

**ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B**

Mr P. D. Purcell (Chair)    Mr G. E. Malone  
 Mr M. J. Horan                Mrs J. Miller  
 Mrs L. D. Lavarch            Mr L. J. Springborg

**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 I. Catlin, Executive Manager, Arts  
 Queensland  
 Mr R. Newton, Director, Corporate Support  
 Program  
 Mr J. Cockerill, Adult Guardian  
 Ms K. Walters, Anti-Discrimination  
 Commissioner

The Committee commenced at 9 a.m.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I declare this meeting of Estimates B now open. I welcome the Attorney-General, public officials and members of the public who are in attendance today. The Committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2000 as is 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 p.m.; the Minister for Police and Corrective Services will be examined from 2.30 p.m. until 5.30 p.m.; and the Minister for Emergency Services will be examined from 5.30 p.m. until 7.30 p.m. You may notice that those hours are later today than normal. We ask Hansard to bear with us. There are some funerals on today which Ministers and shadow Ministers are attending. We have arranged our hearings to suit them as best we can.

I remind members of the Committee and the Attorney 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 end of these time limits. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. The Sessional Orders require that at least half the time is to be allotted to non-Government members. I ask that departmental witnesses identify themselves before answering questions so that Hansard can record that information in the

transcript. In the event that those attending today are not aware, I should point out that these proceedings are similar to Parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings today. 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 now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and Minister for the Arts open for examination. The question before the Committee is—

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

Attorney, would you like to make a brief introductory statement to the Committee?

**Mr FOLEY:** Thank you, Mr Chair. Let me acknowledge at the outset that we gather here on the traditional lands of Aboriginal people. The budget within the area of Justice and Attorney-General reflects significant boosts to do with the Government's priority on attacking crime and attacking the causes of crime. In particular, the Government has made extra provision within the area of prosecutions, within the area of Legal Aid and within other areas which are also very important to the proper administration of justice, particularly for people with a disability with the Guardianship and Administration Tribunal and provision for the Adult Guardian. Provision has also been made within the area of fine defaulting in order to ensure that, so far as is reasonably possible, fine defaulters are kept out of jail.

Significantly, in the area of the courts we have made provision for over \$100m to be made available to construct the long-awaited Brisbane Magistrates Court. I might say in this respect that in these key areas of the budget the contrast with the previous coalition budgetary provision is startling. Whereas under this budget prosecutions are boosted by \$911,000, the coalition's outgoing 1998-99 provision was to slash funding by \$500,000. We are boosting Legal Aid by \$5.875m above what it was under the coalition plus \$335,000 for enterprise bargaining wage increases, plus an extra \$1.5m released by Treasury for take-up of accrued long service leave. What we saw under the coalition Budget was wages in Legal Aid falling 4% behind the Public Service. We have delivered on the Guardianship and Administration Tribunal to give disadvantaged Queenslanders—those with decision-making incapacity—a chance for better access to the law in an area where the coalition failed to deliver.

In the area of keeping fine defaulters out of jail, \$19.4m is provided in this Budget for a system including a call centre, which has recovered almost \$3m to date. By contrast, the coalition Budget prior to the former Government losing office failed to provide any funding for its fines regime. Spectacularly, we have provided funding for the long-awaited court for the Brisbane magistrates. Under the previous Government, it was announced but only a mere \$2m was provided for a project well in excess of \$100m and nothing was provided in the Forward Estimates.

Turning to the area of the Arts, the Budget reflects the Government's priorities on regional arts. We have honoured an election promise to double regional arts funding, in particular through the Regional Arts Development Fund. We promised to double it from \$1.5m to \$3m. We have delivered on that promise. We promised to return the Queensland Biennial Festival of Music, which was abolished under the coalition. We have delivered on that promise. With respect to the Millennium Arts Program, we have budgeted for \$260m to provide for a Gallery of Modern Art, extensions to the Library and a number of other measures. By contrast, the Cultural Heritage Centre announced by the previous Government was all fanfare, but no funding was provided under any Budget passed by this Parliament.

With respect to performing arts, the historical and scandalous underfunding of Queensland by the Commonwealth has been the subject of increased attention. We have secured an extra \$5.64m from the Federal Government over four years for the performing arts and that will be matched by an extra \$1.4m from the Queensland Budget to ensure that the performing arts in this State, including the orchestras, have a strong future. We have ensured that the Empire Contemporary Arts Centre, which was announced under the previous Government but not funded and which was left with a \$7.6m black hole recoverable loan—impossible to repay by the performing arts and visual arts companies—has been funded. We have made provision for over \$11m to do that.

In short, the Arts budget reflects a deeply-held belief on the part of Government that the great cultural strength of Queensland lies in its regional diversity. In partnership with local governments throughout the State, we have fostered the Regional Arts Development Fund as a model for encouraging local art. We have sought to do this within the context of fiscal discipline but in circumstances where the people of Queensland have to bear burdens

because of the inequitable nature of underfunding on the part of the Commonwealth Government. I am happy to answer questions from the Committee.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Attorney. My colleague the shadow Attorney-General and member for Warwick, Mr Lawrence Springborg, gets the first 20 minutes.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. My first question relates to the Anti-Discrimination Commission. I would be happy for either the Commissioner or the Attorney-General to answer. I again place on the public record that, although I do not always share the commission's view on particular issues—and there is one of those on the front page of the paper today—I have always been impressed with the way it is run, with the dedication of its staff and with the management of Commissioner Karen Walters.

I refer to page 2-8 of the MPS where a figure is given in relation to user charges. I am aware that the commission very successfully raises revenue by offering anti-discrimination training courses to the private sector. Last year I expressed a concern that the commission was projecting a drop in revenue from these training courses because of greater competition against the private sector. However, I note from the Budget papers that the commission was able to double its anticipated revenue by bringing in \$113,000. I note that this year the commission is again being a little pessimistic in projecting that it anticipates raising only half that amount in this financial year. Can I get an explanation for the lower projection, considering that the commission far exceeded expectations last year?

**Mr FOLEY:** I thank the honourable member for his kind observations with respect to the work of the Anti-Discrimination Commission. It does do a very fine job. It does so in circumstances where it has had to bear the brunt of the withdrawal by the Commonwealth Government of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. The Federal Government scandalously withdrew its office from Queensland during the term of the previous coalition Government.

With respect to user charges, section 234 of the Anti-Discrimination Act provides for the outlining of the commission's functions. As part of that responsibility the commission does provide information and training sessions. It has developed and delivered five training courses: The Best Person for the Job, recruitment and selection; Getting to Know the Act, introductory and advanced; and The

Contact Officer, introductory and advanced. Publications include a series of nine brochures of various kinds, and the commission provides training programs and publications to certain groups free of charge. However, in some cases a charge does apply.

The commission expected others to enter the marketplace. It adopted a new, innovative approach and it really needs to monitor the market demand in that area. As you would understand, this is an untested marketplace. It is relevant and appropriate, I think, for the commission to engage in this activity, provided of course that it does not detract from its core business. It is significant to note that extra funds have been provided to the Anti-Discrimination Commission in this year's budget to provide for some extra mediators. It is \$182,000 extra.

Australia has seen the rise in recent years of prejudice, bigotry and racism. We are determined to ensure that the Anti-Discrimination Commission is well resourced to combat that, despite the scandalous withdrawal by the Commonwealth of the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission from Queensland.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** My next question also relates to the Anti-Discrimination Commission. I refer to page 2-9 of the MPS. I note that an extra administrative position has been funded to cater for the increased complaints workload of the commission. The fact that complaints are on the increase is certainly of concern to me. On page 2-5 of the MPS a figure is given for the number of complaints expected to be closed by the commission this year, but no figure is given to indicate how many complaints the commission expects to receive overall. What was the level of complaints received last year compared with the previous year? What levels are expected this year? In addition, can I get an idea of what areas the commission is expecting complaints to arise in over the coming year?

**Mr FOLEY:** The complaint workload over recent years may be summarised as follows. In 1997-98 it was 1,607. In 1998-99 it increased to 2,079. In 1999-2000 it increased to 2,222. The estimate for 2000-01 is of about the same order—2,204. There is an increase, particularly in 1998-99 and to some extent in 1999-2000, though it has now flattened off. The State Anti-Discrimination Commission is having to deal with complaints that should otherwise have been dealt with by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. It is an international scandal that, at a time when feelings of racial discrimination have been

abroad, the Commonwealth should have withdrawn that commission and left the burden to be carried by Queensland. I commend the staff of the commission for their efforts and activities.

I am informed that complaints in relation to discrimination on the basis of age have increased and that the number of complaints on behalf of indigenous persons complaining of racial discrimination also rose. I am further informed that, as always, disability complaints and sexual harassment complaints are the most prevalent.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Minister, you made certain comments with regard to the increase in intolerance in our community. I refer to page 1-15 of the MPS. You anticipate that eight Bills in your portfolio will be passed by Parliament in this coming year. You may recall that in June of last year the Premier made certain comments regarding the alleged rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Queensland. He indicated at that stage that there needed to be new anti-racial vilification legislation in this State which would enhance the range of penalties and options available to the State to be able to combat it. At that time some people suggested that that was a media stunt on the part of the Premier, however, we know it is a serious issue. We might differ in opinion on ways to actually deal with and combat that. It is 14 months since this issue was raised in the press. Is one of the eight Bills to be passed through the Parliament a new piece of anti-racial vilification legislation?

**Mr FOLEY:** There are a number of Bills, as you can see there. One of them, which I think will be of considerable assistance in ensuring a better understanding of issues affecting members of the indigenous community, is the current amendment to the Penalties and Sentences Act—it is currently before the Parliament—which requires the courts to take into account, in approaching the difficult task of sentencing, the submissions of the elders and other members of the community.

With respect to racial vilification laws, the commissioner has on a number of occasions recommended such laws in the course of her annual reports, in accordance with her statutory duty. Those have been under active consideration by the Government. In this area there are certain existing provisions within the Anti-Discrimination Act which of course forbid discrimination on racial grounds. As you will appreciate, this is not a forum to debate policy. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that those recommendations of the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner have been and continue to be

under very active consideration by the Government, and a decision in relation to that will be made at the appropriate time.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I now move to MPS 1–2, which mentions reform of the legal profession as one of your priorities of the year. Given the fact that you now have both the legal profession and legal consumer advocacy groups offside on this issue, what money do you have allocated this year for legal profession reform and what is the timetable for the introduction of the new regulatory regime, and will the legal profession reform legislation be one of the eight Bills passed by Parliament this year? Just one other issue of clarification: the Attorney-General mentioned the current legislation in Parliament. Do I take it that you are going to include current Bills in Parliament as part of the eight Bills which will be passed this year and taken into consideration insofar as your output statements are concerned?

**Mr FOLEY:** That estimate of eight Bills reflects the usual workload. In fact, I suspect we will do a larger number than that—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Fifteen last year.

**Mr FOLEY:**—in the course of the year.

With respect to getting the legal profession offside, I must say I have to confess that I have not done nearly as well in that respect, Mr Chairperson, as the member for Warwick in his comments with respect to mandatory sentencing. I thought I could upset the legal profession with some of these reforms, but I must say I pale into insignificance with the sense of outrage and disappointment—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Take it from me: you are not that far behind.

**Mr FOLEY:** Well, I am happy to take at least that proposition from you, Mr Springborg. But if there is an issue on which the legal community has expressed outrage, and rightly so—both here in Queensland, at the national level and indeed internationally—it has been the disgraceful practice of mandatory sentencing which has been advocated.

As to the reform of the legal profession—it is expected that the Government will announce its decisions with regard to those policy matters in the next few months. The issue of the funding of those depends largely upon the outcome of the review of the Legal Practitioners Fidelity Guarantee Fund. The most significant reform in terms of ensuring financial stability in that area has already been made, namely, the exclusion of commercial investments from the purview of that fidelity fund. So long as those commercial

investments were part and parcel of the matters to be covered by the fund, there was a real danger of a massive loss being incurred, such as the ones we have seen in recent times down the Gold Coast. That now has been taken out, so the budgetary implications basically really do not go so much to consolidated revenue as to the question of the most prudent use of the interest on solicitors' trust accounts and how that should be apportioned between the different parts of the regulatory system, whether it be in the Queensland Law Society, the Legal Ombudsman or some other structure to be brought into existence.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** With regards to MPS 1-13, two years ago the Attorney-General may recall that I asked at this very same Committee about a new Coroner's Act and the establishment of the office of a State Coroner. I note that you are going to continue to review the current Act, which I believe is the 1958 Act. Will the new Coroner's Act be one of the eight new pieces of legislation which you will be bringing before State Parliament this year?

**Mr FOLEY:** Again, strictly speaking, matters of policy and legislation are not matters for this Committee, but I am happy to try to assist the assist the honourable member—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It is mentioned in the MPS. How long can you review it?

**Mr FOLEY:** I am happy to assist the honourable member, and the Coroner's Act is indeed under review. The issue here relates to questions of whether, among other things, there should be the establishment of an office of a State Coroner, and Cabinet approval has already been given to draft a new Coroner's Bill, which my department and the Parliamentary Counsel are in the course of doing. Now, that process has to take into account relevant stakeholders. I have had representations from a number of bodies, including members of the medical profession, who are keen to see reform in that area, and the area does require also the development of significant subordinate legislation and the training of coroners and, indeed, police in relevant new procedures, and I am confident that the capacity of the magistrates to deal with such a new regime will be significantly assisted by bringing into existence the new building. Currently the magistrates operate under very difficult and constrained circumstances down at 179 North Quay. So the work with respect to that review is ongoing, and that Act is in the process of being redrafted following approval from Cabinet.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** MPS 1-2 mentions the new Brisbane Magistrates Court. Given the fact that you scoffed at my suggestion two years ago that you should continue with the coalition's process of expending funds to identify a site for the building and planning and invite the private sector to construct this building, why has it taken you so long to reach the same conclusion? How can you be sure that the timetable to start by 2001 and completion by 2003, as in answer to Question on Notice 5, will be adhered to? Are you confident that the expenditure of \$136,000 this year will ensure proper assessment of the bids for the project? Why did you underspend by 60% last year the amount allocated for this planning work, as per MPS 1-43? I also take it—and I invite clarification—that the private sector will construct the building and expend the funds and it will be a lease-back arrangement over a long term.

**Mr FOLEY:** We scoffed at it then and we scoff at it now because it was a project over \$100m which the then Attorney-General, Mr Beanland, announced to much fanfare, but the simple fact of the matter is that he did not provide a budget for it. He provided only \$2m, and not a cracker in the Forward Estimates. It was a classic example of administration by press release without actually locking it in.

We have worked hard to make budgetary provision for this project. It has not been easy, because there are many demands on the public purse, but I am very pleased to say that we have secured this project, and it has been secured with a firm commitment from the Government. The central courts building, which houses the existing CBD, was constructed in 1974. It was originally designed as an office building. It was converted to a courts building during construction to overcome a shortfall in courts accommodation following the fire which had previously destroyed the old Supreme Court building in 1968. It will be the first time the Brisbane central business district Magistrates Court service has been accommodated in a purpose-built courthouse, and I look forward to seeing it actually operate.

This Government, unlike its predecessor, does not operate by way of phantom projects; it operates by way of fair dinkum projects. To get this up, along with servicing the needs of a number of other regional centres such as Mackay and Pormpuraaw, as well as centres such as Inala, has required planning and careful budgeting. We intend to do it, and we have made provision for it in the budget. We do not intend to simply announce it and hope for the best later down the track.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** They construct it and pay for it and you lease it back; that is the arrangement, isn't it?

**Mr FOLEY:** No, that is not the arrangement. I missed out Wynnum in those courts. It would be a terrible thing. I even missed out Mount Isa. That will get me into a lot of trouble.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** My first question is in relation to the Office of the Adult Guardian. Before asking the question, may I say that I personally continue to be impressed with the work carried out by the Office of the Adult Guardian and its commitment to protecting the rights and interests of adults with impaired capacity. I refer to pages 1-8 to 1-11 of the MPS, which relates to human rights protection and promotion, and in particular the Office of the Adult Guardian, and ask: can the Minister identify what changes were made to the operation of the Office of the Adult Guardian in this Budget?

**Mr FOLEY:** This area has been one of the most exciting and rewarding areas of Government that anyone, I think, would have the honour to serve in. What we are seeking to do as a Government—and the Office of the Adult Guardian plays an extremely important role in this—is to transform the quality of life and the access to justice on the part of people with a disability. Part of that has been an expansion of the role with respect to the Guardianship and Administration Tribunal, the role of community visitors and the establishment—which will occur shortly—of the Office of the Public Advocate.

There are a range of sources of funding. Some just over \$800,000 is new funding and some \$95,000 will be newly received from Health for community visitors. Funding of some \$1.4m is provided for the tribunal and the Public Advocate. That was included in the budget for 1999-2000 and is continuing. When it is added to the annual funding for the former Intellectually Disabled Citizens Council of Queensland, the tribunal will receive just over \$2.75m in this year. The Public Advocate will receive some just over \$451,000.

**Mr COCKERILL:** We propose to continue with professional education of investigators through the utilisation of the Investigations and Methods Course and also the Community Visitor Program will enable a proactive response to be given. The Community Visitor Program is part of the Guardianship and Administration Act.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I understand that you did get funding from the Public Trustee and there are some changes in relation to that as well.

**Mr FOLEY:** That continues on this year, but in future that is likely to change. The issue here is whether these functions should be funded directly out of consolidated revenue, which makes sense in terms of the pure logic of public administration. However, for some time the source of funds has come out of the Public Trustee because of the formal provisions. It is planned that that will change, but those funds continue to flow.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to pages 1-17 to 1-22 of the MPS, which relate to civil justice administration, and I ask: can the Minister identify what changes were made to funding for the Alternative Dispute Resolution Branch of the department in this year's budget?

**Mr FOLEY:** The big change is certainty. We have had some trial projects going at a couple of places, Hervey Bay and Mackay, and those trials have proved successful. We are keeping them going. So in terms of budget, there has been no significant quantum change, but what we have now is the security of it continuing as a permanent allocation. There is a modest adjustment upwards of \$15,000 for enterprise bargaining increases, but when these things are started throughout the State at places like Hervey Bay and Mackay, invariably they have to be started as pilot projects to see how they go.

The Alternative Dispute Resolution Program has been very successful. It means that people can solve their disputes outside court. Being a loyal member of the Bar Association, I suppose I should not be advocating alternatives to going to court—I might get into trouble with my trade union. But I think in the overall public interest it has got to be said that if we can find ways and means of people settling their disputes through alternative dispute resolution rather than slugging it out in court, this is altogether a good thing. My tender-hearted and sympathetic colleagues in Treasury have finally seen the wisdom of continuing these projects and I am grateful to them for that. They have been quite successful.

I want to pay tribute in this regard to my predecessor, the Honourable Dean Wells. He initiated this, and it was a passion of his to see the Alternative Dispute Resolution Program established. It has been very successful and it is a great credit to his contribution to the legal system in this State that it has gone on to flourish. I am informed that workload reports indicate that in 1999-2000 the Hervey Bay office received 751 first contacts and performed 139 mediations. The Mackay office received 614 first contacts and performed 73

mediations. There was 83% agreement in Hervey Bay and 94% in Mackay. So there seems to be more agreement as you head north.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Attorney-General, I have got a question for you in regard to drug courts. I accompanied you with other members of your backbench committee to Parramatta and Sydney to have a look at the drug court that is set up there. I, along with yourself and others, was very impressed with the judge, the way they handled that court, the process and how they handled people. I happened to know two people in that court and had a quiet chat to them afterwards. They were getting on very well. One particularly was doing very well. I notice we now have these courts set up here at Beenleigh, Ipswich and Southport. Could you give us any feedback at this stage on how those courts are going and whether we have got enough funding. I know we spoke about funding when we were at Parramatta. Have we got enough funding to keep those three at the level that we thought would be required to assist the people who appear in those courts?

**Mr FOLEY:** The short answer is: yes. The long answer is that at the end of the day these initiatives will be as successful as Government, community resources and the goodwill of all the parties can make them. They are operating at Beenleigh, Ipswich and Southport. It is a bit early days to say whether they have been a success, because I guess one can measure that in two ways: either by the impact upon the individual lives of offenders, or perhaps by the more serious measure of whether or not the crime rate goes down in those areas. Certainly we are seeing good cooperation from the members of the team: the Health Department, the Corrective Services Commission, the Police Service, the Justice Department and the court itself. I commend those officers.

This was an initiative floated as part of the Government's attempts and policy to be tough on crime and tough on the causes of crime. It was indeed floated in the discussion on crime prevention, which was released by the Government in a discussion paper, and I thank the member for Warwick for his enthusiastic taking up of the Government's suggestion in that regard and advocating—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The crime document does not seem to have any real statements—

**Mr FOLEY:** I am delighted that the honourable member for Warwick reads our documents so carefully and sees what condensed wisdom there is in them. I thank

him for his conversion to Labor Party policy in that regard and his support therefor.

During the period from its commencement to 31 July, the court dealt with 64 referrals and made 25 intensive drug rehabilitation orders. I should say this: many people get the impression that drug courts are a diversionary program for minor offenders, and that is really not the case. This is for offenders who would otherwise be going to jail. These are for offenders who have committed serious offences but offences that do not involve physical or sexual violence. So it is worth it from a humanitarian point of view and from an economic point of view to put in resources to try to help these people to lead productive lives, keep them out of prison and, hopefully, prevent them from having to do break and enters in order to service the drug habit.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will give you more time on that if you want it.

**Mr FOLEY:** I will not trespass too long, but to be eligible the offender before the court must be dependent on illicit drugs, charged with an offence, as I said, that does not involve physical or sexual violence against any person, have no charges involving physical or sexual assault pending before a court, must plead guilty to the offence, must be genuinely facing a sentence of imprisonment, and show a willingness to participate. Once found to be eligible and willing to participate in the drug program, participants are given a wholly suspended term of imprisonment and given an intensive drug rehabilitation order. They then embark on a lengthy program, which may include detoxification, rehabilitation, courses on the effects of substance abuse, anger management, vocational educational courses and/or community service. The average length of the program is expected to be 12 months, with participants initially reporting weekly to the pilot program magistrate for supervision under the Community Corrections case manager for drug testing in the course program..

So anyone who thinks that it is a soft option is sadly mistaken. It is not a soft option. I had the benefit of inspecting the urine testing van parked outside the court at Beenleigh. What it means is this: if a person is on the program, then they are tested on a very regular basis. If they slide back into bad habits, it will show up. They will be back before the magistrate before they know it and they will be looking at a period in the slammer to atone for their wrongdoing. That can go on a sliding scale from one or two days up to a fortnight. But it is the certainty of detection, coupled with the availability of help that, really, I think gives

the program potential. We do not know if, at the end of the day, it will work; we hope that it will.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to page 1-25 of the MPS and in particular to the details of future developments for the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. I note that there has been much said recently in the press about the operation of the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions, staff levels and its funding, and I ask: can the Minister please advise how this Budget impacts on the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Budget delivers an extra \$450,000 for additional resources for the Director of Public Prosecutions. It also delivers an extra \$461,000 to fund enterprise bargaining increases. That totals a \$911,000 boost in the course of this financial year. That contrasts with a \$500,000 cut that was proposed in former Attorney-General Beanland's proposed 1998-99 budget. The funding will be used to employ an additional five legal staff and to upgrade a position in Toowoomba to provide a victim support officer. It will provide for professional development training for legal, victim support and administrative staff.

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions does a very good job and it has continued to do so, notwithstanding disgraceful attempts by the Opposition to politicise the office and attempts to distribute defamatory material, which were stopped by the intervention of the former Director of Public Prosecutions. Notwithstanding those attacks upon the morale and standing of the office, it continues to deliver a quality service to the people of Queensland and this Government means to support it in a budgetary sense and support it in its important work to do justice according to law.

Indeed, may I pay tribute to the outgoing Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr Royce Miller, who served this State long and well. I table for the benefit of honourable members an extract of the director's overview from his last annual report, where he said among other things, "We have done well." He goes on to say, "and I must express my appreciation and thanks to all staff", and so on. I table that. In particular, the Director of Public Prosecutions stressed the importance of the lack of political interference. That is an important message, which I hope the Opposition takes on board.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** My next question is in relation to the Supreme Court Library. I note on page 1-22 of the MPS and in particular the

entry for grants and subsidies in the Operating Expenses column—

**Mr FOLEY:** Sorry, which page was that?

**Mrs LAVARCH:** 1-22, grants and subsidies. It has note 2, and then it has \$42,000 in the 1999-2000 column, \$62,000 in the next column and \$295,000 in the 2000-01 estimate column. Note 2 notes that the increase is due to additional funding being provided to the Supreme Court Library. I was wondering if the Minister could give details of this increase and what significance those additional funds will have for the Supreme Court Library's operation.

**Mr FOLEY:** The reference on page 1-22 and the footnote—

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Right, yes.

**Mr FOLEY:** It does make reference to the additional funding provided to the Supreme Court Library. One needs also to go to page 1-29 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements to deal with it. In short, we had to deal with a problem where, under the coalition Government, the grant to the Supreme Court Library was abolished. They were then obliged to rely upon interest on solicitors' trust accounts from the Law Society. That produced some very significant problems for the Supreme Court Library. Last year, we were able to find funds to at least bring that back to \$100,000. This year, it has gone up to \$266,000.

It is elementary that a modern Supreme Court must have access to the highest possible quality of legal information resources. That is why it is important in the public interest that it be properly supported and that is why we have restored that grant. This will allow the library to maintain its services to the judiciary, the legal profession and the public. They have a fine collection in the Supreme Court Library, but I am very well aware that members of the Supreme Court Library Committee were extremely concerned about, apart from anything else, their responsibilities and fiduciary duties with respect to liabilities. That grant of \$266,000 is important. The law changes rapidly and it is of the utmost importance that the highest court in this State should have access to up-to-date legal resources. The Supreme Court Library needs that if it is to deliver a high quality of justice to the people of Queensland. We have been pleased to deliver on it.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I turn to Legal Aid. I refer to page 3-3 of the MPS, on which Legal Aid has listed a number of new initiatives for this year. What guarantees can you give that these new initiatives will be met? I have here

no less than six financial reports prepared for you by the Director of Legal Aid that consistently tell you that the Legal Aid budget is helped in its balancing by delays in implementing new initiatives throughout the year. For example, in the March financial report to you it advises you that "savings from the delay of new initiatives amount to \$237,000 for the nine months to the end of March 2000". What new initiatives were delayed last year and what guarantee do you give that this same method of disguising underfunding will not be repeated?

**Mr FOLEY:** Let me deal with the last point first. There is no underfunding. Quite the contrary, we promised prior to the last election to boost Legal Aid funding by \$5m. We have done more than that. We have boosted it by \$5.8m, plus the extra \$300,000 for enterprise bargaining. So there is in fact a boost of over \$6m. We did that precisely because the previous coalition Government failed to fund Legal Aid adequately and, furthermore, because the Federal coalition Government scandalously slashed \$2m from Queensland Legal Aid. It has started to recover in payments, but it is not yet up to the state that it would have been if they had simply left us be and kept going with the level of funding that had previously been there. The question, with respect, is based upon a false premise. This year the Commonwealth will provide just over \$23m to Legal Aid Queensland, which is an increase of \$1.7m. That is only \$136,000 higher than it was in 1996-97. So the increase of \$1.7m does not really compensate for the \$2m that they pinched. As to the contribution from interest on solicitors' trust accounts—Legal Aid received just over \$10.48m, which was just over \$2m more from this source in 1999-2000 than it had estimated. Its estimate of \$9.63m appears to be substantially underestimated in light of the financial outcome for 1999-2000 and the likelihood of interest rate increases. The State's contribution I have already spoken of. Legal Aid Queensland earned \$356,000 on its investments in 1999-2000, which was \$76,000 more than it had estimated.

The other very significant issue is that on 1 July 1999 the State of Queensland—that is, Treasury—assumed responsibility for \$1,495,000 of accrued long service leave entitlements. That is a very significant contribution. With respect to the Child Protection Act, we put in an extra \$250,000 last year, which we continued this year. Contrary to some false and misleading claims in the newspaper, we funded that. Legal Aid had the benefit of that. The Child Protection



Act, in the event, did not get through the Parliament and proclaimed until the latter part of the financial year. They have had the benefit of that. They will have the benefit of another \$250,000 this year.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I go now to page 3-5 of the MPS. The number of civil and criminal matters is expected to rise significantly this year, but there are no additional State funds to cater for this increase. Why not? How do you expect the increased workload to be catered for when there is no increase in State funds? Further to that, if you have some spare time up your sleeve in the answer you may wish to talk about the other new initiatives that did not come forward as a consequence of the report that I formerly spoke about.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am not sure whether the honourable member is asking questions and not listening to the answer. But the honourable member is continuing his wrong statement that there is no increase in resources. There are in fact increases in resources in the form of some \$335,000 made available for enterprise bargaining. There is also the provision of the \$1.5m that I mentioned in respect of taking over the long service leave requirements. The increased financial provision over the coalition's Budget was promised at \$5m and in fact delivered at over \$5.8m. In terms of initiatives, we have introduced a number of initiatives. We boosted funding for community legal centres, which were ignored. We provided funds in the sum of a quarter of a million-odd dollars—it might have been \$240,000—for the provision of an integrated indigenous Legal Aid strategy in particular to reach out to the women and children who are the victims of domestic violence and criminal violence, particularly in some of the remote indigenous communities. That program is a very important program that arises because sometimes people fall between the cracks; the relevant Aboriginal legal service may be acting for the accused person and may have a conflict of interest to act for the victim. That initiative is a very important and worthwhile one.

The boost to community legal centres is also a very important one made possible as a result of the extra funding that the Queensland Government made available. Some 26 community legal services are funded from a combination of funds from the Commonwealth and State Government, the Queensland Law Society and Legal Aid Queensland. May I say this, too: in providing the funds through Legal Aid we have had to deal with a Pythonesque situation where, among other things, the Environmental Defender's Office was funded

through the Commonwealth on the basis that they would not undertake test cases. That is to say, it is like Sir Humphrey's hospital; it works best when you don't have patients. Providing the extra funds to Legal Aid, which were able to go to them, enabled them to carry out some of their work a bit more efficiently and effectively.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I have certainly indicated this morning a number of areas where we have concerns about the department not reaching performance targets, and a number of Acts have been continually reviewed and not necessarily introduced into the Parliament in the form of legislation. That is not to mention the disgraceful situation in the DPP, in respect of which this Attorney-General was in danger of becoming Australia's first fossilised ostrich. I would like to ask the question—

**Mr FOLEY:** I think, with respect, that is a mixed metaphor.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Given this litany, would you like to indicate to the Committee whether your director-general has received a performance bonus during the year or is being considered for one?

**Mr FOLEY:** That is a matter for the Premier.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** It is a matter for the public record, I would imagine.

**Mr FOLEY:** Absolutely. That is why the Premier comes before the Budget Estimates committee. The bonuses are based on a performance agreement between the Premier and each director-general. No other public servant is privy to this information. The Premier will deal with this matter during his Estimates committee. The honourable member or, indeed, representatives of the coalition should ask the Premier about this during that committee.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** So in the best traditions of a former civil libertarian president Attorney-General, you are not going to disclose that information for the public record, and building on your somewhat regrettable performance insofar as the number of FOI applications which have been stopped or stymied in your department, you do not intend to outline for the benefit of this Committee and the people of Queensland the amount of that money? I have a copy of the contract here gained under FOI which certainly does indicate that there is a performance agreement section in this contract—on page 3, as I understand it. It talks about a number of assessment criteria and those sorts of things. You will neither

confirm nor deny that for the benefit of this Committee?

**Mr FOLEY:** Let me deal with a number of the false propositions in that. It is difficult to know with the honourable member whether the substance of his criticism is that I am a former civil libertarian or a current civil libertarian. Half the time he blames me for being a current civil libertarian—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** You are not acting like a current one.

**Mr FOLEY:**—when he chooses to criticise certain matters, and other times he describes me as a former civil libertarian. So it is just difficult to know which particular allegation he is making. One thing I do not do is go around leading paedophiles to believe, as has the honourable member in the past couple of days, that they can distribute child pornography legally.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Till there is a decent penalty.

**Mr FOLEY:** That is a gross, irresponsible action on the part of the honourable member for which he should withdraw and apologise. As to the other matters dealing with FOI, the first point I make is that the Labor Government introduced freedom of information legislation. The coalition Government never during any period of its Government did so. As to his criticism of my own department's record on the matter, I say firstly that the honourable member or anyone else making application is at liberty to make appeals to the independent commissioner.

What the honourable member complains of is a so-called low rate of disclosure. In fact, out of 12,885 documents, more than 3,500 were already publicly available to the community, to the applicants, by other means. That is the reason why they were told to get them through other means: they were already publicly available. If the honourable member wishes to deal with the question of FOI, he should examine the record of his own department during the term that the previous Government was in office.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Seventy-two per cent compared to your 52%.

**Mr FOLEY:** The honourable member again does not listen to the answer. The point is that with 3,500 of those documents they were already publicly available. So if the honourable member wants to raise an argument to the effect that this is somehow the cloak of secrecy, then let him turn to the 3,500 documents. He complains that they were not available through FOI. Why not?

Because they were already there in the glare of public gaze!

What about, though, other grounds of refusal such as deliberative processes? They were rejected under the Beanland administration 202 times but rejected during this period of our Government not once. What about reliance upon the exemption of law enforcement and public safety? It was relied upon for exemption under the Beanland administration three times as often. The honourable member speaks out of a depth of hypocrisy and simply tries to distort and mislead. I am more than happy to deal with issues of freedom of information. It is, with respect, based on an abundance of ignorance as to the true facts in the matter and an attempt to distort those facts.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** By way of introduction into my next question, I have had matters denied on the basis of their being part of the deliberative process, that it would not be in the best interests of industrial relations harmony in the department and also that, by simply asking for a directory, it was going to endanger the lives of departmental officers. You are elevating it to a whole new regime. I am sure you never envisaged such innovative approaches to FOI when you were president of the Civil Liberties Council 10 years ago. As I understand it, you are not going to now disclose for the benefit of this—

**Mr FOLEY:** When I was chairperson of the Civil Liberties Council they did not have freedom of information in this State because Joh Bjelke-Petersen and the National Party refused lock, stock and barrel to introduce it. I campaigned hard to get it introduced and was successful. The honourable member during his period in Government—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** You are certainly innovative. There is no doubt about that.

**Mr FOLEY:**—did absolutely nothing to change the freedom of information laws that were introduced under Labor.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** You are certainly an innovator. There is no doubt about that. Just on the issue of your failure to disclose for the public record the quantum of the performance payment made available to your director-general, I understand from fairly close sources within the Premier's Department that it is in the vicinity of \$30,000. Given that particular fact, what are the criteria for performance payments? Is it the harmony within the Director of Public Prosecutions Office, is it the effective administration of the development of the new Magistrates Court, the racial vilification legislation on which they are running 14

months behind, the Coroners Act review for the third year? What are the performance criteria?

**Mr FOLEY:** It is a good thing that there is not a performance bonus for the Deputy Leader of the Opposition relying upon harmony within the Director of Public Prosecutions Office because the spreading of misinformation and inflammatory attempts to politicise the office would not result in the payment of a bonus. What the honourable member should do is what he has every opportunity to do, namely, to ask the responsible Minister. The honourable member seems to have a deep misunderstanding of who the responsible Minister is. It is the same mistake he made about who was the responsible Minister for the Fuel Subsidy Act, namely the Treasurer, when he asked me to initiate proceedings under that Act, an act administered by a different Minister. It is the same misunderstanding that the honourable member had with respect to the responsibility to initiate proceedings or to defend proceedings with respect to the Brisbane light rail project. The honourable member should direct his questions—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I would hate to pay you by the hour.

**Mr FOLEY:**—to the responsible Minister. The responsible Minister for that is the Premier.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** We look forward to the Premier disclosing it then. Just moving further on to the issue of the contract of your director-general, does the current contract contain a provision for a private plated motor vehicle? I note that there was provision under the old contract for the provision of such a vehicle until about January of 1999.

**Mr FOLEY:** The provisions in relation to directors-general provide for a choice in accordance with the Public Service guidelines to either take the benefit of a private plated vehicle or take a salary alternative.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I understand that; I have read the provisions. I was just asking what were the specific details in regards to your director-general.

**Mr FOLEY:** The director-general is governed by those provisions.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I know. I do understand that, but I was just asking you about the specifics. I suppose we are not able to ask those questions.

**Mr FOLEY:** You have asked the question. The answer is that the director-general has an entitlement in accordance with the normal

Public Service guidelines either to have a private plated vehicle or to take a relevant salary option instead.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Let me rephrase the question for ease of understanding for your good self. Given that those provisions do exist, in the particular case of your director-general has she chosen to take a private plated vehicle or has she chosen to waive that right and take the salary increment in lieu? That is all I am asking.

**Mr FOLEY:** The latter.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** The salary increment in lieu?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** So the director-general does not have in any way the ability for private use of another private plated motor vehicle within the department?

**Mr FOLEY:** She does not have it for private purposes; she is entitled to use a departmental vehicle for business purposes and she is entitled to home garage that in exactly the same way as any other public servant who is entitled to use it for business purposes can home garage it.

**Mr CHAIRMAN:** Rather than giving the money.

**Mr FOLEY:** In appropriate cases, yes.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I refer to your answer to question on notice No. 20. It mentions the expansion of the committals phase beyond Ipswich and Beenleigh to include Cairns, Sandgate, Petrie, Redcliffe and Caboolture. Given that there should be no reduction in the numbers of matters dealt with at the current locations where the project actually works—that is, 3,400 actual as per page 1-26 of the MPS—how many matters do you expect to be dealt with at each of the new locations? How do you expect efficiency savings to cater for the workload?

**Mr FOLEY:** It is partly efficiency savings and it is partly the extra resources that we have provided which the honourable member seems to deny that we have provided. The proposal to extend the Magistrates Court committal proceedings to Caboolture, Redcliffe, Petrie, Sandgate and Cairns will have to be done over a period of time. It is a bit difficult to predict with any certainty how many cases will be conducted there. It will be dependent upon the throughput of cases in those areas.

The committals project is essentially designed to have Crown prosecution staff involved at an early stage. That makes a lot of

sense, because it means that it can lead to early pleas of guilty or those cases which do not have the substance for proceeding to trial can be disposed of at an early level. There have been a number of efficiency savings within the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions. There has been some boost in resources. For that reason, it is proposed to extend it to those extra courthouses. I hope that will lead to overall efficiencies in the criminal justice system as a whole, but it is difficult to predict at this stage exactly how many cases will be dealt with in those courts.

**Mrs MILLER:** Looking at the budget statements for the Electoral Commission and in particular page 9-16 under the heading "Assets assumed/liabilities transferred", I see note 10 attributes an increase in this item due to the Supreme Court decision that Pauline Hanson's One Nation Party repay the electoral funding paid by the commission following the 1998 State election. Can the Minister advise if the moneys ordered to be repaid have in fact been paid by Pauline Hanson or One Nation? If not, why not?

**Mr FOLEY:** The short answer is: no. I am a little reluctant to discuss the matter as it is still currently before the court. Perhaps if I just deal with matters that are on the public record. On 18 August 1999 the Supreme Court concluded, after reviewing that case, that the decision to register Pauline Hanson's One Nation under the Electoral Act 1992 was induced by fraud or misrepresentation. The court set aside the decision of the commissioner made on 4 December 1997 and decided that Pauline Hanson's One Nation was not entitled to registration as a political party as it did not satisfy the requirements of section 70 of the Electoral Act.

On 23 August Pauline Hanson, as a representative of herself and all members of Pauline Hanson's One Nation, filed a notice of appeal in the Court of Appeal. On 10 March the Court of Appeal dismissed that appeal. Pauline Hanson's One Nation, as a registered political party, had been paid \$502,589.74 in electoral funding for the 1998 State general election and the Mulgrave by-election. On 10 March 2000, immediately following the decision of the Court of Appeal, the Crown Solicitor, acting on behalf of the Electoral Commission, forwarded a letter to Ms Hanson demanding payment of the sum of just over \$500,000 within 14 days.

As Ms Hanson failed to make the payment requested, the commission instructed the Crown Solicitor to institute proceedings in the Supreme Court for the recovery of the

money. On 28 March 2000 a claim and statement of claim for recovery from Ms Hanson of the sum of \$502,589.74 plus interest and costs was filed in the Supreme Court on behalf of the Electoral Commission. On 2 May Ms Hanson's solicitors filed a defence with a request for further and better particulars. They also filed an application in the High Court dated 6 April seeking special leave to appeal.

Although the commission was not originally a party to this application, Ms Hanson's solicitors amended the application so as to add the Electoral Commissioner as the second respondent. On 31 May the Crown Solicitor served Ms Hanson's solicitors with further and better particulars of the statement of claim. The Crown Solicitor filed an application in the Supreme Court for summary judgment. I think I should probably leave the matter there. Suffice it to say that Crown Law, acting on behalf of the Electoral Commissioner, has acted promptly and diligently to follow up the recovery of that money.

**Mrs MILLER:** While still on the Electoral Commission, I note that the Federal Government is proposing changes to enrolment procedures for enrolments for Federal elections. I ask: what is the Queensland Government's position in relation to the proposed Commonwealth changes to enrolment? Will these have any budgetary impact on the Electoral Commission?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes, it could well have. In the unhappy event that the current Howard Government is re-elected and is in power at the time that we go to the State election after next, we would be faced with this dilemma. We could continue with the joint electoral roll where we have the commonsense arrangement of the Commonwealth and State having the same roll. If we go down that path, the current changes that the Commonwealth has acted upon would result in the disenfranchising of a whole lot of people, which some see as the thin edge of the wedge towards knocking off compulsory voting. Be that as it may, there are very significant concerns.

In short, it would mean either allowing all those people to be disfranchised or spending an absolute motser on creating our own electoral roll in Queensland. There has been an estimate that a modern data matching enrolment system for Queensland would take approximately three years to develop with an indicative cost of \$7m over that period. Recurrent user charges at \$1.5m per annum are estimated at this point in time for this

system. This equates to the level of funding provided for the fee currently payable to the Commonwealth under the joint roll arrangement.

The taxpayers of Queensland would be entitled to be concerned that, if we are to maintain a fair roll as opposed to one that disenfranchises people in the way that the Commonwealth proposes to do, this is going to cost money. It is a disturbing fact. This will not influence the forthcoming State election within the next year, because those changes will not have kicked in in sufficient time to have any significant impact on the State roll. However, it is a problem that could cause us to go back to the bad old days where we had two separate rolls.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I have a question with regard to capital works. It was covered a little in a previous answer. Page 1-41 refers to projects your department will run this year. It identifies the capital works which will be undertaken by the department. I also note that the budget identifies the commencement of the new CBD Magistrates Court. I commend the Minister for knowing that it was an office block that was built there, because I worked on that. FA Pidgeon & Son built that as an office block and there was a deal done some time during construction to sell it to the Government.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** You were the union rep?

**The CHAIRMAN:** I was the delegate on the site, yes. It was a very well run, very safe job. Everybody was paid correctly. In fact, it was a little different from these days, Minister. I got about six wage rises a year in those days. It is different now.

**Mr FOLEY:** I believe they had very persuasive trade union officials in those days.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, I know that you have in some cases, but could you identify the differences between the proposals as put forward by the department now, with you presiding, and the proposals put forward by the previous Government? Could you give us more detail about when that court will start? Do we have a site? My mates in the construction field are very keen to hear the answer to that.

**Mr FOLEY:** The short difference is that we have made budget provision for it and the previous Government simply made a \$2m provision with no provision in the Budget estimates. This is a matter of some urgency because the facilities there, brilliantly constructed as they were originally, have now gotten to a stage where they are causing significant difficulties for the courts. The new courts are to be built on the Queensland Place

site, which is owned by the Department of Public Works. Expressions of interest in development of all or part of that site are expected to be called in the near future. Construction is expected to commence in 2001—that is, next year—and to be completed for occupancy in 2003. That will make, we hope, a very significant contribution to the availability of a modern court facility.

The Magistrates Court, of course, is the court that has the greatest degree of contact with members of the public. There will be a new custodial facility included in the development to provide day accommodation for persons appearing before the court. Some of the other things that we intend to do there are to have: domestic violence lounges for aggrieved parties of either sex to await appearance in court; enhanced security for magistrates, public and persons in custody; adequate space for persons and practitioners waiting to enter the courtrooms; sufficient interview and conference rooms to allow legal practitioners to consult with clients; and facilities for the giving of evidence from remote locations, both within and outside the courthouse.

Expressions of interest will be called. The project is anticipated to generate in the order of 90,500 weeks of employment. Of course, 2% of the construction costs will be allocated to the arts, in accordance with the Government's Art Built In policy, in which I know the honourable chairperson has played a prominent and ongoing role.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And what is the situation in relation to training?

**Mr FOLEY:** Through my colleagues Paul Braddy and Robert Schwarten there are regimes in place for the provision of traineeships and apprenticeships. My recollection is that there is a requirement that 10% of the labour involved be devoted to traineeships and apprenticeships. We need to use these major constructions as the equivalent of schoolrooms and college rooms because we do have a very significant Capital Works Program to kick in and we have to make sure, so far as possible, that we do not go back to the bad old days of boom and bust, where you cannot get a skilled tradesperson for love or money during boom times and nobody wants to put on an apprentice during the bust times. So we intend to use these projects in a way which not only delivers a very high-quality court but also provides the basis for sound careers for young Queenslanders, and some not so young, in the building industry.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** My question relates to the Anti-Discrimination Commission. I note that the Opposition Committee member did ask some specific questions in relation to the commission earlier this morning. Minister, I would like you to elaborate on some of the answers you gave this morning, especially in relation to the overall budget effects on the office of the Anti-Discrimination Commission, given that it undertakes extremely important work on behalf of those Queenslanders who have faced discrimination. Also, you made mention of the withdrawal of the Commonwealth's human rights presence in Queensland. Could you elaborate on what effect that has had on our commission here and on the protection of rights for Queenslanders?

**Mr FOLEY:** The basic effect is that if you are someone who has suffered injustice and racial discrimination and you want to take that matter up with the Commonwealth, you had better go to Sydney. It is just a scandalous state of affairs. Earlier I gave the overall figures of complaint workload Statewide, but it is particularly dramatic in Brisbane, where there was an office of the Commonwealth Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission. In the year of the transition, from 1997-98 to 1998-99, in Brisbane the complaint workload jumped from 994 to 1,427. It has stayed relatively stable since then. It went to 1,474 in the next year and 1,544 in the year after. In 1999-2000 the commission funded an additional temporary conciliator to deal with backlog issues. Each conciliator began handling about 60 complaint files each, which is an amount well in excess of the nationally accepted benchmark of 40 files per conciliator.

This year an additional \$182,000 is being provided for the Anti-Discrimination Commission. The idea of that is to provide two more permanent conciliators and an administrative officer in the commission's Brisbane office, effective from 2000-01. In 2001-02 it will be \$157,000, \$160,000 in the year after, and \$163,000 in the year after. This will allow the commission to continue to close more files than it opens, the point being that justice delayed is justice denied. We have to make sure that people do not get dispirited because of delays. We have to make sure that we address these things. The Government has acknowledged that there is a problem there and we have boosted funds to the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner to address it.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Since the Commonwealth has withdrawn its human rights presence in Queensland—I believe that occurred under the previous Government—have there been any

discussions or any attempts made to have the Commonwealth have a human rights presence in Queensland again?

**Mr FOLEY:** They have simply flatly refused to be drawn in that area. They have gone, and they see that they have gone for good. It is one of the very disappointing aspects.

**Ms WALTERS:** Karen Walters, Anti-Discrimination Commissioner. We have brokered an administrative arrangement between the Federal commission and the State commission whereby we receive \$10,000 per year simply to house the Federal brochures at our premises and make reference to the Federal organisation and the outfit in our training.

**The CHAIRMAN:** A whole \$10,000. Do you spend it in one hit, or do you just try to spread it out over 12 months?

**Ms WALTERS:** It is a humble contribution.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I would just like to go back to a couple of issues that I raised earlier regarding the issues surrounding the contract of the Director-General. Firstly, let me summarise the situation as I understand it with regard to the business use of a private plated motor vehicle. As I understand it, your Director-General has waived her entitlement to a motor vehicle with private plates for private use and has taken the salary increment—which is normal; I understand that—and as a consequence has been able to use a private plated departmental vehicle for business purposes—going from work to home or any other business areas—and house that particular vehicle at home. Can you just clarify for me that sort of arrangement? Does that generally operate in the department, or is that a normal sort of an arrangement?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Director-General will speak to that.

**Ms MACDONNELL:** The vehicle I had when I arrived was on a lease which expired in August/September last year. Another one was not ordered. The reason it was not ordered was that a full financial analysis was done of the leasing cost of that vehicle to the department, which was nearly \$13,500 a year. It attracted very substantial FBT on the way it was calculated of nearly \$4,500. It had \$3,000-odd running costs. So it was costing the department a few dollars under \$21,000 per annum as against the CEO contribution of \$7,000. Since I really didn't have private use to make of a vehicle, it clearly wasn't particularly useful to me, but it was also costing the department much, much more.

The number of vehicles maintained by the department reduced by one. It was not replaced. The vehicle I use is a fleet vehicle. There are some that do have private plates. That may be the only one we have at the moment with a private plate, but that doesn't make a big difference. It is used by the department throughout the day. I am driven to meetings and whatnot in it, to appointments if I need to get there, and I do home garage it. I come in in the mornings—usually I leave home before 7—and I go home late in the evenings. There are other officers in the department who do home garage cars. From the answer the Director (Finance) has given me, the only difference is that they do not have private plates on them.

The long and short of it is that the net saving to the department is over \$11,000, and it was, on that basis, thought to be a good thing.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mr Attorney-General, I just take you back to the other issue with regard to the performance bonus provisions of your Director-General's contract. I would just like to read part (1) on page 3—

"A performance agreement between the Premier or the departmental Minister and the executive may be entered into."

It goes on to talk about the criteria that a performance agreement must contain, including—

- "(i) outcomes to be achieved and the indicators by which the standard of performance of the executive in achieving the outcomes will be assessed;
- (ii) the process for assessing the standard of performance;"

I understand that the budgetary allocation for this performance bonus does actually come out of your allocation from Treasury. I would just like your confirmation of that. As the responsible Minister, obviously the Premier does not make these particular considerations in isolation. One would hope that as the Minister who is administratively responsible, you would have some input into the Premier's consideration, if that is so, where it finally lies about the quantum of that particular bonus and the appropriateness of it.

**Mr FOLEY:** I just remind the honourable member that the responsible Minister for this matter is the Premier. The Premier is the Minister who enters into agreements with the heads of each of these departments. Now, the honourable member raises questions about the expenditure of public money, and he is

perfectly entitled to do so, and the Minister who is responsible for answering those is the Premier, who will appear before the public process. The honourable member should direct his questions to the Premier, or have one of his colleagues address them to the Premier.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I have here—and I will come back and try to reinforce the point for the benefit of the Attorney-General—the performance agreement. This information came to us by way of freedom of information before the more innovative ways of stopping us getting some documentation became effective. It says—

"Performance Agreement

- (1) A performance agreement between the Premier or the departmental Minister"—

and I thought you were a departmental Minister—

"and the executive may be entered into."

It concerns me that you in no way are concerned that a certain amount may come out of your budget—I understand in the vicinity of \$30,000—for a performance bonus, which is the maximum amount of 15%, and that you have no say in it, you do not want any say in it, and you do not seem to know about it or want to know about it. Obviously you need to be interested and concerned about the effectiveness and performance of your Director-General, and as we all know, under FOI and the disclosure of information, if you disclose information which is freely sought, then you are able to placate the concerns of the community, and even, for that matter, the Opposition. So I am just saying that it seems to me, from my reading of it, that you do have a role in this, and it is quite obviously a part of the contract.

**Mr FOLEY:** I think the honourable member basically makes the same mistake which he has made in a number of areas of ministerial responsibility. Yes, it is true that relevant Ministers have a role to play, but the responsible Minister is the Premier, just as I am sure that with respect to decisions about Family Services, the Health Minister may make a contribution to the outcome, just as with respect to Police and Corrective Services matters, I may make a contribution in my role. The responsible Minister is the Minister who has the duty, under a system of collective responsibility and ministerial responsibility, to answer the questions.

The honourable member seems to be trying to develop a case that there is some secrecy or that this is somehow a mystery. The point is simply this: the responsible Minister to answer those questions is the Premier, and you have the opportunity to ask those questions of the Premier, and that system of accountability is the proper way it should work. By analogy, if other Ministers were to ask questions and to answer questions about this portfolio or if I were to deal with questions in the Emergency Services portfolio or the Health portfolio, then the basic doctrines of ministerial responsibility would fall down. So I encourage the honourable member to satisfy his curiosity by doing the very thing which he knows he can do but which for some reason he wants to persist in avoiding.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Without wishing to labour the point, I understand that the provision for this particular payment comes out of your budget, is factored into your budget. How much is it? Is it right that it is factored into your budget?

**Mr FOLEY:** The staff salaries for all departmental officers come from the budgets of the relevant portfolios, but the Minister responsible for that decision is the Premier, and I encourage the honourable member to do what he is perfectly at liberty to do and to direct his question to the responsible Minister.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Well, there you go. Certainly innovative! Back on the same issue—and this will be the final question—without wishing to again labour a point, as the Minister administratively responsible for the Department of Justice, Attorney-General and The Arts, do you envisage or do you expect that you will have an input into the decision by the Premier in deciding the quantum of that particular bonus?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** If so, what criteria would you use?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes, by discussion with the Premier.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** By discussion with the Premier? Very open!

**Mr FOLEY:** Excuse me, but I find the honourable member's use of sarcasm untrue and offensive. What the honourable member persists in doing is seeking to convey his own sense of misunderstanding of the doctrine of ministerial responsibility with some attempt at secrecy. If he has a question in this area, then he is entitled to direct it to the responsible Minister. It does the honourable member little credit and the processes of this committee little

credit to pretend otherwise. This is not a case in which the Government is saying nobody is answering this matter. What the Government is saying is that the Minister who makes the relevant decision is responsible for it, and you should direct your question to him.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Mr Chairman, I think a lot of people would probably excuse me for what the Minister says is my misunderstanding of this, because there would be a lot of people out there who would share a similar view. You have conceded that it will come out of your departmental Budget; you have conceded that you will have some say in advising the Premier on the particular achievements of your Director-General for his consideration of the quantum of that particular payment, which I do understand is in the very near vicinity of \$30,000, and therefore a lot of people would think that you were the Minister who was administratively responsible for that particular matter. It is fairly simple, I thought.

**Mr FOLEY:** I think the honourable member's opening remark is absolutely right. I think there are many people in Queensland who would find the mercy and generosity in their hearts to excuse the honourable member for Warwick having regard to his persistent misunderstandings in this area. On the whole, the Queensland people are a very charitable group of folk.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I am sure they are not going to be quite as charitable to you. Just moving on, I would like now to turn to the Queensland Electoral Commission and I note with some intrigue and bemusement that the State Government has not increased its contribution to the commission on the basis that this financial year is not going to be an election year. I would have thought that there will be an election within the three-year period which brings it up to June of next year. That seems to me to be a cute way of saving dollars, at least on paper. I refer to page 9-16 of the MPS and footnote 10 of page 9-19 where it states that changes to industrial relations legislation now means the Electoral Commission will no longer be able to fully recover from unions the costs of conducting their ballots. How much revenue did the Electoral Commission lose last year and which was therefore footed by the taxpayer as a result of these changes when compared with the year before? Is it now the intention of the State Government to extend free election services to other advocacy groups who elect executives to promote the wellbeing of their members and if not, why not?



**Mr FOLEY:** There are several questions in that. With regard to the conduct of elections, the Parliament passed an Act, the Industrial Relations Act of 1999, which commenced on 1 July 1999. Part 7 of the Act provides for elections to be conducted by the Electoral Commission. The Parliament passed that Act. Section 489 further provides that the cost of an election conducted by the Electoral Commission under this Part is payable by the State.

I must say, it strikes me as pretty rich, given the persistent criticisms that we have heard from Mr Springborg's colleagues over the years about union elections and the great need to ensure that these are conducted not by the unions themselves but by an independent body, that he now complains when that very action is done under the authority of an Act of Parliament. \$125,000 was recovered in 1999-2000 and that represents the costs of elections referred to the Electoral Commission of Queensland by the Industrial Registrar prior to 30 June 1999 pursuant to the Industrial Organisations Act of 1997.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Do you intend to extend the principle? That is all I am saying. It is probably a fine principle but the work is gratis.

**Mr FOLEY:** There are no plans to extend it. With respect to the conduct of an election, obviously that has to be paid for. That is a Treasurer's special and that will be paid for when the time arises.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I just wish to turn now to alternative dispute resolution, a matter that has been covered by Government members this morning. At MPS 1-26 the AD target for the last financial year was 264 such resolutions and the actual was 171. Why the difference and why should we believe the projection of 264 again this year?

**Mr FOLEY:** One of the problems we have got with the alternative dispute resolution is that it is too popular. It is doing such a rattling good job that we are getting lots and lots of people who want to use it. That is great; it is to be encouraged, but it all costs money. As you know, we have provided funds this year to ensure that those facilities in Hervey Bay and Mackay that were there on a trial basis are—

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I would have thought that would have meant the actual should have increased, not decreased. I know it is popular and it is very good. It should not have decreased by 40%.

**Mr FOLEY:** The estimated target for 1999-2000 was 8,000. The actual number

they got in was 6,857 first contact. The number of files that were opened was 3,072. That actually resulted in 1,278 reports being conducted. This year, although the number of first contacts from last year was 6,857, the estimate again for 2000-01 is 8,000.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** I am talking about the conferences here on page 1-26. The number of conferences has declined from 264 to an actual of 171.

**Mr FOLEY:** That is because the number of actual first contacts was less than the number that was targeted or estimated.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** You have factored in the same amount for next year and that is a contingency based on similar expectations to last year, I suppose.

**Mr FOLEY:** Just excuse me a moment. With regard to those particular figures, they are dealing with victim/offender mediation and conferencing. So the branch actually conducted 171 adult and juvenile conferences in 1999-2000. All mediations reached agreement. The victim/offender mediation project undertakes pre-sentence diversionary and prison-based offending. The program is continuing this year. The ADR Branch and the Director of Public Prosecutions office are currently reviewing it to determine if a legislative framework is necessary. That review is being conducted because of the different referral types being received by the branch from a number of different stakeholders, particularly the judiciary and the magistracy. The ADR branch also conducts juvenile justice conferences in Ipswich, Inala and Brisbane North for the Department of Families, Youth and Community Care, which are funded by that department.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to page 1-31—

**Mr FOLEY:** It is a little bit hard to hear, I am sorry.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to page 1-31 of the MPS and in particular details of the future developments of the Justices of the Peace Branch. I have a particular interest in JP matters, being the former registrar and manager of that branch within the Department of Justice. I note that reference is made to this branch conducting seminars in conjunction with State members of Parliament. I also note that, during the past year, similar seminars were conducted which focused on the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and the Powers of Attorney Act, and I ask: how well did members respond to organising these seminars and how has it benefited the electorates of those members who did get involved?

**Mr FOLEY:** I thank the honourable member and I do acknowledge her active interest in the matter, having been a former registrar of justices of the peace in the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. I also thank the honourable member for accompanying me to several forums to discuss proposed changes to the laws affecting justices of the peace and commissioners for declaration that were recommended by the Queensland Law Reform Commission. Those forums that were held were very successful indeed. Thirty-two seminars were held successfully during 1999-2000 in electorates from Townsville to the Gold Coast, with a total of 3,891 people attending. The feedback has been very positive, with justices of the peace and commissioners for declaration indicating that the information provided is very useful. I have had the pleasure of attending as many of those that I could attend in different regions of the State with members from different political parties. I want to thank those members for their willingness to provide assistance.

The need for ongoing training of JPs is evident. There have been changes to the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act and there have been changes to the Powers of Attorney Act. All of those bring with them a need for JPs to keep their information up to date. It is a very practical way in which local members can contribute to the voluntary work that JPs do. They are really the unsung heroes of our justice system. Those seminars are an attempt to reach out. Training does cost a fortune, and we are exploring other ways of doing it through the Internet. As the honourable member would know from discussions that we have held at these various forums, the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission would impose upon Government an even greater requirement for training. So we are doing what we can to ensure those JPs are properly informed.

**The CHAIRMAN:** And you owe me one of those, Minister. I remind you that we will do that some time in the future.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am more than happy to do that. My departmental officers are working their way around the State and are keen to make sure that everybody gets access to those very important seminars.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Yes. Minister, in relation to the Legal Aid budget, I note on page 3-3 of the MPS that there are quite some innovative measures being proposed for this year's budget. Could I ask the Minister to expand on these measures, such things as the proposed

increase in community access points in the rural and remote areas of Queensland, the use of video and the Internet or the delivery of advice as part of the Women's Justice Network and the Western Queensland Justice Network, and the integrated indigenous strategy in regard to, I would imagine, the use of video conferencing and court appearances?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes. I thank you for the question. The Legal Aid staff do a terrific job. They have been really at the front line of the pressures coming from funding cuts from the Commonwealth in recent years. So they have had to look for innovative ways of responding. The call centre which they have is extremely helpful. Just a few weeks ago I launched an extension to that involving the use of persons trained in culturally appropriate ways of dealing with the indigenous community. Just on that integrated indigenous strategy, this is all about victims of violence and sexual assault, in particular, women and children. It is about ensuring that they get access to specialist legal service. It has a focus on educating women about their legal rights. It involves partnering with indigenous community support services. There is wonderful work being done by a whole range of Aboriginal and Islander elders throughout remote areas of Queensland within the justice system generally. This particular initiative is about ensuring, for example, that if somebody is the victim of a crime and they live in Kowanyama or Pormpuraaw, then they have got access to legal expertise to help them make the relevant application for criminal injury compensation.

The community access points are part of a rural and regional strategy to increase awareness of and access to Legal Aid services. A network of community access points is being developed to provide different levels of service according to the needs of the community. Legal Aid Queensland proposes to work in collaboration with local, State and community agencies to find ways of sharing resources. Of course, the use of the video and the Internet is there to bridge the distance gap in rural communities.

The Women's Justice Network, based in Toowoomba, services the south-west corner of Queensland. The Western Queensland Justice Network, based in Mount Isa, services the north-west of Queensland. These services provide legal advice and assistance via a network of video conferencing sites across their region. The Internet assists these services by each service having a web site providing information on how to access the video conferencing equipment. So they are trying all

sorts of ways to make the Legal Aid dollar go further.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You do not need any more time? Are you right?

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Just continuing on that Legal Aid theme, on page 3-4 of the MPS reference is made to an increase in the number of civil law applications due to additional funding from the Government for victims of crime matters. Minister, could you give further details of the increase in funding in this area? While you are having a quick look there, on Legal Aid again, could you advise whether there are any ongoing discussions with the Commonwealth to ease the financial position of Legal Aid in Queensland at the moment?

**Mr FOLEY:** We are doing our best. We have secured an increase in funds, but the Commonwealth gives and the Commonwealth takes away. The Commonwealth took away \$2m on a recurrent basis. They announced funding some time ago—and we have entered into an agreement to receive the extra money. We got the first bit of it this year, but it will take a while to even get back to square one in forthcoming years. That will provide some improvement. There is an ongoing very great difficulty about family law matters. They are the responsibility of the Commonwealth, but many, many people have to be turned away from Legal Aid precisely because they cannot get access to Legal Aid because of the lack of funding from the Commonwealth.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I know a number of people get turned away; some of them are in my electorate.

**Mr FOLEY:** There is a unit specifically within Legal Aid to assist victims of crime to make application. When I had the honour of introducing the Criminal Offence Victims Act back in 1995 we made provision for prosecutors to be able to make application then and there at the time of sentence. But there has been considerable resistance and reluctance on the part of the legal system to make that happen. So we are still basically using the system where people come later and make application. For my own part, it seems to me it would be more desirable if the whole thing could be dealt with then and there while the matter is fresh in the court's mind and when all of the relevant evidence of any injury is there.

In addition to that victims of crime unit there is this specific initiative to assist indigenous victims. We were finding that they were simply not getting access to legal

services. We had a number of reports from people who said they had been waiting months, and indeed a couple of years, to get their victims of crime compensation. The reason was that they had never made application, because they had mistakenly believed that it would somehow happen automatically. So Legal Aid is reaching out to try to ensure that those—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Justice delayed is justice denied.

**Mr FOLEY:** That is true. That is particularly so in the case of victims of crime, many of whom want to get the matter over and done with and move on and get on with their lives. The sooner we can get applications for criminal injury compensation processed through the courts and then, if necessary, processed as ex gratia payments the better, because it enables people to move on and, so far as is humanly possible, to put the tragedy and trauma of the crime behind them.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I have a question in relation to the Public Trust Office. Page 10-2 of the MPS, under the Key Strategic Directions section, states—

"The community service obligations of the Public Trust Office are now more clearly identified and their costing more accurately determined. Surpluses generated in the Common Fund will be used to continue to fund the community service obligations of the Public Trust Office including funding for the Civil Law Legal Aid (Outlays) Scheme."

How many people have benefited from that scheme in the past year? And with the continuation of the scheme, how many Queenslanders will be assisted in the forthcoming year?

**Mr FOLEY:** I commend the Public Trust Office for its willingness to assist in this regard. The number of civil law Legal Aid applications approved in 1999-2000 was 369. This Civil Law Legal Aid (Outlays) Scheme is meeting a gap in the availability of legal assistance for civil law matters. The scheme has been expanded to fund business disputes and is principally aimed at providing assistance to small business owners and small farmers. We do not want these people to go to the wall. A need has been identified also to fund public interest test cases, and guidelines are being developed. How many will there be in the coming year? I am told there may be some expansion, but I am afraid we cannot give a Nostradamus-type answer and say exactly how many there will be.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I understand the scheme operates such that, if the applicant is successful in the proceedings, the outlays are reimbursed.

**Mr FOLEY:** Yes, that is right. The idea is that, so far as possible, the money goes back into the scheme to assist as many people as possible. It is there to try to help out and to try to make sure that as many people as possible who need assistance in civil matters can get it. If they are successful, the money goes back into the scheme to help others.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** And if they are not successful there is no requirement to reimburse?

**Mr FOLEY:** No; that is right. You are usually dealing with cases where it would simply be too onerous to impose such a requirement.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to page 5-4 of the MPS and in particular to the Millennium Arts project, including the planning of the new Queensland Gallery of Modern Art, which from all reports is an extremely exciting project for Queensland, and I ask: could the Minister give details of this project and what it will mean for Queensland?

**Mr FOLEY:** It will be fantastic.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Will the workers get their chop?

**Mr FOLEY:** Absolutely. In fact, working people and their families are the main people who use the gallery. It is very much a people place. We have tens of thousands of people through the gallery. Back in 1995 I had the honour of taking a submission to Cabinet in the Goss Government to secure that land and have it reserved for cultural purposes. The Gallery of Modern Art will link with the Queensland Art Gallery, but it is a stand-alone gallery. It reflects a strong commitment on the part of the Queensland Art Gallery to contemporary art and it is part of our overall Millennium Arts strategy of \$260m, of which some \$118.4m deals with the Gallery of Modern Art. It will enable the gallery to expand the level and number of international exhibitions and exchanges. But may I say this, because I do not think most Queenslanders appreciate just how significant a role Queensland plays in the contemporary art of the Asia-Pacific: the great vision that Arts Minister Wayne Goss had of an Asia-Pacific Triennial has really put Brisbane and Queensland on the map in a way that most of us do not really appreciate. People come here from throughout the world, but particularly from throughout the Asia-Pacific, precisely because it is a meeting place of ideas, exhibitions and,

in some cases, very courageous statements. During the height of the East Timor tragedy there was a very powerful work by an Indonesian artist which involved the burning of figures made up as torsos. There were expressions of art that were passionate statements about the social, economic and political life of our country and region. What the Gallery of Modern Art will do is not just put bricks and mortar on a beautiful spot on the Brisbane River; it will give expression to the cultural strength which Brisbane and Queensland have achieved through their efforts in the Asia-Pacific Triennial over recent years.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I will continue with a question on the Queensland Art Gallery. The Lavarch family and friends are frequent visitors to the Queensland Art Gallery and have always been most impressed with it. What the exhibitions the gallery held last year highlighted to me was the fact that the gallery is committed to engaging the wider community through the cultural diversity of its exhibitions. Can you advise what impact this budget will have on continuing the Art Gallery's engagement of the wider community through cultural diversity?

**Mr FOLEY:** That will occur in a whole range of ways. There is an expansion of the gallery's focus on children and youth programs. The Art Gallery will feature two children's exhibitions: *Animals Who Think They Are People*—I suppose for those of us in political life that could strike closer to home than we imagine—and the further one is *A Day at the Beach* in 2000-01, with the latter exhibition scheduled for an extensive tour to 11 regional venues throughout Queensland. There is an exhibition of contemporary Queensland art, *Fortitude: New Arts From Queensland*. It will be accompanied by a focus on youth. There are four regional touring exhibitions—*Luminous: Glass from the Queensland Art Gallery Collection*; *Lines of Descent: The family in Contemporary Asian Art*; *Terra Cognita: Landscape in Australian Art*; and *A Day at the Beach*, to which I have made reference.

I must say I have been particularly impressed by the willingness of the Art Gallery to reach out to the community at large as a multicultural community. I have attended and participated in a number of openings and launches there involving the Chinese community, including some very famous portraits—the restoration of the See Poy portraits, which struck a real cord with the Chinese community. I have also been there for the launching of a number of matters involving

Aboriginal art including, of course, the Emily Kngwarreye exhibition. There are many things involving the Aboriginal community which help to link the Art Gallery into the community at large. Of course, there was the magnificent exhibition of Ilan Pasin: this is our way, Torres Strait Art, which was very moving.

One of the challenges for any art gallery is to connect and communicate with the community, and connecting as it does with the Asia-Pacific Triennial. Connecting also with a number of groups such as the kids program is very important. I am very optimistic that, with the extensions there at the Gallery of Modern Art, that will continue to increase.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The Opposition will now get 25 minutes of the remaining time. We have sharked a little bit of their time with that last question and we will pick up the remainder.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Just to have a brief interlude and interrupt the Thespian wiles of the Attorney-General, for my final question of the day I would just like to return to an earlier question I asked about the—

**Mr FOLEY:** I am not sure that your colleague Mrs Sheldon would want to restrict Thespian activities in this State.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:**—business use component of your director-general's motor vehicle. How often does the director-general actually take the motor vehicle home? By that I mean how many times per week on average?

**Ms MACDONNELL:** It is not my motor vehicle. It is a fleet vehicle that is used for departmental business purposes during the day by whomever. I take the vehicle home four times a week, I would say.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Do not interrupt Mrs Sheldon or I will be in strife.

**Mrs SHELDON:** You will. I refer to page 1-43 of the MPS and your answer to question on notice No. 1. I have a concern that the Minister failed to address any of the specifics of this question. So I will ask him now: in the list you gave me for the Millennium Arts project with a budget of \$260m, I notice that for the Gallery of Modern Art, an extension to the State Library was roughly \$193.4m of that. But there are a number of things listed, such as the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre, the Empire office furniture building refurbishment, shared works/off-site facilities for the Museum and regional initiatives which you have lumped together under that Millennium Arts.

You say you cannot give me the starting dates for any of those projects. I particularly

mention the last four or five because they are subject to completion of a master plan for the redevelopment of the Queensland Cultural Centre complex and the architectural competition that is to be held for the design of the new Gallery of Modern Art, extension to the State Library and public tendering processes. To my knowledge Musgrave Park, the Empire office building, shared works/off-site facilities for the Museum and regional initiatives do not come under any of those things. Could you please tell me the dates of commencement for those five projects?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Empire office furniture building is being redeveloped. Construction will commence in September, that is to say, next month. Resident organisations can anticipate occupancy of the building from May 2001. Those organisations that Arts Queensland has been working on with developmental options include Arterial, the Institute of Modern Art, Kooemba Jdarra Theatre Company, Rock'N'Roll Circus—

**Mrs SHELDON:** Why were these answers not supplied to me when I gave you the question on notice?

**Mr FOLEY:** Your question was couched in very broad and general terms.

**Mrs SHELDON:** No, I think it was quite specific actually. I will read it to you if you like.

**Mr FOLEY:** I have it in front of me, thanks very much. With respect to the matter which you did not read out in your reply, those components are to be completed by the 2004-05 financial year. That is taking them as a whole. I am happy to try to deal with the others specifically. I am hopeful that the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre can be completed in late 2001, if not, 2002. There have been some discussions between different members of the Aboriginal community who have concerns about issues of native title and issues of cultural protocols involved that needed to be handled sensitively. I was originally optimistic that that could have been opened in the middle of 2001 but, of necessity, it is important to show respect to the Turrbal people and the Jagera people. We have had a series of meetings culminating in a very successful mediation just the other day. Let us work our way down the list. The Gallery of Modern Art—

**Mrs SHELDON:** No, the off-site facilities for the Museum. I would be interested to know when that is going to start.

**Mr FOLEY:** The answer which is given, which is the 2004-05 overall, contemplates the development of a master plan. The master plan—

**Mrs SHELDON:** These are off-site facilities for the Museum, and I am sure it does not need to wait to 2004 to have those facilities. In the planning could you tell me what date they will commence?

**Mr FOLEY:** I think you are right; it probably does not need to wait till then. You will also appreciate that it needs to be planned in accordance with the needs of the Museum. The Library, as you know, is being extended. In order to meet its requirements, the Museum does require off-site facilities.

I will take you through it as there is a lock-step process involved. The issue of getting the off-site facilities for the Museum depend upon the off-site facilities for the Library vacating the old Boggo Road site. That in turn depends upon the master plan for the State Library extensions, which, as I indicated to you in the answer, are part and parcel of that whole project. Things such as the Empire Contemporary Arts Centre and the Musgrave Park Cultural Centre are going to occur much sooner than that. The State Library, the relocation of the Queensland Theatre Company's rehearsal space—

**Mrs SHELDON:** I take it that the museum has to wait a fair period of time in the never-never.

**Mr FOLEY:** That is not—

**Mrs SHELDON:** Can I just ask you—

**Mr FOLEY:** Hang on. You have asked a question, Mrs Sheldon. I will give you an answer.

**Mrs SHELDON:** You have given me my answer.

**Mr FOLEY:** The answer is that, no, it is not on the never-never. One of the reasons it is not on the never-never is that we have actually provided a budget, which, with respect, is something you did not do as Arts Minister.

**Mrs SHELDON:** With respect, Minister, I did, although you have regularly said I did not.

**Mr FOLEY:** You announced a \$320m project for which there was not a cracker in the 1996-97 Budget.

**Mrs SHELDON:** There was \$10m, as a matter of fact.

**Mr FOLEY:** The 1997-98 Budget which you announced was never passed by the Parliament. That was a never-never plan. By contrast, we have reviewed that. We have ensured that it provides not only for those facilities but includes as an integral part of it the indigenous facility, it includes as an integral part of it provision for regional arts

infrastructure and, most importantly of all, it also includes an actual budgeted provision.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Minister, it was budgeted as \$320m over 10 years. In fact, there was \$30m in the first year if you wanted to draw that down and use it, which you did not. Could you please tell me the original—

**Mr FOLEY:** With respect, I take that as another question. Prior to the 1996-97 Budget, you announced a \$320m Cultural Heritage Centre. You did so in order to drop a story about job losses in Suncorp-Metway from the front page of the Courier-Mail. That was successful. However, two months later when the Budget was announced—

**Mrs SHELDON:** A bit like the Premier, I would say, in announcing the current art gallery.

**Mr FOLEY:** After the Budget was announced, there was nothing other than your reference to the Treasurer's reserve, which frankly was never ever part of a budgetary provision.

**Mrs SHELDON:** It was part of a budgetary provision and it was listed in the Treasurer's Advance Account. I am happy to give you a copy of that if you so wish, which I am sure you have originally and now.

**Mr FOLEY:** I have read the copy of it, Mrs Sheldon. I am very sad that these projects have been delayed because of the lack of proper budgetary provision under the previous Government.

**Mrs SHELDON:** It could be from a lack of initiative on your part, Minister.

**Mr FOLEY:** Former Minister Sheldon, let me say this: what we have done is passed Budgets to make provision for it. The previous Government did not do so. By contrast, we have done so.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Minister, could you specify when these regional initiatives, which are unnamed, will begin? It is \$15m.

**Mr FOLEY:** There is currently work being done within Arts Queensland with regard to this \$15m arts infrastructure. Some of the various proposals that have been raised to date include a museum in Cairns. There have been discussions with people in Rockhampton also. However, over the coming months the department will have discussions with a number of the stakeholders throughout regional Queensland in order to advance that as part of the Millennium Arts project. The reason that we have done that is to ensure that the cultural heritage initiative is something which is part of the whole of Queensland and not simply confined to the people of Brisbane.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Minister, I certainly applaud that. However, what are the details of the \$15m?

**Mr FOLEY:** That is why we included specific provision for regional arts infrastructure rather than simply leaving it as a project for Brisbane, as it was under the previous Government.

**Mrs SHELDON:** So you do not know the details of that \$15m? How did you get a figure of \$15m if you do not know what the projects are?

**Mr FOLEY:** We made \$15m available because it is a significant contribution which we believed needed to be made to regional arts infrastructure for two reasons: firstly, because considerations of equity require it; and, secondly, our cultural policy is based on the proposition that the great cultural strength of Queensland lies in its regional diversity.

**Mrs SHELDON:** We agree with that, Minister. That is why we gave \$17m to the museum in Townsville.

**Mr FOLEY:** I seem to recall having been at the Cabinet decision where we announced the go-ahead for that project.

**Mrs SHELDON:** No. I turned the first sod, as a matter of fact. I can remember being on a very big end loader when I did it.

**Mr FOLEY:** I will not go there, Mrs Sheldon, other than to say that that project was announced by the Goss Government, and I commend your Government for continuing it. As for the \$15m, it seemed to us that the proper process was to ensure that arts communities throughout regional Queensland were informed of the availability of these funds and could have the opportunity to consult with Arts Queensland to put in bids so that they could be properly prioritised rather than simply presenting them as a fait accompli. I am very pleased to say that the arts throughout the State have welcomed that fact and have now acknowledged that the Millennium Arts project is something which is inclusive of regional Queensland rather than something which is confined to south-east Queensland.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Thank you, Minister. In last year's Estimates Committee you stated—

"We have a problem in that the Library and Museum are bursting at the seams in terms of their facilities."

You had \$19m allocated in 1999-2000 and did not spend any of that money. The problem obviously still exists. We have heard from you this morning that the museum has no hope for any relief until possibly 2004. I see that there is a substantial amount of money put aside for

the library extensions, and I am very happy about that. Of course, it could have started two years ago. As I understand that this is going to be a local tender for local architects for the library, it would not come under the international design time frame as you have indicated. When will that architectural design be let? What is the projected time frame you have for the library extensions?

**Mr FOLEY:** While we are turning that up, as you would appreciate the library has been very pleased at being able now to plan for the extension of its facilities. I had the pleasure of attending the launch of those facilities. We need to keep in mind that the library has those storage facilities off site at Dutton Park near the old Boggo Road. Those are not satisfactory into the longer term. That is why we have announced this extension to the State Library as part of the Millennium Arts project.

The sad fact of the matter is that the State Library of Queensland in Brisbane is by far the smallest of any State library. Its extension is part of the development of this master plan which involves the Gallery of Modern Art, the library and the relocation of museum facilities. It is contemplated that extensions to the library will significantly increase its display capacity, allowing it to fully exhibit collections such as the John Oxley Library. As you have indicated, the selection of an architect to design those extensions will be undertaken through a local design competition. With respect to the Gallery of Modern Art, we intend to have an international competition. We are now in the fortunate position where we have a budget which we expect to be passed by the Parliament of Queensland which will enable us to proceed with that work and to put in place something which, I agree with you, should have been done during the term of the previous Government.

**Mrs SHELDON:** It was done, Minister, but not by you. I refer you to page 1-38 of the MPS and to your answer to question on notice No. 2. You have indicated that your department commissioned \$3m in public artworks in some 50 buildings during the 1999-2000 financial year and that a further 75 buildings will include a planned public art component in this financial year. Could you tell me the nature, scope, artist and cost of each of the works under that \$3m? Could you also give me a list of the 75 buildings that you include in your planned public art component for this financial year?

**Mr FOLEY:** I thank you for raising the topic of public art. This is perhaps one of the most significant initiatives that this Government has undertaken. Making a provision for—

**Mrs SHELDON:** It was our policy, Minister. I would like that list of details, thank you.

**Mr FOLEY:** You should tell Fiona Simpson that. It is so hard to figure out what the Opposition's policy on this is.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Just follow the shadow Arts Minister and I am sure you will be fine.

**Mr FOLEY:** Perhaps you might like to encourage her to stop engaging in criticism of your own policy, in that case.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Could you just give the details of the public art buildings? I did ask.

**Mr FOLEY:** She has been running around criticising the use of public art in hospital facilities. I will now make it clear to her through the Health Minister that it is really you she should be taking up her complaints with. I thank you for that frank admission. What was missing from the previous Government was, firstly, any detailed commitment to what percentage would be involved—we committed to 2%—secondly, a comprehensive Cabinet policy and, thirdly, a set of very detailed guidelines. Those things have been put in place.

Let us turn to some of the specific items you have asked for. Your question is quite extensive. I am happy to answer it in an extensive way. I will table this document. It lists a whole series and includes some very significant projects, such as \$1,444,000 for the Roma Street parklands.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I take it that is in the future, because it is not part of your \$3m.

**Mr FOLEY:** This is dealing with the estimated budget for the forthcoming year.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Minister, my question was in two parts. The first asked you to list the nature, scope, work, artist and cost of each of the works under the \$3m that you say you have already expended. The next part related to the 75 buildings that you have said will have a public art component in the next financial year. I am happy to put that question on notice if you do not have the answer with you at the moment.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am happy to provide you with the information I have got. With respect to this year, for the Brendan Hansen building in Hervey Bay there is an amount of \$22,600 estimated actual; for the Cairns Hospital redevelopment there is an amount of \$74,000; for the arrest courts and the watch-house—

**Mrs SHELDON:** This art is in place, is it? Is it part of the \$3m?

**Mr FOLEY:** With respect, I am trying to answer the honourable member's question. She continues to interrupt as I answer. She will not get the answer if she continues to interrupt, because I simply will not have time to answer it.

With respect to the Bamaga Community Justice Centre, which is in place and which I had the pleasure of opening in the presence of the Chief Justice, the Chief Judge, the President of the Court of Appeal and the Chief Stipendiary Magistrate, there is a sum of \$13,235. With respect to the Kowanyama Community Justice Centre there is a sum of some \$22,290.

I have some copies of the artwork which forms part of the work in the courthouse—it is now called the community justice centre—at Bamaga. In order to better assist the Committee I will table that. In order to save time, rather than have me read out this whole list I think the Committee might find it more convenient if I simply table it. In regard to these works of art and in regard also to the Kowanyama project—

**Mrs SHELDON:** Could I have a copy of that list, please?

**Mr FOLEY:** I am just about to table it.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I would like to see what date it encompasses.

**Mr FOLEY:** I am more than happy to do so, Mrs Sheldon, if you give me half a chance. I have a list here—it is an A4 page—to which I am speaking. The point I was going to make, which I do seek to make and which I would hope would be of interest to members of this Committee, is that the use of public art is not just something tacked on. It must be something which is built in. In the case of Kowanyama and Bamaga, the local community showed a very significant willingness to engage in that process. I now table that material.

I was absolutely heartened by the positive response of the indigenous communities there, who showed a willingness to have a sense of ownership of those court facilities. Far from there being an attitude of, "This is a white fella court doing white fella justice business and nothing to do with us", what we saw was a very positive engagement, through the community art project, in having a say in the way the buildings looked, how they were to be used and what artworks were to be displayed. That is part of the reason the public art policy, which we developed, is so important. It is not



simply a case of tacking bits of art on to buildings; it is a case of involving the relevant stakeholders in the process of design and functionality and of finding ways of incorporating the art into something that helps those people connect with a sense of ownership to what is, after all, a public building owned by the public.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Thank you, Minister. Could you give me details of the \$45,000 in arts grants that went to the Queensland Council of Trade Unions and the ACTU Queensland branch? Possibly they could have just given you \$45,000 less for your campaign funds.

**Mr FOLEY:** That remark is very offensive and—

**Mrs SHELDON:** I just would like the details of the art grants that went to those two organisations.

**Mr FOLEY:** I think it is offensive and I think it shows, with respect, a gratuitous slur upon the integrity of Arts Queensland which I think, frankly, is beneath you, Mrs Sheldon. I am happy to provide that information. I think it is typical of the arrogance that we see from the Liberal Party that they think that the trade union movement of this country—

**Mrs SHELDON:** Minister, you might just give me the details, instead of waffling on with this tirade, because there are a lot of art organisations who would like that \$45,000.

**Mr FOLEY:** I will. I will give you the detail and I will give you the benefit of my point of view as well. It is typical of the arrogance of the Liberal Party that they would regard the involvement of trade unions in art as somehow irrelevant or a matter for political attack. Part of the great strength of artistic life is the involvement of working people. Trade unions are a part and parcel of the healthy life of this country and they are part of the healthy cultural and artistic life of this country. I am more than happy to make the details available to you. Mrs Sheldon, as a former Arts Minister you would well know that the provision of funding through Arts Queensland to arts bodies is subject to the most rigorous scrutiny and is subject to proper procedures and proper insurances to avoid the sort of cheap slur that you have just sought to make.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I think it is a genuine question. You could ask why the QCCI was not also allocated \$45,000. I am sure they contribute good workers in the community, too.

**Mr FOLEY:** I would be delighted if industry groups got more involved. I have been trying to encourage them. I will let Mr

Catlin give you the details, but let me tell you some of the activities that we have engaged in, with the cooperation and support of the trade union movement and with the support of a committee chaired, among others, by the Chair of this Committee, Mr Purcell. They include work with people you might wish to sneer at, Mrs Sheldon —

**Mrs SHELDON:** I do not sneer at anyone. It was a genuine question which you choose not to answer.

**Mr FOLEY:**—but these are people who work for a living, and they are members of trade unions, people like those who work in Walkers Engineering at Maryborough, who have for more than 100 years made timber pattern moulds prior to the foundry process. They have worked together with the Eliza Fraser Association at Maryborough in an Art of the Artisan exhibition to the sum of \$20,000.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Fine, Minister; we will fund them personally, but my question was about the ACTU and the Queensland Council of Trade Unions.

**Mr FOLEY:** You can be well assured that I will answer your question, and you will be well assured that the details of your comments today will be made widely available to working men and women throughout this State, for whom you have shown such disgraceful contempt.

**Mrs SHELDON:** That is a nonsense, and you know it.

**Mr FOLEY:** Filtronic Comtek Arts Program in the sum of \$2,500 to engage artists in the commissioning of artwork for a new building; \$10,000 to the Bodger project in Cairns and Brisbane to explore the development of unique furniture-making skills with a view to creating training and employment opportunities for Aboriginal and Islander artists; a sum of \$22,500 in the Buckles project at Mount Isa to support the concept/development of an exhibition of rodeo riders. Those activities have involved close work with industry including, I am sure, members of the QCCI, but I will ask Mr Catlin from Arts Queensland to give us the details of any funding made available through the ACTU.

**Mr CATLIN:** Just through the Chair—the grant you refer to, Mrs Sheldon, is one of six grants under a particular program called the Partnership Program. A total of \$150,000 has been set aside for that. Other recipients of grants under that program are the Ethnic Communities Council and the Thuringowa City Council. We have just concluded a Partnership Program with the Department of Corrective

Services called Inside Out, which focused on developing the skills of indigenous artists in prisons, and a program that we have in place with the Island Coordinating Council and the Torres Strait Regional Authority in Torres Strait introduced the Regional Arts Development Fund and the Commonwealth Government's Regional Arts Fund into the Torres Strait region. The sixth grant just escapes me for the moment. I would have to provide that to you later. So the ACTU grant is a fairly longstanding grant.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Thank you, Mr Catlin, but I was wanting the details of two specific grants. I think one was \$30,000 and one was \$15,000. The \$30,000 I think was to the Queensland Council of Trade Unions and the \$15,000 was to the ACTU Queensland branch. They were the specifics that I wanted. You might be able to supply them to me later on.

**Mr FOLEY:** We will be happy to provide them to you, to the Committee. But may I say that I believe it to be grossly irresponsible for slurs to be made upon the integrity of the arts grants process through Arts Queensland. I have the highest confidence in the integrity and independence of the officers of Arts Queensland. We have put enormous energy into that. One of the differences between the Labor Government's approach and the previous bunch of cronies that used to run the arts in this State prior to the election of the Goss Government was that we put in place a peer assessment process, precisely to ensure that there would be integrity, openness and transparency there, the type of which is diminished by unworthy attacks of the kind you have mounted.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Oh, Minister—

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mrs SHELDON:** Just excuse me, Mr Chairman.

**The CHAIRMAN:** No, you won't excuse me, Joan. You won't excuse me. I can talk louder than you.

**Mrs SHELDON:** I would like to put on the record—

**The CHAIRMAN:** You have already gone five minutes over, and I have been very tolerant.

**Mr FOLEY:** Give her a chance.

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Minister went five minutes over.

**The CHAIRMAN:** No.

**Mr FOLEY:** Mr Chairperson, please allow her a reply.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Okay. Before I do that— if the Minister wants to answer more questions on that, that is fine—students from Lawnton State School are in the gallery, and we would like to welcome them here. They come from the seat of Kurwongbah. We welcome you very much. I hope you are taking notes. Good stuff!

**Mr FOLEY:** Good luck with their studies in art.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Do you have another question, Joan?

**Mrs SHELDON:** The Minister said I could continue in what I was saying. I was just saying there was absolutely no slur, and neither should you politically infer there was any slur whatsoever, on any members of Arts Queensland. I have the highest regard for that department. They do excellent work. They gave very good advice and support to me as the Minister, and I am sure they are doing exactly the same to you. Thank you, Mr Chairman.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to page 8-4 of the MPS and note that the target estimate of main house session attendances for the Queensland Theatre Company has been significantly reduced for the 2000-01 season. I also note that in the footnote to the financial statements this is attributed to the negative impact the GST will have on audience attendances. Can the Minister advise what impact the Howard/Costello GST has had on ticket sales and the cost of theatre tickets, and what this will mean to the Queensland Theatre Company's budget?

**Mr FOLEY:** The anticipated decline in attendances in 2000-01 is based, just as you say, on an estimate of the devastating effect that the GST will have on the arts industry. The coalition's own figures indicated that the adverse effect on the arts industry would be second only to its effect upon the tobacco industry. Studies have estimated the impact to be between a 5% to 12% downturn in audience attendances. Notwithstanding the Queensland Government's requests to the Federal Government, the Federal Government has refused to supply a compensation package to this industry, which is a very big employer and which will be adversely affected.

Current trends in audience numbers reflect just over a 5% downturn in subscriber numbers—that is, season ticket buyers—and the increased ticket prices were directly attributable to GST. The Queensland Theatre Company does not predict any embedded tax savings, having been wholesale sales tax exempt prior to the introduction of the new tax

system. Therefore, it has been necessary to pass on the full 10% price increase. Major suppliers to the Queensland Theatre Company have passed on this full increase also. It is too early in the operation of the new tax system to determine the impact on single ticket sales of the GST, but the sad fact of the matter is that this GST is bound to have an adverse effect upon the arts industry and certainly on bodies such as the Queensland Theatre Company. It will increase the cost of their inputs and make ticket sales more difficult because of the increased price.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Since we have started a theme here, I welcome students from the Downlands College in Toowoomba, on behalf of Mike Horan who has his apologies in this morning. He is attending a funeral. I make the students most welcome to the public gallery.

**Mr FOLEY:** Hear, hear! I particularly commend them for having an excellent assistant principal, who just retired at Christmas—my brother!

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will not ask the students any questions on that.

**Mrs MILLER:** Again on the Queensland Theatre Company MPS and the proposal to launch the Shed season directed at youth audiences, could the Minister provide more details of this initiative and how much has been allocated in the budget to undertake what sounds to me like an innovative advance for local artists?

**Mr FOLEY:** The Queensland Theatre Company has allocated just under \$150,000—\$149,922—with a budgeted income of just under \$41,000. It is an interesting innovation, and it will be staged in the QTC's rehearsal studio at South Bank in the Shed. This is an attempt to ensure that theatre reaches out. We need top-class facilities such as the Playhouse, which was commissioned under the Goss Government, which was continued under the Borbidge Government and which we had the pleasure to open during the term of the Beattie Government. That is a top-class, excellent facility. But we also need places that are less salubrious, places where members of the public from different walks of life can feel that they can come and frequent. That means that things such as the Shed are to be greatly commended. I think the QTC is to be greatly commended for using it. They will be using it as part of the Brisbane Festival and that, I think, will be a good venue for people who might not otherwise be attracted to the more plush surroundings of the Playhouse.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Minister, I refer to the Queensland Performing Arts Trust and ask

could you advise how the major performing arts inquiry, known as the Nugent report, has impacted on cultural activity in Queensland and how it will impact in the future—or how you see it will impact in the future.

**Mr FOLEY:** Well, I spent some time yesterday meeting with the players of the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra and the Queensland Symphony Orchestra. The biggest single impact, I think, is the merger into a community of musicians. I give credit to the Federal Minister for The Arts, Peter McGauran, for coming up and meeting together with me and the players and then the implementation committee.

The problem is this: we are scandalously underfunded in Queensland by the Commonwealth when it comes to arts funding. It is a shocking disgrace. Even the Federal Minister was obliged to concede that it was inequitable, in his meeting with the players yesterday. We have been striving privately and publicly for a long time to get more money from Canberra. Even if we only got per capita funding, put aside the great extra costs that come from having such a decentralised State, we would be a lot better off.

Regrettably, the Commonwealth arts dollar continues to subsidise the arts elite in Sydney and, to a lesser extent, Melbourne. So the taxpayers of Queensland are basically subsidising those in Double Bay and Toorak to go and see their opera and ballet.

That having been said, we have secured an extra \$5.6m over four years from the Commonwealth, which is not enough, but it is \$5.6m more than we would otherwise have got. The Queensland Government is kicking in another \$1.4m, so that will work out at \$7m extra over four years. That will help the performing arts, but, as I indicated before, they have got to deal with this problem of the GST, and they have got to deal with the changing nature of the arts and entertainment industry. Lots of people are staying home playing videos, playing with their Sony Playstations, watching the Internet and playing with their Pokemon cards. I have every confidence that the performing arts in Queensland will survive and thrive. The Government is strongly committed to the performing arts including, in particular, the Queensland Performing Arts Trust. We are in the midst of a difficult transition where QPAT used to look after the Queensland Philharmonic Orchestra, we are now trying to build a community of musicians. May I pay tribute to those orchestral players who are going through a difficult period. They have legitimate concerns about job security;

they have legitimate concerns about the artistic and musical future of their companies.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will give you a couple more minutes on that, Minister, if you like. Just one more question in there if you would not mind with that extra time.

**Mr FOLEY:** All right.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Have you projected at all—have we done our sums to know this—what moneys the Commonwealth should be paying for our performing arts?

**Mr FOLEY:** A great deal more. If you simply looked at the estimates for funding for the orchestras—

**The CHAIRMAN:** I did not want to cut across your thought.

**Mr FOLEY:** Not at all. The funds from the Commonwealth at the moment for the orchestras are \$3.8m. They are going to boost that by another 10%. My recollection is that it is something in the order of \$9.7m for Victoria and about \$13m for—

**The CHAIRMAN:** New South Wales.

**Mr FOLEY:** New South Wales. We get at the moment \$3.8m, so it is an absolute disgrace. Even if we got it on a per capita basis, we would be millions and millions of dollars better off, and that does not take into account the extra responsibilities for regional touring that arise in the case of Queensland.

It is high time that the Commonwealth took some measures to redress this inequity. If it was not bad enough that their funding to the orchestras is so low, you have to add to it this melancholy fact: that the grants by the Australia Council to arts in Queensland are the lowest per capita of any Australian State. We are getting ripped off blind by the Commonwealth in arts funding. The current Government shows precious little intention to remedy it.

Having said that, I want to again come back to paying tribute to my Federal colleague, Peter McGauran. He is willing to work with us on this transition of the orchestras. I want to assure the orchestral players, the staff and the management that this Government and the Commonwealth Government are determined to make that merger work. I will not, however, desist from a campaign of trying to get a much greater share—a fair share—of the cake, because, frankly, throughout regional Australia people are sick and tired of paying taxes in order to subsidise arts to a small arts elite in Sydney and, to a lesser extent, Melbourne.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** This is what I believe may be the last question for the Committee for this

portfolio. I will address library facilities and, in particular, the Budget statements for the Library Board of Queensland. I note that a key strategic objective of the Library Board is to provide equity of access to service for all Queensland citizens. I ask: could the Minister advise of the Government's plan for the provision of library facilities to remote Queensland towns and could the Minister also advise how this will advance the cause of reconciliation?

**Mr FOLEY:** We need to do a lot better with regard to indigenous communities. There are currently 26 indigenous communities in Queensland without library facilities other than those available through the local school. We have engaged on a program of seeking to establish services in those communities under a planned and sustainable model. The Library Board, with assistance from the Government, is expanding the role of the Indigenous Libraries Unit in Cairns. We have recently assisted in the remodelling of the Kowanyama Library in close consultation with the local community. Indeed, I had the pleasure of visiting that site when I went to perform the opening of the Kowanyama Magistrates Court, or Community Justice Centre, of which I spoke earlier.

We are working with the Aboriginal Coordinating Council and the Islander Coordinating Council to assist the Bamaga Community Council establish a library service. The Bamaga council proposes that its new library, including access to multimedia CD-ROMs and the Internet, be housed in the community centre along with the rural transaction centre. That change is due for completion in late 2000. We plan to establish three additional libraries in Queensland indigenous communities in 2000-01. That is in addition to the ongoing work of OPAL, the Online Public Access in Libraries. But it seems ironic at a time when literacy in our community is such an important issue that we should have communities throughout this State that simply do not have libraries.

This is something that has been neglected for too long. We intend to address it. I have been working closely with the State Library board to try to address it. May I say just on that point that we have a number of very dedicated staff in Cairns who have been working on extending Internet access through remote communities in Cape York. We also have a couple of officers of Arts Queensland, Jenuarrie and Merv Ah Kee, who spend an awful lot of time in four-wheel drives visiting remote communities assisting them through the Regional Arts Development Fund to

become involved in the arts. Jenuarrie in particular is involved in the development of the arts industry among indigenous communities, particularly in north Queensland. Up there, and indeed throughout Queensland, arts means jobs. The arts industry continues to be a very important source of jobs growth. The top priority for this Government continues to be jobs, jobs, jobs and the arts industry has a key role to play in that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice and the Minister for The Arts has expired. I thank the Attorney-General and the portfolio officers for their attendance here today. Before they leave I remind them that the transcript of this part of the hearing will be available on the Hansard Internet Quick Access web site within two hours from now. That is not a bad service, is it. Thanks Alan Watson. This hearing is now suspended.

**Mr FOLEY:** May I just say—

**The CHAIRMAN:** And his staff, I should say, too, who are over here working their little fingers to the bone for us.

**Mr FOLEY:** Mr Chairperson, I take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the director-general, to the officers of my department and to the statutory agencies who have put considerable work into this exercise. May I take the opportunity very briefly to announce that my director-general, Ms Macdonnell, has just today been presented with an award from the Queensland University of Technology Alumni recognising her professional achievements in a job which is very demanding and often subject to unfair and ill-informed criticism.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. We would like to congratulate you also. I must not forget our timekeepers and our bellringers over here who try to keep us on mark. Sometimes it is a little bit harder to keep us on time than others. Thank you very much. We will resume at 2.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 12.02 p.m. to 2.30 p.m.

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

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

Police Service—

Mr J. P. O'Sullivan, Police Commissioner

Mr R. McGibbon, Deputy Commissioner

Mr R. Warry, Deputy Chief Executive

Mr J. Just, Director, Finance Division

Crime Commission—

Mr T. Carmody, Crime Commissioner

Mr I. Thomas, Manager, Operational Support

Corrective Services—

Mr F. Peach, Director-General

Ms A. Dutney, Deputy Director-General

Mr E. Klatt, Director, Finance and Administration

Mr P. Severin, Executive Director, Operational Support

**The CHAIRMAN:** The next portfolio to be examined is that of 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 the answers are to be no longer than three. 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 witnesses to identify themselves before they answer questions so that Hansard can record that information in their transcript. I declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Police and Corrective 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 introductory statement?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes, Mr Chairman, I would. The Beattie Labor Government's 2001-01 Budget is a Budget which delivers for all Queenslanders. For the Queensland Police Service, it delivers a new balance—a balance that tips the scales in favour of operational police. For the Department of Corrective Services, it delivers funding for infrastructure and new operational programs. What this Budget delivers for the Queensland Police Service is an extra \$44m, which is a 5.4%

increase in the bottom line. However, in terms of the Police Service's operational budget, this Government is pumping in \$61m more this financial year than last year, representing an 8.2% increase.

This is an excellent result, not just for police but for the public of Queensland. Over the past two years, I have been flat strap opening new stations and facilities—\$42m worth in 1998-99 and another \$35m worth last financial year. In addition, there was another \$10.8m in the information technology budget for police last financial year, \$2m for operational equipment, and \$2.5m for new speed cameras. In total, we made a massive injection of \$94m into capital assets last financial year.

This year, we are building on that investment in capital assets with that 8.2% increase in the operational budget that I mentioned earlier. This means more police on the streets. It means our academies will continue to work at full capacity to keep up with this Labor Government's aggressive recruiting campaign. It means that the service has 387 more police than at the same time last year. At the same time next year, the number of police on the streets will be yet another 357 higher.

While the Government has significantly increased funding for the police operational budget, we will continue investing heavily in infrastructure and assets. Obviously, with some of the major infrastructure projects now completed, the overall budget in this area will be lower. You do not build two Roma Street watch-houses, for example. However, big infrastructure jobs will continue to be funded and more and more stations will continue to be built. There is a \$30m capital works program in this year's Police budget, a special allocation of \$20m for infrastructure, another \$2m for operational equipment and \$1.9m for new DNA technology and equipment. These are just a few of the highlights of what the Beattie Labor Government is delivering for police through this year's Budget.

However, as time is limited, I will now turn to the Department of Corrective Services, which also has fared very well from the Budget, reflecting the Government's commitment to creating safer and more secure communities. Just over a year ago—in May 1999—the Department of Corrective Services came into being after the abolition of the Queensland Corrective Services Commission. The decision to move from the commission to a department has proved successful. In fact, under this Government, Corrective Services

has received the attention it deserves, and that is reaping results. For example, the operating budget for Corrective Services for this financial year is \$355.8m compared to \$202.5m for 1997-98 under the coalition. This Government has undertaken a significant capital works program with expanded infrastructure at Arthur Gorrie, Borallon, Palen Creek, Townsville, Rockhampton and Lotus Glen; two new centres, Wolston and Brisbane Women's; construction of the new Capricornia prison in Rockhampton; and a 400-bed expansion at Woodford.

A comparison of escape rates also highlights the coalition's abysmal record in Corrective Services. Not one prisoner has escaped from a secure custodial centre under this Government compared with 12 during the previous coalition Government's time in office. In addition, the Beattie Labor Government's policies have seen drug use slashed by one third. Urine analysis results are down from 18% positive in 1996-97 to 5.8% in 1999-2000.

The Beattie Labor Government is continuing to build on its record in Corrective Services by supplying adequate levels of funding, not just rhetoric. For example, this financial year's capital budget for Corrective Services is \$121m, compared to a total of \$129m for both years combined under the coalition's last term in office.

But Corrective Services means far more than the construction of more cells and new jails. The Beattie Labor Government has funded a number of innovative new programs which aim to make our community safer. For example, \$595,000 has been allocated this year, with another \$714,000 next year for a trial of electronic monitoring of prisoners on home detention orders. A Sexual Offenders Treatment Program for indigenous inmates at the Townsville Correction Centre will be developed with a \$613,000 allocation and the department's transport fleet receives an upgrade with an allocation of \$784,000 this financial year and \$773,000 in 2001-02.

These initiatives in the areas of Corrective Services and Police—and I have outlined just a few examples of what we are delivering—are designed to make a real difference to ordinary Queenslanders, and that is what we are doing. Thank you, Mr Chairman, for your indulgence.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thanks, Minister. The Government will take the first block of 20-minute questions. I would like to refer to your answer to a question on notice concerning safety issues associated with the new Glock pistols. Project Lighthouse has provided the most significant upgrade of operational

equipment that the Police Service has seen in a decade. I think that it was much needed. The Glock pistols represent a major change. I am interested to know about any further details that the Minister may be able to provide in respect of Project Lighthouse, in particular the new Glock pistols. In light of information that has been in the press about firearms that are becoming available that are highly technical and can fire very large rounds of ammo, how does Project Lighthouse fit into your program?

**Mr BARTON:** Thank you for the question. Project Lighthouse was initiated by the service in 1996. The new equipment that has been rolled out since then forms a very impressive list. They include 4,970 Glock semiautomatic pistols, with another 3,500 to be purchased in 2000-01—this financial year. We have also provided 7,827 extendable batons, 5,960 hinged handcuffs and 10,630 canisters of active capsicum spray to support the Statewide roll-out. As well as that, we are providing 420 weapons-clearing stations.

Whenever any profession takes on new tools there is always an area needed for familiarisation. If we were talking about computer programs, there would be a risk that data could be lost. But we are not: we are talking about police, we are talking about semiautomatic pistols and, of course, there is a risk that lives could be lost if that training and provisions were not up to speed. As a result, there has been a very strong emphasis placed on safety through new weapons-clearing stations, new procedures and new training methods.

The service now has the Glock pistols, bringing it into line with international best practice standards. To back that up, we have developed new training methods that I believe will soon fall into the same category, that is, international best practice.

Mr Chairman, at lunchtime today on the Speaker's Green I think you saw some of what I am talking about, that is, the new stimulus response training that every recruit going through both of our academies is now doing. This includes the use of FX dye-marking bullets fired from specially adapted Glock pistols to ensure that recruits are exposed to realistic situations involving the use of firearms by both police and offenders. There is an added advantage to these specially adapted training Glocks—an advantage that could potentially save lives. It is impossible to put a live round in the training Glock, because it is a different calibre. In other words, a real bullet will not fit. It is a safety measure. The greatest

amount of time police spend discharging firearms is in the training environment. It makes sense to us that for that reason there is a greater risk of an accident occurring the day after training.

The service's training program has drawn praise from suppliers of the FX dye-marking ammunition as world class in terms of the ones that they are observing worldwide. It has attracted significant interest from a number of interstate and overseas law enforcement agencies, including the Netherlands, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. This is not the only safety precaution that the service has in place; it is part of a whole package as part of Project Lighthouse. All police officers undertake a three-day pistol conversion course before being certified to use the Glocks. But due to the semi-automatic nature of these new weapons, there is a higher risk of accidental weapon discharge during unloading. Since the introduction of the Glocks there have been several accidental discharges. The service has purchased 420 specialised weapons clearing stations, or bullet traps, to facilitate the safe loading and unloading of weapons throughout the State, and we will be purchasing another 150 this financial year.

All police are required to undertake firearms training every six months. They must pass a firearms test every year to be qualified to carry a firearm. If we do not do that training there is always a risk. I think the people who observed the display put on this morning at Parliament House would be able to attest to the fact that our training methods are world class. We are the only ones in Australia doing this. Our specialist squads receive a far higher level of training again than that provided for our recruits coming through the academies now.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** My question is in relation to the EB3. I note that a large chunk of this year's budget—in fact, some \$17.5m—relates to increased police wages and conditions as a result of EB3. Can the Minister please justify this expenditure to the Committee and explain why this money could not be better spent on upgrading or replacing some of the service's major assets?

**Mr BARTON:** I thank the honourable member for the question, which has a fairly straightforward answer. The men and women we have in the Queensland Police Service are our most valuable asset. The expenditure justifies itself. We have significant expenditure and that includes the record capital works expenditure of \$76m over the last two years, the roll-out of state-of-the-art operational

equipment that I have just referred to in an earlier question, the upgrading of radio communications equipment, the \$10.8m of new and improved information technology, a large number of additional police cars—and that is not just replacements, that is real additions—a new aircraft purchased during my time as Minister, and the extensive training programs and facilities. They all have one purpose and one purpose only—to support the men and women of the Police Service on the street. That is the main game.

If you ask me why the \$17.5m provided in 2000-01 for the enterprise bargaining cannot be spent on more important assets, I say the fact is that we have spent that on the men and women in the Police Service—our most important asset, our people. What the Government has done in this year's budget is to set a new balance—a balance that is \$61m in favour of operational police. The facts are that the police in Queensland deserve the wage rises that this Government is funding and they deserve the improved conditions that go with it. Every day police turn up not knowing whether they will be called on to put their lives on the line. Every day they deliver for the people of Queensland. I welcome any question that helps me to justify this budget. We make no apologies for the fact that the Government is not neglecting these areas.

There is a very significant increase in the enterprise bargain, but there is still \$30m in the budget for capital works. There is a \$20m program for infrastructure on top of that. There will be more police cars. There will be more operational equipment, including the \$2m that comes through Project Lighthouse. There will be 3,000 new computers on desks. There will be 60 additional civilian staff to support the operational police and, most importantly, there will be 357 more police. That is the magic number—the number that really counts—and the people of Queensland know it. Contrary to some of the media comment that we have seen in recent times, you cannot move around this State now without seeing operational police out on the beat on duty. That is what the public are looking for and that is what the police have been doing.

In the past six months, sadly, officers have been shot and injured and, in one tragic instance one was killed, while protecting the community. We have the lowest levels of sick leave in the country. The officers have just voted by a huge percentage to accept the new enterprise bargain. That was signed off last week and approved by the Industrial Commission. We are delivering for those



people with this budget of \$61m for the enterprise bargain.

**Mrs MILLER:** I note on page 10 of the MPS that a 12-month trial commenced in February 2000 to assess the impact of transferring responsibility for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community police from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils to the Queensland Police Service. I note that, in 1999-2000, \$1.1m was allocated to this trial and that a further \$0.4m is provided in 2000-01. Can you please explain to the Committee how the trials are progressing to date and how the extra \$0.4m will be spent?

**Mr BARTON:** The trial was kicked off in response to the recommendations made following a review of policing on remote Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. It was set up by a joint Queensland Police Service and Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy and Development steering committee. The committee also includes representatives from the Aboriginal Coordinating Council, the Islander Coordinating Council, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Board, the Criminal Justice Commission, the Department of Local Government and Planning and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General. They recommended that the trial be conducted in three areas and that trial is proceeding in the Yarrabah, Badu Island and Woorabinda communities.

Since then, Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait police officers, or QATSIP officers, as we call them, have been recruited and completed the three-week training course. Four officers were appointed to Badu Island, seven to the Yarrabah community and four to Woorabinda. The QATSIP officers will complete a further 12 months of competency based training under the supervision of the QPS field training officers.

QATSIP officers have powers under local by-laws and are appointed as special constables with limited powers under the Police Service Administration Act. There is already feedback from the three communities that indicates a high level of satisfaction with those new officers. The \$1.1m provided in last year's budget has allowed the trial to progress this far. The majority of the funding was allocated to pay for the wages of the 15 new officers for the 12 months that the trial will run through until February of next year. At that point an evaluation will be conducted and Cabinet will have a close look at the report produced at the end of the day on that evaluation and our experience to date.

The \$0.4m allocated in 2000-01 will ensure that there is still money in the bank to continue paying the 15 new officers during the period while the evaluation is being conducted. We are very pleased with the way the trial has gone to date. Again, I do not wish to pre-empt the evaluation, but we are very confident that it will show up as being a major step forward in policing on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. If it is, we will then look at the possibility of rolling it out into yet other communities.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** The Government established a whole of Government task force on crime prevention in 1998 following an election commitment set out in the New Directions statement Crime Prevention that Works. To support the aims of the task force, in its 1998-99 Budget the Government allocated funding to four programs under the general title of improved police practices. This included funding to establish 10 additional Police Beats and 10 additional Police Beat shopfronts. Information presented on pages 1-8 to 1-10 of the MPS indicates that the service has established 12 new Police Beats and 10 new Police Beat shopfronts and that it intends to expand these programs in the 2000-01 financial year. Would the Minister please provide a brief outline of the Police Beat and Police Beat shopfront programs, detail where the beats and shopfronts are currently located and outline any plans for expansion of these programs?

**Mr BARTON:** Again I thank you for the question, because Police Beats and Police Beat shopfronts are one of the issues of community policing that I feel very passionate about. I know that you support those as well. Police Beats and Police Beat shopfronts are both designed to increase community access to police, to strengthen partnerships between the community and police, and to reduce the fear of crime in the community. The Police Beat program involves one or more police officers looking after a defined local area, or beat, and the officer lives within the beat area and becomes part of the local community. Calls for service are monitored and problem areas are identified and targeted. Appropriate policing responses are then implemented in partnership with the community and other agencies.

Across Queensland there are currently 28 officers working in 22 Police Beats and they are operating in the following locations—I will run through them quickly—Trinity Beach, Leichhardt, South Townsville, Silkstone, Garbutt, East Toowoomba, Kelso, West Toowoomba, Rasmussen, Harlaxton, Slade

Point, Eagleby, Agnes Waters, Bray Park, Urangan, Kallangur, Margate, The Gap, Riverview, Kenmore, Springfield and West End. As you quite correctly pointed out, there will be more beats next year to add to this already impressive list. So far two new beats have been approved: North Ipswich and the Goodna/Redbank Plains area that I know Mrs Miller is very keen on.

The Police Beat shopfront is another program that has continued to expand significantly under the current Government. Shopfronts are typically established in shopping centres and central business districts where they provide a visible police presence and facilitate community access to police. Ten new Police Beat shopfronts have been established in the past two financial years, including four in 1999-2000. A number of the existing shopfronts have already been located.

There are 39 Police Beat shopfronts operating around Queensland. I will not read the whole list, but we do not intend to stop at 39. Two new shopfronts have already been approved for next year. They will be established at Chermiside Shopping Centre and at a location in Townsville which is still under negotiation. I will not mention the site because we do not want to encourage the owner to make the price a little higher.

Police Beats and shopfronts are a critical part of the Government's overall crime prevention strategy. As you have quite correctly pointed out, this Government has already delivered 12 new beats and 10 new shopfronts for the people of Queensland. We will not be stopping there. We will be doing at least two more beats and two more shopfronts this year. We intend to do a lot more within our capacity within the budget.

**Mrs MILLER:** I am particularly interested in the results that have been achieved with DNA technology. The involvement of the Police Service with the Commonwealth's CrimTrac initiative is touched on in this year's MPS. I note on page 1-15 that the Queensland Government will be providing \$1.9m this financial year to support the Statewide implementation of DNA technology. The MPS also points out that Operation Javelin has been conducted throughout 1999-2000 and has used DNA analysis to re-examine crimes that have remained unsolved for some time with some very impressive results. Would the Minister please outline for the Committee what the service has done to prepare for the Statewide implementation of DNA technology, what the \$1.9m allocation will be used for in 2000-01, how this fits in with the

Commonwealth's CrimTrac initiative and provide an example from Operation Javelin that shows how effective DNA technology can be in solving crime?

**Mr BARTON:** As you are aware, the Government introduced legislation as part of the police powers Bill 2000 to govern the collection and analysis of DNA samples and the use of DNA profiles. This legislation redresses the anomaly which had existed between arrangements governing fingerprints and DNA despite their similar function and allows police to use the available DNA technology as a tool in the intelligence-led investigation of crime. While providing a framework for police to collect samples and record the result of DNA analysis on a database, the legislation sets out appropriate safeguards and restrictions on the collection of samples to ensure that these powers are not misused.

In developing this new important policy initiative, the Queensland Police Service has been working with other State Government departments to ascertain how Queensland will implement DNA technology and its impact across the criminal justice system. With the passage of the legislation, the service has now established a DNA implementation team within police headquarters to further develop and implement a procedures system and training and to develop, purchase and distribute sample kits.

On a national level the Queensland service is providing information and expertise to various forums to progress the design and development of CrimTrac and the national DNA database. Commissioner O'Sullivan is on the CrimTrac interim board of management, and the Queensland Government has allocated \$1.9m to the Queensland Police Service in 2000-01 to support the Statewide implementation of DNA analysis. This money will be used to get the initiative operating on the ground. It will allow the service to develop a DNA coordination unit, which is up and running; coordinate profile match information within and between jurisdictions; manage the retention and destruction of samples; monitor the quality of samples and monitor and evaluate the system; purchase and transport sample kits; provide training to police officers; analyse DNA samples; and purchase access to the national database.

International experience in implementing DNA profiling and national DNA databases reinforces the expected benefits from Queensland's use of DNA technology. This includes an increase in crime clear-up rates. If I

could give an example, in the UK the implementation of a similar system saw the clear-up rate for break and enter type offences jump from the order of 10% to 12% to over 40% almost overnight. So it is not just the major high profile crimes that DNA can be used in, but it will increase clear-up rates, put more focus on investigation through positive identification of suspects, eliminate suspects early on if they are not guilty and increase the potential to link crimes within and across jurisdictions. We believe it will be a significant deterrent to crime.

**The CHAIRMAN:** That ends the Government time. My colleague Mike Horan from Toowoomba will have the next 20 minutes.

**Mr HORAN:** First of all, I would just like to express my appreciation for the time having been put back to allow me to attend the funeral in Toowoomba of the helicopter pilot, Mr Paddy O'Brien, who died last week. Minister, could you please provide this Committee with the amount of the increase and the percentage increase for each of the eight regional commands and each of the three commands and four corporate service divisions that are attached to the police headquarters?

**Mr BARTON:** I think we can give you the greatest percentage terms if we talk about the regions, because very clearly the Government has made a conscious decision that we are going to be putting the policing resources out there at the cutting edge where the men and women who pull on the blue shirts need them to allow them to do the job in the interests of the community. In percentage terms the largest increases went to the Northern Region, with a 12.3% increase; Far Northern Region, 9.6%; south-east—you wanted the monetary amounts as well.

**Mr HORAN:** The percentage. If I can get both it would be better.

**Mr BARTON:** I will give you the percentages and then we might come back to the monetary amounts if we have time. The Far Northern Region was 9.6%; South-East Region, 7.5%; Central Region, 6.6%. Again, in dollar terms the largest increases went to the South-East Region because it is one of our largest regions, which was \$4.4m; Northern Region, \$4.3m; Far Northern Region, \$3.5m; and Metropolitan North, \$3.3m. These sorts of amounts—and, again, that is not all of them—

**Mr HORAN:** I got those first four percentages—Northern, Far Northern, South-Eastern and Central.

**Mr BARTON:** I will tick the ones which we have given you and come back for the others. I have given you Far Northern, Northern, South-Eastern and Central. The others include North Coast. The monetary change there is \$3.112m, which is a 5.6% increase. Metropolitan North has a \$3.3m increase, or 5.8%. Metropolitan South has a \$1.249m increase, or 2.6%. Southern region has a \$2.066m increase, or 4.4%. The increase across those regions in totality is in the order of \$25.5m, or a 6.5% change. We have continued to assess regional demands across-the-board. The Finance Committee of the Queensland Police Service will continue to assess regional priorities throughout the year and adjustments to the initial allocations will be made as required. With the time constraints, I do not know if I have time to give a full answer to your question, because we are running out of time. However, they are the four commands.

**Mr HORAN:** I am happy to keep going on to the headquarter commands and support groups.

**The CHAIRMAN:** With Mr Horan's agreement, the Minister may have an extension of time.

**Mr HORAN:** Yes.

**The CHAIRMAN:** You have another two minutes, Minister.

**Mr BARTON:** In addition to those, the largest increases in dollar terms were to Operation Support Command, which is a \$3.65m increase.

**Mr HORAN:** What percentage is that, Minister?

**Mr BARTON:** Operation Support Command is 7.5%. I repeat that that is \$3.645m. State Crime Operations has an increase of \$1.530m, or 4.1%. Ethical Standards Command has an increase of \$563,000, or 11.5%. Human Resources has an increase of \$1.835m, or 7.8%. The poor boys and girls in Finance have worn the brunt. John and his team only have an increase of \$26,000, or 1%. Similarly, Administration has an increase of \$491,000, or 1.7%. Information Management has an increase of \$693,000, or 3%. Office of the Commissioner has an increase of \$365,000, or 12.9%. Media and Public Relations has an increase of only \$21,000, or 1.2%. The Executive has had a drop of \$176,000, or 12%. That is a total increase across all of those commands of \$8.993m, or 5.1%.

Again, I stress that, if you look at the two areas we have looked at, you will see that we

have put the funding out there at the cutting edge. The non-regionals should not be confused with non-operational areas. I again ask for the Committee's indulgence for a minute because these are very important issues. I want to stress that last year we also came in on budget on those regions, contrary to a lot of the nonsense out there in the media. If anyone slips behind, we again have a capacity this year to make sure that they have the materials, goods and budget that they need.

**Mr HORAN:** Thanks. Minister, how many school-based police officer positions were created in the past financial year? How many will be created in this financial year?

**Mr BARTON:** We have continued the program that had been put in place. The cost in 1999-2000 was a quarter of a million dollars. The cost this financial year is a quarter of a million dollars. There has not been an increase in additional schools involved. There has been some change with regard to it. It is an area in which those school-based police officers have continued to work exceptionally well. However, this is not an area where we have an increase, nor do we project a large change in that. We will continue to monitor that process. There may be new locations that are put into place and expanded locations in the 2000-01 financial year depending on how the review we have going shows up. From my observation, they have been working very well. One operates partly in my electorate and a neighbouring electorate and shares two high schools. There has been a marked improvement in those areas where that school-based police officer is working.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, can you detail the following crime statistics for 1998-99 and 1999-2000, if you have it with you: offences against the person, property offences and other offences? I have kept it to those three categories.

**Mr BARTON:** Let us be sure of the specifics. Again, as you are aware, Mr Horan, we put out an annual report on statistics which is normally provided to the Parliament in about October. I am not sure that I have the complete picture. However, the ones I do have might not be the ones you specifically asked about, but I will quote some of them that are fairly important. For the period June 1999 to May 2000, there was a 2.6% decrease in total offences against the person, including a 14.6% decrease in sexual offences, an 11% decrease in robberies and a 22% decrease in driving causing death. Assaults did rise by 1.6%. But, overall, the offences against the

person did drop over the last 12-month period. Of course, you will get the complete picture in the Police Statistical Review that we put out annually. You have to bear in mind that it is only 2 August and the financial year finished only a month ago. We put a lot of work in to get those statistics together to go into that comprehensive report.

Total property offences increased by 7.6%, including a 3.7% increase in unlawful entry and an 8.8% increase in motor vehicle thefts. So there has been an increase in property offences. There has been a decrease in offences against the person. I stress that one reason we proposed the DNA legislation, which also gave a raft of improved police powers, is that we are very confident that once DNA is up and running fully there will be a capacity that DNA factors alone will see a substantial rise in the clear-up rate on property offences. We have no doubt that, once that substantial rise in the clear-up rate on property offences occurs, that will act as a significant deterrent to property offences. We hope to see a drop in those levels of crime.

**Mr HORAN:** The other category was other offences, but it is probably difficult to answer.

**Mr BARTON:** Can I suggest that—

**Mr HORAN:** Unless you have them there.

**Mr BARTON:** Let us have a look.

**Mr HORAN:** Yes, because they are normally put in those three categories.

**Mr BARTON:** In relation to other offences, I want to stress that when there is an increase it typically means that police are doing a better job. Other offences are the result of good work out there in the field. Drug offences are up by 4%. Breaches of domestic violence protection orders are up by 6%. Weapons Act offences are up by 8%. Law and order offences are up by 2%. I again stress that, the more police out there and the better job they are doing, these issues appear to have higher crime levels because they are offences that are typically detected by good police work. I am not critical in any shape or form, nor do I believe the public would be if they saw those types of offences going up. That simply means that there are more police out there doing a better job of detecting people who are indulging in those types of crime.

**Mr HORAN:** Are you giving me details of the offences actually reported?

**Mr BARTON:** They are offences detected by police.

**Mr HORAN:** Reported to the police?

**Mr BARTON:** Detected by police, rather than reported. Let us be clear about our definitions here. Those types of "Other" offences are typically ones where police detect them, as opposed to reported offences. Typically break and enters are offences that are reported to police and statistics are based on the public's reporting of those offences. Offences covered in the "Other" offences category are typically offences that have been detected by police. That is where police have gone out, been proactive and picked up people who have been indulging in crime. I am being very careful and very firm in my words. Yes, there are increases in those, but those increases in fact reflect a better job by the Police Service rather than a lesser job.

**Mr HORAN:** Why has \$7.5m been cut from the allocation for plant and equipment, including motor vehicles? Where will these cuts be made? How will adequate equipment and motor vehicles be provided on a budget that is reduced by 12.8% when there are 357 additional police anticipated? Presumably they will also need vehicles and equipment.

**Mr BARTON:** I think we have to look at that in terms of plant and equipment being one component and one component only of the service's Capital Acquisition Statement. The plant and equipment is not the service's operational budget and it is not appropriate to describe it as such—in the manner you have been in the media lately. Plant and equipment expenditure will reduce by \$7.6m in 2000-01. The figure for last financial year was \$58.85m. This year it will be \$51.234m. That is a reduction of \$7.6m, or 12.9%.

The main reason that reduction is there is that last year there was \$3m in Y2K funding. Y2K was a one-off event that affected all Government departments, but particularly agencies such as police which could not afford to run the risk of having any slip-ups at all, being an emergency service-type operation that responds to the public. We put in big expenditure last year to come to grips with Y2K alone. So there is \$3m that is not there this year due to Y2K funding. The implementation of our Polaris system was also a one-off. We have completed that expenditure. There was \$1.5m for that. We also had a huge roll-out of traffic cameras in the last financial year. Expenditure was in the order of \$2.5m. There is also "Other" expenditure of 0.6%.

There has been a reduction, but the biggest slice relates to the need to be Y2K compliant, to prepare for the millennium bug or the possibility of the millennium bug. We had a

huge roll-out of equipment. Again, I stress that the traffic cameras were the next biggest item of expenditure. There was a huge roll-out of traffic cameras. While we are increasing their numbers this year, it is not in the same numbers as last year.

I stress: while plant and equipment includes the service's vehicle fleet, there will be no decrease in the number of vehicles—in fact, we will continue to increase the number of vehicles—and vehicles will continue to be disposed of at 40,000 kilometres, meaning that the fleet is not going to age. I hope, Mr Horan, that this one was not your best shot. If it is, you have been firing blanks—the same as you have been firing blanks in the media lately—when you have said that police will be driving older vehicles that will be more dangerous because of this reduction.

Let me be very clear: there will not be a reduction. In fact, on one day earlier this year I approved I think 53 additional vehicles on the one day that rolled out around the regions. That type of thing will continue this year. There are good reasons for one-off items of expenditure not appearing there this year.

**Mr HORAN:** Is the DNA equipment part of that plant and equipment—the \$2m for DNA?

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

**Mr HORAN:** That would almost offset the \$3m for Y2K. That is an extra amount of money for a new, additional item.

**Mr BARTON:** I think you are misjudging that. Funding for Y2K was \$3m. Expenditure in relation to DNA is \$1.9m. That is not all for equipment, either. The \$1.9m allocated for DNA is not just for the equipment needs. For example, our costs of buying services from the John Tonge Centre for DNA testing is included in that \$1.9m. It would be quite in error to say that the \$1.9m in DNA nearly makes up for the specialist Y2K funding of \$3m.

**Mr HORAN:** It does in part. You also mentioned the traffic cameras. This year there is something like \$2.2m of additional funding for particular traffic enforcement. Some of that is equipment.

**Mr BARTON:** We can sit here and dissect it, but you asked about why there has been a drop compared with last year, and I will go through it for you again. Last year there was Y2K funding of \$3m; a one-off expenditure of \$1.5m on the Polaris system; expenditure of \$2.5m on traffic cameras—the biggest roll-out of traffic cameras and speed measurement devices we have had; and expenditure of \$600,000 on "Other" items. You cannot really say that this shows a huge reduction.

The blank you fired was with regard to saying publicly that we would be keeping police cars for longer and that officers would be driving dangerous police cars. Let me nail that one stone motherless dead. There will be no change in those procedures in terms of how we replace equipment. This year we will continue to replace the police cars under the same policy we always have. We are rolling out 3,000 additional new computers into the Police Service. We are rolling out I think 3,500 additional Glocks. We are continuing to roll out the new batons, the new hinged handcuffs and the capsicum spray. The service's needs with regard to the tools of the trade are being well and truly met.

**Mr HORAN:** You have listed the items that will not need an allocation this year. I have detailed some new items that have arisen. Plus there will be 357 additional police. There must be a need for a certain number of vehicles and extra equipment to go with those. It is hard to see logically how you could reduce the plant and equipment spending by 12.8% when you will have so many extra officers.

**Mr BARTON:** If this is a fresh question I will take it as such—that is, if it is a fresh question and not just an interjection. I will repeat it for you. Y2K funding was a one-off. Other big ticket items were one-off items of expenditure. They are not the meat and vegetables of the equipment that we provide for police on a day-to-day basis to go out and do their job. We have a program that is continuing to increase those basic equipment levels out there, and increasing them very substantially, to equip the additional 357 officers that we intend to have in place at the end of this financial year. We are well and truly in front of those areas.

This budget has a 5.4% increase. That is in a pretty tough budget year, as no doubt other Ministers will be saying and as the Treasurer said on Budget day itself. There is no reduction in our ability to give the Police Service the tools that they need to do their job. We are giving the Police Service additional staffing levels, not just in sworn police officers but also in support people. We are giving them the tools they need to do the job. We are giving them the additional police powers they need to do the job and we are giving them the bricks and mortar they need to do the job.

We will continue to replace the police cars in the same sort of time frame—40,000 kilometres or two years, whichever comes first. Typically our operational police vehicles, the ones that general duties officers and traffic duties officers operate in, turn over in a matter

of months, not years, and they turn over at that 40,000 kilometre mark.

So I am not sure where you are trying to chase this particular rabbit, but I can assure you that you are firing blanks at him, because well and truly, the operational needs of the police are being met. I have already indicated in my opening statement that if we are looking at the operational needs of the Police Service, taking away the other factors, we have an increase of 8.2% when it comes to the operational expenditure. I have been through it region by region for you and command by command, and I think you would have to agree with me that the only people who are missing out are the people in finance and administration and the executive. Those areas are not getting big increases and in some cases are getting decreases, because we are putting the dollars in this service out there with the men and women in the blue shirts at the cutting edge who are doing the job—and they are doing the job—for this community of Queensland.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would like to ask a question in regard to computers. All departments are becoming more and more reliant on technology. I am sure most people would agree that this is certainly the case for the Police Service. Without timely access to information, I imagine police in Queensland would grind to a halt, so I am not surprised to see the Police Service is again proposing a significant capital injection to maintain the upgrade of its information technology systems infrastructure.

I note from your budget papers that the service has developed an Information Strategic Plan to guide its IT initiatives over the next few years. The budget papers indicate that \$10.8m was allocated to IT in 1999-2000 in line with this strategic plan and that this year a component of \$20m special capital allocation will also go towards information technology. Will the Minister please outline to the Committee what was achieved with the \$10.8m and what will be involved in the new work stations upgrade? How will this improve delivery throughout the Police Service in Queensland? Are the people of Queensland getting value for money?

**Mr BARTON:** Thank you for that question, because again, this is a further example where the funding is going out there in the interests of making sure that the men and women in the Police Service have the tools that they need to do the job. The equity injection of \$10.8m last financial year and a further \$20m special capital allocation this year reflects this

Government's understanding of the vital role that information technology plays in an effective Police Service.

In responding to calls for service and investigating major and organised crime and in implementing crime prevention initiatives, police officers rely on ready access to information about persons, property, incidents and vehicles. The \$10.8m funding in 1999-2000 was spent to continue the process of modernising and replacing manual systems within the service, consistent with the service's Information Management Strategic Plan of 1999-2000, and the Ministerial Program Statement lists some of the significant projects that were funded in that year, including \$1.8m for the expansion of the Polaris system. In 1999-2000 an enhanced version of this system was released. New modules on offender histories and vessels and vehicles were developed and tested, and work was advanced on designing a system to support the new drug diversion initiatives. So that really important information technology system was one of the big-ticket items that we spent once-off capital on last year.

We also spent \$0.4m to upgrade the service's computer-aided dispatch system and to expand its use to Beenleigh and Broadbeach communication centres, and we will be opening both of those officially in the immediate future. We spent \$1.2m to upgrade the service's mainframe to meet increasing demand and ensure acceptable response times. There was \$1.7m to upgrade the service's network at over 450 sites throughout the State, resulting in halving response times and support issues, and \$2.1m to ensure that the Queensland Police Service hardware and software systems would continue to perform effectively from 1 January 2000. In other words, we were making sure that the Y2K bug was not going to interfere with any of our systems, and it did not. There were other things, but I will move to this year.

In 2000-01, information technology will continue to be enhanced, particularly through the work station upgrade and replacement program. Under this program, \$5m has been allocated to replace 3,000 of the oldest desktop computers with modern Wintel PCs, because the age of the equipment makes it insupportable, restricting staff access to computers. So they will make our police systems far more effective. It sounds like I have run out of time.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will give you a couple more minutes.

**Mr BARTON:** The acquisition of these 3,000 new PCs will ensure a manageable and expandable system for the future, and they will also contribute to faster data retrieval and communications across the service's network. For the community, the commitment to improving information technology systems really means better policing services, because modern police services operate on information. I think old police services also operated on information, but it was largely word of mouth. These days, in a modern world, you have to have the modern systems that store and sort and retrieve the information. Police will be able to be more responsive with the ongoing Statewide implementation of the computer-aided dispatch system, and police will be more effective and efficient with key information readily available to assist them in responding to and investigating crime.

As I said, under the enhanced capital upgrade of \$5m we are purchasing 3,000 new computer terminals. I know that in the police stations around your electorate—because I have been there with you—that has been an issue of concern to the police. When we can throw an additional 3,000 new computers at them this year, that will make a huge difference in their capacity to do the job.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I can assure you that the new station is getting plenty of use. Barry Bullion, who is the new officer in charge there, and his IT officer have been working their rings off, and they are going very well.

**Mr BARTON:** I am pleased to hear that, but that is consistent with the message that I am getting right across the State: the Police Service is visible and it is doing an excellent job. Only a few people seem to think it is different, but they must be driving around with Russ Hinze's dark glasses on and his white cane.

**Mrs MILLER:** As part of the budget papers this year, a consolidation of initiatives under the Queensland—The Smart State program was introduced. Whilst this document outlines some of the large projects that demonstrate how the Beattie Labor Government is at the forefront of innovation and technology, there are no doubt a number of smaller programs that did not get a mention.

Members of the Committee are no doubt aware of plans for the Queensland Police Service to better utilise available DNA technology. There are several references to DNA analysis and the national DNA database within the MPS. While the \$1.9m provided for new DNA technology has already received a

significant level of attention, can the Minister please outline for the Committee some additional examples of the service's use of technology in detecting and investigating crime?

**Mr BARTON:** There has been a lot of attention, as you quite rightly said, on the use of DNA technology in the fight against crime. However, DNA is just one of a number of exciting initiatives being progressed by the Queensland Police Service at this point in time. Another example is the computer program called Computer Facial Identification Techniques, or COMFIT, which was invented and developed by the Queensland Police Service. COMFIT produces digital likenesses of suspects from a recipe of facial features and is regularly used to generate suspects and confirm witnesses' descriptions. The technology can also be used to digitally overlay images of suspect items over known items for identification purposes, such as shoe soles and tyre impressions. In 1999-2000, COMFIT images were made available to all officers 24 hours a day via the service's electronic bulletin board, increasing the tools available to police officers across the State in the investigation of crime.

Queensland has now shared this technology with the Northern Territory and the New South Wales police services. The Queensland Police Service is also possibly the first police jurisdiction in the world to develop and use interactive crime scene recording for the recording of crime scenes and presentation of forensic evidence in courts of law. It involves a combination of conventional photographic techniques and computer systems and software to produce a 360-degree image. Scenes on the computer can incorporate video, audio, fingerprint and scientific evidence. With the scenes electronically stitched together, a viewer/operator is able to move through a crime scene at their own pace. Imagine the benefits of this technology in orienting an investigator to the layout of a crime scene, including the presence of physical and other evidence located by crime scene examiners and forensic experts.

This innovative system can also assist police in taking statements from witnesses and suspects. It allows the witness or suspect to view the scene at the time the statement is recorded and has been used in court to provide a better understanding of the general layout of the crime scene. As with COMFIT, Queensland has shared its knowledge of interactive crime scene recording with the South Australian Police. In 2000-01, the

Queensland Police Service will continue to pursue innovative technology to assist officers to detect and investigate crime. So we are not standing still. It is certainly a new age out there in the use of technology and the Queensland Police Service is right at the cutting edge in the use of that technology.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Minister, on page 1-23 of the MPS reference is made to the number of drug arrests and charges preferred against drug offenders by the State Drug Investigative Group. In addition, throughout the year I have seen a number of major drug arrests reported in the media. The drug problem is one issue that has challenged society for some time. While the service's record in catching the offenders and putting them before the courts speaks for itself, can the Minister explain to the Committee how these enforcement activities fit into the broader Government response to drugs in our community?

**Mr BARTON:** Thank you very much, because this Government is doing a lot to address the problem of illegal drug use in our community. As you have pointed out, enforcement is just one component of the overall response, but one where—I must say, the Queensland Police Service is very proud of it and as their Minister I am very proud of them—we are achieving excellent results.

Police actively target the distribution and trafficking of illicit drugs in this State. The State Drug Investigative Group alone arrested over 300 people on more than 1,500 charges. These included major offences carrying 20-year penalties such as trafficking and producing dangerous drugs. In addition, CIBs and Drug Squads in the various police regions have also been having a significant impact. Operation Clean-up was conducted on the Gold Coast last year. It led to the arrest of a number of offenders on more than 1,000 drug-related charges. With over \$9m worth of drugs and over \$2m in drug-related assets seized, there is plenty of evidence to show that the Beattie Labor Government is attacking the illicit drug market through its financial resources as well as through criminal prosecution.

However, these are just two parts of a complex response to a very complex problem. The Government has established a comprehensive range of programs that address both the harm caused by drugs and educate our children and community groups about the dangers of drug use. As stated in the MPS, two key policy documents guide the strategic response to managing drug-related harm: the National Drug Strategic Framework and the Queensland Drug Strategic



Framework 1999-2000 to 2003-04. These policy documents embody three main guiding principles: harm minimisation, social justice and intersectoral collaboration. The Queensland Police Service has actively participated in the development and implementation of both strategies through the Ministerial Council on Drug Strategy and the Queensland Drug Coordinating Committee. The new Police Powers and Responsibilities Act is now up and running and makes provision for the diversion of minor drug offenders as part of the drug courts trial.

What is happening in Queensland is essentially a two-pronged approach. We are attacking the causes as well as the symptoms of drug crime. We are working to a plan, a strategic plan, that will mean a range of responses are brought to bear on this problem. It is a whole-of-Government response. At the same time, we are certainly getting tough on offenders. We have increased penalties and increased police powers. We are taking their assets and hitting them where it hurts—in the hip pocket. We are putting more and more offenders before the courts and spreading the message that there is no place in Queensland for drug traffickers. It is an area that we will not be slowing down on because we do understand that it is not just enough to have tough enforcement measures and tough penalties but we will be continuing to tackle the causes of crime in the first place.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. In your written response to question on notice No. 2 you outlined a wide range of strategies that are being used in the Logan district to address real or perceived crime problems. Your answer also identified a number of key agencies that the service has been working in partnership with to deliver better policing outcomes for the Logan community. I know my colleague the member for Logan is very keen on what you are doing down there. While I am now pleased to see you did not sacrifice too many trees by going into detail with your written responses, I would appreciate it if you could now expand on your answer and outline to the Committee further details in respect of some of the excellent programs that you have up and running in Logan with a view to a few other districts seeing if we could use some of these programs if they are doing what they should be doing.

**Mr BARTON:** I really thank you for the question because not only is the member for Logan very interested but I am also interested because my electorate sits wholly within the Logan police district as well. There are some exciting things happening. There is no way I

can cover them all in even three minutes, Mr Chairman.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will give you more time if you need it.

**Mr BARTON:** First and foremost, the Government has put 55 more police into the Logan police district since it came to power in July 1998. Police numbers were then 360, they are now 415. That is a very substantial increase in the number of police that are in the Logan police district. Secondly, crime is down, with a decrease in reported crime from 12,407 offences in 1999 to 11,788 offences in 2000. What we are doing in Logan is taking a range of approaches and tailor-made solutions to local problems. In addition, we are looking at the causes of crime, not just the symptoms. The good news is that the strategies that we have been implementing are working. I know that because I am out there around that local community as well wearing my hat as the local member, not just the Police Minister, and you can see the impact that they are having.

They include monthly operations on traffic and drugs; intelligence-driven patrols of local hot spots; district operations such as Operation Sniper targeting property crime; new facilities including a Police Beat and three new Police Beat shop fronts; two school-based police officers covering four State high schools, Loganlea, Kingston, Woodridge and Mabel Park; there is the Logan blue light disco; and there is an active and effective community consultative committee that meets every month. There is a number of those committees, in fact. There is not only one at Logan, there is another very effective one at Beenleigh. I did note in my local paper this morning that one councillor, Darren Power, had moved at a meeting last week to try and shut down the community consultative committee at Slacks Creek, which is a real retrograde step. I am surprised that a local councillor would move such an outrageous proposition.

The police are at every meeting together with local councillors and other community members. This is how we know what is needed in Logan from a services perspective and then the service designs its programs to fit in. There is the Logan project, which effectively uses the volunteers in policing to support and assist the neighbourhood watch program. There are safety and security seminars for older persons. There is the Street Safe Project that has seen security cameras going into black spot locations at Logan Central, particularly at Station Road. There are initiatives that focus on improving the safety of taxi drivers and

preventing robberies at service stations, and partnerships with ethnic communities. I could go on for a long time. I will not go on any further but they are just some examples of the splendid work that has been done in Logan in the past two years after what really was a blight on the ability to address crime as we found it when it was left to us from the coalition.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. As the allotted time for Government members has expired, I will—

**Mr HORAN:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. I want to return to that plant and equipment matter. You gave us a number of items that came to about \$5.8m roughly. I have reduced the \$3m for the Y2K back to the \$2.1m that was in the Ministerial Program Statements. You gave us about \$5.8m of items that would not require spending this financial year, but in the MPS there is about \$9m of new items that would more than offset that. So what I am saying is that you do effectively have a \$7.6m or more real reduction in the plant and equipment budget. That would be bad enough in itself when you look at places like central Queensland where there are about 26 computers that do not operate, but on top of that you have got 357 additional police who will require cars and equipment. How are they going to be funded out of this reduced plant and equipment budget?

**Mr BARTON:** I already indicated to you before that if that was your best shot, you are loaded up with blanks. I do not know how often I have got to say exactly the same thing to you. You chased this particular rabbit down a burrow last year in a series of questions mainly on notice and in two-minute statements because you did not, in fact, get up in the Parliament and ask me questions during question time on it. You made all of these sorts of allegations last year about holes in the Police budget that were going to have tremendous impacts out there, that the regions were all going to be broke and in the red by the end of the financial year and that police services were going to be slashed—none of which occurred. I would like to think that you might be big enough to accept that.

The reality is that the Police budget is up \$44m, or some 5.4%. We have been through the whole list for you region by region, operational area by operational area. We have got control funding for direct service delivery. There is \$57m provided for control funding—that is for direct service delivery—together with an increase of \$4m in

control funding from other own sourced revenue. That is an increase of \$61m, or 8.2% in the service's operational budget. In the budget that the service has for its operational needs, we have put that up by 8.2%.

Equity funding has decreased by 14.5% but, again, I make the point that that is due to the completion of two major equity-based projects in 1999-2000. The Infrastructure Rejuvenation Program and the general capital allocation program are both reduced. But even with this reduction, even with the stop of those two specialist equity programs, the service will receive an equity injection of \$21m. We have received a special allocation of \$21m that allows it to extend and accelerate the capital works program, improve its information technology systems and complete a number of equipment replacement programs.

We had 387 more police in the past year. We are budgeting for 357 this year. A direct comparison was that we funded equipment for the 387 last year and the bottom line this year is that we will have more than enough to fund that additional 357 this year. The bottom line is up by \$44m. This will more than pay for the equipment for the additional 357. If I could just take a little bit more of your time—

**Mr HORAN:** That was not my point.

**Mr BARTON:** Okay. Forget it. You do not want the facts.

**Mr HORAN:** You have answered the question.

**Mr BARTON:** No, finished. If you do not want the answer, I will not give it to you.

**Mr HORAN:** The equity return of \$33.37m in this Budget, could you point out to this Committee where that money is listed as funds provided to you? Is the full equity return provided to the department or do you have to pay a portion of it yourself?

**Mr BARTON:** No. Let us make it very clear. Again, this is another example of where 12 months ago you sat here and cried wolf about the huge black hole that this was going to create in Police funding for the past financial year—the black hole that I dare say you are still out there searching for somewhere but which does not exist. The equity return recognises the cost to Government and the community of departments holding capital assets. It is calculated that 6% of the service's weighted net assets is the equity return. It is calculated as a percentage of net assets. Departments reducing the value of assets held will achieve a saving from one year to the next.

At the end of the year 1999-2000, the value of assets held by the service was

\$597m. The equity return was \$32m. The estimated equity return for 2001-01 is \$33.4m. In 1999-2000 the service received \$32m for the equity return. In the 1999-2000 Budget, the service made the required quarterly payments for the equity return throughout the year. In the final quarter of June 2000, the invoice issued by Treasury only required the service to repay the remainder of its \$32m allocation for the equity return. As a result, the equity return payments for 1999-2000 were budget neutral. There was no budget black hole, as you predicted during last year's Estimates debate.

The service's equity return for 2001-01 is estimated to be \$33.4m. The service's base allocation for the equity return has been adjusted in line with the current value of assets. All new capital projects that are funded in this Budget included an additional 6% for the equity return. In other words, we have been given the funding up front in the Budget on this capital outlay to fund the equity return. As a result, the service will not be reducing expenditure in any other area in order to make equity return payments in 2000-01.

In other words, it will be Budget neutral this year, the same as it was Budget neutral last year. We will not do as people had to do with what was known as the Horan health tax when the coalition was in power—we will not be doing that in terms of Police expenditure under this equity return.

**Mr HORAN:** The capital works budget has been slashed by \$13m. We have addressed the issue of about \$7.5m of that, which is due to the cut in the plant and equipment section of that budget. Can you advise what projects have not gone ahead as a result of this cut to the actual building projects in the order of \$6m? You have just mentioned that, of the funding given for each individual capital project, a portion of that is equity return. So now when you pay the builder for a new police station, you have got the money to pay the builder plus you have got extra money, 6%, to pay Treasury. So in other words, this capital figure here is inflated by 6% to cover the equity return. So we are getting less value for the funds here, because 6% in every project is kept to send back to Treasury to pay the equity return that is due. So I would like—

**Mr BARTON:** I have just had it clarified by Mr Warry that the equity return funding is in the operating funding that we have. But let us have a good look. You have asked the specific question about what—

**Mr HORAN:** No, no, you said that it was

part of the money given to you for each capital project.

**Mr BARTON:** It is in an operating budget.

**Mr HORAN:** Now you are saying it is in the operating—

**Mr BARTON:** I have misread my notes. But we are provided with the funding in the operating end of the budget to cover the equity return.

**Mr HORAN:** But which part of the operating account? Headquarters? Administration? Each of the regions?

**Mr BARTON:** We will get the experts. It is retained in headquarters. Let us have a look at the capital works budget, because that is the substance of your question. I made the comment earlier that I have opened so many new police facilities in the past two years that it is pretty hard to keep track of them all. I am advised that the total cost of new police facilities that I have opened exceeds \$34m just in 1999-2000. That is bricks and mortar evidence of this Government's commitment to law and order. I have opened new police stations at Calliope, Coen, Gracemere, Hendra, Laura, Morningside and Paul Braddy opened Lowood for me. The Premier opened the new Brisbane City watch-house late last year, along with myself and the Attorney-General. That certainly is living up to expectations. We have put into place police beats and Police Beat shopfronts. We have opened new shopfronts in Cairns, Mackay, Indooroopilly and Browns Plains. We have got construction under way at Deeragun where a temporary police shopfront has gone up pending the opening of the new station. We have moved into an upgraded shopfront in the city mall. There are existing Police Beat shopfronts relocated at the Logan Hyperdome and Inala. I do not expect them to be slowing down, because we have got another \$30m for police capital works in this Budget and I am pretty certain that I am going to be pretty busy running around this State opening new police facilities.

You do not have major projects such as the \$20m Brisbane City Watch-house every year. The fact that there is not a single project worth \$20m means that there will be a lot more police stations around the place. As to the ones that are happening right now—additional facilities have virtually been completed at Bamaga, Redcliffe, Rosslyn Bay and Oxley. In addition, this year we will complete Kowanyama, Edmonton, Beerwah, Ilfracombe, Yamanto, the Slacks Creek expansion, the Tiaro expansion and expansions to the John Tonge Centre. We

have projects such as that in Roma, which the coalition had promised Roma for something like 20 years. I opened the new watch-house at Roma. We have funded the new Roma police station and district headquarters this year, and it will be built this year.

**Mr HORAN:** \$300,000 has been allocated to the housing program in the police capital works program. How many police houses and barracks is the department responsible for? Does this \$300,000 include the building of any new houses or is it all for repairs and maintenance?

**Mr BARTON:** The funding is a subset of the capital works program. It is part of housing. Single residential accommodation has been identified for acquisition at Ilfracombe during 2000-01 as part of developing a new police station at Ilfracombe. I think you have been through that area in recent times?

**Mr PURCELL:** That will be an expensive item out at Ilfracombe.

**Mr BARTON:** It will be.

**Mr PURCELL:** I will give you a hand, if you are building a house.

**Mr BARTON:** We have reached a pretty good arrangement with the local council out there, which wants to take over the existing Ilfracombe Police Station—an historic building that is over 100 years old. But in putting in a new police station we are also putting in housing. Housing maintenance is separate to the capital works for housing acquisition.

**Mr HORAN:** So the \$300,000 is just for the maintenance of the houses?

**Mr BARTON:** No, we have made it pretty clear to you. I am just trying to get across this briefing note. We have a separate allocation for housing maintenance and housing acquisition. Again, my brief talks in terms of property acquisition. I will explain this to you. Whether it is the small stations program or whether it is housing, if you go to the MPS it shows where the major capital expenditure is station by station. There is a line item on small stations. We do not list all of those small stations. In fact, sometimes that changes within the 12 months depending on the needs that come up. Similarly with police housing. We have identified the need to build new housing at Ilfracombe as part of building a new station, because the existing Ilfracombe station and housing is one and the same. It is one building that has the police officer located and living in the station building. That is similar to a number of old stations around Queensland that we are progressively changing. Right at this point in time I am not

briefed on exactly where else we will put in police housing this year, but we have a budget allocation for that and they will be determined on a priority basis through the year by the service.

**Mr HORAN:** Can I get that information on notice afterwards—the number of houses and barracks and what the \$300,000 is for? Does it relate to maintenance only? It is unclear as to whether that \$300,000 is being spent on new police—

**Mr BARTON:** I have made it very clear for you that it is being spent on new housing and there is a separate allocation for maintenance. I will make it equally clear for you that in fact, apart from Ilfracombe, we will determine the additional police housing on a priority basis throughout the State during the year. I cannot give you that on notice or in any other way at this point in time, because the service will determine that in line with its priorities.

**Mr HORAN:** How many police recruits graduated from the Oxley and from Townsville academies in 1999-2000 and what are the projected numbers for each academy in 2000-01?

**Mr BARTON:** We will just get you the exact numbers. In 1999-2000, the intake numbers were 533, of which 526 were appointed, and the projections that we have for 2000-01 anticipate appointed commencements of 626. After that, you have to allow for any separations that take place. Very clearly, both academies are running full bore. As I think you are aware, the actual separations are very low at this point in time and they are anticipated to continue to be very low, because there is very high morale in the Queensland Police Service at this point in time.

We have rejigged the intakes and the way the Oxley academy is run. That academy is virtually bursting at the seams because of the number of recruits we are putting through—both the recruits that we take from day one as well as what we call the retreads. We have continued with the program initiated by one of my predecessors, Paul Braddy, which was also continued by Russell Cooper, to recruit experienced officers interstate and overseas. We have a program to assimilate them and bring them into the Queensland standards. There are considerable numbers coming through. As such, we have changed the input dates and the way the Oxley academy is running so that we can get more numbers through there. The Townsville academy continues to be run at its capacity as well. At Townsville to date there have been six

intakes of 40 recruits. Five intakes have graduated, delivering 187 new police. In fact, we have a group graduating next week in Townsville. There is a planned intake for 2000-01. Intake 6 will graduate next week—an additional 40 officers. In October 2000 intake 7 will commence, delivering a further 40 officers out of Townsville in May 2001. As you are aware, we have also purchased the site at Townsville—that had been a lease arrangement which was unsatisfactory—so that we can give that Townsville academy some permanence, and the Oxley academy is running at its maximum capacity.

**Mr HORAN:** You said that the equity return was coming out of the operational budget. There is a \$46m increase in the police budget on a budget-to-budget basis, according to the Budget papers. Is the equity return of \$33.4m that will be payable this year part of this additional money? Last year the equity return was shown as a separate item provided to the police budget in the Budget papers. It is not shown that way this year.

**Mr BARTON:** All we can do is reiterate that the operating budget includes the equity return retained centrally and paid back to Treasury. I dare say you could say it is a paper figure. It floats in and floats back out. The capital budget does not include the equity return. That was me misreading my notes before. I am just seeking advice from Mr Warry, who is the predominant finance expert that we have in the Queensland Police Service. Last year it was \$32m. This year we anticipated that it would be \$33m. But I stress that that is not a figure that will sit in the budget, because it is a figure that will come in and go back out. A further final adjustment for the 2000-01 fiscal limit for equity return will be made based on the 1999-2000 audited financial statements, timing of equity injections, withdrawals in the cash funding profile and any further CBRC approved changes in the net asset position which are brought about by equity injections or equity withdrawals. I think that if you want more detail on how the equity issue operates, you really need to be asking the Treasurer, who is responsible for that whole process. All I can do is assure you and reiterate as strongly as I can that last year we were funded for that amount and it came in and it went back out. This year we have been funded for it and it will go back out. We do not anticipate that there will be any cost to the Queensland Police Service or any cost to our budget associated with that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for this session of non-Government members' questions has expired. We had envisaged going on to the

Queensland Crime Commission. Do you have those officers available?

**Mr BARTON:** Tim Carmody will be here in a minute or so. I do not know about other people, but I would not mind a short break.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will come back.

**Mr BARTON:** I will definitely come back because I love these things, as you know. I just make this point, too: I am glad that everybody was able to start later to accommodate those tragic circumstances. The Police Commissioner and others do have commitments that they need to get to. I would seek the Committee's approval for them to withdraw at this point rather than have them sit around in case they are needed later. If you think of something later, I think Inspector Moy will stay behind. He might find a briefing note for me and I will answer it. They got off pretty lightly today. I have not passed the ball to the Commissioner.

**The CHAIRMAN:** If Mr Horan is in agreement, that is fine.

**Mr HORAN:** That is fine.

**The CHAIRMAN:** We are on a tight schedule, so we will only have a short break.

**Mr BARTON:** I just want to thank the Commissioner, the Deputy Commissioner and all their team for their support. A huge effort has gone into this. As it is the Commissioner's last Budget Estimates—and I do not think he is too perturbed about it being his last—

**The CHAIRMAN:** He will be sad not to be here next year.

**Mr BARTON:**—I would like to put that on the record and thank him and his team for their support.

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

**The CHAIRMAN:** We will resume with the non-Government members having the first time allotted, which is 15 minutes.

**Mr HORAN:** What was the value of property assets and cash being proceeds of crime that was seized by the Queensland Crime Commission from organised crime in 1998-99 and in 1999-2000?

**Mr BARTON:** In the financial year 1998-99 \$320,000 was seized, and that is included in the annual report of the Crime Commission for that year on page 25. In the financial year 1999-2000 \$2,300,000 was restrained, including cash of \$84,000 seized during raids. The Queensland Crime Commission's financial investigators assisted in the restraint of assets of \$300,000 as part of Operation Nickel/Gile, and the Queensland

Crime Commission also assisted the Office of Fair Trading in restraining \$1m during Operation Hibiscus. That is a total of—

**Mr HORAN:** What do you mean by "restraining"?

**Mr BARTON:** When we get to these technical terms, if the Crime Commissioner does not mind, I might let him explain precisely what he means. I just give this warning: if we get too deeply into operational issues I might have to—and I am sure the Crime Commissioner will before I do—call a halt to it.

**Mr HORAN:** I understand.

**Mr CARMODY:** "Restraint" refers to the proceeds or suspected proceeds of crime that are seized. They are yet to be processed through the courts. We obviously have to discharge the current burden of proof in respect of that before they can be forfeited to the Crown. So they are not confiscated assets; they are seized pending confiscation proceedings.

**Mr HORAN:** Can this Committee be advised of the number of offenders charged with matters to do with paedophilia, the number of charges and the relevant legislation under which they were charged, that is, the percentage charged under various pieces of legislation.

**Mr BARTON:** My understanding is that the number of offenders who have been charged for the year ending 30 June 2000 for criminal paedophilia is 21, the number of charges is 554 and the relevant legislation is the Criminal Code, the Classification of Computer Games and Images Act, the Drugs Misuse Act and the Weapons Act. I want to congratulate the Crime Commissioner and his team, because criminal paedophilia is a real scourge on our society that everyone in this room would agree needs to be stamped out.

The Crime Commission has put a huge effort into criminal paedophilia as well as its work on organised crime and major crime. Mr Horan, I think you would agree with me that charging 21 people with 554 offences is a very significant start for what is a fairly young organisation in terms of its work. In addressing organised criminal paedophilia, you really have to do your homework—and it is very intense, very intelligence based—before you can take those steps of charging people.

**Mr HORAN:** One thing that I wanted to ask you or the Crime Commissioner is: does the funding for the Queensland Crime Commission come directly from Treasury or via the Police budget?

**Mr BARTON:** It comes directly from Treasury. I think I am correct if I say that it is not included in the Police budget. It travels through the Police Service, but it is not included in the Police Service's budget. It is simply an administrative arrangement between the Crime Commission and the Police Service, the same as was put in place when the Crime Commission was initially developed.

In 2000-01, the service will administer funding of \$4.4m. The major elements of this funding—I am talking about the Police Service here—is the Queensland Crime Commission with \$4m, but that is the Crime Commission's budget. It is not the Police Service budget. Of course, the Prostitution Licensing Authority's funds are also administered by the Police Service for administrative reasons and economies of scale. You would appreciate that the Crime Commission is a very lean, mean fighting machine. If it had to administer its own budget administratively and financially, then that would take up a slice of that budget. Therefore, the Police Service performs that function for the Crime Commission rather than the Crime Commission having its own specialist employees in that area. In its initial stages at least, the Prostitution Licensing Authority will be managed in the same way.

**Mr HORAN:** Where are its funds this year?

**Mr BARTON:** Its funds come through separately as well, but it is administered by the Police Service.

**Mr HORAN:** Then will it be in the Budget papers next year?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes.

**Mr HORAN:** Is there a reason why it is not this year?

**Mr BARTON:** It should be a self-funding organisation. The seed funding has had to be put in there. As you would appreciate, we anticipate with the level of fees that have been set—bear in mind that we are talking about the PLA, not the Crime Commission, and the PLA is not here. The Prostitution Licensing Authority only opened four weeks ago, so we do not have any real experience with that yet. I would anticipate that, when we get to Budget estimates in 12 months time, there would be a separate section for the Prostitution Licensing Authority similar to what exists now for the Queensland Crime Commission.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, in relation to the quantity targets shown in the MPS, there are tactical operations, notices to attend and notices to produce. Tactical operations targets remain the same, notices to attend have

decreased and notices to produce have increased. Could you tell this Committee what each of those are, that is, notices to attend, notices to produce and so forth?

**Mr BARTON:** They mean essentially what they say. If the Crime Commissioner has no objections, I think it would be better if I passed that question to him. Essentially, my understanding is that notices to attend are people who are required to attend for hearings at the Crime Commission. Notices to produce are when the Crime Commissioner requires production of documents to him in line with the Act that governs the Queensland Crime Commission. In terms of the specifics of it, and to the extent that he can without offending any operational details, I will let the Crime Commissioner answer your questions in that regard.

**Mr CARMODY:** What the Minister says is right, Mr Horan. Notices to produce require the production of documents or things. Notices to attend require people to attend for examination as witnesses at the hearings.

**Mr HORAN:** The Crime Commission's budget for operating revenue has increased by \$35,000. However, there are actually six additional operational officers over and above the six additional police officers. I understand that the police officers are funded by the Police Department itself. At the very least, you have the additional salaries of six operational officers and a budget increase of \$35,000. How are you going to fund their salaries and wages? I notice that other things seem to have balanced out such as services and other items.

**Mr BARTON:** They come out of the budget of the Queensland Crime Commission.

**Mr CARMODY:** Last year there were a lot of vacancies that were filled. They were fully funded. They are funded in our budget papers for this year. It is just the timing rather than an expenditure item.

**Mr HORAN:** They might be starting in May or June next year.

**Mr CARMODY:** No, they have started. However, the funding for them was already in the budget but it was unexpended last year because the vacancies were not filled until later.

**Mr HORAN:** So it has been rolled over?

**Mr CARMODY:** Yes, that is right.

**Mr BARTON:** Do not tell Treasury.

**Mr CARMODY:** I think it was expended on capital and things such as that as well. There is no spare cash, Mr Horan.

**Mr HORAN:** What is the estimated value of the drug trade in Queensland and an estimate of how much of this is coming into Queensland from interstate or overseas?

**Mr BARTON:** I am happy to let the Crime Commissioner answer this, but I am not real sure that it is a Budget issue.

**Mr HORAN:** I am trying to look at the amount specified in the budget to combat the problem compared with the volume and the size of the problem.

**Mr BARTON:** As you are aware, we do not fund the drug trade through the Queensland Crime Commission. I am happy for the Crime Commissioner to give his answer, but I fail to understand how that has anything to do with the Budget estimates in front of us.

**Mr HORAN:** I am trying to judge the extent of the problem that we are trying to deal with and what funding we are providing as a State towards combating that problem.

**Mr BARTON:** I can assure you, Mr Horan, that we are providing more funding to the Queensland Crime Commission than your Government did when it was in office.

**Mr HORAN:** We put the Crime Commission in place, too, if you want to make a pithy point such as that.

**Mr BARTON:** I am simply saying, Mr Horan, that we are here to examine the budget of the Queensland Crime Commission, not to explore crime around the State. I have already said that I am happy to let the Crime Commissioner answer that, but I want to make this point: this is not a Budget matter. The longer you continue to banter with me, the more time we will waste. I will leave it to the Crime Commissioner to talk about that, but it is not a Budget issue, Mr Horan.

**Mr CARMODY:** Mr Horan, the value of the illicit drug trade in Queensland was dealt with in our first report on organised crime in Queensland, the Project Crystal report which was published last year. I cannot recall the precise figures, but I will give you some idea of the scale of things. In respect of heroin alone, I think it was valued at \$500m in Queensland on the basis of the number of users who used on a daily basis. Indications are that amphetamines are overtaking heroin as the illicit drug of choice. In respect of the second part of your question, heroin is almost in its entirety imported into Queensland from other States. In respect of amphetamines, there is a growing local manufacturing industry. The strategies in relation to both problems are slightly different because of the different character and extent.

**Mr HORAN:** With regard to organised crime, would you be able to give me an idea of the number of offenders and charges and the relevant Acts similar to my question about paedophilia?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes, but it increased from the time it went to print and when it was given to me. In organised crime, 65 persons have been charged. The number of charges is 392. Do you want the relevant legislation as you had before with organised paedophilia?

**Mr HORAN:** Yes, please.

**Mr BARTON:** It is under the Federal Crimes Act, under the Crimes (Confiscation of Profits) Act, under the Criminal Code, under the Drugs Misuse Act and under the Weapons Act. So again, for a small organisation—again, I stress: a lean, mean fighting machine—to have 392 charges against 65 offenders in this year demonstrates that the Crime Commission is working very, very effectively for the amount of money we do give it. It is working very effectively.

**Mr CARMODY:** Those results come from eight operations. They involve offences of violence, loan sharking, money laundering, organised burglary involving \$3m worth of property, and of course illicit drugs.

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

**Mrs MILLER:** Minister, with reference to the special statutory powers of the Queensland Crime Commission mentioned on page 2-1 of the MPS, can you detail in what instances the special investigative hearings powers of the QCC have been used?

**Mr BARTON:** The Queensland Crime Commission was established under the Crime Commission Act 1997. As indicated by Mr Horan, quite correctly, it was put in place by the previous Government as an enduring law enforcement agency to investigate criminal activity referred to it, in particular criminal paedophilia and major and organised crime. The Parliament has allocated statutory authority to the commission to enable law enforcement to be effective in combating organised and major crime and criminal paedophilia.

Of particular significance is the investigative hearings powers. Section 100(1) of the Act authorises the Queensland Crime Commission to conduct a hearing for investigative purposes. The Queensland Crime Commission does not require judicial or other external authority to conduct an investigative hearing. However, the issue of whether and on what terms such a hearing should be held is

subject to scrutiny by the management committee.

In assessing the use of the commission's statutory hearings powers, it needs to be remembered that the commission operates strictly on a referral basis only. It cannot just determine that it will go and do whatever it likes. The referrals come from the nine-member management committee. The mechanism introduces an important foil against the inappropriate exercise of the QCC's powers. The management committee may only refer matters to the commission under special circumstances where it is satisfied that investigations using ordinary police powers would not be effective and where the seriousness, extent and consequences of the activity warrant a Queensland Crime Commission investigation in the public interest. The Crime Commission's investigative hearings are aimed at eliciting evidence for the prosecution of persons involved in criminal activity that is not likely to be obtained using the powers and the methods ordinarily available to police or other law enforcement agencies.

There are certain hearings statistics that I think are relevant. The number of references involving investigative hearings to date are five on major crime areas, three on organised crime and one on criminal paedophilia. There are in fact nine major references at this point in time. The number of witnesses in the past year was 99. The number of hearing days was 68. It has been such a busy period of time. In fact, we did just recently appoint a Deputy Crime Commissioner so that we could let the Crime Commissioner have some holidays and keep going the number of investigative hearings that we need.

**Mr CARMODY:** I think it is important to make the point that of those five major crime investigations—they are matters which would not have been solved otherwise—there have been three arrests of people for murder who would otherwise not have been charged with it as a result of the hearings. They go back to 1989 matters.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Minister, as a mother of two school-age children I echo the views you stated earlier in relation to paedophiles being the scourge of society. I note that you did answer questions from Opposition members in relation to the charging of paedophiles by the Queensland Crime Commission, but my question relates to the use of the Internet by paedophiles. I note that the QCC has done research into this as part of Project Axis and paedophilia investigations mentioned on page



2-2 of the MPS. Minister, can you detail what successes the QCC has had with charging paedophiles who use the Internet?

**Mr BARTON:** There are currently two strategic projects and four tactical operations in place. We expect those to continue well into this financial year. The Internet investigation project is expected to generate a number of issues for tactical consideration in the future. Over the last two years the Crime Commission has forwarded relevant information to the Queensland Police Service that has resulted in 26 offenders being charged with over 700 offences.

The sorts of charges we are talking about range from supplying dangerous drugs, administering dangerous drugs, possession of dangerous drugs, indecent assaults, indecent dealing, indecent treatment of a boy under 16 and unlawful sodomy to permitting indecent dealing by a child, permitting sodomy, failing to render a firearm safe, and possession of a firearm without a licence. The bulk of those have been in the indecent dealing-type areas, and we are madly trying to stamp those out. Ongoing investigations into such matters, which are of great concern to our whole community, will result in additional charges being laid. We are very confident that that ongoing work is so far progressed that there will be a significant number of additional charges laid.

This important function is being conducted by the commission, focusing on certainly this Government's priorities and, in my view, the community's priorities and their need for a safe and more supportive community. In fact, this is an example of where the Queensland Crime Commission is value adding to the very good work that the Queensland Police Service is doing. There are a number of other very high-profile crimes in relation to which the standard investigative mechanisms simply cannot obtain the information.

The Crime Commission is doing work of that nature, and this is absolutely necessary when we come to the criminal paedophilia area. These people are very hard to dig out simply using normal investigative methods. I think the fact that the Crime Commission has forwarded information that has allowed 26 people to be charged with over 700 offences in that area speaks for itself.

One person alone, a serial sex offender, was charged with 229 offences—two offences of assault occasioning bodily harm, two offences of indecent dealing with a boy under 16 and 225 offences of indecent treatment of

a boy under 16. That is one person. It was very important that that one person be put away. There are a few people like him out there. In the past adults had to protect their children from wild animals. These days we have to protect our children from wild animals of the human kind. The Crime Commission's value-adding work to the Queensland Police Service has been very valuable to date in that organised paedophilia area.

**Mr CARMODY:** Especially in respect of the Internet we have an ongoing covert operation, which we have reported on in Axis, which involves a proactive surfing of the Net—virtually, if you like, patrolling the Net. Like highway police patrol the motorways for speedsters, we are there ensuring that we monitor the activities of suspected paedophiles. Also, we make sure that we enforce the laws in respect of child abuse computer games and the sale, distribution and exchange of child pornography. Where it is necessary we report to other countries because, as you can appreciate, there are no boundaries in respect of the use of the Internet, and a lot of child pornography comes from overseas.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Just a very short question; I don't have much time left. In your budget papers you talk about money laundering. Can you detail to us what steps the QCC has taken in regard to white-collar crime? We seem to be able to catch the blue-collar crims. What are we doing to put a few more white-collar crims in a peter? They tend to get away with a lot more than the blue-collar blokes ever would dream of getting away with.

**Mr BARTON:** I will try to be brief with you. The Crime Commission has an operation, Project Faber, commenced in December 1999. It is focused on identifying the facilitators of money laundering pursuant to a reference known as Gatekeeper, which is one of the references that the management committee has given to the Crime Commission. It continually collects and collates intelligence in relation to individuals suspected of facilitating this activity, and it says "typically lawyers, etc." There are a number who have been targeted. It is a tactical project. For argument's sake, the types of resources we are applying to that are the Crime Commission's intelligence analyst, the assistant intelligence analyst, the financial investigator, police investigators and a research officer. Without going into too much of the specific details, you are quite correct that if it is the young thug from down the road who goes and knocks over a heap of houses, while that is difficult enough for police to address, it is straightforward policing. When we

are dealing with the white-collar criminals, we are dealing with some of the most intelligent people on earth using the best resources on earth and some of the best connections on earth to try to hide their activities. The Crime Commission is fighting fire with fire in terms of dealing with those issues. I don't know whether Tim wants to briefly add to that, because he is the person directing the traffic in terms of that area.

**Mr CARMODY:** The Crime Commission's own sense of purpose really is focused heavily on its ability to deal with financial crime. The police have been dealing with drugs and other forms of criminality well for many years, and the last thing we wanted to do was get in their way, so we had to find an area on the law enforcement pitch that was in need of focused attention. Financial crime and money laundering was chosen as an area of heavy impact in the criminality sphere that wasn't getting dedicated and comprehensive treatment. We have enhanced financial analysis capabilities and competence. We have advertised for a Manager of Financial Crime Investigations. We have formed public and private partnerships with financial institutions and banks. We share information with the banks from the financial institutions and credit providers. We exchange training for forensic competencies in accounting, and we have joint efforts to ensure that there is a control on credit and Internet crime in the commercial area. Obviously we deal only with the organised frauds and financial offences.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thanks. As the time allotted for the Crime Commission has finished, I will just make one comment. You should target a few more bank managers. Given what they are charging in interest at the moment, you ought to be jailing the lot of them! We now have an hour or a little bit more set aside for Corrective Services.

**Mr BARTON:** Could I just thank Mr Carmody and his team for being here. I know the hard work that they put into making sure that we had the answers to just about everything that could have been asked on the Crime Commission, and I am sure we are all better people for going through that regime of studying and working it all out. Thank you, Tim, and your team. We will just swap over and get you some prison people to talk to.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Non-Government members will lead off with the first block of 20 minutes.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, I would like to thank your staff again for the delay to enable me to attend a funeral. The Corrective Services

capital works budget for 1999-2000 was \$119.56m. How much of this was spent?

**Mr BARTON:** Very clearly—and someone will hand me the brief so I can give you exact figures—we have come very close to expending the full amount that was there. You may recall, certainly during the period of Government of the coalition, that each year it seemed that when we would get the Budget Estimates from the previous year there was something in the order of \$43m or \$44m that had not been expended. This year we had a target budget of \$117.765m. We did actually expend \$105.542m. That represents 90% of the total year's budget. I am assured that that is the best performance that has been achieved in Corrections in terms of spending the capital outlays budget that people can remember since anyone who is around currently has been involved. So our underspend was approximately 10% or \$12.223m.

While we would have preferred to have expended it all, I think some of the reasons for the underspend are understandable, because Maryborough Correctional Centre's construction was deliberately slowed down, and that reduced the expenditure potential from \$14m to \$8.5m, so it was \$5.5m below the target. There had been—and there still is—a slowing of offender numbers compared with what we had projected, and for that reason we did pull back the major starting date of construction at Maryborough, and we have in fact slowed down for this financial year as well our expenditure at Maryborough. So there had been, to some degree, a deliberate underspend at Maryborough, simply because there has been a slowdown in that rapid increase in offender numbers and prisoner numbers. We didn't see a lot of sense in having a centre ready, had we continued with the construction timetable we had in place, with not enough people to put into it.

With Capricornia, the new centre at Rockhampton, the contractor has been unable to achieve full expenditure, and in fact that contractor is \$3m below target. That is something that we are not particularly happy about. When someone wins the tender and it is the first time they are back in prison construction for a while, I thought they would have been well in front, but sadly, they are well behind. Similarly with Sir David Longland Correctional Centre's maximum security unit, there has been very poor performance from the contractor on site there, and that contractor is \$3m below target as well.

As well as that, I must say that there were some savings on several other projects. Savings are always good to achieve. We are not very happy with underspends; we would rather have expended the funding, but that is where it has been.

**Mr HORAN:** I refer to question on notice No. 14 regarding the equity return for the Department of Corrective Services. The estimated equity return for this current financial year is \$33.01m. The answer to the question details how it is established at 6% of the actual net asset value at the end of each fiscal quarter throughout the year, but then goes on to say that it was fully funded in 1999-2000 and then says it is also included in the funding estimated for each programmed asset acquisition in 2000-01 as detailed in the Capital Acquisition Statement on page 3-27 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements for the department. This really gets back to what you were saying in answering this question in the Police Estimates, where you said that it was part of the funding for each individual capital asset. That is really, as I understand it, what the Department of Corrective Services is saying. So is the equity return being funded here as part of the funds for each of these individual items listed under plant, property and equipment on page 3-27?

**Mr BARTON:** I will throw to our financial controller in a minute. Let me make this very clear, because we have been chasing this rabbit around considerably this afternoon in terms of the police and apparently the bunny's back in action again. I want to make it very clear. It is budget neutral in the year 1999-2000. It will be budget neutral again this year in terms of the equity return. As to precisely how it is funded within that, I will throw to Evan, but it is an issue that is Budget neutral for us. We anticipate, as it occurred in the last financial year, that it is a transaction where funding comes to us and the funding goes back out. We anticipate it will be budget neutral to us this year. But I will throw it to our financial expert.

**Mr KLATT:** The equity return is based on our expectation as to when the capital projects come on stream and the calculation then works the 6% as explained in the note. The Operating Statement for the department, for example, on page 3-30 shows it as an income item; under Output Revenue it is included in the \$350m and then further down it is shown as an operating expense, equity return of \$24m for 2000-01. The calculations are linked together as—

**Mr HORAN:** Sorry, where was the \$24m?

**Mr KLATT:** In the Operating Statement under "Operating Expenses", which is the second major heading, the fifth line down "Equity Return".

**Mr HORAN:** It is listed there as \$33.01m.

**Mr KLATT:** Sorry, you are right. I was reading the wrong line—\$33.01m. The funding for that is included in Output Revenue at the top of the page.

**Mr HORAN:** In the \$350m?

**Mr KLATT:** In the \$350m. It is an in-and-out figure—the same. We are allowed to spend what Treasury gives us.

**Mr HORAN:** But it is coming to you, where it comes in it comes as a part of each of these particular projects?

**Mr KLATT:** It is calculated based on those projects, yes.

**Mr HORAN:** Roughly, if a project is \$100m you have funded \$106m for it, so that you have got—or \$105m depending on the net change—

**Mr KLATT:** The capital statement has only the capital cost of the project. The equity return is included in this part of the statement.

**Mr HORAN:** So there is no equity in the capital statement.

**Mr KLATT:** That is correct.

**Mr BARTON:** All done?

**Mr HORAN:** Yes. Minister, in question on notice No. 17 you advised that 27% of prisoners in secure centres and 23% in open custody are employed in commercial industries and target import replacement projects to avoid taking the work of outside companies. Could you detail some of these import replacement projects that you are undertaking and at which prison?

**Mr BARTON:** Well, again, I just want to be a little bit cautious in terms of how much detail we give on the individual projects, but at the new centre at Wolston there are a significant number of prisoners who are employed in the metal fabrication, paint, powder coating and assembly units. We have reached a commercial arrangement with a company for a product that they are exporting.

I know from my experiences as a union official before I came into Parliament that at times I would have not only members of unions and union leaders coming to me who saw their members' jobs being at threat from prison industries, and at other times I would have private companies coming to me for assistance to say, "Look, this is an area where prisons are starting to encroach on to our

traditional business and if this continues it could cause our company to fail and that will cause X number of jobs to be lost." It is always a very difficult balance to find that right balance to give inmates of correctional centres proper work to do, that gives them training programs, that gives them skills for when they go back out without running the risk of treading on employers around the areas where the prisons are.

The sector at Wolston—and I am not sure whether you visited it and had a look—I know that the Corrective Services Department would love to show it to you—we had a very significant new industry base put in there and in fact 260 of the 380 inmates of that correctional centre who have jobs are working on that project. They are fabricating components. It is a metal industry shop, for want of a better term. They are directly involved in all manner of metal fabrication; they are involved in painting, they are involved in powder coating, they are involved in the assembly of subunits. That is the major one.

The expanded Woodford Correctional Centre will also have similar concepts for joinery, textiles and packaging and assembling capacity and the new Capricornia Correctional Centre, the replacement centre for Rockhampton, will have timber manufacturing, metal fabrication and training capacity. At Townsville we are reaching understandings with the Health Department in terms of our laundry facilities for Townsville that is not a threat to other laundry industries.

So we have gone right out of our way, in rounding off, to make sure that we are not a threat. That one at Wolston is by far the biggest and the newest in terms of doing deals where we are simply providing components for an export industry conjointly with a manufacturer.

**Mr HORAN:** You mentioned the slowing down of the Maryborough prison construction during last financial year and again during this financial year. Are there any financial penalties under the terms of the contract for that slowing down?

**Mr BARTON:** No. In terms of the slowing down, we had very consciously not awarded contracts when we became aware that we were likely to not need that centre at the earliest possible date. There are not any penalties. I think—

**Mr HORAN:** What was that? What did you say? There are—

**Mr BARTON:** There are not any penalties because we had not actually awarded any contracts at that point in time. So we

deliberately did not award any contracts and the actual management of that site is being conducted by the Department of Public Works for us. So it is not as though we have a major construction authority that could also have been disadvantaged in that regard. We are doing that one substantially ourselves. It was really a question of holding back the initial contracts in that regard because there had been that slow-down in the rapid rise of prisoner numbers.

**Mr HORAN:** What was the number of prisoners in custodial centres during 1998-99 and during 1999-2000, and can you also detail the cost per prisoner in secure and open custody for both of these years?

**Mr BARTON:** I will get you the cost per prisoner in a second, but the monthly average—and, as you would appreciate, this is a figure that moves around a bit and in trying to be definitive it is a bit like trying to predict where they will be in about in 12 months' time. It is a little bit of a black art, I must say. In June 2000 we had 4,520 inmates in secure custody, so that is a 4% decrease. In June 1999 we had had 4,715, whereas in June 1998 it had been 4,504. So there had been a rise and then a drop back almost to where it had been.

Our estimate for June 2001—the end of this financial year—is that it would be 4,882. However, I want to stress that that is after looking at the trends, and you look at a whole range of policing trends as well as our own trend in trying to reach those conclusions. The cost per day—if I come to that for 1999-2000—was \$167.65. We anticipate that that cost will rise to \$184.75. That is a continuing escalating cost. However, I should also point out that the cost also has increased because of the very fact that we have got the new centres open. That opening of the new centres has meant that we have effectively "dedoubled" the correctional centres in this State. What we inherited were vastly overcrowded centres that had huge percentages of double-ups simply because of the huge increases in inmate numbers. So the very fact is that we have, in fact, opened major new centres. We have also closed one of the oldest and most inefficient centres in Moreton A, but that has meant an increased per head of prisoners because while you are simply hurling them in at two to a cell instead of one to a cell then, in fact, your costs are artificially low.

But we have done a lot of work with Treasury in that regard. The method of calculation of the 1999-2000 estimated actuals and 2000-01 figures has been changed so

that they now align with the total State contribution for the output—and that is a more relevant figure—by including more indirect costs such as head office costs and the equity return. So that in part has artificially inflated that cost per prisoner as well.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, Capricornia and Woodford will be completed this year. What will be the total prisoner capacity of Queensland's secure custody centres and open custody centres at that point—once those two are both open?

**Mr BARTON:** We will give you an exact figure in a second. Of course, the new Woodford expansion is a 400-cell expansion just at that one correctional centre alone. We are building 400 cells at Capricornia to replace something in the order of 250 at the old one. The capacity at 30 June 2000 in secure custody is 4,296; open custody is 707. So that totals 5,003. We have Woodford coming on line, as I have mentioned, with 400 additional cells. In Rockhampton, that will equate to about 200 additional cells—or 150 odd. I am just trying to think of the exact numbers. The new centre is 400. Again, we do not have the figure and I am a little bit reluctant to quote figures unless I am sure of the exact number. My recollection is that the Rockhampton centre is about 256 plus the new wing that we had opened, which will remain. So Rockhampton will be a little over 500 total compared to the 350-odd total now. I think that we actually pick up about 150 additional cells at Rockhampton; certainly 400 at Woodford. So during this financial year, we will be commissioning in the order of something like 550 additional cells. At Rockhampton, it is plus 170. I was not too far off when I said 150; it is 170.

We have not made a decision about Moreton B. Depending on what happens with numbers, at some point we need to make a decision about whether we continue to operate the Moreton B Correctional Centre. We have not made a decision in that regard as yet. We may well close Moreton B if we do not get run over with a huge increase in inmate numbers. The last thing that we want to do is to go back to having double-ups in the correctional centres, because that makes it not only uncomfortable for the inmates but it makes it very potentially dangerous for our staff. As well, it creates tensions which lead to a higher incidence of problems in correctional centres. So we know full well that we have got fewer problems in the centres now because of that D-doubling capacity as those new cells have come on line. I think that we have commissioned something in the order of 1,300 cells in the two-year period. We will

commission another 550 this financial year. Of course, we have Maryborough at 500 under construction as well, but I do not anticipate that coming on line until some time in 2002.

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, what were the number of escapes and absconds from Queensland's custodial centres in 1998-99 and 1999-2000?

**Mr BARTON:** I am glad you asked me that question.

**Mr HORAN:** I knew you would be.

**Mr BARTON:** As soon as I get the exact figures, I will give them to you.

**Mr HORAN:** Do you think you will be at it for 10 minutes?

**Mr BARTON:** What I can say is that that is another splendid example of: if that is your best shot, you should go looking for live rounds. In secure custody, the escapes under escort has been two. In 1998-99 it was nil. Escapes from open perimeter centres has been 13. But this compares with escapes and absconds during the period of time that the coalition was in office of 22 and 19. So we are way, way, way below the figure when you were a Minister in a coalition Government in this State. We have had a total of 27 escapes or absconds from secure and open custody during our two years compared with 55 escapes and absconds under the coalition. In other words, they have halved. Fourteen of the escapes under the coalition were from secure custody. Only two during Labor's period of office were, and they were not from the centres themselves; that is while they were under escort. You will recall that one managed to get away when he was at the PA Hospital for some treatment and the other one managed to run away from a Community Corrections Board hearing through an unlocked door. We have simply changed the provisions for that.

Our rate compares to Australia's very, very well. The national average is 1.33. Queensland's is 0.67. In other words, we are virtually half of the rate for escapes and absconds compared to the national average. Essentially—and I hate to tell you—when the coalition was there, you were about on the national average. We have pulled it back to half the national average. We intend to keep it there. There will not be any more Brendon Abbott fun runs while we are in control of the State's correctional centres.

**Mr HORAN:** I suppose you would like to thank the coalition Government for building all of those new perimeters and making the

prisons secure so that you inherited a safe system.

**Mr BARTON:** Most of which were constructed and put in place during the two years of the Beattie Labor Government. You promised; we delivered.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I think the Government's allotted time has just about arrived.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I refer to page 3-2 of the MPS, which refers to the trial of electronic monitoring. Can the Minister advise how the trial will operate and what are the benefits to Government and what the objectives of the trial are?

**Mr BARTON:** Thank you very much for the question, because this is a program that is one that I have been pushing very, very firmly since I had a good look at the operations in Sweden last year and a good look at the operations in New South Wales. We have a trial that will cost \$1.324m over three years. The estimated cost savings per offender per day is \$82 per day, which is based on the difference between the costs for a prisoner in open custody to one at the home monitoring system, and that is compared to open custody. If it is a cost compared to secure custody, then, in fact, the savings are much, much higher again.

The trial will take up to 50 prisoners at a time. It will assess the effectiveness of home detention orders with electronic monitoring for improved surveillance. The trial will enable earlier diversion of prisoners to home detention whilst ensuring that they are able to be constantly monitored. The system involves convicted persons remaining at home except for the time they are permitted to be away. For example, a person may be permitted to leave home for employment, training, health care, program participation, commuting or shopping necessities. In relation to people in detention who have parental responsibilities, it is not uncommon for their management program to allow them to leave for a certain period to take children to school and also to collect children in the afternoon. There might be a particular defined time when they can go shopping or, if they have jobs, a defined time to go to and from work. Some systems are even more sophisticated. In New South Wales they can basically check that they are going where they are supposed to go, for example, by tracking them when they are using public transport through monitoring set-ups in stations.

The prisoners will be required to wear the electronic anklets 24 hours a day. The high-tech anklets send signals to a central computer monitored by community corrections

officers. If the prisoner attempts to interfere with the anklet in any shape or form, an alarm will notify the monitoring office and this will provide community corrections boards with greater confidence to give inmates home detention rather than leaving them in a form of secure custody. We think that is better for the whole system of graduated release. It is safer for the community, because anyone who is borderline and is on home detention can be monitored; if they play up, they can be hauled back in very, very quickly. It is a positive program.

Some people have expressed the view to me that this is too much like Big Brother. I think people would rather wear an anklet and be at home or working than be in a secure custody cell. The Swedish experiment very much showed that people who had been through that process are happy with it. But with the old-time offenders you are wasting your time. We will be very selective as to whom we include in this trial.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer you to pages 3-25 and 3-26 of the MPS. Can you please indicate the number of jobs that will be created through the commissioning of new jails and where these jails will be located?

**Mr BARTON:** I am pleased you asked this question, because obviously the job creation component is very important to us as a Government. This portfolio has certainly assisted in creating a large number of jobs for Queensland. We wish we did not have to build prisons and have more prison officers. However, the construction phase is very important. The Sir David Longland Correctional Centre maximum security unit will employ 20.7 additional full-time employees. These have already been allocated from the relocation of staff from Moreton A as part of the Government's commitment that no full-time officer would lose their job.

The Woodford Correction Centre expansion by 400 cells will create another 172.4 full-time positions. That will be another economic boost for the Woodford/Caboolture area. The Capricornia Correctional Centre will require an additional 86 full-time employees over and above the numbers that we anticipate will be transferred across. Of those currently under construction, 90% of the construction procurement packages have been sourced in Queensland. I am referring to the new Capricornia Corrections Centre at Rockhampton. Some 45% of that 98% sourced in Queensland is from central Queensland.

In Townsville there are three full-time employees to deliver the Culturally Specific Indigenous Sex Offenders Treatment Program that we will start this year. Operations Support will have a further full-time employee in Brisbane. So 233 full-time jobs will be created, and many of those will be in regional Queensland. That is just in terms of the improvements from an operations perspective that we have made. The infrastructure for the jobs will contribute to the economic stability of those regions. That does not include the jobs created during construction. In the construction of those new facilities we created 1,450 job years in 1999-2000. This year, 2000-01, we will create 1,660 job years in the construction of those new facilities. We are not exactly having a prison-led recovery, but the prisons are certainly providing a substantial boost to development in Queensland in those areas, and I can understand why there was such competition for prison sites to be located in various areas. I note one member of the Committee is smiling at the moment. Sadly, Lawrence, yours missed out. But those other areas are very happy with the progress that has been made.

**The CHAIRMAN:** They would have been handy for picking olives.

**Mr SPRINGBORG:** Maybe we can get the next one.

**Mr BARTON:** You should certainly try.

**The CHAIRMAN:** In relation to the work camps in flooded areas mentioned on page 3-16 of the MPS, can you detail the benefits to the community where these camps are operating and how this initiative has been received by these local communities?

**Mr BARTON:** Certainly, the work camps are one of the success stories of Queensland's correctional system since they were started back in 1990 initially, I think, following the floods in Charleville. I know that Glen Milliner was directly involved and Terry Mackenroth—

**The CHAIRMAN:** We went on an inspection there at that time. They impressed me then and I just want to see whether they are still doing the work they were designed to do.

**Mr BARTON:** They certainly are. We had dreadful floods again this year in Longreach, Winton and Aramac. Prior to that time the Community Cabinet had been out there helping the locals pray for rain. I think we did too good a job. Following that disastrous flood, I asked the department to investigate the possibility of providing prison labour to those areas through the work program. Three camps were established in the towns of Longreach,

Mttaburra and Winton. The cost to set up those camps since March 2000 was \$124,748, but since March the prisoners completed 3,787 hours of work valued at \$42,982. Up to this point in time, those three camps are still in operation. Each camp has nine prisoners and one supervisor. They are mainly repairing fences damaged in the flood. The camps are based on private farms and housed in what were old or existing shearing quarters that are not being used for those purposes. A community advisory committee made up of local council representatives, Department of Primary Industries, police and Corrective Services officers oversees those.

I am sure that the coalition members support the program. I certainly know that the member for Gregory, whose area bore the brunt of that flood, has been very supportive both in the Parliament and in writing to me applauding the initiative that my department was able to follow through in that area. The work program in the central west has been able to assist with the rebuilding on many of those properties that suffered flood damage. I am pleased to say that the work camps overall—I think we have 15 of them in Queensland; that is, without these three special ones where essentially some of the resources from the existing work camps were diverted to assist the flood damaged areas—have been a great success. Any people who call for mandatory sentencing or want people to be locked up should really have a look at the people involved in the work camps in western Queensland. I think they will find that there are a lot of people out there who made a mistake and who are contributing very positively to their communities. They will be better people when they finish their terms.

**Mrs MILLER:** On page 3-8 of the MPS mention is made of the contract for the operation of the Borallon Correctional Centre. Can the Minister advise of steps taken to achieve greater accountability from the private sector in the management of correctional centres?

**Mr BARTON:** Yes, I certainly can. But before I do that I should say that whenever you make an error you should express your error to the Parliament. I have to express an error. It has just been pointed out to me that I had a typo in my briefing material. The number of full-time operations jobs in Queensland is not 233, it is 282. So it is actually nearly 50 more. I wish I could make errors like that more often and create another 50 jobs more often.

The Borallon Correctional Centre was the first of the privately operated centres in this

State and the first in the nation. Its current contract expires in September this year. The Corrections Corporation of Australia, which is a wholly owned American company, has operated the centre since 1989, when it first opened. Four companies were invited to tender for a five-year contract to operate the centre. They were the existing contractors, CCA; Australasian Correctional Management, which also operates Arthur Gorrie for us currently; Group 4, which operates a centre in Victoria; and the Management and Training Corporation. I recently announced that the Management and Training Corporation, or MTC, is the preferred tenderer. We are currently working through those tender arrangements with MTC. It is not final that it will be MTC, but they have reached that position of being the preferred tenderer with what was evaluated by an independent group as being the best proposal that had been put to us from the four organisations.

I must stress that all wages staff must be retained by the new operator for at least six months. There is a major effort by the Department of Corrective Services to tighten up the contracts for privately run centres. Currently private operators are paid for 100% occupancy even if they have much less than 100% occupancy. The new contracts will be much more performance based. There will be base funding for 70% occupancy plus a daily rate for each prisoner over the 70% benchmark. Currently the department pays for all property management costs, for example, water, electricity and gas. Under the new contract the operator will pay for these, giving a greater incentive for them to effectively manage the site rather than burn the lights, run the taps or the gas simply because it is free.

Also, the new contract provides that profits from industry above the operator's industry contribution must be returned to the Government in line with the International Labour Organisation's conventions. We are technically in breach of ILO conventions at this point with the existing contract arrangements. Currently all of those revenues are profit for the private company. The new contract provides for a \$500,000 performance bonus over each year only if the operator meets or exceeds key performance benchmarks. The operator will also risk losing \$100,000 of this bonus for each serious incident of escape, death from unnatural causes or riot.

Currently the Government has no control over staffing levels. Under the new contract the Government will be aware of every position on

every shift and can hold the operator to those levels. If you indulge me, I will just finish this.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Okay.

**Mr BARTON:** The department has set new national benchmarks in the standard of contracts for privately run prisons. Already the New South Wales Government is looking at our new contractual standards with a view to adopting them for its own use. I think it is fair to say that the rest of Australia followed Queensland into private prison operations. We have two currently under private operators. We are setting new benchmarks this time around, because there has not been an open tendering process since the very beginning and it is time it happened. We are setting new standards that the rest of the country is watching very closely.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I will preface this question by saying that I have a vested interest in this answer. Could you please provide details to the Committee of the Community Service Enforcement and Enhancement Pilot Project? How many people work in this area and how many offenders do these staff supervise? With our new officer in charge at Morningside, Senior Sergeant Barry Bullion, we are having a bit of an attack on graffiti at the moment. I have every neighbourhood watch wanting to volunteer; I have paint companies wanting to give me paint; I have painters who want to be in it, but I need to know how good the supervision is going to be and how many troops we can get.

**Mr BARTON:** I think you are setting national best practice out there again, Mr Chairman. I have no doubt that we will have a lot of other people wanting to emulate what you are doing in your immediate area. You are quite correct. This can only work if there is appropriate supervision, and that is something that we have been very keen to make sure occurs with any of our open custody type operations.

The total funding will be \$2.4m over four years. It is special project funding of \$600,000 per annum for four years, and the project commenced in December 1999. There is a pilot program in the metropolitan community corrections region funded to improve outcomes of the community service program. The project has employed a manager, an adviser and 15 casual community service field supervisors who have been operational since February 2000. The supervisors engage in on-site supervision of offenders at the projects. We no longer just leave it to the sponsoring organisations. We have actually stiffened it up because we do want the community to have



faith in the community service options so that we have fewer arguments about whether people should be sentenced to prison terms instead of intensive community service orders.

The aim of the project is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of community supervision and as a result increase community and judicial confidence in the community service program. We expect that the outcome will increase the use of community service as a sentencing option where appropriate and thereby divert offenders from secure custody. A lot of those people, frankly, do deserve that chance of not being put behind bars.

The project is guided by the interdepartmental stakeholder steering committee, including representatives from Premier and Cabinet, Treasury, a magistrate, police, ATSI legal service and the Department of Corrective Services community corrections section. There are eight area offices in the region which engage the services of the supervisors. They are in Brisbane North, Brisbane South, Brisbane West, Redcliffe, Cleveland, Inala, Pine Rivers and Wynnum—and, of course, one of those covers your electorate, Mr Chairman. The casual field supervisors follow up an average of 1,500 offenders a month who have been directed to attend community service. Offenders are visited at their home on any day that they fail to attend community service and are taken to the project by the supervisor. Visits to community service projects by supervisors average 650 per month.

The member for Warwick has also spoken in the media about the fact that fine defaulters and minor offenders should not be in prison. We agree with him. This is a project that is all about a range of initiatives, such as this one, making that a reality. Data is being collected on both the qualitative and quantitative aspects in order to facilitate an evaluation. The first stage is going really well and we expect it to be a model for the future.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I refer to page 3-21 of the MPS. Will the Minister please provide details on the Court Advisory Service mentioned on that page and outline to the Committee what the trial aims to achieve both in terms of prisoner numbers and sentencing patterns of the judiciary?

**Mr BARTON:** This again is another one of the projects that we have put into place to try to divert offenders away from secure custody when it is really not appropriate for them to be in secure custody. Special project funding of \$200,000 for a one-year pilot commenced in

December last year. \$60,000 had been spent as at 30 June this year. The court liaison officers liaise with magistrates, judges and other stakeholders to provide information on community corrections, options and processes. We believe it increases the effectiveness of communications between the courts and community corrections. That gives greater confidence in the court to the stakeholders, especially magistrates and judges, with the community corrections processes. If the community can see that our community corrections actually works, that will be reflected by the judiciary in the sentences they give rather than people being put into secure custody for minor offences. It results in increased use of community based orders as sentencing options—again, where appropriate—and diverts suitable offenders from that custody.

During the five-month period from February to June 2000, court liaison officers conducted 184 assessments of offenders prior to sentencing. The average breach rate of all offenders prior to the commencement of this project was 43%. Of the 259 offenders assessed and sentenced to a community based order since the implementation of this project, 70% have successfully completed their orders. The breach rate has been reduced, therefore, from 43% to 30% simply by having better supervision in the field.

A project team was established and maintains networks with key stakeholder groups including magistrates, police, prosecutors and legal practitioners. Information sessions are conducted at annual conferences held by magistrates and police. The project plan includes distribution of monthly information sheets to stakeholders to increase knowledge of and confidence in community corrections. Statistics are being kept on both qualitative and quantitative aspects of the project and measures of the increase in levels of knowledge and confidence on the part of stakeholders. This Government is taking real steps to divert minor offenders from prisons. We have heard a lot of rhetoric from other people, but we have not just made promises; we have gone out and put it into place. The project will be evaluated in October 2000. From there, if it is successful, we will take it forward from that point.

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

**Mr HORAN:** Minister, how many sex offenders are in custody in Queensland jails? What percentage of those completed a sexual

offenders program? Also, on average, what percentage would have completed it on release?

**Mr BARTON:** I will give you that as soon as we dig the actual figures out. Let me tell you the costs of the program and the numbers that those program costs can cover while we wait. Before I do that, let us look at sex offenders. This year we are putting into place a new Sexual Offenders Treatment Program at the Townsville Correctional Centre which is primarily aimed at indigenous sex offenders. Some \$613,000 is allocated in the budget for that. We anticipate having the first program under that new regime running in January/February of next year. We estimate a minimum of 24 completing the program in the first 12 months and up to 36 completing the program in the full period of time.

There are currently 176 indigenous sex offenders in custody. We are certainly not going to get to all of them with that program. A major weakness in the system up until now has been that the Sex Offenders Treatment Program has only been capable of being run in the south-east corner. That has been a barrier to many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander sex offenders because they do not like to be too far away from their traditional areas.

There is another problem with sex offenders which relates to one reason we are proposing to change the remissions issue. A large percentage of sex offenders have taken the view that they did not do it. They have refused to accept their offending behaviour. They sit it out for two-thirds of their sentence and then they are automatically released, and that still occurs under the current system. We have changed that process. If our legislation is accepted by the Parliament, there will now be a higher test. For those people to get out of jail, they have to be judged not to be a risk to the community. If they have kept their noses clean for the period of their sentence but offend again after their release, they will come straight back to jail for the remainder of the previous sentence as well as the new sentence for whatever offence they committed. Many of those people do not undergo offenders' programs even if there are programs available simply because they refuse to accept their offending behaviour. The total annual cost for sex offender programs is \$446,398, that is, \$399,218 for custodial and \$47,180 for community costs. That provides an intensive intervention and maintenance program for 298 offenders per year.

**Mr HORAN:** How many sex offenders are in jail? That was the question. Can you provide that to me?

**Mr BARTON:** We will take that on notice. People have been doing the trawl while I have been answering. We do not have that figure here with us. We will take that on notice and give you that figure. Again, we are pretty confident that we can pull that figure out; we will get it to you as soon as we can.

**Mr HORAN:** With regard to community corrections, I see that staff numbers are estimated to increase by seven from 446 in this budget. With the pilots for the drug courts, the anklet system and the possibility of a new Act being passed through Parliament in whole or in part, is that going to be sufficient? Community corrections staff are already under pretty intense pressure at the moment. They are somewhat the forgotten section of the service. Seven seems to be a very low increase when there is an increasing concentration on community corrections and possibly people being released from jail under certain restrictions.

**Mr BARTON:** Again, people will find the relevant briefs for me, but I want to make this point: when we came to Government community corrections were the poor cousin of corrections in this State. There were an enormous number of problems in terms of morale in all of the community corrections offices around the State. The previous Government had made it well known that it was putting the whole lot out to tender. It intended to put it in the hands of the private sector or community organisations. Morale was through the floor because everybody believed that they were likely to lose their jobs or that they would not have ongoing employment as employees of Queensland Corrections, even though the department was not in existence then.

We immediately put on hold the market testing of community corrections and said to all of those people that we had instituted a review. The review was chaired by Frank Peach. He and his team did that review. After that review, we then made a decision that we would keep community corrections as a Government entity. Not only did I put the market test on hold but, as I said, we threw that concept away. Community corrections will be part of Q Corr. It will be part of the department. People working in it will have security in their employment. They were also very badly paid compared with people with equivalent responsibilities and levels of qualification in the rest of the public sector. We

put them into the professional stream of the Public Service, which effectively gave them increased salary levels as well as that employment security they had been missing.

As a Government we have a commitment to enhancing community corrections. We have already taken very major steps with community corrections in terms of the ones I mentioned previously. We have increased the numbers. We have those trial programs working in the court system such as the one operating in the Chairman's electorate with supervision from community corrections. We have additional people. Yes, it may be only a small increase, but it is an increase at a time when, under the previous administration, the whole thing would have been torn up and thrown away had there not been a change in Government.

We are certainly going to be putting some additional pressure on community corrections to deliver enhanced performance. We are backing that up with some additional people. We are backing it up with resources. We have backed it up with job security and salary increases. Overall, I am very confident that community corrections will be capable of handling that very big job we have for them. The Director-General would like to add to that.

**Mr PEACH:** Mr Horan, as with prisoner numbers, at this stage we are predicting a somewhat slowing down of the rate of growth in community corrections. However, the formula we have with Treasury is based on actual numbers. If the numbers go up during the year, Treasury will provide us with additional funds for additional numbers. It is an estimate at this stage. We are estimating that things will stay steady and not increase rapidly, but we will get extra numbers if they are needed.

**Mr HORAN:** But you were predicting that secure custody would go up by about 300.

**Mr PEACH:** Yes, that is right. However, compared with recent years, that is a very slow increase.

**Mr BARTON:** I made the comment earlier that it is a black art in trying to work out where prisoner numbers will go. Some initiatives we have put in place should lower prisoner numbers. We anticipate that some initiatives we have put in place such as bringing in DNA may increase prisoner numbers. The change from remissions to a system of conditional release will also slightly increase the numbers in our correctional centres.

The funding arrangements that are detailed in the Ministerial Portfolio Statement both for secure custody and for open custody such as community corrections are based on

our projections. It is not a question of us projecting at the beginning of the year and Treasury giving us the funds exactly in line with that prediction. There are formulas in place between the department and Treasury. If there is a big blow-out in prisoner numbers, we get additional funding from Treasury to cover those costs. If we have a reduction in prisoner numbers, then Treasury gets its pound of flesh back. Otherwise we would be in a lottery, hoping like hell that we had the money to run the centres. If in fact we overpredicted and got the money for higher numbers than we actually had, then we would have a nice little cash flow tucked away in a hollow log somewhere to do all sorts of other things. As you are aware from your period as Health Minister, Treasury in this State does not let you do things like that.

**Mr HORAN:** In the recent tender for the private management of the Borallon prison, what were the criteria and what was the percentage of points for each of those criterion upon which the decision was made? Was there any probity auditor appointed through the process and who was that probity auditor?

**Mr BARTON:** I will get the detail on precisely who the probity auditor was. This is a process that is not yet over. We have publicly advised who the preferred tenderer is. We are still working through with that preferred tenderer. I really am not prepared to go into the commercial details that are still in the process of being ultimately established.

The tender evaluation committee comprised chairman Mr Peter Severin, Executive Director, Operational Support Services; Mr Peter Rule, Executive Director, Corporate Services of the department; Ms Alison Hunter, Executive Director, Policy and Program Services of the department; Mr Gavin Wright, General Manager, Operational Support Services for the department; Mr Dieter Katz, principal Treasury analyst of Queensland Treasury; and Mr Tom Murphy of Queensland Purchasing.

We are very confident that we have made the correct evaluation. MTC has been confirmed as the preferred tenderer. Negotiations are under way to finalise a contract. A decision on awarding of the contract or not will be made by Government in September of this year. The process has been a very thorough one. I repeat what I said before: what was happening from the time Borallon first won the tender 10 years ago was that they simply rolled over the contracts. In fact, this year the major operators wanted to roll it over again. We either have a market for

private corrections in this State or we have not. What we had was a pretend market that was not being tested.

Also, we had contracts in place where we as the regulating body and as the Government could not find out what was happening in our own prisons that we owned and that we were paying a contractor to operate because things were tied up in commercial-in-confidence. One of the key issues of the initial Kennedy report was that we would learn from each other, that there should be transparency between private operators and Government operators and we could learn. That was not happening. The answer to the direct question you asked in relation to the probity auditor has just been provided to me. KPMG was the probity auditor. It gave the process an all clear.

**Mr HORAN:** Can you outline the program, including the timetable and location, for the DNA testing of Queensland prisoners?

**Mr BARTON:** We have a small budget allocation for DNA testing. The Queensland Police Service is the lead agency. The major lead will be taken by the Police Service on DNA testing. The time frames for testing all inmates of the correctional centres have not been totally finalised as yet. That is part of the roll-out. It is an operational matter that the Queensland Police Service are the lead agency on. The Department of Corrective Services will cooperate with it.

A fortnight ago I was particularly interested to attend a series of ministerial council meetings in Perth, one of which was for corrections Ministers. Victoria is slightly ahead of us at this point in time on its roll-out of testing all inmates of correctional centres, which we intend to do. I think we can learn from Victoria. It has found that, after a few initial hiccups, once inmates of correctional centres worked out that they were going to be tested they complied very well. I cannot give you the exact time frame because that is an operational matter that the Police Service is responsible for. It will work that through.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates of the Minister for Police and Corrective Services has expired. I thank the Minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance here today. I also thank Hansard for their diligence and I thank our timekeepers and bell ringers. I remind people that the transcripts of this part of the hearing will be available on the Hansard Internet quick access web site within two hours. I think there is nowhere else in Australia that you can get service like that. Thank you very much, Minister.

**Mr BARTON:** Mr Chairman, I thank you and your Committee for the manner in which you have conducted yourselves today. This is the seventh Budget Estimates hearing I have been associated with, either in your seat, Mr Chairman, as a Committee member or as a Minister. I find the process to be enlightening, regardless of which seat I am in.

An enormous amount of work is put in by my departments and by the Crime Commission before we get to the hearing. You can see by the raft of material that we bring that it is character building for everybody who has to be involved in examining their own operations to prepare that material. I and my staff are much, much better informed. My departments are much, much better informed. I am sure that everybody on the Committee is much, much better informed. I thank all of you for the manner in which you have conducted yourselves. I thank my staff for their hard work and my departmental people for all of their hard work, because it is a big effort.

**Mr HORAN:** The Opposition thanks your staff, Minister.

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

- Hon. S. Robertson, Minister for  
Emergency Services
- Mr M. Kinnane, Director-General
- Mr W. Hartley, Chief Commissioner,  
Queensland Fire and Rescue  
Authority
- Dr G. FitzGerald, Commissioner,  
Queensland Ambulance Service
- Mr J. Noye, Executive Director, Counter  
Disaster and Rescue Services
- Ms M. Smith, Executive Director, Support  
Services, Support Services Business  
Unit
- Mr G. Taylor, Director, Finance and Asset  
Services, Support Services Business  
Unit
- Ms F. McKersie, Executive Director,  
Strategic and Executive Services  
Division

**The CHAIRMAN:** The next portfolio to be examined is that of the Minister for Emergency Services. I remind members of the Committee and the Minister that the time limit for questions is one minute. Answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning bell will be given at the end of this time. The Sessional Orders require that at least half the time is to be allotted to non-Government members. I ask witnesses to identify themselves before they answer questions so that Hansard can record that information for us.

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

"That the proposed expenditure be agreed to."

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

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Mr Chairman, members of the Committee, thank you. The Beattie Labor team went to the 1998 election with a commitment to put emergency services on a more secure financial footing. We wanted to ensure Queensland communities get world-class emergency services delivered in the most professional and efficient manner. We were committed to making Queensland a safer community. To achieve these goals, we have in our first term implemented key strategies that focus on, firstly, improving service delivery

and response times by increasing capital works funding to provide more facilities, more vehicles and more staff; and, secondly, transforming what was previously a response-orientated organisation into a department where fire, ambulance and counter-disaster and rescue services are increasingly focused on prevention and mitigation strategies.

The Beattie Labor Government has honoured these election commitments and continues to deliver for all Queensland communities and our emergency service organisations. We have provided record funding for emergency services, fire, ambulance and the SES and other counter-disaster and rescue services in each of our three Budgets to date. This year we are providing the Department of Emergency Services with a \$479.9m budget—another record. In terms of Government initiative funding, Labor is providing the department with \$106.2m more per year over what the coalition provided in its last Budget in 1997-98. That is an extra \$68.76m a year for ambulance, an extra \$31.9m a year for fire, and an extra \$5.5m for counter-disaster and rescue services. We have also provided a \$25m per year rescue package to revive the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority from the financial basket case it became under the coalition.

We have more ambulance stations, more ambulance officers and more vehicles at work across Queensland to improve service delivery and reduce response times. We are providing more assistance to local communities for natural disaster risk assessments and mitigation strategies to prepare them for natural disasters. We are providing more resources and support to our 85,000 volunteers in the SES, rural fire brigades, volunteer marine rescue and coastguard units. And we are showing our ongoing commitment to a strong SES by funding more equipment and clothing for volunteers and providing strong leadership through the Director of the SES, a position abolished by the previous Government.

The Beattie Government is proud of its record when it comes to emergency services. We have put emergency services back on a more secure financial footing with increased funding and sound, innovative management, and we continue to show strong support for our emergency services personnel and thousands of volunteers. We have delivered, and continue to do so, for emergency services in this State.

Mr Chairman, members of the Committee, that concludes my opening statement, but with your permission can I just place on record, given that this is a Committee of the Parliament, the fact that today we said goodbye to three very special people from our organisation: two of them were paramedics from Rockhampton, Bill Birch and Craig Staines, and a relief helicopter pilot and acknowledged good friend of Mike Horan, Paddy O'Brien.

It has been a very difficult day today for emergency services. With your permission, Mr Chairman, I would just like to take this opportunity for all of the members of my department and the members of your Committee, Hansard and others who are here today to remember these three very special individuals by having a minute's silence to mourn their passing.

**The CHAIRMAN:** In a minute we will do that. Mr Horan has let me know that he wanted to say a few words about Paddy O'Brien, who was a special mate of his, and his family.

**Mr HORAN:** Thank you, Chairman. I had the privilege of attending Paddy's mass today. It had a huge attendance. I would like to mention to this Committee that the ambulance officers were remembered in the prayers in that mass and also mentioned by Paddy's children, who delivered the eulogy.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Mike, thank you. I should acknowledge also the presence at today's ceremonies in Rockhampton of the Opposition spokesman, Ted Malone. It was my pleasure to have invited Ted to come along to those ceremonies today, and his attendance was appreciated by all.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Ted wishes to say a couple of words also.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. It was indeed a sad day for emergency services. Yesterday we had the funerals of the Sherry family in Mackay and Walkerston. It was a huge funeral. Last night I attended a debriefing at Marlborough for the SES people there, which was well attended. I have to say that they did an exceptional job at Marlborough, and we all recognise that. Today, of course, the funerals of the two ambos were held in Rockhampton. That was a very sad day. It was heartening to see the support of the ambulance officers for their comrades and the great support of the community. It really is a sad day. It is unfortunate that we have our Estimates Committee hearings this afternoon, but life goes on. We appreciate from both sides of

Parliament the great work of emergency services. Tomorrow they will be out there doing the same thing again. We appreciate all that.

**The CHAIRMAN:** With those few words, I would ask the Committee and staff and those present, including those in the gallery, to stand for a minute's silence for those men who gave their lives in the service of Queensland.

Whereupon Committee members and attendees stood in silence.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Non-Government members have been allotted the first 20 minutes. Mr Malone, when you are ready.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you very much, Chairman, and welcome to Estimates for your bleeding-in, I guess, Minister. There seems to be a marked difference between the information that your staff share amongst themselves and that which is provided to the commissioners and the information you have provided in answers to questions asked in Parliament. I refer specifically to information contained in an internal memo sent on Thursday, 15 June this year to all QFRA staff, commissioners and others and your answers to questions on notice about that memorandum. For example, the memo states—

"We are under significant pressure from the Queensland Audit Office to ensure that our financial statements for the year to 30 June 2000 are an accurate reflection of the organisation's financial performance over the year and the balance sheet is an accurate reflection of our financial position to 30 June."

In your answer to a question on this, Minister, you stated—

"No issues that were raised in respect of the current engagement should be construed as significant concerns or unusual pressure."

Was this internal memo put in those terms when you claim the memo was incorrect? You would have no reason for the QAS Audit Office to put you under significant pressure to ensure something as basic as provision of accurate financial statements, and surely there would be no need for significant pressure so the balance sheet was an accurate reflection of the department's financial position. I ask: was the internal memo put out in those terms when you claimed the memo was incorrect? Are you familiar with the—

**Mr ROBERTSON:** With respect, I am not quite sure what you are getting at, Mr Malone.

**Mr MALONE:** There was an internal memo stating that the department was under significant pressure. The question was asked on notice in the Parliament and your information was that the department was not under significant pressure. Are you aware of that question?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Yes, I am. I have got it in front of me. In terms of the oversight of my department by both internal and external auditors, one of the things that I am obviously particularly keen on is to ensure that my department does in fact meet the standards required by both internal and external audit. If what you are suggesting is that by that internal memo a Minister and a Director-General are ensuring that their department is ensuring that we dot all the i's and cross all the t's and that the people responsible for financial management in my department are doing their job, then I plead guilty to ensuring that that be the case. As to significant pressure, I think you are perhaps putting a bigger spin on it than might otherwise be the case, member for Mirani, but be assured that under my jurisdiction I will be ensuring that at all times the financial management of this department is as it should be.

**Mr MALONE:** I will refer to another question which probably will jog your mind a little bit in respect of that same matter. That same memo on 15 June 2000 stated and I quote—

**Mr ROBERTSON:** So this is a departmental memo?

**Mr MALONE:** That is right. That was referred to in a question on notice in the Parliament—

"At 31 March 2000 for QFRA alone \$3.5m of supplier invoices had been identified as unprocessed when goods or services had been supplied prior to 31 March, in many cases weeks and months prior to 31 March. The total across all DES was more than \$8m of unprocessed invoices."

Basically, Minister, an interpretation of that memo would indicate that you were unaware of that matter and, secondly, that the memo was generated to make sure that your department was well aware of the questions being asked by the Audit Office.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I think you are under a certain misapprehension, member for Mirani. Be assured that my department enjoys a very strong working relationship with the QAO and values its input in assisting the department to identify potential areas for improvement. To ensure that the financial statements of the

department for the year ending 30 June 2000 are an accurate reflection of its performance, regular monthly reviews of the accounts and reconciliations were undertaken to verify that the information was both true and fair. As part of the normal annual audit process, the QAO has written to the chief financial officer seeking clarification in respect of payments to creditors. However, I am not aware of any explicit or implicit criticism of the department's performance.

A realistic measure of excessive time to process suppliers' invoices would be complaints from suppliers. There is a very low incidence of supplier dissatisfaction with invoice payment by the department. To provide you with further details, I would ask Gary Taylor to perhaps provide a more detailed explanation.

**Mr TAYLOR:** Gary Taylor, Director of Finance and Asset Services. The instance that led to this was a memorandum from the Queensland Audit Office to myself where they had taken a selection of invoices that had actually been processed and they had raised some queries about the time taken to pay some of those accounts. We then investigated those and found that the majority of those cases were in fact disputed accounts where we had had concerns with the supplier in terms of when the invoice was issued, the delivery of goods, whether they matched what had been ordered and that type of thing. So the internal memo that you referred to actually had the incorrect wording on it. It said "unprocessed accounts"; it was actually processed accounts that had been delayed in payment. A lot of those were also helicopter payments which were under warranty and we had no obligation to pay those accounts, so we have replied back to the Queensland Audit Office and they are quite satisfied with the response that we have given them.

**Mr MALONE:** The Government has made a great deal of the review of the funding for the Department of Emergency Services. In fact, during last year's Estimates debate the then Minister regularly referred to the imminent funding review. At that time, the reference was mainly in connection with the State Emergency Service, and the Minister then referred to the review on a number of occasions when answering questions about the SES. In the current budget statements I can see no specific review or reference to the review in the Budget papers. I saw no specific review in regard to the SES. Minister, can you give the Committee a broad outline of the findings and recommendations of that review and tell us specifically what changes there will be to

funding as a result of that review? If a copy of that review is available, I would certainly like to have it.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I am sorry, I missed that last bit.

**Mr MALONE:** I was just saying that I would like to get a copy of that review paper, if possible.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** With respect to the portfolio funding examination, it assessed a range of requirements for the portfolio for achieving a contemporary approach, particularly to disaster mitigation. As you would appreciate, what has happened in that counter disaster area over the last few years, as has occurred across the whole portfolio, is a change from just a reactive approach to a more proactive approach and hence a concentration on disaster mitigation as well as our traditional role of disaster response. So the funding review actually concentrated on both that disaster mitigation management as well as our ongoing response capability.

The review identified a number of significant aspects having a direct impact on funding requirements, which include the need to give full effect to the expanding statutory roles and responsibilities under the State Counter-Disaster Organisation Act and the Dangerous Goods Safety Management legislation. It looked at emerging trends in risk-based disaster management and mitigation leading to increased levels of support and assistance for local government. It also recognised the urgent need to modernise management training, provide adequate levels of protective clothing and equipment and implement planned asset replacement strategies for the State Emergency Service on the basis that the Government has a primary responsibility for the SES.

No doubt the member for Mirani will have noticed in this year's budget that we have picked up on those particular issues in relation to various funding initiatives for this year. The portfolio funding examination also recognised the increase in cost to the portfolio's extended network of volunteer organisations as a result of increased regulatory compliance, common law requirements and operating expenses and the need to meet increased operational costs to develop replacement strategies for rescue helicopters which are due for replacement between 2003-07. That is why we are spending \$5.5m more than you did in your last year in Government.

So in terms of the portfolio funding examination, those particular issues have been picked up. Maybe in terms of your

analysis, we do not specifically refer to the portfolio funding review in relation to those initiatives, but these are also ongoing initiatives. On top of that, of course, is our ongoing commitment to flood boat replacement and continuing initiatives such as that. So we are continuing to build on the asset base of the SES. We are continuing to improve equipment. You would have seen the range of initiatives this year in terms of improving communications for our SES volunteers, particularly in remote parts of the State. These are all issues that the portfolio funding review actually identified.

**Mr MALONE:** Is there an actual report in those terms? That was the second part of the question. Do you have a report that is freely available?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** We have a report, which is continuing to be worked through and refined.

**Mr MALONE:** Is it a public document?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Not at this point in time.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, during last year's Estimates hearings we raised the issue of the unfair burden on local authorities throughout the State of providing emergency services. Certainly during the Estimates hearings last year, the then Minister indicated that the department was consulting with local government to look at ways in which the department can assist in that respect. You will recollect that in last year's Estimates hearings—seeing that you have read the Hansard—the Minister at that time said that there was no additional funding in the 1999-2000 Budget for it but she did indicate that she thought that there would be additional funding in 2000-01. I cannot actually see areas within the budget that indicate further support for local government in respect of that matter. Could you redefine that or answer that?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** We are doing a number of things with local government, in particular in collaboration with the Federal Government, in providing funding for local authorities to commence disaster mitigation studies. I think it was only about a month or two ago that we announced the new round of funding with the Federal Government for grants to local governments to conduct disaster mitigation studies.

**Mr MALONE:** Specifically—

**Mr ROBERTSON:** No, sorry, I am happy to provide you with the list of successful grant applications. It would probably be a waste of time for both of us if I went through the list



now, but can I say that we achieved a 100% success rate. I think 44 councils, from memory, picked up funds from both Federal and State Governments to conduct disaster mitigation studies.

This is really important, and the importance of this kind of funding is really misunderstood out in the community. I often tell the story of what happened shortly after I became Minister. The floods cut the Bruce Highway just out of Tully. The picture will remain with me for many years of 12 semitrailers on the major arterial route down the coast from Cairns to Brisbane, which was cut. It gets cut virtually every time it rains. There was this wonderful picture of 12 fully laden semitrailers stuck, and they were stuck for about a week. I do not know the value of the goods that they were carrying, but it would be significant. That just underlines why we need to pay far greater attention to disaster mitigation rather than just repairing the damage caused by flood. That is the benefit of these grants to local government, because for the first time local governments will be supplied with funding that allows them to study the problem, that allows them to actually get into what the problems are that they face, and provides them with funds that allows them to investigate strategies to actually address those problems. So as the advertisement says, it will not happen overnight, but it will happen over time.

The major flaw, of course, in terms of the support that we are providing local government in terms of doing these studies is that the Feds are not backing that support up with establishing a disaster mitigation fund. We cannot get what we need from the Federal Government. We have been on about this for the last couple of years and to date we have got nowhere with your counterparts in the Federal Government. They have refused to provide funding, for example, to raise this particular section of the Bruce Highway, which is their responsibility, above the current level and therefore every time it rains, the highway gets cut. There is a significant economic impact to that, which the Federal Government refuses to recognise.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, that was a very eloquent answer to a question I did not ask.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

**Mr MALONE:** I was asking about the level of support to the councils in terms of providing the SES. It was not about disaster management, but thank you very much for your eloquent answer. Perhaps you could

answer the question that I asked originally. In terms of actually providing the SES across-the-board to councils, what funding is in the budget for that specifically? I am not talking about counter disaster measures; I am talking about actually supplying people with the wherewithal to actually go out there and do that from time to time, and actually maintaining the SES in their local government authority regions.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I guess we have a bit of a philosophical difference. Recently, I came across a newsletter distributed to the SES the last time you guys were in Government. You were on about transferring the responsibility for the SES from the State Government to local government. In fact, you headed your newsletters for the SES with a banner that actually mentioned the "SES/local government partnership". Wherever I go in the State SES volunteers say to me, "We don't want to be part of local government. We are a State Emergency Service. It is a State Government responsibility to run the State Emergency Service, but more and more we feel like we are being pushed into local government", to which I say to them, "No. What you need to realise is that the Government has changed. We have a philosophical difference from the former Government, namely, that we believe the SES should remain a State Government responsibility funded by the State Government and certainly in partnership with local government." We are not about transferring responsibility for the SES to local government. That was certainly implicit in the direction you were taking them when you were in Government through the publication of newsletters and it is implicit in your question.

We can continue with the philosophical argument, but I will refer you to specific initiatives. If you go through the budget, you can see the investment we are making in communications equipment to fill in black holes, particularly in remote areas of the State. The re-equipment, road crash rescue equipment, uniforms, protective clothing, the flood boat replacement program, the legal support we provide volunteers—all of that underlines the philosophical difference between us. We believe that the SES should remain a State Government responsibility, albeit in partnership with local government. But it certainly is significantly different from where you were taking it, and that was down the path of pure local government responsibility.

**Mr MALONE:** I refer to your answer to question on notice No. 13, which stated—

"For example, it is normal for a lapse of three months between the commencement of financial year budget approval, advertising and filling of a newly created position. These funds can be assigned within the CDRS operational budget to provide project support."

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Can I ask you to start again? I am having difficulty hearing you. Can you move your microphone closer?

**Mr MALONE:** Your answer to question on notice No. 13 stated—

"For example, it is normal for a lapse of three months between commencement of financial year budget approval, advertising and filling of a newly created position. These funds can be assigned within the CDRS operational budget to provide project support."

From my perspective, it looks like CDRS might have a small slush fund for project support. This year you had 8.5 positions unfilled for at least a quarter of the year. When this is extended to the rest of the department, the figures become very significant. For example, the QAS will have 111 unfilled new positions for at least a quarter of the year and the QFRA will have at least 55 unfilled new positions for a quarter of the year. When you look at these figures, it could add up to millions of dollars, especially if we add in the other unfilled positions across all of the department. Can the Minister give me an indication of the total estimated salary savings of the department that have already been identified, as evidenced in the answer to question No. 13? Which projects will get additional support from these significant savings in your department that it already knows can be achieved?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I understand what you are getting at. Yes, there would be some savings. But this is the normal operation for any department, particularly when you are talking about operational departments such as the QAS, fire and even CDRS. If I can use the example of fire, when vacancies arise we do not automatically fill them. We wait for a specific number of vacancies to arise and then we conduct a recruit course. You might have 20 or 40 or more going through a recruit course at one time. The same applies with the Ambulance Service. Yes, there may be a notional saving there in terms of those vacancies, but—and I will state this just in case I am predicting your next question—those vacancies are not being used to save money. Those vacancies exist just in the normal course of retirements, resignations, etc., that

get filled when we have sufficient numbers to conduct the next recruit course.

In terms of any savings that do exist and savings which may be reallocated to be put into other areas, I think that is probably a question that would be best put on notice. I am happy to answer it, but I am certainly interested in whatever savings may be identified. I am always after extra dollars to put back into the service. With your agreement, if we can put that on notice, you will get your details.

**Mr MALONE:** Obviously, if positions are not being filled, technically there is a saving to the department. It is actually being used to support projects, according to the Budget documents. The specific question was: what projects are being supported?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** None at this point in time.

**Mr MALONE:** Yet savings have been made?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Sorry? Are you referring to the last financial year?

**Mr MALONE:** Yes.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Okay. That is what I am saying. With your agreement, if you want to put that question on notice, we will provide those details. Is that okay?

**Mr MALONE:** That is fine.

**The CHAIRMAN:** The time for questions from non-Government members has expired. Minister, my first question relates to page 1-2 of the MPS, which identifies one of the factors impacting on the portfolio of Emergency Services as being the effects of the Commonwealth's taxation reform, in particular the goods and services tax. What impact is the Howard Government's GST having on the department and its ability to deliver services to the community and its ability to support 85,000 volunteers in this State?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The short answer is: significant. The longer answer is that, over the past nine months, the department has spent around \$831,000 undergoing extensive preparations in order to prepare and guide the 4,500 employees and provide support to 70,000-plus volunteers for the introduction of the GST and pay-as-you-go regime. These costs are made up as follows: employment costs, \$414,000; impact study and professional advice, \$48,000; communications costs, \$81,000; training costs, \$135,500; systems modifications, \$102,500; and other expenses, \$50,000. Every financial transaction made by these staff and volunteers, whether it be as simple as using petty cash or placing

fuel in a vehicle, has been impacted by the tax reform changes. Very early on in the piece the department formed a GST implementation team directed by a steering committee which worked closely with Queensland Treasury's GST implementation unit. As a result of the proactive preparations and tax reforms, the introduction of the GST has had—thankfully—minimal impact on essential community services that the department's volunteers provide. The major impact is the increased cost in administration and cashflow management issues.

With respect to the volunteers—these are people, as I have said in the Parliament before, who join these organisations to provide a service to the community. They do not join organisations to do book work. The impact of the GST on the volunteers should be something that is recognised by everyone here. By now, all volunteer groups, whether they be in rural fire, SES, volunteer marine rescue or Coastguard, should have registered for an Australian business number, but it is not necessary for all groups to register for the GST. However, unregistered groups will be affected as the purchasing power of each dollar will reduce as they will incur increased operating costs from having to pay GST on their purchases, while registered groups will be able to claim back any GST.

Those registered for the GST will become subject to taxation reporting requirements and will have additional paperwork or administrative work that they must do. This is what concerns me in particular, that the larger the administrative burden that is placed on our volunteer groups via things such as the GST, the less inclined people will be to join these groups. Bear in mind these are essential community organisations. They are the people who go out and rescue people from their homes when the floods come. When the bushfires come, they are the people who hop on their trucks and fight the fires. All that the Federal Government has done through the introduction of the GST is increase the burden on these volunteers, which I fear may turn more and more people off from joining our essential volunteer organisations.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As a supplementary question to that, I ask: has your Ambulance Service been successful—I know they have been negotiating for some time with the Federal Government—in having tax deductibility apply to local ambulance committees? Out my way there is a very successful local ambulance committee, the Balmoral and District Ambulance Committee, which raises funds for the Ambulance Service

to make the saving of lives more efficient for it. Have you had any breakthrough at all with the Federal Government in that regard?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The short answer is no. I acknowledge your involvement in your own ambulance LAC. I understand why you are so interested in this. To provide you with a detailed answer, I will ask Gerry FitzGerald to provide you with those details.

**Mr FITZGERALD:** As you would be aware from your question, in 1994 the tax deductibility of donations to the Queensland Ambulance Service and, by extension, to local ambulance committees was removed. We have been exploring a number of avenues to try to overcome that removal of recognition of tax deductibility of donations. We effectively have exhausted now probably all of the legal processes to have that overturned. The Minister has recently written a number of letters to try to see if there are some other ways by exercising the Federal Treasurer's ability to actually name the Queensland Ambulance Service or ambulance services within the taxation legislation as a means of overcoming what has been otherwise an impenetrable burden to us.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I refer to page 1-9 of the MPS which outlines the State Government initiatives to help Queensland communities prepare for and mitigate against natural disasters and I ask: what impact will the Commonwealth's decision to link natural disaster relief arrangements to evidence of mitigation work have on Queensland's counter-disaster efforts and, further, is there a need for a national disaster mitigation fund to be established by the Commonwealth and the State?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The simple answer to the second part of your question is: yes, and it gets back to something I was talking about in relation to Mr Malone's question with respect to our assistance to local government. A couple of years ago the Commonwealth revised its guidelines for the natural disaster relief arrangements, which makes the Commonwealth's share of funding under that scheme conditional upon disaster mitigation measures being in place. The Commonwealth's decision has the potential to impact significantly on the level of disaster relief funding available to Queensland and particularly our local governments.

The natural disaster relief arrangements are funded jointly by the Commonwealth Government and State Government. Under the funding formula the State Government pays 100% of the first \$30m. The next \$22m

of expenditure is shared on a 50/50 basis by the Commonwealth Government and the State Government. The Commonwealth Government funds 75% of the remaining amount above \$52m, with the State Government contributing 25%. It is a complex formula. It indicates that, unless local governments put in place disaster mitigation strategies, the Federal Government has threatened under these new arrangements to withdraw funding.

If you take into account the fact that last financial year the damage bill for the various floods and cyclones we had here in Queensland was some \$100m, which gets funded under that complex arrangement, if suddenly the Federal Government pulls out of that, that leaves the State Government with a significant expense to pick up. That is why we have been so proactive in getting out into our local governments by firstly producing manuals for the first time to help local governments upskill themselves in terms of the issues surrounding disaster mitigation but also getting them to apply for funding that is available through the Feds and ourselves so that they can commence the process of disaster mitigation studies in their local authorities. Unless they do that, as I said, they could well find themselves in great difficulty with respect to ongoing Federal Government support.

That gets back to what the Premier has been calling for for some time now in terms of the Federal Government establishing this national disaster mitigation fund. Unless that capital pool is there which will actually fund the raising of roads, new levy banks, railways or whatever, then those things will be cut and damaged time and time again with no relief in sight for those communities.

**Mrs MILLER:** I refer to page 1-12 of the MPS, which outlines an additional \$1m funding to support our 30,000 SES volunteers, and I ask: how does this year's additional funding build upon the Beattie Labor Government's commitment to the SES in its previous Budgets?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I think it is fair to say that this Government is very proud of its commitment to the State Emergency Service. We recognise its fundamental importance to Queensland. Over the past three years funding to the SES increased significantly to ensure the continued enhancement of conditions and resources for our invaluable volunteers. In recognition of the valuable role performed by our SES volunteers, we are committed to developing a strong service that has the funding equipment and operational

support necessary to carry out its important role in the community.

The 1998-99 year saw the implementation of the four-year \$1.5m flood boat replacement program. Last year the Department of Emergency Services provided close to \$14m to support SES and marine rescue volunteers. This money has allowed us to provide recurrent funding for SES cadets, with which I know you have some experience out your way. I met with them a couple of months ago. They are a tremendous group of young people. It just brings home the importance of my providing that ongoing funding for SES cadets.

Just before I talked about the problems of retaining and attracting volunteers to our emergency services when loading them up with more administrative work through the GST, etc. Unless we invest in our young people and get them into these volunteer organisations early, then our existing group of volunteers will just get older and older and obviously they will reach such an age when they can no longer be active. Unless we make that investment in our young people, then in the medium term we are going to be in trouble here in Queensland. That is why that \$1m recurrent investment in our SES cadets is so important.

This year's State budget included an additional allocation of \$1m to SES and marine rescue organisations to support volunteers, improve their safety on the job and improve service delivery to the community. The money will be spent on personal protective equipment, road accident rescue equipment, tarpaulins, communications upgrade, more training officers and head office staff, and enhanced counselling support. We have also shown our ongoing commitment to the SES through the cadets program, the flood boat replacement program, increased training opportunities, more protective equipment and continual enhancement of other vital resources.

These initiatives complement a 10-year strategic plan for the SES being worked on at the moment and a departmental review which will examine the funding and resource needs of the organisation. This builds on the Department of Emergency Services' comprehensive Statewide audit of SES equipment conducted last year. Whilst it sometimes takes a devastating event for Queenslanders to realise how important SES volunteers are to the community, this Government's commitment to the SES is solid and consistent. We will continue to build on

our achievements and further improve resources and conditions for our invaluable SES volunteers.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. I have a question from the Budget papers on page 1-12 also. This year is the 25th anniversary of the State Emergency Services and 2001 is the International Year of the Volunteer. Minister, I preface my question by saying that you know as well as I do that if we did not have volunteers in Australia the way of life we know as Australians and our society would collapse tonight because we rely so heavily on volunteers. What are you and your department doing to celebrate these milestones and recognise the volunteers who work in our communities tirelessly year in, year out?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** You are right, Mr Chairman. We could not provide the range of services that the SES provides if we had to pay them. We do rely very heavily on people making that commitment to their communities. Interestingly enough, the reason that this year is the 25th anniversary of the SES is that it was born out of the 1974 floods in Brisbane and in other areas of Queensland. In fact, Monday, 11 December, will be the actual date that we celebrate the SES's 25th birthday.

Emergency Services in total has some 85,000 volunteers. Both the 25th anniversary of the SES and the fact that next year is the International Year of the Volunteer are two occasions which provide us with the opportunity to promote the work of these invaluable men and women. For both of these milestones, my department, along with representatives of Emergency Service volunteer organisations, local government and community groups, will be focusing on boosting the number of volunteers in Queensland, attracting young people to volunteer organisations and gaining recognition for them. It is also a chance to recognise the contribution and sacrifices made by the families and, importantly, the employers of volunteers, who can be called out to assist their communities at all hours.

Today there are well over 30,000 SES volunteers providing support to Queensland communities. Some 16,000 of them are active members. Across the State, there are over 150 SES units based on local government and ATSI community councils, making up more than 340 groups across the State. The value of SES to local communities is highlighted every time they face a natural disaster or emergency situation, as we have seen, in my view, too many times this year. That is why the

25th anniversary is a perfect opportunity to celebrate these very special Queenslanders who give so selflessly to their communities.

This year's Budget includes \$50,000 to fund the anniversary celebrations. In fact, earlier this week, the Executive Director of Counter Disaster, Jack Noye, and the Volunteer Executive Committee Chairman, Tom Bradley, met with me to discuss the format of functions to be held. Staff in the department are currently working on a plan outlining the major activities to be organised. Of course, importantly, SES volunteers are being asked for their input and advice on the best way to celebrate their anniversary. One of the things I am looking forward to in relation to this anniversary is the history that is going to be written that will actually detail the kind of work these people have done for Queensland over the past 25 years.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Thank you, Minister. As the time for Government members has just about expired, we will now have questions from non-Government members.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Minister, I was interested in your answer to the question in respect of the GST. I know that the department is well regarded in terms of forward planning in relation to funding. Given that there is expected to be an extra \$2,000m by the year 2003 flowing to Queensland through the GST funding, are you as the Minister applying to get those funds? How do you feel this will change the direction of the department?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I think that is probably beyond the scope of the current Estimates. I understand what you are getting at. I do not have a crystal ball and would not like to speculate. Perhaps in subsequent years while I am the Minister and you are the Opposition spokesman we can actually analyse that a bit further.

**Mr HORAN:** It might be with a bit of book work.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, I have to say that you raised the issue and made some political mileage out of it.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Only in terms of the expenditure we have had to cop without any funding from the Federal Government.

**Mr MALONE:** I understand that.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** It is no good looking into the future and wondering what money you are going to get if you are having to pay up now. No matter what you do, you cannot diminish the impact it is going to have on our volunteers in terms of extra administrative

work. Neither you nor your Federal Government can actually give a spin on it to satisfy the concerns of our volunteers.

**Mr MALONE:** With respect, Minister, you need to do a bit of planning in that direction. Minister, the QAS ran a deficit this year of \$3.86m. How is that deficit being funded? With respect to the Budget papers, I see no budgeted figure for the trust fund. Has money been utilised from the trust fund to cover that deficit budget?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** There are things that you need to understand about the demands on our Queensland Ambulance Service. I did not come here wanting to bash the Federal Government today, but you keep serving it up to me and it just provides me with another opportunity. One of the great problems we face with the Queensland Ambulance Service is the ideological push towards private health insurance with absolute total disregard for the impact that that has on our subscription service.

One reason we have this deficit in the end of year report is the fact that the push for private medical insurance has had such an impact on our subscription base. You have heard me speak about this in the Parliament before. These private medical insurers are telling people that if they sign with them they will get emergency ambulance coverage. I am one of those who has just had to sign up for private medical insurance. When I went shopping around, not one private health fund explained what emergency transport meant in their promotional material. What we have is people signing up for private medical insurance to meet the ideological demands of your comrades in Canberra whilst at the same time cancelling or not renewing their ambulance subscription. That has a direct impact on the income of our Ambulance Service.

Despite that, what we are now finding is that people are falling into black holes in relation to what their private medical funds provide. I will use the example of a man on the south side of Brisbane a few weeks ago. He had significant respiratory difficulties. He phoned the ambulance and, of course, the ambulance turned up, treated him but assessed him as not requiring hospital admission. He thought he was having a heart attack. The ambulance officers discovered otherwise, treated him with oxygen, got him back on his feet but did not admit him to hospital. They sent him an account as a result. When he tried to submit that account to his private medical insurer, they said, "No,

because you weren't admitted to hospital, your private medical insurance doesn't cover you." What we now have is a significant number of Queenslanders who believe that they have total ambulance coverage because they have signed up for private health cover when in fact they do not. As a result of that, that has had a significant impact on our subscription base.

That is why we had to run that advertising campaign over the past couple of months. Thankfully, that has pulled the declining subscription base back. We have had no help from the Federal Government again. However, this is the impact of that ideological push to private health cover. It is having a direct impact on our ambos.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, in respect of page 2-16 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement under the heading "Operating revenues", the estimated actual for 1999-2000 fell by \$2.5m against the Budget estimate principally due to subscription shortfalls as a result, as you said, of increased competition from private health. However, the estimate under this financial year is \$10.5m more than last year. What user charges are going to produce an extra \$10m this year given that, as you said, subscription collections are only estimated to increase by \$1m?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** One of the outcomes of the portfolio funding review was that for the first time we were actually able to get true costs for providing ambulance services. That is why we have put up a range of user charges this year for non-subscribers. I am pleased you actually agree with me that private health cover has an impact on our subscription base. The reason we put up those fees, that is, the basic fee to turn out paramedics in 21st century vehicles, is that we are now charging people the true cost of providing those services. Of course, those services will not be charged if people make the quite correct decision to take out an ambulance subscription. Those people who do not take out a subscription or who are not covered by private health cover will for the first time be receiving accounts based on the true cost of providing that very professional ambulance service that we now have.

Of course, that is only part of the much bigger story. I am sure you have read our releases and seen in the media that the changes we have made to those user charges actually have some real benefits for people in rural areas. Under the previous charging regime, people in rural areas were really being stung hard. We have brought back those charges based purely on mileage or kilometres

to a more realistic level. What we will now have for non-subscribers is a charging regimen based on the true cost of providing ambulance services, which has resulted in some real reductions for people in rural areas, which I hope you will support.

**Mr MALONE:** The charges were a bit over the top before, certainly in rural areas. I have admitted that the push for private health insurance is probably having some impact, but it seems to me that I am not being provided with any figures in respect of that. I would imagine that for an issue as serious as this your department would have a very good handle on the number of people who are not subscribing to the service—indeed, if there were not a carryover from the possible increased cost because of the free pensioner and senior cardholder policy.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** You will appreciate that the campaign is still going on.

**Mr MALONE:** I understand that.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** So these will be figures that are as close to today's date as possible. On 17 June the subscriber system reached a low of 647,173 prime subscribers, which is a reduction of some 2,000 subscribers. We then embarked upon those marketing campaigns and have pulled those back. We are still running below what we had, but we have pulled back as a result of those marketing campaigns. Because there is that ongoing campaign by the Feds to push private health insurance, we are still playing catch-up all the time. We cannot get ahead of the game because of the continuous push by the Feds and by private health funds. I am happy to continue to provide the Parliament with the figures on the impact this is having. We have had to spend a significant amount of money on a marketing campaign to retain subscriber numbers. That causes us some concern. I will hand over to Gerry FitzGerald to provide you with more specific details.

**Dr FITZGERALD:** Up until the end of May, as the Minister indicated, we were losing subscribers quite heavily. During June itself we undertook a very significant campaign. It turned out to be quite successful because in fact it leveraged off the Federal Government's own campaign. Whereas we were looking at being about \$1.5m below budget, at the end of the year on the actual figures, which post-date the figures in the MPS, we ended up about \$830,000 below budget. It appears that we probably were able to pull back about \$1m as a result of that campaign.

**Mr MALONE:** It seems to me, Minister, that you are actually creating a media area

within your department. Indeed, it seems to me that the message that by joining a private health fund you are not going to get full ambulance cover is a very simplistic message to put across. Are you actually expending sufficient funds in terms of media? Can you tell me a bit about the media section in your department?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Is this an invitation from the Opposition to increase my corporate media budget?

**Mr MALONE:** I am not saying a word.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I am sorry. The reality is that we conducted a very successful campaign. That Total Cover campaign

**Mr MALONE:** It does not seem to me that it is.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** It has been in terms of the money invested and the return we got. It is actually a very good campaign. What I am saying is: in light of the millions and millions of dollars that the Feds and the private health funds are spending constantly on hammering private health funds down our throat, it is very difficult, given our limited resources, to compete on an ongoing basis to continue to get that message through. In terms of what we were able to achieve, I am extremely pleased with those returns. Those returns are excellent. In terms of dollars spent and in terms of what we have clawed back as a result, the returns are very good. But, unless we increase the advertising budget for ambulance significantly—I am not prepared to do that; I am sure that if I did you would be the first one to criticise me—we will continue to receive significant pressure.

We as members of Parliament can all play a part in this because we speak to constituents. In fact, I met with the AMA a couple of weeks ago and put this problem to them as well. We will have some ongoing discussions with them in terms of their helping us to promote our ambulance subscription scheme. We will be finding the most cost-effective way to get the message out to the people of Queensland that they need to maintain their ambulance subscription. As I said, it is a bit difficult. If you can get the message through the thick head of Wooldridge in Canberra that what he is doing is causing us problems, then please come on board and tell him what he is doing. He is not listening to us. In fact, he does not care less about us. This is the problem we are facing. We are doing what we can. As I said, I am really pleased with the outcome so far from that campaign, but we do not have a bottomless pit of money to run advertisements

every day, every night, seven days a week, 365 days a year. The Feds and the private health funds are running them. That is our problem.

**Mr MALONE:** I take your word for that, Minister. I refer to question on notice No. 14. You must be concerned with the increased costs of the Queensland Ambulance Service having to meet marketing and media service costs. From your answer it appears that the number of media and marketing staff has increased and that the classification of some of those staff has been lifted. Additionally, substantial public relations and marketing costs have been attributed to QAS. Minister, why was it necessary to increase the classification for marketing officers from O5s to O6s and O7s? Why do you now need three media officers at O6 and O5 levels when last year O4s and O5s were sufficient? I also refer to the creation of a commercial development officer, especially to the claim in the Budget papers that future development within the unit would be "enhanced commercial activities, particularly in the international opportunities area". When I asked that question on notice, your answer was that no formal plans are in place for international commercial activities. Are the Budget papers misleading, or what is the story there?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Not at all. I will ask Gerry FitzGerald to fill you in on the details in terms of the reclassifications, but the simple answer in terms of overseas marketing activities is: because it is just in its genesis. There are no formal plans in place because we are still looking at what opportunities may be out there. Bear this in mind, however: we already have some contracts in Papua New Guinea, and we have some contracts domestically with various mines with the QAS. We are looking at taking a very soft, very risk-averse approach. We recognise that there may be opportunities overseas for not just QAS but QFRA and CDRS. We are not going to do what you did when you were in Government. Somewhere in Thailand today, there are still how many ambulances running around from Queensland?

**Dr FITZGERALD:** I don't know whether they ever got there.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** What happened when you were in Government was that you went overseas—not you personally, but your predecessors—and went through there like a bull in a proverbial china shop and wasted thousands and thousands of dollars on overseas trips—and you only need to look at Mick Veivers' travel account in terms of what

he was up to and the former D-G's account in terms of what he was up to—for absolutely nil result. In fact, it was a deficit in terms of what was brought back from overseas in terms of true business opportunities.

My predecessor, Merri Rose, put a stop to that, and she did exactly the right thing. She ensured that the people in this department concentrated purely on what is good for Queensland. We have consolidated; we have fixed up the mess that we were left, particularly in fire. What we are now about is saying, "Well, we have fixed a whole range of problems here in Queensland. We have got things right. We are fixing up the funding to allow for continual growth funding." We are now starting to look a bit further afield, but we are going to be doing it in a risk-averse way. There will not be massive junkets overseas. There will not be any of that sort of nonsense that went on under you. But where we find commercial opportunities that are risk averse, then we will investigate them and we will take it carefully. We will not look at China and say, "Let's get into China and let's do it tomorrow." We will do it carefully. Importantly, what we will do as part of that process is build up the skill base within our own department.

**Mr MALONE:** Tell me the figures, Minister.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** No, no—

**Mr MALONE:** What is it costing you currently? I am looking at figures here—

**Mr ROBERTSON:** No, no. I will finish on this point and then hand over to Gerry to explain the reclassifications issue.

**Dr FITZGERALD:** With respect to the classifications in the unit, we have had a very difficult time in that unit attracting the appropriate people. About 12 months ago we felt it necessary to restructure the unit and make sure that it was on a more solid basis. As a result of that, we put in place almost a hierarchy within the unit so that there were individual people who were paid slightly higher than the other people and had responsibilities associated with that. With respect to the media area particularly, we had two media officers before, and we found that they were effectively on one in every second day answering inquiries such as the sort of stuff that we have been dealing with in the last little while. One of our people has been up there almost continuously during that time. So we found it was necessary to have three people there so that at least they would have some form of life, particularly after hours, and not be on call all the time.



In terms of the classifications, obviously there is a process of assessing the value of jobs, and that is how the classifications were achieved.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As the non-Government members' time for questions has expired, it is now the Government members' turn to take up their allotted time. Minister, I would just like to explore, without going into too much detail, an area that we have just been discussing in regards to ambulance subscriptions, which I know is something that has plagued the Queensland Ambulance Service for some period with its ups and downs. It is very important that we get the message out there to people in regard to subscriptions. I know of two private health funds that will refund ambulance subscriptions to their members. I refer to MBF and Medibank Private. Do you know, Minister, of any other schemes that will refund subscriptions to ambulance subscribers? That means that you pay your ambulance fees of \$92 for a family and then you submit that account to your private health fund and they will pay it.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** What I am doing—

**The CHAIRMAN:** It would be a very good campaign if we said that if a private health fund does not do that, you do not join that health fund.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I think there is a significant consumer issue here. I have asked my department to undertake a review of health funds in terms of what each of those funds provide for. Once we get that information in place, we will then have a look at how best to use that information in terms of educating people about consumer choice or whether there are other issues where we need to actually look at contacting the individual health funds themselves to say, "Hey, we don't believe that you are doing the right thing by your consumers by a lack of information as to what, in some cases, emergency ambulance cover actually provides." I am a great believer in letting the consumer decide.

**Mrs MILLER:** Minister, I note on page 1-14 of the MPS that \$900,000 has been allocated to improve maintenance and provide extra crew positions for the Government owned and operated Queensland Rescue Helicopter Service, and I ask: given the tragic loss of five lives in the helicopter accident at Marlborough last week, what guarantees do Queenslanders have that the same level of safety standards and practices employed by Queensland Rescue's helicopters apply to community-based helicopter services?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Thank you for that question. It is probably a highly relevant question given the tragic circumstances of Marlborough. Just for the information of the Committee, the Queensland Government owns and operates four Queensland Rescue helicopters, two based in Brisbane, one in Cairns and one in Townsville. The additional one in Brisbane is what we call the Squirrel helicopter. In addition to those Queensland Rescue helicopters, there are a range of community helicopter providers. They are the Gold Coast Helicopter Rescue Service, the Capricorn Helicopter Rescue Service based in Rockhampton, the Central Queensland Helicopter Rescue Service based in Mackay, and the Sunshine Coast Helicopter Rescue Service based in both Maroochydore and Bundaberg. The Government also has a contract arrangement with Reef Helicopters to provide rescue helicopter services in the Torres Strait, in particular based on Thursday Island.

Community helicopter services have signed five-year service agreements with the State of Queensland which incorporate specific operating and safety standards, financial and activity reporting requirements and agreement to operate within a coordinated system of aeromedical tasking. They are also subject to regular safety inspections by the Civil Aviation Safety Authority. All providers of helicopter rescue services rate safety of their aircraft and the people flying in them as the top priority.

What happened in Marlborough was, of course, a tragic accident, the cause of which is yet to be established. But I take this opportunity to assure all Queenslanders that they should have every confidence that the most stringent safety measures are observed by both Government-operated and community-based helicopter services. This attention to safety is reflected in the fact that we have had just one tragic accident in the many thousands of hours flown each year by rescue helicopters on aeromedical and rescue tasks.

During 1999-2000, Queensland's fleet of rescue helicopters flew a total of 5,400 hours of operation and completed 4,350 aeromedical, counter-disaster and search-and-rescue missions. The four Government-operated Queensland Rescue helicopters flew 2,216 hours of operation and completed 1,870 aeromedical, counter-disaster and search-and-rescue missions. In addition, the community-based helicopter services in Torres Strait Rescue flew a combined total of 3,183 hours of operation and completed a total of 2,480 aeromedical, counter-disaster and search-and-rescue missions.

Members of the Committee, I think this question just provides me with an opportunity—and I know Ted will agree with me—to say a big thank you and a great deal of appreciation to our helicopter rescue crews, whether they be Queensland Rescue or our community helicopter providers. They are a very special group of people.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I refer to page 1-14 of the MPS which says that CDRS will be implementing cost recovery arrangements with the New South Wales Health Department for the provision of requested aeromedical and air rescue services in that State by Queensland Rescue helicopters. I ask: how much is it costing Queensland taxpayers for our rescue helicopters to provide New South Wales with these requested cross-border aeromedical and air rescue services?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** In 1998-99 Queensland Rescue flew to New South Wales in the Bell 412 helicopter on 29 occasions, which represented some 61 engine hours. This equates to some \$85,260 worth of servicing at around about \$1,400 per hour, which was the direct operating cost excluding crewing for the Bell 412 in 1998-99. All but one of these tasks was aeromedical. The other task was a search and rescue commissioned by the Commonwealth Search and Rescue Agency, AusAR, where my department recouped \$14,400 at the charge-out rate of \$3,200 per hour. All other costs were met by my department. In 1999-2000 Queensland Rescue flew to New South Wales in the Bell 412 on 41 occasions, representing some 90 engine hours, and in the Squirrel helicopter on one occasion. This equates to services provided to the value of some \$135,370, which was the direct operating cost for the Bell 412. All those tasks were aeromedical and all costs were met by my department.

In relation to the increasing cost involved in the cross-border tasking of helicopters, as I outlined, in 1998-99 there were 29 occasions, last year there were 41 occasions, so there was an increasing cost on it. We have commenced invoicing interstate agencies requiring the services of Queensland Rescue as from 1 July 2000. So, whilst we are still available to provide those services, we will now be charging for those services across the border.

**The CHAIRMAN:** I would like to refer the Minister to page 1-9 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements and to the statement that shows the State Government has continued its strong commitment to improving disaster mitigation and preparedness including a further \$1.15m

to support local government disaster mitigation studies. I ask: does the department have any initiatives to assist people with special needs, such as the disabled or infirm, to prepare them for disasters?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The answer is, yes, I am very pleased and proud to say. Just recently, my department has developed a publication called "Preparing for Disasters—Information for People with Special Needs" and I plan to officially launch this publication later this month. Whilst the publication is targeted at people with disabilities and their carers, it is also relevant for the elderly and the infirm. The publication provides important and useful information that assists such individuals and their networks to better prepare themselves for the effects of emergency and disaster situations. Commonwealth funding of \$10,000 has been obtained from Emergency Management Australia, Australia's International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction Coordination Committee. Consultation with peak bodies representing people with a range of disabilities was conducted in the development of this publication. There is wide support for the publication from these peak bodies, as you would imagine. A brochure, worksheet and audio tapes have also been developed. These will ensure wider access to the information in the publication for people in the target audience. An initial run of some 10,000 copies of the book will be distributed free of charge through library, schools, care groups, Department of Emergency Services district offices and other relevant outlets. The total cost of the publication and associated material is some \$47,000.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** I note that the MPS on page 2-5 shows the 2000-01 Budget provides for an additional 44 ambulance staff to cater for the increasing demand for ambulance services in Queensland. I ask: has the QAS reassessed this staffing allocation and is it now in a position to provide even more ambulance officers to improve service delivery and response times?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** We have, and I think this might go some of the way to help Mr Malone with one of his questions earlier tonight. We have undertaken detailed work force modelling analysis to identify the optimal location of the 44 additional ambulance officer/paramedic positions provided in the 2000-01 Budget. Using these available funds and in view of the preliminary results from the work force modelling project, we have actually discovered that it is possible to achieve 68 actual new positions at a lower cost per

position, being communications and patient transport officers and some paramedics.

To give you an indication of the numbers and where they are going, I will just read briefly through the list. For example, in the northern region—perhaps I should start with the central region, because I know that is an area that Mr Malone will be interested in. What we have been able to do is find funding for a total of three additional positions to improve staffing in the communications centres in Rockhampton and Mackay. If nothing else, that should provide certainty to the staff in Mackay in terms of maintenance of the communication centre there. We also will be funding an additional patient transport officer to improve services in the Proserpine area and relieve pressure on urgent services.

I visited Proserpine as part of the Community Cabinet process when we were up at Airlie Beach. One thing the ambos said to me up there—and I looked at the figures in terms of the demands on their services—was that what was happening to them was that a lot of their workload was going to patient transport from Proserpine down to Mackay. What we have done by providing a patient transport officer instead of, if you like, a paramedic at a much higher cost is that we will be able to relieve those existing paramedics of those duties. They will be able to get out and fix people on the road while still maintaining that patient transport service down to Mackay and beyond. There will be a reallocation of positions within that central region to provide two additional positions at Boyne Island to improve services and a position to improve relief at Miriam Vale and Agnes Waters. I could go on and go through each region, but I am pleased to say—and all compliments to the QAS and to Gerry—what we have done in terms of the money available through proper work force modelling. We got funding for 44 staff. Through better allocation of resources we have been able to increase that number to 68, as I said, and in fact there is good news for Mr Springborg out his way as well.

**Mrs MILLER:** I note on page 3-5 that the QFRA is expanding its highly successful Fight Fire Fascination program and its pilot program dealing with juvenile offenders to reduce the incidence of arson, and I ask: how has the court system responded to the QFRA's pilot Juvenile Arson Offenders Program, which offers an alternative to detention for young offenders?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Very well is the simple answer. Both of those programs, Fight Fire Fascination and the Juvenile Arson Offenders

Program, really underscore the change that has occurred in the QFRA from being a reactive service to a proactive service. I must say that, in terms of coming back into a position within the fire industry after many years, I have noticed the huge difference. Those two programs are particularly successful. Fight Fire Fascination is all about getting to those young kids who have that fascination with fire—they play with matches. There are some really tragic cases out there of homes being destroyed by young kids who just get that fascination with fire.

Where parents recognise that their kid is really locked on to that fascination with fire, they can now contact the QFRA and get the QFRA involved in terms of turning that kid around. I was out at Acacia Ridge Fire Station a couple months ago to formally launch that program after some very successful trials. I actually met some parents out there. They were just glowing in their praise for what the firies had done in terms of turning their kids around.

In terms of the Juvenile Arson Offenders Program, I think that it is really good stuff. I should say that both of these programs were actually designed by firies themselves, which just adds to why they are so special. The Juvenile Arson Offenders Program provides the courts, where they are dealing with kids who have been involved in arson—burning down the schools; we all know the cases—with assistance. The offenders can now be diverted, should the court so decide, away from detention to a program designed by firies which, again, educates them about the error of their ways. The firies take them in. As I said, they show them the error of their ways but they also provide them with firefighting training. They actually turn them around to an extent that the kids themselves may actually see being a firefighter as a career option. That sounds really weird, but I was down at a high school in Logan not a long time ago and I watched some of these firies working with problem kids. The teachers were saying to me that the impact that the firies were having on those problem kids was amazing. The kids were attentive, they were inquisitive; they had never been able to have such a good, cooperative class than when the firies got down there and started working with these kids. When I saw that first-hand, I just thought that it was absolutely marvellous. All strength to the QFRA and the firies in terms of continuing to develop these programs.

The ambos are doing exactly the same

thing in terms of their specific interest as well. It is coming from the grassroots, and it is being implemented by management.

**The CHAIRMAN:** It looks like the ambulance blokes are working there now.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** We are not into that kind of multiskilling.

**Mrs LAVARCH:** Before the Government time for questions expires, I just want to get in a quick question about the rural fire brigades. I note from page 3-3 that the QFRA will be spending \$3m this financial year to provide 70 new rural fire vehicles, and having an electorate that is well served by our volunteers in the rural fire brigade, I ask: how many fire vehicles have now been provided by the Beattie Government to rural fire brigades under normal capital acquisitions and the accelerated vehicle replacement program?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Yet again, this is a really good news story in terms of the investment that we are making, particularly for our volunteers in rural fire brigades. To give credit where it is due, the accelerated vehicle replacement program was commenced under the previous Government. We have continued with that. What that has done is literally put hundreds of new vehicles out into rural fire brigade areas. I know that the volunteers are certainly appreciative of that.

Since we came to Government, there will be approximately 250 new rural fire appliances out there. We all know what kind of wet season we have had right throughout Queensland. We have had a cold winter. Obviously, with the frost, it is going to be a bit tricky out the way of the member for Warwick and in Mike's area. We could be in for a very tough bushfire season this year. That is why to get this number of new vehicles out there is particularly important. It is a great investment that we have made right throughout Queensland.

The aim of that program is to bring down the average age of rural fire appliances throughout Queensland. So we had a vintage fire appliance replacement program, which took a lot of those very old—sometimes beautiful—but very, very old fire appliances out of service and replaced them with something far more modern. As well as just water, they involve foam as well, which provides better firefighting capabilities for those crews. We are continuing to invest in our rural fire brigades with respect to getting new fire appliances out there.

Importantly, they are made in Queensland. I was out at a manufacturer just a couple of weeks ago. That manufacturer—

both in your area, Mrs Lavarch, and over in Henry Palaszczuk's area—IXL, is producing fire appliances which have been designed, importantly, with input from the rural fires themselves. That makes it just a better product and provides those manufacturers—and manufacturing is a topic of some discussion nationally at the moment—with capabilities and a product which allows them to potentially go overseas. That underscores the importance of a partnership between Emergency Services and the private sector in terms of product development.

**The CHAIRMAN:** Well done. As the Government's allotted time for questions has expired, I now ask the non-Government members to use their allotted time.

**Mr MALONE:** Thank you, Mr Chairman. Minister, I refer to statements by the Premier in relation to performance bonuses paid to senior Public Service executives, specifically when he said that the specific dollar amounts of the bonus were calculated within each department and paid from departmental funding. Minister, I ask: which executives within your department received performance bonuses in 1999-2000? How much did they receive and what, if any, provision has been made in this year's Budget for the payment of performance bonuses?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** There is only one person who would fall into that category, and for details on that I would suggest that you perhaps refer that question through to your leadership to ask the Premier, because he has the responsibility for that with respect to the D-G.

**Mr MALONE:** Minister, you raised the issue of veterans' transport. I know about the situation in Proserpine. I refer to VAST—the Veterans Ambulance Support Scheme—which is certainly a program that I believe will have some good impacts in respect to cutting transportation costs within the QAS. I ask: what follow-up action, as a result of the LAC conference, has the QAS given to the roll-out of the program across Queensland? Could you name the areas where community support would be provided? Has the QAS got a similar proactive scheme to that?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Yes, I am aware of the scheme that you are talking about. There are some real positives with respect to that kind of scheme. I will ask Gerry FitzGerald to provide you with the details.

**Dr FITZGERALD:** The particular scheme that you are referring to was an initiative from Boonah. The RSL at Boonah worked closely with the ambulance service in a trial pilot-type arrangement to provide transport to those

people who are not strictly ambulance cases; they did not require the special ambulance vehicle or the attendance of an ambulance officer during transport. QAS has worked very closely with the RSL at Boonah to test the effectiveness of that. I think that you may have been in attendance at the State conference when a report on that scheme was provided.

Since that time, a number of the people who presented that report at the LAC have also presented a report to the RSL. We have not had an uptake at any specific location at this stage that I am aware of. However, we are still trying to work with the RSL in terms of trying to encourage that. I might also add that there is a broader review under way of the whole issue of non-ambulance health-related transport. That is an area, I think, where that particular initiative would be more broadly considered, I think.

**Mr MALONE:** I respect the comments you made in respect of the roll-out of the rural light attack vehicles. It has come to my notice, though, that a number of veteran trucks—it is in the hundreds—that were supposed to go to inspection on 1 August this year have been deferred for two years. Unfortunately, a lot of the trucks in the veteran range are bigger tanker-type trucks; light attack vehicles are now being put into the field. They are good vehicles but, unfortunately, they carry limited amounts of water and fighting a major fire becomes a problem. What program do you have in place to replace those tanker-type trucks as a backup for the light attack vehicles?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Similar comments have been made to me by a number of rural fire brigades. This is something that I have spoken to the commissioner of QFRA about on a number of occasions. To provide you fully with that information in terms of what we are doing, I will ask Wayne to respond.

**Mr HARTLEY:** Yes, we are recognising that there have been a number of larger tankers which carry in excess of 2,000 and 3,000 litres of water throughout the rural fire service and, yes, they are in the veteran program. Through a group of volunteers we have undertaken to develop a specification for a new tanker. We are cognisant of the fact that, when we develop this tanker, it will have a significant impact on the various individual brigades, even though we have a subsidy system. For instance, in relation to the lighter pump tankers a brigade may provide \$10,000 as its contribution and the Fire Service may contribute the other \$46,000 and, in some cases, \$50,000-odd. We are conscious of the need to produce a vehicle such that it is not

out of the realm of the smaller brigades to access the necessary funds. We are in the process of developing the specifications for a rural fire tanker with the capacity to provide 3,000 litres-plus so that the brigades that have those requirements can seek those sorts of funds and access that vehicle.

**Mr MALONE:** Has an assessment been done of the number of vehicles that meet transport regulations in terms of safety - and I am speaking specifically about the veteran trucks—by the time you get around to the cut-off date?

**Mr HARTLEY:** There is currently an assessment of all of the vehicles across rural fire services. As you are aware, there is a proposal to look at registration for rural fire vehicles. We understand that we need to provide a safe vehicle for our volunteers—that it must meet those requirements. Yes, we are working with individual rural fire brigades to bring those sorts of vehicles under that sort of assessment.

**Mr MALONE:** In terms of communications, has the Department of Emergency Services, the QAS and possibly other support-type areas within the portfolio investigated the use of a full satellite communications tracking system for use on a Statewide basis in conjunction with other services in Queensland or perhaps through mutual service providers? Has any work been done in this respect so that at any one time you have a handle on the location of vehicles?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Sorry, I was struggling with this question until you mentioned vehicle locations. AVL is something that we are investing in particularly in ambulance through the significant investment we have been making in communications right throughout Queensland. AVL has not yet come online in ambulance but it will be coming online within weeks. As I said, it is a new technology. Particularly within Brisbane, that will also provide us with a capability in fire as well. I will ask Gerry to provide you with the details of the AVL which is coming online in the next few weeks.

**Dr FITZGERALD:** Mobile data terminals have been put into vehicles throughout Brisbane and automatic vehicle location will follow. That system will be spread gradually throughout the entire south-east corner, from the Sunshine Coast through to Coolangatta and out to the ranges, over the next 12 months. That will provide the location of vehicles and so on. Extending that technology beyond the south-east corner, as you can imagine, is extremely difficult. It depends

ultimately on radio technology and radio access, and that requires effective radio coverage. In Queensland, which is a big State, that is fairly hard to do. I am not aware of any particular investigation with respect to the use of satellites to facilitate that at this stage in the rural areas, but certainly the satellite is used for global positioning in the south-east corner.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** But there are also different imperatives. Where AVL works best is obviously in densely populated areas where you need to know the location of the closest ambulance or fire engine to a particular job. That imperative is less so in less densely populated areas where your demand for services is not as significant as would be the case down in the south-east corner. It is really horses for courses. What the investment in AVL, particularly in ambulance, is indicative of is our continuing commitment to maintain and improve response times. AVL is part of the overall package we are investing in. One can assume that, as demand picks up in other areas, we will make the necessary investment in technology where it would have a demonstrable impact on the service that we deliver to the community. But you would not invest in that kind of technology if you are not going to get the returns for your money invested. That is why we are concentrating particularly on the south-east corner. How much does it cost?

**Mr MALONE:** Tell me.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The actual cost of the project is \$9.255m over five years.

**Mr MALONE:** The greater part of Queensland is in rural areas. I am concerned about getting ambulance, aircraft and even firefighting equipment to specific locations. Have you identified either through satellite or through property identification ways and means of doing that in a more effective way? Have you set aside funds in respect of that in terms of property identification or, in terms of the previous question, with satellite?

**Mr ROBERTSON:** The most effective way to address those problems is really through the rural road addressing system that has now been in place for a couple of years. As you would be aware—I point this out for the benefit of city-based members—it is about finally putting numbers on rural and remote properties along roads. That provides the whole range of benefits, particularly for Emergency Services, which might otherwise get the call to Bob's place just down the road, over the creek and down the dirt road.

**Mr MALONE:** What about the rural—

**Mr ROBERTSON:** I am getting to this. I was just helping out city members. That program is a very good program. However, it disappoints me that not all local governments in Queensland have picked up on that system. That damages the integrity of that system throughout Queensland. That is the most effective way of ensuring that our Emergency Services know where they are going. When I was out at Mount Larcom, just near Gladstone, they provided me with the example that along the Bruce Highway properties in one council boundary have adopted the rural road addressing system but the neighbouring property has not. So when they get a call for a fire along the Bruce Highway, there is still ongoing confusion as to where that property actually is. The best thing that we can do is—

**Mr MALONE:** It is the—

**Mr ROBERTSON:** No. The best thing we can do is convince those local authorities that do not participate in the system to actually participate to get uniformity right throughout Queensland. I am not trying to have a shot at your side of politics whatsoever, but there are a couple of members on your side who do not support this system, and they are looking for all sorts of other tricky technological solutions for Emergency Services. The easiest and the most fundamental way that we can get consistency of service throughout Queensland is for every council to adopt that rural road addressing system.

**Mr MALONE:** I have one final question. It is probably a bit of a fishing expedition but I will ask it seeing as it is the last question. I know that the Department of Emergency Services tries to run a tight ship, but in terms of trying to save money I am hearing disturbing rumours that the SES as an organisation is talking of taking over the rural fire service. I need your answer in respect of that.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Not only are you on a fishing expedition, but you are doing it with a very long line.

**Mr MALONE:** I am using dynamite.

**Mr ROBERTSON:** Whatever assurance you want from me, I am prepared to give it to you. I will even invoke my mother or something like that to help you out.

**The CHAIRMAN:** As the time allotted for the consideration of the Estimates for the Department for Emergency Services has expired, I thank the Minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance here today. Before they leave, I would like to remind them that the transcript for this part of the hearing will be

available on Hansard's Internet Quick Access web site within two hours from now. That also concludes the Committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the Parliament on 22 June 2000.

I would like to thank the Hansard officers for their assistance in providing the transcript of this hearing. I would also like to thank Sarah Lim, Sandy Musch, Tamara Reader and Rachelle Stacey for their assistance with timekeeping duties as well as the parliamentary attendants, particularly Patty, my mate, who gets me everything I need. I would also like to thank the Committee, Jo-Ann Miller, Linda Lavarch and Lawrence Springborg and I would particularly like to thank two members from the non-Government side. Ted Malone and Mike Horan had very long days today because of the funerals they attended before coming here and holding up their side in regards to this hearing. I thank them very much for their assistance. I also thank everybody in the catering area who has assisted us here today in feeding everybody around the place. I now declare this hearing formally concluded.

The Committee adjourned at 7.32 p.m.