had a mid-term review on where we were. I want to make this very clear: we were not a department. We did not become the Department of Corrective Services until 1 May this year. At the mid-term review, the old Queensland Corrective Services Commission—that independent commission put in place by the previous coalition Government—found that it was unable to expend the budget and handed back \$28m. The total expenditure for 1998-99 was \$140.681m, as detailed. There is a slight contradiction there of \$100,000 or so. That is 77.5% of the total year's budget, or 91.7% of the final adjusted budget. We knew at the halfway mark that we simply could not get it spent. Again, I will make this point: the old independent Queensland Corrective Services Commission knew that. As you know from the debate on the legislation that created the department, the Minister was basically an interested bystander when it came to decisions such as that, as my predecessor found out while you were in Government. The underspend was primarily due to legal advice

sought on the tender process with regard to the Capricornia Centre, which caused some major delays. The time lost while Treasury led an interdepartmental committee reviewing the finance and delivery options meant we had a \$10m underspend for the Capricornia Centre.

The next one that was a problem for us was the original costing of Lotus Glen Stage 2, which was underestimated by \$3.55m. Subsequent deliberations seeking an additional \$3.55m in funds, which ultimately were redirected from other works, meant that this project started late, and there is a further \$10m underspend related to Lotus Glen Stage 2. There were savings on major projects. \$3.55m in savings were directed to Lotus Glen Stage 2 to resolve that budget problem and also \$1.6m was redirected to the Sir David Longland maximum security unit. We also had a delayed start on the Sir David Longland maximum security unit, as we were awaiting the result of design solution changes based on the experience at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, which resulted in an underperformance of \$4.5m there. That is why there were delays. Also, there was wet weather across the State, which amounted to 3% to 5% of the total program, based on our advice from Q-Build. There was a very poor performance by builders at Palen Creek and Townsville. For male expansions we had a \$3.5m underspend. Items A to F—all of the ones I have just mentioned—have been underspent and carried through to the 1999-200 Budget. The fact that the independent commission was not spending the money that was allocated to it was certainly a matter beyond my control as the interested Minister. It does not exist any more.

**Mr HORAN:** Just to make sure that I have got the figures right, you indicated that the target was increased to \$181m?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes.

**Mr HORAN:** In effect, in the full financial year \$130m worth of works was done, that is, capital works expenditure of \$141m less an \$11m carryover?

**Mr BARTON:** In the order of \$141m.

**Mr HORAN:** I refer to the response to question on notice No. 2, which concerned the salaries and wages components within the Corrective Services budget for the 1998-99 year, including the actual and then the estimate for this financial year. I understand there has been a major change from the commission to the department over the year. But the response stated that there was some \$8.7m for salaries for the former Queensland

Corrective Services Commission. In part B, which was about the actual wages and salaries, a cost of \$33.3m was said to be for the former QCSC for 10 months and the Department of Corrective Services for May and June. That is a big jump—from \$8.6m to \$33.3m. I understand that a part of that might be due to the fact that the department now has more resources than the QCSC had. You still kept Q Corr to run the custodial side of the department as a business unit. Could you explain to the Estimates Committee how the jump from \$8.6m to \$33m has come about?

**Mr BARTON:** I think I can. The basic premise is really a fairly straightforward one. The old Queensland Corrective Services Commission was actually a very small organisation. I think it had in the order of 104 or 105 employees in total. The bulk of the people who work for the department now resided at that time with what was then Q Corr. The failed experiment by the coalition of corporatising the operations of prisons meant that we had a very bloated organisation sitting over in Q Corr on salaries that were obscene, in some cases. But the bulk of the people worked for Q Corr. When we created the department—and I know this is not consistent with some of your statements to the Parliament about what you believe occurred—it was a very lean, mean fighting machine that is pretty mean with its salaries as well, in comparison particularly to the old Q Corr. But you have to essentially add the two together—the senior management of the old Q Corr and the membership or the employees of the old commission—to get the basis of the numbers of people employed there.

**Mr HORAN:** How many staff are there? It has gone from 104 to what?

**Mr BARTON:** How many people used to work for you at the Toowoomba Showgrounds Society? We can get that for you.

**Mr HORAN:** I can tell you if you want to know; I still remember.

**Mr BARTON:** I do not really want to know. In relation to the figure that you are querying of \$33m, you are plucking figures out of thin air here.

**Mr HORAN:** They are in the answer to the question on notice.

**Mr BARTON:** The figure of \$33.4m includes the figure for QCSC for a full year added to the figure for Q Corr for two months—for May and June.

**Mr HORAN:** It is for the QCSC for 10 months, not a full year, and the department for two months.

**Mr BARTON:** Sorry, I am relying on advice being handed to me.

**Mr HORAN:** This is what is in the black and white answer in Hansard.

**Mr BARTON:** Ten months, you are correct. I am trying to read a document, listen to someone and listen to you interject at the same time. I can do two things at once; I find three a bit impossible. It is 10 months. So QCSC for 10 months is the \$8.687m figure, Q Corr for two months is the \$24.613m figure, which comes to the total of \$33.32m. So that is where that figure comes from. This is a new department. The Q Corr as it exists today is not the old Q Corr. The new Q Corr is the operational arm with a small, lean group of people at its head. Most of the people who were attached to the old Q Corr now form part of the department proper.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for non-Government questions has expired. It is now time for the Government to ask some questions of the Minister. I refer to this Government's assault on the trafficking and use of drugs in correctional centres as mentioned at the top of page 3-6 of the MPS. Can the Minister inform the Committee of the success of these initiatives?

**Mr BARTON:** I certainly can, because a major effort has been going into addressing the issue of drugs in our correctional centres since the Beattie Government came into office. We have had 16 incidents of drugs being intercepted entering Q Corr correctional centres in the last financial year. Since coming to Government, overall, 153 persons have been charged with 278 separate offences. We have put a huge effort into making sure that we drive the drugs out of our correctional centres. That includes specialised visits staff. We have also applied in this year's budget an additional quarter of a million dollars to maintain seven days per week intelligence officers at all correctional centres because good intelligence is the real basis on which you will find the drugs either in the centres or attempting to be brought into the centres. We put new video surveillance into all visits areas. We have also got an intelligence phone-in line on drugs in prison.

We have put a big effort into putting passive alert dogs into the centres. We currently have 11 out there working. We have three more in training. They are in centres in south-east Queensland because of the close proximity—we move them around; we do not have them at individual centres. There are currently five in the south-east corner, plus another two that are in training that will be

allocated there. Woodford has two, Rockhampton has one, Townsville has one with another one in training and Lotus Glen has two. They have been successful and we are loaning them to the police for operations at times as well.

We also have five drug detection machines. They were purchased this financial year at just under half a million dollars. I am sure the shadow Minister will be keen to know that Queensland Health at the meeting of that committee—the first one for many months—on 30 September has now given us the approvals for their use and they are out there in the centres now. They are being literally commissioned as we speak.

An example of the success on drugs can be demonstrated by a recent drug bust at Moreton A Correctional Centre where a female visitor was found carrying two balloons of heroin and one balloon of marijuana after being intercepted by one of the passive drug dogs. Staff were able to prevent what was a fairly large amount of drugs from entering that correctional centre.

The success is happening because we in the Beattie Government have given the staff the tools that they need to do the job. The former Government neglected their needs. That is why we promised and delivered a million dollars in extra basic equipment rather than spending it on cute, fancy stunts type of equipment. We have also put those 50 additional staff in there. Many of them are in the visits area, and they are delivering on drugs in prisons—really delivering.

**Mr WILSON:** I refer to the secure custody output in the MPS and I ask: can you please inform the Committee of the financial cost of operating and maintaining the Hummer armoured perimeter vehicles at secure correctional centres?

**Mr BARTON:** Hopefully from here on in Hummers are going to be a success story, but they have been one of the disasters of the prison system to date. There are six perimeter patrol Hummers at Q Corr operated centres. The leased cost of those armoured perimeter patrol vehicles is \$47,000 per vehicle per year. We also have five in transport and escort duties, the leased cost of which is \$52,000 per vehicle per year. They are all leased from Q-Fleet. We do not own them because Q-Fleet is the owner, but we lease them.

In total there are 13 Hummers. Six of those are on perimeter patrols and six are in transport and escort. There is another Hummer on perimeter patrol at Borallon, which is a privately operated centre and there is a South

African built Scout, which is operating at the privately operated Arthur Gorrie centre. That is a much more effective vehicle and is what they should have bought instead of the Hummers.

The total cost is \$3.17m per year across all centres—Q Corr and the privately operated centres. That is made up of \$690,000 for lease costs; \$238,000 of operating costs, which is an average of \$15,000 each, including maintenance; and \$2.3m for staff, including their training. In fact, to give a comparison, for that sort of money we could employ another 50 officers and possibly spend it more effectively.

To date, repairs to the perimeter patrol vehicles—that is a small number of vehicles; that is only something in the order of seven vehicles—has totalled \$49,100, and that is just to keep them running. We should have been capable of expecting that without having to spend money. The problems are due to their excessive weight. They were overarmoured for even the specifications that were set by the old Corrective Services Commission at that time. Common problems have been failure of suspension components, major failure of steering and drive line, fluid leaks, excessive tyre wear and electrical faults. To overcome these, the department must fix the Hummers by reducing the weight of each armoured perimeter vehicle.

We have just been involved in a retrofit of all armoured perimeter vehicles so that they comply with the original specifications, instead of being overweighted and overarmoured effectively, because armour is incredibly heavy. Mechanical engineers advise that these changes will fix the ongoing problems but will in no way compromise the safety of the vehicles or the staff who operate them. That retrofit is, in effect, costing us a further \$61,700 on top of other maintenance and lease costs. We are prepared to do that because we have to get these vehicles to work because we have them for five year leases and we have about four more years to go. It is a good investment of funds to make them effective for that period of time.

**Mr FOURAS:** I refer to the court advisory project. Can you provide detail to this Committee on this project and also on its objectives?

**Mr BARTON:** I would certainly be pleased to do that. I know the interest that the member has had in the past in this area. This year for the court advisory project there is a budget funding of \$200,000 for a one-year trial. That will provide additional community corrections officers to give what we are very confident will

be improved court advisory service to magistrates. This extra staff will provide pre-sentencing reports at the courts to allow for better consideration of non-custodial sentences.

Community corrections staff will assess offenders' suitability for a non-custodial sentence before sentencing occurs and provide appropriate advice to the magistrate who is sitting. Non-custodial sentences include community service orders and intensive corrections orders. Those additional officers will also provide the courts with current research information on community-based sentencing options and sentencing patterns across the court system and elsewhere.

Initially at least, this trial will be in the Brisbane Magistrates Court and the higher courts. We believe it will lead to an increase in the number of people being given community-based sentencing, intensive corrections orders, community service orders or probation rather than what we are seeing, which is a large number of people being sentenced to short sentences in secure custody for what, in Australian terms, are really quite minor offences.

We believe it will lead to a reduction in the number of minor offenders getting custodial sentences, that it will make the judiciary more aware of community based options for sentencing and that it will help to reduce the need for further prison cells, because offenders given short-term sentences are taking a very disproportionate number of the cells we have.

For supervision and community based sentence options the costs are just over \$3 per day, compared with over \$110 per day for people who are getting a custodial sentence. I stress the community benefits from the great amount of work that is done by people in those community service areas, whether it be in work camps or in community corrections in our major provincial cities.

Part of this Government's commitment, of course, is to make sure that we find real solutions to crime and the causes of crime. We are not just interested in putting up more razor wire or bringing in effective Hummers, because at this point in time we are locking people up at twice the rate of many of the other States. In many senses, many people are going to correctional centres who do not need to. They would be far better reformed if they were outside.

**Mr WILSON:** I refer to pages 3-16 and 3-19 of the MPS, relating to the community service project. Can you provide details of this

project and its desired impact on offender numbers in Queensland prisons?

**Mr BARTON:** That adds on to much of what I was talking about in the answer to a question from Mr Fouras. We have additional budgeting of \$600,000 per annum for a four-year period for a further pilot program which is being funded to help us improve completion rates for community service. The project will aim to provide departmental staff to directly supervise many of those community service projects that are out there. We are having some failures and people are ending up in secure custody, even though they had been sentenced to community service orders, because they are not completing. They are not behaving in the system.

Currently the supervision is predominantly being provided by the sponsoring organisations, whether that be a local authority or a local showground society, and sometimes the supervision is not as good as it could be. That is understood, because for those people this is a role in addition to their normal tasks and in some cases they are not able to provide effective supervision, which lets people run off the rails again. When those people are caught up with, they go and spend some time in a correctional centre.

We aim to provide better supervision in this area. We believe that if we do that, by providing that direct supervision ourselves, we will have far more integrity in community corrections and intensive supervision or supervision orders. That should increase the judiciary's confidence in community service as an alternative to custodial sentences and we are very confident also that it will increase the community's understanding of and confidence in community service orders so that hopefully we will not see so much of this demand that every kid who offends should be locked up for a period of time, because all that does frequently is turn them into better criminals. That should also reduce the number of prisoners in secure custody for what are minor offences and reduce the number of offenders who are returned to court for failing to complete community service.

The pilot will operate in the Brisbane metropolitan area under the direction of a steering committee. Only appropriate offenders will be referred to the project, as occurs now with community service. The big difference here is that we are going to do this by putting more people and more funding into community corrections, whereas our predecessors also had plans to privatise community corrections. They were about to go

on a process of market testing this area. We are going to hold it within the State area, put more resources into it and actually make it work.

**Mr FOURAS:** I refer to an allocation of more than \$1m for the upgrade of correctional information systems. Could you outline details of this allocation?

**Mr BARTON:** We are very keen to see this. We have an allocation in this budget of \$1.075m as part of a plan to ensure that every community corrections office in Queensland is connected to the Statewide correctional information database. In addition to that allocation this year of \$1.075m, we have a further \$319,000 in ongoing recurrent expenditure. The implementation is aimed to occur mid 2000. It is going to take a bit of time to get it into place.

This will provide an enormous, long-awaited benefit to community corrections officers, particularly those who work in remote areas of the State. Previously an offender would attend a community corrections office with a community corrections order and the officer would have only two very time-consuming and inefficient ways of accessing the offender's previous details—supplying a written request to head office or making a telephone call.

I think in this era of information technology we are finally, at the end of this millennium, dragging community corrections into the light. The way it was meant that sometimes the information was unreliable. It can change at any time on a day-to-day basis, even in the time it takes a letter to get somewhere. That meant more scope for obtaining incorrect information. Also, a lot of time was being wasted while requests were being made, processed and responses forwarded. The new system will cut all of that red tape because people will be on line on their own terminals. Information about any offender's correctional history will be obtained with a simple tap into the computer and the information provided will be current, up to that point. The offices to be connected to this include Bundaberg, Maryborough, Hervey Bay, Gladstone and Gympie. Also, the current services that exist in Mackay, Cleveland, Noosa and Wynnum will be upgraded as part of it. This will mean that each community corrections officer will have access to a terminal to gain up-to-date information.

This is certainly one of the issues that has been raised with me and my staff as I have moved around the State. It is part of why community corrections officers have felt that

for too long they have been the poor cousin of corrections in this State and that the emphasis has been on the secure custody centres. That is what people see on TV. These people are out there in effect working with 20,000 offenders at any given time. I think over 40,000 pass through the system each year, but at any given time the secure centres have about 4,000 people. These people are looking after 20,000. We are going to bring them into the light.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for Government members' questions has expired. It is now time for non-Government members' questions.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, could you provide this Committee with the details of how much your department pays for the operation of the secure custody components of the private contracts, what the cost will be in this financial year, how much you pay for the provision of private or not-for-profit community correction services and how much it will cost this year—whether there will be any increase this year?

**Mr BARTON:** I am advised that, because they are privatised operations, that information is commercial in confidence. I am just not sure how far we can go with that.

**Mr HORAN:** That is why I asked it in block rather than individually. I asked what it is costing for the secure custody.

**Mr BARTON:** That is not hard to work out, either. I am not trying to be devious.

**Mr HORAN:** Then there are six organisations that provide the community corrections on a private or not-for-profit basis.

**Mr BARTON:** Yes. Let us just chat about the philosophy of some of these things while my advisers see whether they can give me something a little more firm that I can give you. I would be concerned if we provided the global figures for the two secure correctional centres, because there are only two. The first one comes up for its contract renewal next year. We are looking at market testing that. The other one comes up for its contract renewal in two years' time. Even if we gave a global figure, it would not be hard to find out how many inmates each is capable of taking and it would be possible for them to find out what the other one's price is, for want of a better term. I can give you a figure for the whole lot together. This is the two secure centres and all of the private providers in the community corrections area. It is in the order of \$44m. That includes Borallon, Gorrie, St Vincent, ACRO, the out-stations and Shaftesbury Centre. I am probably happy for you to be

briefed at some point, if you would like to be, as the shadow Minister. But I really do not want to give any more detail than that, for obvious reasons, particularly when I know that we are potentially moving into a market testing environment.

**Mr HORAN:** The thing that concerned me a bit was that, in all these documents, there is no mention of the private prisons or the private services. I even wonder whether you are paying for them, because there is no mention of them.

**Mr BARTON:** There must be a cost for the provision of those services somewhere.

**Mr HORAN:** It must be hidden somewhere in the expenses of those various program management services.

**Mr BARTON:** I will level with you, Mike. It is one of the reasons why I was so opposed to the corporatisation model that we had under your Government. We could not even find out at all what the costs were on any of the centres, because the commercial in confidence regime then applied to Q Corr as well. And it would have been absolutely impossible for any parliamentary committee or any Budget Estimates Committee to have any idea of what was happening in corrections in this State. There would have been one bottom line figure: this is what corrections costs in this State.

**Mr HORAN:** This figure of \$44m, is that a net figure? I presume they would pay you a lease fee for the use of your prisons.

**Mr BARTON:** No. As I understand it, we provide the facility. This is also something that I found surprising when I became the Minister. It is not just those two centres that the Government owns—Gorrie and Borallon. I will not name them, but with several of our community corrections areas we own the facility and we are paying people to operate our facility.

**Mr HORAN:** You are just paying the operational costs?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes, in the community corrections area. I do not have a real problem with that, because those in the community corrections area are typically non-profit organisations. St Vincent de Paul are not a profit organisation. As we have shown in the Budget papers, we are going to increase the community correction facility run by St Vincent de Paul here. ACRO and the Shaftesbury Centre are non-profit organisations. We acknowledge, as a Government, that you cannot really market test them, either, because they are not in it for the buck—to

make a profit; they are in it to provide a service. So we believe that we should be, in effect, negotiating prices with them, because there is no other market out there to test against, either. They are the only ones that are ever going to front up. You might be able to have a market test if we had a new need and said, for argument's sake, that we want a new facility in Rocky. You might invite tenders and see if someone is prepared to bob. But the reality is that you negotiate with them and try to negotiate a fair price for the deal that they are giving.

And with centres such as our out-stations—we have a new title for them: community placement centres—in the Aboriginal communities, we were pretending really that we were market testing with them, too; but we were not, in reality. They are helping us to provide a very necessary service in that area, and we are going to be providing them with a lot more support in the future, because that is how we are, hopefully, going to get the numbers of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison down to lower numbers—by negotiating options out there for people to stay in their communities in these community placement centres. I appreciate that it is difficult for an Estimates Committee to get a handle on what it means, but if you have the private sector involved, we just cannot put raw figures on the table.

**Mr HORAN:** With regard to community corrections, on page 3-22 of the MPS, note 4, there is mention of a \$1.36m provision for anticipated additional activity. Would you be able to tell the Committee how many additional staff will be provided for community corrections under that amount? Where will they be employed—what parts of the State?

**Mr BARTON:** There is the Community Supervision Project—and in response to questions from Government members I indicated the funding that was there and what that Community Supervision Project was all about—and the Court Advisory Service. Unless someone has some figures here that I am not familiar with—and they are having a look for that at this point in time—I do not have the actual numbers that come with that project with me. They are both pilots.

The community supervision area will also be involved in the drug diversion program that comes with it. There will be in the order of 19 people all up in that. Seven of those in the drug diversion area will be across Southport, Ipswich and Burleigh. That is our anticipation, because that is where that trial program will be happening.

With the Court Advisory Service and the community supervision aspects, there will be three people involved in that trial on the Court Advisory Service. There will be 12 people in the community supervision area. The courts people will be in metropolitan, and the other 12 in community supervision will be spread across Cleveland, Wynnum, Redcliffe and Pine Rivers. These are trial programs, as we expressed in answer to Government members.

**Mr HORAN:** I was actually asking about the \$1.3m, which was the last dot point under note 4 for anticipated additional activity, and where those staff would be. I would be happy to take it on notice.

**Mr BARTON:** We will see if we can get you an answer first. I always have an unhappy hunting ground with questions on notice. That is a provision for anticipated growth in numbers across the State across all those areas. So I cannot tell you exactly where, because it will depend as the needs emerge during this financial year. It is growth funding.

**Mr HORAN:** Fair enough.

**Mr BARTON:** I have just been advised that we use a resourcing formula to determine the numbers of staff available, and as that growth occurs we will need additional people. That is a growth funding figure that has been built in. That is why I do not have a specific note on it.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, the Corrective Services Advisory Council—have you appointed members to that council yet?

**Mr BARTON:** No, but I am very close to finalising that. I have a range of very good experienced people in corrections in mind. I have had one or two holes that I am having a bit of difficulty filling, because I had some good people all ready to go and some other people appointed them to other major positions on me. So I have had to go back and do some backfilling. But that will be in position very soon.

**Mr HORAN:** How much did it cost for the three-day conference at Greenmount, including air fares and the cost of accommodation?

**Mr BARTON:** Where is that in the budget figures?

**Mr HORAN:** It is part of this year's costs—the three-day conference for the senior executives and prison managers. It was referred to as the Greenmount summit or conference.

**Mr BARTON:** Is it in here?

**Mr HORAN:** It is part of your budget for 1999-2000. It was a major conference for three days at Greenmount.

**Mr BARTON:** I do not know whether we have a figure for that here. If you want it, I think we can provide it to you. I do not feel that it is such a big deal other than to say, in case there is any implication that people have been off on a three-day conference or junket, that we have a new department and we are going to make this department work. I have been on the public record in the Parliament as saying that I believe that the Kennedy reforms 10 years ago were the correct way to go at that point in time. However, they ran out of steam—particularly the failed experiment on corporatisation of the operations of prisons and market-testing community corrections. That was really the straw that broke the camel's back.

We put into place a new department from 1 May this year. This department merged what had become two separate, disparate organisations. There were some problems between those two separate organisations and we had to weld them back together again in a new format. My Director-General, Frank Peach, is one of the most experienced directors-general in this State. Having chaired the review process, he probably knows more about corrections in this State than any other person alive, just as Jim Kennedy did when he produced his report in 1988-1989. It is important that we weld those people together as a team. It is also important that they all understand the corporate objectives of the new department and where they all fit in relation to each other. Programs such as the three-day conference at Greenmount are very important because they enable us to make sure that people understand. We are still in the process of building this department. It nominally came into place on 1 May, but it was not until the beginning of July that we started to put people into their new slots. That process is still continuing today. I am happy for Frank to add to that.

**Mr PEACH:** I want to add a couple of brief comments. Only a small number of people were there for three days. The first period was a day and a half planning period which involved senior executives, general managers of prisons and the four regional directors of Community Corrections. After one and a half days, most people left and we then had a day and a half for the general managers of prisons. It was their normal quarterly meeting, so the cost of bringing people to Greenmount by plane would have been incurred anyway as

part of the normal meeting of general managers. It was not a three-day conference for most people.

**Mr HORAN:** Perhaps I could just make a comment, Frank. I have taken my family down there and they put good deals together.

**Mr PEACH:** Very cheap.

**Mr HORAN:** And the tucker is all thrown in.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** The time for non-Government questions has expired. Government members will use the rest of the time until 4 o'clock.

**Mr WILSON:** Minister, I note that the MPS does not have a line item for the Women's Policy Unit. Could you please detail this year's expenditure for the Women's Policy Unit and the type of work it will be doing?

**Mr BARTON:** As we all know, Corrections has typically been a male-dominated area. There has been a quiet revolution in Queensland since Labor came to Government. We had the review entitled Corrections in the Balance which identified the need for a Women's Policy Unit. This year we have a budget allocation for the unit of \$229,000. It will be a small, discrete unit, but one that we believe has a huge job to do. It will review policy, programs and services provided for female offenders, and research and provide advice and develop gender-relevant programs and policies. Typically, what has occurred in the past is that we had so few women in the system—and we still do today, even though it is the biggest growth area—that they just modified in some small way the programs that were run for men. In many cases they were totally inappropriate.

We are providing training for staff who are dealing with female inmates. Our studies show that women offenders are often the primary carer in the family and the family unit is really at risk of breaking down if the woman, who is the primary carer and breadwinner, is locked up in a centre for a while. It is important to encourage non-custodial sentences for women—probably even more so, in many cases, than for men—to prevent family breakdown.

The unit will also be focusing on the needs of female offenders prior to sentencing in secure and open custody and during reintegration into the community. Other factors that we know which are impacting on women offenders include geographical isolation from the family and separation from children because women are typically the primary carers.

I know we are in a new age where we have more men being the house husbands and the primary carers, but that is not reflected in today's society. It is very traumatic when we are tearing a primary carer out of a family. We want to ensure that offenders have better access to educational and vocational opportunities. We want these programs designed for women. We do not simply want an add-on or a modification of a program that was available for men.

We also know that we have to meet the needs of indigenous women offenders. At the moment the staff training that we have been doing does not genuinely reflect the needs of those female inmates. There are also very limited options for community-based release. We have one WORC camp for women offenders, whereas we have quite a number for male offenders. The one women's camp is at Warwick.

We have some great women working in the system at a very high level, some of whom are here today. We recently appointed Ann Dutney as Deputy Director-General. She is the first woman to hold this position in Queensland. Alison Hunter is Director of Policy and Program Services. She has been in the system a long time and is a true professional. Angela Musumeci, who is present today, is the Director of Community Corrections. Kerrith McDermott is currently the only woman manager of a correctional centre. She is the manager at Rockhampton and is doing a great job. We are conscious of the need to advance more women into senior positions. We are conscious of the needs of women inmates. We are really doing something about it. We have taken it out of the too-hard basket.

**Mr FOURAS:** I belong to a group called SOWN which is rehabilitating Enoggera Creek. Apart from involving a lot of members of the local community, we use people who are on community service orders. In fact, I think we could do with more. My view is that there should be a lot more people on community service orders. That is a view with which you earlier agreed. It is a wonderful community project. I am aware of a great project in my electorate. I am sure there must be many other projects of that type. Could you outline the benefits that such a program would bring to the community?

**Mr BARTON:** Thank you, Jim, for that question. I will just give some raw facts because I am conscious that we are running out of time and you guys have a lot more work to do. I have sat up there a few times. The obvious benefit is that, for minor offenders, we

give them community service orders rather than jail sentences. That is financially better for us and it is better for the offender.

Let us look at some of the figures. Last financial year there were 1,624,589 hours of community service worked in Queensland, including your project at Enoggera Creek. That equates to \$18,439,085 going into the Queensland economy that otherwise would not be there. So it is good for the Queensland community as well. We were just talking about the Warwick WORC camp, so we will refer to Warwick for a moment. There were 14,345 hours of community work performed at the Warwick Showgrounds by people from the Warwick WORC camp in 1998-99. 940 of those hours were worked during Warwick's annual four-day rodeo in October. A lot of the work that the inmates from the camp were doing included catering. They do responsible work in those communities.

Another one that is probably pretty close to Mike Horan's heart, and a significant project in Toowoomba, is the 4.5 hectare Japanese garden that was built by those serving community service orders. I love Japanese gardens. These days, I never get time to sit in them, but they are very peaceful, very calming. That garden was designed by Professor Kinsaku Nakane based on medieval and 18th century Japanese cultural themes. Each day, an average of 10 community service workers tended to the 230 different species of plant in that garden. It is a great project. Last year, a total of 8,000 hours was completed at a value of \$90,000. I am sure that Toowoomba would not have got that project if it had not been for community service.

Another one at Palm Island involved the upgrading of the burial area of the island's old and new cemeteries. We have had 15 community service workers working on that. That work has contributed about \$4,000 in value to that community. I can go on and on. I have quite a lot of examples here. I think the real point is that it costs us a fortune for Corrective Services—to sentence people to secure sentencing for very short periods. If we cannot give them projects, they do not necessarily come out a better person. If we can get more emphasis on community corrections, the community wins all around—lower cost and benefits. The chances are that we get back a better person who has a better work ethic and who is not going to offend again.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates for the Minister for Police and Corrective Services has expired.

I thank the Minister and his officers from the Police Service, the Crime Commission and Corrective Services for coming along and giving their time and expertise today. We will now examine the next portfolio, which will be Emergency Services.

**Mr HORAN:** I would like to thank the Minister's staff and the Department of Corrective Services for their courtesy.

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Chairman, I would like to thank your Committee for giving your time and the way in which you have conducted yourselves. Earlier I thanked my Police Service and Crime Commission people. I would like to thank Frank and Christine for the way in which they have not only conducted themselves today but also for the enormous amount of hard work that goes into making sure that we have the answers to whatever gets asked. I thank them very much and thank everybody for their sufferance today.

Sitting suspended from 4.02 p.m. to 4.05 p.m.

**EMERGENCY SERVICES****IN ATTENDANCE**

- Hon. M. Rose, Minister for Emergency Services
- Mr M. Kinnane, Director-General
- Dr G. FitzGerald, Commissioner, Queensland Ambulance Service
- Mr J. Noye, Executive Director, Counter Disaster and Rescue Services
- Ms F. McKersie, Executive Director, Strategic and Executive Services
- Ms M. Smith, Executive Director, Support Services Business Unit
- Mr G. Taylor, Director, Finance and Asset Services
- Mr F. Pagano, Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority
- Mr G. McDonald, Acting Commissioner, Rural Operations
- Mr M. Cummings, Executive Director, Business Services, Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority

**The CHAIRMAN:** I remind members of the Committee and the Minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and the answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning will be given at the end of these time limits. The Sessional Orders require that at least half the time is to be allotted to non-Government members. I ask departmental officers to identify themselves before they answer a question so that Hansard can record that information in their transcript.

I declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Emergency Services to be open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

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

**Mrs ROSE:** Mr Chairman, members of the Committee, this is an excellent Budget for Queensland's emergency services, and that means it is an excellent Budget for Queenslanders. I am pleased to inform the Committee that in only two Budgets, the Department of Emergency Services has received the biggest funding boost in its history. Within only two years, approximately \$110m in new initiative funding will be injected into the portfolio. This will mean safer Queensland communities.

Over the past 15 months, the profile of Emergency Services has been raised to its highest level ever. This has meant a stronger appreciation by Queenslanders of the broad-ranging work done by our people in Emergency Services. It has meant that the portfolio has been given the recognition across Government it deserves, and that means a recognition of Emergency Services personnel—recognition from Government of the magnificent work done each day by the more than 100,000 permanent, part-time and volunteer Emergency Services workers.

A cumulative total of \$71m will have gone to the Queensland Ambulance Service, \$47.5m of that amount in this year's Budget. The initiative funding has allowed us to deliver free ambulance services to up to 850,000 pensioners, Seniors Card holders and their dependants, to provide additional funding to address the steep rise in urgent ambulance case load, to deliver an attractive enterprise partnership agreement to our highly professional and dedicated ambulance officers, and to boost service delivery and extend services into remote areas of the State. The implementation of the free ambulance initiative from 1 January this year has been successful and greatly appreciated by the elderly.

Another highlight of the year was the delivery of a financial rescue package for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. The refusal by the former Government to properly fund the fire service was sending it broke. The rescue package will result in an annual injection of around \$25.5m into our fire service. That means improved safety for our firefighters—volunteer, permanent and auxiliary—and better protection of our communities. We have delivered on our 1997 State election promises and we will continue to deliver.

The 1999-2000 Budget delivers the second instalment of a three-year boost for emergency services, and Queenslanders are the beneficiaries. The revenue budget for the Department of Emergency Services is a record \$478.5m in 1999-2000. The extra revenue has been channelled into improving conditions for our people and enhancing the delivery of emergency services to Queensland communities. Fire and ambulance services share an additional \$45.9m in revenue, effectively an increase of \$22.2m for the Ambulance Service and \$23.7m for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. There will be more ambulance paramedics and firefighters and they will be better trained and

equipped to provide improved services to the people.

Budget highlights for the QAS include \$24.5m for the continuation of the free ambulance service for pensioners, seniors and their dependants; \$4.8m to address the growth in demand for urgent services; the expansion of services in remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities; 44 additional ambulance officers; \$8.2m for up to 80 new vehicles; and an \$8.4m work program for 15 new or replacement stations. QFRA highlights include \$21m for 70 urban and 124 rural vehicles; a record \$16m for the Rural Fire Service—up 30% on last year—and a consolidation of base funding; a \$14.4m capital works budget, including Stage 2 of the hot fire training centre at Whyte Island; seven new stations, the refurbishment of four stations and land purchases; and a \$19m public safety budget.

For counter disaster and rescue services, there will be ongoing funding of almost \$1.2m per annum to support local governments and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils to undertake disaster studies and develop disaster mitigation plans. There will be \$400,000 for risk assessment studies in Cairns, Mackay and Hervey Bay; \$1m this year to help the Coast Guard and Volunteer Marine Rescue Association bring vessels into survey, with \$1.5m next year and then ongoing funding of \$250,000 a year.

Half a million dollars as the second instalment of the \$1.5m will be provided for the SES flood boat replacement and enhancement program and \$1m to expand the SES cadet program. A sum of \$650,000 in additional funding will be provided to Surf Lifesaving Queensland for extra beach patrols, rescue equipment, training, and assistance with workers compensation premiums. The department will also continue its support of the community helicopter rescue services on the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Wide Bay, Rockhampton, Mackay and in the Torres Strait, and Queensland Rescue helicopters based in Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns.

We laid a solid foundation for Emergency Services in last year's budget. This budget allows us to build on that good work as we take Emergency Services into the new millennium.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Non-Government members now have 20 minutes to examine your budget.

**Mr MALONE:** I welcome the Minister and the executive directors to the hearing. It is good to see such a roll up of senior staff.

Minister, I refer you to the MPS and the predicted future development and roll-out of regional computer-aided dispatch for the QAS. I draw your attention to a report in last Saturday's Courier-Mail, which stated that the CAD system is causing high stress levels among staff at the Spring Hill communications centre and that staff are having trouble adapting to the new technology. I also refer you to claims by the ambulance union secretary, Steve Crow, that unnecessary worry over CAD could affect ambulance response times. I ask: what resources were expended in 1998-99 for staff training for CAD? What is the budgeted amount for 1999-2000? What assistance is QAS providing to staff to deal with those stress issues?

**Mrs ROSE:** The development of the new fire and ambulance communication centre in Brisbane has been a very long and complex undertaking. The project has cost around \$14m over seven years. The project has been complicated by many factors, including the change of ownership of the vendor and, most recently, the added impact of Y2K compliance measures. The challenge faced by staff within the centre has been to come to terms with the new technology while continuing to provide services to the community.

AFCOM handles over 600 responses every day, including two hundred 000 calls. The QAS is very aware of the added challenge that learning new procedures and new technology brings to an already stressful environment. On the whole, staff within AFCOM have faced this challenge with exceptional patience and tolerance. They deserve to be thanked and congratulated. I have visited AFCOM on a couple of occasions and have taken the time to speak to the staff about any concerns that they have.

The communication centres, not just AFCOM, do experience a high level of staff turnover which further complicates the training needs and places added stress on the remaining staff. Staff turnover was very high last year, but has improved considerably this year. Over recent months, a peer support has been assigned to work with staff directly in the room and a specialist councillor has been providing additional support for staff. This support will continue to be made freely available to staff. In addition, this Budget includes confirmation of the QAS staff members within the room and has provided permanent employment opportunities to many previously casual staff. Finally, staff are currently negotiating an enterprise agreement that will reward staff for the additional training and skills required. The net effect of these

actions has been to significantly reduce the turnover of staff within the room.

The project is finally coming to an end with the imminent commissioning of the last phase of the CAD technology. As we speak, 95% of the technology in the room is fully operational. Staff are undergoing final training and from time to time are operating all aspects of the new technology to dispatch ambulance services. The staff must be satisfied that they are able to operate the new technology safely before final commissioning. It is anticipated that all of the technology will be fully operational within the next few months. Gerry will be able to give you the breakdown on the funding figures that you have asked for.

**Dr FITZGERALD:** We do not have a separate identifiable training budget for CAD for 1998-99. However, of the \$14m total project cost, \$935,473 was spent on staff support, including training, the development of training programs, backfilling of staff and so on.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, still in regard to communications operators, you will recall that in last year's Estimates hearing Dr FitzGerald said—

"It has been an issue of concern to us. In the past, the training has been fairly limited. We are in the final stages of developing a TAFE certificate, four-level course, which will be implemented as soon as it has been accredited."

Has the TAFE course been developed? If so, has it been accredited? If it has, what TAFE institutions offer it? How many QAS staff are currently enrolled?

**Mrs ROSE:** You will be referring to the communications program.

**Dr FITZGERALD:** The answer to your question is that the course has been developed. It has now been accredited by TAFE. As all of our TAFE courses are, it is offered through the Kangaroo Point College of TAFE. I do not have the information readily available as to how many staff are undertaking that course. I am aware that at least two initial courses have been run as pilot programs. One was held in central Queensland. Progressively, over the next two to three years, we intend to put all of our current existing operators through that course.

**Mr MALONE:** Would there be any opportunity for that course to be run in TAFE centres other than in Brisbane, to give regional Queenslanders a better chance to become involved in it?

**Dr FITZGERALD:** Although the course is actually accredited through the Kangaroo Point TAFE, it is delivered in the field. The residential component of one of the courses that I personally attended was held in Rockhampton. Our courses are largely external studies courses, although the institution is based in Brisbane. The only reason that it is based at the Kangaroo Point College alone is that we have a longstanding relationship with the Kangaroo Point College with all of our programs. That relationship enables us to develop new programs quite easily.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, I congratulate you on the recent appointment of training staff to Beenleigh and the north coast SES districts. However, I understand that of the 12 districts, Longreach is now the only one without training staff. Could you explain the rationale for the appointments of training staff to districts? Do you intend to provide funds for the position at Longreach or do you intend to scale down the situation at Longreach and perhaps service the town from Rockhampton or Mount Isa?

**Mrs ROSE:** Are you talking about training staff for the Queensland Ambulance Service?

**Mr MALONE:** The SES?

**Mrs ROSE:** Sorry, I did not hear that. The SES do, as you know, an incredible job right throughout the State.

**Mr MALONE:** I am not doubting that.

**Mrs ROSE:** I can give you an assurance that that has been demonstrated by the financial commitment that we gave to the SES within months of taking office last year. The 1998-99 Budget has additional dollars for the SES, as does the 1999-2000 Budget. In 1998-99 we provided the first \$250,000 for the flood boat replacement program. In 1998-99 funds were also provided for 10 new boats, the replacement of safety equipment, outboard motors and trailers—

**Mr MALONE:** I was particularly referring to the training officers.

**Mrs ROSE:** I know you are referring to training. We are also allocating additional money for training, because we want to make sure that when our SES volunteers respond to an incident they are well trained. I think it is important to reinforce the message to you that we are responding to the needs of our SES volunteers. As you know, over the past 12 months we have had a number of floods. That has given me an opportunity to be able to talk to them on the ground not only about their equipment needs but also about their training needs and the need for additional communications equipment. It is important

that you recognise that we have responded to that. Shortly, I will get Jack to address the issue of Longreach specifically. As I said, because there have been so many incidents over the past 12 months I have had the opportunity to speak to them and that has reinforced to us the need to ensure that they have proper equipment and training. I will ask Jack to address Longreach.

**Mr NOYE:** The training officer situation is based mainly on workload. Over the past couple of years we have increased the number of SES training officers through some adjustments in workload. At the moment Longreach is supported by training officers out of Mount Isa and Rockhampton. We are not in any way going to scale down the Longreach district office. In fact, we are just increasing it by allocating some full-time administrative staff. We will be looking at the training officer situation in the current funding review, and we will be looking at how we can improve the training for the SES.

**Mr MALONE:** So the answer is: yes, there will be a training officer based at Longreach?

**Mr NOYE:** No, it is not. The answer is: we would like to, but it is a matter of funding.

**Mr MALONE:** I appreciate your candour. My next question concerns ambulance services in the Gold Coast region, of which your electorate forms a part. That area, together with the Sunshine Coast, according to Budget papers, receives the lowest per capita capital works expenditure in the State, despite the fact that these regions are the fastest growing. The Minister would be aware that the QAS has been asked to vacate the shared facility at the Nerang Police Station and that Nerang will now be deprived of an ambulance facility, with the closest proposed station adding three minutes to the response times. I also remind the Minister of her commitment earlier this year to the opening of the Worongary ambulance station and her statement that it would not affect plans for the Nerang ambulance service. Why is Nerang now being downgraded? Why is the Gold Coast, with its rapidly growing population, going backwards in terms of ambulance services under this Government?

**Mrs ROSE:** Ambulance services on the Gold Coast are not going backwards. People such as Ted Shepherd have been making outrageous statements in the media over the past several weeks. He is using the Queensland Ambulance Service as a platform for his own political campaign. He is running in the Gold Coast City Council elections in March next year. I am pleased to have the

opportunity to place some facts on the record. The Worongary/Mudgeeraba Ambulance Station will be operating out of an old QFRA station at Worongary. That station has been established to service the Mudgeeraba/Worongary hinterland area. Our recognition of the growth in that area was the initial reason for establishing the station there. We then planned to make that a 24-hour station about 12 months down the track as the case load demanded it. We are not going to put resources into an area where the case load does not warrant it. I made it very clear at the time that, once the case load did justify it, we would increase the number of ambulance staff at that station.

At Nerang, the Queensland Ambulance Service has been operating out of police premises. We were able to lease some police accommodation. A few weeks ago, with very little notice, the police advised us that they needed that accommodation, because they wanted to expand their own services, and that that accommodation was no longer going to be available for the Queensland Ambulance Service. What we will be doing is relocating the staff from Nerang to Mudgeeraba/Worongary. We will be fast-tracking the Mudgeeraba/Worongary station to a 24-hour station. The staff from Nerang will be given the first option of relocating to the Mudgeeraba/Worongary station. I have spoken to people from the Nerang Chamber of Commerce. The people of Nerang are disappointed that the Queensland Ambulance Service presence will be moved a couple of additional minutes away, as you have said. The Queensland Ambulance Service has responded to the growth in the Gold Coast region by allocating eight additional paramedics to the region this financial year. We are not ignoring the growth in the Gold Coast region. We are also building a new station at Helensvale. We are looking at sites at this time. Funding for a new station will be allocated in the next financial year, not in this current Budget.

**Mr MALONE:** Do you have funds set aside to cater for this critical situation?

**Mrs ROSE:** Yes. We will be providing temporary accommodation at Mudgeeraba/Nerang until such time as we can build permanent accommodation. But, yes, the money will be available for Worongary/Mudgeeraba to go to a 24-hour station and it will be able to service the people of Nerang.

**Mr MALONE:** How quickly will that happen?

**Mrs ROSE:** I think we have to be out by the end of October. It is very soon, within the next few weeks. We have moved very quickly to make sure that we will have adequate accommodation at Mudgeeraba/Worongary. But the people of Nerang can be reassured that they will receive good service from the Worongary/Mudgeeraba ambulance service.

**Mr MALONE:** Mudgeeraba?

**Mrs ROSE:** Yes, Mudgeeraba/Worongary. Because it is located in Worongary but it serves the fairly large community of Mudgeeraba, we have not come up with a formalised name for the station. At this time we are calling it Worongary/Mudgeeraba. The people at Nerang will probably expect to be called the Worongary/Mudgeeraba/Nerang Queensland ambulance station. We will wait and see.

**Mr MALONE:** I am sure the people of Nerang will be keeping a close eye on it, that is for sure.

**Mrs ROSE:** I think the people of Nerang had a public meeting fairly recently. Within the last couple of months they have been feeling neglected by the Gold Coast City Council. They have been hurting a little over the widening of the Pacific Highway through the Nerang area. Some of the local businesses have suffered as a result of that. They have been feeling some impacts from the widening of the Pacific Highway. At this time, I think they are feeling a little bit sensitive to services in the area.

**Mr MALONE:** Given the increased demand on SES volunteer units to support police and statutory services—and some examples of that are six months ago in Bowen and more recently on the north coast where volunteers from all over south-east Queensland spent thousands of hours assisting police in searching for critical evidence—are additional funds being allocated to ease the burden on local governments in particular who recently, it seems, have been required to provide large sums of money to make contributions to their own SES groups? Further to that, I might add that they are increasingly having to put funds towards the operations of the cadet unit—I think you would have received a letter from me just recently in respect of that. The budget from the SES to one of our cadet units is only \$3,000 and the local governments are putting in almost the same amount.

I need a commitment from you, Minister, to make sure that our local governments are not being impacted upon by having SES cadets, and I am totally and unashamedly in

support of SES cadets and perhaps a little disappointed that there were not more SES groups allocated in your budget. Really, from the point of view of local governments, I would like an assurance that they are not being impacted on by having their SES groups go out and help when they are required.

**Mrs ROSE:** I certainly appreciate, as I said, the work that the SES puts in and I know you are referring to the extensive urban search that they are doing at the moment in the Kenilworth area. I was in Kilcoy last week and I know that some of the SES volunteers from there were talking about their colleagues or some of their group who were actually going out to assist at Kenilworth. You are right, the SES volunteers put hundreds of hours into their searches. They were also involved, as you know, in the search in Rockhampton—

**Mr MALONE:** We understand all that.

**Mrs ROSE:**—for that young girl. I also know the support that they do get from local governments. The local governments do give them wonderful support. Yes, I have been approached by some mayors across the State who would like to see additional funding for the SES.

The Department of Emergency Services is currently undergoing a funding review, and we will be looking at the funding for the SES during that process. You specifically talked about the cadet program. This year is the final year of the initial commitment of \$1m per year funding approved to establish the SES cadet scheme. This Government has approved ongoing funding of \$1m—you may recall that we made an announcement on that just in the last few weeks—from 2000-01 to ensure the future of the SES cadet program.

The program has been so successful. I took the opportunity to go out to one of the high schools. The Education Department has also become involved and is working with emergency services and the State Emergency Service to get more high school students involved in the program. The SES is just like all of our other volunteer groups throughout the State: you try to encourage younger people into the movement as you know you can quite often get an ageing group of volunteers. But the cadet program is something that we are very concerned to strengthen and continue. I can assure you of our continued support for the SES cadet program and for the State Emergency Service.

We made a commitment to examine the long-term funding needs of emergency services, as I said, and we will be looking at the SES during that process. I understand that

you have written about the issue and I might ask Mr Noye to respond to some of your concerns, if that is okay, that you raised in that letter. Do you want any extra time?

**The CHAIRMAN:** Do you want to extend that at all?

**Mr MALONE:** Perhaps I will just make a comment. The question I asked is: can you actually specify any additional funding that will go to local governments to overcome the problem that they have in terms of actually funding, in some instances, on almost a 50/50 basis with the SES. In my own region, it is having a fair impact on local governments.

**Mrs ROSE:** There is no additional funding in this Budget. As I indicated, we will be looking at the long-term funding needs when we undertake the funding review of the department. We are also consulting with the Local Government Association of Queensland to look at other ways where we might be able to assist local government. But we have to look at it as a whole when we are going through the funding review.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for non-Government questions has expired. It is now the Government's opportunity to examine you in regard to the budget. The MPS on page 2-1 outlines the growth in demand for urgent ambulance services is growing by approximately 6% per annum. Given this huge growth in demand, can you please advise us what the Government is doing to ensure Queenslanders continue to have prompt access to emergency ambulance services?

**Mrs ROSE:** The Government has recognised from day one the pressures that the Queensland Ambulance Service is under. In common with the Health portfolio, the QAS is subjected to population pressures that continue to escalate the demand for services. Urgent case load has grown from 250,500 cases in 1997-98 to almost 265,000 cases in 1998-99. That is an addition of 14,500 cases, or growth of 5.5%, in 1998-99. This pressure is not new. It is a result of not just population growth but also an ageing population. But nothing was being done about it before we took office.

Our first task was to immediately boost funding. We did this with funding in 1998-99 of \$3.5m for service delivery and response time stabilisation, and \$20m to fully fund the implementation of the free ambulance policy—a very successful policy, I might add. We then began for the first time a methodical examination of the funding needs of the Ambulance Service. We did not waste time on organisational reviews as the previous

Government did. We did not turn the service upside down and destroy morale. The first stage of that examination was completed during 1998-99 and led directly to the provision of a further additional \$4.8m in this budget to cope with growth in demand. The growth, which I mentioned before, of 5.5% in 1998-99 is for urgent services.

Response times have been on the slide since 1995-96, when the previous Labor Government achieved a remarkable 68% of urgent responses within 10 minutes. Since that time, QAS response times Statewide declined to 66% in 1996-97 and 65% in 1997-98. What I have done is had a chart drawn up which shows you quite clearly—and I am quite happy to give you a copy of this graph—the decline in response times during the years that the coalition was in Government, the stabilisation of those response times since we have been in Government with the injection of additional funding and you can see that we project that there is going to be a rise in response times over the next 12 months.

I know that the shadow Attorney-General has made some comments in the media last week about response times. But this current chart is a clear indication that we are on the right track to improving response times. We have stabilised response times when they were plummeting during the years that the coalition was in Government. We have stabilised them and now they are on the improve.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Are you going to table that, Minister?

**Mrs ROSE:** Yes, I will table it so you can see quite clearly that, prior to Labor taking office last June, response times were trending down to 64%.

**Mr FOURAS:** I refer to the rescue package totalling some \$25.5m for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority provided in the last Budget, 1998-99, so that the QFRA would not go bankrupt. What is the impact of this funding injection on the QFRA and on services to Queensland communities?

**Mrs ROSE:** Our fire service rescue package stopped the QFRA from going broke. A year ago I sat here while Opposition members denied that the QFRA was a financial basket case—and the member was here at the time. I think he will remember that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I remember that dogfight. I had to referee.

**Mrs ROSE:** Mick Veivers did not stay for very long, did he? I think Opposition members have finally conceded that they left the fire

service in an absolute mess. The independent PricewaterhouseCoopers report into the financial state of the QFRA conclusively showed a \$20m funding black hole. It is a report I am sure the Opposition will remember they were given a briefing on.

Insolvency within two years and a \$116m deficit within five years if no action was taken was a major finding of that report. This Government looked at the options for saving the fire service—raising additional revenue or slashing firefighter numbers and closing stations. We showed leadership. We recognised that Queensland communities expect and deserve a decently resourced fire service. We increased the fire levy, raising an additional \$25m in recurrent funding. We filled in the black hole and we made available the funds to repair the fire service.

That funding is being put to good use. It has been ploughed into a record \$38m capital expenditure program, with nearly 200 new urban and rural fire appliances, better equipment, better facilities, better training and better safety for firefighters. The QFRA is now well on the road to financial recovery, and Queenslanders right around the State will benefit from enhanced resources.

For the first time, the full range of services provided by fire crews—from fighting structural fires or bushfires to attending chemical spills to providing road accident and other rescue services to conducting public education campaigns—will be properly funded. Page 3-3 of the MPS shows total revenue for 1999-2000 increasing to \$219m from the 1998-99 actual of \$195m. Every cent will be directed at boosting fire services to communities right across the State and at improving the safety of permanent, part-time and volunteer firefighters.

Around \$21m will be spent on the fire fleet, with a record 70 new urban appliances and 124 rural fire trucks to be built this year. A further \$15m will go on new stations, renovations and the purchase of land for rural and urban stations.

There is a record public safety budget of \$19m, including a \$1m increase generated through the rescue package. This will allow firefighters to further expand existing public safety initiatives and to develop new initiatives. The rescue package has also enabled a record \$16m budget for the rural fire service, representing a 38% increase on last year's budget.

There will be more money for new operational clothing and equipment for firefighters, more money for the development

and purchase of hands-free communication equipment, more money for new safety gear and more money for equipment and training and rescue techniques.

**Mr FOURAS:** Do you require some more time? How much would you require?

**Mrs ROSE:** About 15 seconds.

**Mr FOURAS:** Actually, since the fire station in my electorate got some hands-free equipment recently, I will let you have longer to answer the question.

**Mrs ROSE:** The budget will ensure that the firefighters protecting Queenslanders and their personal possessions have the best possible training and equipment. It means that Queenslanders will be safer in their homes and our firefighters will be safer at work.

What you say is true, and I bet that the firefighters are very, very pleased. Over the last 15 months I have had such positive responses from our firefighters because they say that for the first time somebody is listening to them and they are getting the equipment and the dollars they need to run the sort of service they want to deliver to the people of Queensland.

**Mr WILSON:** The State Emergency Service continues to provide invaluable assistance to communities across Queensland. Can you outline the Government's commitment to the SES this year and its ongoing support for the 35,000 SES volunteers?

**Mrs ROSE:** I thank the member for the question. I have already run over some of this Government's commitment to the State Emergency Service with our extensive floodboat replacement program and also the SES cadet scheme. I was pleased to personally commission new boats for Normanton, Babinda and Kilcoy. As a matter of fact, when I was in Kilcoy the SES volunteers actually took me out in one of the floodboats on the Somerset Dam. I have never actually been in one of the floodboats before; it was quite an experience.

One thing I have learned from going throughout the State and visiting the SES during the floods is the importance of the type of floodboat that we actually deliver to an area. We have V-hull floodboats and flat-bottomed floodboats. In certain conditions—if it is a swollen creek with swift running water, for example—one of the boats is not necessarily the most suitable for those conditions. We are very in tune now to making sure that we deliver to our SES groups the floodboats which meet the needs of their particular areas.

The 1999-2000 allocation for the floodboats program has been increased by a further \$250,000, bringing the total to half a million dollars this year. A replacement program is in place following an audit of floodboats that revealed non-compliance of some boats with marine safety regulations. These vessels are, of course, a priority. Eleven will be upgraded and 26 will be replaced. This Government wants to be able to support the SES properly. That is what we are committed to and that is what I mean when we say we listened to their specific needs for their region.

One of my decisions early upon becoming Minister was to restore the position of Director SES, which was abolished by the previous Government. The SES volunteers were crying out for recognition and support. I still, to this day, cannot understand why the previous Government abolished that position. It was just such a stupid thing to do. Having a dedicated director of the State Emergency Service means that we can focus on the real needs of the SES, and we are.

We allocated an extra \$102,000 in 1999-2000 for the SES accommodation subsidy scheme, increasing the total pool to over \$230,000. This will give real help to SES units needing better accommodation, better storage facilities and better training space. \$50,000 has also been provided to develop a comprehensive and systematic SES equipment maintenance and replacement program. Before we rush out willy-nilly buying things, we want to know exactly what we need and who needs it most. This kind of stocktake has been sadly lacking in the past and now we are delivering.

All of this complements the work that the department is doing in building a 10-year SES strategic plan. The SES volunteers are being asked to provide input so that we can be sure that the SES grows in a way that has maximum community support. This plan is anticipated to be completed by the middle of next year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I know that one of the QFRA's key outputs is public safety and fire prevention, with a range of public safety programs targeted at various sections of the community. That is referred to on page 3-4 of the MPS. Can you give details of the QFRA's public safety budget and what benefits it will deliver to Queensland?

**Mrs ROSE:** The tragic deaths this year of 16 Queenslanders in fire-related incidents have underlined the importance of educating the public about fire safety, so I am pleased that this year's State Budget has delivered a

record \$19m for the public safety budget for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority. These funds will be channelled into a range of projects in regional Queensland—most importantly, fire prevention and education programs. Around \$6.5m has been set aside for premise inspections and advice, while \$4.6m will be spent on public education campaigns. There is an estimated \$2.2m for QFRA building approvals for fire protection plans, \$1.3m for legislative compliance inspections, \$700,000 towards fire investigation and \$550,000 for hazard mitigation.

An estimated \$1.5m will be spent on training, and a similar amount for fire education and safety programs in schools. This budget will allow further development and expansion of a number of highly successful public safety programs, such as the Road Awareness and Accident Prevention program, seniors Fire Ed, Fight Fire Fascination, Operation Safe Home and Fire Ed for Year 1 students. A \$100,000 purpose-built fire investigation burn house will be established at Lytton in Brisbane to further research fire behaviour and smoke patterns and to better train operational firefighters. This year's record public safety budget includes a special \$1m increase generated by this Government's financial rescue package for the QFRA. This money has been earmarked for a range of new initiatives and the purchase of public safety equipment and information for rural and regional stations.

Wherever I visit fire stations and firefighters around Queensland, I am always heartened by the way that firefighters have embraced the fire protection focus of the QFRA. I was only reading a brief yesterday which had come through from Fire, and they were talking about Operation Safe Home. Our firefighters were making the comment that they were overwhelmed by the appreciative response that they had received from seniors—where they actually go out to the home and they advise seniors on where is the most appropriate place to locate their smoke alarms. Also, the QFRA has been working with Rotary. I certainly applaud Rotary, which is actually paying for the smoke alarms to go into seniors' and pensioners' homes. As you can probably appreciate, the difficult thing for us is to identify all of the older homes with older people living in them that may not have smoke alarms. It is so important that we do whatever we can to identify those people and to get smoke alarms into their homes.

Fire stations, more often than not, are plastered with education and fire awareness

information, and firefighters are increasingly taking the message out directly to the community. It is important to remember that most fire deaths are preventable, and these initiatives are about saving lives. With the tragic loss of life recently, I know that the QFRA is even more strongly committed to fire prevention as the major focus of minimising loss of life from fire in Queensland.

**Mr FOURAS:** Minister, you have been quoted as saying that there needs to be a change in focus with regard to natural disaster relief. I totally agree with this observation. We do need to do more than merely rebuild infrastructure and then watch as it is destroyed or damaged in the very next disaster. Would you advise this Committee of your department's commitment to, and expenditure on, natural disaster mitigation and risk assessment projects?

**Mrs ROSE:** During 1998-99, we had an extraordinary run of flood and cyclone disasters. We had seven serious flood events in the space of four months, extending from far-north Queensland and the gulf to south-west and south-east Queensland. Hardly any community was left unaffected. As we all know, this is a continual cycle—a cycle which may well worsen, according to predictions about changing weather patterns caused by greenhouse climate change. In response to this fact of nature, my department is increasingly moving towards a proactive and positive focus on mitigation and risk minimisation. We do not want to just respond to disasters; we want Queensland communities to be better prepared. We want to reduce the extent of damage, not just repair it. That is only in 1999-2000.

The Government has provided additional funding, to a maximum of \$1.15m, for disaster mitigation and management through funding disaster studies and mitigation plans for up to 32 local governments throughout Queensland. That is why, during 1998-99, the Government established, for the first time anywhere in Australia, a State Mitigation Committee to develop disaster mitigation priorities across Queensland. This initiative is a vital component of the Government's commitment to proactive counter-disaster measures.

I notice that the Federal Government seems to be getting a little upset at our strong lobbying on this matter. A few weeks ago, Senator Ian Macdonald, the Commonwealth Minister for Regional Services, addressed the LGAQ conference and criticised me and the State Government for urging the establishment of a national disaster mitigation

fund. Now, you would think that the Commonwealth Government might support a program that delivered real infrastructure improvement, real jobs and real benefits to rural and regional Australia. But apparently—at least according to Senator Macdonald—they are not interested. The best the Feds can do for Queensland is \$7m over three years. This is a half-hearted response and, quite simply, is not good enough.

A national disaster mitigation fund is a commonsense idea. It makes economic sense by reducing the community cost of recurrent natural disasters. It should be an idea that Governments of all persuasions are keen to consider and explore—not be fobbed off with cries of "Where will the money come from?" This is especially hypocritical from a Federal Government that is slugging Australians with a massive new tax from July next year. I think that some of that money should be going back to regional Queensland, and I will keep pushing for a real, meaningful response from the Commonwealth about mitigation to complement the steps that this Government is already taking.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Government's period for questions has expired. It is now time for questions from non-Government members.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, I have been listening to your high accolades of the volunteers and the SES people out there. I totally concur. I was also listening to the dollars that you were talking about in support of the SES groups. However, I have to say that—and I ask whether you think it is true or not—I have had reports that SES controllers have been asked not to send equipment requisitions in because they will not now be filled. Can you deny that or otherwise?

**Mrs ROSE:** I will ask Mr Noye to address that at this time. I would be very surprised if we were telling people not to put in their forms. Is that what you were suggesting?

**Mr MALONE:** Absolutely.

**Mrs ROSE:** Did this come from a particular group?

**Mr MALONE:** Not particularly; from a number.

**Mrs ROSE:** I visit an awful lot of SES groups, and I have not heard that accusation. It has not been made to me.

**Mr NOYE:** Not to me, either.

**Mrs ROSE:** I mean, if you have a specific group, or if you have somebody who has a particular concern and you ask them or, by all means, if you provide me with the information—perhaps there is a reason why

they believe that. But we would be happy to straighten it out for them.

**Mr MALONE:** So, Minister, you are suggesting that it is a communication problem rather than a funding problem?

**Mrs ROSE:** I cannot answer that until I find out specifically what the person's concern is. But if you ask that person to contact me, or if you would like to pass it on to me, I would be more than happy to have a look into it for you.

**Mr NOYE:** We have been advised that there are some shortages of some types of uniforms and equipment due to the military actually taking up a lot of the gear, or the manufacturers being focused on supporting the Timor crisis. That is the only thing I can think of. There has been no formal advice from us, to my knowledge, of any equipment shortages. There is certainly funding for equipment and uniforms. I think it must be a communications issue.

**Mr MALONE:** I will take that on board.

**Mr NOYE:** I am more than happy to receive any advice.

**Mr MALONE:** Thanks very much. Minister, I refer to concerns that have arisen about local volunteer firefighters in the Hinchinbrook Shire, where the administrative control was transferred from the Charters Towers district, so it is now operating out of Innisfail, as I understand it, without consultation with the local firefighters or with the local rural fire brigade association. Is the Minister aware of any protocols that should be put in place to ensure that this lack of consultation is not going to occur on a regular basis? There should be proper consultation with the local firefighters in respect to these types of administrative changes. Basically, is it a budgetary situation, or is it administrative?

**Mrs ROSE:** This is the rural fire—

**Mr MALONE:** Rural Fire Service.

**Mrs ROSE:** The district inspectors. I certainly saw all of the media at the time. You are right. Perhaps communication could have been better. But the Rural Fire Service was looking at changing the boundaries to make it a fairer distribution of the number of brigades within a particular district. There was an inequitable number of brigades that were being looked after by a single district inspector. So they looked at changing some of the boundaries just to make it a more equal distribution, so that people could have a fairer, if you like, contact with the service.

In order to improve that level of service, the Rural Fire Service increased the number of district inspectors from seven to eight and

rearranged the district boundaries to provide for a more equitable distribution of responsibility for rural fire brigades in the expanded area. This expansion and reorganisation will see the average number of rural fire brigades per district fall from 121 to 106 with a more even distribution of responsibility for rural fire brigades amongst the inspectorate. As you can see, the reason for doing it was not to take away services but to enhance the services and to have a fairer distribution of responsibility. The decision to proceed was taken after consultation with the Rural Fire Brigades Association in May 1999. As I said, I am aware that some brigade members were unhappy about it, but I also understand that all of the affected rural brigades were advised in writing.

**Mr MALONE:** Afterwards or before?

**Mrs ROSE:** You asked also whether or not the rearrangement of the boundaries was for administrative purposes or for budgetary reasons. My understanding is that the rearrangement of boundaries was for administrative purposes. This will not affect operational management in any of the areas concerned. The aim of the Rural Fire Service is to have every rural fire brigade exercising self-management and operating as autonomously as is practicable. Current funding has not been affected by these changes.

The Emerald office is a new district inspector's office and that has been included within the budget allocations. The decision was taken after consultation with the Rural Fire Brigade Association. How much consultation the brigades association had with brigade members is probably an issue which you need to take up with the association.

**Mr MALONE:** I will take your word for it. Minister, I refer you to ongoing concerns about the practical implications of the QFRA proposals with regard to safer crewing levels. I would appreciate it if you could inform the Committee of the UFU's attitude to this proposal following a survey of its members. Could you also deal with the claims by the ALP candidate for the Charters Towers electorate, Christine Scott, that this would result in removing staff from Charters Towers and possibly other centres? You are well aware of those allegations. There was talk that numerous centres could be affected by this move. I seek your assurance that there will be no forced redundancies or forced transfers as a result of this proposal.

**Mrs ROSE:** First of all, let me say that there has been some really atrocious politicking on this safety issue in the last few

months. The Opposition and some local councillors around the State have been trying to frighten Queenslanders with some complete untruths—untruths about slashed fire services and staff cutbacks. I think sometimes if you just stop to think about the fear that you create in the community when you go out and make some of these statements—

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, I am only quoting a candidate.

**Mrs ROSE:**—maybe you would have second thoughts about some of the statements you are making. What is most shocking about this beat-up is the blatant disregard that has been shown for the safety of firefighters, and therefore for the community. We are trying to improve firefighter and community safety. All that those sorts of attacks do is undermine it.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, if you can find a media release with my name on it in that regard, I would appreciate knowing about it.

**Mrs ROSE:** You asked me about what the firefighters union thinks, so hang on a minute.

**Mr MALONE:** I appreciate that.

**Mrs ROSE:** It is the QFRA's job to determine the best way to staff fire stations so that they are safe.

**Mr MALONE:** I appreciate that.

**Mrs ROSE:** I was at the LGAQ conference and I am aware of the resolution which was passed at that conference. You asked me what the UFU thought of firefighter crewing levels on fire trucks. I will quote from the UFU's media release in response to the LGAQ resolution. This is a quote from the UFU State Secretary, Mark Walker, where he said this—

"This resolution which calls on the State Government to review the necessity of four-person crews outside of capital and provincial cities is an affront to firefighters and is a blatant attempt to compromise the safety of firefighters. Does the Local Government Association really believe that fires outside of larger cities are not as dangerous to firefighters and the people trapped in the building? It is outrageous that local governments are intentionally trying to put not only firefighters' safety but also the public's safety at risk."

This is about safety. Why on earth would the QFRA want to compromise community safety? I know that the QFRA is continuing to consult with firefighters about this issue, and that will

continue. At the end of the day, we can have the best fire trucks in the world and we can have the best appliances, but without better crewing levels we cannot deliver a better service. We are going to deliver a better service to Queenslanders. They deserve it.

**Mr MALONE:** I have a supplementary question. In respect to permanent firefighters now stationed in regional areas, how is your policy of delivering fire safety to all Queenslanders going to affect regional centres with regard to permanent firefighters?

**Mrs ROSE:** That is what we are trying to do.

**Mr MALONE:** I understand that.

**Mrs ROSE:** What we are trying to do is establish crewing levels across the State which ensure the safety of our firefighters, which in turn ensures the safety of members of the community. That is what this is all about.

**Mr MALONE:** I understand that.

**Mrs ROSE:** It really is an insult to the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority to suggest that it is trying to reduce services to regional Queensland. That is not the case. What the QFRA is working towards is safer crewing levels, which makes for safer communities for Queenslanders because Queenslanders deserve to have the best fire services that we can deliver. That is what the QFRA is focused on.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you, Minister. I have no problem with that at all. I am just trying to understand where the Government is coming from, particularly in the light of some information that has been leaked over a period of time off the back of a truck in respect of those fire stations. That is really what I was getting at.

**Mrs ROSE:** Crewing levels have been an issue for some years. When I came to Government, one plus three was an issue. When you were in Government, one plus three was an issue. Nothing was ever done about it. It has always been a matter where the hands were thrown up in the air and we were told, "It's too hard." For the first time we are trying to do something about one plus three. We are trying to address the issue.

When the coalition was in Government, it commissioned the Staib review which examined the circumstances surrounding the deaths of two firefighters in that tragedy at Southport. One of the recommendations that came out of that review was one plus three—safer crewing levels.

**Mr MALONE:** I have no problem with that.

**Mrs ROSE:** When the coalition was in Government, nothing was done about that, other than on the Gold Coast where the matter was addressed. It is an issue across the rest of the State. For the first time, we have had a working party, which comprises the QFRA and the union, which has sat down and tried to explore and examine ways of achieving one plus three across the State.

It has nothing to do with reducing the number of firefighters, but if there are better and more efficient ways that we can deliver a better service to the people of Queensland, then I certainly make no apology at all for trying to work towards delivering a better fire service and also delivering better safety for our firefighters. If you want some more detail on that working group, I will ask Frank Pagano. At this time, I would like to take this opportunity to say that, sadly, Lee Johnson, who is the acting Fire Commissioner at this time, his father passed away overnight and Lee has gone to Townsville to be with his family. So Frank Pagano has stepped into Lee's shoes today for this Estimates hearing. I will ask Frank, who has been involved in the negotiations in achieving one plus three, to provide you with a little more detail on that working party.

**Mr PAGANO:** Thank you, Minister. I have a couple of points in relation to that question. In relation to service delivery in regional Queensland and urban and major provincial centres in Queensland, in fact, as documented in the Managing for Outputs in Treasury guidelines, QFRA does not differentiate between regional Queensland and urban Queensland. So all the education programs, including Fire Ed and Fight Fire Fascination, are delivered throughout the State.

In relation to the issue of one and three, not only is the QFRA committed to the safety of the community but indeed we are obligated to ensure that we, in fact, view the safety of our firefighters. The issue, or the crewing of one plus three, is well established nationally and internationally as a recognised model for safe fire ground operations. As the Minister has alluded to, over the past few months we have been reviewing the issue of one plus three and service delivery and how best to achieve crewing around the State. Just as an aside—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Those two bells mean that you wrap it up, unless the member who asked the question wants to give you more time.

**Mr MALONE:** That is all right. Thank you very much. I would just like to reinforce my position. I was really getting to the fact that I

would not like to see forced redundancies out of this situation. I just clarify that. I certainly support you 100% in fire safety. Given that what were SES district coordinators are now Managers—Disaster Operations and do not display SES office signage or on their business cards, I ask: is the support for SES volunteer units, both financial and physical, going to continue to diminish as seen by the cancellation of pagers by at least one district office, which allows for volunteers to make contact only during office hours regardless of emergency?

**Mrs ROSE:** I certainly appreciate the need to give our volunteers a sense of ownership. I know how important it is to give them the recognition that they certainly deserve. I became aware that there was an issue where the name was going to be—

**Mr MALONE:** Changed.

**Mrs ROSE:** Yes, changed or talk about changing of vehicles. Also, I understand that some newsletters may not have reflected accurately that it was the State Emergency Service. I can give you my personal assurances again of our commitment to the State Emergency Service and how I understand and recognise that they need to have recognition inside Government. As I said, we have re-established the position of Director of SES within the department. I will ask Jack to provide more detail on your specific question.

**Mr NOYE:** Mr Malone, the district coordinators were never termed SES district coordinators; they were disaster management. They still have a dual role of looking after disaster management as well as SES. This is in line with what local governments require. As you are aware, the disaster management side is more the up-front disaster mitigation stuff, but there is certainly no movement away from supporting the SES. In fact, as I mentioned before, in the past two or three years we have increased the training officers.

In relation to the specific mention about the pager, from my recollection that was to do with Mackay. He replaced his pager with a mobile phone. He is available for the SES, then. Because of making sure that they are focusing on the right things and the times that the coordinator, or manager, is available, we have been trying to make sure that managers are not going to every small activation by the SES when they can do it themselves. So we are looking at priorities. If the district manager is required at the activation, or the incident, they will go; otherwise, their time in the office and time on other things gets taken away. So we are juggling those priorities as best we can.

I know that we are not perfect, but we are trying to get there.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for questions by non-Government members has expired. It is now time for Government members to ask questions.

**Mr WILSON:** We all know the commitment of QAS officers to the communities that they serve. Pages 2-7 and 2-8 of the MPS refer to the CPR 2000 project and its aim to increase the survival rates of victims of out-of-hospital cardiac arrest. Can you please advise the targets for 1999-2000 in the delivery of this lifesaving initiative?

**Mrs ROSE:** The CPR 2000 project is about saving lives. The current survival rate for people suffering a cardiac arrest is around 5%, and that is just not good enough. We must strive to improve. Lives depend on it. Where a patient receives both CPR from a bystander and rapid defibrillation by the Ambulance Service, the survival rate is boosted to 17%. The aim of the CPR 2000 project is to have one in four adult Queenslanders proficient in cardiopulmonary resuscitation—or CPR—by the end of next year. At a cost of \$227,000 for 1999-2000, this is an excellent investment in the health and safety of Queenslanders.

The Queensland Ambulance Service CPR 2000 team has taken what can be a complex topic and broken it down into just the information that a person needs to perform CPR on an adult in cardiac arrest and even to teach CPR to their peers. The basic philosophy is that if someone trains 10 people in CPR, then you have 10 people trained. But if that someone trains 10 peer trainers and those people then each train 10 people, you have 100 people trained. Already, the CPR 2000 team has successfully piloted the program in Brisbane and received extremely positive feedback from participants. The message here is a simple one: two-thirds of Queensland cardiac arrest victims do not get CPR. The vast majority of Queenslanders over the age of 40—the most at risk group—do not ever learn CPR. Yet most victims are over 40. Most cardiac arrests happen in or near the victim's home and it is usually the partner or immediate relative who will be the rescuer.

If we are going to turn around the current survival rate, we need to get out there and train adults in CPR. Already, both my staff and I have undergone CPR training. Every extra person who has CPR skills is potentially a lifesaver. All of the members of the Committee should have received a letter inviting them to participate in CPR 2000 training. I hope that those of you, particularly the regular users of

the gym whom I run into occasionally—just in case I get into trouble up there—are very proficient in CPR. I know that some of the members have indicated that they will be participating in the program.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have had a certificate since 1972. Current.

**Mrs ROSE:** With due respect, are you aware that you have to go back and have your proficiency updated?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I am current.

**Mr FOURAS:** I offered to practise with you one day, but you did not get back to me. I was very disappointed.

**Mrs ROSE:** I will let that one pass. The member for Ferny Grove has indicated that he will participate in the program. Maybe we can even find out how many of the Parliament House staff are proficient in CPR as well.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I note on page 2-14 of the Ministerial Program Statements that the capital acquisition statement shows that \$6.4m will be provided for new stations, replacements, refurbishments and residences. Could you provide details of the major Capital Works Program for the QAS this financial year?

**Mrs ROSE:** I know how committed the Chairman is to the QAS and the provision of quality ambulance services, so I am pleased that this excellent capital works budget includes funding for the construction of a replacement Brendale ambulance station to be located at Eatons Hill. At a total cost of \$450,000, this station will enhance service delivery on the north side of Brisbane and will compliment our strategic vision for western Brisbane.

I mentioned before that this is an excellent capital works budget for 1999-2000. It will deliver new ambulance stations at Agnes Water, Clifton, Cunnamulla, Doomadgee, Eatons Hill, Home Hill, Inglewood, Maroochydore, Northgate/Nundah, Buderim, Palm Island, Rosewood, the Mount Ommaney area and Woodridge. It provides new residences at Charleville, Coen, Mornington Island and Mount Garnet.

This Capital Works Program demonstrates our commitment to improving ambulance services right around Queensland. It is part of a \$27m total capital budget. It includes \$8m to put 81 new and refurbished ambulances into Queensland communities. Communications centres will also be upgraded and regional CAD will be further rolled out after its successful implementation in Bundaberg and Toowoomba.

**Mr FOURAS:** I refer to your statement that ambulance emergency responses were increasing at a rate of around 6% per annum. Could you tell the Committee how the Queensland Ambulance Service is coping with this spiralling demand?

**Mrs ROSE:** Our CAD/AVL project is about using our ambulance resources smarter and more efficiently. This \$14m project will provide for the roll-out of computer-aided dispatch to regional communications centres and the progressive roll out of automatic vehicle location systems to ambulances right across the south-east of Queensland. The delivery of regional CAD/AVL has been delayed. These delays occurred over a three-year period as the QAS strove to deliver the best possible system with the least possible risk to Queenslanders. We all know what a debacle the implementation of CAD was in Victoria. The QAS has been working to make sure that that does not happen here and that at every step of the way we have minimised any risks to patient care.

The regional CAD/AVL project has now been rolled out in stages. Regional CAD has been successfully implemented in Bundaberg and Toowoomba. The member for Toowoomba South is here. I am not sure if he has taken the opportunity to visit the communications centre. I was there a couple of weeks ago and was very impressed.

**Mr HORAN:** Is it above the ambulance station?

**Mrs ROSE:** Yes.

**Mr HORAN:** I have been there a number of times.

**Mrs ROSE:** With the new CAD, to see how it operates? It is excellent.

Roll-out will continue with Townsville, Rockhampton, Cairns, Southport and Nambour coming online. The AVL project will put global positioning equipment into ambulances, initially in Brisbane and the Gold and Sunshine Coasts. This will move service delivery from the ambulance station to the ambulance vehicle. This is an important point.

Ambulance services are about assistance at the scene, not at the ambulance station. The QAS is increasingly focusing on ways to make sure that the ambulance vehicle and our paramedics have the best chance possible of getting to the scene quickly. That is why we have been trialling motorcycle responses on the Gold Coast during 1998-99. That is a program that I was very pleased to launch on the Gold Coast and it has been extremely successful.

CAD/AVL is all about working smarter, not just harder. With vehicles spending most of their time on the road, knowing where any vehicle is moment by moment means that we can get the nearest ambulance to respond to any given emergency. CAD/AVL will deliver the maximum possible information to communication centre staff so that the best placed resource, be it the traditional ambulance, paramedics in sedans or on motorcycles, is directed to the scene. This is the future of ambulance service delivery.

I am pleased that a few weeks ago the QAS signed a contract with a consortium including Technisys, United Wireless and executors from the Swedish company Eriksson. The provision of \$4.8m is the first-time allocation to meet growth and demand for urgent services and, of course, the additional 44 staff that I mentioned before.

**Mr WILSON:** Minister, the volunteer marine rescue units now have to comply with marine safety regulations to enhance volunteer safety at sea. Could you tell us how your department is subsidising the quite considerable cost to Coastguard and volunteer marine rescue units of those upgrades?

**Mrs ROSE:** Marine rescue volunteers are often the unsung heroes of our coastline. They provide a rescue service that Queenslanders can be proud of. I am very pleased to receive that question. It is quite timely because only today the Gold Coast Sun ran a very large story congratulating the Government, on behalf of the volunteer marine rescue groups and the Coastguard on the Gold Coast, for the funding boost that they have received.

They do need resources and my department provides an annual grant of \$886,400 each to the volunteer Coastguard and volunteer marine rescue associations. This year, we have provided an additional \$1m as a first instalment of special funding to assist the associations in bringing their vessels into survey. All vessels must comply with marine safety legislation by 31 December 2000. Many units will have to replace or upgrade vessels that no longer meet safety standards. Around 30 units require the replacement or upgrade of their rescue vessels. Rescue squadrons from Weipa to Point Danger, from Whitsunday to Tully and the Torres Strait, and from Mooloolaba to Raby Bay must replace their vessels.

The VMRAQ units at Weipa, Karumba, Burketown, Stradbroke Island, Currumbin, Point Danger, Aurukun, Gladstone, Raby Bay, which has two, Beenleigh, which has two, and Whitsundays have or will be replacing vessels.

Bowen, Bribie Island, Bundaberg, Gladstone, Hervey Bay, which has two, Mornington Island, Southport and Whitsunday will need to bring vessels into survey. AVCGQ units at Cape York, Cardwell, Ingham, Innisfail, Mooloolaba, Redcliffe, Redland Bay, Sandy Strait, Torres Strait, Tully and Yeppoon have or will replace vessels. Cairns and Port Douglas will be bringing vessels into survey and Cooktown, Innisfail and Noosa will be upgrading vehicles.

The associations face significant costs to comply with the regulations and we have an obligation to help them. This funding of \$2.5m over two years plus recurrent funding of \$250,000 to help units keep their vessels in survey was a necessity. I am pleased that we have delivered in a way that will help ensure the continued safety of the boating community up and down the Queensland coast. We must ensure the safety of volunteers who often put their own lives on the line when they put to sea in extreme conditions to help others. As State bodies, the AVCGQ and the VMRA will receive an extra \$500,000 each this year to start the program. It will be allocated on a priority basis. Our marine rescue volunteers do a fantastic job and they deserve this extra help.

The funding is in addition to annual subsidies that I have already mentioned. The \$886,400 for each association is distributed to units to help with operating and boat replacement costs. Each unit is eligible for up to \$20,000 a year to help with operational costs and \$100,000 over any 10-year period for vessel replacement. The level of Government support to Coastguard groups and the VMRA in Queensland is the envy of units in other States.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We know from statements that you have made in Parliament that call-outs for road accident response and other forms of rescue have doubled in recent years. That is a sad tale, but it is true. What steps are you taking to ensure that our firefighters are properly trained and resourced to carry out these important duties?

**Mrs ROSE:** Our firefighters no longer just respond to fires. The number of road accidents and other incidents they attend has risen dramatically in recent years. There is plenty of evidence that our firefighters are up to the job. Only last week the QFRA State Rescue Coordinator travelled to Taiwan to assist the United Nations with search and rescue operations following a massive earthquake there. Last month, two Queensland fire crews from Mareeba and Brisbane South took first and second place respectively at the National Road Accident Rescue Championships in

Melbourne, with Mareeba going on to take second place in the international event. This year's Budget reflects the increasingly diverse role played by our firefighters in the community. Every new vehicle built this year will be fitted with the latest road accident rescue equipment. The Budget includes a specific allocation of half a million dollars for equipment and training techniques used in a variety of rescue situations. This includes \$250,000 for the acquisition of specialist location devices, such as search cameras and listening devices, which will be used by highly trained QFRA staff in response to a range of rescue activities throughout Queensland and interstate. There will also be funding for training courses and equipment for use in trench rescue, confined space rescue, vertical rescue, urban search and rescue and swift water rescue.

At present there are 63 firefighters strategically placed around the State who are trained in urban search and rescue, high-angle rescue and confined space rescue. The number of firefighters with specialist rescue skills will increase this financial year. You would be pleased to note, Mr Chairman, that I take a very keen interest in the training of our firefighters. The week before last I joined a crew on the Gold Coast for some vertical rescue training.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I noticed how keen you were on the training; you were sitting on the shoulders of one of them and he had no shirt on!

**Mrs ROSE:** What vertical rescue training involves, Mr Chairman, is abseiling off the cliffs at Miami. I joined a crew of fine Gold Coast firefighters. Dave Herman is the firefighter on the Gold Coast who actually runs the vertical rescue training. They showed me how secure all of their ropes are. I might add that they are very expensive ropes. I abseiled three times off the cliffs at Miami. That was quite an effort. I am going back in six months' time for a bit of retraining. Mr Chairman, I invite you to join me on that occasion.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will gladly go with you.

**Mr FOURAS:** This may be the last question that I will get to ask at this Estimates hearing. I note your very keen interest in and support of surf-lifesaving. That is something that I share, as a person who grew up on Main Beach. I note that under the Volunteers Guarding Our Coast policy there has been a substantial boost to funding for Surf Life Saving Queensland. What is the outcome for surf-lifesaving in this year's Budget?

**Mrs ROSE:** Volunteer surf-lifesavers have watched over Queensland's coast for six decades. Over that time they have saved in excess of 71,000 lives. It is an impressive record that highlights the critical role that these dedicated men and women play on Queensland's beaches. Every year their role becomes more and more critical as the number of holiday-makers skyrockets. Thousands of people from interstate come to Queensland to live, and water activities become an increasingly popular pastime. Overall, visits to the beach increase at an annual rate of around 14%. That amounts to around 18 million people each year making the pilgrimage to south-east Queensland beaches alone. SLSQ is well aware of these figures and the need to keep on top of surf safety, and so is the State Government.

Prior to being elected, this Government made a commitment to support the volunteers guarding our coast and we have delivered on that commitment. Over the past two years this Government will have delivered a \$1.3m funding boost to SLSQ, with the surf movement this year receiving an additional \$650,000. This takes my department's overall contribution to surf clubs to more than \$3.7m. The boost recognises the great work done by our surf-lifesavers and it will enable surf clubs to mount extra beach patrols. It will be spent on additional rescue equipment, such as oxygen resuscitation gear, jet skis, inflatable rescue boats and general maintenance. We have again allocated funds to ensure that Queensland's lifesavers have full insurance cover while on duty. The remainder of the money has been earmarked for surf-lifesaver training and, very importantly, surf safety education for the community.

The State Government also provides each of the 57 surf clubs and six branches in Queensland with an annual grant of \$24,000 to assist them with operational expenses. SLSQ also received a couple of bonuses this year. The Premier donated \$50,000 to help kick off Surf Week and announced additional funds to ensure the continuation of the highly successful City Nippers program, which I understand I am launching next week—something that will be very exciting.

This Government is proud to support the men and women of Surf Life Saving Queensland, who last season saved more than 2,600 lives, carried out almost 70,000 preventive actions and administered more than 7,000 first aid treatments. They each take their job of protecting beach goers very seriously, just as this Government takes its

commitment to surf-lifesavers and their clubs very seriously. The two-year funding boost to Surf Life Saving Queensland is proof of that commitment.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As the Government's 20 minutes for questions has expired, we turn to questions from non-Government members.

**Mr MALONE:** In August there were reports that up to 50 new rural fire engines delivered to brigades in Queensland could be illegal under Department of Transport specifications. This was a particular problem for various fire brigades. It seems to revolve around the Mazda T3500 appliance, which seems to be about 300 kilograms overweight. The suggestion is that it will cost around \$5,000 to rectify it. I have seen a report that I believe emanated from you stating that the department will rectify those problems. That has bipartisan support. However, I would have thought that the body builders would have been building to departmental specifications. If that was not the case, who was responsible for creating the specifications that allowed those engines to be overweight? What sort of money would you expect to have to allocate to rectify the fire engines? There would obviously be a substantial cost in doing that?

**Mrs ROSE:** I am certainly aware of the problem. Recently, there were some media reports in the Gold Coast Sun about one of my local groups having problems with its vehicle. The rural fire brigade responded very quickly and was able to help them to have the vehicle fixed. I might give you some background on our rural fire appliances. We have two types of fighting appliances. One is a light attack appliance, which costs approximately \$34,000 to construct. This appliance will be available to brigades for \$6,900 in 1999-2000. The medium attack appliance costs approximately \$57,000 to construct. That appliance will be available to brigades for \$11,400 in 1999-2000. The two programs are run within the rural fire brigade to provide these appliances.

A base vehicle program provides brigades with their initial or an additional appliance to match their risk profile. Both light and medium attack appliances are provided under this program, with \$2,023,000 allocated in 1999-2000. In relation to the veteran vehicle program, in an effort to reduce the age of the fleet to under 20 years, \$4.14m has been allocated for 1999-2000, consisting of \$1.39m from an existing program and some \$2.75m from the QFRA Rescue Fund to the QFRA earlier this year. I know you are specifically talking about those vehicles, so I will get the acting Commissioner of the Rural Fire Service,

George McDonald, to talk to you specifically about those other vehicles.

**Mr McDONALD:** Certainly we have a commitment to provide vehicles that are safe. There is no requirement for them to be registered, but we have a commitment to provide them as a safe vehicle meeting all vehicle manufacturers' and transport regulations. The incident was brought to our attention from a brigade on the Gold Coast and we certainly reacted quickly. Our equipment coordinator and I personally visited the brigade and we weighed the vehicle in question with a control vehicle. The brigade contended that they had to modify their vehicle because it was overweight. We weighed the vehicle that had been modified. We also weighed a totally unmodified vehicle. We found that both vehicles were within specifications. Certainly the problem arose. We reacted to it because it did cause us concern. But in the end the volunteer admitted that there had been a mistake made.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you very much for that. That was great—a good news story perhaps. I refer to Output Performance for the SES on page 1-17 under Future Developments. Point five states "Development of a systematic SES equipment maintenance and replacement program", and I ask: has the Minister allocated additional specific funds for this purpose and, if so, how much and where has it been added to the SES budget? Can you identify where that has actually been added in?

**Mrs ROSE:** My department provides substantial equipment support for the SES volunteer units. The Government selection policy on emergency services included a commitment to examine the long-term funding need of emergency services, as I was explaining to you before, and to develop a strategy to place the services on a more secure financial footing. This includes the provision of adequate equipment to SES volunteer units.

The department commenced phase 1 of the Emergency Services portfolio funding examination in late 1998. Phase 1 of the funding examination identified a number of immediate funding requirements for the portfolio. It also identified medium and longer term funding challenges for the portfolio and strategies to achieve long-term sustainability, and security of the portfolio's funding sources are being explored. With respect to the SES, the funding examination identified that additional funds were required to support the critical work of volunteers across Queensland.

**Mr MALONE:** Particularly maintenance.

**Mrs ROSE:** Phase 2 of the funding examination which commenced in August 1999 will examine the issues identified in phase 1 in relation to SES equipment and requirements. It is intended to develop a full proposal for inclusion in next year's budget. This proposal will include initial equipment needed by SES volunteer units and an equipment replacement program. In the interim, the existing SES equipment program will be maintained, supplemented by the Government's initiative to provide \$1.5m over four years to upgrade the SES flood boat fleet, as I was telling you before. A quarter of a million dollars was spent on this initiative last financial year and a further half a million dollars was included in this budget.

I do understand what you mean about training, but we want to cover all aspects of the SES requirements. Quite simply, when I was in Cairns during the floods, they only had one pair of overalls. So there are certainly issues there that I understand and I recognise need to be addressed. Again, I will say that during the examination of the portfolio funding review, we are specifically looking at the State emergency services—not just overalls, as I said, not just training, but also communications, radios. In some of the areas in north Queensland, as you can appreciate, communication can be difficult sometimes. On all of those sorts of issues, I can assure you and give you a reassurance that we are taking them into consideration for the SES when we are looking at this funding review.

**Mr MALONE:** I was particularly keen in respect of funding for maintenance and the ongoing program of maintenance.

**Mrs ROSE:** Sure.

**Mr MALONE:** In respect of the QAS, what is the current number of operational staff vacancies throughout the State and what progress has been made since the last Estimates hearings in developing key initiatives to attract staff to rural areas? I am referring particularly to housing assistance, professional development, education and isolation allowances.

**Mrs ROSE:** The Government is committing to delivering services to all Queenslanders and not just those living in the city. The QAS has implemented strategies to ensure equitable access to ambulance services for remote and rural communities. Those key strategies include improved aeromedical transport services through the Royal Flying Doctor Service in the QAS owned aircraft, incentive schemes to encourage

officers to the more rural and remote centres in Queensland, upgrading of radio and electronic communications with the installation of repeater stations and links, and the continued close working relationship with local ambulance committees to maintain close consultation at a community level.

Our Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme has reduced the number of vacancies and enhanced the delivery of pre-hospital care in more isolated areas. In 1998-99 the Government committed an additional \$300,000 for the construction of residences in rural and remote areas. We still do have 12 vacancies—I think you specifically asked how many vacancies there are—but that is the lowest level of rural vacancies that we have had in years. Over 30 officers have been permanently appointed to positions in regional Queensland, including locations such as Hughenden, Clermont, Emerald, Miles, Cunnamulla and Dirranbandi. Officers are recognising the value of our rural incentives and voting with their feet.

That number of vacancies of 12 was as at 30 June 1999. As I said to you, that is the lowest level of rural vacancies that we have had in years. We were able to address a lot of the issues concerning attracting people out into rural and remote Queensland through the enterprise partnership agreement, which was negotiated just this year. What I might do is outline for you some of the specific incentives. They include special leave of up to three days for staff development purposes for isolated remote and rural staff, payment of an isolation bonus to isolated remote and rural staff, an integrated transfer program including term appointments and improved transfer conditions and entitlements, housing provided or subsidised in selected locations, payment of an incidental expenses allowance for overnight relievers away from home and improvement in the QAS meal allowance provisions. So we are working on it and it is getting better.

**Mr MALONE:** Let us hope we can clear the 12 vacancies. I support your constantly expressed desire to see funding directed to the front line or grassroots organisations and operations throughout the State. I would just like to ask: what are the present classifications of the Executive Director of the Support Services Business Unit, the Executive Director of Strategic and Executive Services and the Director of Human Resource and Regional Services? Have these positions been reclassified in 1998-99 and, if so, were they advertised externally?

**Mrs ROSE:** I will ask the Director-General to respond to that question.

**Mr KINNANE:** The position of Executive Director, Support Services Business Unit is SES3 and that position was reclassified from an SES2 position, mainly because of the addition of regional support services staff. That reclassification, from SES2 to an SES3, was supported by the previous director-general as well.

The position of Executive Director, Strategic and Executive Services was reclassified to SES3 also following an independent CED evaluation of the position. That is an approach that is adopted throughout the public sector and it is well recognised. I will ask the Executive Director of SSBU about the position of Human Resource Services, but I take the opportunity of assuring the Committee that all of those positions were certainly publicly advertised and the final selection process was based on merit.

**Ms SMITH:** The position of Director, HR and Regional Services previously was part of the senior executive service—it was an SES1 position—and subsequently accrued the entitlements under the conditions of the senior executive service, including the private use of a motor vehicle. This position has subsequently been removed from the senior executive service and now is classified as a senior officer level 1 position, which is not part of the senior executive service—it is the feeder group to the senior executive service—and it does not accrue the entitlements of the senior executive service, which is the private use of a motor vehicle. In actual fact, this position was removed from the senior executive service.

**Mr MALONE:** So it was in fact downgraded?

**Ms SMITH:** Well, the actual senior executive service 1 was abolished in the previous Government and was classified as a senior officer level, so they actually did away with the SES1 positions.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, I draw your attention to page 26 of Budget Paper No. 5 and the amount of \$944,000 allocated to minor works on fire stations. Last year \$1.491m was allocated for station enhancements but only \$944,000 was actually expended. Why was the budget underspent by half a million dollars in that particular area and why is less money being allocated this year for fire station enhancement?

**Mr TAYLOR:** Last year's minor works totalled \$1.49m for the Queensland fire and rescue service—I believe that included some carryovers from the year before—and the level

of funding this year is \$944,000. The majority of the minor works in the Queensland fire and rescue service were fully expended, I believe, in the last financial year. This year the major focus has been on equipment upgrades rather than the minor works of the building area.

**Mr MALONE:** So you are saying that was a carryover from the year before, in actual fact?

**Mr TAYLOR:** There was some level of the carryover in the \$1.49m from the previous year.

**Mrs ROSE:** If you would like further information I can get Maurie Cummings, the Executive Director of Business Services, to give you some more information.

**Mr CUMMINGS:** I was not here last year, but I have in front of me the Minister for Emergency Services portfolio statement, page 3-15. You will note that, relating to capital, property, plant and equipment, under the heading "Land purchases and minor works", last year the fire service proposed to buy \$1.045m worth of land and it ended up buying \$2.287m worth of land. The reason for that was that some capital projects were behind schedule due to weather and other conditions. That means in terms of this year that \$944,000 is all that is required. You will see that for minor works last year \$2.270m was spent. So the short answer to your question is that because we had a good year last year we were able to spend less on minor works this year.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for non-Government members' questions has expired. Government members can take up the remainder of the time.

**Mr WILSON:** I refer the Minister to page 2-7 of the MPS and the reference to a baby capsule hire service. Can you advise the Committee of the outcomes of this very well worthwhile service and its benefit to Queenslanders?

**Mrs ROSE:** The Queensland Ambulance Service last financial year hired out 6,389 baby capsules. That is 666 more than the previous year. This year we estimate that we will hire around 6,600 capsules. I think the advertising campaign the QAS has been running about the baby capsule hire scheme has been extremely successful. It is a really worthwhile service which has obviously grown in popularity. Last year the QAS purchased 900 new baby capsules, taking the number on hand to 4,900.

What many parents do not know is that they may be exposing their children to the risk

of serious injury or even death by incorrectly installing child restraints in vehicles. QAS checks have revealed that up to 70% of child restraints fitted to vehicles by untrained members of the public are incorrectly installed. When restraints are incorrectly installed, there is the potential for spinal or other injuries in the event of sudden stopping or accident.

Checks by the QAS have also revealed a tendency for many parents to travel with young children completely unrestrained. At an Ipswich shopping centre, 15 children under five years were found to be totally unrestrained, 10 child restraints were not held securely in place by seatbelts and five were not secured by anchor bolts, three baby capsules were not connected to seatbelts and four child seats had the harness incorrectly fitted. These are disturbing statistics, particularly if they are replicated around the State.

Parents and carers seem to believe that it is easy to install child restraints, but do so poorly. Many parents and carers are not restraining children at all and they obviously need better information on restraint selection, use and installation. The clear message is that parents and carers should not take risks.

The experts agree that if children are properly restrained while travelling in vehicles they stand a much better chance of escaping injury in the event of an accident. After many inquiries from the general public in recent years, the QAS has conducted child restraint checks at ambulance station open days, in shopping centres and for the Family Day Care Association and Nursing Mothers Association.

A recent RACQ restraint check indicated that around one-third of parents and carers did not use a restraint appropriate to the child's height and weight. Children are being moved out of child restraints and into seatbelts too soon, often resulting in the sash of the seatbelt being placed across a child's neck. Many of the child restraints fitted incorrectly were older restraints purchased second-hand without the user manual. Many of the older restraints do not now comply with the latest Australian design and safety standards.

Parents should always restrain their children when travelling. It is vitally important to have restraints expertly fitted to vehicles. The QAS offers free advice on child restraint selection and installation and conducts a baby capsule hire service, offering capsules completely installed at a cost of \$40 for six months. All baby capsules hired from QAS meet the latest Australian safety standards.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. I would say that that would be cheap at twice the price.

Minister, that is all for today. It is just about 6 o'clock. That concludes the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 27 August. I thank Hansard for their due diligence today. Sometimes we are unintelligible and speak gobbledegook, but in the transcript we always read very well.

Minister, I thank all your officers, Fiona, Margaret, Gary, Michael, Dr Gerry, Frank on very short notice—thank you, Frank—and Jack for being here to assist us. I thank all your other departmental officers who are here. I also thank the time keepers and the attendants, who keep us honest and keep us on the ball, and also the other Committee members for their cooperation today. That helped things run as well as they did. I also thank my colleague the member for Ferny Grove, Mr Geoff Wilson, who sacrificed an afternoon when he had other matters on to come along and assist this Committee. I now declare this public hearing closed.

**Mr MALONE:** Mr Chairman, just before we go, I would like to thank the Minister and her departmental staff and the executive directors for their support this afternoon. Thank you very much for your attendance.

**Mrs ROSE:** Thanks, Ted. I, too, would like to add my thanks to all of the departmental people here. They never cease to amaze me with their dedication and commitment to Emergency Services and the portfolio. They really do a fantastic job. They have put hundreds of hours into preparing the briefs to make sure that I was adequately prepared. So I would like to add my personal thanks to all of the people in Emergency Services who contributed to the Estimates debate today.

The Committee adjourned at 6.01 p.m.