

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE B

Mr G. J. Wilson (Chair)

Mr J. M. English
Mr W. B. I. Flynn
Ms J. H. JarrattMr P. J. Lawlor
Mr J. W. Seeney
Mr L. J. Springborg**ATTORNEY-GENERAL, JUSTICE****IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. R. J. Welford, Attorney-General and Minister for Justice

Dr K. Levy, Director-General

Mr R. Newton, Director, Financial and Property Services

Mr D. Schulz, Executive Director, Administration of Justice

The committee commenced at 9.00 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee 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 Appropriation Bill 2001 for the areas as set out in the sessional orders. The organisational units will be examined in the following order: the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice from 9 a.m. to 12 noon; the Minister for Police and Corrective Services from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m.; and the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

I remind members of the committee and the Attorney-General 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 of the expiration 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 allocated to non-government members. I ask departmental witnesses to identify themselves before they answer a question so that Hansard can record that information in their transcript.

In the event that those attending today are not aware, I should point out that the proceedings are similar to parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. In that regard I remind members of the public that in accordance with standing order 195 strangers, that is, the public, may be admitted to or excluded from the hearing at the pleasure of the committee.

In relation to media coverage of the Estimates Committee B hearing, the committee has resolved that television file footage without sound will be allowed for the opening statements by the chair and ministers and that radio and print media coverage will be allowed at other times. I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice to be open for examination. The question before the chair is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Attorney-General, if you wish, you may make an opening statement, but would you please limit it to no more than five minutes. Thank you.

Mr WELFORD: Thank you, Mr Chairman, and members of the committee. I thank the committee for this opportunity to comment on our government's budget for 2001-02 for the Attorney-General and Justice portfolio. This budget strengthens our government's commitment to an equitable justice system by providing further protection for people's rights and contributing to better and safer communities.

\$10 million has been allocated over the next four years to Legal Aid Queensland to ensure that legal assistance is available to those who need it most and not just to those who can afford it. This commitment is about giving ordinary battlers a fair go in our justice system, wherever they live and whatever their problems. It is worth pointing out that since our government has been in office the state's contribution to Legal Aid funding has risen by 50 per cent, from \$14.4 million in 1997-98 to \$21.7 million in this financial year. Our government's approach has meant benefits for a range of groups in the community, including indigenous women, assault victims, the mentally ill and children of families involved in child protection proceedings.

This budget also supports our government's priority for safer and more supportive communities. Additional funding has been provided to another of our government's important initiatives, the drug courts trial. This 30-month trial began in June last year. It aims to give people a chance to break the drug cycle by undergoing rehabilitation instead of going to jail. Another \$1.67 million was provided in this year's budget to support the trial in south-east Queensland and to begin planning for an expansion to Cairns and Townsville.

I would also like to draw the attention of the committee to the ongoing program to improve our courts through technological improvements and capital works. \$41.9 million has been allocated in this year's budget for a range of projects, including the start of the new Brisbane Magistrates Court complex, the Inala Magistrates Court and upgraded facilities in Mackay, Mount Isa and Wynnum. \$1.2 million has been provided to purchase land at Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast for a new courthouse in the future. This recognises that region's rapid growth. Our government is working to bring all our courts into the 21st century. The computerisation of our Magistrates Courts was completed in November last year. In this budget a further \$3.9 million is being allocated to this courts modernisation project.

I have already mentioned the importance our government places on Legal Aid Queensland. It is one of four organisations that operates within my portfolio that contribute to the government's priorities and outcomes. The other three organisations, the Anti-Discrimination Commission, the Public Trust Office and the Electoral Commission, also deliver a broad range of important services to Queenslanders and have received additional funding in this state budget.

Question on notice No. 9 asked by this estimates committee sought statistics on the drug court pilot program. The answer said that at 30 June 2001 145 intensive drug rehabilitation orders—IDROs—had been issued. Since that question was answered, further documentation was received by the drug courts registry, resulting in a further four IDROs being issued by the court, taking the total now to 149. Consequential amendments have been made to the answer previously provided, and with the leave of the committee I seek to table the updated answer to question on notice No. 9.

The CHAIRMAN: Leave is granted.

Mr WELFORD: I have copies for each of the members of the committee. That concludes my opening statement, Mr Chairman. I thank the committee for the opportunity to make these comments and I welcome any questions from the committee.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions is allocated to the non-government members. I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman, Attorney-General and officers of your department. My first question relates to question on notice No. 9 on the drug court program. I require further clarification from the Attorney-General on a number of these points. I note that you indicate that 149 intensive drug rehabilitation orders have been issued from 365 referrals. I refer you to page 2, which indicates that 129 participants are currently on the program, 103 of whom are active while 26 have absconded. From my reading of it, that would indicate that 20 per cent of those people who are active participants in the program have actually gone at large and there would appear to me to be no active way of knowing where they are. Can you indicate to me what action your department or kindred departments are taking to try to address that particular problem and how long some of these people have actually absconded for?

Mr WELFORD: The first thing to understand, Mr Springborg, is that, as you would appreciate, we are dealing with people who, like any person with an addiction, are prone to lapse. In the grand scheme of things, to have less than a third of the overall number referred to the program lapse at any one time is not necessarily exceptional. By 'absconded' we mean people who have not returned or accounted to Corrective Services or the court on the day they are required to return and report their regular progress. For all those people who have left the program without authority, as is the case for anyone who breaches conditions imposed by the court, bench warrants have been issued for their arrest. Police will, as in the normal course, pursue inquiries with a view to bringing those people back before the courts.

I must say that my initial reaction was like yours—surprise, somewhat, at the number of people who appeared not to be responding to the program even though they had been referred to it. It raised in my mind questions as to whether sufficient or appropriate information was being put before the magistrates before these people were referred to the program. But when one compares it with similar drug courts systems elsewhere, such as in New South Wales, one sees that our track record so far, given that it is only a trial at this stage and we are still honing the system, is remarkably good.

In New South Wales, although a number of people are still on the program only 3.2 per cent of the program's participants have actually graduated so far. We still have to wait some time before the 12-month rehabilitation program that people are referred to is completed, so we are yet to have some graduates. But 42.5 per cent of the people referred to rehabilitation in New South Wales drug courts have been terminated, either for failing to complete the program or for absconding. Our track record is better than that so far, but I am hoping we can improve on it.

As for those who have absconded, although they are people who obviously do not have a social structure of support none of them are violent offenders of any kind. They are people who were assessed as appropriate for referral to the drug court rehabilitation process. Of those who have absconded up to now, while 26 have left the program, some have been rearrested fairly quickly. Some of those have returned to residential rehabilitation and settled down. So there will be cases where

people lapse. That is to be expected. Where it is appropriate they are given a second chance. If their lapsing is regarded by the court as incorrigible, then they go to jail.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I suppose my reading of this would be that there is probably a bit of a difference between lapsing and absconding. Paragraph (g) on page 2 of the answer states that 71 participants have received a total of 220 sanctions. At the end of the day, some of those people would have lapsed but they have received sanctions and are still on the program. I would say that there is probably a difference between those people and those who have actually absconded from the program. My reading of it, though, is still that, regardless of those that have been rearrested and taken back, there are still 26 at large.

I refer you to the fact that there appears to have been 149 people put on the program, and 20 of those are no longer active participants. That would indicate that they have already been taken off the program. Either they have voluntarily left the program as per New South Wales or they have been taken off the program by the drug court magistrate. So in actual fact there are 46 people who have either left the program or absconded. That is a significant percentage. Can you indicate why those 20 people have left the program?

Mr WELFORD: People leave the program for various reasons. For example, if they are referred to a residential rehabilitation facility and they breach the rules while they are under rehabilitation in that facility—such as if they fail drug tests—then they can be discharged from the facility, the intensive drug rehabilitation order is terminated, and they are liable to return to prison. If they abscond, as you indicate, then the drug court is informed and the court issues a bench warrant for their arrest.

The court, of course, is liaising closely with rehabilitation centres to seek to minimise this problem. But again, I think we need to remember two things. Firstly, the people referred to these rehabilitation programs are referred because there is some prospect of rehabilitation. It is expected that not every one of them will succeed, but that is what rehabilitation is about: making our best endeavours to treat these people in a way that would be more likely to be effective than if they merely went to prison and continued to be an addict. But the court liaises closely with the centres and with the police, and any person who does not measure up to the program is discharged from it.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Please do not get me wrong. I very much support this program, because I have been agitating for it for a long time. For me, it is an issue of administration, of course. It is something that we have spoken about previously. I asked a question earlier as a subpart to one of my questions, and you may not have had time to actually answer it. I did ask how long these people had actually absconded for, and I would be interested to know if you had that particular information with you for each of those individual people or if you could indicate a particular bracket of time, from minimum to maximum, that those abscondee or absconders have been at large.

Mr WELFORD: I do not have the exact figures on the number of days or weeks for each of the people who have absconded. I am happy to see if we can get that information. It may not be information that is readily available. As you would appreciate, in the case of some people who fail to attend court on their return date, in some cases the explanation can be innocent. They are treated as having absconded when they do not attend, and they are picked up very quickly—often within the next day. Others may be at large and their whereabouts unknown. That

breakdown about those that have been at large for more than a few days I do not have immediately, but I undertake to see if that information is available to get it to you.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I appreciate that. With my experience in the New South Wales program, there might be people who have gone truck driving and have not turned up. But one would imagine they would turn up the next week. But if it is a period of longer than a week or two, it is really quite serious absconding.

Mr WELFORD: I agree with you.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I turn now to the issue of drug testing in answer to the same question—part (f)—where you indicate that 2,837 regular drug tests have been carried out on program participants and 30 random drug tests have been carried out. One of my real issues all the way along has been—since witnessing the early stages of the New South Wales program—to seek to ensure real, regular drug testing. It was indicated by me by a senior person in New South Wales that it had to be at least twice and preferably three times a week because of the nature of drugs. And even if somebody is addicted to heroin, they can have used heroin and be tested twice a week and still slip through the net because of the morphine traces in their urine samples. Can you indicate the average number of tests on each participant? It would appear to me, from a reading of this, that it probably works out to be a maximum of two and probably more likely one test per week on each participant.

Mr WELFORD: I think you are right. It is between one and two per week. It depends to some extent on who is monitoring the issue. For example, those in residential facilities are under closer supervision than those who are being treated as outpatients. The precise figures on that are not held by me. They would be held by Corrective Services, because Corrective Services are responsible for the management of people once the courts, under my portfolio, refer them. So you need to get someone to ask the Corrective Services Minister for that detail.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I suppose I would encourage you, as the minister who is responsible for the legislation that established the drug court program, to be very much aware of this—as you would no doubt continue to be—and ensure, with your kindred colleagues, that the testing regime, if need be, is strengthened, because it is an extremely important part of it.

I refer to some of the media statements that have come out over the last year that the program has been going. I refer particularly to one gentleman who had been on the program for some period of a 32-week drug rehabilitation program and was actually found dead from a drug overdose. I would have thought that, whereas these things are possible, an efficient regular testing regime as well as a random regime should somewhat minimise that, because obviously this person had a significant ongoing problem and had been slipping through the net. So that is something we really need to look at. Is it still the government's intention, over the life of the trial program, to have 600 participants?

Mr WELFORD: That is the intention. As you know, we are in the process of evaluating the program now. Factors like the level of termination or absconding factors like the frequency of testing, which you properly mentioned, and other factors will be evaluated on an ongoing basis through to the end of next year to seek to refine the effectiveness of the system.

In terms of the overall number—to be perfectly frank, I think we have found that the intensity of the assistance required by Corrective Services officers in managing

people referred to the program has been greater than anticipated. It may be that the number that we originally anticipated over the period of the pilot—the 30-month pilot period—will not be achieved, not because we have withdrawn from our desire to refer that many people but simply because of the amount of time and effort required by Corrective Services officers to manage the referees.

As you may have recently noticed in media reports, we are looking now at capping the number of referrals in any one year to somewhere between 140 and 150. It was originally thought that we could refer more than that, but because of the workload involved in managing referees—while the courts have the capacity obviously to make orders referring more, Corrective Services—obviously in the trial period at least—have a defined staff allocation to manage them, and we think between 140 and 150 at any one time is probably an appropriate number. We could refer more. We could seek to manage more. But then we would run into problems like you identified about adequate supervision, sufficiency of frequent testing, and so forth. So the exact number that we are likely to get to by the end of the trial at the end of next year we are not sure of at this stage, but I am being frank with you in saying that it may be that we do not get to the 600 that was originally flagged.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It would appear to me that the amount of necessary ancillary resources in other departments to make sure the program met its original goals has not necessarily been made available. It would appear that your courts would be capable of referring those people, but Corrective Services and your colleague the Minister for Health have not necessarily made available the resources to be able to ensure that original number of 600 people suggested by your predecessor are able to take part in the program.

I have a number of press reports here from the Premier: on 11 September, 300 offenders a year; again from the Premier on 24 January last year, 600 offenders taking part in the program; and your predecessor, on 2 March last year, 600 offenders. It would appear to me that there is no way on earth that, with the current amount going into the program per year, you will be able to meet that and, in actual fact, you might fall short by about 50 per cent. Because you indicated the other day that it was originally intended to be 141. There was a press report that I saw in which you said it may be 141, as intended earlier. So would you be prepared to concede that you are only at halfway there?

Mr WELFORD: It was originally intended that there be more than 141. What I am saying to you is that we have so far, after 12 months, had 365 referrals.

Mr SPRINGBORG: There is a difference between referrals and participants.

Mr WELFORD: We have 365 referrals, but we have 149 intensive drug rehabilitation orders made. You need to appreciate that the Premier's comments and the original estimate of the likely number of referrals, or IDROs, was based on what Corrective Services originally believed they could handle.

As I say, there is no lack of will on the part of the government to make this system work. But as you would appreciate, what we need to do between now and the end of next year is refine the system as much as we can and evaluate a system which demonstrates that referring people for drug rehabilitation is more effective on two fronts: one, it costs less than keeping people in prison; and two, it makes at least some progress. Even if it only achieved the first one, we would be ahead; but it should also make some progress to helping people overcome addiction more effectively than they otherwise would in prison.

For that purpose, in the first year—1999-2000—Corrective Services were allocated \$588,000. This last year they were allocated a similar amount. And in 2001-02 they will have \$1.45 million. So there is a significant increase in this coming year to respond precisely to the point you made about the unexpected intensity of their workload in making sure that there is adequate supervision and monitoring of these referees.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for non-government members' questions on this occasion has expired. Attorney-General, I refer you to page 1-44 of the MPS and the reference to the new Brisbane Magistrates Courts complex. Could the minister outline plans for this new complex and the benefits it will bring?

Mr WELFORD: The proposed new Brisbane Magistrates Courts complex is a \$127 million project. Apart from providing a major boost to the construction industry, which has suffered a downturn over the past year or so partly attributable to the GST, this project will generate about 600 construction jobs. It is to be located in what is currently a car park bounded by George and Turbot Streets. It will, I believe, be a major Brisbane landmark and a cornerstone of the redevelopment of that location, known as Queensland Place.

The current central courts building at North Quay, which currently houses most of the Brisbane central business district Magistrates Courts, was built originally in 1974. It was designed as an office building and converted during construction to overcome what was then identified as a shortfall in courts accommodation following a fire which destroyed the old Supreme Court building in 1968. It is well known in legal circles that the North Quay building is only barely coping with the current level of demand and it would be difficult to make adequate modifications for future needs in that building. The new complex, which will incorporate significant advances in courtroom technology, will provide much more flexibility in the delivery of justice, particularly in the use of video for taking evidence. For the first time the Brisbane CBD Magistrates Court service will be accommodated in a purpose-built courthouse building.

The new complex will accommodate 33 hearing rooms. All courtrooms will be multifunctional. In other words, they will be able to be used for formal court hearings or for more informal dispute resolution processes. There will be a new custodial facility to provide day accommodation for alleged offenders who are on remand and need to appear in court.

Other key features of the development are that the facilities for aggrieved parties of domestic violence proceedings will have special facilities awaiting for their appearance. It will have enhanced security for magistrates, obviously, for the public and for the retention of people in custody. It will provide more waiting space in foyers for people and practitioners who are waiting to appear in court and it will provide conference rooms and interview rooms to allow legal practitioners to consult with clients. There will also be facilities, using the new technology that is now available, to allow evidence to be given remotely through video conferencing.

Mr WILSON: If I could take you to page 1-2 of the MPS and the commitment to provide additional funding of \$10 million over four years for legal aid. I understand that funding for legal aid has changed considerably since the Beattie government first came to office in June 1998. Could the minister indicate the difference in access to justice arising from this funding boost?

Mr WELFORD: As I indicated in my opening statement, legal aid funding has changed considerably since the Beattie government came to office in June 1998. I

believe this is something that has been greatly underestimated and under-recognised in terms of the giant leap forward in access to justice that this additional funding has provided. As I mentioned, in the 1997-98 year the budget allocation from the state for legal aid was \$14.4 million. Today—this financial year—it stands at \$21.7 million—a full 50 per cent increase since our government came to office.

During the same period, unfortunately, the funding commitment from the Commonwealth, the Liberal-National Party coalition in Canberra, has not matched our government's commitment to give everyone in the community access to justice and a fair go. Commonwealth funding has risen marginally from \$20 million to \$25 million, but compared to our performance, the Commonwealth performance, frankly, is pathetic, given the demand in the community for access to legal assistance.

Our government's increased support for Legal Aid Queensland has resulted in new and better services for a range of groups in the community, including rural and regional Queensland. The Howard government might choose to ignore people in the bush, but our government never will. Our government's additional funding will also ensure that legal assistance is available to those who need it most and not just to those who can afford it. It is about giving ordinary battlers a fair go in the justice system wherever they live and whatever their problems. It has also meant certainty for the many people who work or volunteer their time in our community legal centres. Alongside Legal Aid Queensland, these community legal centres ensure the socially and financially disadvantaged in our community have access to justice. They are at the coalface of the legal system, providing affordable legal assistance and educating people about their legal rights.

In fact, I am very pleased to advise the committee today that Legal Aid Queensland has now finalised a funding agreement for the community legal sector for the next four years that will see base funding maintained and increased in every single case. Every single community legal centre currently receiving funding will receive an increase this year. This means that for the first time these centres will have long-term funding certainty over four years and viability—something that was never delivered by any previous coalition government. Services such as the Caxton Legal Centre, the Environmental Defenders Office, the Women's Legal Service, the Logan Youth Legal Service and the remaining centres around Queensland can now get on with the job that they do so well.

Mr WILSON: Minister, I refer you to page 1-30 of the MPS and the reference to the drug court pilot at Beenleigh, Southport and Ipswich. Could the minister advise the committee of funding for this important initiative and add to the information that you have already provided to the committee on the progress of the trial?

Mr WELFORD: I thank you for the opportunity to expand on the discussion of issues that were canvassed with Mr Springborg a moment ago. The drug courts trial, I believe, provides a realistic initiative to break the cycle of drug dependence. It marks a comprehensive shift in the way the Queensland criminal justice system has dealt with drug-related crime. No previous government has ever introduced such a constructive approach. By diverting offenders who meet strict criteria from a prison term to a rehabilitation program, they have the opportunity to reclaim their lives. It is not easy for people addicted to drugs to break the habit, but this program offers them a very stark choice—a choice to either break the habit or go to jail.

The reason our government is supporting this trial is the positive outcomes that it can produce for the community as a whole. A successful rehabilitation means fewer housebreakings, fewer car thefts and other crimes committed by drug-

addicted offenders to pay for their habit. It needs to be remembered that most of this petty crime is driven not by criminal intent necessarily but purely by the need to support an addiction. It is also good news for the mums and dads of these drug-addicted offenders—ordinary Queenslanders who deserve more than rhetoric on the issue.

My department is a lead agency for this 30-month trial and is being supported by the Departments of Corrective Services, Health, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Housing. Total government spending was increased in this year's budget and now totals \$6.33 million over the life of the project. Funding across government in this financial year is \$2.89 million. This funding allows for around 140 intensive drug rehabilitation orders to be issued by the drug court magistrate each year during the trial. There are currently 46 rehabilitation beds allocated for intensive retention rehabilitation in south-east Queensland. We will obviously evaluate the adequacy of this number at the end of the trial once we determine whether the trial is successful enough to continue beyond the current year.

Many of those placed on IDROs prefer to undergo treatment as an outpatient and maintain some semblance of a normal life, particularly if they have employment. Others with severe addictions seek full-time in-patient care. An extra \$1.1 million in this year's budget will support the assessment and monitoring of offenders by the Department of Corrective Services at the Ipswich, Beenleigh and Southport courts. Corrective Services, through its community correctional officers, provides assessments of potential participants, case management services, provision of offender programs, advice to courts, data input, drug testing and surveillance. An additional \$500,000 was provided to the Health Department to plan the establishment of rehabilitation beds to extend the trial to Townsville and Cairns.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, I refer you to page 1-17 of the MPS and the reference to a review of the proceeds of crime legislation. Could the minister explain what is involved in this review and what changes the government is considering?

Mr WELFORD: The review of the proceeds of crime legislation is prompted by the government's need to assess the feasibility of an additional component of confiscation law, that is, civil confiscation. These laws are already in place in New South Wales and Victoria and we believe they are potentially a valuable tool to be used in the fight against organised crime, and drug trafficking in particular.

Between 1985 and 1993, all Australian jurisdictions enacted legislation enabling the confiscation of the proceeds of crime. Indeed, I worked for the Commonwealth Director of Public Prosecutions in implementing the first of such legislation at a national level. The key common feature of these legislative schemes, when initially established, was that they were based on obtaining a conviction. They were designed to send a message to criminals in our society that crime does not pay.

Over the years, the schemes, including Queensland's, have been amended and adjusted in various ways to make them more effective. What this review is about is looking at a significant enhancement of the scheme to pick up what other jurisdictions have started to do and what is currently under assessment by the Commonwealth for the potential for confiscation of assets through civil proceedings as distinct from awaiting a final conviction.

In 1999, New South Wales enacted a non-conviction-based civil forfeiture scheme. Victoria did it in 1997 and Western Australia did it in its own convoluted

manner from 1 January this year. The Commonwealth Law Reform Commission in 1999 also undertook a review of confiscation of legislation and has made recommendations for a non-conviction based civil confiscation scheme to operate at the Commonwealth level. The Commonwealth are in the process of responding to that Law Reform Commission report and various proposals, both by the current federal government and the current federal opposition, have been proposed for its scheme.

In Queensland, of course, we have the Crimes (Confiscation) Act 1989. While it has had some effect, I am very keen, while in the role as Minister for Justice, to enhance the effectiveness of this very important adjunct in the fight against crime motivated by greed. There are a number of issues that I think need to be considered in this context and the purpose of this review is to ensure that in expanding our current legislation to include civil proceedings for the confiscation of assets we have the best possible tools available to law enforcement agencies in the country.

Ms JARRATT: I refer the minister to page 1-30 of the MPS in which it states that there will be a continued development of the SPER system. Could the minister explain the benefit of SPER since its introduction and how the system will be delivered over the next 12 months?

Mr WELFORD: Yes. The SPER system has been an innovation by our government with legislation introduced in 1999. SPER, of course, is the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. The purpose of the legislation establishing the registry is threefold. Firstly, it is to ensure that the imposition of fines remains an effective penalty for our courts and that fines are recovered; to ensure that fine defaulters pay their debts to the community; and, hopefully, to keep fine defaulters out of jails.

Of course, there are occasionally people who choose not to pay the fine for serious offences, because they either choose to go to jail or do not care whether they do. In those cases, then the penalty that fits the crime should still be paid. But this is a system designed to provide people who have a fine imposed on them with the greatest possible opportunity to pay that fine.

Some of the outstanding fines date back to 1975 and, frankly, it has been a difficult issue for successive governments over decades in recovering these outstanding fines. The idea of locking people up, of course, for fine defaulting does not work and it is certainly not cost effective—it does not recover the money owed to the state. SPER replaced the SETONS registry—the Self-Enforcing Ticketable Offence Notice System. SPER began on 27 November last year.

I have already mentioned the number of fine defaulters going to prison, but I should reinforce the point about the range of payment options that are now available for fine defaulters. Previously, if you could not pay your full fine by the time it was due, then in default you automatically went to prison. Now we have mechanisms to enable people to pay off their fines, whether they are court imposed or whether they are imposed by infringement notices.

Other court orders such as for restitution, compensation or amounts forfeited under bail and good behaviour undertakings or sureties can also be paid through the SPER system. It provides commercial practices for the collection of fines such as credit card, EFTPOS, direct debit, Australia Post and garnishee facilities. It is electronically linked to the Queensland Transport fine notice system, Australia Post, the Commonwealth Bank and the Department of Corrective Services. A secure

registration area of the SPER web site also allows all registered local governments to lodge and withdraw matters for fines payable to local government via the Internet.

Ms JARRATT: I refer the minister to page 1-17 of the MPS and the reference to the legal profession review. Could the minister provide an update of that review and advise whether a recent change in solicitors' conduct rules is part of that review?

Mr WELFORD: The legal profession has a very important role in our society. People ought to be able to go it for sound and safe legal advice. In our last term, our government began a wide-ranging review of legal profession reform issues. There were two rounds of public consultation on a discussion paper in 1998 and a green paper in 1999.

Last year, just before the election was called, a package of reforms was announced by my predecessor, the Honourable Matt Foley. Some of those reforms included enhancements to the dispute, complaints and disciplinary processes, cost assessment and fidelity fund regimes. Also proposed were common admission, national practising certificates and tightened rules for solicitors' advertising.

Since the election, I have been working with the Queensland Law Society to finalise and implement those reforms. In terms of the timetable for implementation, I am currently working through a few final issues and expect to announce the detail of the agreed reform package shortly. I anticipate that legislation, so far as it is necessary to implement the reforms, will be introduced by the end of the year.

Those legal reforms are not expected to have any direct budgetary implications for the government. The costs of regulating in this area have historically been met out of practising certificate fees for solicitors and solicitors' trust account interest. The new regime, of course, will extend not just to solicitors but also to barristers practising in our courts.

The recent change to solicitors' conduct, which I announced in the parliament a couple of weeks ago, does not relate directly to the review of legal profession regulation. It arose from the government's monitoring of the withdrawal by the Australian Securities and Investment Commission of an order exempting solicitors' mortgage investment schemes from the Corporations Law. Such schemes were given until 31 October this year to comply with Corporations Law or be terminated.

ASIC advised me that a review that it was conducting of these so-called run-out schemes indicated that there was likely to be a high level of default. At the same time, I was advised that the professional indemnity insurance policy covering solicitors' mortgage practices, which expired on 30 June just gone, would only cover claims if the practitioner notified the circumstances giving rise to the claim to the insurer before that expiry. That is why I intervened to change solicitors' professional conduct rules to force them to notify the indemnity insurer of any suspect loan before 30 June this year. Those who fail to do so will face charges of professional misconduct and be liable to be banned from practising as solicitors in Queensland.

The Law Society has also conducted audits of a number of those practices to ensure that all relevant notifications were made by 30 June. This, of course, will help protect any consumers who may have future claims in negligence against solicitors who managed mortgage investment schemes negligently.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for government questions has expired. I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Attorney-General, I take you back to the drug court program for a little while, with regards to previous answers and discussions on the number of participants. Are you indicating that those people who have been referred to the

program but not actually put on the program, the 365, need to be considered in the overall number of people who are actual participants in the program? As I understand it, they are just referrals and it is then up to the court to decide whether they are suitable. I would have thought that the people who were actually participating in the full range of rehabilitative measures would be the only participants in the program.

Mr WELFORD: I understand the distinction that you are drawing, but in a sense the distinction is a little academic. As you correctly point out, people are referred and some people are assessed as suitable. The situation at the moment is that we believe about 140—a maximum of 150—is the appropriate number to be on an IDRO, an intensive drug rehabilitation order, at any one time. That takes account of the number of residential placements that are available, both through government hospitals and through community organisations running rehabilitation centres, and the number who are able to be placed and supervised adequately by Corrective Services in outpatient rehabilitation.

We can wrestle with the figures whichever way we like, but the figures and the facts are as I have stated them. There were 365 referrals over the last year. Of those, 149 have been considered suitable for orders to be made. In more recent times, as we started to approach the maximum limit of the numbers that are able to be managed under the program, there are some who may be assessed as suitable but have yet to have orders made because, for example, there may not yet be a placement available either in the community or in Health Department residential facilities.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am reluctant to labour the point to the Attorney-General. However, I keep reading the original second reading speech by the Attorney-General and also subsequent press statements. They would all indicate to me that there are 600 offenders in 24 months, with six months evaluation, basically leaving 300 per year to participate as part of an IDRO. That is the way that it would seem to me. As far as you are concerned, that is not the right conclusion to draw?

Mr WELFORD: I think you could draw that conclusion, yes. I am not debating with you the validity of the point that you are making. It is fair to say that when the program was established, the advice of government departments to the government, regardless of who was in office, was that, based on certain staff resources, about 300 a year could be managed through the program. That would take account of 300 IDROs, some of which would lapse and be terminated.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I appreciate that.

Mr WELFORD: Some would make it through the 12 to 18 months of rehabilitation and succeed, but 300 IDROs would be made in a year. As I have explained earlier, the simple fact of the matter is that the intensity of the management and supervision required particularly by Corrective Services officers has, as it has transpired, resulted in that department indicating that, for the purpose of the pilot, a more manageable number is between 140 and 150 at any one time. If, at the end the pilot, we believe that the system as a concept will then be successful, obviously the government will expand funding to the program so that many more can undertake it. By then we will have proved the cost-effectiveness and the treatment effectiveness of the program. However, I guess it is very easy for there to be claims that, in the course of the 30-month pilot, the government should be putting more resources into the pilot. I accept that that is a point that you would like to make. My only response to that is this—and you accept, Mr Springborg, that I have only been in the saddle for three months.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I do accept that.

Mr WELFORD: I want this system to work and I want it to be managed effectively. Frankly, even if Treasury were to offer double the money to take more than 150, I would be reluctant to throw taxpayers' money into the program before we get a clearer view of how we can make the system work effectively. If we have 150 people at any one time who are the subject of orders on rehabilitation being managed, and if we can show that for the pilot 150 can work and it is better than sending people to prison, that is the result that we want at the end of the next year. In that way, whoever is in government in the future has sound justification for expecting more funding for a wider program.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Attorney, I acknowledge that you only caught the ball a couple of months ago, but from our point of view it is an issue of reference to what was originally indicated, and it is an issue of accountability, I suppose. The other issue that I would like to raise, and I mentioned this earlier on, is the length of time that people have actually been on the program. Would it be possible for you to provide the committee with the number of person weeks that participants have been on the program? We talk about a Capital Works Program that will create so many thousand person years of work. I am not sure if you have that information here, but I would very much appreciate it because it would provide me with an opportunity to really compare the effectiveness of the drug testing regime and how often it has been applied.

Mr WELFORD: If I can take that on notice, I will certainly provide that information to Mr Springborg and the committee.

Mr SPRINGBORG: With regard to the government's intended expansion of the drug court program to Townsville and Cairns, which is very similar to our policy, although we want to include Mackay, I note that you have a certain amount of money indicated. This is referred to at page 1-2 of the MPS. With regards to the expansion of the program, you indicate that there is money there for planning. Can you give an indication of when you actually expect the drug court program to be up and running in both Townsville and Cairns?

Mr WELFORD: What we discovered, and one of the reasons for not processing—certainly in the residential rehab program—the number of people that was originally anticipated on advice to government is that it takes some time for residential beds to be established. That is why this year we have allocated \$500,000 primarily to the Health Department to arrange for rehab beds to be established in Townsville and Cairns. That will get the facilities established and make the spaces available. Whether we actually start referring people to those rehab beds in this financial year we have yet to determine. It depends how long it takes for those beds to come online, but I would advise the committee that the formal starting date for expanding into Townsville and Cairns would be 1 July next year. If the beds are available earlier and the courts are ready to allocate in Townsville and/or Cairns before that time, then we are happy to do that. However, the starting point is that certainly IDROs should be able to be made in Townsville and Cairns, at the very latest, from 1 July next year.

Mr SPRINGBORG: My next question is on a different matter. I turn now to the Electoral Commission of Queensland, which is at page 2-2 of the MPS. There have been a number of issues that the government has raised in this area. One, of course, is the desire of the government to hold a referendum on four-year terms. I indicate that the budget of the Electoral Commission of Queensland reflects the fact that we have just had a state election with the normal inputs and outputs that one

would expect. I would imagine that if the government were to have a referendum on four-year terms to bring them about at the start of the next parliamentary term if passed, there would need to be some facilitation of that somewhere in the MPS, including the normal education programs and all the ancillary information that needs to be released, including the ballot. Is there any money available in this year's budget for that? If not, can you indicate when it is likely to be and, also, the time frame for the holding of such a referendum?

Mr WELFORD: As you point out, there is no specific allocation in the budget at this stage for holding a referendum on four-year terms. The reason for that is obvious—no decision has yet been made by the government as to when or if such a referendum will be held in the current financial year. Obviously, if I was aware of the date that it would be held I would be more than happy to inform you and the committee, but no such decision has been made at this stage. As far as I am concerned, the sooner we can make a decision and get a four-year term the better. But to some extent it depends on your cooperation, Mr Springborg. I know that you would be a strong supporter of four-year terms, as would your colleague Mr Flynn, to provide stable and strong government in Queensland, as occurs in every other Australian jurisdiction except the Commonwealth.

But I think there need to be further discussions between the government and the other parties in relation to any option that might be taken forward. The government is not going to take forward a referendum on a whim. We obviously believe that, as the experience has demonstrated elsewhere, four-year terms are a good balance. The UK national government has five years. We have had three years. As the Queensland Constitutional Commission said in its report a year or two ago, with three-year terms your first budget is usually paying off the commitments of the previous government, your second budget might actually look at some longer term planning, and your third budget is getting ready to pay for your promises at the next election. We really do need some stability.

My view is—and I hope you share my view—that fixed four-year terms are the way to go so that no government and no Premier of any political colour can fiddle with election dates in order to try to advantage government or disadvantage opposition. But I presume that there will be further discussions between your Leader of the National Party and the other party representatives as to whether there can be some consensus around a model that is, if not the preferred model of everyone, at least one that everyone can accept. I think it makes sense for government. It makes sense for the long-term planning of our state. In the long-term, the reality is that all political parties will benefit equally from it. But the most important beneficiary will be the people of Queensland if we can achieve more stable government.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am pleased you gave it that rider. I hope you can appreciate my reluctance to subscribe to your very enthusiastic view, Mr Attorney, considering your kindred colleagues Mr Cain and Mr Bannon had a four-year term to ensure good government in their states. There is another way of looking at it, and that is that if things do not go right it takes a lot longer to rectify. With regards to this issue and the funding to the Electoral Commission, I take you back to the fact that Mr Beattie, after a certain amount of naughtiness amongst some of your party colleagues, launched a good government plan. I would imagine that any good government plan would require legislation, as has been indicated by the Premier, and also to ensure accountability and checking of Queensland's obligations for the roll—all of the things we have to do here—a certain allocation for that. Can you indicate the amount of money appropriated in the budget for the Electoral

Commission of Queensland for its component of ensuring the implementation of your government's good government plan if it is to be implemented in this financial year?

Mr WELFORD: The Premier and I are working on the implementation of the good government plan. The initial stage has been to obtain some advice from the Electoral Commission in relation to issues of electoral roll verification and the implications of that in terms of the joint state-Commonwealth roll. One of the things that we have to assess is whether we should go down the track, which we would do reluctantly I might say, of having a separate state roll in order to have different or, some might argue, better verification or accountability mechanisms for the roll. Some reforms have already been introduced into the parliament, but I expect a new bill will be brought to the parliament before the end of the year to further amend the Electoral Act, both to implement some of what we call the Barcaldine reforms arising out of the Premier's statement on good government at Barcaldine earlier this year and to implement recommendations of LCARC in its Report No. 23.

At this stage, we have funded the feasibility study for the Electoral Commission in conjunction with CITEC on what would be involved both in terms of cost and other resources to establish a state based enrolment verification computer system. That study, I understand, has recently been finished. I have not yet perused it. Both the Premier and I will obviously have to assess that before the amendments to the Electoral Act are brought into the parliament later in the year. Obviously, the question of budget allocation arises depending on whether we pursue a state based system or not. If there is no state based system but we can tweak the accountability mechanisms including, as the Premier indicated, through Electoral Commission oversight of party ballots, that may or may not require additional resources. That is something we have yet to get advice on from the ECQ. In relation to whether an additional budget allocation will be required in the mid-year budget review for a separate state based system, that will depend on our assessment of the feasibility study.

Mr SPRINGBORG: So at this stage there is no specific appropriation because it is pending further investigation? You mentioned the possibility of separate rolls. I would say the only benefit from that for the state would be if the requirement for enrolment in Queensland would be of a higher standard than what is currently the case or is mooted by the Commonwealth Electoral Commission, I would imagine?

Mr WELFORD: There are two issues. One is the threshold level of the requirements to get on the roll. Another is the mechanisms for cleansing or reviewing the roll—updating the roll. I think the problems that from time to time people raise largely arise less from initial registration and more from the reviews. People move and do not change their address and so forth. If we can reach an accommodation with the Commonwealth Electoral Commission about regular roll reviews that satisfy our requirements and also, as you say, agree on what the threshold requirement should be for registration, we may be able to avoid having to establish a separate state system. But it depends on whether our verification system can match up with the Commonwealth one. I am hopeful that it can, because obviously that would, in my view, be the most cost-effective way to do it. But that is precisely the assessment we need to make to determine whether we need a separate state system.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I would like to take the Attorney-General to a slightly different issue. It follows on from what Mrs Jarratt indicated earlier on with regards to legal profession reform. The issue of first mortgage investments by solicitors has

been raised today. Do you have any idea of the amount of money which is owed to clients in Queensland from solicitors who have defaulted, done a bunk or however you want to describe it? I know that prior to the change to the legislation there were some millions of dollars worth of claims against the Fidelity Guarantee Fund. Does your department have any idea of the amount of money that has been misappropriated?

Mr WELFORD: Let me clarify a number of things for you. Firstly, there are different ways in which clients who engage solicitors can find themselves at risk of losing money. One is fraud, which is straight-out theft and misrepresentation when money is taken from trust accounts without authority and used for purposes for which there is no authorisation or used for the solicitor's own benefit. They are not necessarily the same as when money is taken by solicitors on loan from lenders and then loaned out through these mortgage schemes to borrowers. The money that is at risk of being lost for those purposes is not necessarily lost through fraud, although in some mortgage schemes there is fraud as well. The risks in those schemes that give rise to claims against professional indemnity insurance are in negligence rather than fraud.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I appreciate that.

Mr WELFORD: There are two categories. We do not have figures for the dollar amounts, although these in rough terms can probably be made available to you by simply having a look at the matters that have been before the Solicitors Complaints Tribunal over the past couple of years. In respect of fraud, the dollars concerned in rough terms would be available if we did a review of those recent cases where people have been struck off or indeed jailed. In respect of the mortgage schemes, where cases arise more from allegedly negligent operation of those schemes, I am aware on the latest advice from ASIC, with whom I have been meeting to start to gear up the collective regulatory response to this, that there is somewhere between \$120 million and \$130 million in funds currently on loan and potentially at risk. It could be that the larger proportion of that will not ultimately be lost to lenders to those schemes. If the assets which are security for those moneys having been loaned out are able to be sold in an orderly way, that is, without a fire sale and presuming the valuations of those assets manage to hold up, a good portion of that money ought to be safe. What we do not know at this stage is what proportion of that \$120 million that is potentially at risk is likely to be lost. We will not know that until the assets are crystallised and we see what is recovered. But that is why in the last three months I have stepped in, as no previous state Attorney has done, to coordinate both ASIC and the Law Society in efforts to do everything that needs to be done, such as making sure notices are given to the insurer, to maximise the potential for recovery by those investors. That is as much as we can do at this stage. As soon as we have clearer information about where the risks are, I will be more than happy to make them public. The good lawyers who have been running these schemes and the good lawyers who do not run them do not want their profession's reputation further tarnished by those who have not managed them well.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from non-government members has expired.

Mr LAWLOR: I refer to page 1-32 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements and note that the change in the number of matters to be lodged in the Magistrates Court went from 420,000 last year to 210,000 this year. Could the minister explain, firstly, the reasons for the change and, secondly, how both our Magistrates Courts and higher courts are fairing in the time taken to bring these matters before them?

Mr WELFORD: As members of the committee might note, there appears to be quite an extraordinary variation in relation to the number of matters lodged in the Magistrates Court in 2000-01 compared with the estimate in 2001-02. The reason for that is that there has been a change in this coming financial year in the way that we calculate that number. Let me explain.

In 2000-01 the estimate was nearly 382,000 and the actual figure was closer to 420,000. This covered both manual lodgments and electronically lodged matters through the Self-Enforcing Ticketable Offence Notice System, SETONS, as well as the State Penalties Enforcement Registry. The inclusion of figures from those two offence notice systems obviously inflated the number of proceedings actually lodged with the court. So in the coming year we are separating manual lodgments with the court from the electronic lodgments.

If we had done that in the last financial year, we estimate that of the 420,000 about 200,000 would have been manual lodgments in the court and we have forecast a five per cent increase to roughly 210,000 in the coming financial year. Electronic lodgments increased from 196,436 in 1999-2000 to an estimated 210,000 this year just past and are forecast to grow to about 250,000 in this financial year. The matters diverted to the electronic registry tend to be straightforward, thereby leaving more complex matters in the court. In the Magistrates Court this obviously results in some delays, but still not unreasonable delays, with hearing dates in the last financial year being on average eight weeks. This is well within the target of 12 weeks set by the chief magistrate as the benchmark to manage resources of the magistracy and meet peaks in workload. Obviously I will be continuing to monitor the workload of the courts in terms of both lodgments and other measures to ensure that resources are available to keep delays at a minimum.

Mr LAWLOR: I refer you to page 1-29 and the Fast Track program undertaken by the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions to include the delivery of justice to victims of crime in Cape York indigenous communities. Could the minister advise the success or otherwise of this program and plans for the future?

Mr WELFORD: The Fast Track program was a pilot program aimed at improving access to justice and to protect victims of violent crime in Cape York indigenous communities. I am pleased to inform the committee that it has been a success and we now intend to convert that pilot into a permanent program. It was implemented as a pilot last September in response to concerns about the length of time taken to process prosecution cases involving sexual offences and crimes of violence in the cape communities. It focused on the communities of Kowanyama, Aurukun and Bamaga with the aim of reducing delays which impact more acutely upon people living in remote areas, particularly in circumstances involving charges of physical or sexual violence.

The program was commenced in the Cairns office of the DPP, and a senior legal officer was appointed to fast-track prosecution cases to higher courts using ex officio indictments, thus avoiding committal proceedings. We have worked closely with the courts, police, victims group and leaders of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities in implementing this program. It has been a great success in reducing the length of the time for these matters to await a hearing.

The request for matters to be dealt with by way of ex officio sentence in these cases has increased significantly not just in cases involving sexual offences and crimes of violence but, in fact, in all types of cases arising for hearing in those communities. For example, in Aurukun in the period before the pilot began there

were six requests for ex officio indictments. Since the pilot there have been 21 requests over a similar period. As a result, hearing delays have been reduced by as much as 50 per cent.

This new approach means better justice for remote communities and savings in time, costs and resources to both the Magistrates Courts and District Courts. At the same time the Queensland Police Service benefits from freeing up its resources in the cape region. This outcome could not have been achieved without the cooperation and assistance of all the stakeholders, and I would particularly like to place on record the appreciation of the government and the office of the DPP of the various stakeholders who have cooperated in bringing about this successful pilot.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The committee will now adjourn for morning tea.

Sitting suspended from 10.20 a.m. to 10.35 a.m.

The CHAIRMAN: I now declare the committee's hearing reopened.

Mr LAWLOR: I refer to page 3-4 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements and the Anti-Discrimination Commissioner's plan for education and religious leaders about the new racial and religious vilification legislation. Could the minister explain what is planned to educate not only these groups but all sections of the community about these new laws?

Mr WELFORD: The government does believe that the introduction of the racial and religious vilification amendments earlier this year requires a significant education campaign. You may be aware that there is a requirement under section 235 of the Anti-Discrimination Act requiring the Anti-Discrimination Commission to promote the purpose of the act by conducting educational campaigns. So the commission is planning a major education campaign aimed at ethnic and religious communities as the bulk of the amendments obviously deal with the racial and religious vilification.

Materials will be developed for training, including posters, brochures and articles in journals and newsletters. The focus of the campaign will be to educate not just communities of ethnic or religious specific background but also the broader community about the legislation, its purpose and, importantly, why it is important that racial and religious vilification should not occur.

Based on the New South Wales experience, it is likely that many of the complaints of vilification will be made against media outlets as distinct from individuals, in particular radio and newspapers. So the Anti-Discrimination Commission will provide seminars for the media to focus on appropriate reporting of potentially vilifying material. In line with the experience in other states, the Queensland Anti-Discrimination Commission expects that the legislation will increase its workload to some extent, possibly up to 80 new files in the coming year.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer you to page 1-17 of the MPS, which states—

... the Policy and Legislation Division will:

...

implement an administrative privacy regime within the Queensland public sector to ensure that people's information privacy rights are protected.

I ask the minister to elaborate on this statement.

Mr WELFORD: Thank you, Mr English. Welcome to your first estimates committee. The Queensland government has taken steps to introduce a privacy regime. We want the Queensland people to have confidence in the way the government deals with private information. The government has agreed to establish

an administrative regime as distinct from a legislative one at this stage. The administrative regime for the public sector will be based on the same information privacy principles that apply under the Commonwealth's Privacy Act. Those principles also obviously apply to the Commonwealth public sector.

The first stage of setting up these privacy protection arrangements will be the development of an information standard and supporting guidelines to apply to all public sector agencies to be implemented through the accountability of the heads of departments. It will cover personal information received or created by or for any public sector agency and also covers the transfer or sale of personal information by Queensland public sector agencies, that is, sale to both other government agencies and to the private sector. It will apply to all Queensland public sector agencies and entities, including statutory bodies, and, materially, government owned corporations.

The Department of Justice and Attorney-General is a lead agency in implementing this privacy regime, and we propose to establish a privacy unit to supervise the implementation of the information standard across government. The key role of the unit will be to assist agencies in implementing their regimes and ensure that they appoint a privacy contact officer as the first point of call for the public in relation to any privacy concerns. Each agency will develop a privacy plan for their agency aimed at giving effect to the privacy principles that apply, consistent with the Commonwealth act.

Government agencies will be required to implement their plans subject to any existing contractual obligations and licences. Where there are existing contractual obligations, they will be complied with for the time being, even when they may temporarily be inconsistent with the principles. In due course we will review those obligations to ensure that, in the long term, the privacy principles are consistently applied. The review of the initial administrative arrangements will occur within two years. As part of that review, we will then assess the need for specific privacy legislation.

Mr ENGLISH: Thank you, Minister, for that detailed answer. I draw your attention to page 1-22 of the MPS, which states—

In 2000-01 the Alternative Dispute Resolution Branch:

increased the number of mediations held by over 70% compared with 1999-2000.

Could the minister indicate whether he expects this trend to continue and whether this has any impact on the number of matters brought before the courts?

Mr WELFORD: There has been a significant increase in the number of mediations conducted by the ADR branch of the department over the last year. The reason for the increase was largely the result of the statewide introduction of what are called abbreviated mediations, as well as increased demand from agencies as a result of a range of strategic partnerships and protocols between the branch and various departments to provide ADR services. Abbreviated mediation is a fast-track dispute resolution service offered to members of the public who are involved in the Small Claims Tribunal or the minor debts court. It is a process that allows disputing parties an opportunity to reach a mutually acceptable resolution of matters they bring before the court. In the last financial year, abbreviated mediation accounted for about 50 per cent of all the mediations performed by the branch. We expect the demand for services to remain high in the coming year, with an estimated 2,000 mediations and facilitations forecast. This represents a slight decrease compared to the actual result last year.

The forecast for this year is based on a levelling out of demand for mediation services after having overcome something of a backlog in mediation needed to resolve disputes in those small claims and minor debts forums. The ADR branch will of course develop strategies to meet any increase in demand should it arise. Anecdotal evidence from the court staff and the magistrates also indicates that matters before the Small Claims Tribunal and the minor debts court are now being dealt with more quickly. Even if a matter does not settle through abbreviated mediation, the issues are clarified so that the courts can resolve the matter in a more expeditious way.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer the minister to page 1-22 of the MPS and the reference to the domestic violence protocol, which has been developed and introduced in the Queensland Magistrates Court. I ask the minister to explain this initiative and the benefits it has or is anticipated to have for staff and users of the Magistrates Court in domestic violence matters.

Mr WELFORD: In Queensland our government and previous Labor governments have long recognised the need to assist staff and users of the Magistrates Court in relation to domestic violence matters. Domestic violence protocols were first developed and introduced in the Magistrates Court during the Goss government years in October 1994. The aim of the protocols was to help court staff deal with domestic violence applications. The protocols were updated and reissued in June last year at a conference entitled Domestic Violence: 2000 and Beyond run by the Department of Families. Using the protocols, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General developed a booklet *Domestic Violence Protocols* to be used as a training and reference tool for Magistrates Court staff.

These protocols provide a number of benefits. They provide a framework to create a safer and more secure environment for court staff, court assistance workers and to the parties to domestic violence applications. They help staff, as well as the parties and lawyers, understand and recognise differences in personal attitudes and values in the context of domestic violence. They further develop the staff's understanding of the nature, extent and dynamics of domestic violence. There are of course myths and misconceptions that are often brought in relation to domestic violence matters. It is important that court staff, as well as other officers of the court such as lawyers and police, are able to deal with what are obviously very difficult matters in a sensitive way. The guidelines also assist people working with interpreters, people dealing with cultural issues and people from non-English-speaking backgrounds and generally raise the awareness of court staff as to how to sensitively and sensibly deal with participants who are party to domestic violence proceedings.

There are five sets of guidelines for different groups contained in a best practice manual prepared by Legal Aid Queensland more recently, which I launched a month or two ago. It provides guidelines to lawyers, staff of Legal Aid client service centres, child representatives or chairs of mediation conferences for dealing with domestic violence victims. These guidelines help them to achieve best practice in resolving domestic violence disputes as well. In this respect it is a first. Nowhere else in Australia have the groups come together to coordinate a set of best practice guidelines for lawyers to help ease the anxiety of domestic violence victims.

The CHAIRMAN: I refer you to page 1-37 of the MPS and the work of the justices of peace branch regarding training and information for indigenous communities. Could you explain how this branch is improving access to justice for indigenous communities, particularly in remote areas?

Mr WELFORD: Justices of the peace have played an outstanding role in our justice system throughout history. It is pertinent to note that nowhere is this role in the modern legal system more useful than in indigenous communities. The increased participation of indigenous people in the administration of justice in Queensland obviously depends on education and training. That is why during the last year the JP branch provided 21 training sessions throughout all seven communities which have Magistrates Courts constituted by local indigenous JPs with the Magistrates Court accreditation. The communities are Bamaga, Kowanyama, Hope Vale, Thursday Island, Yarrabah, Woorabinda and Wujal Wujal. These training sessions were attended by a total of 55 people.

My department has also worked to improve access to justice for indigenous communities by establishing guidelines acceptable to the judiciary, police and the communities for the operation of courts convened by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander JPs. We have evaluated outcomes relating to indigenous JPs sitting on Magistrates Courts, particularly with respect to recidivism, culturally appropriate processes and other community justice issues. We want to improve the access to justice of indigenous communities through examining the issues of conflict of interest, legal representation, how appeals against sentences should be dealt with, the recording of evidence and, of course, future resource implications.

In all this we have developed a justice agreement with Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to ensure that we have a close partnership in implementing their role. A long-term aim of the justice agreement is to reduce the rate of Islander and Aboriginal people coming into contact with the criminal justice system and to at least reach parity with the non-Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander rate. We hope that through using this agreement and using indigenous magistrates, with improved cultural awareness of how to deal with offenders in these communities, we will reduce by up to 50 per cent the rate at which Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are incarcerated in our criminal justice system by the year 2011.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for government members' questions has expired. I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Minister, I refer to your previous answer to me regarding the issue of solicitors investments and the issues of concern to the consuming public. It seems to me that a lot of these things are more trouble than they are worth when you look at the problems that have been caused over a period of time. As I understand it, ASIC actually regulates any of these funds where the total investments contained therein are worth more than \$5 million. I seek your clarification regarding that. With regard to your legal profession reform agenda—I know that it has been going on for some time; the issue has been raised here this morning—do you believe it would be appropriate at the end of the day, if ASIC cannot regulate it, that it not be facilitated?

Mr WELFORD: It is probably necessary to reflect briefly on a bit of history in order to answer that question. The way this originally arose was that when the Commonwealth government established legislation to regulate the providers of financial and investment services—I think it was in the late 1980s—the requirements for prospectuses and other such consumer information to be provided when any investment scheme is established and sold as a product were part of the Commonwealth legislation. So on the face of it it is a Commonwealth regulatory matter.

What happened at that time was that, through the Law Council of Australia, the legal profession kicked up a stink and wanted an exemption from those regulatory requirements on the basis that the scale of their activities, in providing basically a matching service between someone with money to lend and someone who wanted to borrow some money and providing the mortgage documentation to facilitate that, was a very small-scale activity nationally—and it was. It was a legitimate ground for argument. In retrospect, whether the exemption should have been given is another question. At the time that was the argument of lawyers, that they were engaged in a service that at that stage probably was not about selling any particular investment product.

Of course, what happened was that a number of firms did 'diversify' their legal practice to in effect sell financial products by pooling the resources of investors and lending them out through an investment scheme. The exemption, however, was not lifted, regardless of the scale of the enterprise. As a result, we are now in a position where some quite large schemes have not been well managed, were not based on sound valuations, or at least the right kind of valuations, and investors' funds are at risk. There are even borrowers, some of whom I met as recently as yesterday, who are disaffected by what happened.

How should we deal with that? Up until last year, the way it was dealt with was that ASIC agreed to an exemption, at least so far as the Queensland jurisdiction was concerned, so long as the Law Society exercised some oversight. The Law Society did exercise some oversight, but it really did not extend beyond the normal supervision of solicitors and their trust accounts and their practice. So it was pretty unsophisticated oversight in those terms.

Clearly, in the absence of adequate federal regulation, the alarm bells for which were ringing long before last year and should have resulted in ASIC intervention long before now, and in the absence of adequate Law Society supervision, something needs to be done. It is regrettable that government agencies at all levels are coming to this after so much damage has been done, but nothing would be done even today had it not been for my intervention three months ago.

What I propose to do is this. As I explained to you earlier, I have already taken some steps to strengthen the measures that the Law Society can take to address past operators in existing schemes. Most of those schemes are in the process of being wound up. ASIC has issued that ruling that will require them, at least on current estimates, to be wound up by 31 October. The simple practical reality of course is that for some of those schemes it will not be possible to crystallise the assets by 31 October, so there is going to have to be some accommodation given if those assets are to be sold off in an orderly way to maximise their sale value and recover the money for the investors. So I am dealing with ASIC about how to sensibly manage that.

The more important issue, it seems to me, is that the exemption should finish—and I have struck agreement with ASIC that that should occur—and we need to put in place even better regulation than ASIC already has for anyone starting new schemes. I intend to personally liaise with the national chairman, Mr Knott, of the Australian Securities and Investment Commission to ensure that their rules are strengthened, because even some of the new schemes established post Law Society regulation have now started to go belly up.

Mr SPRINGBORG: It would appear to me that legal practitioners have to decide whether they want to be investment bankers or legal practitioners. At the end of the day, you have to carry the can to try to work out a regime that is going to work.

Consumers of these services see that a lawyer is doing it—that obviously offers it some prestige—and that they have these insurances in relation to negligence and so on, and there is also a belief that the fidelity fund covers it. That leads to a whole range of complicated problems further down the track. I think that needs to be addressed.

Mr WELFORD: I could not agree with you more. What you are saying is absolutely right. It needs to be remembered that from 1 July this year there is no professional indemnity insurance to cover new loans under these schemes. They are exempt from the Law Society's professional indemnity insurance, which covers negligence in legal practice. As a general principle, I agree with you that we probably have got to the point where we need to say to lawyers, 'Either you want to be a lawyer or you want to be a marketer of investment products. Make your choice.'

The difficult grey area, of course, is where a lawyer does on an ad hoc basis—not as part of a business but once every now and then—match up people who want to loan to borrowers and does their legals for them. Now, in those circumstances the rules against conflict of interest should require that they only act for one or the other and that the one they do not act for gets independent legal advice.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The confiscation of proceeds of crime was mentioned by Ms Jarratt earlier, along with the government's review of the legislation that governs the confiscation of the proceeds of criminal activity. Do you have any projected figures for what it is expected the DPP or Crime Commission will be able to take back from the proceeds of criminal activity next year? As I understand it, a couple of years ago it was \$2 million. The year before last it was a bit over \$1 million. This year it is a bit under \$1 million. What is the projection there? As I understand it, the annual report of the DPP always carries the previous year's figures, but there must be some projection around the place.

Mr WELFORD: We need to first of all distinguish between the sorts of orders that can be made. Dollar values will be ascribed to different orders in different ways. There are restraining orders initially, which simply seize and preserve assets pending the outcome of proceedings, whether they be conviction or whether they be civil proceedings under any new arrangement. There are forfeiture orders, where the court forfeits tainted property. There is provision for that to occur currently, even without conviction in certain circumstances.

In the last financial year, 113 forfeiture orders were made. The estimated value of the property in respect of those forfeiture orders was \$839,000. The estimated total value of forfeiture orders outstanding—of that \$839,000 there is about \$56,000 outstanding as at 30 June in terms of dollars recovered. The larger figure is probably pecuniary penalty orders, and that is the element of civil confiscation that I am interested in exploring to see whether we can increase the dollar amount that the state recovers. As you quite rightly point out, it is abysmal at the moment. But let me explain why that may be the case. And it is not all the result of the law.

Total pecuniary penalty orders outstanding at 30 June is \$34.8 million. In other words, there are significant dollar amounts of pecuniary penalty orders already made. It is not always possible to identify assets against which those orders can be executed. During the whole year, 55 pecuniary penalty orders were obtained. But again, these were only of a total value of \$581,000 during the last financial year. So there are obviously some significant orders outstanding from previous years that have yet to be recovered.

Obviously, no-one expects to get 100 per cent recovery of pecuniary penalty orders, but it seems to me that we can do a better job of recovering with the orders that have been made. To do that, a couple of things need to happen. Firstly, in the course of the investigation of the criminal offence there needs to be a greater focus on assets and the proceeds of the offending activity. That is not always necessarily the focus of the police investigation for the primary offence, although in some cases the identification of significant assets can help prove the offence, but not in all. So if we are going to recover more dollars we need to make sure more work is done on identifying the dollars that can be recovered.

The other thing that needs to happen is that currently in the office of the DPP there are some staff who bring these proceedings if they need to be brought. I believe—as occurred when I worked in the Commonwealth—we need to establish a specialist unit to bring these proceedings so that they coordinate both DPP and police investigations into the assets that can be recovered. And that is what I am working on as part of the review of confiscation laws generally.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I bring you to an issue that I have raised, I think, at every other estimates committee since I have been shadow Attorney-General.

Mr WELFORD: Did you not get an answer last time?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I did not get a very satisfactory answer last time, the time before or the time before that, but that might have been a legacy of your predecessor. With regard to the Coroners Act, which has been reviewed in Queensland for the last four years, I understand that in the 1998 financial year and maybe even the 1999 financial year there was some preliminary budget work done which indicated that the cost of such an office would be in the vicinity of \$2 million. I understand that work has been done. This is an extremely important area of reform—something that you would agree with. What is your timetable for the implementation of the new Coroners Act in Queensland? There are a lot of groups out there calling for it. There is very good reason for having a central office of state coroner with all the powers that a new Coroners Act would be able to offer to ensure not only investigation but recommendation and compilation of useful data to ensure the prevention of death, as well. Could you outline where that may occur in this budget or any forward estimates?

Mr WELFORD: There are two stages to the process. One is the bill, which is in draft form and has been out for public consultation. The second is the establishment of an office—a specifically defined office—of state coroner. There is no money in this budget for the establishment of an office of state coroner, so there will be no state coroner's office established arguably this financial year. However, there are some preliminary steps that I think we can take this year that move in that direction.

I am currently consulting with various groups, people who have made submissions on the bill, of course the chief magistrate and members of the Magistrates Court. The Brisbane coroner will obviously be consulted in order to refine the bill as a response to the public consultation period. What is a moot point at this stage is whether I take forward a bill that tidies up a lot of the legal issues surrounding coronial investigations but does not have an office specifically identified—an office of state coroner specifically identified—or whether I wait for a future budget allocation and take the bill forward then. So the timetable depends somewhat on where we head budget-wise. But at this stage, as I say, there is not a budget for an office of state coroner. I agree with you that, in general principle, it would be a desirable thing.

Mind you, I believe the Magistrates Court, with the chief magistrate currently effectively acting as state coroner, do an outstanding job. But one of the things we can do to support them in that job in the interim is that information collation and data collection, as you mentioned. I have been working with the department as recently as this week to look at how we pull together that information in a way that is consistent with other states. But as you would appreciate, while I am keen to progress the bill and the infrastructure, such as data collection systems, in order to assist the coronial process, there is not much point legislating for an office of coroner until you get a budget.

Mr SPRINGBORG: A couple of years to get a budget—I wish you well on that. I turn now to the Director of Public Prosecutions. There is a question on notice No. 4 in which you outlined the number of positions for the DPP and also the budget. I refer you to the situation in the Toowoomba regional office, where there is a strong indication that there will be a 25 per cent reduction in staff from eight to six. This seems to be in direct contradiction to all other offices, where there seems to be an increase. I am sure you are aware that there have been some significant problems in the DPP with regard to the loss of some very senior people with a great degree of corporate knowledge right around the state, from Cairns to Townsville, down to Rockhampton, Southport and even Toowoomba. That has been very unfortunate for a balanced criminal justice system. Can you indicate why we see such a reduction in Toowoomba when you consider the workload that they have there and also the desire to attend to and address these issues on a regional level and the fact that the crime rate in Toowoomba, like many other places around Queensland, is not reducing for some reason or other?

Mr WELFORD: The situation with staffing, as you would appreciate, changes from time to time. As you pointed out, in all of the offices—except Toowoomba—we anticipate that there will be either a continuing current level of staffing or an increase. The reduction in Toowoomba—if you look at the figures—sees one reduction in a PO6, that is, the top level, and that obviously reflects both the changing workloads in that region and perhaps some advance notice of the future career direction of the person who currently holds the position.

Mr SPRINGBORG: The reason for the advance notice is interesting, too.

Mr WELFORD: No, it is not interesting at all. It is only interesting to the extent that everyone who practises at a high level as a lawyer does not necessarily want to sit in the one job all their life. That is the nature of that career.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Sometimes it reflects the frustration that people are feeling with regard to the administration.

Mr WELFORD: No. People move in and out of legal jobs quite fluidly. That is the nature of the legal profession. You can only take my word for that, but I know that the nature of the legal career is that people, until they achieve a partner status—but even some of them—come and go from partnerships quite regularly. We do not pay the dollars that people in the private sector pay, and we never will, but we can offer a very high quality of work. You do not get the quality of work in the private sector that is available—if you want to work in criminal law—in the DPP or in civil law in the Crown law office. One of the things I want to do is to elevate the recognition across the profession of the compensating quality of work that is available to people who want to work for government agencies like the DPP.

I should place on record my respect for the outstanding work—outstanding work—that lawyers at the DPP have done over the years. Sure, some of the more

senior officers have moved on to the private bar. And after a certain amount of experience, it is not unnatural for some people to choose to pursue a private career—a private and potentially more lucrative career. But there are still some very senior, very able and competent lawyers who are prosecuting on behalf of the state, and I want to place on record the outstanding work they do.

I should mention in closing—to more specifically focus on the question you raised—that in the last year the number of incoming matters to the Toowoomba office has fallen from 561 in 1999-2000 to 448 in 2000-01. In other words, in the Toowoomba office alone there has been a 20 per cent decrease in the workload. So if that changes during the year, we will adjust the figures and increase the numbers either during this year or next year. But the forecast in the estimate is accurately provided to you—and honestly provided—based on the reduction in the workload in the last year. Of course, prosecutors at the DPP can only prosecute cases for which evidence is brought before them. And in terms of the crime levels in Toowoomba, I know that your leader and I and the Police Minister are actively looking at that issue to improve police investigation surveillance of particularly juvenile crime issues in Toowoomba.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for non-government members' questions has expired. Minister, I refer you to page 1-30 of the MPS, which states that the Victim Support Unit in the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has extended and strengthened its links with victims of crime and other similar organisations and, in particular, the ODPP has entered into protocol agreements with such groups. Could the minister please explain this initiative and what other initiatives are proposed to assist and support victims of crime?

Mr WELFORD: In the last decade, the acknowledgment—both in the law and in the government's systems—of the importance of responding to the concerns of victims of crime has increased dramatically. In an endeavour to ensure that a quality service is provided to victims of crime, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions has developed a number of initiatives in implementing the Criminal Offence Victims Act.

Meetings have been held between the DPP, other government agencies, and community-based victims of crime organisations to resolve any of the operational policy issues associated with how we serve the needs of victims of crime. The DPP office regularly provides training sessions to those community organisations so that they can serve the constituency of crime victims that those organisations assist. On occasions, community-based victims groups with specialist skills and knowledge in dealing with victims of crime have themselves provided training sessions for legal staff in the DPP so that there is a shared understanding of the trauma and the social dislocation that can occur in families who have members who are victims of crime. Protocol agreements between the DPP and those community groups have been entered into to clearly define the type of service and support that the office of the DPP will provide to victims of crime.

We now have a victim liaison officer in every regional office of the DPP, in addition to a unit of seven officers in Brisbane. They provide information and assistance to victims at all stages of the prosecution process from the time of the arrest to the time of the sentence. At the arrest, the victim liaison officer in the DPP advises the victim of who the offender is, what they have been charged with and how the court process will proceed from that point. They will also give the victim contact details and information on how they might claim compensation for any criminal injuries resulting from the crime. If the victim completes a 'request for further

information' form, they will also—and this is if they choose to have further information—be advised of the outcome of any committal proceedings, the results of any mentions before the court, bail, the outcome of the trial, any sentences handed down, as well as the outcome of any referrals to the Mental Health Tribunal or appeals.

Mr WILSON: Minister, I refer you to page 1-30 of the MPS and the reference to infrastructure enhancements. Could the minister provide an update on progress of both the Wynnum and the Inala court projects?

Mr WELFORD: The Wynnum and Inala court projects are part of an ongoing program of upgrading our regional local courts to provide better access to justice for people throughout the community. Our government keeps a constant watch on courthouse needs around the state and it was clear that these two facilities needed refurbishment.

Work began on the upgrade in Wynnum early last year. The Wynnum courthouse originally comprised two buildings: one containing a main courtroom and the other containing a small second courtroom, registry and support services. The buildings were on different floor levels with no direct links. The toilets were external to the buildings and access for people with disabilities was only to the main courtroom. The public was required to wait in a courtyard, where there was no weather protection, prior to entering the courtrooms, and there were no interview rooms for lawyers and their clients.

When we upgrade the Wynnum court, the main courtroom building and a substantial portion of the registry building will be demolished. The remaining part of the registry building will be expanded on one level to provide the facilities required in a modern courthouse. It will now provide two full-sized Magistrates Court rooms, access for people with disabilities throughout the building, two interview rooms to support the courtrooms, and facilities to take evidence on closed-circuit television from a remote room. There is also room for interviews at the registry counter and for dealing with aggrieved parties to domestic violence matters. Of course, there are now internal separate public and staff amenities. The project had a total cost of \$1.4 million. I am pleased to say that it will be finished by the end of August.

In relation to Inala, anyone who has been to the Inala court can see that the building does not meet the required standard for contemporary court facilities. It lacks public facilities—there are no public facilities, as in Wynnum, for witness interviews and domestic violence interview rooms. The replacement courthouse will incorporate three courtrooms. It will be built on a new site in Inala providing long-term court services to the south-west growth corridor of Brisbane. It also provides space for future expansion and a possible adjacent site for the development of separate projects by the Queensland Police Service and the Corrective Services Department.

The Inala court project is estimated to cost \$4.5 million, including land, with the construction period expected to deliver 3,000 person weeks of employment. We are currently reviewing site options and we intend to purchase a suitable site shortly. We hope to tender the works by March next year.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, I refer you to page 1-30 of the MPS and the mention that \$1.2 million is allocated for the purchase of surplus government land at Caloundra for the future construction of a courthouse. Could you please elaborate on that statement?

Mr WELFORD: As I mentioned in my opening statement, the existing courthouse at Caloundra will need upgrading in due course. It was established almost 40 years ago—in 1965. It is no longer suitable for use as a Magistrates Court because the proceedings cannot be recorded over the noise from the surrounding roads. It is also inaccessible, as are many of our older buildings, for disabled people. There are no facilities for prisoner detention or for interviewing witnesses. There is no protection for child witnesses to give evidence via video in adjacent rooms or for victims of domestic violence. So it is timely that we plan for a new courthouse for Caloundra on the Sunshine Coast. Most of the needs are currently being served by the Maroochydore Courthouse, but clearly the growing Caloundra area and its hinterland will require court facilities in the future.

Queensland Health has fortuitously offered my department a parcel of land adjoining the Caloundra Hospital and the Caloundra Police Station. Negotiations are being completed for the purchase of this land. We have allocated up to \$1.2 million in the budget in anticipation of both the cost of the land and any other ancillary costs in preparing the land for the future courthouse.

Incidentally, this initiative is a testament to our community cabinet process, because it was out of one of our community cabinets that both the need for a new courthouse in Caloundra and the potential site for a new courthouse arose. It is a good example of how a new initiative and coordination between departments can be delivered through the community cabinet process in the regions.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, could I refer you to page 5-3 of the MPS and to the reference to the Public Trust Office continuing its commitment to the development of the Queensland Community Foundation? Could the minister please explain this initiative to the committee?

Mr WELFORD: One of the core activities of the Office of the Public Trustee is, of course, the administration of charitable trusts. In November 1996, the Public Trustee established the Queensland Community Foundation. The objectives of the foundation are very broad. They are not limited to sectional or any particular interest. It was formed to benefit the community as a whole.

The Public Trustee is the trustee of this Queensland Community Foundation. It is advised by an advisory board consisting of representatives of the community and chaired, incidentally, by the Honourable Mike Ahern. The foundation enables funds to be maintained for the benefit of charitable purposes in perpetuity. Any member of the public or any corporate donor can bequeath or donate money to a registered charity through the Queensland Community Foundation and, of course, be assured that the money is secure.

Some 53 charitable organisations have established a fund with the QCF and many others are expressing an interest. It provides a cost-effective, flexible and financially secure mechanism for people and organisations wishing to become involved in philanthropy. Many people are now donating to charitable funds through the QCF, and commercial organisations are also being approached to use the QCF as an umbrella fund instead of establishing their own foundations so that they can establish a fundraising entity under the auspices of the QCF managed by the Public Trustee. For example, Qantas Airlines has established a fund to benefit the Torres Strait community.

The foundation has completed wills containing approximately \$43 million in bequests since its establishment in 1996 and bequests are currently running at about \$1.5 million a month to the fund. The fund has established regional funds in

Cairns, Townsville, the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast and they are looking at the Darling Downs for the potential for a new fund on the downs to serve that regional community. The focus over the next two months will be to continue to raise public awareness of the Queensland Community Foundation so that more sectors of our community can take advantage of this facility to receive philanthropic donations towards worthy causes that benefit the community as a whole. The Public Trustee has a partnership with the Queensland Investment Corporation to responsibly invest the fund pending its use by the various contributors.

Ms JARRATT: I refer you to page 1-12 of the MPS and the reference to the Office of the Adult Guardian? Could you please explain the community visitor program?

Mr WELFORD: The concept of a community visitor program to be conducted by the Office of the Adult Guardian was recommended by the Law Reform Commission in its report in 1996. There were a number of inquiries, highly publicised, through the 1990s about the failure of government services to people of mental or legal incapacity. The operation of the program was provided for under the Guardianship and Administration Act, which was passed in 2000, but the establishment of the community visitors program has taken until now to be developed and designed. It took effect from 23 April this year. It is in many respects the final stage of law reform relating to substituted decision making for adults with impaired capacity. That was an election commitment of the Beattie government in 1998. It is also an important part of our government's strategic framework for disability for the period 2000-05 and our psychiatric disability services and support strategic plan for the same period.

The community visitor program covers the disability and mental health sectors. What it will provide is external independent scrutiny over the provision of services to ensure recipients are protected from abuse, neglect or exploitation. It obviously is designed to promote the rights of people with disabilities receiving disability or mental health services, to maintain and monitor the quality of the service, and to safeguard the interests of people who are receiving those services.

Funding of \$430,000 has been allocated this year to employ community visitors on a sessional basis who will visit defined sites set out by regulation. The recruitment of these community visitors will commence in August. We are currently settling with the Office of the Adult Guardian a visiting schedule and a clear set of priorities for the role and functions of the community visitors for this coming year. The program will, of course, not just have a system of routine supervision; it will also respond to specific requests from people in various mental health or other disability facilities who believe that they need some representation for the protection of their rights.

Mr LAWLOR: Minister, I refer to page 2-10 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements and the reference to the per elector cost of the recent state election. Could you provide further details of the Electoral Commission of Queensland's conduct of this election, including costs?

Mr WELFORD: The 2001 state election was the first election that the Electoral Commission conducted that was fully computerised. All 89 of the state returning officers were supplied with a computer and a laser printer for the duration of the election period. That equipment was purchased prior to the poll, obviously after obtaining a series of quotes on hire and purchase options. Four hundred thousand dollars was spent on equipment, software and service in last year's budget. This covered both returning officers and the tally room requirements. The commission

developed five computer applications to assist returning officers during the election period.

The applications assisted with processing 95,813 postal votes, 77,505 pre-poll votes, 150,287 polling day absentee votes, 6,554 electoral visitor votes and 16,555 declared institution votes. Counting of those kinds of votes at those levels could not have been processed in the time frame without the assistance of the investment in computerisation. Some 244,445 hits were received on ECQ's web site during the period.

Funding for the general election had initially been provided in the 2001-02 financing year, but was obviously transferred forward once the Governor issued the writ. The total cost incurred by the commission to conduct the election was \$8.407 million, which is \$3.78 per elector. This compares to \$6.295 million for the 1998-99 general election, which works out at about \$2.98 per elector.

For the 2001 general election, an information and awareness campaign was conducted by the commission at a cost of \$1.8 million compared to \$811,000 spent on a similar awareness campaign in 1998. The main communication vehicle was a direct mail pack to 2.2 million voters on the roll in Queensland at the close of the rolls on 29 January this year. It included a personally addressed letter informing the elector of their electoral district and a list of polling booths in the district. It cost less than 59c per elector, including design work, the envelopes, printing, mailing, data processing and postage. Voter turnout for the election was 92.5 per cent, so it can be argued that the money was well spent.

Of course, there was the supplementary cost of the Surfers Paradise by-election. It cost about \$200,000. At that smaller scale, it had a much higher cost per elector of about \$6.87.

Mr LAWLOR: I refer the minister to page 1-38 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements which states that agency services will focus on providing a broader range of information than people in rural communities have previously had to contact other agencies about. Could the minister explain how this will work in practice, the benefits it will deliver for people in rural and regional Queensland, and any changes in costs that this will cause?

Mr WELFORD: The range of information and services to people in rural and regional Queensland is provided through the government's Queensland Government Agency program, QGAP. This has improved markedly in recent years, thanks to new technology. Clients seeking services from QGAP officers can now access information about products and services through the Internet. Let me give an example: for the past 12 months, various Australian Taxation Office services have been offered at QGAP sites throughout Queensland. We are able to provide not only services offered by the Queensland government but also we can use our network of QGAP officers throughout the state to give people access to the service of Commonwealth agencies as well.

In June this year, the Australian Taxation Office advised our Office of Rural Communities that it would extend its range of services through the QGAP network for a further 12 months. The focus is on providing electronic service delivery with QGAP agents assisting clients to access Taxation Office products and services, such as through the Internet but in other ways as well.

In the past, a person in a rural or regional community attending a QGAP office with a taxation inquiry could be provided with the basic forms but, beyond that, there was no other assistance. Now, with the assistance of electronically provided

information, additional advice can be provided through the ATO centre in the QGAP office. People can sit down either at a computer or with a QGAP agent and look at the Internet site, access Taxation Office information and download any required forms or other information they might require. The Tax Office, in conjunction with the QGAP network, is providing community-orientated seminars using video conferencing facilities run by the QGAP agent so that the Taxation Office can actually communicate directly with people in regional locations.

In many cases, one of the advantages of the QGAP network is that people are able to do business without even having to leave their homes or properties. Many people in rural and regional Queensland are now gaining computer skills and Internet knowledge that enable them to access a much wider range of state and Commonwealth government services.

The ATO paid \$10,000 for QGAP assistance in the last financial year. We hope to expand that to about \$30,000 worth of cooperation this financial year.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for government questions has expired. I call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Attorney-General, I take you back to your previous answer to me with regards to the Director of Public Prosecutions and also to the situation in Toowoomba. I have always recognised that many people undergo career changes. Many people change around and, because of their legal skills, go out into the private sector. However, it is also fair to concede that some of those people felt frustrated. I will say that it was not under your stewardship but previously. I think some of those people actually left as a consequence of frustration. I also place on record my confidence in the work that they do under the circumstances that they often find themselves in within the DPP. They are all very excellent officers. Notwithstanding the fact that you have said that there is one career change with regards to Toowoomba, I point out that there are going to be no PO6 officers, and the PO5 position, which is the next senior level, will be reduced from two to one. Considering that they are the most senior prosecutors, I would have thought that a 66 per cent reduction is not justified. That really leaves it exposed. I would also appreciate any advice that you have—

Mr WELFORD: A what reduction?

Mr SPRINGBORG: That is in the answer to the question on notice.

Mr WELFORD: Which number?

Mr SPRINGBORG: Number 7.

Mr WELFORD: No, it is No. 4.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I am sorry, it is No. 4. Do you have any advice on the increase in the number of prosecutions happening out of the Ipswich office as well?

Mr WELFORD: I thought that I had explained this pretty clearly before. There is not an increase in the workload of the Toowoomba office. Surprisingly perhaps, there is a significant decrease.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Not a 66 per cent reduction, though.

Mr WELFORD: Where is the 66 per cent reduction?

Mr SPRINGBORG: If you look at the top brackets of senior prosecutors, there has been a 66 per cent reduction from three to one. It is a rather flimsy argument.

Mr WELFORD: Lies, damn lies and statistics, I would suggest, Mr Springborg.

Mr SPRINGBORG: You use them.

Mr WELFORD: Why do you not use a 100 per cent reduction for PO6, because it has gone from one to zero.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I was giving you the benefit of the doubt in including the top two brackets.

Mr WELFORD: I am giving you the benefit of the doubt. The number of staff we have in Toowoomba directly reflects the scale and complexity of the work that is required and the amount of work that is required. As I said to you before, in the financial year just finished there was a 20 per cent reduction in the number of charges referred to the DPP for prosecution. That does not mean that the police are not doing a lot of their usual Magistrates Court prosecutions in Toowoomba in the normal course. I do not have the figures on how many of those there are. There may have been an increase in lower level offences that the police themselves have dealt with. But there has been a 20 per cent reduction in the demand for DPP services in the Toowoomba office last year. That came on top of a 10 per cent reduction in the year before, so we are 30 per cent down on the amount of work that was needed to be processed in Toowoomba from two years ago. As I said, we constantly monitor that. Staff do shift from one regional office to another or from the Brisbane office to a region, depending on the demand for service.

The overall number of staff in Toowoomba is being reduced from eight to six. If you want to use percentage terms, that is a 25 per cent reduction in the overall number of staff. There will still be prosecutors there to do the job. There are no criminal sittings of the District Court in Toowoomba between now and October, so they will be sitting in October. Matters that arise that require prosecution before that time will either be, in occasional cases, held until then depending on the circumstances or referred to the Ipswich District Court.

In any region—not just Toowoomba—if there is a sudden swell of demand for prosecution cases to be dealt with, then it is not at all uncommon for prosecutors from Brisbane to be sent out to do the job. Let me assure the people of Toowoomba and the region, including the member's area, that there will be more than adequate resources applied to ensure that prosecutions proceed in a timely way in Toowoomba.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Mr Attorney-General, I have a three point question. Can you provide me with a comparison of the work that is undertaken—the case load—in the Ipswich office of the DPP in the current year and the previous year? Has there been prosecution preparation work transferred from Toowoomba to there? Is it also possible to provide me with data for the case load in the current year and the previous year for the other offices of the DPP around Queensland?

Mr WELFORD: I will be able to provide you with that information on notice. By way of preliminary answer, I can indicate to you that in the Ipswich office there was also a slight reduction, I think about five or six per cent, in the incoming case load in the last financial year. That is the state of play with Ipswich.

There has been no cost shifting or similar games being played. Obviously, if there is work to be done in Toowoomba, we make sure that we put people in Toowoomba to do it. If there is work in Ipswich or anywhere else, that is where we allocate the staff. We are not duckshoving people from one region to another in order to make one region look like it is doing more and another region look like it is doing less. The fact is that in both Toowoomba and Ipswich there was a fall in the incoming case load.

Mr SPRINGBORG: With regards to your answer to question on notice No. 5, in the area of criminal compensation it is expected, on projections for this year, that the amount of exposure to the state will be in the vicinity of \$18.55 million. Given the processing, the greater community awareness of victims, the fact that compensation is available and that people can advise them, how can you justify the projected reduction of a little over \$2 million in the amount of criminal compensation that you would pay out in the forthcoming year?

Mr WELFORD: It is not a question of justifying it as such. We basically respond to applications that come in. If the applications go up, the dollar figures will go up.

Mr SPRINGBORG: They expect fewer applications?

Mr WELFORD: That is right. At the time you asked the question—at the time the question was submitted—the office of the DPP that looks after the claims process looked at how much had been paid out so far this year, looked at the likely balance of payments during June, and indicated that they estimated that this year we would end up making about \$18.5 million. That happens to be down on last year. But that is not something that I or the government engineer from a budget perspective; that is the way the cards fall.

To pick up on one point you made, there is a potential upside risk in respect of criminal compensation. There has been a massive growth in the cost to government, as you probably know. Since 1996-97, when the value of claims was \$7.17 million, we have gone in the space of four and a half short years to a budget allocation for the last year of \$20 million—and we are a couple of million within that, as it turns out. I keep getting confused about these Treasury terminologies, but it is an administered expense, which means that a notional allocation is made but it is paid directly from Treasury. It is not controlled by me or the department. Whatever the dollar figure comes up to, that is the cost that the Treasury covers. A lot of our court system costs are in a similar category.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I refer to page 1-8 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements and the number of judicial officers, which I understand is 134 and is projected to stay the same this year. Also, last year there was a growth in crime in Queensland, as there invariably is in most years. I understand from other figures available in the budget papers that the government is not expecting much growth this year. When do you foresee that a budgetary allocation will be made available in the state for additional judicial officers, whether they be for the Magistrates Court jurisdiction or the higher jurisdiction? I think some recent figures would indicate that there are problems in some of the courts around Queensland with regards to lengthening backlogs.

Mr WELFORD: I do not think we are too far away, frankly, from needing more magistrates. What seems to be the trend is that there are slightly fewer criminal matters burdening the higher courts—that is, the Supreme Court. The District Court deals with, obviously, most serious offences. But the real growth area is in the Magistrates Court. It is in the Magistrates Court in one or two of the registries—I think the northern ones, Cairns—where some of those delays you mentioned have recently occurred. The benchmark, as I think I mentioned earlier in the proceedings, that the Chief Magistrate sets is to have matters, where a hearing is required, brought on within 12 weeks. I think that is reasonable. The average is between eight and 10 across the state now, but it is hitting 12 in one or two of the registries, as I said. The option of looking at an additional magistrate or two in Townsville or Cairns is something that I think would have to occur within the next 18 months or two years. It is more cost effective to administer justice through the Magistrates Court than

through the higher courts. I think it is likely that the workload of the Magistrates Court will grow in the years ahead.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions from non-government members has expired. The member for Southport?

Mr LAWLOR: I refer to page 1-2 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements, on which it is stated that \$1.2 million is being spent this financial year on technological improvements to the Supreme and District Courts. Could the minister explain how this program will benefit the higher courts?

Mr WELFORD: I am very keen on using technology to improve the efficiency with which our court system delivers justice to Queenslanders. I believe that in the past we have underestimated the capacity for the system to deliver justice more efficiently because we have not paid sufficient attention to coordinating systems both between the various courts—Supreme, District and Magistrates—and between the court system and associated agencies, such as the police, the Corrective Services Commission and the Department of Family Services.

With a modest \$1.2 million injection this year I hope we will start the beginning of a more serious focus on how technology can better assist the courts in dispensing the criminal justice and civil justice service that they provide to the community. It needs to be remembered that it is not just about crime. That is the most obvious and high-profile activity that the courts deal with. The court and legal system provides an infrastructure for the conduct of business right across the Queensland economy. Getting our court system operating effectively is a key input into an efficient state economy. I see our court system, like the other elements of information and communication infrastructure and transport infrastructure that serve the economy across the state, as a key element of our government's Smart State approach. We need to keep it up to date with the latest technology to provide that service. This \$1.2 million will enable the introduction of Internet services in the higher court registry to publish up-to-date listings, to establish a mechanism for electronic document lodgment in the courts, and to provide information about court services and civil cases electronically to law firms and barristers across the state. Law firms, for example, will not have to visit court registries to conduct their business—to file forms and so forth. They will be able to do more and more of this electronically over the Internet. Much of the preliminary proceedings that are expensive and time consuming both in physical and human resources could be more efficiently dealt with by doing a lot of that electronically and even remotely. For example, a judge can resolve a lot of pretrial issues well before the matter gets to a trial date and, in some cases, maybe even resolve the entire dispute.

Mr ENGLISH: Following on from the question of the member for Southport regarding improvements in technology for our courts, I refer to page 1-29 of the MPS and the release of the Queensland-wide Interlinked Courts Computer System to all of our Magistrates Courts. Could the minister provide an example of the type of information this system can provide?

Mr WELFORD: One of the things that I am concerned about arising from the delayed implementation of better technology across government in relation to our criminal justice system is that the data we have available is patchy and fragmented in different departments and different agencies. And what happens is that we see situations like that which arose recently in the parliament in relation to a question on notice by the member for Southern Downs, who asked the same question—very cleverly I might say—of two departments and each of them referred him to the other for the answer. Ultimately we did find that it was not my department that had the

answer, but your question served a very good purpose from my perspective because it highlighted how poorly coordinated the access to this information is. I think the question that the member for Southern Downs raised in the parliament was about the number of clean-up orders for graffiti.

At the time, the advice of both departments was that both thought the other had it and neither thought they were able to provide it. The truth is that we have some of it but not everything that the member for Southern Downs was asking. There is a reason for that, and I think a very legitimate reason. What we are able to say is that with the new Interlinked Courts Computer System, which is still undergoing further development—that is what I want to focus on over the next year or two—we know that there are 524 convictions for graffiti offences across the state. I guess graffiti is a good example of the way a decent information system should be able to provide us with information. But, of course, several different offences arise from a graffiti offence. You can have an offence of wilful damage. But that will not necessarily show up as a graffiti offence as such; there is no specific offence. The offence of possession of a graffiti instrument is an offence under the Vagrants, Gaming and Other Offences Act. It is different to the offence under the Criminal Code, but again it is a graffiti offence. There is an offence of injurious behaviour or wilful damage under the transport infrastructure regulations relating to railway carriages. There are a number of different offences that can relate to graffiti. So that explains to some extent why it was difficult to tease out specifically what the member for Southern Downs was asking.

As it turns out, in some cases the magistrate will specifically record on the court order that part of the community service should involve cleaning up graffiti. It may or may not be the actual graffiti that the offender committed, because that may have already been cleaned up. In other cases the order is made for community service and it is left to the community corrections people to determine how that community service will be performed. They might be building a fence, washing cars or indeed cleaning up graffiti, and that is not necessarily recorded, certainly not on the court file.

The question is: is that information, if it were recorded, useful? I am not sure about that. It is certainly very useful if the member for Southern Downs asks about it again in the parliament. But I think in essence we do try to make sure we record information and collect data that will look at the effectiveness of the various primary punishment options. But those are community service orders vis-a-vis jail, fines and so forth. We have not until now identified any particular forms of community service that are the best options, but I think we need to give some thought about whether the cost of collecting and specifying that data actually adds much to our knowledge about sentencing. We just need to think that through a bit further before we jump to any knee-jerk conclusion. It would be interesting, I agree, to know precisely what proportion of community service orders end up being graffiti clean-ups, but whether that is useful information we have yet to really determine.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for consideration of the estimates for the Attorney-General and Minister for Justice has expired. I thank the Attorney-General and the portfolio officers for their attendance. 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. This hearing is now suspended until 1 p.m.

Sitting suspended from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m.

POLICE AND CORRECTIVE SERVICES**IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. T. McGrady, Minister for Police and Corrective Services and Minister
Assisting the Premier on the Carpentaria Minerals Province

Police Service

Mr R. Atkinson, Police Commissioner
Mr R. McGibbon, Deputy Commissioner
Mr R. Warry, Deputy Chief Executive
Mr J. Just, Director, Finance Division

Corrective Services

Ms H. Ringrose, Acting Director-General
Mr P. Severin, Acting Deputy Director-General
Mr E. Klatt, Director, Finance and Administrative Services
Mr P. Hollis, Senior Adviser

The CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. 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 answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning will be given at the expiration 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 a question 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 Chair is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement, but would you kindly limit the statement to no more than five minutes?

Mr McGRADY: In the short space of time that I have been in this portfolio I have certainly come to appreciate the huge range of complex issues which confront the Police and Corrective Service Departments. It would be fair to say that when the Goss government came to power in 1989 it inherited a criminal justice system which was in disarray. The Police Service has been widely exposed as being corrupt at the highest level. One of the key priorities of successive Labor governments has been to rebuild our criminal justice system, and the Beattie government has spent more on police than any other government before us and, likewise, we have put in place more police on the beat than any government before us.

At times difficult decisions need to be taken as to which capital works projects should receive priority. But this is something which is not unique to police. We would need to take them in Health, Education and other portfolios. The reality is that we have to balance competing priorities, and I accept this as one of the major challenges of this portfolio.

Within this context I am pleased to announce today that we have approved the first five tactical crime squads to be deployed to Logan and the Gold Coast, the city area, Cairns, Townsville and the Sunshine Coast. These squads will provide a real boost to regional police and an excellent weapon in our fight against crime. There will be 16 of these squads over the three-year period, and hopefully those five which I have just announced will be in operation within the next six months.

I am also pleased to inform members that we are on track to reach the target of 9,100 serving police officers by the year 2005. As at 1 June this year, there were 638 non-operational police and 7,042 operational police. Most importantly, since 1990 the proportion of operational police has risen from an estimated 77.7 per cent at 1 January 1990 to 90.5 per cent at 1 June this year. No one statistic is more indicative of the progress which we have made since the dark days pre Fitzgerald.

On the Corrections side of the portfolio there was also a need for the government to take a balanced approach. We need to ensure both that adequate capital works are undertaken so that our prisons are safe and secure and that sufficient attention is paid to rehabilitation programs. Again, this is a difficult portfolio which very few people really understand. Everyone has a view and from time to time, as I have said many times before, we will make mistakes because we are human.

One of the first things I have done since becoming minister is to try to make the department more transparent by reporting incidents to the media as they occur. Whilst we have made significant progress in both sides of this portfolio, we will not rest on this record. We want to continue to improve Police and Corrective Services, and I have every confidence that we have the right management team to achieve this.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions is allocated to non-government members.

Mr SEENEY: At the outset I thank you, Minister, the commissioner and your officers for making your time available to explore some of the issues in budget documents relating to this portfolio. My first question relates to speed cameras and the revenue that flows from their operation. In reply to question on notice No. 1, you stated that the total output cost for traffic policing, speed management and camera operations this year will be \$132.9 million and will represent about 15 per cent of the Police Service's total output costs. Has this percentage increased in line with increases in fines from speed cameras, and do you expect it will in the future?

Mr McGRADY: First of all, I thank the member for Callide for his initial comments. I am a great believer in the estimates program on principle because it allows the government to answer these questions. The service operates and manages the operational aspects of a speed camera program. When an offence is detected, a photograph is taken and subsequently processed by the Police Service's traffic camera office. As a consequence, an infringement notice is generated which requires payment. All speed camera fines are payable to Queensland Transport. If a fine is not paid, responsibility for the collection then passes to the Department of Justice, to the SPER group. Once collected, fines are returned to the Queensland Treasury and contribute to state consolidated revenue. Treasury is then responsible for ensuring that the total amount of revenue received from speed camera operations is provided to road safety initiatives the following year in line with government commitments.

As part of the budget process each year, the service receives funding for the activities it performs relating to traffic management and road safety. These activities are encompassed in the service's output relating to traffic policing, speed management and camera operations. Treasury does not identify how much of the funding provided for these activities is drawn from revenue raised through speed camera operations. As such, the activities may in fact be fully funded by speed camera revenue or, equally, they may not receive one dollar of revenue for speed camera operations.

What is important to recognise here is that there is no link between the amount of funding the service receives for traffic operations and the amount of revenue that is raised through speed camera operations. Therefore, there is certainly no financial incentive for the service to be seeking to raise additional revenue. I would reject any suggestion that this is the purpose of the speed camera program. This is also borne out in the fact that the proportion of the service budget allocated to traffic and speed management activities has remained very consistent over the previous two years. The total output costs for traffic policing in 1999-2000 was \$112.4 million, or 15.2 per cent of total output costs. In the year 2000-01 it was \$118.9 million, or 14.8 per cent, and in the year 2001-02 it is estimated to be \$132.9 million, or 15.3 percent.

Mr SEENEY: We are familiar with those figures. Could you confirm that there are no specific programs that your department administers that are funded specifically and directly from the speed camera revenue?

Mr McGRADY: The speed camera operation is designed not as a revenue raising exercise but simply to ensure that we have safer roads. If I was made aware that any officer of the Queensland Police Service was using the camera method to simply revenue raise, I would be quite angry. But the whole point is that, if the Queensland Police Service was maintaining the revenue which is being received as a result of these fines, your question may be valid. But as I have explained in my answer, we do not keep the moneys received.

Mr SEENEY: But you are reimbursed for that activity from Treasury. You did point that out, that there was no connection. But you are reimbursed?

Mr McGRADY: Yes.

Mr SEENEY: In answer to my question on notice No. 200 in state parliament, you advised that the overall budget allocation for the State Drug Investigation Group was in the vicinity of \$5 million last year. That expenditure of \$5 million a year to combat illicit drugs compares with that budget figure of \$133 million for speed management and camera operations as listed at page 1-34 of the MPS. Do you think that priority is appropriate, that that sort of comparison is an appropriate allocation of resources, given the impact on the community of the illicit drug problem?

Mr McGRADY: The State Drug Investigation Group investigates major and organised drug-related offences that cross regional, interstate and, in fact, international boundaries. These investigations are carried out by covert and overt means. The group also provides assistance to regional police. Consistent with an answer I gave to a question on notice, which I think you have referred to, the State Drug Investigation Group has an approved strength of 61 officers and seven staff members.

Mr SEENEY: There were four vacancies when—

Mr McGRADY: The Asian task force within the State Drug Investigation Group investigates major and organised crime within the Asian community. It promotes closer police liaison with the Asian community and educates police on Asian crime issues. The group also has the plantation reference, which assists regions in the investigation of large-scale illicit cannabis production. A further component is the illicit laboratories reference, which comprises two groups: the illicit laboratory investigation task force, which investigates synthetic drug manufacture, and the chemical diversion desk, which liaises with the pharmaceutical and chemical industry to identify and target persons acquiring chemicals for illicit drug manufacture.

The State Drug Investigation Group has been involved in 21 covert drug operations and a further 16 overt drug operations that resulted in the arrest of 470 persons on 1,546 drug and other criminal offences. These investigations resulted in applications for pecuniary penalty orders for the amount of just over \$97,000, and to date an amount of just over \$42,000 has been awarded by the penalty orders.

Mr SEENEY: Minister, I asked you about the comparison with the allocation.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member will allow the minister to answer the question.

Mr SEENEY: Mr Chairman, it would be helpful if the minister answered the question rather than read from the script.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The member will allow the minister to answer the question.

Mr SEENEY: I only wish he would answer the question.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! You will withdraw those comments.

Mr SEENEY: I withdraw.

Mr McGRADY: The value of tainted property seized by the group was approximately half a million dollars and the amount forfeited was about \$0.2 million. The question of drugs is one of the most important issues facing our society today. It is not the sole responsibility of the Queensland Police Service to take responsibility for the drug problem. There are many government and other organisations which have a responsibility. Since I have come into this portfolio, I have a far greater understanding of the menace of this trade. I can assure you that we will be doing all we can to stamp out these merchants of death who work within our community.

Mr SEENEY: Minister, I ask you again whether you think the allocation of resources within your department of \$5 million to the illicit drug problem compared with \$133 million to traffic enforcement is an appropriate allocation of resources. Does that allocation of resources have anything to do with the fact that the government earns a large amount of revenue from speed camera operations?

Mr McGRADY: As I said in my opening remarks, it is all a matter of priorities. Obviously, I wish we could spend a far greater amount of money on many areas of concern. But what we have to do is ensure that the police in this state cover all areas of crime. Drugs are an horrendous activity. As I said before, it is not only the Police Service which is responsible. We talk about drug squads, but what we also have to understand is that general police also engage themselves in detections of drug offenders. We also have to realise that state and regional drug squads are only part of the service's attack on crimes related to drugs. I want to assure your committee, Mr Chairman, and the people of Queensland that it is a problem in our

state. We will do all we can to provide sufficient funds for our men and women who work in the Queensland Police Service to do the job which we expect of them.

Mr SEENEY: I refer to the upcoming CHOGM to be held in October this year. Who will pay for the police resources that will be transferred from regional areas to Brisbane to provide the policing that is necessary for that event? Will the cost of that policing be met by the regional budgets or from some other source?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question, because it is one which I think is important. There is an agreement between the Commonwealth government and the Queensland government on the amount of money which we as a state will receive. Whilst the Commonwealth did not give us the exact amount which we asked for, it has been supportive. And so it should be, because this is not a state meeting. This is a meeting of 52 heads of state in our state and we are the host. So the Commonwealth is playing its part. The Queensland Police Service received a letter some time last month from the director-general of the Premier's Department indicating that an amount of money would be allocated to the Queensland Police Service. If there is a shortfall in those two figures, we have been assured that we can go to the mid-year budget review committee.

The point I am making is that there will be sufficient funds. I think what we should be talking about today is just what CHOGM means. It means that 52 heads of state will be visiting our state. Approximately 1,000 journalists from right around the world will be coming to Queensland. Altogether, there will be 10,000 visitors to our state. The eyes of the world will be upon Queensland for the duration of this meeting. I can assure you that we understand the issues.

A couple of weeks ago a group locked themselves away for two days in the Executive Building and we did an exercise which covered all the eventualities which could occur. Other departments were involved, such as Emergency Services, Health and Transport. The Prime Minister was personally involved. The Premier of our state was personally involved, as were federal ministers and state ministers. After this exercise I walked out with pride because of what we can do and what we will do. However, it is a little bit disappointing to hear adverse comments when all of this work is going on to prepare Queensland for when it will be the showcase of the whole world. People are entitled to ask the question, but let me say this: if the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Opposition want to come in, Mr Commissioner, I do not see any problems at all in going over the plans we have. However, I am certainly not going to announce today how much money we have. All I will say is that we have sufficient funds to ensure that every one of those 10,000 people who come to our shores will be flying home delighted with what they have seen in Queensland.

Mr SEENEY: I refer to the plant and equipment outlays in 2001, which actually fall by \$2.1 million on last year's actual spending from \$58.626 million taken from page 1-44, as does the outlay for vessels. Police numbers are set to increase, according to the budget documents, by 404. Surely with these additional police numbers there is a need for a budget allocation greater than last year's actual expenditure to ensure that our police officers have the resources and the equipment to do the job that is expected of them.

Mr McGRADY: I am glad you raised the question of police numbers. As I said in my opening remarks, our government has a policy whereby we will increase the number of police by 300 per year until the year 2005.

Mr SEENEY: The question related to the resources that are available to them. The budget allocation for that has actually fallen.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! When the member finishes his question, would he kindly allow the minister to answer.

Mr McGRADY: Mr Chairman, the policy of this government—and it is set in concrete—is that we will increase police numbers by 300 per year until the year 2005, and then obviously we will review the situation. That has been welcomed right across the community. If you increase police numbers, you also have to increase the resources which those men and women will require. It is not just a matter of employing 300 additional staff. Those staff will require cars and other resources. In this year's budget as part of the operational budget, we have the funds to increase those resources. I hear some stories from people who, in my opinion, should know better about insufficient funds for, as an example, computers. If my memory serves me right, I think we have allocated an additional \$7 million this year for computers for the service. At this point in time I may ask John Just if he will elaborate on my answer.

Mr JUST: Thank you, Minister. The actual plant and equipment budgets from 2000-01 to 2001-02 went from \$51.2 million to \$56.5 million, which is an increase of over \$5 million. The estimated actual came in at \$58.6 million. That will happen again during 2001-02. During mid-year reviews we get increased funding and we allocate that funding to the areas as needed. In relation to vessels, funding for vessels has gone from \$1.5 million down to \$1.3 million, and that happens. We have a 15-year vessel replacement program. The vessels are not replaced on a continual basis. They are replaced as and when they are required to be replaced. This year we have about three major vessel replacements that will occur. So the vessel replacement does go up and down over the years, but we do have those funds on an ongoing basis. There is a 15-year program which looks after the vessel program.

Mr SEENEY: The budget documents show the capital works budget has been cut by \$4.4 million on last year's actual spending, yet for the first time the department has borrowed money to pay for capital works to the tune of \$22.2 million, which equates to an interest cost of \$547,000 this year. At the same time, the government's equity injection has fallen from \$20.6 million to less than \$1 million. Given that your department's output receipts from Treasury have increased from \$787 million to \$833 million, what has happened to the \$420 million you have saved by reducing your capital injection and replacing it with borrowings?

Mr McGRADY: I want to comment first of all on the claims which have been made in recent days by, again, people who should know better about the Queensland Police Service starting the financial year with a \$22 million debt. This is a nonsense. The Queensland Police Service is not starting the year with a debt of \$22 million. What has happened is that Queensland Treasury has allocated that funding. It has also allocated the funds to pay off the interest and redemption. So that \$22 million so-called loan will not cost the Queensland Police Service one single solitary cent—not one single cent. I could, I suppose, go back into history to discover what other governments did, but I do not want to waste your time. Suffice it to say that these claims that we have started the year off with a \$22 million debt are totally and utterly untrue. So I hope I have established that. In actual fact, that question should have been addressed to the Treasurer, because that amount of money is a method by which Treasury does its accounts. To those men and women who work for the Queensland Police Service, I want to give them that assurance. I

am surrounded here by the senior people in the Queensland Police Service who can vouch for the statement I have just made. So I hope that is the last we hear of that nonsense.

In relation to the other issues which have been raised, the service's capital investment plan is based on a rolling program of police facilities which are required over a 10-year period. The plan includes all regional proposals and priorities, together with the government's initiatives and known corporate needs. So what we are saying here is that the regional centres will submit their applications for funding as to government election commitments or the needs of the government, and they are all considered. It is the same as any other department and the same as any other business. Let me say for the record that this year the police budget increased by 8.6 per cent.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for non-government members questions has expired. Minister, on page 1-26 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements you mention the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting as being a major challenge for the Police Service. Can you outline, supplementary to the information that you have already provided to the committee in answer to an earlier question, what steps are being taken to prepare for this major event?

Mr McGRADY: I appreciate the question, Mr Chairman. For a long time now the commissioner and in particular the Deputy Commissioner, Mr Ron McGibbon, have been actively involved in this process, together with their Commonwealth colleagues and members of the armed services and other organisations. They have been working long and hard to ensure that CHOGM will be a great success. So, Ron, because of your vast amount of experience, I would ask you to answer that question.

Dep. Comr McGIBBON: Thank you, Minister, and thank you, Mr Chairman. That is true. The CHOGM meeting of course is a Commonwealth meeting. I represent the service, with a number of other organisations, at the Senior Security Liaison Group, which is actually overseeing planning by a number of organisations, such as ASIO, AFP, ADF, Commonwealth Transport, QPS and the Victoria Police. We are all represented on a committee which actually oversees planning throughout Australia for the entrance of all these dignitaries to Australia and also for how we receive them at our airports and our venues.

There are a lot of issues with CHOGM at the moment that have security classifications and it is not possible for QPS to divulge exact details, but I can assure you that in-depth planning is being conducted. There have been a number of exercises in Brisbane, as the minister has previously indicated. More recently, there have been exercises in Brisbane by the ADF in preparation for CHOGM. I can assure you that all planning is at a very good stage at this point in time.

The CHAIRMAN: On page 1-16 of the MPS the new tactical crime squads are discussed. What steps has the government taken to deliver on its election commitment of 16 tactical crime squads?

Mr McGRADY: Again, I am pleased to take that question, because I did make mention of it earlier. Today I announced that our government will deliver on a key election commitment. At the recent state election we promised to provide 16 new tactical crime squads. The implementation of these squads will be done in a three-stage process. The first five of these squads will be in place before the end of this year, a further five will be developed next year and the final six will be added in the last year of the current term. The first five squads will be located in Logan and the

Gold Coast, City, Cairns, Townsville and the Sunshine Coast. These squads will consist of 14 officers—basically detectives but other officers as well. I am sure they will provide a real boost to the police in these regional and city areas. They will be funded with \$40 million over three years. Funding from within this year's budget will be met. It will cost about \$5 million, but obviously by the time it gets up and running the year will be half over.

The crime squads will investigate all crime, with an emphasis placed on property crime and possession and supply of drugs offences. They will provide assistance to local CIB detectives and, depending on the needs of the community, could conduct district-based special operations into particular problems such as break and enters and hooning. They will also have the capacity to conduct joint operations where necessary with federal agencies, including Australian Customs. I am sure that these squads will provide a real boost to police in regional and indeed metropolitan areas. They will be an excellent weapon against crime and are further proof that the promises we made during the last election will be carried out.

The CHAIRMAN: Minister, I take you to page 1-22 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements, which refers to new police flying squads. This is of special interest to people in my electorate, as it no doubt is to all Queenslanders. In the long term it could provide a real boost to local police officers when crime waves occur. Could you comment on the progress of this important initiative?

Mr McGRADY: I certainly can. As you may be aware, the Premier and I recently announced that the government would soon finalise the deployment arrangements for the new State Flying Squad, another election commitment. I can confirm today that the new squad will provide police officers for deployment to regional areas following a murder or increases in serious crime. Indeed, under a proposal to be approved in the coming weeks, officers from the squad could be deployed to a regional area for between four and six weeks to assist in a murder investigation, for example. They could also be deployed for a short, intensive period following sharp increases in crimes such as break and enters. Deployment periods will depend on the nature and the complexity of the crime, but it is planned that officers will be made available to help regional areas deal with major crime and matters of high public importance.

This again demonstrates what the Police Service is trying to do, with the support of the government, in combating crime. The previous question was about the tactical crime squads and this one is about a flying squad. The flying squad will be based here and will be able to be flown to an area of the state in which there are particular problems. I think this should get the message out to the people of Queensland that we are aware that crime is being committed and we are doing all we can to ensure that we give the Police Service the tools that it needs to fight crime in our state. Mr Commissioner, would you like to add anything to that?

Comr ATKINSON: I would like that opportunity. I am particularly pleased with the introduction of the flying squad. The nature of crime in Queensland, being such a decentralised state, is that I do not believe it is viable to have all our resources locked in in terms of permanent placement at any given police station. The advantage of the flying squad, and the tactical crime squads as well, is that it provides us with the flexibility to go where the increased level of activity is at any given time.

Having been a detective for 20 years in my police service, I am well aware that when a serious crime happens it is critically important that at a very early stage in the process there is a very heavy application, intensely so, of resources to deal with

that. Sometimes it is beyond smaller police communities to do that. When the flying squad is operational, as it will be this year for the first group of people involved, it will give us a capacity to respond very quickly, and I would hope effectively, to crime throughout this state, particularly to serious crime.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, page 1-10 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements deals with proactive problem-oriented policing. It makes mention of plans for new police beats during this term. Is there any information about where these beats will be established? How effective are these establishments proving in fighting crime and developing community policing?

Mr McGRADY: The commissioner has held his position for about four months longer than I have been the minister, so both of us are basically new boys on the block. We have been trying to visit as many centres around the state as possible. The purpose of this is to, obviously, meet the men and women who make up the Queensland Police Service but also to talk to local councils and others. Everywhere we go we get the same request. I was over on the bay islands with the member for Redlands just last week and it was the same there. The requests are for more police, more police stations, more police beats or a police beat, a shopfront, maybe a police youth club and, in more recent times, Aboriginal police liaison officers. The police beats are a very, very important part of policing.

Recently the commissioner and I were in New York and we had meetings with some of their high-ranking police officers. In reply to a question from us as to the reasons New York city has had a decline in crime and is now being seen as a place where the police are very successful, although I hasten to add not quite as successful as us, the assistant commissioner spoke about, among other things, community policing. He told us of a time he was sitting outside a building in which a murder had recently taken place. A lady came along and asked the police officers, 'What's happening? What's going on?' She was basically told to mind her own business and move on as it had nothing really at all to do with her. The assistant commissioner realised then that in an hour's time the police service would be saying to the public at large, 'Come and help us with our inquiries.'

If you have to ask people to come and help you, then obviously you want to form a partnership. He was saying that community policing was responsible for, in part, the reduction in crime. That is what we are saying. We are increasing police beats in major centres in this budget and we will also have police shopfronts in various communities. I know that I have waffled on a bit there, but I will table the list of police beats we plan to implement in this term.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, I understand that the government has committed to establish an additional 10 police shopfronts during this term. Page 1-10 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements makes mention of the funding set aside for shopfronts in this term. Has there been any decision made as to which communities will benefit from the establishment of police beat shopfronts in this financial year?

Mr McGRADY: I mentioned in my previous reply that, whilst police beats and shopfronts are different, to some extent the same philosophy is behind them. On many occasions we do get the support of major shopping centres, who provide premises for us to operate that service. As I mentioned in my previous answer, we do have plans in this period of time to provide additional police beats and shopfronts. There will be four shopfronts established in this financial year and I think six additional police beats this year. I table those figures.

I think we need to have this public debate about community policing. If the Queensland Police Service is to continue to be successful in its battle against crime, particularly against organised crime, it needs the support of the people of this state. The commissioner may elaborate a little on some of those discussions we had in New York and his plans to improve community policing in Queensland.

Comr ATKINSON: Thank you, Minister, for that opportunity. I do not think anyone would argue with the proposition that the future of policing is a partnership arrangement with the community. The combination of traditional police stations and some of the other initiatives that have been outlined here today, particularly with activities such as shopfronts, police beats, the police in schools program, Adopt-a-Cop and other such activities, enables us to make a reality that partnership with the community. I think shopfronts are one of the most exciting things we have been able to do in that regard.

Possibly regrettably, depending on your view, it would seem that communities now tend to see the centre of the community in some cases as the local shopfront. So shopfront areas, such as Indooroopilly shopping centre and Chermiside shopping centre, tend to become the focus of communities. I think it is critically important that, where possible, we have a police presence there. Certainly we believe the shopfront program has been very successful.

The minister may wish to announce it, but he has apparently given me the leave to do so. In this financial year four of the 10 new police beat shopfront locations will be established at Cannonvale at Thuringowa, Castletown shopping centre at Townsville, Springfield and Morayfield. Of course, there are a further six and the location of those is yet to be determined.

Ms JARRATT: Recent criticism has been levelled at the government for not spending enough on the Police Service's Stock Squad. Can you please outline the steps you have taken to assist this vital squad?

Mr McGRADY: I have noticed in the media that there has been some criticism, but the criticism has come from one source. Agforce, which is obviously one of the key stakeholders, has been sending out press releases left, right and centre congratulating the Police Service and particularly me as the minister. I do note that one person in particular has been running around the countryside complaining.

I want to reply by saying that I have really appreciated the strong support which we have received from Agforce. The other thing that I have been saying publicly is that to attract police officers to the Stock Squad you need a very special type of person. You need a person who obviously understands the land and the bush, and you also need somebody who understands cattle. Now, it is very difficult to get that combination. Some people have suggested to the commissioner and myself that maybe one way would be to reduce the educational levels. The argument that they put forward is that if you get a person who has lived most of his life in the rural parts of the state and he or she understands the land and has the attributes which are required, the chances are he or she may not have had the education which the Police Service requires. I have to say I am a bit loath—and I think the commissioner is, too—to lower the educational standards.

The other thing, too, as a result of the negotiations we have had with Agforce, is that my ministerial colleagues the Attorney-General and the Minister for Primary Industries have had some discussions following discussions I and the commissioner have had with Agforce. The penalty for cattleduffing is ridiculously low. So we are in the process of increasing the penalty for that offence. Obviously,

when cattle prices go high, as they have been for some time now, you obviously get more and more people involved in this illegal practice. I have said before that sometimes people think there is a glamour, there is an adventure, in cattleduffing because it is part of the old romance of the Australian bush. But let me say here today that these people who engage in this activity are thieves. They are criminals. And as such, the full weight of the law will come down on them. I give the commitment that we will attempt to increase the numbers. I understand the numbers are falling for various reasons. The vacancies are being filled. We did introduce two new positions together with two four-wheel drives for them.

Mr LAWLOR: The Opposition Leader, Mike Horan, earlier this year called on the government to go back to using drug squads in areas such as the Gold Coast. Minister, can you please elaborate on why the government has resisted these requests?

Mr McGRADY: I know this proposal sounds attractive, and there are many people who think at first glance it is good idea, but I can confirm today that the Queensland Police Service is not planning the establishment of any additional regional or district drug squads at this point in time. Currently, the service has a central state Drug Investigation Group capable of providing specialist support anywhere at all in this state. The state Drug Investigation Group focuses on major and organised criminal activity and has 68 staff, comprising one detective superintendent in charge, 60 police officers and seven public servants, including two accountants. There are two regional drug squads: one in the northern part of the state and one in the far northern police region. And each regional drug squad has 10 police officers and one public servant.

In addition to these dedicated squads, the service devotes significant resources to the fight against drugs. It employs both proactive and reactive strategies in this regard, and some of those strategies include policing operations, including general patrols, which involve the CIB and traffic officers; also, covert operations; joint agency operations; multijurisdictional operations; illicit market scans; a drug and alcohol coordination unit; and so on. So there are a number of current election commitments that will also enhance the service capacity, and some of those I have mentioned here this afternoon.

Also, there will be four new sniffer dogs, and they will be specialists in drug detection; two new scanners; a State Flying Squad, which I have mentioned already; and the 16 tactical crime squads which, likewise, I have mentioned. So whereas we, as a service, understand that there is a huge battle ahead of us, in terms of a by-election where you can make these promises that we are going to set up a drug squad—although it sounds attractive, there are some problems. And I like to think that rather than have specialist squads in one particular part dealing with drugs or anything else, it is far better to have people employed to cover a whole area of criminal activity rather than concentrate on one specific area. Commissioner, would you like to add to that?

Comr ATKINSON: Yes. I understand the thinking behind the proposal, but I think it would probably be counterproductive. The deputy and I are very closely attuned to making sure we get the best value from our resources. We think that in the south-east corner we are better having a single drug squad based at State Crime Operations Command here in Brisbane and that that squad cover the whole south-east corner.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for government members' questions has expired.

Mr QUINN: My question refers to CHOGM. Minister, did the government provide all of the additional funding requested by the Queensland Police Service in its budget submission to cover its security requirements for CHOGM?

Mr McGRADY: I am not being rude, but I did take a similar question from the opposition. I do not know whether you were in the room, or not. Were you here?

Mr QUINN: Briefly.

Mr McGRADY: What I did say was that there is an agreement between the Commonwealth and the state as to the contribution which the federal government will make towards this exercise. That is only right and proper, because it is not a state initiative, it is a national initiative, which I am sure all Australians will be proud of. So we have arrived at a figure which the Commonwealth will give us. We have also had a commitment from the Premier's director-general that an amount of money will be allocated to the Queensland Police Service. We have also had a further commitment that if the two amounts fall short, we can go back to the mid-year budget review.

So the point I am making is that I certainly do not want to announce to the world how much we are going to spend on security. I think the important thing is that the security program, which the deputy commissioner was briefly discussing earlier today, will be met. We believe that we have sufficient funds there to provide the resources. We will have the assistance of the Australian armed forces. There are other agencies who will be assisting, as well.

I did make the offer—and I do that again in your presence—that if you, as the leader of the Liberal Party, and the Leader of the Opposition want to come, we are more than happy to give you a briefing on what is happening. I believe that the CHOGM conference is one of the greatest events that Queensland will see for a long, long time. I just do not want people to be casting doubts about our ability to host such a major international event. I mean, 52 heads of state, 10,000 visitors and 1,000 journalists are all going to descend on Brisbane. There will be 600 motorcades during the conference. That is some idea of the extent of this. The Commonwealth government—I would not say they are being generous, but let me say this: we think they have given us sufficient funding which will help us. The state has a role to play for accepting this.

Let me make it also clear that this is not just moneys for the Queensland Police Service. Emergency Services has a role in this, the Department of Health has a role and so, too, does the Department of Transport. So without being flippant, if Mr Horan and yourself wish to come in, we would be more than happy to give you a confidential briefing, because I do not want this nonsense to gather strength—that we do not have the funds. We do have the funds, and we will give you a confidential briefing, acknowledging your role in the parliamentary system. So if you want to take up the offer, just give us a call and we will arrange it for you.

Mr FLYNN: First of all, minister, I should acknowledge the assistance rendered by the heads of your department during the framing of my questions on notice. I appreciate that. It is acknowledged that the government intends providing an additional 600 police, I gather, in the year 2001-02. However, given any projected loss rates for whatever reason—undoubtedly anticipated by QPS—are you able to indicate in real terms the number of additional police to be provided? And does the government have a specific figure in mind for employing such additional police, or does that depend upon the loss rate?

Mr McGRADY: As I have mentioned previously, our government remains on target to reach the 9,100 serving police officers by 2005. We are on track to do this. To meet growth and attrition, approximately 600 recruits are being trained each year. This will provide the Police Service with a net increase of the 300, to which I referred in my previous answers. I have also been advised that, on a month by month analysis, on the current planning the service will meet the September 2002 target of 8,174 officers.

I think I have mentioned this before, but since 1990 police officer numbers have increased by 2,477, but the proportion of operational police has risen from an estimated 77.7 per cent—and I mentioned these figures in my opening remarks—in January 1990 to 90.5 per cent in June of this year. As at 1 June this year, there were 638 non-operational police and 7,042 operational police. Commissioner, you may like to add something to those figures.

Comr ATKINSON: Yes. It is an interesting question. One of the things that I understand is currently particularly interesting for the service is that, whereas police numbers have increased, the attrition rate is actually declining. So it may well be that we actually have to recruit slightly less new officers than we had anticipated to meet these target figures. We are comfortable we will meet them. At this stage it is too early to call as to why the attrition rate is declining. It could be due to a number of things. It could be the fact—as you would be well aware—that the focus on retiring at 55 years of age as an option is not being taken up as readily as it was. It could be greater job satisfaction. It could be that people simply want to stay in and earn the annual income for a longer period. We are just not sure yet. But there is a current trend that the attrition rate is actually declining, which is good. We think that is a healthy thing for the organisation. It would at least show a degree of desirability in terms of staying in rather than leaving and retaining the experience. But certainly, regardless of whether the attrition rate declines, remains stable or increases, we are confident that we will certainly clearly meet the target figures. Because even if the attrition rate were to increase, the number of applicants that we have who are suitably qualified to be commenced as recruits is far more than we are able to take in, which is again a healthy thing. Unless there is some specific issue, minister, I do not think there is anything more I can add to that.

Mr McGRADY: I will just add that the Queensland Police Service has the lowest turnover rate of any police jurisdiction—a 3.3 per cent turnover rate this year, which says something. There is a message somewhere there.

Mr FLYNN: Minister, despite the assistance of your department, I have to refer you to my question on notice No. 7 from Estimates Committee B. In part I said that bearing in mind the imminent changeover to PCs from Apple Macs, what financial support is available to police in remote areas for software and hardware? The fact that your department is implementing a range of strategies—which was part of the answer I was given—for software and hardware support in rural areas is appreciated. However, can you demonstrate what methods are being employed to provide this training and support to rural areas, bearing in mind that there was no service contract with Apple previously when they were issued and that police training was largely restricted to metropolitan and larger regional centres?

Mr McGRADY: As I said in answer to an earlier question, this year we are spending \$7 million on desktop replacement. I think that compares to about \$5 million in the previous year. This is basically an operational matter. As you would appreciate, I would not know, as the minister, what equipment we have in the various stations around the state. But John or Dick, could you answer that?

Mr WARRY: In response to that question about the training, we have a number of irons in the fire, so to speak. We will be doing train the trainer sessions as part of the roll-out program and we are proposing to enhance the level of support available at the regional level. We are a bit concerned at this stage that it is somewhat differential across regions—some of them are better placed than others. We will have warranties in respect of the new material rolling out. From memory, that is a two-year warranty on new machines.

The other thing that we have done as part of this program is to endeavour to make sure that we can actually provide support to regional and local centres by running the software and the systems much more centrally than previously. One of the downsides with the Apple platform was that if it fell over you had to send someone out to fix it. The new machinery comes in a modularised way and we have got a centralised software distribution and updates for key applications. So, for example, we will be able to update software or provide virus protection. All of those measures are designed to relieve the burden on the people actually working in the police stations. I am sorry, I have just been corrected on the warranty. It is a four-year warranty for the desktops and a three-year warranty on laptops. I think that indicates that people will not be left alone.

I think that what we will see as part of this program is a platform across-the-board that is swifter, more capable but also much more comprehensively supported centrally than was previously the case. The other thing that we are hoping to do as part of this program is to in fact maintain a degree of commonality across regions and commands so that there are not great variations between the holdings as people move from one region to another.

Mr FLYNN: Thank you, Minister. Could you indicate whether—and I should at this stage state that I have no doubt whatsoever about the value of shopfronts; I would somewhat vaguely link them with resident beats in the UK, which essentially put police at the forefront together with their community and I have always been a supporter of that and it is a splendid initiative—in providing much-needed shopfront facilities to a total of 40, I gather, throughout the state that this has involved removing resources from existing establishments and, therefore, added to the potential resource problems for individual stations?

Mr McGRADY: I appreciate the question. I think it comes back to the comments that the commissioner and I made about community policing. We have answered the questions about the net gain of officers—the net gain of 300 a year. We have talked about the six police beats this year and the four shopfronts and we have also discussed the concept of community policing. I do not think that it matters one iota, to be quite honest, as to whether or not you deploy a police officer from the station to a police beat or a shopfront, or whether or not that person stays there. It is all about making the police visible and it is all about creating this relationship between the police and the public. The point that you made about the UK—where the whole of the area knows who the local cop is—I think this is what community policing is all about. I think the object of the police beat and the shopfront system is to reinforce what you are referring to. Now, commissioner, is there anything that you would want to add to that?

Comr ATKINSON: I would. Thank you for the opportunity. I understand your concern, but I do not think it is a significant issue. Where shopfronts are located, that tends to be in a fairly largely staffed police establishment or there is a largely staffed establishment close by. The resource allocation model allows for a relieving component in the staffing. There is no doubt that the average shopfront has two

police officers and a civilian employee and from time to time one of those police officers will be unavailable due to recreation leave and would need to be replaced, or would generally be replaced. That replacement would come from the nearby police establishment. So in Cairns it would be the Cairns Police Station. But there is a relief component built in. We have found there is absolutely no difficulty at all in attracting people to perform that duty.

The minister's comment, if I might say so, I think is quite reasonable in that if the police are performing duty in the shopfront and are dealing with shoplifters in the shopfront, that prevents the necessity for police being called from the local police station, obviously, to go to the shopping centre to respond to that particular call for service. So I think that it is rather balanced in terms of the overall effect.

Mr FLYNN: Minister, given that police liaison officers are one of the most significant, valuable additions to police human resourcing not only from the point of view of crime fighting but also from the point of view of fostering good relations with the public, are either you or your department able to indicate how much these positions cost? Given the undoubtedly recorded cost of police overtime when dealing with ATSI matters, would this government consider the extension of this facility on a shared basis to all stations, that is, not necessarily one PLO per station but PLOs made available to the smaller stations by the larger ones?

Mr McGRADY: The police liaison officers, I think, is a tremendous initiative. At Mount Isa where I live, we were one of the first cities or areas that benefited from police liaison officers. Different people have different views as to what the role and the responsibility of those liaison officers are. In my part of Queensland, there are Aboriginal police liaison officers, but in the metropolitan area we also have the different nationalities. The Police Service attempts to have police liaison officers employed from the various groupings which reside in the cities.

I know in the early days there was a concern or some people felt that Aboriginal liaison officers could in fact arrest. Well, they cannot. Their role is simply to try to be a liaison between ethnic people and the Police Service. The other part of the equation, too, is that in some of the communities, particularly in the far north and the north-west, you have community policing as well, which is different from the Queensland police. There are currently 124 police liaison officers and, as I have mentioned, from culturally diverse backgrounds right across the state. So in addition to indigenous police officers, there are two Chinese, there are three Vietnamese, one from Samoa, one from Papua New Guinea and three other police liaison officers with identified links to the South Sea Islanders. So they are not exclusively Aboriginal. Commissioner, would you like to add to that?

Comr ATKINSON: Thank you, and with your approval I might ask Mr Warry to comment in relation to the specific question about funding. I am not sure of the precise amounts. I thank you for those supportive comments. We believe strongly in this program and would like to see it expanded as resources and funding are available. Currently, the next locality to gain police liaison officers is Bundaberg.

What we are finding—and this is perhaps slightly at variance with your proposition—is that it would seem to be better to put two police liaison officers in a locality together rather than one. Being a police officer, as you well know, is a difficult task. Being a police liaison officer, particularly from an Aboriginal background, I would suggest is a more difficult task. We are finding that if we can put two there, they are mutually supportive of each other and it has a greater effect. Wherever possible we would also like to add a vehicle. The package of two police

liaison officers and a vehicle is not an inexpensive package. Could I ask Mr Warry to comment if he has any information in terms of the cost of such a package?

Mr McGRADY: \$30,000 a year.

Mr FLYNN: Thank you, Minister. There are certain difficulties with addressing all the problems in replacing the number of police stations that need replacing, building new ones and renovating those that were probably around when Noah built his ark. However, in addressing these needs there are a number of police stations that appear to be left off the capital expenditure list for 2001-2002, notably Gatton Police Station, which is within my electorate, and Beaudesert.

Gatton's problem, essentially, I think, is that there is an overcrowding situation. They have had security problems and I note—at no fault to the officer in charge, I might add—significant workplace health and safety issues in relation to the loading and unloading of firearms and also, in relation to Beaudesert Police Station, the hang proofing and upgrading of the watch-house. If I have framed that properly, perhaps you would address my concerns in relation to those two stations.

Mr McGRADY: I get the gist of the question. As I have said previously, when you travel around the state, whether that be to Gatton, Biloela, or anywhere else, there is this demand for additional police stations or additional facilities. There are those around the state which are obviously in need of repair or renovation.

I had the opportunity last week of going with Mr Warry to Tannum Sands. The reason I mention this today is that Tannum Sands has a police station there but obviously as the area is growing they require and need additional facilities. We made a commitment that we will build a new police station. Quite honestly, the structure that is at Tannum Sands now, in my opinion, does not need demolishing. What we can do is build around it. So I went there and I spoke to the local member and the mayors of Gladstone and Calliope, and we have come to an agreement. We will spend the same amount of money. We are going to provide basically a new police station, but we will maintain the existing one within the new building. Also, the commitment that we gave is that by the time we finish, which will be next year, they will have all the state-of-the-art equipment that you would get in a new police station. So the Police Service is well aware of the need, but it all comes down to finance.

This year, as an example, we will start the construction of a new 24-hour police station at Calamvale, which will cost \$1 million; the commencement of construction of a new police station on Fraser Island; we will complete stage 1 of the Mount Isa headquarters, and the police station and the watch-house for \$4.3 million; we will complete stage 2 of the Rockhampton Police Station, which is \$2.6 million; and we will commence the one at Toowoomba which we announced just prior to the budget. So we are going ahead.

In regard to the one in Gatton—we have previously identified the shortcomings, as you rightly say, of the Gatton Police Station. The station, as you know, is co-located in a government building with the Department of Justice. To address this issue, we have secured additional office accommodation for use by the Queensland Police Service from the Department of Justice. I have just been advised that a design for the refurbishment of the facility has recently been approved by the Queensland Police Service and it is anticipated that this refurbishment will be completed by November. So once again, the government is delivering to you and your constituents and I appreciate your thanks and appreciation.

Mr FLYNN: I thank you for your answer. At the risk of labouring the point, I sincerely hope nothing goes wrong with the Beaudesert watch-house within the next 12 months.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The time for non-government questions has expired. Mr Lawlor, the member for Southport.

Mr LAWLOR: Gun control has always been an important issue and a somewhat controversial issue in Queensland. I am aware that the parliament recently passed an amendment to the Weapons Act 1990. Can you provide details of the nature of the amendment and the changes it will entail for gun ownership in Queensland?

Mr McGRADY: I thank you for the question. As you say, the matter recently went before the Queensland parliament and we did receive the support of all sides of the chamber. The legislation which you are referring to effectively closes a loophole which had allowed hand guns which had been rendered inoperable to be restored to working order and possibly—possibly—end up in the hands of criminals. The old legislation allowed a category H weapon, such as a hand gun, to be classified as a replica if it had been rendered permanently inoperable by the owner. These replicas did not require licensing, registration or, indeed, any record of disposal. This resulted in the situation where unscrupulous people were buying replicas, or allegedly buying replicas, restoring them to full working order, and disposing of them without any record of the purchases.

With the changes that you refer to, weapons classed as permanently inoperable obviously can no longer be classified as replicas and they will require licensing registration and, of course, a record of disposal. This will prevent any shady activity associated with the use of replica guns. Closing this loophole will ensure greater safety for all Queenslanders.

The important point is that a three-month amnesty commenced on 17 May to enable all owners of those types to take steps to either obtain the appropriate licensing and registration or, alternatively, hand them in. An awareness program is being conducted to ensure that people are fully informed of this change, and I promised that during the debate. This includes internal advice to key stakeholders and the provision of relevant information to the general community through the media. Just the other day, we approved the forms and the advertising campaign that we are embarking upon.

Mr LAWLOR: Page 1-15 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements makes mention of the Police Drug Diversion Program. Can you expand on the nature of the program, whether it has strict guidelines attached to it and how it fits in with the state government's strategy to deal with drugs?

Mr McGRADY: The program that you refer to is part of the Queensland illicit drug diversion initiative, which is a joint Commonwealth and state program. It is part of a national campaign against drug misuse. Recently, the Prime Minister, the Premier and myself officiated at the launch of one of these campaigns. The police commissioner was there too. The point I make is that often you see state governments and the federal government arguing and disagreeing, but there are many instances where we work together as a team. This is one of those instances.

Offenders are offered an opportunity to attend a drug diversion assessment program. This involves assessment, education and information about the legal and health consequences of cannabis use and assistance to develop a personal plan to stop their drug use. However, diversion will only be offered to eligible persons who

admit committing the offence and who do not have a conviction for an offence involving violence against other people or another person. The offer can only be made once. It is basically a second chance.

This early intervention strategy offers people who are apprehended for a minor drug offence an opportunity to receive professional help rather than being charged and then proceeding through the courts and getting involved in that cycle. It is an option to give young people or first-time drug users the second chance that I have just mentioned and to avoid the stigma of a criminal record. It is not about the decriminalisation or the legalisation of cannabis. It is all about giving somebody, particularly a young person, a second chance and to try to educate them as to the folly of their ways.

I can inform members today that in the first nine days of the program, which began on 24 June, 64 people were diverted to rehabilitation under the program. Diversions have also taken place in all police regions. Approximately 90 per cent of all the people diverted were male. A regional breakdown of the first nine days is as follows: the far northern region, 11 people; northern region, four people; central region, 13 people; the north coast, six people; the southern region, six people; metro north, nine people; metro south, eight people; and the south eastern region, seven people.

Mr ENGLISH: Modern technology is changing the face of much of today's society, including policing. Science seems to be becoming an increasingly important weapon in the fight against crime. I understand that the Queensland Police Service has recently started to utilise DNA testing in its day-to-day operations. Page 1-16 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements discusses funding to collect and analyse DNA samples. Can you tell us what role DNA plays in policing in Queensland? What funding is being provided this year and what will it be spent on?

Mr McGRADY: DNA and its uses in modern policing have indeed been a popular topic in Queensland in recent months. At the end of this session I will ask what DNA stands for, and I guarantee that there will not be too many people who know.

Personally, I believe DNA is a scientific tool that can greatly assist in changing the face of modern crime fighting. The collection of DNA samples from prisoners serving a term of imprisonment for indictable offences began last year. The collection of DNA samples for people in watch-houses charged with indictable offences also became mandatory in Queensland at the start of June this year.

The process also allows for a voluntary collection of samples from persons by informed consent. This initiative is an example of smart policing and can greatly assist in identifying subjects or offenders for criminal offences. It will also provide a valuable investigative tool to help in solving crimes. In addition to identifying suspects, it can also help prove innocence. Another benefit of the DNA program is the expected reduction in the investigation hours required when DNA evidence is available.

This year's budget contains just over \$500,000, which is required for the DNA coordination unit to administer this process. This amount reflects an increase in staffing recently approved by the Police Service's board of management. A sum of \$1.38 million is allocated for the analysis and profiling of DNA samples taken from persons arrested or convicted for indictable offences. I know that the Queensland

Police Commissioner is very supportive of DNA. Maybe he would like to add some comments.

Comr ATKINSON: Thank you for the opportunity, minister. The DNA process is one of the most exciting things happening in policing generally, certainly for the Queensland Police Service. One of the best aspects of DNA technology is the certainty. It is consistent with fingerprints in terms of the certainty of the identification, the conclusiveness and the weight on which a jury can rely in terms of that evidence.

As well as the current capability of DNA, we are also excited by the future potential prospects of DNA. Whilst it is not available as yet, I am told that the potentiality for DNA evidence is enormous. The potentiality exists for DNA evidence to provide a profile of the suspect from the DNA sample left behind by the offender. In the future, it may well be possible to take a DNA sample left at a scene by a criminal and say that this person is Caucasian and has blond hair and blue eyes. The future is exciting, as well as the current situation.

Mr ENGLISH: I thank the minister and the commissioner for that very detailed answer. Minister, page 1-8 of the MPS refers to 'Proactive, Problem-Oriented Policing'. There has been frequent mention made in the media in recent times about increasing crime in various parts of Queensland. As the Minister for Police, do you feel that there is any credence to the reports of a supposed sharp rise in crime and do statistics back those claims up?

Mr McGRADY: First of all, I read reports of crimes occurring across the state with as much concern as any other Queenslanders. However, I think media assertions of crime waves and the like are sometimes alarmist and are more reflective of the desire for an increased readership and audience than dealing with the current crime situation in our state. The most recently available statistics do not indicate a sharp rise in crime. In fact, only a slight increase has been recorded and, with population growth, I should think that this would really be expected.

I will be clear about this: any increase in crime is not welcome, but we do need to view this issue in its proper context. Preliminary figures from the crime reporting information management system for the first three-quarters of this year show that reported offences increased only slightly across the three major offence categories compared with the same period of 1999-2000. The Queensland population grew by approximately 1.7 per cent during the same period. Offences against property increased by 2.5 per cent, offences against persons increased by 3.2 per cent and other offences increased by 1.5 per cent. On a national level, a recent Australian Bureau of Statistics report found that Queensland was below the national average in seven of the 12 categories for which a national crime rate could be calculated between 1999 and 2000. We recorded one of the lowest rates of motor vehicle theft in the year 2000. Our rate of assault was 29 per cent below the national rate. Unlawful entry was five per cent below the national rate and robbery decreased by six per cent in the last year, some 46 per cent below the national rate.

As a government, we are determined to be tough on crime and this is reflected in the Queensland Police Service's proactive stance on fighting and reducing crime in our state. Just some of the strategies that the service has introduced include the property crime investigative group, within the state crime operations command, which investigates major and organised property related crime. This squad maintains a commuter database—I would like to continue that because I think it is important, but my time to answer has expired. Maybe some other time.

The CHAIRMAN: With the permission of the questioner?

Mr ENGLISH: Yes.

The CHAIRMAN: You certainly may, minister.

Mr McGRADY: As I have mentioned before—and this is all part of the proactivity—the state's flying squad will assist as will the 16 tactical crime squads. As regards auto theft, the Police Service, in cooperation with stakeholder networks representing government and non-government agencies, business and industrial groups, has continued to progress Project Heat. In recent times, the Attorney-General and I met with motor traders and other organisations, along with the police commissioner, to see what other actions we can take to try to reduce this sort of crime.

Also, with offences against the person, the government's introduction of DNA sampling within the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act now allows police officers and scientists to work together to identify sexual assault offenders and successfully prosecute them. In the field of public order, all operational police officers are now trained and equipped with capsicum spray. This initiative allows police officers to subdue violent offenders and maintain public safety.

The Police Service also maintains a highly effective group of specially trained officers who form the Public Safety Response Team. Those officers are trained and equipped to respond in the interests of public safety to instances of violence and confrontation. We are deeply involved in those proactive activities. I think it is going a long way to reducing crime. The figures that I have detailed and that indicate that in seven out of the 12 areas we are below the national average are a tribute to the work that is being done.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for the consideration of the estimates of the Police Service has expired. The committee will now adjourn briefly for afternoon tea. The hearing will resume at 2.40.

Sitting suspended from 2.28 p.m. to 2.41 p.m.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee will now consider the estimates of the Department of Corrective Services. Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement in relation to this portfolio similar to the way you did in regard to Police. But if you do so, could you kindly limit it to five minutes.

Mr McGRADY: I thank you for the generous offer, but in my opening remarks at the beginning of this session I did briefly discuss both Police and Corrective Services so I will decline your offer.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you. I call the member for Callide.

Mr SEENEY: Once again, I thank the minister and the officers for the opportunity to examine some issues within the budget estimates for this portfolio. Minister, there has been a series of escapes from custody from Corrective Services institutions. In fact, page 3-16 states that there were eight escapes and 28 absconds from Community Custody Correctional Services alone during 2000-01. As recently as last month, two prisoners were mistakenly released from the Woodford Correctional Centre. Your standard response seems to be that you will conduct a review into each of these incidents. How many of these reviews do you have running and when do you expect them to report?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for the question. It is a question which I believe warrants some public debate and some public discussion. One of the first moves I made when I became the minister was to basically inform the media

whenever there was an incident in our prison system. Whenever there is an incident we immediately do a media release which goes out almost instantly so that we can inform people of exactly what is going on. With that policy you obviously involve yourself in giving the impression that there are more absconders around than there have been in the past. That is a deliberate policy of mine, because I think it is important that people understand. The other point I want to make is that it is all very well to make headlines about those people who abscond—and I do not criticise the media for doing that; they are stories in which people are interested—but at the same time we should understand that well over 90 per cent of people in the scheme are doing the right thing.

Earlier I mentioned having a public debate. I would welcome a sensible debate. We have two options. The first option is that you throw them in jail and throw away the key. If you adopt that policy, one day even the most violent criminal will step out of the gate and will become part of our community again. The chances are he or she will be back in in a very short space of time. The other alternative we have is that whilst they are inside the system you try to involve them in rehabilitation programs and then you involve them in day release or the other schemes which are in place. That gradually gets that person used to coming back into and being part of the community. There is no easy answer. That is the decision which governments have to make. It is not about political point scoring. It is a genuine problem which we as leaders in the community have to address. Again, I feel strongly about this. I have only just started to get wound up. If you want to give me an extension of time, I will be happy.

Mr SEENEY: I want to remind you of the question. I do not disagree with what you said. Few people would. But I asked the question: how many reviews do you have running? Do you know how many reviews you have running? Do you care how many reviews are running? Can you tell us how many reviews are running?

Mr McGRADY: Again, it is a supplementary question. I am more than happy to—

Mr SEENEY: With respect, it was the original question.

Mr McGRADY: Are you giving me an extension of time?

Mr SEENEY: No, I want you to answer the question. Could you tell us how many reviews are running?

Mr McGRADY: I will give you the background. In the early days I asked the department to give me some alternatives and review why certain parolees did not come back in. As a result of the first review and some of the recommendations which were made—that was an internal review—we changed some of the systems that we had in place. The second review, which I have referred to, is an external review being done by consultants. The review is expected to take three months. I have not yet had the recommendations from that report and I will ask the acting director-general whether we have received that report yet.

Ms RINGROSE: 15 July.

Mr McGRADY: 15 July; it is very close. We will be getting the results of the external review and we obviously will be taking on board the recommendations and deciding whether or not we go down that particular path. In the 2000-01 financial year there were eight escapes and 28 absconds from community correction centres. If that is the figure you want, that is the figure I will give you. But coming back to the two reviews, one was internal, which we have had the results of and which we have

acted upon, and the second one will be in the department's hands on 15 July. Obviously, we will take the opportunity then to review those recommendations.

Mr SEENEY: You referred to the number of escapes from Community Custody Correctional Services. Why were the staff numbers in that service cut from 139 in last year's budget papers to 129 this year and why haven't any additional staff been appointed given the fact that you have had that number of escapes? I am referring to page 3-5 of the MPS.

Mr McGRADY: As at 28 June this year there were 615 staff working in community corrections, including part time and also some casual staff. The staff establishment was reduced by 30—and casual positions—at the commencement of the 2000-01 financial year as a response to a reduction in the number of supervision orders. As at 28 June, 201 community staff were temporary or casual. I have required that the department take action to reduce this number where possible. However, it is necessary to maintain a proportion of casual staff in each operational area for supervision of offenders as required. Furthermore, the department's workload related funding arrangements with Treasury require some flexibility of the community corrections work force through the retention of a small proportion of temporary staff.

Queensland continues to be at the forefront in the efficient delivery of community corrections services, with the highest offender to staff ratio of all Australian jurisdictions. To give you some idea, I will table this document containing a table. For the committee's information, the operational structure of community corrections consists of four operational regions: northern, central, metropolitan and southern. There are 32 area officers and a significant number of reporting centres. The Community Custody Program includes the Work Outreach Camps, which have great success as country members would certainly know, and we also have the Women's Community Custody Programs and the West Brisbane Community Corrections Centre, and also the central office where obviously the directors operate from.

Mr SEENEY: The Ministerial Portfolio Statements indicates that the cost per prisoner per day in secure custody has increased from \$184.75 last year to \$203.62 in this year's budget. The cost per day per prisoner in open custody has increased from \$121.43 to \$182.25 and the cost per prisoner per day in community custody has increased from \$110.73 to \$144.74. You indicated in reply to my question on notice No. 4 that the cost per prisoner per day of home detention with electronic monitoring is \$48. You also stated in reply to a government question on notice that electronic monitoring used in conjunction with home detention offers increased community safety, and we would concur with that. Why have you refused to roll out this technology to other prisoners, such as parolees and those on work relief, to save taxpayers' money and to improve community safety, and why have only 10 prisoners been involved in that trial of home detention?

Mr McGRADY: They are two very relevant questions and I will not labour the fact that the cost of maintaining prisoners in the system has increased. Can I just explain the reasons for that? Prisoners requiring the highest level of supervision will obviously incur a higher cost per day to the taxpayer. So prisoners in secure custody cost the state approximately \$200 per person per day as compared with community custody, which costs around about \$140 per person per day.

There are three reasons for the increase in the prisoner cost per day. The first one is the increased fixed costs resulting from the prison cell expansion program. There has also been a reduction in double-ups of prisoners. Thirdly, we have just

been through an enterprise bargaining exercise and obviously the additional costs—

Mr SEENEY: Those things were explained in the notes. I did not ask about them. I asked about the electronic monitoring.

Mr McGRADY: Mr Chairman, I was again reiterating the reasons why the costs have increased and, as I did say, they were very relevant questions. With regards to electronic monitoring, the government is conducting a trial of electronic monitoring of offenders on the home detention program. I do not think at this point that I should pre-empt the outcomes of this trial, but I can say that the electronic monitoring used in conjunction with home detention orders may offer an opportunity to strengthen the effectiveness of community corrections. So we are singing the same song.

Under the trial, electronic monitoring gives non-violent, non-sexual offenders an earlier opportunity to move into the community, thereby reducing the costs of holding that person in custody. Funding is allocated for project development and research and also for the procurement and commissioning of an electronic monitoring system. You also need staff training, consultation and the like. I am saying to you that there is a trial going on. We will obviously evaluate the trial and if we believe that this will be beneficial and cost effective, we will certainly go down that path. The acting director-general may wish to add something to those remarks I have made.

Ms RINGROSE: At the moment we anticipate that when the trial is fully operating we will have up to 50 offenders. Clearly we do not have any budget beyond that which has already been granted by Treasury to go beyond that number.

Mr SEENEY: In reply to a question I asked in the House you said that it would cost \$85 million to use the GPS technology for a work to release program. Would you provide us with the details of how you arrived at that figure, considering that you said in an answer to a question on notice that it costs \$48 per prisoner for the home detention technology?

Mr SEVERIN: The GPS technology is significantly more expensive than the technology that has been used for the home detention trial. It will require an expensive bit of equipment to be provided for every offender that is monitored using such technology. In arriving at the figure that you quoted and that was quoted in the minister's response, we referred it to the parolees who are currently approved on parole orders in the community. We then used the knowledge of the cost of the GPS technology and just multiplied those figures and arrived at the figure of \$85 million.

Mr SEENEY: Sorry, every prisoner on parole rather than the work to release program?

Mr SEVERIN: The question was related to prisoners on parole. If I may also refer to release to work, release to work is our directly supervised program which requires institutional based supervision. We would not feel confident about using electronic monitoring to replace the institutional based supervision. So it is actually a more intensive supervision program where electronic monitoring would reduce the level of supervision. In arriving at the best option for the electronic monitoring trial, the department investigated all the available technologies and found this one to be far superior in terms of both its effectiveness and efficiency.

Mr SEENEY: In regard to the discussion we had on radio this morning about the dairy industry adjustment package payments that your department received—and I note that in the cash flow statement the note indicates that the enterprises conducted by your department showed an increased profit this year—can you tell us

the effect of the dairy deregulation on the profitability of the dairy enterprises that your department operates.

Mr McGRADY: Again I thank you for the question. It gives me another opportunity to once again say that the figures that you quoted were incorrect. I reiterate the comments I just made. First of all, there are five prisons around the state which produce milk. Three of those prisons sell the surplus that they do not require for their own consumption. Prior to deregulation they had quotas, just as the University of Queensland did. When deregulation came in we, in common with every other milk producer, and not just in Queensland but around the Commonwealth, were entitled to compensation and we claimed it. We will receive \$1.2 million over seven or eight years. So they are the figures.

Mr SEENEY: They are not the figures in the budget documents.

Mr McGRADY: We will come to that shortly. The figures that you were quoting were not just the expected revenue from the federal government. They also contained other forms of revenue, such as moneys we receive from the federal government for keeping prisoners in custody and the like. But that is fine; you do not have a department to assist you and I am not criticising you. It is not Peter Beattie or the Department of Corrective Services, it is the taxpayers of Queensland. Under that scheme who were entitled to that compensation. The argument I put forward to you on radio this morning is that, if we had refused to accept that money, it would not necessarily have gone to the battling milk producers around the state. You know and I know that when you are talking about government levies, there is no guarantee that every single cent will end up where it was originally intended to go.

Mr SEENEY: A bit like the national competition payment!

Mr McGRADY: So the point I want to emphasise is that, once again, people start playing with figures and they do not quite understand what they are saying. The nonsense that was on the radio this morning about the Queensland Department of Corrective Services getting \$3.3 million in compensation was totally wrong. In fact, the figure was \$1.2 million over an eight-year period. If you can guarantee to me that every single cent that we rejected would go to the poor milk producers of the state, maybe we will revisit it. But at the end of the day you are advocating that the taxpayers of Queensland give back that \$1.2 million to the federal consolidated revenue fund. Quite honestly, brother, I do not go along with you.

Mr SEENEY: That is not right and you know it. There is an easy way for you to guarantee that every cent of that reaches the dairy farmers, and that is to pass that money on to the Queensland dairy industry, where it was intended to go.

To take you up on the figure, Note 2 in the budget documents says that the increase in 2001 is largely a one-off dairy structural adjustment package payment. Now you are telling us that out of the \$2.745 million only \$1.7 million, I think you said, is the dairy structural adjustment package payment. As to the question of the department's entitlement, be it a legal entitlement or a moral entitlement, my original question sought to establish just what your entitlement was by asking you whether the profitability of those enterprises was affected by dairy deregulation. The profitability of every dairy farmer in Queensland was horrendously affected by that dairy deregulation, which your government introduced. I was trying to establish whether your department's activities were impacted in the same way as other dairy enterprises in Queensland, and you have chosen not to answer that. I give you the

opportunity again to answer it. What was the impact of the dairy deregulation on the profitability of those dairy enterprises?

Mr McGRADY: We are more than happy to answer your question, but a large part of the question should be directed to my colleague the Minister for Primary Industries, because I am not getting involved today in a debate about the rights or wrongs of deregulation. It is not my portfolio. What I am concerned about is the allegation that the Department of Corrective Services has somehow or other received this money it was not entitled to. We have established the fact that we are entitled to the money. We have accepted that, haven't we?

Mr SEENEY: No. My original question sought to establish that. How was the profitability of the department impacted by dairy deregulation? Tell us that, and that will establish whether you were entitled to it or not.

Mr McGRADY: The acting director-general will reply to that part of the question.

Ms RINGROSE: Thank you, Minister. To answer your question as to whether there is a shortfall, the answer is yes. The total value of the shortfall in revenue to the department amounts to \$300,000 per annum, of which we receive \$145,000 per annum as part of the compensation to the department. If you subtract those two figures, you will find that there still is a remaining shortfall to the department of \$155,000 per annum which our department, the Department of Corrective Services, must absorb.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The time for non-government questions has expired. Minister, recently I heard of a project involving prisoners repairing glasses in Brisbane. Page 3-17 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements discusses various community service projects. Most of these appear to be associated with the Western Outreach Camp or similar projects. Are these programs only occurring in rural centres or are similar programs occurring in metropolitan areas?

Mr McGRADY: I appreciate the opportunity, because the Speaker of the parliament, Ray Hollis, is very much involved in one of these schemes in Redcliffe. Community service work has an estimated value of about \$60.5 million, that is, community service work performed by offenders on community correction orders in one year. However, while there are many projects under way and many projects completed to assist regional and rural communities—and I am sure we will discuss some of those later today—there are several worthwhile projects happening in the Brisbane area.

An excellent example is the project for offenders undertaking community service in Redcliffe. Used spectacles are collected from optometrists by Lions clubs right throughout Australia. During the past 12 months they have been distributed to the Philippines, Sierra Leone, Western Samoa, Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka. Offenders in the Redcliffe area have been working on this project since February last year. During that time, a total of 42 offenders have completed 1,152 hours of community service, which has a dollar value of \$17,280 on this project.

The project uses an average of four offenders per week. Their work consists of washing, grading and packing the spectacles for distribution to aid agencies overseas. In fact, the initial referral for this particular project was made to Redcliffe community corrections by none other than our colleague the Speaker. The number of workers allocated to the project is limited by the number of grading machines available. Approximately 1,500 pairs of glasses are processed each week and funds are raised by Lions to purchase the grading machines, which cost approximately \$6,000 per machine.

Another successful project is based on Palm Island. In conjunction with the Palm Island Council, offenders are engaged in a forestry project. Approximately 18,000 trees have been planted on Palm Island and an irrigation system installed for those established trees by offenders on community service and other orders. The work program, which operates camps right throughout western Queensland and which were initiated after the Charleville floods, which proved to be an excellent project, has performed community service work valued at more than \$1 million in the last year. So it really is a tremendous effort. We will be taking steps in the months and years ahead to demonstrate to people the value of the work being done by some of these people and this system.

The CHAIRMAN: I take you to the issue of rehabilitation programs. I note that the President of the Queensland Community Corrections Board, Mr Frank Lippett, recently claimed on ABC Radio that the government should be directing more funding towards rehabilitation programs. What is the government's response to these claims? Are they justified?

Mr McGRADY: I think you have to take that interview over the whole of what he said. Quite honestly, what he said is basically what I would be saying. He said that he would like to see more money spent on this work. I think his expression was 'rather than razor fence', and I am sure everybody here would agree. As a government, we recognise that in terms of the Corrective Services sector a balance needs to be found between providing funding for capital works to ensure our prisons are secure and providing funds for rehabilitation. That is the difficulty we have, that is, providing funds to ensure that not only prisoners are safe but also we have sufficient funds to rehabilitate the people who are inside the system.

We have embarked on a capital works extension program which has seen the capacity of Woodford Correctional Centre expanded by 400 beds. A new facility is also being constructed at Maryborough, as is a modern facility just outside the city of Rockhampton. That will replace the secure prison in that city. Additionally, older facilities have been decommissioned, such as Moreton A and also, more recently, Moreton B. Under our government, responsible action has also been taken to ensure that we have facilities with enough capacity to meet future demand. It is always very difficult to try to work out what the demand is going to be for beds inside prisons. Another consequence of this action is that overcrowding within Queensland jails is no longer looming as a problem. The security risks to the community and to the prisoners which derive from overcrowding therefore basically move away.

Just because our government has undertaken this capital expansion does not mean that we are adopting the approach of locking everybody up and throwing away the key. I believe that we do have a responsibility to provide secure prisons to minimise the risk to the community whilst at the same time seeking to rehabilitate offenders in order to reduce the risk of future crime being committed. That is the argument I used before. If we lock them up for 10 years and then one day open the gates and throw them out, they are back in within a few weeks. The other way of getting them used to going back into the community certainly works, but it has its risks. That is the public debate I keep on calling for.

What Mr Lippett said basically was in accord with what I have been saying. I agree with his comment when he said that he wishes we could spend more money on rehabilitation than we do on razor fence, but we have this responsibility to keep them secure—if we did not, we would be under pressure—and at the same time introduce rehabilitation programs.

The CHAIRMAN: On page 3-2 of the MPS you provide details on the government's drugs court trial. Can the minister please provide us with details as to what role the department plays and how much funding it is contributing to this program?

Mr McGRADY: Drug use is a very complex issue. During consideration of the Police budget, I touched on it. We all have to admit that there is no simple answer, but I believe that one of the best steps any government can take to tackle the issue of drug use is early intervention. That is why the government has developed the drugs court diversion program, which is being implemented on a whole-of-government basis. Obviously, the Department of Justice and Attorney-General is the lead agency. I understand from some of the discussion which took place this morning that a number of questions were asked about the drug court and its expansion and what plans the government has. The Attorney-General's Department is the lead agency with support from the Department of Corrective Services. The Department of Health also has an important role to play, so too do the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Housing. It has to be a whole-of-government approach.

The pilot program is operating in the Magistrates Court at Ipswich, Southport and Beenleigh. The program commenced in June of last year and will continue until December next year. The drug court program aims to reduce drug-related crime and the level of drug dependency in the community. It is expected that health risks associated with drug dependency and the pressure on the courts and indeed Corrective Services will be reduced through this program. The Department of Corrective Services through its various correction officers provides assessment of the potential participants. They do case management services. There is provision of offender programs. They give advice to the court. They have data input, as well as doing drug testing and surveillance.

As part of the intensive supervision of offenders subject to these drug court orders, offenders are required to submit to drug testing. At a minimum they are tested five times a fortnight. This could be increased, depending on the identified risks. If officers see a risk, then the five times could be expanded. The supervision is obviously the responsibility of the individual officer. This standard is considered sufficient to adequately monitor offenders' overall compliance with the program. As I said a moment ago, I understand that similar questions were asked of the Attorney-General. I have not read his answers, but it obviously would be in line with what I am saying here.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, page 3-28 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements lists capital acquisitions for the Department of Corrective Services. Can you list the most significant capital projects occurring within the portfolio, their cost, what stage their development is at and plans for work during the 2001-02 financial year?

Mr McGRADY: The capital budget for the department for this financial year is just under \$73 million. We all say within this government that we are tough on crime. This means a safe and secure corrective services system, which is vital to house those who break the law and in fact must be punished. The department has been undergoing a major capital works program in recent years to allow modern, secure and effective facilities to be established.

The bulk of the capital budget will be expended on ongoing projects. In particular, the first of two major projects will be the Capricornia corrective centre. That has a total budget of \$89.5 million. This year there will be a budget allocation of just over \$12 million, which will complete the centre. I was there a few weeks ago,

having a look around. The second major project is the Maryborough corrective centre. The total budget there is \$97 million. In this budget we have allocated just under \$50 million.

The Capricornia centre will create 88 new jobs when it is commissioned later this year. It is a state-of-the-art prison. It will provide a high-quality service to the central Queensland area, replacing the old Rockhampton centre. Central Queensland has already benefited from this facility in that local subcontractors were employed to build the new facility. The centre will accommodate 400 prisoners. There will be 300 in secure accommodation and 100 in residential-style accommodation.

You may have seen something in 'The Bottom Line' a few weeks ago about Jim Pearce, Robert Schwarten and I visiting the residential site, where four prisoners reside in an apartment. We did say that it would be interesting if you had to pick which three journalists you would stay with if you were sentenced to 12 months imprisonment. It was reported in the paper, which is quite shocking. The existing open security facility was completed in 1999. It will remain in use and house a further 96 prisoners. The old Rockhampton centre has a bed capacity of 336 and has on occasions in the past had to double up prisoners. As I mentioned in a previous answer I gave, that practice is not acceptable.

That is just some of the capital works. We have talked about Capricornia and we have talked about Maryborough. There is \$70,000 for the Sir David Longland maximum security unit, \$477,000 for Woodford and so on. Just under \$73 million will be spent.

Ms JARRATT: Page 3-2 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements mentions funding to trial a drug rehabilitation program using buprenorphine for prisoners who have drug addiction problems. Can you explain exactly what the drug is, how it works and the benefits in using it for the prisoners and the prison system? How and when will this trial be conducted in the state's prisons?

Mr McGRADY: Buprenorphine is a drug treatment for heroin addicts which offers increased safety. It also minimises adverse health outcomes and it reduces the risk of accidental overdose. We have approved \$120,000 in this budget for funding to purchase buprenorphine and for additional staffing to facilitate the administration of this drug on a trial basis for one year. This is part of our government's stated commitment to fight drugs and the crimes which are associated with drug abuse.

If we can reduce drug use in our state's corrective centres, we will have the flow-on effect of combating the problem of prisoners returning to drug use and drug-related crime when they leave prison. We successfully use a combination of detection, deterrence and treatment strategies. These complement each other and, in combination, work quite effectively. There are always exceptions to the rule, but basically they work effectively.

This drug is part of a treatment strategy that works to block receptors. It creates a searing effect which means that other drugs such as heroin no longer provide the effective hit. It also means that there is less potential for its misuse than methadone within the prison. Research indicates that two-thirds of patients on methadone would obtain similar or better outcomes when treated with buprenorphine. Prisoners on this treatment at the time of their incarceration will have the option of continuing this treatment, while those withdrawing from heroin or other opiates will have the option of treatment to minimise the adverse health outcomes of withdrawal.

Obviously this is controversial. Some people take the view that there should be no drugs whatsoever—no assistance, zero tolerance—but there are other people who use the argument that there are massive adverse effects to expecting people who come into the prison system to go cold turkey. I am sure that a public debate is taking place as to the merits or otherwise of it, but that is the view which we as a government and the department take. Helen, would you like to comment further?

Ms RINGROSE: Yes. We will be planning for the use of buprenorphine in our centres. That planning will be completed by September. We will then decide which correctional centres will be able to trial the drug. Then the number of prisoners who will be able to participate in that can be determined. I guess the greatest benefit from our perspective is that it is a much safer drug than methadone and it obviously improves the safety overall in prison of any people who are affected by illicit substances.

Ms JARRATT: Thank you for that response. Minister, on page 3-8 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements you talk about the acquisition of prisoner transport vehicles. Can you please elaborate on what capital funding has been made available for prisoner transportation vehicles in south-east Queensland?

Mr McGRADY: This is an important question because it discusses the whole purpose of running prisons and the need for safe transport. In this year's budget \$1.1 million has been allocated by the department to allow for the replacement of the outdated escort fleet for the transportation of prisoners in the south-east corner of the state. \$700,000 of the allocation has been expended in the last financial year.

The new vehicles purchased by the department incorporate security and surveillance technology, which greatly enhances safety and security for escorted personnel, prisoners and indeed the general public. The design of the replacement vehicles allows for an increase in passenger carrying capacity and a greater diversity of prisoner classifications in each transfer. This will increase the ability to perform standard prisoner escorts, particularly in the event of prisoner number increases.

Four escort vehicles were acquired toward the end of the last financial year, with four further vehicles to come into service during this current financial year. The new escort vehicles carry up to 16 prisoners in four separate compartments, compared with the older style escort vehicles which carried only nine passengers in two separate compartments. Safety and security features in the new vehicles include a body construction using advanced durable lightweight insulated materials, improved picture definition security camera systems and compartments designed to reduce the possibility of prisoner interaction or indeed assault while the vehicle is in transit.

Additionally, the vehicles provide airconditioning units which operate independently of the main engine, obviously reducing the risk of prisoner disturbance when a vehicle must remain stationary for an extended period of time, for example, when sitting in heavy traffic or waiting outside a centre to gain entry. The vehicles also have installed a mobile telephone for duress capability and radios to enhance safety. These vehicles have already proven their worth. I think I made some comments recently that we stopped people escaping because of the new type of vehicle which we had. It certainly is an added facility. Again, it will improve security when transferring prisoners.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for government members' questions has expired. I now call the member for Callide.

Mr SEENEY: Minister, I wanted to ask you a question about departmental borrowings as set out in the statement of financial position on page 3-31. Last year your department budgeted to borrow \$14 million. In actual fact you eventually borrowed nearly \$71 million. This year you are budgeting to borrow another \$71 million, to take the total debt incurred in two years to \$142 million. The non-current liabilities, which the notes identify as loans, have increased from a budgeted figure of \$123 million last year to a budgeted figure this year of \$226 million. That is an increase of \$103 million in debt from last year's budget to this one. There is also a corresponding fall in the government's equity injection, from \$105 million to just \$4 million as set out in the statement of cash flows on page 3-32. Given that your department's output receipts from Treasury have also increased, what happened to the \$100 million you saved by reducing your department's equity injection and replacing it with borrowings? Are you concerned about your department's ability to service these debts in the future?

Mr McGRADY: This is a similar question to the one which was asked about the police loan. In the past, funds for the construction and purchase of major assets were provided as direct cash injections to departments. They were formerly known as equity injections. As part of recent budgets, the government decided that in certain cases these funds should be made by way of borrowings. The recording of these loans in the department's books, rather than in Treasury books, provides a clearer link between funding sources and individual agencies' capital acquisitions. That is, it matches the agency's capital assets with the debt required to acquire these assets.

As I said during the discussion on the police 'loan', agencies are no worse off under these arrangements. The total funds provided by loans and equity injection match the approved capital works program. The department is fully funded for the loan repayments and indeed interest. This is demonstrated on page 3-28 of the MPS. I will ask Evan from the department, who is the financial director, to elaborate further on my answer.

Mr KLATT: The mix between the equity and loans is a matter for the Treasury to determine, based on its overall funding, but all loans we get from Treasury are loans that we take out. We have a guarantee to be supplemented for the loan repayments and the interest. To that extent, as each year progresses we will be no worse off under the new arrangements. Our ongoing revenue will be supplemented for any interest, and we will also get funds to make the capital repayments.

Mr SEENEY: Minister, if it were just a case of you taking up the loan instead of Treasury, why does the amount of money that you receive from Treasury in the output receipts not reflect that? Why is there not a corresponding decrease in that figure—presuming that before this arrangement was put in place Treasury would have borrowed the money and you would have received it as part of that bulk figure? You are borrowing \$142 million extra, but you are getting extra money from Treasury. It has gone up from \$339 million to \$372 million.

Mr McGRADY: Again, I repeat that this is a financial way which the Treasury has of recording such transactions. I do not want to become involved in history, but I would suggest that maybe you check what went on in previous administrations. Evan, I ask you again to repeat the answer which you have already given.

Mr KLATT: The statement of performance only deals with the interest component of the loans. That table shows that we are getting enough to pay the interest. It is a later table that demonstrates we get enough money to pay the principal repayments. That is the table on page 3-32.

Mr FLYNN: Minister, given the implications of the recent fines amnesty, are you able to indicate where possible what savings have been made so far by the department because of fewer prisoners since the amnesty's inception and, where savings are shown, to where are they directed?

Mr McGRADY: You are referring to the amnesty earlier this year?

Mr FLYNN: Indeed.

Mr McGRADY: When those people who were, in normal circumstances, sent to jail for not paying fines?

Mr FLYNN: Yes.

Mr McGRADY: The intent of the amnesty was to ensure that people who had not paid fines were not thrown into prison. As a result of that, plus other factors, there was a reduction in the number of people who were in actual fact jailed in the state. So there was a saving to the department and the numbers did go down. What I will do at this stage, though, is to ask the acting director-general if she could elaborate with the figures as per the request from the member for Lockyer.

Ms RINGROSE: The amnesty has had an effect on the number of prisoners, and the number of fine defaulters—those who are subject to fine option orders—has declined significantly, with almost a 50 per cent decrease throughout the year. There has been a significant decrease from 207 fine defaulters in the system as at 30 June 2000. It is expected that, at the conclusion of this amnesty, the number of fine option orders and fine defaulters will again increase, but we do not believe that it will return to the same levels as the previous imposition of the SPUR amnesty.

Mr FLYNN: Minister, are either you or your department in a position to put a figure to the saving?

Mr McGRADY: We would not have a figure at this stage.

Mr FLYNN: You may be able to respond to that later perhaps?

Mr McGRADY: We will, yes. As I said in my opening remarks to the answer, there has been a significant reduction—obviously a significant reduction—and there would be savings to the system. Obviously, if you have fewer people inside using the services, whilst you still need the staff there would be some savings. We will try to work out for you what financial savings we have made. I will not take the question on notice. Can you add to that?

Mr SEVERIN: Not to provide an actual figure but just the workings of the savings. There are savings in one area, and in the other area there are arrangements in place where the funding is actually based on the actual activity, particularly in community corrections. So in the area of custodial corrections, there was a very short-term effect, and then the prisoner numbers have grown again. So there is actually no net saving as a result of the impact of SPUR in terms of custodial corrections. There is certainly an overall saving to the government, because otherwise we would have those prisoners in addition to the prisoners that the system had to absorb in any case.

The savings are certainly not reflective in our financial statements because it is a whole-of-government initiative. Our arrangements with the Treasury Department provide us with revenue which provides for the period of the amnesty. We will then carefully reassess and identify if there has actually been a significant drop in our level of activity in relation to supervising community service orders. The accurate figures—if we can establish those—we would have to provide at a later stage.

Mr McGRADY: Can I just add to that and say that I will not take the question on notice because it would mean our having to get back to you within a prescribed time. But it is something which I would be interested in. I have a figure which has been given to me now, but obviously I would want to consider that. We will come back to you at the appropriate time with that information.

Mr FLYNN: Thank you, minister. I have a feeling you may be going to answer this next question with a similar sort of answer, but I am going to ask you anyway. Can you or your department show the committee what savings might be made for Police—and I could have asked this in your portfolio of Police but framed it differently—if Corrective Services were made responsible for the costs involved in the executing of outstanding warrants upon inmates and visitors? In other words, at present the Police Department, as I understand it, has a particular portfolio for executing warrants. What savings might be made if Corrective Services were to carry out this function?

Mr McGRADY: I am not dodging the issue, but I do not think the exercise has ever been done. The exercise has not been done. I know there is a debate taking place about whether or not it should be Police or it should be Corrective Services. The police have one point of view, and I am sure Corrective Services have another. So I could not even hazard a guess as to what the costs would be to Corrective Services. Obviously there would be some savings to Police. It is an exercise which we could look at. The only problem I have there is that once we start to do that police will get the idea that we are about to implement it.

Mr SEENEY: Minister, referring to the comments you made earlier about the number of escapes and absconds—according to the MPS, in 2000-01 there were four escapes and one abscond from the open custody correctional services and eight escapes and 28 absconds from the community custody correctional services. Can you confirm that this figure of 41 is the total number of escapes or absconds from custody correctional services in the past year? Can you indicate what the difference is between an escaper and an absconder? Can you indicate how many of those people have been returned to custody? And can you indicate whether those escapers and absconders cost your department in any way in terms of pursuing and returning them or whether that cost is borne by the Police Department?

Mr McGRADY: You are not bad, Mr Seeney.

The CHAIRMAN: There were five questions there. Perhaps the minister can take any one of them.

Mr McGRADY: Escapes are escapes from prison. Escapes, as I understand it, are those people who physically escape from prison. Abscondees are people who are involved in home detention or are involved in corrective halfway houses, as I call them, who should be reporting back and they do not. So they are the people who abscond. That is the difference. Is that a correct summation?

Mr SEVERIN: Yes.

Mr McGRADY: So the escapees are from secure facilities, namely, inside a prison, and the people who abscond are those who are let out and do not come back, or come back late. So that is one question. What were the other four?

Mr SEENEY: Can you confirm that number: 41? It was the number in the MPS.

Mr McGRADY: If the number is in the MPS, it has been signed off by the acting director-general, and I would assume it is the correct figure.

Mr SEENEY: How many of those people have been returned to custody?

Mr McGRADY: I think the easier question would be how many of those people are still at large.

Mr SEENEY: Either way I can do the maths.

Mr McGRADY: Are there any escapees still at large?

Ms RINGROSE: I do not know.

Mr McGRADY: Can I take that on notice?

Mr SEENEY: If you like, yes.

Mr McGRADY: I will take that on notice and get back to you.

Mr SEENEY: And in terms of incurring the costs for pursuing and returning those escapees, is there any cost to your department, or is the total cost of that borne by the Police Department?

Mr McGRADY: The police would be the people who would go after abscondees and also people who escape. So that would be a police matter. I do not know if you can break down the figures, because it would be a normal part of police operations. I will attempt to get that figure. I will not take it on notice.

Mr SEENEY: I was trying to determine where the cost was incurred—in Corrective Services or Police.

Mr McGRADY: Police.

Mr SEENEY: In terms of rehabilitation programs, minister, are any prisoners released without undergoing sex, alcohol or drug rehabilitation programs? Or are any prisoners denied from applying for parole or release because they cannot access one of those programs?

Mr McGRADY: The Department of Corrective Services funds and delivers 12 intervention programs, which include four core intervention programs: anger management; substance abuse; ending offending; and cognitive skills. Ending offending is an indigenous program focused on the treatment of offenders who have an alcohol addiction. In addition, eight more intensive treatment programs are delivered, and these programs target specific areas of offending, such as violent offending, sexual offending and offences related to substance abuse, and they are available in each of the 13 prisons, community correction centres and the four community corrections regions and they are facilitated by program officers and, indeed, specialist staff.

In the year 2000-01, 5,076 offenders participated in rehabilitation programs and, of these, 3,659 enrolled in the 12 departmental intervention programs. The government has also initiated a 12-month pilot indigenous sex offender treatment program, which commenced at Townsville at the cost of \$613,000. A joint departmental and Treasury committee has been set up to evaluate offender rehabilitation programs to improve treatment effectiveness and to target high-risk offenders for intervention.

As well as intervention programs, we have also approved a number of treatment programs for alcohol and drug dependent offenders on admission to custody. These options include a methadone treatment program within the Townsville and Brisbane centres; the trial of that other drug for offenders; and, at the time of their incarceration, the use of other substances. So in summary, there are a large number of programs in place to assist people who are inside the system.

Ms RINGROSE: To add to your question—while the Parole Board may determine that offenders are to participate in certain programs, because of the length of their sentence and/or the fact that they may have earned previously remission, they may not have had time to participate and enrol in programs. These programs are resource intensive. They sometimes require the participation of 10 or 15 offenders. And if we do not have the correct numbers, then there is no advantage in running the program, or it is not possible to run the program because of the staff involved. So it is possible that prisoners may be out on parole and have not had the opportunity to participate in those programs in prison. But if they are being managed and supervised while on parole, they still may be able to participate in those programs through community supervision.

Mr McGRADY: I have got those figures for you now if you want them. I will give them to you after the session is finished.

Mr SEENEY: Okay. Last year's budget provided funding of \$150,000 for an external evaluation of the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs for those in prison and community rehabilitation programs. Has this review been completed and what was its recommendations?

Mr McGRADY: Yes, \$150,000 has been provided. The government has approved a joint department and Treasury initiative to evaluate this program in order to assess and improve the treatment effect of those on these programs. This interdepartmental and community steering committee has been convened for the purpose of developing and endorsing a plan of program evaluation strategies. Membership of this includes people from the Office of Economic Research, an academic from the Griffith University School of Criminology, a person from Treasury and also a person from the CJC. We have not got those reports back yet.

Mr SEENEY: So it has been completed?

Mr McGRADY: They are ongoing.

Mr SEENEY: It is ongoing. It has not been completed yet.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! That concludes the time available for the non-government questions.

Mr LAWLOR: Page 3-3 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements discusses the Department of Corrective Services' focus on rehabilitation. The rehabilitation process is obviously directed towards using many different programs. I am aware that some prisoners in Queensland's correctional system are being given the opportunity to produce some quality indigenous artwork. Can the minister elaborate on this program and the benefits for prisoners it is having in terms of rehabilitation?

Mr McGRADY: If I would have asked you to ask me a question, that would have been the first one I would have given you, because it is something that I am very, very proud of and so, too, is the acting director-general. On one of my first visits around the prisons, I saw some magnificent artwork in them. I have also seen some work where the prisoners have involved themselves in rehabilitating some antique furniture. There are also some excellent examples of quilting, which the women have done and are doing. We have been working to have an exhibition of the artwork of prisoners. That is on 7 August and that will be held at Parliament House.

You may say that it is just another exhibition. It is not, because what it will do is display to the people, particularly of Brisbane, some of the magnificent artwork which the people inside the prisons are capable of doing. It will give those prisoners the opportunity to feel proud of their heritage, their culture and, probably more importantly, their own ability to be recognised for the work that they can do—the

artwork that they can do—as opposed to being seen simply as a prisoner. What we did was to send a letter around to all the prisoners and asked them if they had anything to display. We got over 100 paintings and also some of the other artwork which is being done. Some of you will get an invitation to it.

The reason why I feel excited about this is that we are allowing these people to carry on their skills and develop their skills inside these correctional centres. We will sell these artefacts and after we take out, I think it is, about 20 per cent—which will be costs incurred in staging the exhibition and paint and other equipment—the balance of the funds will go into the prisoners' trust accounts. I think it will give them a sense of achievement. I think that it will demonstrate to the people who come in and view the exhibition the talent that we have.

I think that it is appropriate to note that a piece of Aboriginal artwork was sold recently for many hundreds and thousands of dollars. Some of the work I have seen I would suggest may be not quite worth hundreds and thousands of dollars but certainly it will be well worth an investment by art lovers in purchasing this sort of art.

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you. I would like some further detail on grant funding by the Department of Corrective Services. On page 3-1 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements, one of the goals stated is the desire to work to provide an integrated and consistent focus on rehabilitation and reparation. This is a worthy goal, but can I ask the minister if there is any provision within the Department of Corrective Services via grants for external agencies who wish to work within the corrective services system and also help progress this goal?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for that question, because to date we have been discussing the programs run by the Department of Corrective Services. This year we have allocated \$717,000 to fund groups within the community. We as a government recognise that external organisations will desire to play a role—whether that be a hands-on or a monitoring role—in how the state's Corrective Services system is run. We also recognise that often outside organisations can offer a great deal of assistance towards the various programs or, indeed, goals within the corrective services area. With this in mind, the government has given funding to administer grants to non-profit organisations like community groups and church and welfare organisations to promote effective services for approved targeted groups.

A total of 18 organisations, including chaplaincy services, are funded by the department through the grants process. From memory, I think we allocated just over a quarter of a million dollars to the chaplaincy group. As you know, the chaplains do visit prisons and they provide counselling to the people on the inside. That is costing \$237,000. We also allocate funds to organisations such as Sisters Inside, St Vincent de Paul, the Women's Legal Service and so on. I could go on—the Catholic Prison Ministry, the Cherbourg Elders Family Support Group, and the far-north Queensland Families and Prisoners Support. We give money to organisations to assist prisoners for either when they come out or indeed in assisting families to visit, particularly in the far northern parts of the state.

There are also other organisations that provide services that do not come under this \$716,000—the Second Chance Foundation, as an example. They are paid by the government to play a specific role with people who come out of the prison service. So it is not just the Department of Corrective Services; there are other organisations which the government funds to assist us to rehabilitate or assist those prisoners who have spent time inside or indeed members of their family.

Mr LAWLOR: At page 3-9 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements reference is made to the implementation of the new Corrective Services Act 2000. Could you outline changes to remission and its potential to impact on prisoner numbers?

Mr McGRADY: I thank the member for that question. It is an important one because, as you rightly say, there have been some changes. Under the old legislation, the Corrective Services Act 1988, prisoners could be released after serving two-thirds of their sentence with no supervision. That act did not provide for an assessment of risk to the community when considering release on remission. The new act abolishes remission for prisoners sentenced after 1 July for offences committed after 1 July this year. Those prisoners currently serving maintain their eligibility for remission. However, prisoners released on parole, on home detention or indeed released to work during their current term of imprisonment will not be eligible for remission.

What this means is that if you are a prisoner on parole, home detention or release to work and you breach the conditions of your release and you are sent back to prison, you lose your eligibility for remission and the only way you can be released to the community is with the approval of the relevant community corrections board under supervision or if you serve your full sentence.

Under the new legislation, prisoners serving two years or less will have the opportunity to be assessed for conditional release. There are stringent criteria aimed at assessing risk to the community as well as good conduct and industry whilst they are in the prison. Prisoners serving two years or less who are assessed as high risk to the community will not be granted conditional release and will be required to serve their full sentence in custody. They will not get parole, home detention or indeed release to work; they will serve their full sentence. Those prisoners sentenced for longer than two years under the new act for offences committed after 1 July will be able to be released into the community either on parole or home detention or release to work only once approved by the relevant boards.

It is anticipated that the abolition of remission will result in a daily net increase of 19 prisoners. There will be an increase in prison numbers as a result of abolishing remission. However, given the projected increases, I believe that it is justified if we see more prisoners being released under supervision than there previously were or, indeed, if they need to serve their full sentence if they are assessed as being a risk to the community.

Mr ENGLISH: In the output statements at pages 3-10 and 3-14 of the MPS there are indicators that measure the assault rates in Queensland prisons. How do these rates compare with those in prisons in other states?

Mr McGRADY: We certainly take seriously our responsibilities to provide a safe working environment for the staff working in prisons. We also have a responsibility to minimise the potential for violence among inmates. Strategies to divert offenders from prison, such as the State Penalties Enforcement Register, which we discussed previously and which has significantly reduced the number of fine defaulters in prison, and the drug court diversion program have reduced the number of offenders who would otherwise have been sent to prison. This, in conjunction with our government's record Capital Works Program to provide new, modern facilities has significantly reduced the need for prisoners to be doubled up.

Four years ago, up to 1,500 prisoners in this state had to share a cell. The establishment of new and improved corrective facilities has not only increased the

capacity of staff to adequately supervise and manage prisoners; the majority of prisoners no longer have to share accommodation. Occasionally in regional centres prisoners may share cells for short periods and in some instances it is desirable to place prisoners who are at risk in a cell with another person.

A consequence of the improved infrastructure and better correctional practices is that the level of assaults in custody has been significantly reduced in the year 2000-01 by 42 per cent against the previous year's figure and 38 per cent against the 1998-99 figure. The government has also introduced a legislative regime that allows prisoners to be strip searched, reducing the likelihood of prohibited items such as glass, plastic and wooden shapes being brought into the prisons. The benchmark in an analysis of 1999-2000 for the national corrections advisory group ranks Queensland as having the second lowest rate of assaults on staff by prisoners in Australia. The rate in Queensland is well below the national average. The level of prisoner-on-prisoner assaults has decreased dramatically, with minor assaults decreasing by almost half in the last year. To anybody, that is a clear indication of the staff managing prisoners effectively.

The CHAIRMAN: The time allotted for the consideration of the estimates for the Minister for Police and Corrective Services has expired. I thank the minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance. 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. Thank you very much for attending.

Mr McGRADY: Before we conclude my section of this estimates hearing, I place on record my thanks and appreciation for the very professional way in which you have chaired the proceedings today, and for the very sensible and relevant questions that I have received from both the non-government members and the government members. Once again, it brings home to us the importance of the estimates, where a minister and department heads have to face the representatives of the parliament to justify their estimates and the expenditure that they will be spending on behalf of the taxpayers of the state. It brings home to me again the importance of the changes that were made to the system following the 1989 election. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister, for your remarks. The committee will adjourn for five minutes whilst the officers present depart and the new officers attend. Thank you.

Sitting suspended from 4.01 p.m. to 4.07 p.m.

TOURISM, RACING AND FAIR TRADING**IN ATTENDANCE**

Hon. M. Rose, Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading

Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading

Mr D. Williams, Director-General

Mr M. Miller, Commissioner, Office of Fair Trading

Mr B. Mason, Executive Director, Racing

Mr M. Tolhurst, Executive Director, Liquor Licensing

Mr I. Warren, Director, Finance and Administration

Ms L. Dickens, Manager, Strategy and Corporate Communication

Mr J. Paterson, Senior Racing Adviser

Tourism Queensland

Mr A. de Waal, Director of Marketing

Mr D. Ronai, Director of Finance and Corporate Services

The CHAIRMAN: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. The next portfolio to be examined relates to the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. I remind members of the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A 15-second warning will be given at the expiration of 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 a question so that Hansard can record that information in the transcript.

I declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading to be open for examination. The question before the Chair is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, if you wish, you may make an opening statement, but would you please limit it to no more than five minutes.

Mrs ROSE: Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. Good afternoon to all members and to all staff. The 2001-02 financial year will be one of enormous challenge to the Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading. One of the most significant pieces of fair trading legislation, the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, came into effect on 1 July. It has taken the industries into the twenty-first century and provides greater levels of protection for consumers and improved industry standards. The act was introduced after exhaustive consultation and an exhaustive education campaign, which attracted thousands of industry representatives and consumers to sessions across the state.

The Office of Fair Trading is committed to improving marketplace integrity and building consumer and business confidence. A key role will be building awareness of consumer protection offered by new legislation, as well as increasing business understanding of legislative requirements and responsibilities. We will also

continue programs to educate consumers about their rights and arm them with knowledge to help ensure that they do not fall victim to rogue traders, scam merchants and callous crooks.

The Office of Fair Trading budget also includes an additional \$600,000 for the Queensland Building Tribunal. The funding boost will enable the tribunal to expand its jurisdiction to include commercial building disputes. Funding will help the tribunal resolve domestic and commercial building related disputes as quickly, economically and informally as possible.

As well as responding to emerging concerns, Fair Trading will be reviewing the effectiveness of several key pieces of legislation to ensure that those continue to address the main areas of consumer and business concern. These include the Retirement Villages Act and the Fair Trading Act.

In tourism, we will continue to ensure that Queensland remains top of mind for both domestic and international visitors and help provide the building blocks for continuing industry growth. Special emphasis will be placed on the implementation of the Growing Tourism strategy, a blueprint for a whole-of-Government approach to tourism, and on developing regional tourism.

In conjunction with the Department of State Development, we will also complete a cruise shipping plan that will reap rich rewards for the state, work to boost access to Queensland and continue to grow convention and events tourism. Tourism Queensland will also develop Internet gateway sites to target specific overseas markets: the US, the UK, Singapore, South Africa and the Middle East. We will also be extending the *Japan Destination Positioning Blueprint* to other international markets.

This financial year Tourism Queensland has been handed record base funding of \$39.4 million. There is an additional \$1 million for international and domestic marketing, \$2 million for leverage of the Goodwill Games and another \$2 million for convention and incentive marketing.

TQ's base budget has been boosted by \$2.5 million in our past two budgets. This year, our 14 regional tourism organisations will share an extra \$500,000, taking the total government support to \$5.1 million. On top of that, TQ will again pay a GST component to ensure the federal government's tax does not erode the marketing of their regions. The same payment will be made to our six convention bureaus. The extra support for regional tourism compliments the government's \$1 million a year regional events development program, which I launched recently in Townsville.

The Liquor Licensing Division will continue to spread the responsible consumption of alcohol message across the state. It will continue to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to develop relevant and workable solutions for the management of alcohol within their communities. Reducing the harm and crime associated with the consumption of alcohol will continue to be a major priority of the Liquor Licensing Division.

The division's indigenous officers will continue to work with indigenous communities to develop alcohol management plans as a major component of the government's next step initiative that has been developed in response to the report of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women's Task Force on Violence. The work will entail developing relevant and workable solutions for the management of alcohol within the communities.

An additional indigenous officer to be based in Cairns will be employed this year to join colleagues based in Brisbane, Rockhampton, Townsville, Mount Isa and Cairns. Liquor Licensing staff will continue to participate in community-based action committees across the state which are directly responsible in implementing crime prevention programs.

Major amendments to the Liquor Act and Wine Industry Act are being implemented. Licensing regimes for licensed premises continue, with compliance checks and enforcement of the law. Provision of accredited responsible service of alcohol training and responsible consumption of alcohol programs will continue across the state. Mr Chairman, I have about 30 seconds to go.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Mrs ROSE: Another highlight of the department's year will be the completion of a review of the governance structure of the Queensland thoroughbred racing industry. The deadline for input was 29 June. I am currently assessing close to 80 submissions received. The review is all about governance structure. It is not about race dates or prize money. That is the role of the governing body for thoroughbred racing. The structure we settle on will be the one that is best for thoroughbred racing in Queensland.

The CHAIRMAN: The first period of questions is allocated to non-government members. I call the member for Warrego.

Mr HOBBS: Minister, you have announced a major review of thoroughbred racing in Queensland, as you have just mentioned. This industry, as you would be aware, generates in the vicinity of \$600 million in gross state product to Queensland. The review was talked about for some time and was finally announced on 28 May this year. Why is there no mention of this review in the future development program in your portfolio statements? Is this an indication of governing by a wing and a prayer, and a reaction rather than strategically developing racing in Queensland?

Mrs ROSE: No, not at all. We always said that we would allow time for the industry to settle post privatisation of the TAB. We always indicated that, as a government, we would not look at or entertain a review at all in 2000. We said that we would not look at a review before the election. We always made it very clear what our intention was. Once the election was over, we then moved to have the review. As you know, the announcement was made at the end of May and, as I have just said, the submissions closed on 29 June.

Mr HOBBS: That was a month later. The budget came out and there is nothing in the future documents at all.

Mrs ROSE: There is. Do you have the MPS there?

Mr HOBBS: Yes.

Mrs ROSE: If you go to page 1-26, under Future Developments, the fifth dot point five states—

New legislation will be prepared to modernise Queensland's racing legislation and incorporate recommendations of the NCP review.

The next dot point states—

Racing control bodies, asset ownership and management structures will be reviewed with a view to modernisation.

Mr HOBBS: Thank you for that. Wagering has also gone back 20 per cent in the last 25 years. That is 0.8 of a per cent per year. You have been minister for

going close on two years. It has gone back 1.6 per cent. If you are minister for a further full term, wagering will go back a total of 3.2 per cent. What are you doing to turn this trend around for Queensland racing?

Mrs ROSE: Does that mean that if I turn it around five per cent you are going to give me all of the credit for that?

Mr HOBBS: We would be very happy. If you can turn it around, we will give you the credit. There is no doubt about that.

Mrs ROSE: There are so many factors when you are looking at turnover, as you well know. You are somebody who, similar to me, likes to go to the races. Over the last 12 months there has been some impact on the industry via the GST. I am not trying to dump on it, but that is recognised across all sectors in the industry. Queensland racing's financial viability depends very much on TAB turnover and product fees flowing to the industry. Currently, TABQ derives only approximately 30 per cent of its revenue from turnover on Queensland's racing events. Some 70 per cent is derived outside state boundaries. Therefore, Queensland's financial viability depends on racing conducted in other states as well.

By having the review, unfortunately there is a perception in the community that the racing industry in Queensland is not going as well as it should be. I am hoping to turn that perception around at the completion of the review. The response from all sectors of the racing industry has been very, very good. I go to the racetrack at least once a week and have been doing so throughout this whole term of the review. If anybody in the industry has got any questions about the review, I am there and they have ready access to me. There seems to be a renewed confidence. I think that will flow through. One of the challenges is not only to get people back trackside but also, when they are there, to get them to have a bet as well. I know that the control body even at this time is reviewing some of the systems, if you like, and it is trying to work more closely with clubs to make them more profitable. All of these things are factors, as you know, when you are trying to encourage people. I popped into the TAB at lunchtime today and it was absolutely packed. I can assure you that I contribute quite generously to TAB turnover. I am really doing my bit to increase it. I am doing what I can.

Mr HOBBS: Minister, I am not sure if you single-handedly can do that.

Mrs ROSE: I hope next year that you are going to acknowledge that I did.

Mr HOBBS: I refer to the crossing at Eagle Farm that has been in the news after the breaking down of Go Flash Go. You indicated in your press release that the Queensland Principal Club should have fixed it and that funding was allocated for this purpose. How much money is provided for this purpose in this year's budget and how much was provided in last year's budget?

Mrs ROSE: As you said, on 1 June at Eagle Farm, tragically, Go Flash Go was destroyed following a three-horse fall. I was at Eagle Farm that day and had left just after the race before. I was very concerned to ensure that both the QPC and the QTC were prepared, if necessary, to undertake any modifications and maintenance to the racecourse effectively without delay. I was disappointed when somebody called me not long after the fall to say that there had been people within the industry on the television saying that the reason it happened was that the government had not coughed up with the \$6 million necessary to either modify it or to build the underground tunnels. That was in contradiction then to the outcome of the inquiry that they held into the crossing, which was determined by the stewards to have not

been a factor in the fall. So there were contradictory statements, one from the club and one from the QPC.

As you know, the QPC is empowered under the Racing and Betting Act to control, supervise, regulate and promote thoroughbred racing in the state. They are also the responsible body for the licensing of racetracks. Therefore, they have a duty of care to ensure a safe racing and working environment. That is not something the government does. The government does not license racetracks; the control body does. The Queensland Turf Club, or the QTC, is a registered race club, registered by the controlling body. It is a licensed venue of the QPC. Therefore, while race falls are, unfortunately, a part of racing—I hate seeing them—there is an unequivocal duty on control bodies and clubs to ensure the chances of their occurring are minimised. It does concern me when I hear from trainers and jockeys. This is not something that has just been an issue over the last—

Mr HOBBS: How much money is provided for this purpose? So money is provided for this purpose to a certain degree?

Mrs ROSE: We have the training track subsidy? Is that what you mean, the \$2 million that we provide for the training track subsidy?

Mr HOBBS: Basically, at the end of the day the QPC, as you said, had the responsibility to fix it.

Mrs ROSE: Yes, they do. They are the ones that license racetracks.

Mr HOBBS: How do they fix it if they do not have the money? Where do they find \$6 million?

Mrs ROSE: We have contributed considerable financial and non-financial support to the industry apart from the in excess of \$100 million per annum which the QRI receives to run its business under agreements with the TABQ. That \$100 million is to run the industry. It is to look after the racetracks. They have a responsibility to make sure that those racetracks are safe for the horses and the jockeys.

Mr HOBBS: I would suggest that there still might not be enough money there. But I will move on. In relation to the review that you are doing into a new governance body for thoroughbred racing, you will be consulting further with the governing body and industry and you obviously must have in your mind a picture of how it is developing. How many independent people—that is, non-racing-types—would you like to have on the new board?

Mrs ROSE: I seriously have not even got that far. It is too premature to pre-empt any outcomes from the review. I have not even finished going through the submissions yet. There are 80-odd submissions. I am not rushing through them. I have a team of people in the department who are going through them as well. Some of them are very good. The discussion paper, as you know, set out four models. The outcome is not just limited to those four models. The only reason that we put the models out there was to generate discussion and encourage debate. It is so much easier if people are given ideas to work from rather than if they are just given a blank sheet of paper and expected to come up with the ideas. Obviously there is a lot of support for the way that Victorian racing has gone. The on-the-ground feedback that I have had from people is fairly divided. Some people, of course, would like to see the regulatory and commercial functions of the control body separated or clearly delineated, anyway. I do not have any preference for a model or for a structure at this stage.

Mr HOBBS: Thanks. In relation to—

Mrs ROSE: Hang on. I have not finished. But in relation to the feedback in the submissions, so many of them lead in with 'thank you very much for having this review'. Everywhere that I have been over the last 12 months people have been wanting to have a review. The structure of the QPC was fine when it was established. But there was a need to modernise it to bring it into the 21st century. That has pretty much been recognised by the industry. I think it is timely to have the review now. Hopefully, it will be within the next couple of months. There are some fairly complex submissions. I always said that when I made a decision would depend on the number of submissions I got and the complexity of the submissions that I received. Eighty submissions is a lot of submissions. Some of them are quite detailed and complex. I am still going through them.

Mr HOBBS: You state in the terms of reference that the cost of operating any proposed model or structure compared with the cost of operating the present structure is one of the guidelines. What is the salary presently paid to the CEO of the QPC?

Mrs ROSE: That would be commercial-in-confidence with the QPC. The CEO of the QPC is not appointed by me.

Mr HOBBS: Have you no idea?

Mrs ROSE: No. That is a board decision. He has a contract. My understanding is that he has a five-year contract. But I don't know—

Mr HOBBS: So anything you put in place will be on the same sort of basis?

Mrs ROSE: The QPC has agreed to help us when we get to costing the systems. At the moment I do not know, but when we get some options and put it to them they will come back to us.

Mr HOBBS: Further to the inquiry and to my question 10 in relation to the future of country racing in Queensland, the purpose of my question was to gain an assurance from you about the future control body of thoroughbred racing, that is, whatever you set up in Queensland. The worry I have is that they may believe they have a mandate, because you have specifically excluded not cutting back country racing. So they could take the easy and short-term option of reducing country racing. Will you give a clear commitment to the people of Queensland and this committee that any new control body put in place will not have the ability to cut back country racing?

Mrs ROSE: A controlling body has exactly that—control.

Mr HOBBS: We need to have some guidelines. That is exactly my point. If you give them open rein, they will cut it back.

Mrs ROSE: That is what people said when the QPC structure was first put in place. Everybody went nuts saying, 'This is going to be the end of country racing in Queensland,' and that has not been the case. I think it is scaremongering. I am not talking about you, because I have been in central Queensland. I have met with all of the regional association chairs and I know that some of the chairs were copping a lot of flack from country clubs because they fear that in this review it will be looked at very much from—

Mr HOBBS: I thought maybe you could solve that problem so we do not have the fear. You can make a statement quite clearly when it comes out that country racing will have a place in the future.

Mrs ROSE: I have never made a secret of the fact—and I have always stated this quite publicly—that I am a very strong supporter of country racing in

Queensland. I grew up with country racing. My mother has been involved with what used to be the Hazeldean-Esk Race Club since I was about eight years old. I would have to answer to my mother if I wanted to try to close any country race clubs in this state. You have to listen to your mother.

Mr HOBBS: I will have to give her a ring and make sure she keeps you on it.

Mrs ROSE: I am a very strong supporter of country racing. I was at Beaudesert last week. What a great little track! It is a really good track. I think that country racing provides some of the best racing that we see in this state. I am not in a position to sit here and guarantee the future of every race club in this state. What I can do, though, is give a reassurance about my commitment to country racing. In the early stages, I also made it very clear to the QPC, which is the controlling body, that I believed that they needed to have stronger communication with country clubs, that they needed to give them better assistance with trying to make their clubs more profitable. There are a lot of challenges out there for country clubs.

One of the ways that the QPC's country racing division has been able to deal with it is to look at the allocation of race dates. There has been some movement and some shifting in race dates, which has been welcomed by some clubs. They have found it much easier for them to have full programs with some shift in the allocation of race dates. I am with you; I support country racing. I will do what I can to make sure that the important part of the social fabric that country Queensland racing does play is always in the minds of people.

The CHAIRMAN: Order! The time for non-government questions has expired. I refer to page 1-9 of the MPS under the heading 'Recent Achievements'. I direct your attention to the Training Track Subsidy Scheme. I note that grant payments of \$2 million had been made to the thoroughbred code under that scheme. Could you explain what this scheme involves and how it assists the Queensland thoroughbred code?

Mrs ROSE: The thoroughbred industry will again benefit from \$2 million in government funding following an allocation from consolidated revenue for the Thoroughbred Code Training Track Subsidy Scheme, which was approved in the 2001-02 state budget. The government provided \$8 million to fund this scheme over the past four years. The funding for this scheme that recognises the quality of training facilities established by clubs and rewards their ability to generate starters to the industry will be distributed to some 80 race clubs across the state. Retention of government funding for the scheme provides important support to the Queensland racing industry, particularly during the transition period following TAB privatisation. The scheme underwrites training facility maintenance costs, benefiting not only the major metropolitan and regional clubs but also the smaller rural clubs. I understand the cost of providing high quality training facilities, and we are committed to ensuring that Queensland horsemen and women have the appropriate facilities to bring through quality horses. The success of Queensland horses at all the major racing carnivals this season, including in Hong Kong, showed that this program is bearing fruit.

The CHAIRMAN: I take you again back to page 1-9 of the MPS under the same heading. There is a reference there to the department having commenced stage 2 of the review of key racing industry assets and racecourse tenure arrangements. What is the basis of the review and how will it benefit the Queensland racing industry?

Mrs ROSE: Last year cabinet endorsed a policy on ownership of key racecourses of economic significance to the Queensland racing industry. At that time only two major Queensland race clubs held unrestricted freehold title to their racecourses. That was the Brisbane Turf Club and the Gold Coast Turf Club. Further, Eagle Farm Racecourse, which had been held in trust, was vested in the Queensland Turf Club Limited subject to certain restrictions on proclamation of the Eagle Farm Racecourse Act 1998. The Sunshine Coast Turf Club leases Corbould Park to Caloundra. It was bequeathed to Caloundra City Council for racing purposes. Seven other main racecourses were held under a deeds of grant in trust, or DOGIT, arrangement. Bundamba; Callaghan Park, Rockhampton; Clifford Park, Toowoomba; Gatton; Cluden Park, Townsville; Bunya Park, Dalby; Ooralea Park, Mackay; and also Deagon racecourse were owned by the state government as a consequence of the TAB privatisation process, having been transferred on 1 July 1999 upon the demise of the Racing Development Corporation.

As a logical step to help position key Queensland race clubs to meet the challenges of the post privatised TAB environment, the government endorsed a policy to assist them become more commercially focused. The policy states that freehold title shall vest in the incorporated race club freehold and free of charge subject to voluntary surrender of DOGITs held by trustees and on condition that the land is released from all encumbrances and interest and that the incorporated race club enters into a statutory covenant registrable under the Land Title Act 1994 requiring that the land must only be used as a racecourse and for sport and recreation purposes.

It also states that allowing race clubs to acquire freehold title over their racecourses provides them more freedom to operate in a commercial manner and to utilise the value of their assets to business advantage and stimulating future growth. It also states that industry ownership and control of these racecourses also removes the bureaucratic processes and costs of administering venues through the Land Act 1994. Under this policy, Clifford Park Racecourse was transferred to the Toowoomba Turf Club during December 2000 and the Bunya Park racecourse at Dalby was transferred to the Dalby and Northern Downs Jockey Club when we held a community cabinet up there last month.

Further, following on from a commitment provided during privatisation, the government transferred the ownership and operation of the Deagon racecourse to the Queensland Principal Club on 30 June last year. The department has also received expressions of interest and is currently working with Gatton racecourse; Cluden Park racecourse, Townsville; Bundamba racecourse, Ipswich; and Ooralea Park racecourse in Mackay.

Ms JARRATT: I refer you to page 1-10 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements under the heading 'Future Developments'. I note that the department will continue to monitor issues that have an effect on the performance of the Queensland racing industry. While I acknowledge that you have already touched on this matter in answering previous questions, I would ask you to tell us how the government contributes positively to the industry.

Mrs ROSE: The Queensland racing industry continues to make a significant and increasing contribution to the Queensland economy. The year started with a record-breaking Magic Millions Carnival on the Gold Coast and, subsequently, we had a fantastic interdominion harness championship at Albion Park, and we are in the final throes of the Queensland Winter Racing Carnival.

The 10-day Magic Millions Carnival in January features two \$1 million races as its premier events. That was the first time that we had had two \$1 million races in Queensland on the same day. Profitability of the 2001 Magic Millions race day increased by 22 per cent on the previous year and attendance was up 10 per cent. I know that when it goes up next year the member for Warrego will say that I am responsible for it. The continued success of the carnival has enabled the Gold Coast Turf Club to undertake extensive improvements to its complex, including the construction of a stabling complex and a permanent, modern state-of-the-art dome for on-course functions. A record yearling sale price of \$1 million was achieved this year. The average yearling sale price has climbed from \$30,000 in 1986 to \$75,000 this year. Turnover has surged from \$20 million in 1986 to more than \$90 million in 2001. I was there for the sale of the \$1 million yearling. It was a pretty magnificent horse and a pretty exciting time.

Albion Park hosted the 2001 Inter-dominion Championships. Some 44,000 people attended the four-night carnival held over three Saturdays and a Tuesday. A huge crowd of 18,451 filled Albion Park stands for the pacers' final night. I was one of 10,222 people who witnessed New Zealand trotter Take a Moment take out the trotters championship final. Total betting on the carnival was \$3,777,085. \$2,308,500 was invested on the totalisator and \$1,465,000 in the strong bookie ring. Six track records were established, culminating with a new Inter-dominion record by New Zealand pacer Yule Star in the pacers final. Yule Star became the first New Zealand pacer in 25 years to win the coveted championship, and trainer Judith Nolan was the first female trainer to win a final since the series began in 1936. She was a very excited lady that night.

The Queensland Winter Racing Carnival winds up at the Sunshine Coast Turf Club next Wednesday and Thursday. I recommend that all honourable members check their diaries. The carnival has broken all sorts of records for turnover, crowds and success for our local trainers and jockeys. Queensland's favourite horse Falvelon took out his first group 1 race in the Doomben Ten Thousand for Brisbane trainer Danny Bougoure and Gold Coast jockey Mick Cahill, my favourite jockey.

Ms JARRATT: They are impressive figures. I refer to page 1-9 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements under the heading 'Recent Achievements'. I note the monitoring of issues in the Queensland racing industry. Recently we have seen the industry united against the federal coalition over Internet wagering. What was the Queensland government's response to this threat?

Mrs ROSE: It is most pleasing to see that the federal government's Interactive Gaming Act has excluded wagering. At the 2000 Racing Ministers Conference, which I hosted in Brisbane, Racing Ministers expressed their opposition to a proposed ban or moratorium on interactive wagering activities due to potential implications for Australia's racing industry. Ministers were concerned that research showed growth in interactive wagering services was not contributing to the increased scale of gambling problems. Rather, growth was being driven by customer preference and efficiency savings compared with other forms of placing a bet.

The Internet is the fastest growth area for wagering with the TAB and provides an important and efficient way for the racing industry to distribute and market its product. Yet this was not being taken into account by the federal coalition government, which proposed legislation prohibiting Australians from accessing interactive wagering services. This short-sighted move threatened the future viability of Australia's racing industry. The entire racing industry is underpinned by cash

flows generated through commercial arrangements between TABs and the industry. Any downturn—and this would almost certainly have been the result under Senator Alston's and Prime Minister John Howard's proposed legislation—would have adversely affected employment and investment in the racing industry.

Of course, this would also have had a proportionately greater adverse impact on race clubs located in country and regional areas, especially in Queensland, which have limited opportunity to generate revenues from sources other than through product fees paid by the TABs. The industry lobbied the federal government for months over the threat posed to its viability by this legislation. I am proud to say the push to save the racing industry began here in Queensland, before gaining momentum across Australia.

The support of government members and their local racing communities has been of great benefit during this campaign. I again thank all those who wrote to or phoned federal members of parliament and senators in a bid to make the federal government aware of the industry's \$6 billion contribution to the national economy. The federal government finally bowed to the enormous pressure placed on it by the 100,000 Australians employed in the racing industry. I know that this is a great relief to the 24,000 Queenslanders who are employed in the racing industry. It is a shame that Prime Minister Howard and his minister had to be dragged kicking and screaming to get this result.

Mr LAWLOR: My question relates to fair trading. In the Ministerial Portfolio Statements at page 1-18 there appears to be a reduction in projected operating expenses for fair trading services from the 2000-01 estimated actual to the 2001-02 estimate of nearly \$3 million. Is this the case? Does it represent a reduction in the Office of Fair Trading budget, as has reportedly been claimed by the opposition?

Mrs ROSE: The Office of Fair Trading budget this year includes almost \$2 million more to protect consumers and run common shonks and callous crooks out of town. I will explain a few things. Excluding the impact of one-off funding and accrual budgets for equity and depreciation and the allocation of indirect costs, the recurrent operating expenses for the office have increased by \$1.919 million. This increase is as a result of the return of \$1.5 million in smoothing moneys taken in 1999-2000 and other budget adjustments totalling \$419,000. The fair trading services output appears to have a decrease in its budget of \$5.078 million. This simply reflects the transfer of revenue to a different category of receipts at the whole-of-government level, combined with the introduction of the property agents and motor dealers legislation. Reductions in one area are offset by increases elsewhere.

In relation to revenue reductions, there is a reduction of \$12.912 million in other revenue. This arises from the transfer of the Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund from controlled revenue, that is, within this portfolio to administered revenue, and that is Treasury. This is part of the reform package that includes the new Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act and has been widely canvassed in parliament and in public debate. There is also a reduction of \$1.29 million in equity return funding. This also arises from the transfer of the revenue stream from the old Auctioneers and Agents Fidelity Guarantee Fund. With revenue offsetting increases, there is \$7.2 million in revenue from Queensland Treasury that replaces the revenue formerly available from the fund. There is \$1.86 million in additional funding from Treasury. There is also \$1.5 million for return of smoothing funding, \$360,000 for OFT projects, enterprise bargaining increases and other minor budget

adjustments, and an increase of \$193,000 in fees and charges, mainly increased revenue from REVS and trade measurement fees and charges.

Mr LAWLOR: I refer to the Ministerial Portfolio Statements at page 1-15 under the heading 'Consumer Protection'. I note that one of the developments planned for 2001-02 is the implementation of a national consumer alert and complaint sharing system, together with an online consumer fraud prevention strategy. These are surely welcome initiatives in this age of online Internet based fraud and scams. I ask the minister to inform the committee about these initiatives and, in light of the government's Smart State policies, the role played by the Queensland government in the development of these national programs.

Mrs ROSE: The Office of Fair Trading is taking a leading role in progressing an Australiawide system for alerting states and territories to scams and consumer complaints of national significance. The need for this type of alert and information system is becoming increasingly important because of the effect of globalisation and the increased speed with which scams can now spread throughout Australia and the world. New technology is absolutely fantastic. You can talk to people halfway around the world and they seem as though they are in the next room. The downside to that, though, is that it makes some of these scams just so much easier. We recognise that. We are very keen to progress the implementation of a system for national scam alerts to minimise the impact of these types of schemes on Queensland consumers.

The system will provide a means for sharing information between jurisdictions nationally and internationally. The Standing Committee of Officials of Consumer Affairs is generally supportive of introducing such a system. A Canadian system called Canshare has been evaluated by Queensland and is considered to be suitable for the purpose of sharing scam information at a national level. The Standing Committee of Officials of Consumer Affairs has established a working party to consider the options available for a national system. A recommendation considered to best meet the requirements of all jurisdictions will be made by the working party to the Standing Committee of Officials of Consumer Affairs.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for government members has expired. I now call the member for Southern Downs.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I thank the minister and officers of her department for the opportunity to examine the expenditure and aspects of the department insofar as Fair Trading is concerned. Minister, I refer you to the section of your department which is responsible for censorship. There have been reports in the press in recent times that there have been illegal sales of X-rated videos and amyl nitrate in some sex shops around Brisbane. I note that in one particular article you indicate that there have been a number of prosecutions of sex shop operators who have engaged in such illegal activity. Can you indicate to the committee how many such complaints you have processed over the last year and how many prosecutions there have been?

Mrs ROSE: It was a very serious article, and I was interested to see it. I was interested more by the comments at the end. You have the article in front of you. I do not remember it verbatim, but I think Mr Chapman said something along the lines that 'all she'—the she is me of course—'has to do is to go into one and she'll see they are there.'

Mr SPRINGBORG: Stop over on the way home from the races.

Mrs ROSE: I suppose you can gather a couple of things from that. Firstly, no, I do not normally go into sex shops. I have no personal knowledge of the type of X-rated videos that they have. Quite seriously though, I am particularly concerned about these sorts of videos in service stations and other places where kids can get their hands on them. Our priority is making sure that we keep them out of sight of young eyes. Of course, it is illegal for sex shops to have X-rated videos. I am not saying that it is okay for them to be there. We will prosecute them. I will find out for you exactly how many prosecutions there have been from sex shops. As I said to you, the department and its inspectors are particularly vigilant in making sure that X-rated videos do not pop up in video stores or from behind the counter. I will find out for you how many prosecutions there have been of sex shops.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I understand your priorities and your concerns, but the issue of course is that in all Australian states, other than the territories, it is illegal to sell these videos at these outlets. If there are complaints, I know that you and the officers of your department would be keen to carry out the necessary investigations and subsequent prosecutions. Have you got any idea of any complaints that have been made in the last year? How many complaints have been made? Also, what action has your department taken subsequent to this article, because it seems to carry some degree of verification to investigate what is contained therein?

Mrs ROSE: That is a fair comment. The difficulty is that a lot of people who go into sex shops are not going to complain if they find X-rated videos. We do not get a lot of complaints. I will ask Matt Miller, the Commissioner for Fair Trading, to comment, because he might have a little more knowledge about this. I am not suggesting—

Mr SPRINGBORG: Not from a practitioner's viewpoint.

Mr MILLER: Thank you, Minister. We will be responding to the complaints highlighted in the *Sunday Mail*. We have already set up dialogue with the Queensland police. We do not want to be in any sense duplicating the investigative activities that need to be pursued in relation to that particular agenda. We will be chasing, as the minister has indicated, the exact numbers of complaints and enforcement actions in relation to sex shops. I do not have that data on hand. You can rest assured that all complaints that are notified to the office are in fact pursued vigorously. The key point here is that, as I think the minister has already indicated, the number of complaints in relation to sex shops is not great. The complaints are more usually typified from offensive material or illegal material in relation to more public areas, such as service stations, newsagents and other sorts of general stores.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I have one further question, and I do not want to labour this particular point. The minister has indicated that one of the problems in investigating this is that it is highly unlikely that people who would go into such establishments would be disappointed to find one of these videos. That of course then poses an issue for the department responsible for overseeing the censorship laws in such a way that it has to come up with some sort of spot checking regime, some sort of mechanism of going into shops and ensuring compliance with the law. I was wondering if you could indicate to me how you do that or if indeed you do that sort of thing. In light of what has been uncovered in this article and also the fact that it is likely to be going on, how do you propose to ensure compliance with the censorship laws by spot checking? I would also appreciate it if you could make available any of that other information that I have asked for on notice.

Mrs ROSE: Matt will go through the sort of spot checking that we normally do anyway. A lot of our responses are based very much on complaints. The complaint made in the newspaper did not come direct to us. The first we knew about it was when we read about it in the newspaper.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Or when you commented to the journalist.

Mrs ROSE: Exactly. I must admit that I still have not been into one, even though Mr Chapman has suggested that perhaps I should. But Matt will expand on what the process is with our officers and how they do in fact carry out their spot checks.

Mr MILLER: The primary process we are embarking on in respect of all compliance, not just in relation to some of the activities we have spoken about in the last five minutes, is to establish a compliance monitoring unit within the office. That unit has already seen the number of proactive checks of business compliance increase from 1,178 in the previous financial year to 2,841, with a whole raft of legislative compliance. At this point there is not a specific program that targets these sorts of violations of that particular legislation, but whilst investigators and inspectors are on the road they are checking those premises, when they are out in the field.

Mr SPRINGBORG: How many compliance checks have there been of such premises?

Mr MILLER: I will need to get that breakdown for you as a part of the number of enforcement actions.

Mr SPRINGBORG: If you could also provide details of how many premises there may be that are engaged in—

Mrs ROSE: I do not even know how many sex shops there are. We will get that information for you.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Minister, I take you back to an incident that happened before you took over this portfolio, in the lead-up to the state election. On 13 or 14 February your predecessor sent a letter out to retirement village residents around Queensland warning about how nasty the coalition's policy on retirement villages was. At that stage there was some concern about the cost of that letter and the appropriateness of using taxpayers' funds for it, given that the government was in caretaker mode and it was openly electioneering. Would you have any idea how much that actually cost? I could not find it in the budget papers.

Mrs ROSE: I understand that there were 200 or 300 letters. They were sent to the Village Residents Committee. Given the number of villages, there were between 200 and 300 letters posted out. I remember reading in the paper about the letter. I have never actually seen the letter. My only knowledge is what I remember reading about in the newspaper at the time. Obviously it did not cost a lot if there were only a couple of hundred.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I know what answer I will get to the next question. Do you believe that your predecessor was justified in those actions and would you do the same thing yourself?

Mrs ROSE: I did not see the letter. I do not know exactly what the previous minister said or the context in which it was in fact said. I find it difficult to comment when I have not actually seen the letter or the context in which it was written.

Mr SPRINGBORG: You might be able to go back and pick up a copy somewhere in the department. I turn now to the issue of lottery scams. I think some of these issues were mentioned a moment ago by the member for Southport. These

people are becoming far more elaborate and they are operating from right around the world. Recently someone told me that somebody had written to them from New York and asked for them to be put on some sort of who's who. Next thing, it cost them \$700. They took the money out of their cheque account.

This is not only about lottery scams. There are a whole range of other get-rich quick schemes around the place and there are a lot of other dubious dealings. Can you indicate the amount of the department's resources, in dollar terms and in staff terms, actually committed to dealing with those sorts of things? Obviously there is a fair community protection element involved in this. As you deal with one thing, such as pyramid selling—I acknowledge that the government has done reasonably well—something else emerges. We always need to be on our mettle. Is there any indication of the amount of resources involved?

Mrs ROSE: The number of complaints we get runs into the thousands—10,000 complaints a year—but that is in relation to all sorts of consumer issues. I know about these issues just through my own electorate office, as I am sure you do. People are phoning up all the time about a letter they have received about some pyramid selling scheme. I have done quite a bit of media over the last even three months, warning people that if they get one of these letters in the mail they should certainly let us know. That is the other thing: we do not always know. We cannot possibly have an accurate record of the number of people who receive these letters, because some heed our warnings and throw them in the bin.

I saw some figures of the number of people who actually respond. The other thing with these databases is that they flag the people who do respond. In other words, the same person will get hit. A scamming group will close up shop and set up under another name. They keep their database and they hit that same person a number of times. They usually target the vulnerable. Only a couple of weeks ago I did some media about these fraudsters who had a list and targeted the over 60s. So anybody over the age of 60 was targeted by this database. As for the percentage of resources involved in this, Matt will be able to give you some idea.

Mr MILLER: Approximately 25 per cent of the office's staff is dedicated to investigation and enforcement action, but in terms of dollars I cannot give you the breakdown. It would be more than 25 per cent. It would be more like 30 per cent, but that is for all enforcement and investigation activity, not just for scams. Our primary strategy against scams is clearly public education and awareness, because our ability to in fact take enforcement action against most scammers is constrained by the fact that many of them are operating from overseas or outside of Queensland.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Nigeria.

Mr MILLER: Nigeria and Canada in particular. As I have indicated, the primary response is an awareness and educative response more than a compliance and enforcement response.

Mr SPRINGBORG: I appreciate that. I know that there are some difficulties. As the minister indicated earlier in response to a question from the honourable member for Southport, there are things you are doing in conjunction with your colleagues in other states. No doubt that means ongoing contemporary legislative regimes that might be able to address it. Obviously international jurisdictional issues come into it. Are you aware whether there are things the Commonwealth government can do through any arrangement it has? When you discuss these things, do you talk about how to deal with those matters?

Mrs ROSE: There is a ministerial council, MCCA—it is my very first one—meeting tomorrow and Friday. Certainly these are the issues that are discussed at MCCA. There is a great little book, though, which hopefully your electorate office has which has been produced by the Office of Fair Trading called *The little book of scams*. It is a terrific little book. We distribute it as widely as we can. We use that as a means of trying to educate people about the types of scams that are out there and the sorts of steps they should take.

Canshare is the system I referred to earlier that the Canadians have come up with. OFT is currently looking at that. The Standing Committee of Officials of Consumer Affairs, as I said before, is generally supportive. It is always best, though, if we get the support of all of the states and territories and make sure any legislation we introduce has some teeth. As you quite rightly identified, the difficulty is with international jurisdictions. We worked really well with that Nigerian letter scam and we have worked well with the Canadian government. We provide information, too, because there are companies here that send letters over there. It cuts both ways.

It is very frustrating. Some of these schemes are terrible. I will mention one I saw recently which did not involve a great deal of money. If you sent something like \$36 they would send you your winnings from a lottery. It was all supposedly unclaimed winnings. So they apparently had this big pool of unclaimed winnings and they identified these people as winners of that. All you ended up getting back, apparently, was a ticket in a lottery. If people had gotten a lawyer or someone to actually read it all word for word, it provided all the information. The sad thing is, as I said before, that it is the most vulnerable people and the people who can least afford to send the money putting it in an envelope and sending it overseas. It is just something that people should never, ever do.

Mr SPRINGBORG: Before I ask my next question, I say to the minister in a bipartisan way: I thank your office and the department for the work they do. We do report these things as a matter of routine. As you quite rightly indicate, unless people take the time to inform your department, you often do not know. I commend you. There are a lot of schemes that have been tidied up or warned as a consequence of that.

My final question is to do with the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, which came into effect on 1 July. As you know, there are some issues with regard to wording and confusion when it comes to investment seminars and so on that concern those people involved in the real estate industry and, more recently, second-hand motor dealers with regard to warranties on vehicles that are not fit for sale vis-a-vis the insurance industry selling vehicles at auction and there is no requirement for a warranty. There are obviously some anomalies and problems with wording and there were some issues of implementation. Can you indicate whether you plan any legislative changes or whether you have allocated any resources to address those issues over the forthcoming year?

Mrs ROSE: Are you referring specifically to motor dealers or you are interested in all of it?

Mr SPRINGBORG: I suppose it was a bit of a blunderbuss question. I am talking about the real estate industry and the issues it has raised through the REIQ. More recently, there have been issues for some of the motor dealers, particularly second-hand motor dealers, who have some problems with warranties vis-a-vis the insurance industry selling similar vehicles. I am not against the intent of the legislation—I think it is pretty good—but I do think there are some issues and I would like to know how you are going to address them.

Mrs ROSE: The provisions relating to statutory warranties for used motor vehicles sold by licensed motor dealers of course was introduced with the commencement of the act. I was a little surprised to see some of the comments by some of the used car dealers, because I would like to think that if used car dealers had been doing the right thing there would be no problem. There was some concern from the bottom end of the market, where they sold vehicles for \$800 or \$900. Maybe those people will find that they are unable to sell a car for \$800 or \$900 with a statutory warranty. But if you are going to buy a vehicle for \$800 or \$900, then there is a fair chance you are buying a vehicle with serious mechanical problems. What we are trying to do is protect the consumer so that when they drive a car away from a used car lot they are driving away a vehicle which is defect free.

We negotiated with the industry to come up with a workable arrangement, if you like. Most used car dealers—or the majority of them—have welcomed it. They recognised that there was a need to tighten up some of the things in the industry, and they worked really well with us. I do not believe that there are very many dealers out there who are against these statutory warranties. From a consumer point of view, I think it is a very good move. It is something that I was particularly pleased about.

As you know, this was something I walked into, and I cannot take credit for it. But certainly there have been a lot of complaints to the Office of Fair Trading over the years. Even as a member of parliament, I had a young girl in my office in tears because she had driven away in a vehicle that she had paid a couple of thousand dollars for and, within a couple of days, she just could not drive it because it had failed miserably mechanically. So this is really about protecting consumers.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for non-government members' questions has expired. The committee will take a short break.

Sitting suspended from 5.16 p.m. to 5.27 p.m.

Mr ENGLISH: Minister, I refer to page 1-14 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements under Recent Achievements. The Ministerial Portfolio Statements claim significantly increased compliance monitoring activity focused around licensing of motor dealers and real estate agents as a major achievement in the last financial year. Can the minister inform the committee about the extent of this initiative and whether it has involved the creation of new positions or just reallocation of staff, the extent of unlicensed trading detected and whether any prosecutions have resulted from this initiative?

Mrs ROSE: In January of this year an additional 10 officers were appointed to undertake proactive compliance activities for the Office of Fair Trading. Six of these staff were located in regional Queensland and the balance assigned to a new compliance monitoring unit in Brisbane. This new unit has been established to deliver and coordinate, in conjunction with the office's new regional managers, increased proactive monitoring of trader compliance with legislative requirements. An increase in the identification of unethical practices within the motor dealing and real estate industries has been recorded. Improved levels of compliance have also been achieved through this new initiative, thereby improving consumer confidence in the marketplace.

Between February and April of this year, 432 visits were conducted by investigators from the Office of Fair Trading who commenced a proactive compliance program focusing on unlicensed motor dealing. At present, inquiries are being conducted into the activities of 83 possible unlicensed dealers, and these

pleasing results were achieved in partnership with the Motor Traders Association of Queensland and licensed motor dealers.

The compliance monitoring unit of the Office of Fair Trading initiated a program conducting spot checks of real estate agencies and their sales staff. Some 630 licences have been checked, with visits to 109 premises in the first month. The checks are continuing. Real estate licensees have been appreciative of the visits, which have demonstrated high levels of compliance—which is good news. Office of Fair Trading inspectors have also been disseminating information in relation to the new Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, which commenced on 1 July. As I said before, we had a number of information sessions throughout the state, which of course were welcomed by both the motor dealers and the property agents industry.

Mr ENGLISH: We have already explored some aspects of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. However, on the same page under the heading Information for Businesses and Consumers in relation to the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, which came into effect at the beginning of this month—this act has been one of the major legislative initiatives of the Beattie government in the fair trading area. Can the minister furnish the committee with details of the targeted education strategies undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading to inform business and consumers about their responsibilities and rights under the new act?

Mrs ROSE: Something that we acknowledged and recognised was the need to make sure—because there were so many changes, and even though a lot of consultation had taken place with the industry, it was important to provide them with ready reckoner and easy-to-read information, including the information sessions.

But just to give a bit of background to the act—whereas the old act regulated the licensing and conduct of real estate agents, motor dealers, auctioneers, commercial agents and employees of these occupations, the new act also regulates real estate developers and their marketers and motor dealer brokers. The new act introduces mandatory codes of conduct that set appropriate standards of conduct and practice for traders and boost consumer protection for the Queensland community.

The motor dealing code commenced on 1 July, as well. We have done much to ensure that business and consumers are aware of their responsibilities. It is estimated that \$640,808 will be expended on the education campaign. This includes the costs of an information campaign, grants to industry groups to meet the costs of their participation, and the salaries of staff specifically dedicated to implementation of the legislation. Many more staff have been indirectly involved in implementation.

We conducted, as I said, a statewide information campaign comprising 58 information sessions in 17 locations across the state. I attended and opened a couple of the information sessions myself. They were very well attended. In fact, more than 5,000 industry people and consumers attended the sessions—which was quite extraordinary—3,900 for the real estate property sessions and around 1,200 for the motoring sessions. We actually split them. We had separate rooms: one for the property agents and another one for the motor dealers.

We have also advertised extensively in regional and metropolitan newspapers. The information campaign was conducted in partnership with two key industry groups, the Real Estate Institute of Queensland, or the REIQ, and the Motor Traders Association of Queensland, the MTAQ. The Office of Fair Trading staff were joined by an REIQ or MTAQ speaker at each of the 58 information sessions.

The REIQ and the MTAQ, together with the Urban Development Institute of Australia—the UDIA—have also been partners in the development of some of the written material being finalised to support the commencement of the act. Grants totalling \$80,798.85 have been made to these peak industry groups to meet the direct costs of their respective involvement. I think that it is important that I tell you what those grants were. To the REIQ, it was \$35,351.25; to the MTAQ, \$38,792.60; and to the UDIA, \$6,655.

Mr ENGLISH: Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN: At page 1-14 of the MPS the Office of Fair Trading is noted to have resolved approximately 10,000 consumer complaints and achieved \$3.7 million in redress for consumers. Consumers have saved a further \$0.5 million through the detection of incorrect measures. Can you give the committee some examples to illustrate how the Office of Fair Trading has achieved these impressive results?

Mrs ROSE: As you say, these are very impressive results. I have had the opportunity to meet a lot of the staff of the OFT. I have been into the communications centre where all the telephone calls come in. They really do an absolutely amazing job in there. They are very much, as an organisation, focused clearly on delivering effective consumer protection and achieving consumer redress where it is warranted.

The office receives complaints on a broad range of issues spanning general fair trading matters, issues with real estate agents and motor dealers, consumer and product safety issues and matters relating to weights and measurement that are used in trading. That is something that I found quite fascinating. I really did not know anything about weights and measurement. I did not realise all the intricacies of it. I am learning a little about it now and have, in my education as Minister for Fair Trading, come across the amazing, accurate scales and all the different sorts of tubes and things that they use in weights and measures. So I must say that that has been one area of the portfolio that has particularly fascinated me.

I am very proud of the fact that the OFT has again delivered outstanding results for consumers who have suffered financial loss. I am also very proud of the office's performance in preventing financial loss through identifying trading practices that could potentially disadvantage consumers. Of the about 11,000 consumer complaints received last financial year, approximately 7,800 were conciliated and 3,200 were investigated for possible breaches of legislation. Through its conciliation-based complaint handling service for consumers, the Office of Fair Trading staff achieved redress for 2,783 consumers in relation to a range of transactions, primarily for the retail purchase of goods, including computers, televisions and videos. The highest single amount of redress achieved through mediation was \$46,100. This dispute resolution role has also seen many more consumers receive credit notes or replacement products and 345 consumers also received redress through the outcomes of formal investigations. The highest amount achieved was \$50,000 in relation to a purchase of a preconstructed aluminium shed. So it is not just small amounts; these are really quite substantial amounts.

Consumer redress also included compensation through the Travel Compensation Fund for people who suffered financial loss when their holiday plans were frustrated or cancelled by travel agents. Through the Auctioneers and Agents Committee redress was also achieved for consumers who lost money through transactions with either real estate agents or motor dealers where there had been a breach of legislation.

The CHAIRMAN: You might like to table the remainder of the response if you feel that that would be helpful to the committee.

Mrs ROSE: Yes. It is great when you get examples like a self-funded retiree achieving an \$84,000 redress. He had been trying to further his retirement investments when he was caught up in a marketeering scam on the Gold Coast. So that one had a happy ending. Certainly, I would like to table the rest of that response. They really do an amazing job.

The CHAIRMAN: I will also ask for it to be incorporated in *Hansard*, if I could.

Mrs ROSE: Yes, thank you.

Savings to the community were also achieved from early detection of short measures of goods sold by weight. In the last financial year, short measures were discovered in a range of products including LP gas in bottles, stock feed, cream and milk, bag mix concrete, seafood, butcher's meat and sugar.

Office of Fair Trading staff work hard to ensure consumers are protected and don't suffer financial loss.

Staff regularly undertake spot checks of traders to ensure legislative compliance and to provide information and advice to traders on their obligations. I am confident this presence in the business community delivers increased protection and savings for consumers.

The CHAIRMAN: Can I then take you to another question dealing with pages 1-14 and 1-15 of the MPS under the heading Information for Businesses and Consumers relating to the fair trading web site. This deals with an area of particular interest for me regarding the work of the OFT for business. Part of the redevelopment of the web site has included the construction of a platform to enable e-business transactions. It is further planned to implement a comprehensive e-business strategy over the coming year. Can the minister inform the committee what sort of e-business transactions will be able to be undertaken via the web site and what savings will accrue to businesses, consumers and taxpayers as a result of this important initiative? In answering the question, I would appreciate the minister commenting specifically on efficiencies for business and consumers in regional Queensland.

Mrs ROSE: Yes, it is planned to implement a comprehensive e-business strategy over the coming year. The Office of Fair Trading has commenced development of an e-business strategy for the primary products and services offered by the Office of Fair Trading. The strategy will initially focus on alternative service delivery options, such as phone pay, BPay and Net pay for the payment of business names and occupational licensing renewals. It is then intended to move to introduce more extensive e-commerce facilities beginning with business names for renewal payments being able to be completed via the Internet. Ultimately, all transactions relating to business names and occupational licensing will be able to be completed online.

These initiatives will provide consumers and businesses with more flexibility in the way they transact with the Office of Fair Trading. People will not be required to visit office counters to lodge applications or send applications through the post. This will result in savings of time and money for both businesses and the government when making applications and reduced processing turnaround times.

The new web site will make it easier for consumers and business to access information and services offered by the Office of Fair Trading. The cost effectiveness of the office's web site providing information to businesses and consumers is already evident from the rapid growth in the use of the site. Nearly six million

inquiries were made on the site during 2000-01. With the improvements being implemented, this will grow significantly over the coming years.

These new methods of transacting with the Office of Fair Trading will be of particular benefit to rural and remote consumers and businesses. The proximity to an Office of Fair Trading counter, of course, will no longer be an issue. When I see these sorts of stories and statements, it gets a little scary, because I am not all that good with getting on the Internet. I must admit that I have to rely on my kids to help me out when I need to know anything. But it is really good. We are keeping up, in the Office of Fair Trading, with the need to make sure that we make it as easy as possible for people when they are lodging their applications or when they are making their renewal payments. This is the way that we are going to go. So it really does make us a very modern organisation.

Ms JARRATT: Minister, I refer you to page 1-5 of the MPS under the heading Responsible Business Operators. I notice that the Office of Fair Trading plans to develop and implement a number of important strategies to reduce product-related injuries. These include targeted communication strategies, legislative initiatives and the re-establishment of the consumer safety committee. Could you provide the committee with further information regarding these strategies to protect consumers from hazardous products?

Mrs ROSE: The Office of Fair Trading uses a number of strategies to ensure that consumers have access to the safest possible products as well as ensuring that business understands the importance of supplying safe products. These strategies include providing advice and information to consumers and traders, developing and maintaining uniform product safety legislative standards and conducting safety audits of new and second-hand products.

During 2000-01, there were a number of significant projects undertaken to meet these objectives. For the first time ever, the second-hand industry came under close scrutiny by safety inspectors. A number of unsafe cots and child restraints for motor vehicles were removed from second-hand shops. Education resources were provided to businesspeople to assist them in complying with mandatory safety standards. The indications are that industry performance is improving in the second-hand sector in terms of product safety.

The government also updated a number of product safety standards to ensure that Queensland's standards met national safety standards. It is very reassuring for Queensland industry to know that if their products comply with Queensland's product safety standard, then they can rest assured that they comply with the national requirements.

The product safety unit also assisted hundreds of consumers by producing and distributing a range of safety literature, conducting displays and offering telephone advice to around 1,000 clients on how to use products safely as well as information on strategies to assist in making the best possible purchasing decision. The unit gathered information and research on the latest issues affecting the safety of consumers from a variety of sources, including the Internet, media feedback, scrutinising overseas events and trends, as well as liaising closely with other state government agencies and consumer groups. This ensures that the unit is at the cutting edge in product safety policy development. For example, a number of submissions based on the research activities were made to Standards Australia in relation to improvements in the safety standards for indoor halogen lamps, small-wheeled scooters and trampolines. All of these Australian standards are currently being improved.

The product safety unit also used the media extensively during the year to warn consumers about unsafe products. These included warnings on the strangulation hazard with blind cords, choking hazards with beanbags, toy safety, show bag safety warnings, the drowning hazards associated with large inflatable and refillable wading pools, and the safety of small-wheeled scooters.

Only this morning I issued a children's winter nightwear safety warning focusing on the flammability of certain garments and reminding Queenslanders of the dangers posed by recalled electric heaters and the need to make sure that parents are vigilant about checking the labels on children's nightwear to make sure that they do get the ones with a low fire risk. Fire officers from the Queensland Fire and Rescue Authority came along. We had some baby's nightwear and a heater. We saw a demonstration of how quickly an item of children's nightwear caught on fire. It really is quite scary.

The other thing that was alarming and that people are not aware of is that if you are standing in front of a bar heater and you are wearing a gown or something of a fabric that attracts heat, even by standing there the fabric can pick up enough heat so that when you move away it can still ignite and set the entire garment completely alight in seconds. Those are the sorts of things that we do. Only today we were out there warning people about children's nightwear.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, minister. The time for government questions has expired. I call the member for Maroochydore.

Miss SIMPSON: I seek the leave of the committee to ask questions. Minister, I would like to ask some questions with regard to the Tourism portfolio first of all. I refer you to page 2-7 of the portfolio statements. I note that in 1998-99 the state government contributed \$47.376 million for tourism in Queensland, but for 2001-02 your government will cut that to \$42.397 million, which is nearly a \$5 million fall in funding. Given the potential of tourism spending to create real jobs and Queensland's large number of unemployed people, why is your government decreasing the state's overall contribution to tourism spending?

Mrs ROSE: We are not decreasing the state's overall funding contribution to tourism. In fact, in the last two budgets we have boosted TQ's base funding by \$2.5 million—\$2 million last year and \$500,000 for the RTOs this financial year. We have had record levels of funding for the RTOs and a record base budget for TQ.

This came up during estimates last year. I believe that it is appropriate to again explain that a lot of the funding for TQ is special purpose grant funding. We will make funding available. For example, in this budget we have just made \$2 million additional funding available so that we can use the Goodwill Games as much as possible to leverage the benefits of those games for tourism. In addition to the base funding that we have made available to Tourism Queensland, we have just allocated another \$2 million. However, that does not mean that that \$2 million is going to be built into the base funding for next year. It means that that \$2 million has been allocated for this specific purpose.

This is where it is difficult sometimes to understand about the funding allocation for TQ. It is important always to look at what the base funding is. A lot of the differences that you see in the funding levels are because a particular special purpose grant has been exhausted. It has served its purpose, just as with the \$6 million that we allocated for the Asian economic meltdown. We went over there with targeted marketing campaigns. Three years ago we hit it with \$6 million. We made it very clear at the time that that \$6 million would be spent over three years: \$3 million

the first year, \$2 million the second and \$1 million in the third year. It is very easy to say that you have reduced that funding, but it was made very clear right at the beginning.

It is really important to look at what is the base level of funding and then, on top of that, what is special purpose grant funding. It is always going to have a life. This special purpose funding will have a life, whereas the base funding is the most important. We have increased that over the last two budgets.

Miss SIMPSON: Following on from that question, the state contribution listed on page 2-7 clearly shows that the overall state contribution has decreased and that the money that you are putting into marketing will result in jobs, but if you decrease the amount of money that you put into marketing you are going to decrease the potential number of jobs that you could get through tourism. You really still have decreased the overall Tourism budget in the last few years when you take the base budget and then look at the special initiatives that are added to the top of it.

Mrs ROSE: You cannot just look at the figures in isolation without knowing what the funding was allocated for in the first place. The example that I have just given is of the \$2 million that we will spend in the next two months with the Goodwill Games to lever as much as we can for tourism off those games. However, that does not mean that that \$2 million is then going to be available for next year, because it will not be there. The base funding is there. We have increased the base funding, but because that is a special purpose grant for this one specific purpose, that will not be there next year. It might be something else that we are looking at developing. On top of that, the budget includes another \$1 million for marketing, the last instalment of the three-year \$6 million program that I talked about, and \$2 million for convention and incentive marketing, taking our investment in this sector to \$8 million over four years.

The other thing about tourism which I always emphasise is that it is not just about promotion and marketing. Yes, we need to promote and market our destinations in Queensland, but we also have to make sure that our destinations have the infrastructure. It is all very well and good to promote and market a city, but you have to ensure that they have the product to market.

As an example, we put money into the redevelopment of the Strand in Townsville. I do not know if you have been to Townsville recently or if you are familiar with the Townsville area. It is an area that I am very familiar with because I lived there for 12 years. I left there in about 1987. I have seen the progress that it has made since that time. I have seen Townsville now with a new branding, which I launched only a couple of months ago. It is now being taken seriously as a tourist destination, which it has never experienced before. We have Virgin flying in there now with a strong leisure yield on its planes. Townsville is being taken seriously as a tourism destination because of the money that the Queensland Government invested in tourism infrastructure for redevelopment. Yes, we have the money for marketing and promotion, but now we have a great product in Townsville that we can market. It is not just about promotion and marketing, it is also about providing the money—providing the dollars—for infrastructure.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I will ask you a question about infrastructure. I note on page 2-3 of the portfolio statements that you make reference to the draft Queensland Cruise Shipping Plan. I note that this was first referred to in the 1999-2000 budget papers. Does this draft plan include a blueprint for a cruise terminal in Brisbane? What is the estimated expenditure for the plan and the initiatives that will sit under that plan? When will Brisbane have a new cruise terminal?

Mrs ROSE: The draft will be finalised this week. It has been at the printers. It has been sitting at the printers and it will be distributed now. Queensland, with its unique location and world-renowned natural features, is in an excellent position to secure a larger share of the highly lucrative world cruise shipping industry. Cruise shipping is one of the fastest growing global sectors of international tourism. It has an annual growth of eight per cent and an estimated worth of \$17 billion a year worldwide.

When TQ first came to me and said that they had this cruise shipping plan, I said, 'Cruise shipping? Is there a future in this?' I was absolutely astounded by the figures that TQ provided to me. The industry in Australia has grown at nine per cent a year for the past 10 years and is worth \$200 million per annum. Despite receiving over 70 per cent of domestic and international cruise ship visits to Australia, Queensland's share is only \$13.8 million. We believe that the potential revenue for Queensland will be approximately \$84 million per annum through untapped or potential new businesses. That goes from a share of 13.8 per cent, which is all we are getting at the moment, to a potential \$84 million market for Queensland.

The difficulty is that Queensland has never ever had a plan before. The decisions have been made very much on an individual basis, so that is what this plan is all about. We want to make sure that Queensland gets a larger share of the world cruise shipping industry. There was extensive industry consultation last year. A draft Queensland Cruise Shipping Plan was developed. It was approved by cabinet on 18 June. As I said, it is at the printers and it is just about finished now, so it will be distributed next week. It will be available for a period of two months for industry consultation. Hopefully, I will be taking the final plan back to cabinet later in the year. The work undertaken on cruise shipping in previous years has provided valuable input into the Queensland Cruise Shipping Plan and development actually commenced in 1999.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I would like to ask a question with regard to page 1-26 of the portfolio statements. This is the legislation that you are proposing to develop to address the unethical activities of inbound tourism operators. As this is a significant issue on the Gold Coast and in other parts of Queensland, there is obviously a feeling of some urgency to see this matter progressed. When will this legislation be brought before the parliament?

Mrs ROSE: I am glad that you brought it up, because inbound tour operators and the way that the industry is run are things that have been of concern to me for some time as a Gold Coast member of parliament and certainly as Tourism Minister. Before I became Fair Trading Minister and not knowing that I would one day become Fair Trading Minister, I had a number of discussions with my predecessor in Fair Trading. We talked about regulating the industry and the need for that.

At last year's Tourism Ministers Council meeting in Darwin, which I attended, we made some significant decisions to address the issue—at my insistence. It has been a problem for a long time. Unfortunately, it has always been put in the too-hard basket. The council publicly endorsed the development by the Australian Tourism Export Council, or ATEC, of an export tourism code of conduct to be administered independently of ATEC. Consultants are currently finalising the industry code under the direction of an industry/government steering committee. The final documents will include export tourism business standards, a compliance framework and implementation guide. A business plan and implementation options are currently being developed for its implementation and marketing.

To complement and reinforce this industry's self-regulation, my Office of Fair Trading in consultation with Tourism Queensland is developing legislation which will cover the business and operational standards of key sectors in the inbound tourism industry, including inbound tour operators and tour guides. Our legislation will be template legislation for the other states and territories. Queensland's regulatory regime is expected to be in place by June 2002.

In addition to these key initiatives, my department's Shopping Around in Australia Consumer Education Program is being expanded to a national level along with further research initiatives. My aim is for these initiatives to receive national endorsement and funding commitments when the Tourism Ministers Council meets in Brisbane later this month, on Thursday, 26 July. I will also be placing these initiatives on the agenda of the Ministerial Council for Consumer Affairs—the MCCA agenda—as the Fair Trading and Consumer Affairs portfolios would be the most appropriate state and territory agencies to administer any complementary legislation. This multi-pronged approach to improve business and industry standards is supported by tourism ministers around Australia. It will not stop the problem of rogue operators overnight, but it will progressively make it more and more difficult for unethical practices to continue unchecked.

Miss SIMPSON: With regard to the liquor industry services output statement on page 1-22 and the non-achievement of the number of indigenous communities assisted to develop alcohol management plans because of delay in appointing licensing officers to work in indigenous communities, I ask: how many licensing officers have been appointed to work in indigenous communities and why was there a delay in appointing these officers?

Mrs ROSE: There was not a delay. We had to make sure that they were adequately and properly trained before we put them in place. There was not a delay. We have five indigenous licensing officers in place now. They began in January after they had received their full training. We have a second officer that we will be bringing on hopefully by the end of the year in Cairns. We want to make sure that we have a coordinated approach to government service delivery in indigenous communities. This is an issue in respect of which I feel very strongly about doing something.

I first visited some Aboriginal communities about 25 years ago. To my frustration, I found a lot of the issues that we are facing today were there 25 years ago. It has always been put in the too-hard basket. I have been very pleased with the work that my Liquor Licensing Division has done recently in consultation with the police to put indigenous licensing officers in place. That was something that we were able to achieve in the budget last year. As I said, there was not a delay in putting them on. Firstly, we had to find the people. We had to advertise and get people who were suitable. Then we had to train them up. They have been very successful. I was talking to one of them in Townsville only a couple of weeks ago. They have done a terrific job.

As to some of the things that they have been doing, as you said, they have been involved in the development of alcohol management plans. We have had a trial program running at Woorabinda, Palm Island, Yarrabah and Doomadgee. That has created community awareness and discussion about offences such as sly grogging and the detrimental consequences it has had on communities. Officers are building a rapport within communities. They have been instrumental in obtaining information from community members about sly grogging suspects, which has been passed on to police. They have also developed procedures and gathered information during

the course of the trial on suspected offenders. As a matter of fact, we have identified 40 people. Those names have been passed on to the police. It is difficult to gather evidence. We face a tough job both through our Liquor Licensing officers and also the police in gathering enough evidence so that we can have these people prosecuted.

Miss SIMPSON: I mentioned the delays in the appointment of licensing officers because it is in the footnotes of your portfolio statements on page 23. It says that there have been delays in appointing those licensing officers to indigenous communities. I refer you to your answer to question on notice No. 7 in relation to fines for under-age drinking and in particular in regard to the significant increase in the number of notices issued to minors for consuming or possessing liquor on licensed premises. I understand that in 1999-2000 it was 122; in 2000-01 it was 695. However, in respect of licensing nominees, in 1999-2000 and 2000-01 there were no prosecutions for selling liquor to minors on licensed premises. I appreciate that most licensees will try to enforce the law, but I have to ask why there is such a discrepancy between the number of actions against minors who have broken the law as opposed to licensees who must have broken the law.

Mrs ROSE: I will make a couple of comments first and then I will ask Michael Tolhurst, the Executive Director, Liquor Licensing Division, to give you more detail. Obviously, the number of minors who test the law and try to access licensed premises is of concern to me and most other parents. We provide an education kit to licensees. We make licensees very much aware of their responsibilities for making sure they have proper procedures in place so that anybody who goes into a licensed premises has their ID checked, particularly if they look young. A lot of fake IDs have been confiscated by door staff. Of course, there is a responsibility on staff behind the bar as well. If they serve alcohol to minors, they are exposing themselves to being fined by Liquor Licensing. I will ask Michael Tolhurst to provide you with more detail about the discrepancies you have identified.

Mr TOLHURST: As to the issue of under-age drinking and the statistics you mentioned, certainly within the legislation one of the defences for licensees relates to the issue of these false IDs that are provided. If the licensees can provide evidence to us that they were provided with information or documents that one would reasonably expect are acceptable, that is a defence under the act and as a consequence we cannot proceed with a prosecution against the licensees.

As the minister has rightly indicated, certainly the false ID issue is one that we are trying to address. It is certainly one that we raise in various schools throughout Queensland well prior to the schoolies weeks on both the Sunshine Coast and the Gold Coast. What we are finding is that a number of those false IDs are originating from outside of Queensland. It is an increasing problem and we are getting better at dealing with it. Under the legislation brought down in July there is now provision such that not only the licensees are liable under the act; we can also now rest some of the responsibilities on the security providers at the front door who are the ones that have been given responsibility by the licensee to check IDs and people's ages as they come through the door.

The CHAIRMAN: The time for questions by non-government members has expired.

Ms JARRATT: I refer you to page 2-3 of the MPS and ask why the Growing Tourism strategy was prepared and what you hope to achieve through it.

Mrs ROSE: Tourism will be one of Queensland's key economic drivers in both the short and long terms. Few industries offer tourism's potential for job and wealth creation, sustainability and quality of life for all Queenslanders. The tourism industry in Queensland is the largest employer. We employ some 150,000 Queenslanders in the tourism industry. It also generates over \$14 billion for the Queensland economy. It is the second biggest industry in this state. It is a very diverse and complex industry. Its benefits are enjoyed right across the state. Its needs are derived from a range of government agencies.

The industry comprises thousands of small businesses and is becoming an important additional or alternative economic contributor to regional areas. What has been missing in the past, though, has been a whole-of-government approach to tourism in Queensland. To keep tourism at the forefront of Queensland development we need a whole-of-government strategy to foster cooperation and collaboration between key agencies on tourism issues, and Growing Tourism is that blueprint. It will help us to develop our second largest industry and create thousands of new jobs. The strategy will put tourism uppermost in the minds of agencies right across government. The strategy will harness government resources and direct them to ensuring that tourism reaches its full potential in Queensland. It incorporates the industry's needs into all levels of government planning and funding.

The strategy recognises the roles of the public and private sectors and what the government can do to provide the right environment for growth, add value and market Queensland's tourism assets. Growing Tourism builds on a wide range of initiatives currently being undertaken and identifies key policy links and priorities across government. It is a tangible set of strategies, initiatives and measurements that will ensure that tourism stays top of mind in resource allocation, infrastructure and services, the environment, market trends, government leadership and coordination.

When I became Tourism Minister, everyone slapped me on the back and said, 'You've got the fun portfolio in government.' As I said, tourism might be a lot of fun but it is the second largest industry. It is the largest employer. It is big business. We have this cross-agency CEOs group that meets and talks about tourism. When I first went to cabinet with the Growing Tourism strategy, I had never before seen ministers putting up their hands saying, 'Yes, I've got tourism in my portfolio. I can do this for tourism.' But I wonder about Corrective Services and tourism. I really place a question mark over that one. There has been an enthusiastic response from the other ministers and right across government. I am very excited about the Growing Tourism strategy and I believe it is going to push us into becoming, hopefully, the No. 1 industry in the state. That is my goal.

Mr LAWLOR: I take you to page 2-10 of the MPS which has a statement of cash flow. I know that the actual for grants and subsidies for 2000-01 was \$4.61 million. This amount has increased to an estimated figure of \$5.11 million for 2001-02, and I ask: what are these grants provided for and why is this amount increased by approximately half a million dollars?

Mrs ROSE: I am glad that I am given the opportunity again to talk about how funding for Tourism Queensland actually works. You referred to the half a million dollar boost in this budget to fund our regional tourism organisations. During the recent state election the government recognised the need to ensure that Queensland's 14 regional tourism organisations were adequately funded and hence we announced the half a million dollar yearly increase in total RTO funding.

That represents an 18 per cent boost and will deliver each RTO \$35,714 extra each year to promote its region. This additional funding will take Tourism Queensland's base budget from \$38.914 million in 2000-01 to a record \$39.397 million in 2001-02. The total government financial support of RTOs rises to \$5.1 million this financial year.

The RTO structure in Queensland is one of tourism's greatest strengths and it is certainly the envy of every other state in Australia. Tourism Queensland enjoys more funding from government in promotion and marketing than any other state organisation in Australia. The funding increase recognises the great job that the RTOs do in marketing and promoting their regions. This commitment brings total RTO funding to \$3.11 million per annum in general grants. There is another \$2 million grant to our six convention bureaus attached to the regional tourist organisations. There is the proof positive of our commitment as a government to regional tourism and recognition of the significant contribution that tourism makes to the Queensland economy.

It follows the payment to the RTOs and the convention bureaus of a 10 per cent GST component to ensure that the federal government's tax did not erode valuable marketing dollars. These payments will be made again this year. The Sunshine Coast—and I know this will be of particular interest to the member for Maroochydore—will get a GST-inclusive \$220,785 this year, which is up from \$165,000 last year. On top of that there will be another \$103,403 in convention and incentive funding to the local bureau. That is a total for 2001-02 of \$324,188. That is up from a pre GST grant of \$260,000.

Mr LAWLOR: I refer to the recent Australian Tourism Exchange held in Brisbane, and I ask: what is the Australian Tourism Exchange? What was your portfolio's involvement in the exchange? What outcomes were achieved?

Mrs ROSE: The ATE, or the Australian Tourism Exchange, is Australia's largest tourism trade show and is the third largest in the world. From 27 May to 3 June Brisbane was proud to host the biggest, the most ambitious and the most successful ATE yet. It showcased Brisbane and Queensland, bringing massive and ongoing benefits to the Queensland tourism industry and the state's economy. I think that there were probably very few people in Brisbane or indeed in Queensland outside of the tourism industry who had even heard of ATE. Now everybody knows what ATE is. It was the first time that a cabinet had been held at ATE and it was the first time that ATE had been held outside of Melbourne or Sydney, and Brisbane will again host it in 2002. I would like to put on record my pride in the efforts of the Tourism Queensland staff, who did an absolutely amazing job. It was their hard work and their genius which meant that we had the most successful ATE ever.

When I was at the ATE I was trying to have a conversation with one particular fellow from Guatemala. He has been saying that he had been going to the ATE for 10 years, 15 years or whatever. I said, 'So, is it better here than in Sydney?' He was saying, 'No, no, no, no, no,' and I was thinking, 'Why did I ask?' He said, 'No, no. So much better here. People much more friendly. Weather much more beautiful.' He said that he would much rather come to Brisbane for the ATE than Sydney. I reckon that that was worth a lot. As a result of the ATE, tourism business worth around \$2 billion was written just during the time of ATE. So there is no doubt that Queensland will feel the benefit of that for years to come.

Even though Tourism Queensland hosts the event in Queensland, it is conducted by the Australian Tourist Commission. The new managing director, Ken Boundy, unhesitatingly declared ATE 2001 in Brisbane the best yet in the event's

19-year history. If they think we did it well this year, they should see what we have in store for next year because next year is going to be an absolute blinder.

Mr ENGLISH: On page 2-3 of the MPS I notice reference to the Heritage Trails Network. Can you outline your department's involvement in the project and its benefits for regional and rural Queensland?

Mrs ROSE: The Queensland Heritage Trails Network is a \$110 million capital works initiative jointly funded by state, Commonwealth and local governments. The network aims to generate jobs, stimulate tourism and conserve heritage in rural and regional Queensland. Communities in regional and remote areas of Queensland are increasingly turning to tourism as a saviour. They know the benefits which can flow from identifying and then developing unique local attractions. The Heritage Trails Network is boosting local economies by helping develop new attractions and improve existing attractions. Its objective is to deliver a network of 32 sustainable heritage-based projects throughout regional Queensland by 31 December 2002. In addition, the program is providing funds to a range of smaller local projects to reinforce the network concept.

This year Tourism Queensland has continued its involvement in the established steering committees for our projects. However, it is simply not enough to develop the projects; they must be adequately marketed to ensure their long-term viability. In this regard, Tourism Queensland continues to work with Arts Queensland to reinforce the importance of marketing the network in line with Tourism Queensland's existing destination marketing focus.

The Drive Tourism Program is part of the Heritage Trails Network's marketing and branding strategy. It involves developing a range of initiatives including important signage along three of Queensland's major tourist routes, the Warrego highway, the Matilda Highway and the Overlanders Way. The \$3 million program is a collaboration between the Queensland Heritage Trails Network, the Department of Main Roads and Tourism Queensland. The first of these initiatives was border gateway signage launched in Wallangarra in October last year. The 'Welcome to Queensland' sign uses Tourism Queensland's distinctive 'Where Else But Queensland' branding. Remaining 'Welcome to Queensland' signs will roll out over the next six months in Coolangatta, which is in my own electorate, Goondiwindi, Hebel, Barrington and Camooweal.

I do not know if many of you have been to Hebel. I actually did go to Hebel when I was Emergency Services Minister after they had a nasty storm. There is not much there. There is a pub, a store and a restaurant. Now they are going to have a 'Welcome to Queensland' sign. Other signage initiatives associated with the Drive Tourism Program will be completed over the next 18 months.

Mr ENGLISH: I now refer you to page 2-4 of the MPS and the reference to maximising the benefits from the Sydney 2000 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Can you outline how Queensland benefited from those games?

Mrs ROSE: The Sydney 2000 Olympics provided unprecedented exposure for Australia on the world stage. While New South Wales was the major beneficiary of the Games, Queensland also shared the spoils thanks to the magnificent work of the Queensland Olympics 2000 Task Force. When Queensland set out six years ago to market our tourism, sport, business and arts industries, many thought that we were being very optimistic in hoping that states other than New South Wales could benefit from the Games. Nevertheless, we were confident that we had a great

product, a strong team and an extensive plan. The task force far exceeded its lofty goals.

We set out to assist small business access tender opportunities with an original goal of \$50 million. More than \$128 million worth of Olympic business came to Queensland, which was more than double the initial target. Another \$285 million was secured by national and international companies headquartered in Queensland. We hoped to entice a number of national and international Olympic teams to conduct pre-games training here. We ended up with 179 teams and 2,500 athletes from 48 countries conducting their final preparations in Queensland. Eighty thousand Queenslanders were able to see the athletes in action. The camps were worth a conservative \$36 million to the state.

We wanted to ensure that the high profile journey of the Olympic torch through the state was incident free. It not only went off without a hitch but our model was applauded and adopted by other states. I was very pleased to be in Mount Isa, which was the first Queensland town to receive the Olympic torch. It was absolutely freezing. I did not know that Mount Isa could get so cold. We hosted six preliminary finals and one quarter-final of the Olympic football tournament. The games were watched by more than 100,000 fans.

We achieved significant involvement in the four-year Olympic Arts Festival for Queensland's visual and performing arts. We marketed the state's tourism attractions and destinations within an Olympic framework to an unprecedented number of domestic and international media and travellers. Over \$700 million worth of destination publicity for Queensland was generated. A further \$600 million in additional business is expected to be generated by Olympic-induced international arrivals up to 2005.

The establishment of the Olympic Task Force by the former Labor government will bring long-term benefits to Queensland. The successes felt right across the state belong to every Queenslanders. We would not have been able to achieve those outstanding results without the enthusiasm and hard work of a great team right across the state. They really did do an outstanding job.

The CHAIRMAN: I take you to the See Australia Campaign, which is referred to on page 2-4 of the MPS. I think just about every Queenslanders saw the television advertisements featuring Ernie Dingo. Can you outline Queensland's involvement in this campaign and the likely benefits for the state?

Mrs ROSE: We have all read the research that indicates that Australians are taking fewer holidays. In fact, research shows that the domestic tourism industry has grown less than one per cent a year for the past 10 years. See Australia is the company formed to stimulate growth in the Australian domestic tourism industry. The See Australia campaign featuring Ernie Dingo was launched in November. It is valued at \$16 million over three years and comprises support from the Commonwealth, the states and industry. Support from the states totals \$4 million. The Commonwealth tips in \$8 million and industry \$4 million. Queensland's share of total support is \$1.032 million over three years. The level of state funding is determined by a formula which considers Queensland's proportion of the total number of domestic visitors to Australia. Cooperative support from Queensland industry is expected to total another \$760,000.

The main elements of the campaign include a web interface with the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse, a consumer benefits program to convert the desire to travel domestically into sustainable sales growth and a public relations campaign

designed to support the brand campaign. Tourism Queensland has received \$335,000 from See Australia for cooperative marketing. This has been matched by industry on a two-for-one basis, resulting in a total investment of \$1,006,000. Queensland's See Australia cooperative marketing campaigns include Queensland's Rail Outback Queensland campaign, comprising media coverage in cinemas, on television and radio and in the print media. This campaign commenced in February. Next year there will be the continuation of the outback campaign I have just mentioned, Sunlover Holidays and a core hotels Queensland campaign of 12 months duration, which commenced in April 2001.

Queensland has a magnificent tourism product. We have something that will appeal to everyone. On top of that, there is little doubt that Queenslanders are the friendliest Aussies. We give our visitors a warm maroons welcome. The domestic campaign, combined with more affordable airfares, is bringing more people to Queensland. That means injections into local government economies across the state and more jobs for Queenslanders. I know I do not have to ask everyone in this room if they take a Queensland holiday, because I am sure they do. We have so many wonderful destinations in Queensland, don't we?

Mr de WAAL: We do, Minister.

Mrs ROSE: We do. Yes, I take a Queensland holiday every year. The See Australia campaign is a fantastic campaign. If you have not had the opportunity to take a Queensland holiday recently, then I suggest that you do.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Minister. The time for government questions has concluded. Just before the committee takes a holiday, we will have some non-government questions.

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, I ask leave of the committee to ask questions of the minister.

The CHAIRMAN: Is leave granted? Leave is granted.

Mr BELL: Minister, like you, I should like to see a larger share of cruise ships come to Queensland, but I can be more focused and say that I would like to see it at the Gold Coast. Without revealing anything that you should not before the draft cruise ship plan is released, can you tell me what needs to be done to ensure that the Gold Coast is well and truly included in that?

Mrs ROSE: I will make sure that you get a copy of the cruise shipping plan, because the plan indicates a number of potential places and regional cities in Queensland for a terminal. Miss Simpson mentioned the Hamilton wharf earlier. There is a tender process at the moment calling for expressions of interest. I did not get the opportunity before to tell her that. The Gold Coast has been identified as one of the regions in the cruise shipping plan. There is Cairns, Townsville, Rockhampton and Bundaberg. There are a whole range of coastal cities that have been identified, and the Gold Coast is one of them.

Mr BELL: Thank you, Minister. That is most encouraging.

Mrs ROSE: As you know, there have been two concepts for cruise shipping on the Gold Coast. You may have seen my comments recently. I did notice that there are some people who are totally opposed to a cruise shipping terminal of any description on the Gold Coast. I said quite publicly and made it quite plain that I thought that their comments were premature given that there were only concepts at this stage and that nothing had been developed. It is very premature to be writing something off before we have had an opportunity to have a look at it.

I have in fact had a look at Desmond Brooke's concept. He has some ideas there, but again, as I said, there has been no development. Certainly, the Gold Coast is mentioned in the cruise shipping plan. I can make sure, if you like, that you get a copy of the plan. The latest information is that it is going out next week to industry. As I said in my comments before, it will be out there for two months. We will get feedback from the industry. The plan has been developed over a few years. TQ has been working on developing the plan to this stage, but before the final plan is completed there will be a two-month consultation period. We will make sure that you get a copy.

Mr BELL: Thank you, Minister. Turning now to financial accounts, I refer to page 2-7 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statements. I do understand your explanation to the honourable member for Maroochy in relation to the special grants, which are included in the figures. I refer to the state contribution of \$42.397 million to Tourism Queensland. How much of that is the base grant and how much comprises the special grants? What was the comparative figure last year?

Mrs ROSE: The total base fund for this year is \$39,397,000. Last year it was \$38,914,000. Do you just want me to go back one year?

Mr BELL: Yes, thank you.

Mrs ROSE: In relation to the convention bureau, there is \$2 million this year and \$2 million last year. In relation to the domestic and international marketing tourism rescue plan, which was the special allocation of the \$6 million that I alluded to before, this is the year where we received the final \$1 million of that \$6 million. Last year it was \$2 million. In 1999-2000 it was \$3 million. I explained before that that \$6 million was allocated over three years. That brings the total funds as per the MPS to \$42,397,000 for this year and \$42,914,000 for last year. We then have the Goodwill Games funding, which is not included in the financial statements in the MPS, but, as I said to you, that money has been allocated. That brings the total funding for this year to \$44,397,000, and for 2000-01 it was \$42,914,000.

As I also stated before, TQ has the highest funding of any state or territory tourism body in Australia. I want to give you some comparisons, because I think it is important that you understand this government's commitment to promotion and marketing in Queensland. In this year's budget Tourism Victoria received \$33.9 million; the Northern Territory, \$27 million; South Australia, \$28 million; New South Wales, \$39.9 million; Tasmania, \$23.6 million; and WA, \$31.3 million. So you can see that our amount is far greater than it is in any other state.

Mr BELL: Finally, comparing the two base years, it would seem to me that the increase in actual money terms is roughly half a million dollars, which you referred to before, but there is no accounting for inflation at all. It would seem that the base in real terms has not kept pace with inflation. Is that correct? The base last year was \$38.914 million.

Mrs ROSE: But you want to know whether or not that is keeping up with inflation.

Mr BELL: Yes, if the base from last year to this year has kept up with inflation. It looks to me as if it has not.

Mrs ROSE: I will get Mr de Waal to answer that for you.

Mr de WAAL: Certainly, there is a \$500,000 differential, as you have identified. As the minister has pointed out, the substantial incremental special grants that have been awarded will more than compensate, if you like, for that deficit in the financial year we are talking about.

Mr BELL: Mr Chairman, that completes my questions at the moment. Thank you.

Miss SIMPSON: The minister said that the \$2 million for the Goodwill Games was not included in the MPS. Why isn't it and where is it in the budget papers then?

Mrs ROSE: It was too late to get it in. We of course had been pushing for some extra money, and I was delighted when the Treasurer called me out of the blue and told me. It is in the Budget Highlights document. It says that \$2 million is allocated for tourism marketing to coincide with the lead-up to the Goodwill Games and that the aim will be to promote the games in southern markets and showcase Queensland more broadly as a tourism destination. The Goodwill Games are a huge coup. Did you find it?

Miss SIMPSON: Yes, but it is not actually rolled into the state contribution on page 2-7 where you provide the breakdown.

Mrs ROSE: Because it was at the printer and it was too late. I was not going to knock it back just because it was too late.

Miss SIMPSON: I have some other questions with regard to tourism. Reference was made to the Growing Tourism strategy, but you have also written to industry about the action plan that is to go with the strategy. The brochure does not provide anything more than a brief overview. How much is the government going to allocate to the action plan for Growing Tourism? When will we actually see the strategy in the funds against this action plan?

Mrs ROSE: There are two specific costs associated with implementation of the Growing Tourism strategy. One is the cost associated with production of the Growing Tourism industry brochure, which I think you have a copy of, which is a summary of the strategy, and the strategy itself. In relation to the Growing Tourism brochure, 10,000 copies have been produced. The cost of the 10,000 copies was \$13,112, and that included the distribution costs. There were 100 copies produced of the Growing Tourism strategy. That cost was \$2,475. The Growing Tourism strategy was designed principally for government purposes and costs have been minimised by making the strategy available on GovNet. While the strategy was developed principally for government, it was important for industry to be apprised of the government's strategic direction for tourism. Copies of the brochure have been distributed to industry groups and via Tourism Queensland's news database.

In the new initiative funding, which I think is what you are really referring to, implementation of initiatives contained in the Growing Tourism strategy will largely be met from existing budgetary allocations. Any new initiatives requiring additional funding will have to go to the Cabinet Budget Review Committee for consideration as part of the normal budget process.

As I said, the strategy was developed principally for government as a framework to encourage a high level of cooperation and collaboration between agencies on strategic tourism issues. It will encourage that cooperation and collaboration between agencies on strategic tourism issues and ensure that efforts to address those issues are in line with the government's priorities and outcomes. It is envisaged that the industry will be actively involved in implementation of many of the initiatives contained in the action plan.

The strategy was originally developed as a government working document. I know that you wrote to me about this. Because this strategy was subject to cabinet consideration, I have written to the Premier. I need to go through that process to get his approval to provide copies of the strategy to interested parties. I am just trying to

go through that process at the moment. I do not have a problem, then, with giving it to you.

Miss SIMPSON: Thank you. Minister, I would like to ask you a question with regard to the tourism aviation strategy, referred to on page 1-26. I also refer to the fact that I understand a tourism aviation strategy was developed only two years ago. That was referred to in previous budget papers, for 1999-2000. What is the difference from the previous strategy? What did or did not work with that strategy? Why, two years later, are we going through another process of developing a new strategy?

Mrs ROSE: I can give you some background to the strategy and the task force. As far as the differences between now and two years ago are concerned, I will get Alex to provide you with the detail of that. International and domestic airline access to Queensland destinations is vital to growing the tourism industry in Queensland. I certainly did not have an appreciation of just how fundamental aviation is to the tourism industry until I became Tourism Minister.

Whilst the existing aviation plan provides a framework for government agencies to formulate action plans, it is also timely for the government to restate its strategic policy framework and plan of action for the development of tourism aviation. As part of our Growing Tourism strategy, cabinet agreed to the creation of an airline route development task force.

My department and TQ will work with key government agencies and industry groups to develop the tourism aviation strategy. The strategy will provide a broad strategic direction and outline action for optimising the future development of tourism aviation in Queensland. Of particular importance will be the need to encourage international and national airlines to introduce new or expanded services and to improve airline access to key regional destinations throughout the state. I anticipate the strategy being substantially completed by the end of the year.

As you would be aware, Cairns has had its difficulties over the last six months with the withdrawal of Singapore Airlines and the changes Qantas made to accessing Cairns via Brisbane now instead of directly from Singapore. I think it is important, given particularly the changes in the aviation industry we have seen, even with the advent of Virgin Airlines, that we have an aviation plan so that we can grow the number of flights into Queensland. We just cannot grow the industry without growing the aviation facet of it.

The task force will also provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and information by the various agencies involved in addressing those key tourism aviation issues, such as bilateral negotiations and route development in the state. The task force is co-chaired by my department and the Department of State Development. Of course, as I said, they will play a key role in retaining and proactively seeking new domestic and international aviation services into and out of Queensland.

Mr BELL: Minister, I refer to the \$2 million of special funding for marketing the Goodwill Games and also a similar amount for convention promotion. Will any of that, through Tourism Queensland or otherwise, concentrate on any of the regions or is it generic, whole-of-state publicity?

Mrs ROSE: In addition to this \$2 million, we had actually, through Tourism Queensland, already developed some marketing strategies surrounding the Goodwill Games. I think the Gold Coast is actually featured in one of the ads, which of course is very pleasing to us. It was Where Else But Queensland, but

Queensland... Beautiful One Day. Perfect The Next! is still part of all of our marketing strategies. Even though we got some criticism in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* recently that it was not, it is still there. We still use it. It is still very much in the minds of everybody. While we attract people to the Goodwill Games with this \$2 million, the marketing strategies TQ have in place as well—in addition to that—are very much focused on regional Queensland. Even though the games are in Brisbane, it is about getting people when they come for the games to lengthen their stay.

Mr BELL: And the convention funding?

Mrs ROSE: It is allocated to the six bureaus. I can give you the breakdown if you like.

Mr BELL: Thank you.

Mrs ROSE: Do you want all six?

Mr BELL: No, just the Gold Coast, thank you. I do not want to seem parochial, Minister, but you asked.

Mrs ROSE: That is okay, Lex. You can be as parochial as you like. It is \$435,380 per annum. The Goodwill Games was a great coup for Queensland. We must not forget: this week we have the World Veterans Athletics Championships in Brisbane as well. We have some 6,000 international competitors in Brisbane for that.

This has been an absolutely incredible year for Queensland as far as events tourism is concerned. As I said, we have the World Veterans Athletics Championships and the Goodwill Games. I am not sure how many participants will be in the Goodwill Games. They are being held from the end of August to 9 September. Then of course we have CHOGM, which is huge. So Queensland is really going to go ahead in leaps and bounds this year.

The thing is, we do not get just the immediate benefits. When we develop our marketing strategies to market Queensland as part of the games, it is not just so that they stay here when they come for the games. It is about them coming back to Australia or attracting them to come back to Queensland. So even if visitors do not go to regional Queensland this time, they may come back and visit us at some other time.

The CHAIRMAN: Order, there being no further questions, that concludes the examination—

Mrs ROSE: Mr Chairman, a question was asked earlier by the member for Southern Downs about the complaints re sex shops and X-rated videos. I have an answer, which I said I would provide to him, about the number of prosecutions. I ask leave to—

The CHAIRMAN: Would you like to table that?

Mrs ROSE: Can I read it? I will be brief.

The CHAIRMAN: Certainly.

Mrs ROSE: During 2000-01 there were seven prosecutions undertaken for breaches of the Classification of Films Act and the Classification of Publications Act. These were launched against business operators such as newsagents, service stations and convenience stores. Fines totalling \$16,250 were imposed from the seven prosecutions and 470 videos and 113 magazines seized. The prosecutions came about by the Office of Fair Trading being made aware of complaints as well as referrals from members of the business community. Whilst the exact number of sex

shop outlets is not known for Queensland, the Yellow Pages indicates there are approximately 300 under the heading of adult products and services.

Whilst Queensland police take a primary role in dealing with child pornography through outlets such as sex shops, the Office of Fair Trading focus is on pornography that is being distributed through retail outlets which are accessible to our younger and more vulnerable members of the community. Notwithstanding this focus, the Office of Fair Trading will act on any complaints it receives in relation to videos or publications.

The CHAIRMAN: That concludes the examination of estimates for the Minister for Tourism and Racing and Minister for Fair Trading. I thank the minister and the portfolio officers for their attendance. 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 also concludes the committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the parliament on 22 June 2001. I would like to thank my fellow members of Estimates Committee B and all the parliamentary officers who have assisted this committee with the conduct of its hearing today. I declare this public hearing closed.

Mrs ROSE: With your indulgence, Mr Chairman, could I also thank all members—government and non-government members—and I would like to thank all of my officers of the Department of Tourism, Racing and Fair Trading. A lot of hard work goes into making sure that I am well briefed for estimates. They have done an outstanding job. Of course, I also thank my personal staff. I reckon I have the greatest staff in the government, so I just want to thank them.

The committee adjourned at 6.56 p.m.