

THURSDAY, 13 JULY 2006

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C—EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS, AND SPORT

Estimates Committee C Members

Mr SD Finn (Chair)
Mr MA Caltabiano
Mr JM English
Mr CJ Foley
Mr JD O'Brien
Mrs JA Stuckey
Mr GJ Wilson

In Attendance

Hon. TA Barton, Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport
Mr L Spencer, Policy Advisor

Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation

Mr M Kinnane, Director-General
Mr P Cook, Director, Business and Financial Management

Sport and Recreation Queensland

Mr C Matheson, Executive Director

Queensland Academy of Sport

Mr A Baumann

Department of Employment and Training

Mr S Flavell, Director-General
Mr C Robinson, Deputy Director-General

Department of Industrial Relations

Mr P Henneken, Director-General
Mr B Leahy, Deputy Director-General
Mr B Walker, General Manager, Executive and Strategic Services

Committee met at 8.30 am.

CHAIR: I declare this meeting of Estimates Committee C now open. On behalf of the committee, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to today's hearing. I am Simon Finn, member for Yeerongpilly and chair of the committee. My fellow committee members are Mr Michael Caltabiano MP, the member for Chatsworth and deputy chair; Mr John English MP, the member for Redlands; Mr Chris Foley MP, the member for Maryborough; Mr Jason O'Brien MP, the member for Cook; Mrs Jann Stuckey MP, the member for Currumbin; and Mr Geoff Wilson MP, the member for Ferny Grove.

The committee will examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2006 for the portfolios assigned to it in the order of appointment dated 21 April 2006. We will examine the portfolios of Employment, Training, Industrial Relations and Sport; Transport and Main Roads; as well as Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development in that order. The committee has given leave for non-committee members to ask the ministers questions. In this regard Miss Fiona Simpson MP, the member for Maroochydore; Mr Ray Hopper MP, the member for Darling Downs; and Mr Kev Lingard MP, the member for Beaudesert, will be participating in the hearing.

I remind the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and three minutes for answers. A bell will ring once 15 seconds before the end of these time limits and twice when the time has expired. I will allow more time for answers if the questioner consents. The standing orders require that at least half the time for questions at today's hearing is allocated to non-government members. Government members and non-government members of the committee will take turns at asking questions in blocks lasting approximately 20 minutes for most of the hearing, commencing with non-government members. However, given the short amount of time allocated for Sport, questioning will take place in 10-minute blocks.

In relation to media coverage of today's hearing, the committee has resolved that video coverage without sound and still photographs are allowed only during the opening statements and at the commencement of proceedings after each change of departments. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask the advisers to the minister to identify themselves before speaking. Please also ensure that mobile phones or pagers are switched off while in the chamber so as not to disrupt the proceedings.

I remind all of those participating in the hearing today that these proceedings are similar to parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. Standing order 206 provides that a person admitted to a committee public hearing may be excluded by order of that committee.

The first item for consideration is the estimates of expenditure for the Employment, Training, Industrial Relations and Sport portfolio. The time allotted is three hours. The committee will examine Sport first from 8.30 am to 9 am. We will then examine the Department of Employment and Training from 9 am to 10.15 am followed by a 15-minute break. After that we will examine the Department of Industrial Relations from 10.30 to 11.45. At the conclusion of this portfolio the committee will break for a one-hour lunch recess.

I call on the estimates of the proposed expenditure referred to the committee and declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, under standing order 117 you are able to make an opening statement that does not exceed five minutes. Would you like to make that opening statement?

Mr BARTON: Yes, I would, Mr Chairman. Chairman and committee members, let me outline the Beattie government's plans for 2006-07 for Employment and Training, Industrial Relations and Sport and Recreation. Employment and training are at the top of the agenda for the Beattie government. A record \$979 million budget will provide the first down payment on our groundbreaking \$1.1 billion Queensland Skills Plan, which over the next four years will see an all-out attack on skill shortages. This plan is necessary at a time of record low unemployment and a buoyant economy because our workforce is ageing and skill shortages are both a national and worldwide reality. Skill shortages exist despite 24 consecutive quarters of year-on-year growth in the number of apprentices and trainees in training in Queensland. By comparison, nationally there has been a fall year on year for the past seven quarters.

In 2006-07 we are anticipating continued record growth in apprenticeships and traineeships in Queensland with an estimated 58,000 to 60,000 new commencements. Over the next four years we will, in partnership with industry, make an even greater effort to boost numbers in training, particularly in industries with skill shortages. By 2010 we aim to provide an additional 17,000 new trade training places and 14,000 new paraprofessional training places a year. A significant part of that training effort will occur in reinvigorated TAFE Queensland, which currently has some 31,000 apprentices in training—a jump of 64 per cent in the past four years. The increase is happening right across the state.

The past year has been a busy one in the area of industrial relations, with new legislation and the continued campaign to get a fair deal for everyone concerned about the impact of the federal government's new industrial laws. WorkChoices has impacted heavily on workplaces around the country, and the Queensland government has launched High Court action seeking to overturn the legislation and bring fairness and balance back into the state's industrial relations system. The court has heard all the evidence and is expected to make a decision before the end of the year. The Queensland government has also asked the state Industrial Relations Commission to report on the impact of WorkChoices to see if something cannot be done to offset the appalling assault on workers' pay and conditions that is being reported to the Department of Industrial Relations information lines.

We have also been active in seeking to make workplaces safer, fairer and more equitable. The Beattie government has passed legislation to protect child workers and to ensure that employees have right of access to their union representatives for workplace health and safety matters, and it has acted on growing community concerns regarding asbestos in the workplace and for home owners to bring in new laws regarding its management and removal.

Record funding for sport and recreation activities of \$287 million in 2006-07 will serve to consolidate Queensland's growing reputation as Australia's active state. This government is committed to building healthier communities by helping more Queenslanders get active regardless of their age,

ability or location. This state provides more funding for sport and active recreation than any other state or territory government in Australia, because we believe that regular physical activity is one of the best ways to improve our quality of life, both individually and as a community. In total, clubs, councils, sporting bodies and other eligible organisations will receive more than \$50 million in sport and recreation grants to support over 1,300 projects across the length and breadth of the state.

To support our successful and popular spectator sports, our budget includes \$72.2 million to fund the first year of construction of the 25,000-seat stadium at Robina to be the home of the Gold Coast Titans National Rugby League franchise. Queensland's premier sporting event, the Lexmark Indy 300 on the Gold Coast, will receive \$11.2 million this year and \$11.4 million for the 2007 event.

Finally, I can report that popular community programs such as the Get Active Queensland Schools program, Locker Room, Building Activity Communities workshops, women and girls forums and early childhood workshops will also be continued in 2006-07 and there will be a comprehensive campaign run in partnership with Queensland Health to help tackle overweight and obesity.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The first round of questions is from the non-government members.

Mr LINGARD: Your government has given great promotion to a proposal for a Young Athlete Assistance Program to assist children and young people with travel and accommodation costs where they have been selected to participate in state, national and international level sporting events. Why has the program already been deleted from the web site?

Mr BARTON: It has not been deleted in terms of a program that is continuing, and I want to make that clear, but in terms of taking in applications at this point in time it is not possible to take them on until such time as we have the next round, which I think will be in November. One of my colleagues will correct me if I am wrong on that. We had an unprecedented number of requests for applications. When we developed it we made great publicity about the fact that we had a half-million-dollar program for the year. We will have a second round. We have had to close the first round off because of the unprecedented number of applications.

I must say that not only have we spent the half million dollars but we have, in fact, put additional funding into it. We have certainly already well exceeded the half a million dollars that we had allocated. My anticipation is that, despite the fact that we had allocated half a million dollars to it, we will, in fact, more than likely go to something like \$2 million in terms of the full financial year.

I want to put that in context for the shadow minister, because I think this is important. This is a brilliant program that will assist many thousands of young people to travel to sport away from their homes. I know—and I am sure he does—the number of applications from individuals that I get as personal requests to my electorate office for people travelling to such competitions. When we looked at an allocation of half a million dollars, we knew that there would be a great demand. We looked at programs that exist in New South Wales and Victoria by way of comparison. The New South Wales Country Athletes Scheme has allocated on an annual basis \$260,000. The Victorian program, called VicTalent, is allocated \$120,000. So already we are more than double what the next state does at half a million dollars.

The director-general has drawn my attention to the fact that I have recently approved funding totalling \$2,087,550 to assist 3,132 children and young people to travel and compete at sporting competitions. These are people who would not have typically been able to get to those sporting competitions. So when you ask why is it not there taking applications at this point in time, we allocated half a million dollars and the demand has been such that we have already spent over \$2 million. We will spend more money in this program, because we will find the funding somehow to support these young people.

Mr LINGARD: Not only have you been embarrassed by your lack of finance; you have also cut the eligibility for the first round. On 8 June in parliament I spoke about this. On 9 June I asked the minister a question on notice. The winter program closed on 8 June. In the June holiday period kids were going through trials and will have their competition before November. All of those children are exempt under your program. You have already given me the answer that you refused to change that criteria.

Mr BARTON: I think that is pretty harsh. Let us put it in context. When you were in government what young people got for programs such as this was zip—sweet nothing. When I announced this program, it already was at twice the funding level that happens in the biggest state in Australia with twice the population of Queensland. We are spending twice the money. I have already indicated to you the unprecedented demand. We all knew that there was a demand out there, but I must admit that the demand has been far, far higher than what we could possibly have foreseen with the numbers of applications coming in. It was always understood that not every child wins a prize. If, in fact, we were to support every single child who goes to a sporting competition away from their home, the budget of not just this department but the state would have difficulty swallowing a cost of that size. So it does come back to the criteria that we have to put in place.

We have been surprised by how many people did apply. We are reviewing the program and will consider changes to the eligibility rules. But to say that we have run out of money or that we did not have enough money is incorrect. When I announce a half a million dollar program and I spend over \$2 million and say that that is round one for the year and I intend to have round two and spend yet more money which I will find within our budget because of this unprecedented demand, then I think young people and parents in this state are getting a very good deal.

To give you and the committee an example of how it works, the level of financial assistance provided to individual athletes is dependent upon where the athlete lives in comparison to the location of the event being held—\$500 if travelling between 100 and 500 kilometres, \$650 if travelling between 500 and 1,000 kilometres and \$800 if travelling over 1,000 kilometres to the event. So that is the criteria. We always knew it would be a competitive model but we will have to have another look at that criteria. I have said that in response to the last question. We need to have a closer look at the eligibility rules because we cannot fund every child who wants to go to a sporting competition. We have already funded, as I have indicated, 3,132 children and young people at a cost of over \$2 million, and there will be yet more. I expect thousands more will successfully get grants when we reopen it for the summer period in November.

Mr LINGARD: Minister, your department has been incompetent and dishonest. You promoted a \$500,000 program with great fanfare. You said that the applications could be between \$500 and \$800. That clearly would only affect 80 children. Yet you have gone ahead with this program saying that this funding would be available. Three and a half thousand people applied and you cut the criteria even then. Minister, why wouldn't the public see it as being plenty of promises in the budget, no money allocated and the scheme cannot be put in place? Clearly the scheme cannot be put in place because you have already cut it on the web site?

Mr BARTON: Let us be very clear. I think if it were raining gold bricks you would be complaining about it from your performance here already this morning. We never cut the criteria. You used to be a school teacher, I am told. Your grasp of mathematics is appalling when you say that only 80 people could have received the grants of \$800 per child from an allocation of half a million dollars. I have not done the maths here, but I can assure you that 800 goes into half a million a lot more than 80 times.

This is the absolute best grant scheme of this nature in Australia. I have already reported to you that New South Wales spend \$260,000 on its comparable scheme for a population of virtually twice that of Queensland's. There is unprecedented demand and we will address that unprecedented demand by having to potentially adjust the criteria in the future to ensure that the people with the greatest need get the support. I make the point that every child who falls within the category of going to a sporting activity that distance away from home cannot be capable of being given a grant because there are tens of thousands of children in that category.

I will repeat the figure: 3,132 children and young people have been approved for funding under this scheme. That is a lot more than the figure of 80 that you are commenting on and saying that we have not been generous or have been dishonest with this scheme. That is an appalling assertion to make. We were very honest in saying that we had half a million dollars to spend. Because of the unprecedented demand, we have spent over \$2 million. That is not an indication of us not having enough money or not being committed to helping young people participate in junior sport. It is appalling for you to criticise my department and call my department incompetent in this matter. My department came to me with a program and a capacity to spend half a million dollars. We have gone out of our way to find the additional dollars to meet most of the demand.

CHAIR: The time allocated for non-government questions has expired. Pages 4-5 and 4-6 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement refer to the Tennyson riverside development, a wonderful project being developed in my electorate. Minister, can you outline for the committee how this project is progressing in the light of last week's announcement by the Premier and Tennis Australia that a new combined men's and women's hard court championship tournament will be played at the State Tennis Centre from January 2009?

Mr BARTON: I thank the chairman for the question. The government is overseeing delivery of the Tennyson riverside development, which consists of an international standard State Tennis Centre and residential development on the site of the former Tennyson Power Station. The Tennyson riverside development, being delivered in partnership with Mirvac, will see the development of a new \$77 million State Tennis Centre as the focal point for tennis in Queensland as well as opening up public access to a scenic stretch of the Brisbane River. The State Tennis Centre will be the first purpose-built state facility in Australia, with all three 'grand slam' surfaces—that is, acrylic, grass and clay—and will provide a world-class venue for hosting state, national and international tennis events. The State Tennis Centre will enable Queensland to compete for major tennis events on an equal footing with other states and will revitalise the sport of tennis within the state by providing opportunities for the state's future tennis champions and a new home for Tennis Queensland and the Queensland Academy of Sport's tennis project.

The project has already borne fruit even before it has been built, with the announcement last week that Tennis Australia has agreed to allocate a combined women's and men's hard court championship to the State Tennis Centre from January 2009 as a lead-in tournament to the Australian Open in Melbourne. Significant progress has been made with this landmark project including: the acquisition of the Tennyson Power Station; the preparation and lodgement of the development application with the Brisbane City Council; the commencement of extensive consultation with residents and surrounding businesses—which I know the member will be very happy about—through public forums, meetings, doorknock visits, newsletters, advertorials, a 1300 hotline and a web site; the commencement of demolition of the power station building and site remediation on 4 May 2006, with these works scheduled to be completed by 30 November 2006; and the completion of preliminary design work for the State Tennis Centre and the commencement of the detailed design and development process.

The Tennyson riverside development will deliver an international standard tennis facility for Queensland that will benefit the future generations of players and spectators and provide improved recreational opportunities for local residents, including access to landscaped riverfront parklands and walkways. It is planned to be completed in December 2008 in time for the combined tournament in January 2009.

Mr O'BRIEN: Pages 4-4 and 4-5 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement refer to the department's work with Indigenous communities and the development of a new Indigenous sport plan. Could the minister outline how sport and recreation can assist Indigenous communities achieve a better future and highlight some of the key services and funding the department provides to generate better sport and recreation opportunities in these communities?

Mr BARTON: Thank you for the question. I would be delighted to. There is a growing realisation of the importance of sport and active recreation to Indigenous communities as they offer a significant alternative to substance abuse and other behavioural problems. Sport and active recreational activities can help defeat boredom and truancy underlying many dysfunctional aspects of Indigenous communities. They can also provide recognised health and social benefits, provide skills development and help to mitigate obesity, which is a growing concern to all Australian communities. Sport and active recreation offer an opportunity for government and Indigenous communities to work together towards achieving these aims.

The department offers a range of initiatives which foster opportunities for Indigenous communities to participate in sport and active recreation including: nearly \$3 million annually through the Indigenous Community Development Program to employ 65 community based recreation officers, facilitate education and training, provide opportunities for participation and encourage long-term planning; providing \$791,000 over three years to six major state sporting organisations to deliver sustainable sporting opportunities to Cape York communities; funding sport and active recreation facilities through the department's major and minor facilities funding programs and through whole-of-government commitments via Community Renewal; employing nine regionally based departmental Indigenous advisers who play a key engagement role with Indigenous communities across Queensland; roll-out of a pilot training program in faculty management in Indigenous communities to provide skills to better manage sport and recreation infrastructure; and delivery of programs and resources such as Locker Rooms, Get Active Queensland Schools Program and the Get Active Queensland Children and Young People strategy suite of resources.

The department will be enhancing its services to Indigenous communities through the implementation of a new Indigenous sport plan targeted at delivering better opportunities for communities to identify proposals and solutions to engage in sport and recreation. I must say that I have been very pleased—I am sure the member for Cook and other committee members will agree—that we have recently been able to secure the services within the department of Mr Steve Renouf, who is an incredibly well-known top sportsman from Brisbane Broncos, State of Origin, Australian Rugby League—

Mr WILSON: He lives in the Ferny Grove electorate.

Mr BARTON: I did not realise that. Mr Renouf has been working with the department for a number of weeks now. As an Indigenous person he is a great role model and an incredibly good operator as well.

Mr ENGLISH: Page 4-2 of the MPS refers to investment in sport and recreation infrastructure. Sporting clubs and local governments play a major role in providing community based facilities for participation in sport and recreation, and often this is done by organisations with little resources. Could the minister outline how he is assisting clubs and councils to provide local sport and recreation facilities and the importance of doing so?

Mr BARTON: I thank the member for the question. Queensland government recognises that participating in sport and active recreation is an essential element in building vibrant, socially cohesive and active communities. Access to quality, safe sport and recreation infrastructure is essential if Queenslanders are to be encouraged to lead an active and healthy lifestyle.

In 2005-06 over \$36 million in funding was approved to organisations across Queensland for 315 community based sport and recreation facilities projects. For 2006-07 I recently approved a further \$33.5 million for 252 sport and recreation facilities projects. These projects span the state, ranging from an oval on Dauan Island in the Torres Strait to an indoor multisport facility on the Sunshine Coast. This is substantially more funding for the development of local and regional sport and active recreation facilities than any other state or territory government. We do this because quality and accessible sport and active recreation facilities provide a basis on which to enhance and create opportunities for communities across Queensland to participate in a healthy active lifestyle.

It is important to note the government's commitment to developing regional and remote communities with half of the funding distributed under the facilities programs to projects outside south-east Queensland. The Queensland government also recognises the valuable contribution school based facilities make to enhancing the ability of communities to participate in sport and recreation. This was a key theme which emerged from the recent Obesity Summit.

We are working with the Department of Education and the Arts and local governments to collaboratively develop school based facilities which can be accessed by members of the community outside of school hours. This approach maximises the usage of resources in communities and builds stronger relationships between schools, local governments and sport and recreation associations. Ultimately, the investment in sport and active recreation infrastructure will strengthen the social fabric of Queensland communities and assist in enhancing Queensland's reputation as a premier sporting destination.

Mr WILSON: Minister, there have been a number of media reports in recent months relating to bad behaviour at junior sporting competitions. Sometimes this is on the field, sometimes it is directed at coaches and officials and sometimes it comes from parents on the sidelines. I have a close association with the West Arana Hills junior Rugby League club and the Ferny Grove Falcons AFL club. Members of those clubs and others have a vital interest in this very important issue. Could the minister outline what action his department is taking under the Fair Go program referred to at page 4-5 of the MPS to assist local sporting clubs to stamp out this conduct?

Mr BARTON: We share your concern. The Queensland government deplores inappropriate behaviour in sport, whether it be bad player behaviour, abuse of children, abuse of officials or the ugly parent syndrome. This behaviour at junior—

CHAIR: We have actually run out of time for government questions. That concludes examination of the estimates for Sport. We will now commence our examination of the Department of Employment and Training. The first round of questions is from non-government members. I welcome the member for Darling Downs to Estimates Committee C.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, I refer you to page 1-28 of the MPS, the output statement for vocational education and training services. In answer to non-government question on notice No. 6 you indicated the additional \$26.31 million in new recurrent funding had been allocated this financial year under the Queensland Skills Plan. Your press release which launched the Queensland Skills Plan in March this year advised that \$542 million in new recurrent funding over four years would be provided. Presumably the bulk of this new money, approximately \$516 million, will appear in the later years of the program. How do you propose to deliver the remaining \$520 million in just over three years?

Mr BARTON: I think that anybody with any knowledge of the training system would understand that it is not like a tap that you can turn on and off. In fact, what you need to do to deliver very substantial increases in numbers is to build up your capacity to train those additional people over a period of time. Having said that, I understand that the sorts of figures that we have in recent years represent an increase of 60 per cent in the numbers of apprentices that we are training in this state. The figures that we have released as part of the Skills Plan will build up progressively over the four-year period to 17,000 additional places per year for apprentices and in the paraprofessional area will build up progressively to an additional 14,000 places.

If, in fact, we were to allocate more funds than that amount this year we would not be able to spend it because we would not have the capacity, with the numbers of teachers, classrooms and facilities, to actually push through those numbers of people. We have already budgeted this year for a very significant increase in the numbers of apprentices, trainees and paraprofessionals that will come through.

You will see elsewhere in our budget papers how we are spending a significant amount of funds across the river from here at the South Bank Institute of TAFE, which is the government's first public-private partnership. A major redevelopment of that site—nearly \$300 million in construction costs alone—is well under way so that we can put through additional people, particularly in the paraprofessional area. Construction of the Acacia Ridge Trade and Technician Skills Institute is also well under way. That has been under construction since we purchased it approximately this time last year. It will have its first students early next month. It will be wound up to hopefully something like its full numbers by the end of August and well and truly operating. The program is \$1.1 billion, approximately

\$500 million of which will be redirected out of existing funds to the sharper end of the operation and over \$600 million of new funds over a four-year period. There is a substantial down payment this year which will continue to grow.

Mr HOPPER: Also referring to the output statement on page 1-28 of the MPS, I note that income from user charges is expected to increase by \$9.5 million in 2006-07. Note 9 on that page indicates that the increase will be generated by the Queensland Skills Plan. Will the bulk of this extra income come from students undertaking training?

Mr BARTON: I would expect that some of that funding will be fees from students, but one of the real growth areas that we expect—and that is already occurring—is fee-for-service from our relationships with industry. This is a plan that is designed to ensure that we deliver to industry what industry needs. That is certainly one of the major focal points of the Skills Plan. While it is about individuals and giving individuals the training, it is absolutely crucial that we deliver the skill base that industry needs so that those people who get the training can have a well-paid and secure job.

We do expect that commercial fees will significantly increase, both from industry and from our other activities. The total commercial fees and charges revenue collected by the department in May this year—we do not have our final figures—is \$117 million. The end-of-year forecast for fees and charges revenue for the department is approximately \$131.8 million. That is a 4.8 per cent growth from the 2004-05 total of \$125.7 million. All fees and charges revenue generated to date were collected by TAFE institutes. The majority of the revenue relates to industry funded training, which is what I was talking about—the fact that industry is in partnership with us. We are training on behalf of industry and they are paying for it.

International students are a very big growth industry for us. We have brilliant export education activity. We are training people in significant parts of Asia and the South Pacific. We have recently picked up some additional training opportunities in both China and the South Pacific. They are, of course, fee-for-service for international students, many of whom we actually train in their own countries. In fact, we have basically a full-time TAFE operation with a polytechnic in Shanghai. We are doing additional work in Jiangsu province around Nanjing and Changzhou and, of course, we have just signed another one with Fiji—with five countries. I just approved a heap of people to travel to Fiji in a couple of days time, which is why Fiji stuck in my mind. We are training people in their own countries and, of course, we are training a lot of people here in Queensland who are coming from their countries to actually study here in our TAFE colleges in the state itself.

Mr HOPPER: Page 1-19 of the MPS, dot point 3, notes that TAFE training delivery across Queensland is being reorganised as of 1 July 2006. Concerns have been expressed to me that programs at some campuses are being wound down prior to the amalgamations occurring. Can you guarantee that the net effect of the TAFE reorganisation and amalgamations will not result in reductions in availability of course offerings at these certain locations?

Mr BARTON: Let us have a good look at what that question implies and what needs to occur. We are dramatically increasing the number of people we are putting through TAFE. We also are dramatically increasing the amount of training that is provided by private providers. Something that is not widely understood is that, in fact, the Department of Employment and Training is the regulator and the funder of most of the training that occurs in the state. The TAFE, which we own, is the biggest training provider—it is one of the training providers that we fund—but we also fund the private sector for a range of training initiatives, as well as ones where industry pays us directly to train.

We certainly are reorganising our TAFE institutes. We are also rationalising which campus or institute is the lead agency for particular programs. That is so that we can get the efficiencies to increase the numbers of people who can be trained within the TAFE network—which is only one aspect of where people are trained, of course. TAFE needs to compete with the private sector, which is increasing greatly its training capacity and moving into areas which traditionally had been left only to TAFE in this state and, certainly in the period of time when I was a TAFE student, which only TAFE could provide. There were no other opportunities under user choice.

We are rationalising which campus or institute is lead agency in particular areas. That will mean in some cases training that is occurring in some campuses now will be transferred to others. What it is designed to do is to increase the capacity of all of those campuses across all of those institutes to greatly increase the amount of training that they can deliver to students and greatly increase the number of students who are capable of coming through. But that does mean that there will be some rationalisation where some individual campuses will no longer be training in subject matters that they have been training in the past, as we get better bang for the taxpayer's buck.

Mr HOPPER: The former shadow minister, Marc Rowell, wrote to you about concerns he had with the Bracken Ridge campus. Can I table that letter?

Leave granted.

Mr HOPPER: Do you intend answering that letter?

Mr BARTON: I have not seen it. It is a bit hard to ask me whether I am going to answer a letter when I do not know what letter you have tabled.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, I would like to—

Mr BARTON: Is that the question? Are you going to give me a copy of it or am I supposed to read your mind, which will be pretty difficult?

Mr HOPPER: I have tabled it.

Mr BARTON: This letter has come in; yes, of course I intend to answer it. As to exactly what that answer is, I have consulted with my department and we are in the process of responding to this correspondence. If I could make this point, Mr Hopper—and if you ever, sadly, become a minister you will find out: you get hundreds and hundreds of pieces of correspondence in a week and to know exactly where every one of them is at any given point of time is pretty difficult, as is knowing the exact answer to every one of those when I am seeking advice from my department. I will waste a lot of time if you want me to sit here and read this letter in its entirety and answer it right now. It would have been wise of you, if you wanted answers like that, to put that on notice so that we could come fully prepared.

Mr HOPPER: In relation to the previous question, can you confirm that there will be no reduction in courses, no matter where they are offered?

Mr BARTON: No reduction?

Mr HOPPER: No reduction in the courses at TAFE under your restructure?

Mr BARTON: Let me put this in context. You need to understand that in offering far more numbers of places than certainly we will be ensuring that across all of the skills that are required we will not be not offering courses in those skills. Again, that could mean that at some particular campuses they may not offer that particular course as part of a rationalisation. It makes a lot more sense if we are going to rapidly increase the numbers of people who are trained in those particular skills to some degree to have it rationalised and centralised.

I can use as an example the Acacia Ridge Trade and Technician Skills Institute, where we are spending a significant amount of money and putting modern equipment into a major new facility across traditional trade skills. Several things triggered this, including the need to put in new equipment to modernise our TAFEs. Many of our TAFEs have not had significant expenditure spent on them for a long period of time and, frankly, it is very difficult to train people on modern equipment if you do not have the modern equipment in the TAFE or access to it. So we are spending a lot of money for the Trade and Technician Skills Institute's new site at Acacia Ridge that will be opened next month. That means, of course, that some of the courses that have been delivered elsewhere will be delivered at that institute rather than at some of the existing campuses.

With the Yeronga TAFE—and the chairman is well aware of this, as it is in his electorate—we have had a problem for some years now with a neighbour who objected to having people trained in these skills in her neighbourhood and who successfully won a court case to have them shut down. In order to deliver those programs, we have had to spread those students across a number of other TAFE campuses in the meantime—the second best way, I must say—until we could get the construction finalised for this new institute.

We are certainly intending to build another comparable institute site at the Gateway campus on the northside, and we will be spending funds on trade and technician institute activity at a range of campuses around the regions as well. That could mean that in some cases those skills will be transferred to those new sites—where that new expenditure comes in—so that we can give people appropriate skills on the appropriate, modern equipment. If you have a small number of people to train and it costs a small fortune for some of the equipment, you cannot have it at every site.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, I would like to direct your attention to the output statements for the Australian Agricultural College Corporation, pages 2-1 and 2-5 of the MPS. I realise that agricultural colleges are now part of a statutory authority under your portfolio rather than part of a Public Service department. However, can you explain to me why the output statements, unlike all other department output statements, do not contain details of the number of full-time equivalent staff numbers employed in the past year and planned to be employed in the coming year?

Mr BARTON: I will wait until people get me the brief, but I am aware of the full-time equivalents as I have seen the briefs when we were preparing for this. Staff numbers at 30 April this year were 230.4 full-time equivalents, down from 250 at the time of the amalgamation. That is a small number in real job levels. I have had a good look at where the agricultural colleges are. I have a newspaper clipping here in which you kindly flagged that you were going to ask me a lot of questions about this, so I took you at your word. Go ahead, please: make my day easy.

You are fully aware, because you had in your electorate one of the old agricultural colleges when they were independent bodies, of the nature of the problems that we had across basically all of those old agricultural colleges which led us to amalgamate them. Rationalising their activities has meant that some staff have moved on. In rationalising those activities, we will progressively replace those staff as

the new structures that are being put in place come together and as the demand rises. I guess it is inevitable, in some part, that there have been some drops in the training levels because there has been a very significant drop in demand from the rural sector for training. That is the first thing. That is a sad outcome of the one-in-100-year drought that we are currently suffering: fewer people are seeking to be trained, so there have been fewer people in those colleges.

The other factor, which I think you are fully aware of from the earlier colleges, is that a lot of what we call overtraining was taking place. In other words, there was a lot of training being given that was neither needed nor appropriate. So you do not need to hold as many people to give training that you did not need to train when you have stopped overtraining—if that makes sense. As people have left, we have not replaced some of those people and we will recruit into the new applications as we finalise the new structures that are coming into place. There has been a small drop—when I say ‘a small drop’ I guess 230.4 full-time equivalents down from 250 is about 20 people, but you would understand that we would not rush in and replace people in like-with-like classifications if we think we are not likely to need that classification in the future. We will put people into the new positions as we develop the new programs and more enhanced programs with industry to meet rural industry’s needs.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, correct me if I am wrong, but I have been advised that there used to be 120 staff at the Dalby ag college and the numbers are now between 60 and 70; is that correct?

Mr BARTON: I do not know whether someone can tell me here. I have the full-time equivalents for right across the whole Australian Agricultural College Corporation. I guess I would be surprised at that. We can check that, but I have the global figures for the entire college, which is five campuses, as you know. If we are only down 20 full-time equivalent positions across the five campuses, we just simply cannot be down those sorts of numbers at Dalby, unless at Dalby there was a huge number of people in part-time positions. We will try to give you an answer on the Dalby figures by the end of the session.

Mr HOPPER: Can you take it on notice?

Mr BARTON: I would rather give you an answer here.

Mr HOPPER: That is fine.

Mr BARTON: Leave it with me. It is not a secret. We will get it to you one way or the other.

CHAIR: The time allocated for non-government questions has expired. Minister, I would also like to talk about the Trade and Technician Skills Institute and Yeronga TAFE later, but firstly I would like to refer you to page 1-1 of the MPS, which refers to the Queensland Skills Plan. I am wondering if you could advise the committee on the four major areas of reform.

Mr BARTON: Thank you for the question. We are very proud of the Queensland Skills Plan. On 8 March this year, the Premier and I announced this plan. I know we have been referring to it as the billion-dollar skills plan, but it is actually a \$1.1 billion program to ensure Queensland’s vocational education and training sector meets the skills challenges of the 21st century and that Queensland remains a leader in skills development in Australia. Over the next four years, \$801 million is being provided by the Beattie government in recurrent funding to implement these vocational education and training reforms, with an additional \$303 million total capital commitment over the next six years.

The Queensland Skills Plan outlines four major areas of reform, encompassing 24 action statements that are re-energising and repositioning our already robust vocational education and training sector to better respond to Queensland’s changing needs. The first is a training system that works for Queensland through significantly reforming the vocational education and training system and the TAFE structure within our training system. This will ensure it more closely matches the needs of industry and the aspirations of students, and my department is currently moving from a supply driven training model to a system capable of responding to rapid changes in skill demands; managing and supporting the entire training system, especially the growing private training sector; driving further innovation while increasing industry’s willingness to invest in more training and skills development; and reforming the TAFE system to ensure its capacity is improved to meet the larger apprenticeship and higher training level needs that lie ahead.

The second major aspect is training that works for industry and employers by outlining a new approach to working with industry and employers to ensure the vocational education and training system is better targeted to economic needs. To achieve this, my department is working on effective responses to skill shortages through genuine communication, openness to change and fresh ideas from employers, industry groups, unions, training providers and government and developing new strategies for expanding collaboration between all stakeholders.

The third aspect is training that works for the trades through introducing major reforms to trades, training and modernising our apprenticeship system to assist in overcoming trade skill shortages. The department has strategies in place for providing sufficient training places to meet the demand and supply of skilled tradespeople to the Queensland economy. It is taking action now to address these factors discouraging Queenslanders from undertaking trades training through apprenticeships.

The fourth aspect is training that works for the individuals. I will run out of time, but it is absolutely crucial that we make sure that, while we meet industry needs and the state's needs, and while we need to do the trades, we look at the individuals first. That is really what it is all about.

Mr WILSON: Minister, I refer you to page 1-21 of the MPS, which introduces a new concept to facilitate early completion of apprenticeships. This will be an important issue for many Queensland apprentices and their employers. I can tell you, Minister, that many people in my electorate are very keen about improved opportunities for apprentices. Could you provide further details for this development?

Mr BARTON: Thank you. I would love to. Queensland's proposed responses to the challenges of skills for jobs and growth and the green paper released last year recognised the need to develop new options to enable people to complete apprenticeships more quickly if they gain the required competencies. While the public consultations on this green paper provided support for the reduction in the nominal terms of some apprenticeships, there were concerns about proposals to shorten the length of apprenticeships for others.

The Vocational Education, Training and Employment Act 2000 currently empowers the Training and Employment Recognition Council to set a nominal term for all apprenticeships and trainees. In October 2005, I requested that council to commence consultation with industry, with a view of revising the nominal hours. The council's report recommended reduced nominal terms for 24 apprenticeships. The council also recommended that we adopt a term called expected durations, that it be implemented for all apprenticeships, that the expected duration be a benchmark for the development of training plans and that progression points or stages be established with the earlier completion of many apprenticeships. These recommendations are currently being implemented by the department and will be effective from 1 January next year.

For many apprenticeships, the new expected duration, in concert with other reforms contained in the Queensland Skills Plan, will set a target for their earlier completion. Up to four out of five apprentices could have the expected time for their apprenticeship reduced by up to six months, while some will have the apprenticeship reduced by up to 12 months. The expected durations have been developed following consultation with a range of industries. Some expected durations for trade apprenticeships have already been announced and some will be announced later in 2006.

The government acknowledges that some industry and community stakeholders have expressed concern that shorter apprenticeships may reduce the quality of skills. The Beattie government is committed to maintaining the quality, consistency and integrity of Queensland apprenticeship qualifications and is strengthening assessment processes to maintain the community's confidence in the trade skills. The existing apprentices are able to negotiate fast-tracked apprenticeships with their employer and training provider should they wish to do so. We will continue to work with industries to ensure that training products and training delivery support these new expected durations.

Mr WILSON: Can I now take you to page 1-3 of the MPS. The Queensland Skills Plan outlines a range of fundamental reforms to the state's training system to tackle skill shortages. Could you advise of the part that TAFE Queensland is playing in helping meet skill shortages in Queensland?

Mr BARTON: The Beattie government is committed to restructuring and reorganising TAFE Queensland to better meet the current and future needs of industry, employers, workers and learners. A suite of structural changes are assisting TAFE to be more responsive to client needs and to provide more consistent quality products across the state. These reforms include coordinating statewide trades training through the Trade and Technician Skills Institute and providing leadership and training expertise to upskill the trades workforce. The institute will lead product development and delivery throughout the state for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing and engineering and electrical and electronics training. More than 31,000 of the 40,000 apprentices in training in Queensland trained through TAFE institutes, representing around 80 per cent of all Queensland apprentices. The establishment of the Trade and Technician Skills Institute will prove to be a major factor in alleviating some skill shortages.

Another reform is the establishment of the Southbank Institute of Technology which is responsible for technological and high-level skills training and education and providing a bridge between technical training and university. The establishment of the Australian Resources and Infrastructure Institute of Technology will provide training solutions for the resources and infrastructure industries, including electricity, gas, water, the environment, road, rail, ports and other major civil construction. The institute will be based in central Queensland and will be active throughout the state wherever there is a major resource activity.

There will be reorganisation of TAFE delivery in the Brisbane metropolitan area to increase organisational flexibility, enable more effective scheduling of programs, increase utilisation of resources and establish clearer channels for industry. The new-look delivery will consist of the Trade and Technician Skills Institute and the Southbank Institute of Technology as well as the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, combining the non-trade segments of the current Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and the Open Learning Institute with an additional responsibility in developing distance and e-learning.

The Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE will amalgamate the non-trade segments of the Yeronga, Moreton and Logan institutes. Regional TAFE institutes, which include the Cooloola Sunshine Institute of TAFE, have been renamed the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE to focus on the growth demands of the Sunshine Coast region. The Gympie campus of the Sunshine Coast Institute of TAFE has been transferred to the Wide Bay Institute of TAFE to better align with the business focus provided by each institute. Additionally, individual TAFE institutes have been assigned as training product leaders for vocational training areas.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer to page 1-3 of the MPS that advises that by 2010 there will be an additional 17,000 extra trade training places in Queensland. As a former electrician I am actually very interested in how this will be achieved.

Mr BARTON: I think we might need to get you back on the tools with the shortage that is there.

Mr ENGLISH: I would like to stay here a little bit longer.

Mr BARTON: I am an old instrument tradesman, and every time people find out they try to recruit me away from politics. They tell me that I would earn more money if I were to go back to my trade. Coming to your question, in March 2006 the government released the Queensland Skills Plan. This plan outlined the policy framework that will better match the supply of skilled labour to industry's needs and the economy's demands. I have said earlier that it sets out 24 actions that the government will take to implement the policies.

Action 11 of the plan relates to dealing with the demand for skilled tradespeople. Trade jobs have experienced enormous growth in recent years—around six per cent annually. At the same time, Queensland has experienced a rapid decline in unemployment, producing the tightest labour market in 30 years. The Queensland economy is booming. Consequently we are experiencing skill shortages that are particularly evident in trade occupations.

While this is partly cyclical, created by the recent building boom, it is also partly attributable to apprenticeship intakes being insufficient to keep up with the growth in turnover. Since 1998 Queensland has experienced a 60.5 per cent increase in the number of apprentices and trainees in training. That is up from 46,044 in June 1998 to 76,100 in June 2005. However, continued strong growth in training numbers is required to ensure that qualified people are available to meet industry skill shortages.

Action 11 of the Skills Plan outlines a commitment to increase the number of trades training places, with 17,000 extra places to be available in each year by 2010, to help meet the demand and supply of skilled tradespeople to the economy. In doing this, the government recognises that there is already significant pressure on TAFE Queensland in dealing with the current trades training demand. Most off-the-job apprentice training in Queensland is provided by TAFE institutes. However, TAFE will not be able to meet all the expected training growth, even with the establishment of the new Trade and Technician Skills Institute.

The Queensland Skills Plan therefore provides a range of actions to support the expected increase in training demand, including: support for the private training sector, action 1; increased support for TAFE staff, including flexible employment arrangements where appropriate, action 6; and improved recognition of people's existing skills for credit towards a trade qualification, action 19. That one is absolutely crucial. These additional trade training places will be made available from July 2006 and will be incrementally increased to reach 17,000 per year by 2010. This is crucial to the shadow minister's question earlier. There will be 4,250 places in 2007, 8,500 in 2008, 12,750 in 2009 and 17,000 in 2010 and beyond.

Mr ENGLISH: On page 1-23 of the MPS your department shows a continued achievement in the number of apprentices and trainees in Queensland. Would you like to provide further detail regarding these achievements?

Mr BARTON: Thank you, this is a great opportunity. The government recognises that the majority of future tradespeople will require qualifications provided by the vocational education and training system. The Queensland training system has responded to the growing demand for apprentices and trainees across the state. Record intake of apprentice commencements over the last couple of years has continued, with a growth of 35 per cent since 2002-03. It is expected that the 2005-06 target for apprentice and trainee commencements will be exceeded, with the final number estimated to be in the order of 53,000 to 55,000.

I am pleased to report that the number of apprenticeship commencements to the end of May 2006 is showing a 7.7 per cent increase compared to the same time last year. The 2006-07 target for apprenticeship and traineeship commencements is 58,000 to 60,000, based on expected trends and additional funding which this government has made available. Record levels of apprentices and trainees in training have continued in 2005-06, with approximately 79,000 apprentices and trainees in training, which breaks down to around 40,000 apprentices and 39,000 trainees. This number is expected to grow as more commencements are reported.

The allocation of \$139.5 million to the User Choice program for 2006-07 will continue to address apprenticeship and traineeship training in priority industries and particularly the trades. To assist with continued growth of apprenticeships and traineeships, the User Choice program for 2006-07 has been reformed to address the apprenticeship training demand issue and grow the capacity of quality training providers delivering training to apprentices and trainees in Queensland.

Changes include that the price paid for apprenticeship training has been increased by 12 per cent and for priority traineeship training by six per cent. The building of private training sector capacity to deliver apprenticeship training is supported by offering longer term contracts for apprenticeships delivery under the User Choice program, removing barriers to partnering and encouraging greater flexibility in delivery options. The state has experienced strong growth in participation and currently accounts for approximately 42 per cent of all commencements in Australia.

So Queensland continues to lead the nation in the number of young people choosing to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship as part of their school program. During 2005 a total of 6,676 young Queenslanders commenced a school based apprenticeship or traineeship, with 7,303 school based apprentices and trainees in training as at 20 June 2006. I might say that our big cousin next door in New South Wales does not have a single school based apprentice. That puts it into context.

CHAIR: In a number of responses today you have already referred to the Trade and Technician Skills Institute. It is referenced on page 1-19 of the MPS. This is an exciting development for people in my electorate, particularly in those areas around Salisbury, Coopers Plains and Acacia Ridge. Could you advise the committee on the progress of the training institute?

Mr BARTON: I would love to. The TAFE system has served Queensland well for many years, but it is changing and posing some real challenges on our delivery model. In response to that we brought in the statewide Trade and Technician Skills Institute to lead product development and delivery for automotive, building and construction, manufacturing, engineering, electrical and electronics training.

The skills institute is a significant investment out of the Skills Plan to coordinate trade training statewide and to provide leadership and training expertise to upskill the trades workforce. It includes a five-year \$135.1 million initiative to establish a physical presence at new premises in Acacia Ridge that I announced last year and the existing Brisbane North Institute of TAFE campus at Eagle Farm, which we have known up until now as the Gateway campus. The design of this state-of-the-art facility at Acacia Ridge is unique, with an initial 6,000 square metres of flexible floor training area. The development of design specifications and the subsequent letting of tenders for stage 1 works was managed in conjunction with the Department of Public Works. That has been completed.

Contractors Abigroup have been appointed to complete the construction. They have put in an extraordinary effort, along with our director Steve Ghost, to ensure delays have been minimised. Work has been accelerated and the flexible training area is due for completion by the end of August 2006. This will allow for some building and construction students to begin training in the new facility I understand by the end of August but certainly by September 2006.

Additionally, there will be the commencement of a five-year \$80.2 million initiative to establish specialist trade training centres in central Queensland and the Townsville-Thuringowa regions. The investment also includes the modernisation of some existing facilities. A five-year \$25.4 million modernisation program of facilities has commenced in 2006-07 at the Sunshine Coast institute of TAFE, including trade training areas at Nambour. Addressing key areas at Mooloolaba is also being initiated in 2006-07. The institute will establish lead institute status for trades training and will have responsibility for the curriculum, management, development and distribution of training support materials and coordinating product quality and consistency. The institute will become the primary point of contact for industry to engage in vocational education and training qualifications and will work with private training providers to achieve best practice across the Queensland training system. It will share in an injection of \$8.5 million to create an additional 4,250 training places. By 2010 that will increase to an additional 17,000.

CHAIR: The time for government questions has expired.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: I refer to the page 1-4 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement. It says that \$6 million will be provided to establish three centres of excellence in manufacturing and engineering, building and construction and energy. As Maryborough is at the forefront of manufacturing and engineering, as evidenced by ongoing contracts to EDI Rail and others, we are experiencing a building boom on the Fraser Coast and Ergon Energy has its regional headquarters in Maryborough, will you confirm that Maryborough TAFE, which is one of the most modern and well-equipped campuses in the state, will be one of those centres of excellence, and if not why not?

Mr BARTON: Let us look at it. Certainly you have an excellent facility there. As you know, the federal minister for vocational education and I went up and opened it last year I think it was. Time flies when you are having fun. You were present at that time. We opened a new trade training building at Maryborough TAFE. Certainly, I must say—and this is one of the sad things—that, despite the expenditure of that significant capital between both ourselves in cooperation with the federal

government, the actual numbers in those areas that you mentioned has tended to have fallen away in Maryborough. That is rather surprising, but again it is no doubt part of this changing world that we live in with training under user choice and with significant numbers of private providers coming in. Believe it or not, private providers in Maryborough—and my colleague here will kick me if I have it wrong—have picked up a lot of that work, and that is a harsh reality. We certainly do anticipate that that building and that facility will be part of the trade and technicians institute. If you can think of it in these terms, the building at Acacia Ridge is an all-new site which will be dedicated only to that. What was the Gateway campus will have an all new building put there that is dedicated to the site. We will put all new buildings at a range of existing campuses around the state. Maryborough is well catered for with that building that was only completed last year.

The centre of excellences are different to the TAFE. The point I make is that certainly that excellent facility that you speak of at Maryborough TAFE will be part of the trade and technician institute for training. But when we are looking at these new centres of excellence, then they are also basically different programs again. We have done very well in this state with centres of excellence. We have Aviation Australia. We also have one operating in its initial form—we are waiting for its purpose-built building to be finished—for the mining centre of excellence. But we are starting these three new centres of excellence in electricity and energy, manufacturing and engineering, and also building and construction. We do not have sites actually allocated for those as yet, but I would say to you that I do not think Maryborough is going to be the centre for the engineering centre of excellence, nor the building and construction one, simply because the south-east corner is so dramatic in terms of what is occurring down here.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, just returning to the agricultural colleges, earlier you mentioned the drought. Yes, I do agree; it certainly has had an impact. But recently we have seen the restructure of those agricultural colleges in Queensland and the morale of the staff and the students has been an issue that needs to be looked at. Minister, we have heard a lot of gossip about where the colleges were heading, and of course that put quite an emphasis on whether to send your child or relative to that college because people wondered if there was any future in it. Some of that gossip was that some of the assets would be sold. Minister, do you have any plans of selling assets from our ag colleges?

Mr BARTON: Let me be very clear, and I was very clear in the debate in the parliament early last year—very clear in that debate. The opposition concern, which you are reflecting again now, is that we are going to sell the farms off. My commitment was that that is not the intent with the amalgamation and no farm assets have been sold and I do not intend to sell any. I have no plans for them as the minister. I have to say you, though, we certainly do have a range of properties there that do not really make a lot of sense as to why they are located where they are. One of them in particular is a property that was in the hands of Dalby—it is out near Mundubbera—called Narayen. It is 250 kilometres from Dalby, yet it was in the hands of the Dalby college. How you reasonably use that to train people at Dalby 250 kilometres away escapes me and, I think, escapes the new corporation. When you set up a corporation, it is going to have to make the appropriate business decisions. That is why I have set it up.

What we have done with that particular site is not left it with Dalby. Rather, we have transferred it from 1 July—from 13 days ago—to being managed out of the Emerald campus because, frankly, with what the Emerald campus is specialising in it made a lot more sense for Narayen to be managed by the Emerald campus facility rather than the Dalby campus facility. In fact, students from Dalby, from Emerald and from the Longreach campuses will all be trained at appropriate times on that property. I give that one as an example. There are some properties that we were leasing—or the old colleges were leasing—and in some cases the old colleges were leasing property they owned to other third parties.

I do not want to come down and give you an absolute guarantee that we will never sell anything, because it would be stupid of me to do that. I put it in the context that we have no particular plans to sell anything. But, yes, there is likely to be some rationalisation over time as we come to grips with the actual need, because you only hold that property for training purposes. Sadly—and I said it in the debate—all too often some of those old colleges were farms with a dormitory attached and they had lost their way. We do not intend to sell anything. We have no plans to sell anything. But over time the rationalisation is that if we have properties that we own and we have been long-term leasing them to third parties then why would we hold them if we have no long-term need for it? That is my thinking, but that will be a decision for the corporation in conjunction with its advisory board, which, as you know, is very well representative of the rural sector. There could well be some other property that we are under-utilising which might make more sense to sell, even to the extent to fund some additional purchase. Nothing stands still in time, but there is no plan right now to sell anything. If there is anything sold or bought in the future, it will be a rational process worked through with the advisory board by the corporation.

Mr HOPPER: Thank you, Minister. Minister, I refer to the listing of non-current assets for the agricultural colleges on page 2-7 of the MPS. I note that the asset base of the colleges is gradually declining. It is forecast to decline by \$1 million in the coming year. Page 63 of the Capital Statement indicates a \$1 million capital grant to be spread across the four colleges in 2006-07—hardly a major investment which will barely maintain the status quo. Can you advise what real improvements in the infrastructure for the agricultural colleges will occur?

Mr BARTON: Let me put it in this context: I think, as you know, all of the campuses—and I, believe it or not, had a long association with those campuses right from when I was a backbencher in this parliament when I used to serve on the committee for Matt Foley when he was the minister for training in the Goss government; so I know all of those campuses well, not just from this term—were falling down around our ears. They had equipment. In some cases they had the absolute best equipment and in some cases they had the worst and a mixture. The other harsh reality is that overall all of those old colleges were just so poorly managed that they did not know what assets they had anyway. There were no proper registers. It was a screaming shambles, to put it mildly. That is part of why I had the review that I had and did something about it.

We also know that we have to make very significant improvements. We also know that, because of the drought—some of it is to do with that concern, and this is a time to talk these colleges up, not talk them down; so I would encourage you to talk them up, not talk them down—we have put in an additional investment in the past year of \$1.1 million and this year we will put in another \$1.1 million. We do intend to spend money in 2005-06. Campus by campus, at Burdekin we will spend \$185,000, at Dalby we will spend \$125,000, at Emerald we will spend \$269,000, at Longreach we will spend \$385,000, and at Mareeba, which has less need, we will spend \$36,000. But we have put in \$1.1 million. This was a special allocation. I must say that in putting the new corporation in place we knew that they had been so run down. We knew that one of the first things that the new corporation had to do was get control of just what assets were out there, and in getting control of that we knew that we had to do something about their run-down condition—things like dormitories, things like buildings, things like equipment that was necessary for the training.

I would just simply put this little commercial in: Queensland is the only state that does rural training of this nature. Victoria was the last one. It shut its down several years ago. We could have done that, but we did not. We amalgamated them; we rationalised them. We are very highly committed to training in the rural sector—very highly committed. But it is a bit like Gorbachev when he told the Soviet Union that things would get worse before it got better after he became the leader when they cut the corruption out. We have had to make some hard decisions. We have put additional funds in. We are putting our money where our commitment is, and we will greatly improve these colleges in the years ahead.

Mr HOPPER: Minister, just one more question on the agricultural colleges. I refer to page 2-4 of the MPS regarding future developments for the Australian Agricultural College Corporation. There are eight activities listed as key activities for the corporation for 2006-07. I am very concerned that not one of those key activities listed is about improving the quality of education outcomes for the agricultural colleges and for those students attending them. The focus of these activities from what I can see is all about turning these colleges into more or less a fee-collecting business for the government. Am I right in saying that?

Mr BARTON: No, nothing could be further from the truth. Again, I would want to make sure that you do understand our very high level of commitment to these colleges. As I say, it would have been very easy for me 1½ years ago when we had that period of consultation and dealt with just what basket cases they were to scrap them. In one case, particularly the one in your electorate, it was totally insolvent and hiding its insolvency from its owner, the government—hiding it. We had the CMC in two others in a very big way with problems. But one of the things, as I say, we have to do to make it better in the future is fix up the problems of the past. In doing that, we had to stop what was a dramatic amount of overservicing. They were training young people, particularly residential students, for things they did not need to be trained in—overtraining. That is why they were blowing money out the back door like it was going out of fashion—like standing under the shower and tearing it up.

So we have had to greatly restructure that. We believe that we have in doing that enhanced the quality of training. We have a very good advisory board there, and you no doubt know who the advisory board is. I will not waste the time of the committee by reading out all of them and their backgrounds. I consulted not with yourself at the time but certainly with many of your colleagues about who should be there. There are some people who are there because basically western based ministers said these are who the people should be—not all of them but in a couple of cases. We have a commitment to enhancing their ability to work with industry and do more industry based training such as we are doing with TAFEs. Where industry wants specialist training, then, yes, we would expect industry to pay for it the same as we do within the TAFE networks.

As you are aware, there were a lot of people from interstate being trained in these colleges. That is fine if they are fee-paying students, but they were students being paid for by the state to train. So large numbers of people from Victoria and New South Wales were being paid to train at our agricultural colleges by the Queensland taxpayer, and there is still some of that happening. I have written to my equivalent ministers in both Victoria and New South Wales and asked them to actually pay for that—come up with some money. We are happy to help their rural sector too, because we know we are the only agricultural college left in Australia. But also I have had my department put submissions to the federal inquiry on rural training and we are seeking some federal government funding out of that as well. Overall, this is not about making them fee for service, but they are a corporation and they are expected to find their own way.

Mr HOPPER: On page 1-23 of the MPS, the output statement indicates that there has been a fairly static completion rate for apprenticeships and traineeships—between 55 per cent and 65 per cent. This is not a very good result and a very low target to be aiming for, given our skill shortages and the resources being committed to training. What action is being taken to lift that low completion rate of training?

Mr BARTON: As you say, it is estimated to be 55 per cent to 65 per cent: 60 per cent to 65 per cent for apprentices and 55 per cent to 60 per cent for trainees. The various states and the Commonwealth fund a body called the National Centre for Vocational Education Research. It shows that more than 70 per cent of people who leave their apprenticeship or traineeship have taken up other opportunities such as further study or alternative employment. Up to 8 June, in Queensland 23,966 apprentices and trainees had completed their training. That number will increase as existing apprentices and trainees finalise their training.

One of the things that is crucial to our Skills Plan is addressing that issue. Another factor that impacts on this is the current form of contracts. There is quite a bit of movement between employers. We are not really happy about that movement in some cases, because it means that people are walking away from one contract with an employer to go elsewhere for more money in this skill shortage period. That means that there is a cancellation and then a new contract. The cancellation does not reflect the fact that, while the person has left and not completed that particular contract, they have opened up another contract. Therefore, at times the figures can be rubbery. Those are the best figures that we can get through the national body, because those figures arrive nationally.

We are working with industry, and it is part of the whole picture. We are putting much more emphasis on school based apprenticeships and school based work experience so that before young people start a trade they have a better idea of what they are getting into. That will minimise the number of people who are likely to find that they do not like the trade and then bail out.

We are restructuring to put more emphasis on the competency base of trades, the nominal duration and the expected duration, and we are putting more money into the actual training level. This is designed to have people trained earlier in certain parts of their apprenticeships so that they get to do the more interesting work in the workplace. Hopefully that will mean that more will want to complete rather than move on to somewhere else. A whole raft of issues that are part of the central culture of the Queensland Skills Plan have been designed to increase that retention rate.

Mr HOPPER: Why is the completion rate not addressed in your Skills Plan?

Mr BARTON: I think it is addressed in the Skills Plan. The Skills Plan strategies are fundamental to the completion rate. I have just explained some of it to you. There is a whole raft of initiatives that are designed to increase the training experience.

CHAIR: That is the end of non-government questions. I call the member for Cook.

Mr O'BRIEN: The new labour market response Skilling Queenslanders for Work was referenced a number of times in the MPS. Can you provide further information on the 2006-07 transitioning arrangements of this program and what it will provide to Queenslanders?

Mr BARTON: Since coming to office in 1998, the Beattie government has a proven and sustained record in lowering unemployment. Queensland's unemployment rate steadily fell to a 30-year low in March 2005 and it has remained around that low level over the past 12 months.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work is part of the recently released Queensland Skills Plan. It is a subset of that plan. It is a new Beattie government initiative to provide assistance for the remaining 105,500 Queenslanders reported in April 2006 as still unemployed. We understand that later this morning new figures will be released.

The program targets job seekers who are less competitive because they lack skills and recent work experience or face other recognised barriers. The initiative will target mature-age workers, Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, unemployed parents and carers, people with a disability and people who are long-term unemployed or employed part-time or temporarily but are unable to secure full-time work because they lack necessary skills.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work maintains many of the successful components of Breaking the Unemployment Cycle, which was introduced in 1998 to address unemployment in Queensland when we inherited, sadly, very high unemployment levels. The Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative has an enhanced focus on raising the competitiveness of job seekers through a new service delivery model for skilling and job preparation assistance tailored to individual needs.

The initiative provides for a mix and match of components, including work placement, traineeships, cadetships, job preparation information, accredited vocational education and training, recognition of prior learning, postparticipation support for up to six months, employer wage subsidies, mentoring and assistance with transport and child-care costs. It maintains the government's commitment to disadvantaged young people under Education and Training Reforms for the Future and has capacity to respond quickly to assist workers displaced as a result of large-scale retrenchments.

Skilling Queenslanders for Work commences from July 2007 but will be progressively implemented during 2006-07 as the Breaking the Unemployment Cycle programs are phased out. As full implementation of the initiative commences in July 2007, \$79.6 million per year will be provided for labour market programs. That figure includes \$75.18 million net new funding.

An estimated 15,900 Queenslanders who need most assistance to overcome barriers to finding suitable employment will be helped each year under the Skilling Queenslanders for Work initiative. Experience shows that if assistance is not targeted in this way most will remain uncompetitive.

Before the next question, I have a figure for Dalby staff levels. Our advice is that at 1 July 2005 the Dalby establishment was 71. As at 1 July this year it was 65. There have been no forced redundancies. Anybody who has left has left of their own accord. That compares to the figures that someone has indicated to you. I have to stress that these are the equivalent full-time positions. A heap of part-timers may have left, but we are talking about equivalent full-time positions, which are down six people. If some people are part-time there could be more than six, but that is what it is in equivalent full-time positions. Thank you for your indulgence.

CHAIR: I come back to page 1-19 of the MPS regarding the Queensland Skills Plan reform to create a training system that works for Queensland. I come back to my electorate, because there is a lot happening in employment and training in my electorate.

Mr BARTON: It is a good place, your electorate.

CHAIR: I refer to the reorganisation of TAFE delivery. How has this reorganisation affected the Yeronga Institute of TAFE in my electorate?

Mr BARTON: I thank you for the question, because this issue provides an example of where change is taking place. That can have good aspects but it can also cause concern for some people.

The plan is designed to ensure Queensland's vocational education and training sector meets the skill needs of the future and repositions us as a leader in skills development. The Yeerongpilly electorate will benefit from that. We have announced a reorganisation of training delivery in Brisbane to improve collaboration, efficiency and outcomes for students. TAFE students will benefit from more effective scheduling of programs, increased utilisation of resources, and closer links between TAFE and industry, which is crucial.

In moving to the new arrangements, the government is committed to minimising disruptions to students. The changes at the former Yeronga Institute of TAFE will be that trade students studying automotive, building and construction, manufacturing, engineering and electrical will be progressively transferred to the new Trade and Technician Skills Institute. While some students will be transferred to the Acacia Ridge campus this semester, the full physical relocation of trades training will occur over several years. The new trades institute will be built on the trade training strengths developed at Yeronga and other campuses but moved to the new site.

Sport and recreation programs that are currently at Yeronga TAFE are being combined with the Southbank Institute of TAFE's significant sport and recreation facilities, equipment and expertise. This will create a strong industry focus and identity for this growing industry, with clear benefits for sport and recreation students.

Other programs delivered at the Yeronga campus will now be offered through the Metropolitan South Institute of TAFE, which combines the non-trade segments of the former Yeronga, Logan and Moreton institutes of TAFE. The Yeronga campuses are part of this new institute.

Programs such as literacy, numeracy and community services courses, which have been utilised by local people including the growing Sudanese community at Yeronga, continue to be offered. This newly amalgamated institute will continue to provide the training needs of the local community at Yeerongpilly.

The changes to TAFE Queensland have resulted in additional places at the new institutes and will provide all students with high-quality and responsive training. Staff in TAFE institutes like Yeronga will have access to superior and more contemporary resources to improve training delivery as a result of the reorganisation. Movement of staff has been kept to a minimum. It will be phased in gradually, in line with the development of the new institutes. Teaching staff will continue to deliver high-quality training. This directly improves the job prospects for them and our students.

The plan is not only an investment in skills but also an investment in Queensland's future. I am very hopeful that all these changes will help to make one of your constituents very happy, Ms Claire Crowther. We aim to please.

Mr WILSON: The people in my electorate of Ferny Grove are interested in the reorganisation of TAFE delivery mentioned in the MPS on page 1-19. Indeed, the Grovely campus of the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE sits on the boundary of my electorate and that of Everton, which is held by Mr Welford, the Minister for Education. How have these reorganisations specifically affected the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE?

Mr BARTON: Certainly the main thrust of the plan is to underpin the growing Queensland economy by providing skills and training needs. Of the TAFE institutes of the Brisbane metropolitan area, the Open Learning Institute, which is currently located at South Brisbane, will be amalgamated with the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE and we will establish the brand-new statewide Trade and Technician Skills Institute. The new Trade and Technician Skills Institute will have new premises at Acacia Ridge and we are progressively upgrading the premises at the Eagle Farm campus.

The Brisbane North Institute of TAFE has always been a large provider of trade training. However, the consolidation of the trades into the one institute will bring enormous benefits to students through enhanced facilities and to industry through the improved ability to communicate with trainers through a single point of contact. The people of Ferny Grove will benefit from this reorganisation of TAFE delivery through the strengthening of TAFE Queensland as a strong and viable business. The ability of the institutes to schedule programs more effectively and to increase the utilisation of TAFE resources will enhance training delivery for all Queenslanders.

The more focused approach to industry liaison facilitated by the establishment of the new institutes, including the Brisbane North Institute of TAFE, will benefit all sectors of the Queensland economy. The Brisbane North institute, which includes the Grovely campus in your electorate, I think—

Mr WILSON: It is right on the boundary.

Mr BARTON:—is the lead institute for several vocational training areas. Students in this area will continue to be serviced by the broad range of courses offered by Brisbane North and Open Learning but in addition will have access to the enhanced facilities and product delivery through the lead institute. That is, there will be more specialist facilities available in the areas of business, finance and information technology, government, horticulture, open learning and blended learning models. The leadership role that Brisbane North has developed over the years in these areas will continue, and all Queenslanders will benefit from their expertise because they will be providing the lead to the rest.

Most students from the Ferny Grove electorate will finish their studies in their current physical locations, with some current and future students transitioning to new locations over the next few years. In moving to the new arrangements, the government is committed to minimising disruption to students. The main changes for students at the former Brisbane North Institute of TAFE will be that trade students studying automotive, building and construction, manufacturing, engineering and electrical will be progressively transferred to the new Trade and Technician Skills Institute, while some students will be transferred to the Acacia Ridge campus this semester. The full physical relocation of trades will occur over several years, and the new trades institute will build on the trade training strengths developed at Brisbane North and other institutes.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. It is now 10.15 and I am determined to abide by standing order 185, given the amount of hearing time we have today. That concludes the examination of the estimates for the Department of Employment and Training. The committee will adjourn for a break and the hearing will resume at 10.30, when we will be examining the estimates of the Department of Industrial Relations.

Proceedings suspended from 10.15 am to 10.31 am.

CHAIR: The hearing of Estimates Committee C is now resumed. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure for the Department of Industrial Relations be agreed to.

The first round of questions is from non-government members. I welcome the member for Maroochydore.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I refer you to page 3-9 of the MPS and also to your response to non-government question on notice No. 8 concerning the assessment of licences for prescribed occupations under the Workplace Health and Safety Regulation 1997. As we know from recent media and also from yesterday's estimates—the police commissioner confirmed the extent of the fraud yesterday—an approved assessor and union official is suspected of involvement in issuing approximately 3,500 fraudulent licences to about 1,500 individuals. Can you explain to the committee what actions your department is going to undertake to ensure the validity of all occupational licences it has issued currently? How soon do you expect to be in a position to guarantee that all current licences have been checked for validity?

Mr BARTON: We are in the middle of a process already. You will appreciate the circumstances in which this has occurred. There are charges pending against a number of people so it makes me restricted to some degree. We have had a number of licences as a result of that issue that are suspect—I will put it that way. We are in the process of a very detailed program to check every one of those people who have been issued with one of those licences.

My department has written to every one of those licence holders who have been known to have been issued with a licence by the individual concerned. They have all been given 28 days to respond to my department. If, in fact, the letters are not delivered and are returned to us—and it is all registered mail and already some of them have been returned—those licences will be cancelled. If, in fact, they do

not respond at all—either the mail is not returned through Australia Post, which would indicate that it has been delivered, or they do not respond at all—the licence will be cancelled. They have been given an opportunity effectively to demonstrate to us that they have not had their licences issued to them in a fraudulent manner. They will be assessed on that basis. If they can prove to us that their licences were not fraudulent, then they will maintain their licence. If, in fact, they cannot do that—and I will expect that this will be most of the people who have had their licences issued by the person who has a question mark over his head, if I can put it that way, because it is subject to court action—we will arrange for all of those people who are still holding licences or who wish to hold licences to be reassessed by assessors we have confidence in.

The director-general has just given me an update as of close of business today, because we have also been encouraging people through a hotline that we set up to make contact with the department about their licences. We have had five returns to sender already. We have had 61 phone calls regarding the show cause letters. We have had 34 workers electing to be reassessed. We have had 14 workers indicating that they will surrender their certificates and 13 workers have indicated that they believe that they obtained their licences properly, even though it was through that assessor—that they had done a complete and proper assessment.

Miss SIMPSON: What about the licences that are not under suspicion yet? Will all be checked—not only the ones that you currently suspect?

Mr BARTON: Let me put this in context. There has been a big question mark put over the head of one particular assessor. I should also answer this in the context that this was a program that came into place in 1996 whilst somebody else was in government; it was not us. This program and this licensing regime has been shown to be very weak. We have had at least one other very serious matter of a similar nature where a gentleman was issuing licences from the bar of a hotel in Mackay several years ago and was charged and convicted. As a result of that type of activity and as a result of our involvement with the national standardisation of programs as well, we are already well underway to changing that whole licence regime from one where the assessors are private assessors—and that is the reality; it is one area where it was highly deregulated in 1996—to private assessors doing examinations and assessments on the job for potential licence holders. Prior to that there had been a very rigid statutory regime of people having to get experience under supervision and then be tested by machinery inspectors from the department itself.

We had already determined that the system had too many weaknesses. We have a new process that is already underway which will have the vocational education and training system provide the mandatory training and the mandatory assessment of people who have done the mandatory training. After they have passed those examinations and tests, the department will issue the licences. The Department of Industrial Relations will still maintain the licence regime, but the vocational education training system, as opposed to private assessors, will provide mandatory training and mandatory assessment.

So I should say to you that the system that allowed this to occur is already being replaced. This is not a reaction to this occurring; this is a reaction to an understanding that the system had great weaknesses. I must say to the shadow minister that your predecessor, Mr Rowell, put a question on notice on 19 April 2006 and asked me why the government was taking such an impractical, expensive and cumbersome approach to training in these basic occupational skill areas which is contrary to its recently announced Skills Plans. So your party and immediate predecessor were objecting to my new regime that I was putting in place to replace this regime which has been demonstrated very clearly by recent events to be severely flawed. I must say it was introduced at a time when your party was last in government.

Miss SIMPSON: If the system was so flawed, why did it take you eight years to change it? I put it to you that some of the major flaws are that certain union officials are too close to the government and have not had the level of scrutiny they should have had under existing law. This is why there has been protection and the ability for this fraud to be perpetrated.

Mr BARTON: Let me answer what I think are both parts of your question. The first is why has it taken eight years. The system had been brought in to replace a very rigid statutory regime that was there previously and that had been brought in at the time when the coalition was last in government. We have seen the weaknesses in the system. You do not totally change a regime overnight. I must admit that I am the minister who has progressed that change. That change is occurring now. It will certainly take until the middle of next year at least to be fully implemented. My director-general might correct me if I am wrong, but certainly by about the middle of next year we expect the new system to be largely implemented. It is a flawed system. It was shown to be a flawed system where you have private people as opposed to departmental staff overseeing the training. There will be private people involved in the new system, too, but they will be people who are registered training organisations who stand to lose a lot if they do the wrong thing.

As to your other assertion about this occurring because of a union official, I have to say to you that this department was not aware that this assessor was a union official. People who are assessors are made assessors on the basis of their skills, their training and their capability. I became aware that he

was a union official only after it broke. I think an email was sent to the director-general on the Thursday, which is about a fortnight ago now. That email was passed on to me on the Friday morning. That is certainly the first occasion that I became aware that we had any private assessor out there who was, in fact, a union official.

Again, this is where I have to be careful because this is all subject to appearing before a court and I do not want to prejudice any court hearings either way. We have been doing another very thorough check of all of the private assessors in the state to just check who they are and where they are. I have certainly found one other person in there who used to be a union official at one earlier stage and who is no longer a union official. In fact, he is currently no longer even in this country. We had a good look at who was on the current list. Even though he was on the current list he is certainly not in the state and not practising.

We have not just looked at it very closely in that direction; we have met something like 80 employers, because they obviously have some real concerns about whether people are valid. I am sure you will ask me more questions about this.

Miss SIMPSON: Our question on notice that you referred to objected to the cost, not the process. I refer you to MPS 3-8 and 3-9 under the Workplace Health and Safety Services output. Recent changes to workplace health and safety laws under your government expand the range of people who gain right of entry to businesses, particularly small businesses, without any legislative penalty if they abuse that power of entry or the use of employees' details they gain access to. What guarantees will you give this parliamentary committee that you will effectively monitor the use of this power to prevent abuse, given the department's failure to effectively monitor and prevent the extensive fraud of one of its own authorised representatives in regard to occupational licensing?

Mr BARTON: I think we are only going to traverse the debate that occurred fairly recently in the parliament with regard to the right of entry of union officials to business. Notwithstanding the fact that I find it very difficult to work out how it will impact on the costs to my department, I will answer the question.

By passing our industrial relations legislation in the parliament, we reinstated a right that unions have had in this state and, indeed, in every other state in this nation since unions existed—and that is the right of unions and union officials to go into workplaces to look after the health and safety interests of their members or their potential members. That is a fundamental part of the role of the union movement since the union movement has existed. That changed as a result of the federal government's WorkChoices legislation which came into effect earlier this year.

As you are aware, we have mounted a High Court challenge to that legislation. We are very seriously opposed to the WorkChoices legislation for a range of reasons. I would be interested to know what your position is because the National Party up until now has refused to come out and indicate whether it is opposed to WorkChoices after having voted with the Labor Party on the floor of the parliament late last year opposing the WorkChoices legislation. I find it intriguing that you are now asking questions which appear to support John Howard's WorkChoices legislation. You might like to clarify for me and the Queensland public just what your position is.

We have reinstated that right. It is incorrect to say that unions or union officials who do the wrong thing can do so without penalty because they have to have a federal permit. They also have to have a permit from the state to exercise that right of entry. If they abuse that right of entry, the union—and someone will correct me if I am wrong—can be fined \$33,000 and an individual union official can be fined \$6,000 under the federal legislation. So the reason that was explained very fully during the debate in the parliament was that it would be a double jeopardy position if people could be fined under both state and federal legislation.

We believe that there are appropriate safeguards in ensuring that unions or union officials who abuse that trust would have those rights removed—and that is clearly part of our state legislation. They would lose their permits. They would lose their right of entry to workplaces to their detriment as organisations or individual officials and they could be fined very severely under John Howard's WorkChoices legislation. I stress that the state legislation only reinstates a right that unions and union officials have had since unions existed. I know that the union I am a proud member of has existed in this state since 1859.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, your government has failed to effectively ensure that this fraud was picked up earlier in regard to occupational licences. It has failed to effectively monitor existing legislation. How can we trust you to ensure that there will not be an abuse of this extraordinary new power for union officials to go into new businesses where previously they did not have the right of access that you have recently legislated for?

Mr BARTON: Let me be very clear. I need to correct one of the points that you made.

Miss SIMPSON: Workplace health and safety was abused. It has not been effectively put in place given the fraud that you have allowed to flourish. How can you ensure that the new legislation will guarantee workplace health and safety and not just the interests of those who are perpetrating an abuse of their power?

Mr BARTON: Are you finished your little tirade? I am happy to answer your question but I have forgotten what the question was now after that tirade of abuse.

CHAIR: I remind the member for Maroochydore to ask one question at a time and then for each question the minister has three minutes to respond.

Mr BARTON: Let me make it very clear. Most small businesses in Queensland are not subject to John Howard's WorkChoices legislation. Most small businesses in Queensland are unincorporated. Most small businesses in Queensland do not wish to become incorporated, and if they wanted to be covered by John Howard's WorkChoices legislation then they can become incorporated and so be it. But that is currently not the case. So when we are talking about unions suddenly having a right that they did not have before to go to small businesses, they have always had that right since unions have existed. They have always had the right to go to small businesses that are unincorporated in Queensland because small businesses in Queensland that are not incorporated are not subject to the WorkChoices legislation—and that is most small business.

So most of the businesses that will be impacted by the legislation that this government introduced and passed earlier this year to reinstate the right of unions to go into workplaces which are subject to the WorkChoices legislation is larger businesses. Larger businesses have a great deal more knowledge about what their rights are and what the rights of unions are and, in most cases, have reasonable relationships with the particular union or unions that work with their businesses.

I am very comfortable with the legislation that I introduced to the parliament and that the parliament supported. When I asked my staff to check this for me in the last few days, the advice was that, while the coalition parties moved some amendments that failed on the floor of the parliament, they actually voted for the bill. I find it a bit hard of you to come in here and say that I have taken action that is going to have such drastic results when, in fact, your party and your coalition voted for that bill, notwithstanding some failed amendments that you moved.

I am very confident that we have safeguards in place for any union that misbehaves because the rules apply to one and all. The union movement in this state is, by and large, very responsible, and most employers who deal with them will tell you that. We do not have some of the rogue elements that sadly have been drawn to our attention in other states. I am very confident that the unions will not abuse the trust that has been given back to them—a trust that they held for 100 years or more.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, our position is that we want to see genuine workplace health and safety issues properly policed. We have no objection to authorised and properly trained officials having entry. What we do have a problem with, as we expressed during the debate of the legislation in the House, is the unions' right of entry where there is no control over an abuse of power, and you have not yet given an assurance that, given the failures in other areas of government monitoring, you will ensure that those abuses of power will in fact be kept in check under your reign. Could the minister outline how many union officials who have actually breached the laws of the current statute books have been prosecuted under your government?

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. Would you like the opportunity to respond?

Mr BARTON: Unless the member would like to ask me in the next round, I am happy to answer that question.

CHAIR: I need to stick to timing so I would only be prepared to give you one minute.

Mr BARTON: Let me make a comment about it that I think will help. When you ask me what am I going to do about the union officials, I have to be very careful because of sub judice on this matter. It is not officials; it is an official—an ex-official. We did take that particular person's status off them last year when it was drawn to our attention that there was a risk that some licences were fraudulent. We did, in fact, change that person's status at that time and handed the matter to the police. The police are currently investigating that matter and the matter is before the courts. As to what action I can take, I think I am restricted in what I can say because the matter is effectively sub judice.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 3-16 of the MPS and the federal government's WorkChoices legislation. We hear a lot about the supposed benefits of this legislation. Can you inform the committee whether this legislation will actually deliver the benefits promised by the Howard government?

Mr BARTON: Clearly the WorkChoices legislation overrides large parts of Queensland's successful industrial relations system and sadly reduces the protections formerly available to many employees. There is mounting evidence that employers are using the laws to remove workers' terms and conditions. Dozens of cases have been reported to the Department of Industrial Relations of wages slashed, working hours rearranged and employment terminated for no reason. One worker phoned in to say she had been sacked without reason while on an overseas holiday, another that she had been dismissed after she reported workplace bullying, and two workers reported being sacked after they were injured at work by faulty equipment. This is not only happening in Queensland but right across Australia and, in most cases, it is worse in other states.

Some cases have received high media attention, such as the 29 meat workers at Cowra who were sacked by their employer and then offered their jobs back on reduced conditions; the employees of a Lufthansa subsidiary who have been offered AWAs that cut wages by eight to 15 per cent and make the pay up with bonuses linked to the workers not taking their sick leave; or Lorissa Stevens, the mine worker in the Hunter River, whose AWA required her to give 12 hours notice of sick leave or lose \$200 out of her pay. For every case the media reports, there are dozens more across the country that are being hurt by these laws, if not hundreds and thousands that are not coming to public attention as yet.

WorkChoices also imposes higher compliance costs on employers. It is the most prescriptive, complex and intrusive industrial relations legislation ever seen in Australia. If you are a company you cannot move without checking WorkChoices first to see whether you are committing an offence such as including something in a workplace agreement that the federal government thinks you should not have, such as union safety training. So much for choices!

Employers have always preferred Queensland's system. Before WorkChoices, companies could choose to operate under federal agreements but they stayed away from them in droves—70 per cent of the Queensland workforce was under the state system until recently. The federal government's answer was to take that choice away from them.

There is no justification for these laws. National and international evidence suggests that labour market deregulation has led to poor social results without any improvement to economic performance or productivity. In its most recent employment outlook, the OECD discredited the federal government's economic rationale for the laws, finding that unfair dismissal laws do not cost jobs, minimum wages do not harm employment and collective bargaining is strongly related to high employment. This confirms earlier OECD data showing that highly regulated labour markets, such as those in Norway and Sweden, have similar productivity levels to countries with much less regulation, such as Canada and the UK. The Netherlands, which has a higher degree of regulation than Australia, has the world's highest levels of labour productivity.

CHAIR: In the light of the perceived benefits of the legislation, could you outline the human costs of the federal WorkChoices laws?

Mr BARTON: Sadly, the new federal laws on wages, working conditions and job security have already been painfully apparent for many working Queenslanders and their families. Since the new laws came into operation on 27 March, my department has been receiving daily reports of workers being treated unfairly under the new laws, being dismissed or having their wages and conditions reduced. As I have previously mentioned, one worker phoned in to say she had been sacked without reason while on an overseas holiday, another that she had been dismissed after she reported workplace bullying and two workers reported being sacked after they were injured at work by faulty equipment. From these reports, it is clear already that after just three months of operation these new laws have increased the risk of exploitation, particularly for the most vulnerable sections of the workforce. This is happening not only in Queensland but right across Australia.

Even the federal government's own Employment Advocate has highlighted the unfairness of these changes. Information released by the federal Employment Advocate on a sample of 250 new AWAs made during the first month of WorkChoices show that all AWAs—and I stress again all AWAs—expressly removed at least one protected award condition and 16 per cent expressly excluded all protected award conditions—and I stress again all protected award conditions, every single one. These are the ones that John Howard and Kevin Andrews were saying were protected by law. They are and have been removed. Conditions most often removed were: leave loading, which was removed in 64 per cent of AWAs; penalty rates, which were removed in 63 per cent of AWAs; and shift loadings, which were removed in 52 per cent of AWAs.

Do not forget that there are more than 200,000 low-paid workers in Queensland who have had a wage freeze imposed on them because the federal government has set up a new hand-picked body, the Australian Fair Pay Commission. I call it the 'Australian so-called fair pay commission'. These early reports add to the findings from previous research and evidence in this area that show that labour market deregulation has led to poor social results. For example, OECD research shows consistently that overall earnings dispersion is higher in countries where the labour market is more deregulated. The US, which has a minimum wage of \$US5.15 an hour, has the second highest earnings dispersion in the OECD. In 2000, minimum wages were just 36.4 per cent of the median full-time earnings compared to Australia, where they are currently 57 per cent.

International experience has shown that low-wage, deregulated nations also spend the least on social expenditure and have had to cut welfare to get people to work. We are already seeing those signs in Australia, sadly. To force people to work for lower conditions welfare benefits are cut or they are being hunted off unemployment and disability benefits.

Mr WILSON: Can I refer you to MPS page 3-16. Will the deceptively named WorkChoices federal legislation produce the economic benefits claimed by the federal government?

Mr BARTON: The federal government argues that WorkChoices is necessary to improve productivity and create jobs. There is simply no evidence that these changes will produce the economic benefits that have been promised. In fact, national and international evidence suggests that labour market deregulation fails to deliver improvements to economic productivity. For example, in the most recent OECD report, the OECD discredited the Economic Outlook report advanced by the federal government. The three findings of the OECD report were: unfair dismissal laws do not cost jobs, minimum wages do not harm employment and collective bargaining is strongly related to low unemployment.

This report by the OECD adds to the findings from previous research and evidence in this area. For example, OECD data shows highly regulated labour markets, such as Norway and Sweden, recorded similar productivity levels to those countries with much less regulation, such as Canada, the UK and, as I have mentioned, the Netherlands.

Radical labour market deregulation in the 1990s in New Zealand—our closest neighbour—failed to produce any productivity benefits. Average productivity growth fell 1 per cent below levels achieved in the 1980s. Australia's productivity performance, with a more regulated IR system, was far superior with over 2 per cent productivity growth each year.

Research at the workplace level shows that a deregulatory approach to reducing wages and conditions is not rewarded with higher productivity. It also shows that workplaces with active union involvement and cooperative workplaces produced good productivity results.

WorkChoices also fails to deliver a simpler system with more choice and poses higher compliance costs on employers. It is the most prescriptive, complex and intrusive legislation we have ever seen and bans a whole raft of issues that people have taken for granted. Let us just look at some of those that I mentioned in the previous answer as issues that are being stripped out of current agreements. If you are a low-paid worker in this country, particularly in this state, and you lose your shift payments then that dramatically reduces the living standard of you and your family. Most people who get shift payments take it in as part of their overall wages. In many industry sectors there are penalty rates. If you work in hospitality or the food industry then your penalty rates are an inherent part of what gives you a living wage. If you strip that away you reduce dramatically your standard of living.

Mr WILSON: Can I refer you to the same page of the MPS. Can you outline the grounds of the Queensland government's High Court challenge to the Howard government's new industrial relations legislation?

Mr BARTON: I would love to. Let us be very clear about this. As I told the Senate inquiry earlier this year or late last year, whenever it was, because again time flies—I noticed when I got down there that one Mr Barnaby Joyce was wanting to knock over the proposed legislation, but like most things changed his mind when it actually came time to put his vote where his mouth is—it does represent probably the most severe attack against the constitution of Australia, the greatest single act of vandalism against the constitution of Australia since Federation. It has widespread implications for the nature of power sharing between the states and the Commonwealth. It has impacts. We have already seen a whole lot of other ministers come forward, although John Howard has given them a bit of a smack whenever they have gone public, saying that if it wins the High Court challenge then it will move into a whole range of other areas that are currently regulated by the states and take them over to Commonwealth powers. In recent weeks—recent days even—we have seen the pretender to the Prime Minister's throne come out wanting to take over, in his view of Federation, a whole lot of those issues.

This case is primarily about defending the working and living standards of working people in this state. If we were to lose it—because corporations are so intrusive; corporations by their very nature are in every facet of society—the very nature of states as we know them could be torn apart. Our views were that the corporations power simply does not give the Commonwealth the level of activity that it has used in WorkChoices and that has been fundamental. We believe it has fundamentally gone further than the constitution allows under section 51(23). Section 51(23) of the constitution makes it clear that the Commonwealth's powers over industrial relations are limited and were always intended to be limited. The people of Australia, through the referendum process, have repeatedly rejected proposals to give the federal government control over wages and conditions. It is not legitimate for the Commonwealth to introduce legislation relating to workplaces by directing it at constitutional corporations. Certainly the Commonwealth does have some corporations powers in the constitution, but, in fact, most of its constitutional powers, even to allow it to register and regulate corporations, are state powers that by agreement the states have ceded to the Commonwealth so that we can have a national regime of business in this country. We agree with that and, in fact, we had to recently renew that but only after we were very certain that these were not the powers that the Commonwealth was relying on to defend the WorkChoices legislation.

The harsh reality is that there has been several High Court decisions that have opened up that door. The Commonwealth has sought to make a couple of cracks in the door into a gaping chasm. We have a degree of confidence, certainly an arguable case, that it has exceeded its powers under the constitution and we eagerly await the decision of the seven-person full bench of the High Court.

Mr WILSON: On MPS page 3-18 there is a reference to the establishment of a Fair Go Queensland Advisory Service. Would the minister please outline what the service does and why it was established?

Mr BARTON: Right from the very beginning we put in this service, established by the Department of Industrial Relations, to assist Queenslanders who have suffered any unfairness in the workplace because of the WorkChoices legislation or who are seeking assistance with the complexities of the legislation. As you have seen yourself, you just about need a trolley to wheel this legislation, its regulations and the explanatory notes around. The Fair Go hotline commenced operation on 5 December as a dedicated telephone service available to all Queenslanders for the cost of a local call. The system also allows callers to leave contact details at any time or to place an order for a free explanatory booklet. The Fair Go hotline, in conjunction with the department's established Wageline service, is playing a significant role in assisting thousands of Queenslanders who have already suffered under the federal government's WorkChoices legislation or who are confused by what it means and have sought advice as to what it means.

As at 30 June, close to 1,000 Queenslanders had sought assistance from the hotline with an estimated 5,500 employees and employers seeking clarification on the complexities of the WorkChoices legislation through the department's other service, Wageline, which has been there traditionally to advise people on state awards and the state system. Around 100 Queensland workers have phoned the hotline and Wageline telephone services with stories of being unfairly dismissed as a result of the federal WorkChoices legislation. In many of these instances there is simply no remedy available to these workers because of the limitations that that legislation put in place, legislation that in the early weeks the federal government was trying to hide from, such as in the case of Cowra, which has proven that employers do have the right to simply sack people even in the larger firms by saying, 'There is a change in my business needs so I have put people off.'

Workers who call the Fair Go hotline and are affected by WorkChoices are given the federal WorkChoices Infoline as well to contact in the first instance. The department is also recording details of alleged injustices for possible referral to the federal minister, Kevin Andrews, or to the federal Office of Workplace Services. Again I give a few examples: a middle-aged female employee in Townsville with six years service dismissed due to a business downturn only to find out that the intent of the employer was to replace older staff with younger, cheaper workers; a Gladstone woman on sick leave following surgery whose job was filled while she was getting a clearance to return to work. The employer had full knowledge of her situation but still fired her without any notice or without any reason being given.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer to page 3-11 of the MPS. Can the minister advise of the potential impact of the federal government's WorkChoices legislation on the delivery of workplace health and safety services?

Mr BARTON: Over recent years Queensland has made impressive reductions in the instance of workplace fatalities and injuries, which fell by 25 per cent and 10 per cent respectively between 2001 and 2004-05. The data for 2005-06 will be available next month. In addition, Queensland has one of Australia's best performing workers' compensation schemes having achieved a balance between ensuring the best possible benefits and rehabilitation for workers and maintaining Australia's lowest premium rates for employers now at \$1.20. This has been achieved within the state industrial system that considers and balances the rights and obligations of employers and workers.

The new federal WorkChoices industrial relations legislation has the potential to impact significantly on the workplace health and safety and workers' compensation outcomes of Queensland workers. WorkChoices has the potential to impact on these outcomes by increasing poor workplace health and safety outcomes related to casualised, contingent and outsourced work arrangements, reducing access to collective arrangements which provide many protections, increasing psychological injuries arising from an inability to access unfair dismissal or change to work characteristics, increasing the duration of workers' compensation claims through delayed return to work as a result of more complex return-to-work arrangements, and worker concerns regarding unfair dismissal and potentially reducing the protections available to workers who raise occupational health and safety issues.

The Department of Industrial Relations is closely monitoring the impacts of WorkChoices for a whole range of reasons. We are very concerned. We have already seen examples where the federal government is saying that it is totally opposed to union training courses on occupational health and safety being included in agreements. We had one of those bob up in Queensland in the last couple of weeks in relation to a major coal mining company. Traditionally, ever since there has been coalmining in this state, the unions have been part of the formal arrangements for occupational health and safety. It has been told that it cannot include the provisions for the training of union members on occupational health and safety issues in its registered agreement.

CHAIR: The time for government questions has expired. I call the member for Maroochydhore.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, the MPS states on page 3-35 that the output will continue to work closely with Queensland Health on industrial relations and human resource strategies to continue reform to the health system. I ask: given the way that the head of nursing at Royal Brisbane Hospital

was summarily sacked and then hastily reinstated recently and Queensland Health's shocking reputation under your government for nurturing a culture of bullying which has seen thousands of highly experienced staff leave the system, do you not accept that you have failed to change this terrible bullying culture in the Queensland public sector?

Mr BARTON: I think it would be pretty unfair of me to delve into an individual incident in Queensland Health. Of course, we were not directly involved in that matter that is reported. Are you muttering something over there?

Miss SIMPSON: Well, Minister, the government is the employer. Are you not concerned? Given that you have an MPS—

CHAIR: Order! You have asked the question.

Miss SIMPSON: I thought the minister had finished.

Mr BARTON: Well, someone was muttering something at me from over there and it was disrupting me.

CHAIR: The three minutes will start again. We will go back to the question.

Miss SIMPSON: He was asking me questions.

Mr BARTON: The primary responsibility for health matters for the Queensland government is Queensland Health and the Minister for Health. There was an incident several weeks back where the director of nursing was dismissed by the new clinical CEO, but within a matter of an hour or two that director of nursing was reinstated by the director-general, and the person who dismissed the director of nursing publicly said that he had misunderstood the industrial relations relationships. I guess that is unfortunate, to say the least, but let us be very clear when you say that there is a culture of bullying and that we are responsible for it. Our responsibility is for industrial relations in Queensland Health. The deputy director-general of my department, who is sitting on my left, Barry Leahy, had been over there until several weeks ago acting as the chief industrial person for Queensland Health while we got through a whole raft of industrial relations issues that came out of the restructuring of Queensland Health. He has just advised me that the clinical CEO is a Canadian who had no idea of how our system worked and he thought he could change it, but he has been instructed appropriately and given appropriate counselling on how the system works now.

We have come through bargaining periods with basically everybody in Queensland Health. There have been agreements finalised with the doctors. There have been agreements finalised with the visiting medical officers. There have been agreements finalised with the nurses. There have been agreements finalised with the engineering and support staff. There are agreements that are close to finalisation with the clerical staff. That is one that is at the very final stages of finalisation. There has been a little bit of a problem with the allied health professionals only in the sense that the allied health professionals reached an agreement they concluded directly with me and with their unions, they went public in front of the television cameras with me to applaud that agreement, had that agreement finalised, had it put to their membership, in excess of 70 per cent of whom voted in support of that agreement, and then their leadership found out that that there had been a bigger deal done for the nurses and decided they no longer wanted to sign off on the agreement.

The great bulk of Queensland Health employees have their enterprise agreements finalised and everybody is over there working more productively than they have for a long time.

Miss SIMPSON: I have a further question regarding how you propose to work closely with Queensland Health, industrial relations and human resource strategies to continue reform to the health system. Are you seriously saying that you have fixed this terrible bullying culture in Queensland Health?

Mr BARTON: My responsibility is for industrial relations for this government. While we put together the bullying policies—

Miss SIMPSON: Human resource strategies are in your MPS statement.

CHAIR: Order! Do I have to bring it up every question you ask? One question at a time. The minister was responding to your first question. Three minutes start again.

Mr BARTON: I am not even sure I remember what the question was now, but let us go back to where I think we were. The public sector human resources policies of this government effectively sit with the Premier. The office of public service sits with the Premier, not with me. My department certainly has responsibility for working out many of the strategies on bullying and on other public sector matters, but when it comes to addressing individual matters in departments of that nature that is a matter for that department, not for me. I must say that we are working very closely with Queensland Health on their industrial relations practices. I would be the first to acknowledge that industrial relations in Queensland Health, certainly around the time I became the minister, was a basket case, to put it mildly. That is why Mr Leahy, sitting here on my left, kindly agreed to go over and run Queensland Health's industrial relations while we got through the restructure. I wanted him back in my department. He is now back. He has been back for several weeks.

You do not come from where Queensland Health has been, even from an IR perspective, to a perfect system overnight. We think very great progress has been made. This is demonstrated by the fact that WorkCover claims in Queensland Health are going down. That is one measure. We are particularly helping Queensland Health with workplace health and safety prevention strategies. We think quantum leaps have been made in Queensland Health, at least from the perspective of how my department interacts with them. But again I want to stress to you that the fundamental management of Queensland Health is, as it should be, with Queensland Health. The responsibility for Queensland Health is with the minister, as it should be. We applaud what they are doing. We are advisers, I guess, to Queensland Health in having our global responsibilities for the government on industrial relations, occupational health and safety et cetera, and great progress has been made in those areas.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, do you accept that bullying causes psychological injury and that therefore it is a portfolio responsibility of yours? Are you concerned at all that there is still an extensive culture of bullying in Queensland Health which is failing that public sector employee workforce?

Mr BARTON: Queensland Health, I am advised—because my deputy director-general was over with Queensland Health—have developed a new code of conduct. They have set up a new unit to deal with bullying and harassment. It is an area of major concern for Queensland Health. If you look at the standing orders for this committee, you will find that I am not supposed to give opinions and you are not supposed to ask me for my opinions. I have opinions about Queensland Health, but I will keep them to myself because I am not the minister responsible for Queensland Health. I believe that the minister, the director-general and their management team, from the interaction that I have with them on areas that are my whole-of-government responsibility, where I rub shoulders with them, are doing an excellent job.

You mentioned the link between bullying and WorkCover psychological claims. You asked me whether I believe there is a link. Yes, there is. There is absolutely no doubt that workplace bullying and harassment does lead to incidents of psychological claims before WorkCover, but the incidence of psychological claims in the public sector is down 7.9 per cent from where they were in 2003-04 to 2005. The material that we have—we do not have the final figures for 2005-06 but we have the year to date data—indicates that the incidence has reduced again by a further 7.2 per cent, having been down by 7.9 per cent for the year before. That is the whole of the Queensland public sector. I do not have that broken down department by department with me, but I must say to you that great concern that we all had about WorkCover claims related to psychological claims, and I accept that there is a link—the workplace bullying. The work that we have collectively put in across the government demonstrates that that work is having a positive effect. Not only are they not climbing; in past years there were some very significant increases in the level of psychological claims to WorkCover in the state public sector. It has been consistently falling for the last two years. I know when I first came into this portfolio just over two years ago they had plateaued, but they are now significantly falling.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, will you table a breakdown of the psychological workplace claims for each department—

Mr BARTON: No.

Miss SIMPSON:—and with a comparison to last year?

Mr BARTON: No.

Miss SIMPSON: Why not?

Mr BARTON: I do not have them.

Miss SIMPSON: Will you take it as a question on notice to table that information—

Mr BARTON: No, I do not know that we do have that yet, because we do not have the final figures for the year to June.

Miss SIMPSON: You have just said that they have gone down. Surely you can table them here.

Mr BARTON: We have the global figures. The global figures have gone down. The numbers in total I have, but if you wanted that sort of information my suggestion is that you should have asked for it as a question on notice before this hearing. You are asking me for figures that I could not conceivably respond to in a three-minute answer here.

Miss SIMPSON: Well, you can take the question on notice.

Mr BARTON: You are not entitled to go on a trawling exercise, to put my department through a massive exercise at that sort of notice. Also, I could not conceivably provide that sort of information in a three-minute answer here even if I had it, and the time for those types of questions on notice is over. Again, I make the point: I doubt we have that breakdown at this point in time. We have the global numbers of claims. You would be asking me to put WorkCover through a very significant exercise.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I take it that you are refusing to provide that breakdown or even to take that as a question on notice to provide it to this committee.

Mr BARTON: I have just said to you that we do not have the information here, nor should we be—

Miss SIMPSON: Could I ask you what would that breakdown be for Education and Health?

CHAIR: The minister was still responding to your first question. Every time you ask a question we get to this. You appear at this committee by a decision of the committee to allow you to appear. We have had a very polite hearing until now. We will let the minister respond to your questions.

Mr BARTON: We have the 2004-05 figures here, but you are asking me for the 2005-06 figures. The year to the end of 2005 was 13 days ago. That is when it finished. Figures are not generally available. Even the employment data that ABS has probably released this morning will be for May, not for June. I am not saying that I will not give you the information. No-one is more forthcoming at estimates committees than me, and I am happy to give you the breakdown for 2004-05 for the major departments which I have. But I cannot give you facts that I do not have. Is that simple enough for you?

Miss SIMPSON: To answer the minister's question to me, I will accept him tabling that document and we will seek the further breakdown when it becomes available if he does not have it now.

Mr BARTON: You can ask me that question on notice in the parliament when they become available.

Miss SIMPSON: Well, you asked me a question, Minister. I am asking you to please take that as a question on notice to table that information, as you have just said that information is available. Will you make a commitment to table the current figures when they become available?

Mr BARTON: Let me clarify—and the director-general has just reminded me—that a question on notice came in about three months ago. Presumably it was from your predecessor for the breakdown of the figures for the 2004-05 year and that was provided at that time. So that is available, I am advised, to you now. If it is not available to you, it should be in the *Hansard*. It would have been an answer. If there is any difficulty with that, we will give you that because that is information that we have available to us. But I do not want my department to go through and dig it out again if it is already available on the public record and on the parliamentary record. If you write to me, or ask me, or put a question on notice for that information, I will be happy to provide it to you when it becomes available and it is collated.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I would ask you to please publish that information publicly when it becomes available, and I ask you: when will that information become available, given that you have told us a global figure for this committee but you have been unable to provide a departmental breakdown to show which departments have had increases and which departments have had a reduction?

Mr BARTON: It is easier to get a global figure because you will appreciate that WorkCover do know on a running basis how many claims they have. When you start to dissect it further, that does require additional work by their staff. My advice is that the full data for the 2005-06 financial year will be available in approximately the first week of August.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I refer you to page 3-8 of the MPS regarding the role of this area of your department in developing policy and the legislative framework for the Queensland workers compensation system. Earlier this year the member for Burdekin asked a question on notice No. 763 regarding WorkCover Queensland's policy of rigidly enforcing section 11 of workers comp rehabilitation regulation 2003, whereby WorkCover would no longer automatically allow employers the facility to pay their annual workers compensation premiums by monthly instalments but would instead insist on payment of the full 12-month premium up front in advance. Will you consider making some minor amendments to this regulation to make it less onerous for employers, particularly small businesses, to be able to pay their premiums by instalment?

Mr BARTON: WorkCover has advised that from 1 July under section 11 only employers who are experiencing genuine financial hardship will be offered an instalment plan arrangement for paying their workers compensation premium. The change in arrangements for premium instalment plans was a business decision made by the board of WorkCover Queensland. WorkCover Queensland still does accept payment by credit card for small to medium employers who have difficulty in coming up with the cash.

WorkCover Queensland continues to deliver the lowest average premiums of any state or territory in Australia and rewards employers for good performance through lower premiums. WorkCover Queensland's customer advisers have been making personal contact with these policy holders as part of the forecasting season and industry groups have been advised. Customers requesting consideration for an instalment plan will be sent the criteria used to assess financial hardship. To assist businesses that have been using instalments plans WorkCover will now extend the credit card payment option from a premium limit of \$5,000 to \$10,000. This could benefit approximately 7,900 employers whose policies cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000. The current uptake on the credit card payment system is approximately 15 per cent of eligible policy holders.

Let us have a look at this. You have asked me whether we will do it for everybody. I guess there is a cost involved in doing it for everybody. You did qualify it by saying, 'What about small business?' We have the most efficient workers compensation scheme in the country and the lowest premiums in the country—the lowest by literally a country mile. The next premium closest to ours is virtually double our workers compensation premiums. Employers get the benefit of that.

If employers do have genuine hardship there is criteria for that. All those who did have the instalment plan and who have technically lost it have been directly contacted by WorkCover, not the department. WorkCover has a very good board. It does include a previous leader of the state Liberal Party in this parliament as deputy chair so it is not just the good old boys of the Labor Party. WorkCover will allow instalments where there is demonstrated hardship. We are happy for those people to contact WorkCover. They will be given the criteria for what is considered hardship. If they are experiencing hardship then they can pay by install.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer to page 3-9 of the MPS. What has the Beattie Labor government done to improve the workers compensation benefits for injured workers in Queensland?

Mr BARTON: We have just been talking about WorkCover so that is a very appropriate question. Queensland's construction industry continues to enjoy rapid growth with a 16 per cent increase in activity between 2003-04 and 2004-05. The strong activity has continued in 2005-06, though final data is not available.

The increased activity in this high-risk industry poses additional challenges in ensuring improved workplace health and safety outcomes. The building and construction industry initiative, which is one of our responses to keeping benefits down, has been developed to assist in achieving improved outcomes through the employment of 22 specialist construction inspectors to deliver greater presence and workplace health and safety focus at construction workplaces. In total, Workplace Health and Safety Queensland had 61 construction inspectors in 2005-06 out of a total complement of 229 inspectors.

We have seen the establishment of a construction safety group which works in cooperatively with representatives of the construction industry to develop strategies to ensure safe and healthy construction work environments and the identification of opportunities to provide incentives for the safe design of plant and equipment used in construction work and the development of strategies with professional industry groups to support the pending statutory requirements for safety and design. The construction sector has traditionally had one of the higher levels of job accidents and workers compensation claims. We will provide incentives for the safe design of plant and equipment used in construction work and the development of strategies with professional industry groups.

Other construction related activities during 2005-06 include the codes of practice for mobile cranes. There is a whole raft of issues that we are addressing across that sector. We are working with industry. As you would be aware we do have training programs with the various industry groups. We provide safety seminars et cetera. We work with individual employers to make sure that they put new processes in place that lead to reductions in injuries. We have also put in place significant benefit provisions for workers who have been injured.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to the MPS at page 3-11. What is the Beattie Labor government doing to better manage the risks from asbestos containing materials?

Mr BARTON: As committee members would be aware, prior to the late 1980s asbestos was widely used in products and can be found in buildings and plant and workplaces and domestic premises. The Beattie Labor government recognises that the dangers from exposure to asbestos need to be managed properly to ensure people's health is not put at risk. The government has put in place a range of measures to impress upon the community the need to identify asbestos and ensure that it is handled properly.

My department is focusing on workplace exposure to asbestos and is administering new regulations which call up two national codes of practice—one for the management and control of asbestos in workplaces and the other for the safe removal of asbestos. Workplaces have had to comply with these new requirements since 1 January 2006.

Let me add to what I have said. We have also made some quite significant changes in terms of asbestos that is in people's homes and in the broader community. Asbestos is something that we have been well aware of in workplace environments for quite a long time and appropriate measures were there. The other harsh reality is that most buildings in Queensland built prior to 1970 contained quite significant amounts of asbestos. They had what we all referred to as fibro or Tilux. Believe it or not a lot of the vinyl tiles that are on floors or vinyl sheeting that is on walls in private homes, schools and other places does contain asbestos.

It is not free asbestos although we have seen the problems with some roofs in schools. Once they start to degrade then the asbestos can become free and can become a problem. Fibro in a school, a home or anywhere else is not a problem until someone starts to work on it. I must admit that one of my cousins threw me through the wall of his parents' home one day and that was asbestos. I guess none of us appreciated at that time that fibro was dangerous.

The problem is when people start pulling it out. That is what typically happens in a lot of homes. There may have been Tilux in the bathroom and people want to modernise the bathroom so the first thing they do is pull the Tilux down, break it up, throw it in the bin, put up new walls and put ceramic tiles on it.

We have changed the act so that a private handyman can remove up to 10 square metres of it. After that, properly licensed people have to do asbestos removal. People can do those training courses through TAFE or a private provider if they want to do it themselves.

Mr O'BRIEN: Pages 3-8 to 3-10 of the MPS refer to workplace health and safety services. What has been done to improve workplace health and safety outcomes for Indigenous communities in 2005-06, including communities in the electorate of Cook?

Mr BARTON: If you do not mind, can I butt in for a minute. I have just been handed the unemployment figures. I am sure everybody on this committee will be interested in them. The Queensland unemployment rate for the month of June was 4.7 per cent down from 4.8 per cent on a trend basis. On a seasonally adjusted basis, which is the one most regularly referred to and used, it is 4.6 per cent down from 4.9 per cent. The participation rate was steady at 66.3 per cent. The figure is not represented by less people seeking work. The participation rate is the same and the figure has dropped by a further 0.3 per cent. Employment growth in Queensland over the year is two per cent compared to the national average of 1.5 per cent. Queensland is punching above its weight once again. Sorry to indulge but I thought everybody on this committee would want to know that the good work on employment is continuing. As the minister for employment I am a pretty happy boy. I might have a beer at the end of these hearings on the strength of that.

Back to the question. In 2005-06 the department extended its Indigenous program through the employment of a permanent principal adviser to better coordinate services to Indigenous communities. The emphasis of the program in 2005-06 was the development and preparation of culturally appropriate training and advisory services and the production of supporting workplace health and safety information.

During this year negotiations have been conducted with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander councils at deed of grant in trust communities to provide workplace health and safety awareness training in cooperation with the Department of Local Government, Planning, Sport and Recreation's community governance improvement strategy. In June 2006 staff from the Brisbane south-Gold Coast regional office consulted and delivered workplace health and safety awareness training to six Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations comprising 63 full-time and part-time staff and volunteers at North Stradbroke Island. This training was specifically designed to inform the organisation's management and staff of the requirements and the obligations under the Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995.

The staff from the regional office also designed and delivered manual handling and ergonomics awareness training to three Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander organisations comprising 26 full-time and part-time staff and volunteers at North Stradbroke Island. In addition, the department's corporate strategy unit provided financial sponsorship for two Indigenous staff positions in the Wal Meta Indigenous leadership training program 2006 through the Department of Employment and Training. Financial sponsorship of the two staff positions in this leadership program is in line with the department's staff personal and professional development strategy. Two staff have since enrolled in the training program and commenced their studies in early February 2006.

Mr ENGLISH: I also refer to the same page of the MPS. What has been done to improve workplace health and safety outcomes in Redlands during the 2005-06 financial year?

Mr BARTON: The Redlands form part of the Brisbane south-Gold Coast region of Workplace Health and Safety Queensland. The region had an active year with a significant number of compliance campaigns having coverage at Redlands. These campaigns included: audits of amusement devices at the Redlands show; audits in the manufacturing industry focusing on areas such as boat building, metal fabrication and cabinet making; audits of child-care centres focusing predominantly on risks to workers contracting communicable diseases; manual handling audits for non-residential carers and aids; and audits of retail nurseries with a focus on hazardous substance management associated with workers and members of the public.

The increased growth in construction activity, particularly domestic construction in the Redlands, was also reflected in the region's activities. A compliance campaign in the construction area focused on particular hazards such as excavations, working at heights, falling objects as well as mechanisms that support effective risk management such as workplace consultation.

A rearrangement of construction inspector allocation to specific regional areas has also resulted in improved delivery of service to the Redlands, with two construction inspectors dedicated to the Redlands in 2005-06. Efforts have also been directed to improving workplace health and safety for the Aboriginal community of Stradbroke Island. More than 80 community members attended information sessions run on the island in 2005-06 which addressed topics such as manual tasks, risk management and legislation. Businesses within the Redlands area have also benefited from the Workplace Health and Safety Queensland small business program with 16 consultations delivered in the Redlands over 2005-06. So I must say it is pretty good news for occupational health and safety in the Redlands area.

CHAIR: It being 11.45, that concludes the examination of the expenditure estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Employment, Training and Industrial Relations and Minister for Sport. Thank you, Minister, and advisers for your attendance. The committee will now adjourn for lunch and the hearing will resume at 12.45 to examine the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads.

Sitting suspended from 11.45 am to 12.45 pm.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C—TRANSPORT AND MAIN ROADS

In Attendance

Hon. PT Lucas, Minister for Transport and Main Roads

Queensland Transport

Mr B Wilson, Director-General

Mr D Hunt, Deputy Director-General

Mr C Nash, Director, Rail Services

Mr L Franzmann, General-Manager (TransLink)

Queensland Rail

Mr B Schueber, Chief Executive Officer

Mr S Cantwell, Chief Operating Officer (Acting)

Department of Main Roads

Mr A Tesch, Director-General

Mr L Ford, Deputy Director-General

CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to our hearing. I am Simon Finn, the member for Yeerongpilly and chair of the committee. My fellow committee members are Mr Michael Caltabiano MP, member for Chatsworth, and deputy chair; Mr John English MP, member for Redlands; Mr Chris Foley MP, member for Maryborough; Mr Jason O'Brien MP, member for Cook; Mrs Jann Stuckey MP, member for Currumbin; and Mr Geoff Wilson MP, member for Ferny Grove. The next portfolio to be examined relates to the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I remind the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and three minutes for answers. A bell will ring once 15 seconds before the end of those time limits and twice when the time has expired. I will allow more time for answers if the questioner consents.

The standing orders require that at least half of the time for questions is allotted to non-government members. Government members and non-government members of the committee will take turns at asking questions commencing with non-government members in blocks lasting approximately 20 minutes. In relation to media coverage of today's hearing, the committee has resolved that video coverage without sound and still photographs is allowed only during the opening statements and at the commencement of proceedings after each change of departments. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask advisors to the minister to identify yourselves before you speak. Please also ensure that mobile phones or pagers are switched off while in the chamber so as not to disrupt proceedings.

I remind all of those participating in the hearing today that these proceedings are similar to parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. Standing order 206 provides that a person admitted to a committee public hearing may be excluded by order of the committee. The time allotted to the portfolio of Transport and Main Roads is three hours. We will commence with the Department of Transport from 12.45 to 2.30 pm. After a short break, we will then examine the Department of Main Roads from 2.45 pm to 4 pm. I call on the estimates of the proposed expenditure referred to the committee and declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Transport and Main Roads open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, under standing order 177 you are able to make an opening statement that does not exceed five minutes. Would you like to make that opening statement?

Mr LUCAS: Thank you, Mr Chair, and your fellow committee members. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to talk about the Transport portfolio. The Beattie government will spend a record \$3.98 billion on transport and road infrastructure in 2006-07. Some \$2 billion has been set aside for Queensland Transport rail and ports capital and \$1.98 billion for Main Roads and Queensland Motorways Ltd capital works. Spending on Transport infrastructure is up 27 per cent or \$418 million and on Main Roads capital works by a massive 58 per cent or \$727 million compared to 2005-06. It is an historic boost to transport and main roads infrastructure in Queensland and a tremendous investment in our future economic growth and wellbeing.

This is a budget that ensures that facilities need to keep pace with rapid population growth throughout the state, and funding will be provided. Major projects funded in the 2006-07 budget include the Gateway upgrade project, the Tugun bypass, the inner northern busway, the Boggo Road busway, expansion of the south-east Queensland cycleway network, bus priority measures for Redcliffe, Gold

Coast and Sunshine Coast, advanced planning for the eastern and northern busways, and the CAMCOSS rail line on the Sunshine Coast. This portfolio budget and emphasis on new transport infrastructure funding is indicative of the Beattie government's commitment to establishing a world-class transport system in Queensland.

The state government is determined to deliver the best possible transport outcomes for all Queenslanders by working with the private sector, the community and with other levels of government on the planning and management of our road network. For example, the Main Roads-local government roads alliance and Queensland Transport's integrated regional transport plans are at the forefront of how stakeholders are involved in developing and shaping regional road and transport priorities. This collaborative approach is pivotal in the development of a world-class transport network for Queensland. With the committee's concurrence, I intend to make some comments specifically about Queensland Transport and then provide a similar introduction at the start of the Main Roads session.

Queensland Transport is facing unprecedented challenges to provide the services and infrastructure needed to underpin this state's tremendous economic and population growth and to maintain the style of living Queenslanders expect and deserve. Passenger transport services are being upgraded to meet burgeoning demand in high growth areas, including south-east Queensland and our regional cities. Demand for freight services is at historical levels and rising, driven mainly by record demand for coal. The budget meets those challenges and provides Queensland Transport with the foundations to continue meeting growth targets for the future. It is a visionary budget matching today's needs and planning for expected growth for 20 years to come. Funding is provided for Queensland Transport's responsibilities under the Beattie government's \$66 billion, 20-year South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program. Transport and roads infrastructure projects under SEQIPP total \$27.7 billion.

This is also a socially responsible budget, providing record funding for road safety and for transport accessibility. Road safety remains at the forefront of the Beattie government's agenda. In addition to the Safer Roads Sooner program administered by Main Roads where \$183 million has been provided over the next four years, this budget provides an extra \$4 million on top of recurrent road safety funding to fast-track implementation of initiatives from the Road Safety Summit held earlier this year. In 2006-07 the Beattie government will spend \$50.8 million of a \$187.7 million commitment to provide improved access for people with disabilities at train stations and on trains. A further \$3.8 million of a total \$29.2 million has been allocated to help the Queensland passenger transport industry meet its obligations under the Disability Standards for Accessible Public Transport 2002.

This budget continues the government's \$12 million commitment over four years to support operators of school buses in steep and hazardous areas to fit seatbelts and other safety equipment to the buses to protect students and drivers. In December this year the government will complete the \$8 million installation of VerifEye security cameras to about 2,800 taxis in all cities with populations greater than 40,000. Taxis in other centres will then be considered for installation on a case-by-case basis. Major initiatives included in the state budget for Queensland Transport rail and ports include \$2 billion allocated to Queensland Transport rail and ports capital expenditure, up 27 per cent on the previous year; operating expenditure of \$2.1 billion for QT; assisting exports and economic growth with \$837.75 million for rail infrastructure and rolling stock this financial year, including funding for major expansion of QR coal freight services; a \$472.7 million capital investment in public transport infrastructure, up \$109.5 million on last year to provide better bus and rail services throughout the state; and supporting trade and local jobs by allocating \$856 million for port and airport development, including \$661.9 million to develop regional ports and airports.

Major projects funded in the budget include a \$1.3 billion commitment for Queensland Transport for the first five years of the SEQIPP; \$215.3 million to upgrade track on the Citytrain network and to provide additional Citytrain rolling stock; \$193.8 million to continue the development of the port of Brisbane and the relocations from Hamilton to Fishermans Island; \$118 million of a \$330 million commitment to complete sections 1 and 2 of the inner northern busway; \$51.8 million to improve access, safety and security at Citytrain stations and carriages; and \$20 million towards implementation of a new smart card integrated ticketing system. In the regions statewide, there is \$360 million at RG Tanna. There is a lot more, but time has escaped me.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Before I call on questions from non-government members, there was an omission from my opening remarks. Section 177 of the standing orders enables a member with leave of the committee to ask questions at an estimates committee. The member for Maroochydore sought leave from the committee to appear and was granted leave at this morning's meeting, so I welcome the member for Maroochydore with us this afternoon. The first round of questions is from non-government members.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to MPS page 1-12 and the Traveltrain operations undertaken by Queensland Rail. As you would be aware, over the last three years patronage has dropped from 600,000 to a projected 432,000, a drop of 168,000 passenger trips or a 28 per cent reduction. At the same time the subsidy per passenger per kilometre has increased from 28c to 48c, which is a 71 per

cent increase. Minister, what are your plans to arrest this decline given that the state contribution to the network has also increased by 61 per cent over that same time?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. The first point I want to make is that public transport throughout the world, not just Australia, requires subsidies to operate. We are a low population density city in Brisbane in a low population density state in Queensland in a low population density country. I have indicated before my concern with the decline in patronage that has come as a result of a number of factors which I will go into now. The first thing I want to say is this: just because you live in the region does not mean that you are entitled to expect that government will not support you in terms of transport. We lead Australia and indeed, I think, are the only state in Australia, for example, that subsidises airfares to remote locations in the state. So we are very keen to ensure that we do that.

I want to say this in relation to Traveltrain patronage: it has been declining. When you talk about airfares to places like Cairns, which I think off the top of my head are \$147 and are available all of the time—there are cheap fares and planes are available all of the time—it is clearly a problem in terms of QR. The problem is this, though, however: many of the journeys that occur in regional Queensland are not from Brisbane to Cairns or Brisbane to Townsville; they might be from Mackay to Townsville or Mackay to Cairns. So we need to understand it. Those people who travel on it in many cases are pensioners, who are free. That is not available to them on the air network. With historical highs immediately after the Ansett collapse and the International Year of the Outback, we have then been coming off in figures since then.

I want to make this very clear to the committee and to the people of Queensland that our commitment to regional rail services is very strong. QR seeks to market our rail services throughout Queensland. You may be aware that a little while ago I announced the Wanderer package, which is a package to encourage backpackers to hop on and off our rail network. I have to say this as well: RailCorp in New South Wales has reported an overall 21 per cent decline in interregional passengers from 1999-2000 to 2003-04. The *Courier-Mail* reported that the McCaffertys Greyhound chief executive officer said passenger kilometres there were down 25 per cent in 2004-05. The Brisbane to Cairns tilt train fare is \$294.80. On the *Sunlander* it is \$201.30. A discount airfare on 13 July for a mid-June ticket on Jetstar is \$124.

But we have to remember this too: it is not just people who catch aeroplanes that are important to tourism. Pensioners often use our Traveltrain services because they do get the free rail travel by combining the vouchers. The point I want to make is that they are very important to the economies of these regional centres. People often use the train to travel for family reasons or to travel for health reasons, and we are committed to continuing that. So we will continue to promote our rail Traveltrain system. We will continue to go to international fairs to promote it with products like the Wanderer. But I want to say this: people in regional Queensland should be assured that the Queensland government is strongly committed to providing rail services for them.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to the MPS at pages 1-10 and 1-32 relating to the improvement to the rail corridors in the south-east corner and also to government question on notice No. 1 of this estimates committee. In November 2003 you stated that you would duplicate the Gold Coast rail and provide additional rolling stock to double the frequency and halve the time between services from approximately 30 minutes to 15 minutes. Minister, two years and eight months later this work still has not been completed. The service frequency has not changed and the now well-known 'Bombay Express' is forcing patrons back on to our road system. When will the necessary duplication and rolling stock be in place? With regard to the promised increased frequencies for services, when will they be delivered and at what cost?

Mr LUCAS: The first thing I want to say about the road network is that thanks to the federal Liberal government there is no commitment from it for the Pacific Motorway between Brisbane and the Gold Coast either at Springwood or Nerang to Tugun, notwithstanding the fact that it is happy to put \$150 million a year into the Pacific Highway the other side of the border. So that is an utter and absolute disgrace, but we will probably talk about that a little bit more in the second half of the estimates committee. We have made it clear in relation to the Gold Coast rail line that there is a commitment to significantly improve the services there. We have talked about the frequency of the services that we would achieve there and also improve the rolling stock.

If you go down there now you will see that work is well, well advanced on the Ormeau to Coomera duplication. Later this year we will start the Salisbury to Kuraby triplication, together with the upgrades to the stations there. The chairman would know that that triplication is necessary to get the service frequency required and to allow trains to bypass Brisbane trains on our network. So the benefits there will be for the Gold Coast. I think that in approximately September, off the top of my head, we will start the physical construction. Already we have let the contract for the new bridge over Mains Road there, for example. Shortly we will also start the next stage of the duplication on the Gold Coast. With regard to the Helensvale to Robina duplication, construction will commence in September 2006 with completion by August 2008.

Being an engineer, the deputy chair would know that there are two aspects of frequency and service: not only do you have to have the infrastructure in place; you also have to have the rolling stock in place. The rolling stock is currently being built. If you go up to EDI in Maryborough, you will see it being built. Seventy-two carriages will roll off and, off the top of my head, approximately one-third of them will be going specifically for the Gold Coast line services. They will be put into service as they are built and as the infrastructure permits that to happen.

I am always happy to have a comparison on rail on the Gold Coast with the Tories, because in 1965 your crowd ripped the line up. Not only did you rip the line up; you also sold off the right of way in what would have to be one of the most stupid decisions that a Queensland government has ever made. In the last year there has been a number of instances—for example, Jericho to Yaraka in central Queensland—where we have closed a railway line but we did not sell off the right of way. Even out there we will not sell off the right of way.

For the people of the Gold Coast our commitment is very clear, and if you want to ask me about the Gold Coast light rail-busway I am happy to tell you about that and our commitment to one of the fastest growing cities in the fastest growing state of Australia. The program is in the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and I am delighted to be a part of rolling it out.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 1-14 of the MPS relating to employee expenses. The increase between the 2005-06 estimated actual and the 2006-07 estimate is noted as a variance resulting from the impact of enterprise bargaining agreements and an increase in the rail safety audit activities. How many train drivers work for Queensland Rail on the Citytrain and Traveltrain networks? How many of those drivers are female? What are the conditions of employment for drivers including their wages, superannuation, award and overaward payments under their enterprise bargaining agreements?

Mr LUCAS: Obviously, I do not have a copy of their enterprise bargaining agreement with me, but I am happy to get back to the committee with respect to those figures. I make it clear that we are in an environment where wage costs are escalating and people are in need. I do not know about you, but I know that train drivers are highly skilled individuals and they are reasonably well paid. In that environment you need to make sure that you can continue to attract highly paid workers to work in your network.

Certainly we know the issue in terms of places like central Queensland, where the mining industry is booming. But that is also a function here. The taxi industry tell us about the problems they have in attracting drivers. We make no apology for negotiating with our workforce to attract them and to give them attractive conditions. One of the things we work on with them, too, is recruitment and retention in relation to the workshops and the like.

However, I should point out that we do offer the people who drive trains and the like in rural and regional Queensland the opportunity to move to Brisbane to work on our Citytrain network. I do not see any difficulty in relation to that. We do not have them on AWAs like your crowd wants. We have a very strong commitment to our drivers.

I would like to have more women drivers. I think the honourable member has made a reasonable point. I do not have the exact numbers with me, but to have more women drivers would be a good situation because, broadly, we want to do that. Different occupations have different attractions to different people. I do not know why not enough women are seeking train-driving jobs with QR. I will look into that. Having said that, QR is an equal opportunity employer. CEO Bob Schueber places very high emphasis on equal opportunity applying in the organisation and on the promotion of women. I notice behind me, for example, the head of HR in QR and she does a wonderful job. We encourage women train drivers and we could do with more.

I will get you some information in terms of the wages and conditions. However, if you want me to apologise for remunerating people fairly and appropriately I will not do that because that is what we should do. Of course, there will always be some disputes when we pay people. The enterprise bargaining negotiations took place earlier this year. They were completed successfully. In terms of industrial issues, I make the point that other states would cry out for the industrial relations history of this state.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: Referring to page 1-35 of the MPS and the percentage of unscheduled train cancellations on the Citytrain network, as you would be aware between 2003 and 2005 there has been a 150 per cent increase in the percentage of unscheduled train cancellations on the Citytrain network. With increasing problems associated with the reliability of public transport, commuters will very soon lose their confidence in having a reliable and efficient service. What plans have been put in place to arrest this increase in unscheduled train cancellations? Can you provide a breakdown of the reasons for those unscheduled train cancellations, whether they be maintenance, wildcat union strikes or other types of industrial action?

Mr LUCAS: I am getting the figures for you. QR Citytrain has one of Australia's best on-time performance records for its train services with 93.8 per cent reliability for 2005-06. That is particularly good for a system that shares many of its tracks with a freight network.

We achieved greater than 94 per cent on-time running in the peak periods last year. That exceeded the contract requirement of 93 per cent. QR has also achieved less than 0.5 per cent of services which were cancelled without prior notice. This exceeds the contract requirement of achieving less than 0.6 per cent of unscheduled cancellations. These two measures mean that rail passengers in south-east Queensland can be confident that their rail services run according to the timetable and also that disruptions to customers due to cancelled services are minimised.

I want to make a point about the industrial action earlier this year, which was unfortunate in the context of the enterprise bargaining negotiations. It is not helpful when individuals seek to withdraw services. QR took the opportunity to have the matter dealt with in the commission as soon as possible. These things sometimes happen. At the time I apologised to commuters for that issue. However, when you compare our on-time reliability with that of other states, together with our safety and indeed our infrastructure standards, Queensland scrubs up very well. I would like to thank QR for doing that.

QR is the most effective and efficient operator of passenger rail systems in this country in terms of the satisfaction of our commuters. We have had significant growth in patronage under TransLink, and that includes a growth in patronage under rail. People are voting with their feet when it comes to our rail network. The rolling stock is built very well, and the rolling stock for the Citytrain network is built exclusively in your electorate.

The tilt train accident was an unfortunate event. Bob Schueber and I went on-site on the morning of the accident and we looked at the structural integrity of that rolling stock. Notwithstanding that it came off the track at a pretty high speed, it was amazing. All of the seats were intact. That it had that structural integrity says wonders for its design and for the people who built it.

The Victorians now also operate high-speed trains, but Queensland's operation is world-class compared to the rest of Australia. We have invested money, and even under the Tories money was invested in our track. That is one thing that I will give you guys: from the days of Bjelke-Petersen onwards, we actually invested money in our main line rail system in this state. Labor continues that tradition.

Miss SIMPSON: Minister, I refer you to page 1-1 of the MPS where reference is made to strategic issues such as safety and security of the transport system and its users, and to protecting our children and enhancing community safety. I also refer you to my question on notice No. 525 concerning an alleged assault by a railway worker on a youth at the Nambour Railway Station. Will you release the surveillance tape of the incident to satisfy us whether reasonable force was involved and necessary to ensure public safety or whether it was excessive force and that this is a departmental cover-up?

Mr LUCAS: If the member believes that there is a departmental cover-up, I am more than happy to refer the whole matter to the CMC. I had thought that we were well shed of your inane questions, but obviously we have you back again.

I will say this: ultimately, excessive force and the behaviour of people are adjudicated by courts, and matters are adjudicated by courts if complaints are made to the police and police then choose to prosecute people. In this state and this country, that is the manner in which those sorts of issues are dealt with.

No, I do not routinely release surveillance tape. I do not routinely release surveillance tape for all sorts of reasons, including privacy. One of the important things that we value in terms of our network is privacy. I have not had a request from any individual concerned in this instance to release it. I will have to check the details as I do not have the answer to the question on notice with me here. I will have to check the nature of any reports that were made.

QR is an organisation that values very highly the conduct of its officers. Have you been to the police on it? If you have some evidence, I suggest you provide it to the police. If you believe that the police have not investigated something, I am happy to refer it to the CMC. Fortunately, it is very rare that these instances occur.

I will say this in relation to the incident: on a number of occasions a person had been spoken to about riding a bicycle on a railway platform. I will tell you what happens when you ride bicycles on railway platforms: you come off railway platforms. When you come off a railway platform, you get hit by a train.

The member can talk all she likes about investigations of individuals when it comes to people who are seeking to dissuade them from doing that. I would much rather have a situation that people were chipped for riding bicycles on train stations than that they rode them off the end of the platform and were killed by a train. Think of what that does to the train drivers, let alone to the families of the individuals involved.

If in that instance a staff member overreacted, internally it is a matter for QR to deal with. Alternatively, if it is a matter for the police then I am more than happy for the police to deal with it. However, it is not a matter for the member to demand a star chamber or to flash security surveillance around to people. What would happen if we released tapes of people in the Queen Street Mall? It might show people who are full but obeying the law, or people doing things that are quite legal but they might not want the public to know about. Privacy is important. With security cameras in taxis, I ensured that we had a very tough privacy regime in place so that, ultimately, it is supported.

I am told that the child involved in the incident did not lodge a formal complaint. QR did investigate the matter and the staff member was disciplined. If you have additional information and are concerned, pick up your pen and paper and write to the CMC. That is what you should do, rather than grandstanding or, indeed, wanting to have surveillance tape when you have not even provided evidence that the child in question or their family had reported the matter to the police. I am told that they have not. That is the nature of these things.

Mrs STUCKEY: I refer to page 1-35 of the MPS and the percentage of unscheduled train cancellations on the Citytrain network. The Australian Federated Union of Locomotive Employees and the Rail, Tram and Bus Union instigated an illegal strike on 3 February and had planned for another that did not eventuate on 17 February this year. This illegal strike not only cost the Queensland economy millions of dollars but also left 150,000 commuters stranded during peak hour. What was the cost to the Queensland Rail system from this failure to deliver services? What action have you taken to recoup those costs from the unions involved after their illegal actions?

Mr LUCAS: We will not start selling people's houses and bringing common law actions because someone has taken part in that incident. Indeed, in Queensland the Industrial Relations Commission, upon the appropriate application being made, allows action to be undertaken in relation to people who undertake unlawful industrial action. That certificate was not granted at that point in time nor, in the circumstances, do I believe it would have been appropriate.

I do not believe that the action that was undertaken by a number of our employees—not all of them took industrial action at that time—was appropriate. It is always regrettable. I will say this: your ideological position is to consign that to us all the time. You ought to get out there and say really strongly the industrial relations climate that you want to have. You want to have a 2c an hour pay increase for Spotlight and then get shafted when it comes to your work conditions.

I do not like industrial action, but Queensland's industrial relations record speaks for itself. The good news is that since the time of that strike, which was a wildcat strike—I agree with you on that point—we have not had industrial action that has deprived us because with our integrated ticketing system under TransLink we put on a number of alternative services and the like. Of course, if you go on strike you do not get a day's pay. So we saved a day's pay for anyone who did not turn up to work, I might add. But people were also able to use their TransLink tickets on buses.

I have to say that what I would be focusing on is the fact that there is good news for us in terms of our drivers. We will be needing to recruit even more for a rail system that will be rolled out to Maroochydore on the Sunshine Coast, to Springfield and then to the Gold Coast. Of course, those other corridor studies will also make a real difference.

So no, I do not intend to go and sell train drivers' houses in relation to that. I do not appreciate—nor do I support—the industrial action that was taken. It is not helpful and it was not helpful in the resolution of the matter. On the other hand, I make sure that we have as far as possible not only industrial harmony but also fairness and justice in relation to our wage outcomes. I believe that we got that, but I also believe that you can still have the best passenger rail system of any state in Australia.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. I would like to turn now to improvements in the expansion of Queensland's ports. I refer to page 1-9 of the MPS and I ask: can you update the committee on the progress of work at the port of Brisbane?

Mr LUCAS: Yes, I can. I have to say that I am very proud of the port of Brisbane because a very large proportion of it is in my electorate. For the 2005-06 financial year the Port of Brisbane Corporation is estimated to have spent \$183 million on capital expenditure with a further \$194 million being budgeted for the 2006-07 financial year. Over the past 20 years, over \$1.1 billion has been invested in the infrastructure and assets of the port of Brisbane. The corporation's capital expenditure of \$442 million over five financial years to 2004-05 is more than that of Melbourne, Sydney, Fremantle and Adelaide put together.

During the last 12 months a state-of-the-art, 28-hectare vehicle processing precinct to replace the Hamilton facilities and an associated car import flyover have been developed at the port of Brisbane to provide storage and predelivery inspection facilities for imported vehicles prior to distribution to commercial outlets. The corporation's expenditure on these facilities has been over \$17 million. Since May 2006, all car carriers have been calling at the port of Brisbane instead of Hamilton. The new precinct includes 14 hectares managed by PreCar, which can store around 7,500 cars.

I have a visual here. This is the area that the port is expanding into in the future—the quayline there. The port of Brisbane has a great advantage compared to a number of other ports in Australia. The central Sydney port is land locked. Port Botany is restricted by access to roads. Melbourne port has to undergo massive blasting and digging to get further through Port Phillip Bay. So we have tremendous advantages. Also, of course, we have the link with the gateway. I might say that I am very keen to work with the federal government in relation to some ideas that it has floated in terms of stage 2 of the port motorway. We will see what happens there.

Construction of the new container berth at the port of Brisbane is currently underway. The berth and associated dredging works are due to be completed by early 2006 at an estimated total cost of \$60 million. This additional berth is essential to ensure that the port of Brisbane remains highly efficient and continues to meet the growing needs of Queensland industry. The length and capacity of container ships is increasing worldwide with a growing number of vessels calling into Brisbane being more than 207 metres long and carrying more than 4,000 standard sized containers. This quayline expansion will enable the port's two stevedores to handle at least two of these larger ships simultaneously.

A new 210-metre general purpose berth is to be built at the port of Brisbane next to the coal berth. It will be used mainly for bulk and break-bulk cargo. It will also be equipped to handle a range of other cargo, including motor vehicles and project cargo, giving port users increased flexibility.

The Port of Brisbane Corporation will be spending \$45.9 million on a new wharf and associated infrastructure, which is planned to incorporate a general purpose terminal, two hectares of heavy-duty pavement, a 3,200 metre cargo shed and an office and amenities building. We have also got the Port Gate Estate—20 hectares of port land dedicated to cargo handling—and also Port Central. Can I seek an extension?

CHAIR: I am happy for you to extend.

Mr LUCAS: I just want to mention very briefly the redevelopment of the Kingsford Smith Drive precinct, for want of a better word, of the port known as the Northshore development. I think that the opportunity to shift industry out from where it was once appropriately located but now no longer appropriate down to the mouth of the river where it is welcomed and where it will operate very effectively and redevelop that area is a wonderful opportunity.

One of the things that Jim Soorley in particular did was to work very hard on giving the quayline of the Brisbane River back to the people who own it, that is, everybody—not the few who are wealthy enough to afford a house along the river, but everybody. One of the things that we make no apologies for in this development is to make sure that that quayline will belong to everybody. There will be plenty of parks there as well. We are working very well with the Brisbane City Council in relation to that. I notice that the mayor strongly welcomed the development. Liddy Clark is very supportive of it as well. It will take a lot of heavy vehicle traffic off Kingsford Smith Drive. Also, we are investigating running the rail line around there, which is a personal interest of mine, which would also help us increase frequency on the Eagle Farm rail line.

CHAIR: Before calling the member for Cook, thank you for the use of visual assistance in response to questions. It is no doubt what Transport gets when a former minister for innovation has the Transport portfolio. I just ask that they be printed out in a form that can be incorporated into *Hansard*.

Mr LUCAS: We will make sure that you have copies of them all. I remember talking to the deputy chair very shortly after he was elected. He expressed his concern about technology. I will talk about that in non-government time a bit further.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to the Brisbane-Cairns freight transport study, which appears on page 1-9 of the MPS. What is the state government doing to improve rail freight contestability on the north coast line?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the member for the question. The 1,700 kilometre Brisbane to Cairns corridor links Brisbane with major regional service and tourism centres. It also supports regional industry in Queensland and links the south-east corner of the state with the rest of Queensland. This corridor supports the transport needs of rapidly growing areas to the north of Brisbane and important regional centres, tourism and other major export industries.

Road and rail transport activity is expected to grow strongly at around 2½ to three per cent per year throughout the corridor. That growth will be fuelled by rapid population, economic growth and tourism. Road and rail are expected to compete strongly for the long distance movement of freight.

The upgrading of the north coast line from Rockhampton to Cairns was completed in June 2005 at a cost of \$379 million. This involved resleepering between Rockhampton and Cairns and rerailling between Rockhampton and Townsville. This has resulted in increasing the train axle loading from 15¾ tonnes to 20 tonnes on the north coast line between Brisbane and Townsville.

Of course, we have further work on the Caboolture to Landsborough track upgrade that will not only improve track speeds for passenger services, which are ultimately a part of getting to the Sunshine Coast, but also improve the movement of freight trains. A further \$550 million upgrade for the Landsborough to Nambour section of the north coast line is programmed for completion by 2020.

That is a graphic of that, but I will talk about that later. We welcome this Brisbane to Cairns corridor study with the federal government. It covered two aspects: road and rail. I will not talk about road at the moment. But in relation to rail, as I said before, both conservative and Labor governments in Queensland have spent money on main rail line work. The only slight criticism I will make is that the money spent on electrification from Brisbane to Rockhampton, that is for those parts other than the coal network electrification, was actual probably not a good investment in terms of return on money and would have been better spent on even further track alignments. Having said that, at least it was money spent. I object when the federal government rewards places like New South Wales, which does not spend money on its track but gets all that money from the federal government when it comes to track upgrades. I have written to Minister Truss on a number of occasions and lobbied him to get more money from the federal government to do more track straightening on the north coast line so that we can further improve transit times.

At present, the equilibrium point for competition between road and rail is about Mackay. That means that from that point north, rail is competitive with road. South of that, to come from Brisbane, it is not particularly competitive. QR does rail stuff out south of that point because QR are nice people. But I can tell you that their competitor will not be nice. Their competitor will have whatever is the cheapest allocation. I will say in terms of competition that if we bring that equilibrium point down, that works for any competitor of QR just as much as it does for QR in terms of encouraging that rail usage. So the federal government needs to come to the party with the north coast rail line, because it is an important aspect.

Mr WILSON: I refer to the response you have tabled to the question on notice regarding the expansion of the passenger train network in south-east Queensland. Can you advise of the current status of the Queensland Rail project to duplicate the Ferny Grove railway line between Mitchelton and Ferny Grove?

Mr LUCAS: Yes. The \$55 million duplication of the Ferny Grove rail line between Mitchelton and Ferny Grove is identified in SEQIP. The first stage of this duplication from Mitchelton to Keperra is currently being progressed to be completed by October next year. The duplication from Keperra to Ferny Grove is scheduled in SEQIP to commence in 2010-11. There is \$16.5 million allocated in this year's budget to commence construction of the Mitchelton to Keperra project. This project will support enhanced passenger rail services, including more frequent peak period services.

This is one thing that the honourable member and I have discussed before. People do not realise how well used that line is. They think that it is just a short line and that it is underutilised. It is a very heavily utilised line. More than 4.6 million passengers use it each year. The project will also improve service reliability. Two stations will be upgraded as part of the project. Station upgrades works, which will benefit rail commuters, will include at both Oxford Park and Grovely stations new station buildings; lifts to support disability access standards; upgraded platforms; extra off-street car parking, including more accessible parking; and upgraded station lighting. At Oxford Park station there will be an upgraded subway, a new passenger set-down zone and new bike lockers. Thirty-six off-street car parks, including disabled parking, will be provided. At Grovely station, there will be new platforms, a new footbridge, upgraded bike lockers and improved access to the level crossings. Fifty-three extra off-street car parks, including disabled parking, will be provided. Other works will include the construction of the new second track and the installation of noise barriers at selected locations and upgrades to open level crossings with new pedestrian mazes, flashing lights and boom gates.

QR has undertaken the following activities: the completion of the preliminary design and the preparation of the environmental planning study for community consultation. That community consultation was undertaken over March and April 2006. Actions in 2006-07 will include the commencement of construction in September this year; the completion of substantial construction of civil and station works; the commencement of track formation; the electrical overhead construction of track laying; and the commencement of signalling construction. QR is currently finalising a review of the feedback received during the community consultation phase. It will be issuing a newsletter in August 2006 outlining the main issues raised during the consultation and QR's response to these issues.

Mr WILSON: I refer you to page 1-10 of the MPS in relation to the closure of the Jericho to Yaraka branch line. Can you advise the response from the local communities affected by this decision?

Mr LUCAS: Yes. I thank the member for the question. One of the reasons I like Vaughan Johnson is that he is a member of parliament who is prepared to get in and work in the best interests of his community. He is prepared to ask, 'Where can we change things instead of playing politics? Where can we do things that are better for our community?' The amount of taxpayers' funds that were spent on the Jericho to Yaraka rail line, which is in central Queensland—I do not know if I have a map here, but you probably all know where it is; it comes off the Longreach line from Jericho—was \$4.5 million a year. That money went to support a weekly train service that in some parts was carrying enough freight that you could put it on the back of a truck. In other words, you had a locomotive with one carriage behind it. Frankly, that is not an effective use of taxpayers' money. That money belongs to the people of Jericho and Yaraka just as much as to anyone else. The local councils got together and some top work was

done by some of those people in those local councils. They said to the state government, 'We have 480 kilometres of road that is essentially dirt.' This is putting the money back into getting them an all-weather road seal, which has tourism, access and equity advantages.

That was a feature of closing the rail line and we had strong community support to do that. The Beattie government does not close rail lines without community support. We are working with a number of other communities—I think it is well known, for example, that we are talking to local communities in the Noondoo-Thallon area at the moment. We have spoken with councils and others in relation to Yeppoon, Hughenden to Winton and also Kingaroy. We are out there talking about how we might better spend their money. If they do not want to close the line, that is fine. But people need to think laterally. In the past—and the government realises this—if we closed a rail line the money just went to Treasury and sat in their pocket. That does not put anything back into the community where it was closed. I have a DVD—and I will not show it to you because I know I am not allowed to and I did not intend to in any case—

Mr CALTABIANO: Why not?

Mr LUCAS: You can ask me a question and I will play it for you in non-government time, if you like. You and I can watch it later over a beer or something like that. I am happy to do that as well. I think it is incumbent upon us as stewards of public funds to be constantly talking to the community about how best they want that money spent. One of the things about the TransLink smart card is that it will enable us for the future to find out where people are going so that we can get the best possible outlay of funds. We have a number of other councils that are very keen on proposals such as this.

Mr O'BRIEN: Minister, I refer to page 1-9 of the MPS in relation to major investment proposals by Queensland port authorities. Can you provide more information about the investment proposals, particularly in relation to the Cairns and Mackay airports?

Mr LUCAS: The member for Cook has a lot of good points and amongst them is the fact that he is a Rugby referee—and he is a lot better Rugby referee than I am, but I try. He is also a very strong advocate for his region. Whilst the Cairns Airport is not in his electorate, his electorate is certainly served in part by the Cairns Airport for people who need to get to far-north Queensland.

The government does own directly, through our GOCS, the Cairns and Mackay airports. For 2004-05, passenger numbers at the two state government airports totalled 4.36 million passengers. That is a 9.1 per cent increase from the 2003-04 figures. Over the last five years, total passenger numbers through Cairns are up 25 per cent and 116 per cent through Mackay.

The member for Chatsworth asked before about Traveltrain patronage. I have no problem with him asking that question. It is a totally appropriate question to ask. The other side of the coin is that the airports are getting significant growth in patronage. So it is not a matter of fewer people wanting to go to Cairns. It is that people, due to market forces on airfares and the like, want to go there by air.

Mackay Airport handled 580,000 passengers in total. The Cairns International Airport is owned by the Cairns Port Authority—and Brad Geatches is a top CEO; I hope we do not lose him now that I have said that. Cairns Airport is Australia's largest government owned airport and is Australia's fifth busiest international airport and sixth busiest overall. The federal government does not often understand this. When you put aside Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne, the other Queensland airports are really up there in comparison to a lot of other airports in Australia. You often have to catch a plane around Queensland.

Jobs generated through the Cairns Airport represent about 26 per cent of the region's total employed workforce. The domestic passenger terminal at Cairns Airport will be made even more efficient due to a \$140 million redevelopment. Departing passengers will be able to check in at the 'common-use' all-airline area. Arriving passengers will collect their baggage at a central baggage location and also enjoy a shorter walk from the aircraft into the building. More check-in counters and passenger handling facilities will be added with minimum disruption to people using the terminal. The existing aerobridges between the passenger terminal and aircraft parking bays will be replaced and an extra two added. Three more bays for heavy aircraft will eventually be provided. Indeed, just as an aside, if you are an aircraft enthusiast, I note that the only flying Shorts Belfast in the world is often on the tarmac at Cairns, flying out with freight to the Solomon Islands. Construction will get underway later this year and continue through to the end of 2008.

The Mackay Port Authority owns and manages the Mackay Airport, acquired from the Commonwealth government in 1989. That airport can handle aircraft up to Boeing 767s. Mackay Airport has experienced recent rapid growth, despite the collapse of Ansett and Flightwest operations as well as the effects of terrorism and SARS. Extra capacity has been provided through an expansion of QantasLink and Jetstar services. In 2005-06, Mackay undertook more than \$4 million of capital works at the Mackay Airport.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer to page 1-3 of the MPS which refers to initiatives concerning acquiring rail corridor land for future rail expansion projects. Can you outline what acquisitions are currently underway and why these acquisitions are so important to the state of Queensland?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member. One of the things that we are called upon to do when we have the great privilege of being ministers is make sure that we do the planning now for the future. One of the most important tasks that I have set myself is corridor identification and planning for the future. Rail acquisition is critically important if we want to roll out high-speed quality rail in the future. In fact, sometimes negotiating with people and defining the corridor can be the hardest thing you have to do in terms of the project because people have concerns about how their homes and properties are affected. I have to say that, generally, once corridors are built they are very warmly welcomed because they offer significantly increased services. QT, in conjunction with Queensland Rail, is progressing the detailed planning and design to identify the property requirements to fulfil the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan and Program 2006-2026.

Land for future rail schemes can be acquired by QT in two ways. Formal acquisition of land by way of resumption is carried out under the provisions of the Acquisition of Land Act. Land could also be acquired prior to the formal acquisition stage by hardship purchases. If an owner of land can demonstrate some form of hardship, QT can acquire the required land in accordance with the whole-of-government hardship acquisition policy. QT has purchased parcels of land prior to formal acquisition for a number of rail schemes. Hardship purchases have been made for Robina to Varsity, Caboolture to Maroochydore corridor study, Gowrie to Grandchester rail corridor study, Varsity to Tugun and Darra to Springfield. QT has been working in close conjunction with QR for the current Salisbury-Kuraby scheme. The formal acquisition of land was approved by the Governor in Council and published in the *Government Gazette* on 30 June. All the land now is in our ownership.

QT is also working closely with QR on the proposed Caboolture to Beerburrum phase 1 upgrade. Resumption plans have been drawn and notices of intention to acquire for the formal resumption were issued on 16 June. The process for formal acquisition of land for the Robina to Varsity rail extension also proposes to commence later this year. Currently QR is undertaking an environmental impact statement in connection with the proposed northern missing link freight line between the Goonyella and Newlands rail systems. Once all approvals are in place, QT will commence formal land acquisition to preserve the corridor. So land acquisition for rail is very important.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for that block of government questions has expired.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 1-11 of the MPS where it refers to supporting growth in passenger rail transport. To support the growth of the south-east Queensland population, new train lines, duplication of existing train lines and the enhancement of rolling stock is required to deliver a high-quality mass transit solution for a growing south-east population. On the current network, the Grey Street Bridge presents a major choke point for trains crossing the Brisbane River. What additional capacity is currently available to allow more passenger trains to travel across the Grey Street Bridge during peak hour? When is the duplication of the Grey Street Bridge to be delivered and what allocation is in this budget to commence that process?

Mr LUCAS: The honourable member asks an important question. One of the tasks that we have to undertake under the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan is a study for the duplication of the rail link across the river. It is not at capacity at this point in time, I am advised. But I will say this: with our growth and continued rollout in services in the future, it will be, particularly when we have services such as Darra to Springfield. If you want to have a heavy rail line to Capalaba, that will certainly have implications for capacity through there as well.

The study will commence this financial year and run for a period of three years. One of the questions is whether the best outcome is to duplicate in situ where the Merivale Bridge is or look at another crossing. One of the problems with the rail line is that from the Merivale Bridge it goes across the main line. Indeed, the line to Ipswich—I should add as an historical quirk at QR—is indeed the main line because that was the first line built. The main line is not the northern line. I will not try to explain some of the other odd things that QR does in terms of train numbering and things like that. Even someone who has a mind for trivia like me does not understand that.

Increasing capacity over that point is problematic. We will do that study. In accordance with the advice I am given, this is the appropriate timing in which to do it. It will be expensive, ultimately, to construct. It is noted under the South East Queensland Infrastructure Plan as a study that we have to do. We have made it clear that what we need to do in terms of those issues is what we will do. We have not got out there identifying corridors, but one could think there are a number of options in terms of how we might best connect to the system. You also have to make sure that it has appropriate connections with the rest of the system. In relation to anything that tends to go away from connecting fairly directly with the Gold Coast line—for example, if you connected with the line directly from Cleveland—you may have to deal with some capacity issues but you may not have to deal with other capacity issues, remembering that Springfield will feed further south onto the Beenleigh-Gold Coast line.

That study will commence this year. I am told that it will be for a three-year period. It is an important study, and I welcome the honourable member's interest.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 1-5 of the MPS where it states that public transport patronage increased by approximately 12 per cent in south-east Queensland in the past two years and to page 1-34 dealing with the number of passenger trips taken, particularly on the TransLink services. In answer to government question on notice No. 5 for this committee, you indicated that just over 50 million passenger trips were taken on the Citytrain network. We know that Brisbane Transport passenger trips were 55.7 million and 5.7 million on the ferries. We also know that private bus operators are delivering approximately 25 million passenger trips in the TransLink area. That adds up to 136.4 million passenger trips. On page 1-34 it states that there are 152.7 million passenger trips. Can you identify where the 16.3 million trips are that I cannot identify?

Mr LUCAS: One of the things I will say about TransLink and integrated ticketing is that it is now somewhat more difficult to predict actual journeys. You need to rely on surveys to predict actual journeys. The reason is that with integrated ticketing we can sell a bus ticket on a Clarks bus in Logan and the passenger will not have to go near a QR station to buy a ticket because they will hop on that bus and then use our Citytrain network. One of the issues we have in the way that integrated ticketing works is that if you buy a daily ticket—that is a return ticket—you are entitled to use that ticket to go between a number of zones any number of times during that day. In other words, people can have additional journeys out of the same ticket. I might ask Luke Franzmann, the General Manager of TransLink, to provide some information in terms of those patronage figures.

Mr Franzmann: What I can give you at the moment is the May year-to-date figures. The June year-to-date figures are still being derived. We have a forecast for the system for the June year-to-date figures, and that is 150 million across the system. The May year-to-date figure is 138 million across the system, but our expectation is that the QR patronage will be 10.6 per cent higher last financial year over and above the 2004-05 financial year.

Mr LUCAS: That will be based on the end-of-year figures. I should say this: I welcome the Brisbane City Council's involvement in TransLink. One of the good things about successive Brisbane City Council administrations, and this has continued under the current joint Labor-Liberal administration—with the exception of the Tories because people at Wynnum and Inala did not get a bus service because they were Labor people; we had to wait for Jim Soorley to come in before we got a bus service at Wynnum and Inala—is that they do support public transport to a far greater extent than councils in other parts of Queensland. The member for Currumbin would be pleased to note that the Gold Coast City Council, certainly in recent times, is improving its commitment to public transport, but it is still much behind what Brisbane does.

We have had tremendous increases in patronage. I do not have the time to talk now—perhaps later—about the patronage growth that we have had under TransLink—not just the growth in Brisbane itself, which is 10 per cent patronage on average, but also in those areas around Brisbane which is just phenomenal.

Mr CALTABIANO: I am sure you will provide me with that breakdown of 152 million passenger trips at some stage through your officers. I refer to MPS 1-21 regarding the future development of Queensland Transport working with the Queensland police to expand the coverage of speed camera programs. Has a new data review been completed for speed camera zones on Queensland roads and can you advise how many zones or sites have been rescinded and how many zones or sites are now in use on Queensland roads?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am advised that the review of the zones has been completed and that the future of a number of sites is currently under consideration. The committee will meet to make the final decision in the very near future. Ultimately, in my opinion, it comes down to making sure that the police are happy with any outcome. The problem with speed camera zones is that in some areas the fact that there is not an accident history may be due to the fact that the road configuration was different or, alternatively, that there is additional policing or the like. You have to be very, very careful if a zone is taken out that it does not encourage a return to the behaviour that caused the zone to be there in the first place. This is a very, very vexed problem.

As part of the Road Safety Summit initiatives we indicated that we will go through a process of labelling or notifying speed camera zones. We are not going to label all of them because we do not want people to assume that just because there is not a labelling they are in the clear. They should not assume that in any way because police can always do random enforcement with hand-held devices.

The analysis of the approved zones using road crash data was for the period 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2004. It also considered detection rate data and QPS local knowledge of road safety issues. The report is being finalised and it is likely that some sites will be deactivated. The outcomes are to be released after discussion with the partners and stakeholders, for example, the Queensland Police Service and the RACQ.

One of the initiatives that I introduced through the government that was warmly welcomed and that the RACQ had been calling for for some time—it was a good suggestion and we adopted it—was for revenue from speed cameras to be applied towards black spot eradication. Our Safer Roads Sooner

program, off the top of my head, is about four times the size of the Commonwealth's Black Spot program. Not only will we be announcing those black spots that are being attended to from speed camera revenue but also we will label that so people know that as well.

Mr CALTABIANO: I refer again to MPS 1-21 regarding the future development of Queensland Transport working with Queensland police to expand the coverage of the speed camera program. Following the data review of the speed camera zones or sites, do you now have quantifiable evidence that demonstrates that with the implementation of speed cameras there has been a decrease in accidents causing death or injury in these zones or sites?

Mr LUCAS: I compliment—and I am not being silly about this—the Borbidge government on introducing speed cameras in Queensland. It was a very good initiative, as was stone mastic asphalt which was introduced while it was in power—both were important. The initiative introducing speed cameras was very, very important. The evaluation by the Monash University Accident Research Centre during 2004 was that the program prevented an estimated 2,243 serious casualty crashes. Those evaluation results are included in the Queensland Transport annual report. The centre also did some calculations in terms of the number of fatalities that were saved as a result of it.

Vaughan Johnson brought in speed cameras. Why did he bring in speed cameras? Because there is good evidence that they make a difference. As minister, one thing I would be absolutely thrilled to do is to get up and say that I have collected no money from speed cameras this year because no-one sped. They are the most totally avoidable fine: do not speed.

I will refer to the Queensland Transport 2004-05 annual report. Under the performance indicator, the estimated number of serious casualty crashes prevented by the speed camera program within 2 kilometres of the centre of a speed camera zone was 2,243. In relation to red lights, the estimated number of serious casualty crashes prevented by the red light camera program was 99. The estimated total social cost savings from serious casualty crashes prevented by the speed camera program were \$1,317 million, and estimated total social cost savings from serious casualty crashes prevented by the red light camera program were \$55 million.

The honourable member would be aware that the Queensland Police Service are in the process of working towards digitising their camera operations to take us to the next level. We also indicated in relation to speed cameras that we will be rolling out fixed cameras in due course at places like the Gateway Bridge, for example. I know they are used in tunnels. I imagine the Brisbane City Council will be after us to put speed cameras in the NSBT, which would be quite appropriate. I do not know if you have ever seen footage of crashes in tunnels; they are not pretty.

In 2005 the Australian Road Research Bureau evaluated the effectiveness of fixed speed cameras in New South Wales. Results indicated that mean speeds dropped by 6 kilometres per hour at the sites 12 months after installation. We will roll out fixed cameras in Queensland as well. One of my personal views in relation to fixed speed cameras is to put them along the Bruce Highway, particularly in country communities because the highway goes right through them. It is not like in Brisbane where major highways do not have houses either side of them in the sense of frontages on to it. On the Bruce Highway they do. Clearly labelled speed cameras might make sure that those people who are driving through country towns do the right thing.

Mr CALTABIANO: I refer to MPS 1-33 which identifies the completion of a security review in relation to ASIO-identified high-risk passenger ferry services as a future development for Queensland Transport. Which of Queensland's ferry services are presently regarded as high risk from a security point of view and when will security on these ferry services be upgraded, what sort of measures will be put in place as part of that upgrade and what allocations have been made in this budget to commence that work?

Mr LUCAS: There are certain established protocols in relation to security matters. There are a number of important ferry terminals throughout Queensland, in particular in relation to tourist areas, that are significant. We work with the Commonwealth government in relation to that. Basically where large ferries operate is where there is an important need to address security. We believe that security is important throughout our public transport network. That is why, for example, we developed the security material for our buses, the training DVD for surface transport staff and the material that operates in relation to our rail network.

I do not believe that it is appropriate that I disclose in an open forum the nature of our undertakings. The Commonwealth government decides what the specific threats are. There has been no advice received on any specific terrorist threat to the security of the surface transport system but we want to be forever vigilant. We have 9,600 kilometres of rail corridor, 181 kilometres of road network, over 130 airports and 20 ports. Each year in Queensland approximately 616 million tonnes of freight is moved by road, sea, rail and air; an estimated 221 million tonnes of goods pass through Queensland ports; there are over 7,000 ship visits to Queensland ports; and vehicles travel over 37 billion kilometres. One has to balance and that is why we work with the Commonwealth government in relation to it to make sure that we have the appropriate level of security.

As people said after the London attacks, if you alter your behaviour in terms of passengers you let the terrorists win. We had a situation of a bomb hoax on the QR network a little while ago which caused a disruption to services. I was down there at Roma Street train station. I am not going to let people, whether they be hoaxers or not, take away the liberties of people that I represent to use our public transport system. I am a strong believer in doing that.

In relation to our ferry terminals, as we have generally, I am told that we have material promoting our safety message. We built on the Commonwealth scheme. The Commonwealth scheme was fine in terms of advertising, but the need to actually advertise a bit more broadly is something that is there. Our greatest weapon in relation to public transport security is getting our patrons and our staff to report something that is suspicious—to report suspicious behaviour and activity.

I will give consideration outside of the estimates process, as well as consulting with ASIO, as to the extent to which it is appropriate that we can brief you in relation to ferry matters, subject to the appropriate undertakings that I know exist at a federal level in terms of disclosure.

Mrs STUCKEY: I refer to MPS 1-28 that indicates a very big jump in the number of noncompliance instances, up by 1,050 from 1,700 to 2,750, over the past 12 months. It is an increase in noncompliance instances of 61.7 per cent given the same number of person hours of compliance monitoring. With this big jump in noncompliance instances and the rapid growth in boating registration in Queensland, would it not be prudent to enhance the number of person hours of compliance monitoring undertaken on our waterways in the 2006-07 budget to keep commercial and pleasure craft safer and our environment protected?

CHAIR: Before answering that question, time is about to expire. You can answer it now or you can leave it until next time.

Mr LUCAS: I am happy to answer it now.

CHAIR: I am conscious that we went over time with non-government questions earlier.

Mr LUCAS: Do you not adjust the time, being a fair man?

CHAIR: We will adjust the time, being fair.

Mr LUCAS: Unlike Dinsdale's brother Doug Piranha, you are both nice and fair, not cruel and fair.

CHAIR: I was suggesting maybe a brief response might be helpful to us in allocating times.

Mr LUCAS: Maritime Safety Queensland works closely with Queensland Boating and Fisheries Patrol and the Queensland Water Police in delivering marine compliance programs. We work with our enforcement partners delivering a range of activities to monitor and increase industry compliance with marine safety pollution legislation as well. It is important that resources are directed towards addressing marine safety and marine pollution targets. Compliance and enforcement activities are predicated on a risk management approach with the resources targeting priority areas.

Recent compliance initiatives at Currumbin Creek and Airlie Beach are examples of this approach. Statewide compliance is generally good amongst industry and the boating community. Problem areas continue to be speed, licensing, registration and safety. For commercial vessels safety equipment and appropriate documentation are major areas of noncompliance.

One of the things that we have sought to do in relation to marine initiatives is to increase the amount of targeted enforcement; to actually look for how you might specifically look for risky behaviours. For example, we have appointed three people from Maritime Safety Queensland dedicated to jet ski enforcement. That resource was not specifically there in the past. Jet ski ownership is growing at a greater rate of increase than general boat ownership which is going at twice the population increase. Additionally, jet skis are disproportionately likely to be involved in an accident, so clearly targeting that sort of behaviour is something that we want to do. We have devoted increased resources in relation to that. As I said, those resources were not there in the past in relation to those people.

On the one hand, if you did no enforcement you would have no tickets issued and that would be a bit of an absurd measure of your success because you actually did no enforcement. On the other hand, the more enforcement you do the more you get. This is the issue when it comes to boat use. Most of us would drive a car a number of times a day. I have a boat licence. The last time I used a boat was certainly not within the last year, off the top of my head. People are not regular users, and so they need to be extra careful to remember that the skills you get from regular use are not necessarily there. Also, increasingly there is a concern with busy waterways such as on the Gold Coast. I have been out there with the water police. In terms of enforcement of rules of behaviour et cetera, the water police play a very key role. You would need to ask the police minister about their resources, but certainly I have seen them and have been out with them on the Broadwater when they have been there, and the Broadwater is very busy.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for that block of non-government questions has expired. I would like to come back to a question on notice regarding Larapinta. Rail freight issues are often raised with me in my electorate. Could you please provide further information about the proposal for the land at Parkinson and other associated rail freight enhancements which will deliver improved outcomes for the rail freight industry?

Mr LUCAS: I was asked a question about Larapinta, and there are QR holdings at Larapinta, but what has been in the media is Parkinson. I am more than happy to discuss the Parkinson issue. QR has owned the Parkinson site for some 20 years. It is 145 hectares, having originally been purchased at a time when there was limited residential development in the area and with the publicly stated intention to develop it as a rail facility. The QR land holdings are bound by the Logan Motorway, Paradise Road, Johnson Road and the Brisbane-Sydney standard gauge railway line. It actually goes through the middle of it, I think. The existing corridor runs alongside the eastern side of the site and will continue to be the main standard gauge interstate rail corridor to New South Wales.

You would not get a better located site from a strategic freight point of view. It is on a major motorway. It is on an interstate rail line. One of the problems that we have had with development in the past is that people—and there was an extremely irresponsible campaign by a local individual, a scare campaign, on this matter—would build a freight terminal, a freight yard or a distribution warehouse in the middle of urban space with people on urban roads. Having it straight off the rail network and then onto the Logan Motorway for distribution is a wonderful opportunity. I will make this point: Woolworths have an enormous site next door. This was never going to be a rail freight yard like Acacia Ridge. The rail siding was going to service the needs of a person or persons who occupied the site.

QR and the government take environmental issues seriously, and environmental issues were raised. Those environmental issues, on investigation, indicate that there are a number of regionally important plants that will preclude development on part of the site. As a result of that, QR in consultation with the government will do this: a parcel of land, approximately 92 hectares adjoining Johnson Road and the interstate rail corridor, will be transferred to the state government in order to be protected from future development. It is most likely to go to the EPA. The state government will investigate the most appropriate land tenure to preserve this area of land. QR will also transfer to the state, in an area alongside the existing rail line approximately 30 metres wide, an additional two hectares for future rail purposes including potential passenger rail stations should Citytrain services be introduced to this corridor in the future. So that is just future-proofing it.

Some land at the northern end of the site will be made available to Queensland Motorways for the construction of a new Paradise Road interchange. The balance of the site, approximately 44 hectares, would no longer have rail access or strategic value to QR and will be disposed of by commercial sale. So 44 hectares will be sold. I presume it will be developed no differently from the Woolworths site that is next door to it and approved by the Brisbane City Council. QR will fund from part of the proceeds of sale a clean-up of the site and remove rubbish illegally dumped there over many years.

Mr ENGLISH: Minister, I refer to page 1-39 of the MPS in relation to the smart card technology for the public transport system. I was at a forum yesterday where a question was raised about this. Can you give an update on the progress of the smart card ticketing system, please?

Mr LUCAS: Yes, I certainly can. TransLink's integrated ticketing system has been a huge success. Since its introduction two years ago, more than 280 million trips have been made using the new ticketing system—an increase of more than 20 per cent on pre-TransLink figures. This kind of growth is unheard of in major transport systems across Australia. The next stage of integrated ticketing, the smart card, will be introduced across the TransLink network later this year. Smart card technology will make it even easier for people to use public transport.

Here are some mock-ups of it. There is a concession card, for example, there is a child card and there is an adult card. As I said, they are mock-ups but they are the sorts of cards that we will use. There will be no more fumbling for small change. Trips will be even quicker and easier. This morning I was out there with Hornibrook Bus Lines to say that customers in the Redcliffe area will be the first in south-east Queensland to use the new system. Testing of the smart card system started last year with a rollout of smart card ticketing equipment on Hornibrook Bus Lines in Redcliffe and at five QR stations—Sandgate, Petrie, Brunswick Street, Central and Roma Street.

The early stages of the pilot have involved field testing by research staff in ironing out glitches before the system is introduced to the general public. I think the member for Chatsworth asked me a question last year in parliament about it, and I said to him quite clearly that I was not prepared to go to the next stage of rollout in relation to the software part of it until such time as TransLink had advised me that it was appropriate to do so. They have advised me now that it is, and we are calling for 1,000 people in the Redcliffe area who will use both Hornibrook Bus Lines and the rail system to be a part of our public pilot.

The second stage of the pilot recently commenced, with 50 members of the public currently using the smart card for their daily travel. Now we are calling for up to 1,000 people to use it on a regular basis. The smart card system also uses new touch screen fare machines which can be used to add value to smart cards and to purchase TransLink paper tickets using notes or coins. Many other members of the community have already tried out aspects of the new system. To date, the general public have purchased more than 12,000 paper tickets from these new machines at the five QR pilot stations since May 2006. So we have turned them on for people who want to buy paper tickets, and they take notes as well.

While the software is undergoing rigorous testing, TransLink has rolled up its sleeves and installed smart card equipment at more than 100 railway stations. Patrons would have noticed a growing number of these machines on their railway platforms. Hornibrook Bus Lines is taking part in the pilot, and the entire Sunbus fleet has undergone prewiring for the onboard equipment. More than 360 buses in the Brisbane transport fleet have been prewired, and in some instances equipment has been installed. I catch public transport and I noticed recently on a Brisbane bus the proximity things.

The introduction of smart card technology will revolutionise public transport in south-east Queensland by offering a fast, efficient and seamless approach to paying fares and transferring between services. Might I have an extension?

Mr ENGLISH: Yes.

Mr LUCAS: That is good news for millions of public transport users. Experience overseas, in Western Australia and in New South Wales suggests this sort of technological shift is complex. So it is important that TransLink takes the time now to get it right for the people of south-east Queensland.

Last year I told parliament that we planned our smart card rollout in south-east Queensland by the end of 2006. We want to make sure that technology is absolutely 100 per cent to our satisfaction before we go live. We make no apologies for setting high standards during the testing stage to ensure the system we roll out meets the needs of our customers. As I said, we would expect that we would meet that target, save and except this: Brisbane Transport tells me that we may wish to roll that out over the Christmas break, which may involve some delay. This is why we have continued with the rollout in terms of the infrastructure that people will have noticed. As I said, the tickets have been switched on, but it is important that we get this 100 per cent right. There have been problems in other places with smart cards. QBIC are the people who supply the system to us, and they have supplied the oyster card, which is the one that operates on the London tube. Members may have used that. That is quite a good system.

One of the things that I think is wonderful about the smart card is that it will give us the opportunity to really know where people are going and when. In the past we have relied on patronage counts and the like. We will now know where people are going. That means we can then fund services appropriately to their need.

CHAIR: I refer to page 1-22 of the MPS regarding the investigation of in-vehicle safety technology—for example, electronic stability control in new cars, which is something that you and I have looked at directly at one stage. What progress has been made? Is electronic stability control the next silver bullet for improved road safety?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the chairman for the question. Just as the member for Cook and I are Rugby enthusiasts—well, I am not really a car enthusiast but the chairman certainly is a car enthusiast, as is the member for Redlands. Other people might call you both revheads, but I call you car enthusiasts.

In relation to safety improvements in motor vehicles, we have had a number of key improvements over the last 30 or 40 years and they include things like seatbelts, collapsable steering columns, radial tires, random breath testing, airbags, ABS braking and the like. The next big one on the horizon, in my opinion, is electronic stability control or electronic stability program. Some of the evidence from overseas studies is a 22 per cent reduction in crashes in Sweden. Toyota says that it has reduced single-vehicle crashes in Japan by 50 per cent.

One of the things about ESC that takes it even further from seatbelts and airbags is that seatbelts and airbags help reduce the impact of an accident but they do not stop the accident. I do not have the figure in front of me, I do not think, but the Cairns-Brisbane corridor study that we did under AusLink for the federal government identified that about 30 per cent of the accidents in that corridor are run-off crashes. In a state like Queensland we have a lot of rural roads. They are the sorts of crashes that ESC is particularly likely to reduce. It works with the car's ABS system. The member for Chatsworth could get one on that very garish car that he drives around.

Mr Caltabiano interjected.

Mr LUCAS: We cannot retrofit it, so the next time you get one you will have to put it on.

The good news is that from approximately September this year, off the top of my head, Holden Commodores will come standard with ESC. We need to give General Motors a big pat on the back for that. I hope other car manufacturers are sitting there saying, 'Oh, no. They are going to get a big competitive advantage over me, so I had better make them standard in my cars as well,' because they have wonderful opportunities to make a difference. I sought at the Australian Transport Council to look at an Australian design rule that will mandate ESC. It is about \$1,000 in terms of car costs, but 30 per cent of car purchases in Australia are by fleet buyers. We are looking at some further policy initiatives in the Queensland government. We will say more about that in the future, but people who buy cars ought to understand this: if you buy a car with ESC, it is about avoiding crashes in the first place. We all know that with any crash in a car these days, even if it does not involve an injury at all, you do not get much change out of a thousand dollars.

If you have a system that costs only about a thousand dollars extra in terms of the base price of the car, you have saved that if you avoid one crash. This is about technology, and think of the savings in lives and cost that this could potentially achieve.

Mr WILSON: I refer you to page 1-32 of the MPS regarding taxi security cameras that have been installed in some parts of the state already. A good friend of mine is a taxidriver, and he keeps hammering on with me about the need for progress in this area.

Mr O'BRIEN: Alan?

Mr WILSON: It is Alan, yes. Can you inform the committee how this project is progressing? Is it making an impact on taxi security?

Mr LUCAS: I know Alan well, too, and he is a good guy. I thank the honourable member for the question. Our cabbies do a top job in this state. I think they are entitled to go to work without being treated as a punching bag by louts, grubs and thugs. If security cameras in cabs help give them peace of mind and help detect people, then that is a very important initiative. I have a camera that I can show you. Propmeister Paul Blake is going to hand it to me. That is the black box. I am not tabling them; I am just waving them. That is the outside camera with the infra-red light and that is the inside camera. The quality of pictures you get out of it is exceptionally good. In fact, there is a picture of me in a cab in daylight, but it is designed to work in no light at all and even with lights going straight into the camera from vehicles behind, which is the hardest way to do it.

The vehicles will be fitted with a minimum of three cameras, including one external camera above the driver's door. We went through a very careful selection process—and we had representatives from the Taxi Council of Queensland and the Queensland Police Service—to get a world-class system with the latest technology at its core. For example, we have increased storage times on our cab camera system compared to those in New South Wales. I know in New South Wales that it was a bug bear with taxi drivers that they were charged for downloads. Downloads are free on our system. They cannot download it themselves because privacy is important to us.

I know it would not happen to any members of the committee, but when some people are in the back of a cab on a Friday night they do not look their absolute best. It does not apply to the member for Currumbin. I did not say it applied to any members on this committee.

Mr CALTABIANO: Are you talking from experience?

Mr LUCAS: No, not at all. I say to the member for Chatsworth that I look equally bad all the time. Privacy is very important to us. The installation and rollout of the system is a huge undertaking for the contractor and QT, but as of 6 July 1,541 taxis have been fitted with security cameras in Brisbane, Redcliffe, Ipswich, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast, Cairns and Townsville. Redcliffe and Ipswich fleet installations are complete. Installations for Brisbane and the Gold Coast are progressing well. Brisbane has 673 remaining and the Gold Coast has 24 remaining to be done. Those for the Gold Coast are expected to be completed by the end of July and those for Brisbane by late October. Installations commenced on the Sunshine Coast on 19 June, in Cairns on 27 June, Townsville on 3 July, and Toowoomba is due to start this month as well.

Extensive training material has been provided to the Queensland Police Service and taxi drivers. It has been rolled out. As of 6 July 2006, 43 incidents have been downloaded for investigation by the Queensland Police Service—19 fare evasions, two assaults with robbery, five thefts of property or robbery, four assaults and three vandalism. So the message is this: as at 31 May, of the 22 incidents reported to the police for investigation, eight people have been charged and one person cautioned and 13 remain under investigation. The important thing here is that the police are now able to act on taxi related crime that previously presented serious difficulties. This information can also be used in relation to other detections as well. It is a great initiative and we achieved it without increasing fares.

Mr WILSON: Minister, I refer you to page 1-31 of the MPS regarding public transport services in south-east Queensland. Seniors and young people living in the Hills district of my electorate have been calling for the provision of additional bus services on evenings, weekends and public holidays. Can the minister advise us of the Queensland government's plans to introduce additional bus services in the Hills district of the Ferny Grove electorate?

Mr LUCAS: Yes, I can. It is a pleasure to deal with the member for Ferny Grove. He was obviously very successful as an industrial advocate because he is not only articulate but also very persuasive, and he gets good results.

In April 2005, TransLink released the draft TransLink network plan which outlined the proposed service and infrastructure improvements over the next 10 years. That includes a three-year rolling program of improvements for implementation between 2004 and 2007. This plan represents a \$388 million commitment to improve services over the next 10 years. Already \$49 million has been spent on enhancing bus services across the region.

In the Ferny Grove electorate TransLink recently introduced a new bus route 399 between Highvale and Samford and the Ferny Grove station with connections to QR Citytrain services to Brisbane. The service has met its trial patronage targets and has now become a regular urban service. This service is of great benefit to peak hour commuters living north of Ferny Grove station wanting to travel to Brisbane.

As outlined in the TNP the state government is committed to constructing a bus-rail interchange at Mitchelton Railway Station. Planning and design started in March 2006 and construction is due to be completed in July 2007. This upgrade will allow passengers to easily transfer between bus and rail services in a safe and comfortable environment.

In conjunction with the Mitchelton bus-rail interchange TransLink will introduce a number of bus service improvements which will be of benefit to residents in the Hills district. Routes 397 and 398 will provide improved connections from the Hills district to railway stations on the Ferny Grove line at Mitchelton or Ferny Grove stations. These routes also provide services on evenings, weekends and public holidays.

The frequency of route 360 will be increased to cater for demand. These services will be timetabled to connect with train services at Mitchelton station. Route 390 will be extended from Mitchelton to the intersection of Bunya Road and Collins Road in Ferny Hills and will also coordinate with train services at Mitchelton station.

From 11 August 2006 there will also be a NightLink version of the route 390 operating from Fortitude Valley to Ferny Grove. This service will operate hourly between 1 am and 5 am on Friday and Saturday nights. This service will be of great benefit to young people living in the area who will be able to travel home after a night out on a cheap, reliable and safe bus service. In summary, residents can expect more frequent bus services, services operating for longer hours and better connections with train services and thus faster travel times.

CHAIR: I would like to refer to page 1-31 of the MPS in relation to NightLink services and ask if you could give the committee some details on the outcome of the NightLink trial.

Mr LUCAS: I certainly can. The review of NightLink late night public transport has confirmed what Brisbane party goers already knew—the services have been a success. Mr Chairman, when people like you, the member for Chatsworth, me or other committee members used to socialise when we were young, and not old as we are now, we tended to go out at about 8 o'clock or 9 o'clock at night. What young people do now is go out at 10.30 or 11 o'clock at night. The whole profile of the hours that young people go out has changed. That has implications for public transport.

The trial commenced in December 2005, in the lead up to the peak of the party season. One of the things that we indicated in terms of behaviour in the city is that we needed to work on a comprehensive package, including late night bus and train services. We introduced an innovative flat fare taxi service. The flat fare taxi service allows passengers heading in the same direction to share a taxi for a flat fee which is considerably less than the metered fare. You know what you are going to be paying.

More than 17,854 people have utilised the flat fare service since its inception. As a result, the number of dedicated flat fare ranks will double. As of Friday night flat fare ranks will also operate in Eagle Street outside the Pig n Whistle—I do not know where that is, but it is in Eagle Street—and in Queen Street outside MacArthur Chambers, I know where that is.

Due to the success of late night bus services, additional funding has been allocated to extend the services for another 12 months. New timetables will be launched in August with normal TransLink fares applying for all services. Late night party goers will be able to use the bus services to get home for less than the price of a drink in the nightclubs they frequent. More than 72,000 people have utilised the late night bus and train services since December. The review has enabled adjustments to services to meet customer needs and demands. It is a total of 89,000 taxi, bus and train trips.

I indicated that 'use it or lose it' was the philosophy in relation to this program. The patronage figures in relation to three rail lines were not to our satisfaction. Trains are very expensive to operate. The lines were the Cleveland line, the Ferny Grove line and the Sandgate line. So what we are doing is replacing those services with hourly bus services.

People in the area where the member for Chatsworth lives will have a bus service. The train service to Cleveland goes all the way through Wynnum, which is a circuitous route. It will go along Old Cleveland Road so it will actually service Capalaba on its way to Cleveland. There will be a service to Wynnum. There will be ones to Ferny Grove and Sandgate. This is a wonderful initiative. As I have indicated, the flat fare taxis have dedicated ranks staffed by taxi rank marshals and security guards.

CHAIR: That ends the government question block.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 1-42 of the MPS, particularly in relation to the government's ability to deliver transport infrastructure, notably public transport infrastructure. In last year's budget this government promised to the people of Queensland that it would deliver \$75.1 million

worth of public transport infrastructure across the state. What was actually delivered and is shown on page 1-42 was \$41.8 million worth, a \$33 million underspend, which is 44 per cent of that budget allocation. Which projects were not started and how much money was allocated to those projects? Which projects have started, but are not yet complete? How much of the \$49 million allocated in the current budget is actually being used to build the 2005 budget projects?

Mr LUCAS: The detail that you have asked is beyond the scope of an oral question in an estimates committee and cannot be answered in three minutes. I am told that amount predominantly relates to the Inner Northern Busway and the Boggo Road busway. One of the things that I want to do when it comes to the rollout of public transport infrastructure is make sure that the community broadly accepts it and it is done in an appropriate manner.

In relation to Boggo Road, we have been in negotiation with local stakeholders, in particular stakeholders from the state school. They have raised a number of issues concerning a portal onto Gladstone Road and also the location of the interchange station at Park Road Railway Station. We will continue to work with them.

We have started work with our alliance partners on that part of the busway that goes through the Princess Alexandra Hospital. We are also considering how we might bring forward the second stage of that project. I am told that in terms of the completion of the Boggo Road project there will be no delay. We will bring stages 1 and 2 together to deliver the project.

I am told that the other project of significance in relation to your question is the Inner Northern Busway. Again, what we have already done is brought forward the second stage of the project—the part that goes on to Roma Street. I am advised that both of the projects will be delivered on time. If you go down to King George Square now you will note that the busway is physically under construction. I thank the Brisbane City Council for its cooperation in relation to this project. We have had good cooperation from both sides of the council in relation to building the busway through King George Square. It is currently under construction.

Similarly, the second stage of the Inner Northern Busway busway has been approved and announced. With the same alliance team it involves us going up on to platforms at Roma Street Railway Station. Off the top of my head there are about 800 train services a day that go through Roma Street Railway Station and a lot of bus services. The ability to transfer from one to the other under the one roof is just amazing. We have integrated ticketing as we know, but to go from one to another is very important.

Mr Wilson: Another factor, as shown in the MPS, might relate to the transfer to Main Roads for bus priority measures on the Gold Coast and to QR for delivery of a rail corridor and intermodal facilities as described in the footnotes to the table.

Mr CALTABIANO: Perhaps you can take it on notice and you can give a fulsome answer. I would be happy for that.

Mr LUCAS: Sure.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer to page 1-39 of the MPS in relation to the development of the eastern busway which residents of the Redlands will benefit from. Can you outline the cost of not progressing with the busway?

Mr LUCAS: I have had a bit of a chat with the member for Chatsworth earlier about the eastern busway. I know that when he was briefed he indicated that he was happy to help in some discussions with some stakeholders in his area. I acknowledge his offer to do that. I agree with the platform that he ran on for the Brisbane City Council election which mentioned the need for dedicated busways, particularly within five kilometres of the CBD of Brisbane.

This busway will be a wonderful opportunity not just for the people in the electorate of Redlands. There will be big advantages for them in terms of getting on to a dedicated busway to get into the city. Also people in the electorate of Chatsworth, Greenslopes and South Brisbane will benefit. One of the things the busway will allow you to do is go from a local service straight on to the busway. Trains do not allow you to do that.

There is no 'do nothing' option when it comes to Old Cleveland Road. The fact is that usage is increasing on the Old Cleveland Road corridor and unless we want to resume a whole swathe of houses to widen Old Cleveland Road, which I do not think some in the community want to do, then you have to address public transport usage. The problem is the rail line goes all the way through Wynnum back into the city. It does not really service people in your electorate because you are in the lower part of Redlands or those in the central part of Redlands. It is the eastern part of Redlands that the rail line services.

The eastern busway could cut travel times along Old Cleveland Road by more than half. For a commuter from Coorparoo to the city, this could equal a travel time saving of 1½ hours per week or around 75 hours per year. From Capalaba to the city this would mean a travel time saving of 3½ hours per week or around 150 hours per year. The eastern busway is a solution that will allow the state

government with the support of the Brisbane City Council and Redland Shire Council to better protect the quality of life for communities along this vital corridor. If we do nothing, travel times on the corridor are likely to double by 2026, with daily traffic increasing by 60 per cent. Increasing road capacity along Old Cleveland Road will draw more traffic, leading to even more vehicle trips on that road. The modelling suggests that an eastern busway will cater for 35,000 trips a day. That is nearly triple the current bus patronage. Why do people hop on trams and the like in Melbourne? Because it is convenient because they have frequency. Of course, if you are one of the lucky people who, say, lives in Camp Hill or Coorparoo, you benefit from the increased frequency of a dedicated busway servicing the people of Capalaba and Redlands. So there are real win-wins in there in terms of those services.

The natural terrain of the eastern corridor is not suited to the construction of an underground railway, as I note some people have suggested, and rail services also only service people on foot if they live within 800 metres of the station. This means that people will want to drive their cars to the station. Car parks will not fit in this highly developed corridor, congesting local streets with on-street parking or massive underground or overground car parks. That is not what we want to achieve and is not in the best interests of those communities. Underground rail stations are estimated to cost in the vicinity of \$100 million each. An underground rail tunnel which allows for a dual track is estimated to cost around \$100 million to \$180 million per kilometre. You would probably go aboveground once you got east of Carindale anyway with significant disruption to the local community. So we are proceeding with it. With regard to the draft plans, consultation will run until 4 August with six information sessions and five library displays. I genuinely say that I genuinely am keen to work with both sides of politics to deliver this important project for the eastern suburbs and Redlands.

CHAIR: Minister, I can see that you are enjoying this, but that concludes the examination of the estimates for the Department of Transport. The committee will adjourn for a break and resume the hearing at 2.45 when we will be examining the estimates for the Department of Main Roads.

Proceedings suspended from 2.31 pm to 2.49 pm.

CHAIR: Estimates Committee C hearing is now resumed for the Department of Main Roads. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, did you want to make a statement?

Mr LUCAS: I thank committee members. I am told that there is no further time for me to introduce Main Roads, so I have shown the deputy chairman and the chairman the statement that I was going to make. I seek leave to have that incorporated in *Hansard*.

Leave granted.

The Main Roads budget outcome reflects the Beattie Government's continuing commitment to improving Queensland's road system.

The roads program includes state-funded works for state and local government roads, and federal funds for the Auslink National Network and Black Spot projects.

Road capital funding in the State Budget has been boosted by a massive 58% to nearly \$2 billion next financial year.

The 2006-07 portfolio budget allocation provides a strong foundation towards state-wide planning that will ensure:

- long-term development of the road system to meet current and future needs of road users
- infrastructure programming development and delivery to ensure efficient and reliable
- delivery through effective program, project and contract management
- road stewardship that ensures effective management of the land corridor in terms of
- access, vegetation management and safe and efficient use of the road network.

This is a budget that delivers for Queensland roads. Our money is on the table and the work is underway across the state—at Tugun, across Brisbane, on the Sunshine Coast, in western Queensland and all the way up to the Cape.

The \$1.98 billion provided next financial year for road improvements and other initiatives across the state—including \$428 million for Queensland Motorways Limited—represents an increased commitment to Queensland's road network of \$727 million.

\$183 million has been put aside over the next four years for road safety projects as part of the state's Safer Roads Sooner initiative, aimed at reducing road trauma and its social consequences by targeting road safety improvements.

Since December 2003, the Beattie Government has committed an extra \$3.2 billion to Queensland's roads—on top of normal road funding sources—over a six-year timeframe.

This significant increase in funding is reflected in the record \$10.5 billion Roads Implementation Program from 2005-06 to 2009-10.

The Australian Government commitment to roads pales in comparison.

Under AusLink and other programs, the Australian Government has promised a total of \$2.2 billion over five years from 2004-05, which represents only one fifth of Main Roads total roads spend over the same period.

The Queensland Government is building on the state's economic strength and providing a strong and diversified economy through efficient and effective transport.

The 2006-07 roads budget reflects a level of funding that will increase transport efficiency and improve safety for road users throughout Queensland.

CHAIR: We will now begin with non-government questions.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to MPS 2-1 which alludes to the record \$10.5 billion Roads Implementation Program over five years which must be put into the context of the previous programs of \$5.3 billion over five years when only \$3.78 billion was spent by your government. In September 2005 the Australian Associated Motor Insurers—AAMI—released its annual crash index report that focused on road rage as a symptom of congested roads and the increasing incidence of road rage. Brisbane is currently experiencing the most rapid increases in congestion costs in Australia and 73 per cent of drivers agree that traffic congestion is a major cause of road rage. From the briefings that you have received about congestion and related issues, including congestion rage, will you identify what critical pieces of road infrastructure are required to relieve the congestion for the Brisbane CBD and how many of these key pieces of road infrastructure will be built within the Brisbane city boundaries and are being funded in the 2006 budget?

Mr LUCAS: A question of that detail is beyond the scope of estimates. However, I will indicate a number of observations about the road network in terms of my areas of responsibility but also working with other areas of government. I want to say at the outset that the problem we have with roads funding in this country is that the Commonwealth government, despite collecting, off the top of my head, \$16 billion in road taxes through fuel, returns approximately 16 per cent to 17 per cent to motorists. With regard to motor vehicle registration, the figure used to be 93 per cent but it is now 100 per cent, because the government has taken the decision to make sure it is 100 per cent. So that growth component goes to road funding—all of it—in that registration fee that you pay. That is not including the other items in it of course, but all of the registration amount will go to roads, though we spend far in excess of that when it comes to our road network as well.

I would not mind if the deputy chairman on just one occasion said something about the federal government meeting its responsibility for roads in this state—if just once you said something about it, because Campbell Newman is prepared to do it, the Liberal mayor of Brisbane. The RACQ is prepared to do it. The state government is prepared to do it. The Ipswich council is prepared to do it. The Gold Coast council is prepared to do it. The Logan council is prepared to do it. The federal opposition is prepared to do it. You are the person who stands out there as the defender of the federal government. The member for Currumbin must be tearing her hair out that no new major federal capital funding has come to the Gold Coast under this budget. She must be tearing her hair out that the federal government is not playing its role in relation to the fifty-fifty funded Pacific Motorway other than the \$120 million we got announced for Tugun in 2003. It is just a disgrace.

But I will say this as well: we are working very closely with the Brisbane City Council in relation to the tunnel under the city and indeed are working extremely well with it in relation to the airport link, and some announcements will be made in the next few months concerning that as well. Work is already underway in relation to the important Gateway project, and in September we will announce the successful proponent for that. Basic Construction Services won the contract for the work on the Wynnum Road interchange as well. Additionally of course, we have the ongoing money for the acquisition of the Centenary Highway through Springfield and then out to Ripley. Of course we are spending money on the Sunshine Coast in relation to the Sunshine Motorway. The start of works will happen on the Gateway Bridge crossing as well. There is \$9 million towards the duplication of Moggill Road between Kilkivan Avenue and Pullenvale Road. There is also work in relation to the Mount Lindesay Highway. Could I seek an extension of time, Mr Chairman?

Mr CALTABIANO: No, I will move on to the next question.

Mr LUCAS: Noted.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to the MPS at page 2-13 and the quality measures for acceptable levels of service on state controlled roads. This budget indicates that in urban areas only 42 per cent of roads meet the acceptable Austroads level of service. Minister, 58 per cent of roads in the south-east corner are not at an acceptable level of service as a consequence of a failure to invest in road infrastructure and build an integrated state road network to service our growing population. How many new state controlled roads will be built in the 2006-07 year and what financial allocation has been made in this budget to complete these works?

Mr LUCAS: The Capital Statement speaks for itself. You can read the Capital Statement. But I will say this, and I will go back to it again: the federal government is not meeting its responsibilities when it comes to our urban road network. The state government is spending a record capital budget on roads and indeed a record capital budget generally exceeding that of New South Wales. You must be the only person who does not understand, because certainly the RACQ and other stakeholders understand the state government's commitment to roads expenditure. As I said before, the return from petrol and diesel excise revenue to roads by the Commonwealth government is projected at 17.6 per cent in 2006-07. We have spent over 2½ times more than Victoria per capita on our roads—\$222 compared to Victoria at \$93 on 2001 figures, let alone the current ones.

The Local Government Association in 2002 recommended that at least \$1 billion extra a year needed to be provided for Queensland roads and public transport. The recent 2005 update to this report found that from 2003-04 to 2005-06 the Beattie government increased funding for roads and public transport by 100 per cent to \$1.4 billion, meeting most of the LGAQ's \$1 billion extra target with an increase of \$700 million. In 2006 the south-east Queensland council of mayors identified a federal funding gap of at least \$2.6 billion over the next 10 years. So the amount of money invested by this state government is nothing short of amazing.

The member would full well know in relation to the central business district of Brisbane, as I think you originally said, but also Brisbane city itself that the nature of the city is such that it does not have a lot of state controlled roads in it. The Gateway is part of the National Highway. How could you as a local member who actually has people in it stand by and not say one thing about the federal government walking away from the Gateway duplication project? You have not said one thing about it not committing so that people in your electorate and mine have to pay a higher toll than they would otherwise have had to pay if the federal government had committed to the National Highway aspect of it, yet you say nothing about it. You would have far more credibility if you actually got out there and put the wood on the federal government.

In terms of the Ipswich Motorway work, you are one of the ones prolonging the myth along with Cameron Thompson. Of all people, why you would ever want to throw your cards in with Cameron Thompson—no-one else in the Liberal Party does, but you do—about when money was received and contrary to the cash flow that we are provided by the federal government I do not know. I really have to say this: this government is very strongly committed with a record capital works project, but let us have a little bit of a tour of south-east Queensland. Even though the federal government will not give us the money for the Pacific Motorway between Nerang and Tugun and around Springwood, we are actually out there doing the design. I know you will not give me an extension so I will not ask for one.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to the MPS at page 2-19 that specifies that activities to be undertaken by the department include road safety inspections and audits to identify defects and specify appropriate improvement treatments and time frames. On 30 June 2005 the Department of Main Roads took over the \$505 million South East Busway from Queensland Transport. In the lead-up to the Department of Main Roads taking over this busway, was an audit completed detailing safety issues and defects that must be rectified and, if so, what did the audit show?

Mr LUCAS: The director-general tells me that an audit was undertaken and no defects were found. But I will take the opportunity, though, to talk about the nature of busways when it comes to our road congestion, because you clearly have a question about road congestion. A full bus, for example, on the South East Busway takes the equivalent of 40 single vehicle cars off the road. A major component to also dealing with the issue of congestion is the reduction, where possible, in the use of cars compared to public transport. So the South East Busway has been a raging success. I am certainly not aware of any serious crashes in relation to the South East Busway in its time. I know it is an internationally recognised busway. Indeed, when the international conference was here a few years ago of UITP, inspections were done of the South East Busway and the like. So I am not sure where the honourable member is coming from in relation to those sorts of issues. If he is aware of anything, please let me know and I will make sure that Main Roads responds to him in relation to it. But, as I said, my director-general indicated to me that he is not aware of any defects in relation to the busway.

I say again that the Old Cleveland Road corridor will have significant increases in motor vehicle use. As part of the planning for the Eastern Busway, we wanted to make sure that we did not—I know that some people suggest that we should have bus lanes going through Coorparoo Junction. I know Coorparoo Junction very well because I went to school in Coorparoo. The idea of, in those sorts of locations, being able to do that would really have played chaos with traffic from people going from your electorate. We treat our busways very seriously. I should also point out that the busways are designed to light rail standards.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to my previous question relating to MPS 2-19 and safety audits of the South East Busway. Have you been briefed, or are you aware, of any safety concerns that the department has in relation to busway structure, in particular that of the O'Keefe Street tunnel?

Mr LUCAS: I would have to check. I certainly have no recollection of that. I will say that one of the things that we do in Queensland Transport and Main Roads is to make sure that we build things to the best possible standard. As I said to you before, the South East Busway is the subject of world-renowned examination by people. We rely, in our design of things, on best possible practice, and we certainly seek to design things to best possible practice. If you have any concerns about that structure, I am happy to get Main Roads to look at it.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: Minister, I refer to page 2-10 of the MPS with regard to the planning study for the upgrade of the Bruce Highway from Cooroy to Curra, including a bypass of Gympie. The federal government has contributed \$4 million to complete this work which, following the announcement of the Mary River dam at Traveston, has been thrown into disarray as the Queensland government plans to flood more than nine kilometres of this National Highway that must be reconstructed at Queensland

taxpayers' expense. Minister, what is the status of the planning study for the Bruce Highway upgrades, and how much will funding a new planning study cost Queensland taxpayers following the announcement of the Traveston Dam?

Mr LUCAS: The first thing I will say is this. The entire length of the bypass study area is some 65 kilometres. In November 2005, Minister Truss launched a public display of the various options. Off the top of my head, it was developed as northern, central and southern sections. The section impacted by the dam relates to about nine kilometres in the southern section.

On 17 November, Minister Truss announced that consideration will be given to new route options further to the east and west of Gympie to make greater use of the existing corridor. Minister Truss did that long, long before any dam was announced. For the federal government to claim that, in terms of those routes, the state government is responsible for any issue relating to wasted money is straight out wrong. Indeed, what the federal government is doing now, and you need to be very careful that you do not aid and abet it in doing this, is clearly looking for an excuse not to fund it.

All the time, in relation to the Bruce Highway, I said, 'Look, the study is important but the main game is to get the money to build it.' People from your electorate come down to and from Brisbane using that corridor.

Minister Truss actually announced in the *Gympie Times* the other day that a route—I am yet to be advised officially from him of this case—essentially north of Gympie, which really followed the rail line but was generally east of Gympie, was the preferred route. I know our eyesight is good but it is not that good, so I will not worry about trying to test your eyesight on that graphic. Minister Truss indicated that in the *Gympie Times*. The route will obviously incorporate the issue concerning the dam. It is a cost to the dam. Part of the cost of the dam is that the Bruce Highway will be needed to be relocated. That is about nine kilometres of the Bruce Highway.

What I want to see from the federal government is a commitment to doing the project. When we get the route determined at the end of this year finally, after the consultation period, we want to see federal government money on the table. That is what will make a difference here. We are not the ones mucking around in relation to this.

I have to say that the Australian Automobile Association recently published comparative safety performance data for the AusLink national network as part of the AusRAP program. It uses two measures: collective risk, that is casualty crashes per kilometre per year, and individual risk, casualty crashes per unit of travel. The Triple A suggests that roads which scored poorly on both measures should be considered as priorities for investment in those areas where drivers should exercise care. The Bruce Highway between Cooroy and Gympie is one of the few sections of the AusLink national network to score a high risk rating on both measures. We would certainly need to work with them. The Cooroy-Curra committee was very keen for us to proceed with the study, notwithstanding Mr Truss trying to derail it to save money.

Mrs STUCKEY: Minister, I refer to MPS 2-21 that details aspects of road traffic lighting systems. Last year it was revealed that there were electrical safety issues and non-compliance with the Electrical Safety Act 2002 for much of Main Roads electrical work completed at great expense to taxpayers. Prior to your role as minister for transport you were the Minister for Energy, so you would have a thorough understanding of the importance of electrical safety. At estimates last year you committed to undertaking statewide electrical safety audits by the end of 2005. As a result of these audits we ask: what problems were identified? What remedial work is budgeted for completion this year? What is the total 2006-07 budget allocation for these works?

Mr LUCAS: The first point I want to make is that the energy minister is not responsible for electrical safety issues; the Hon. Tom Barton is responsible for that. In relation to our road network, lighting, in some instances, is done by the electrical authorities but mainly is under the control of Main Roads.

There are 18,000 light poles installed in the state controlled road network. In 2005 a scheduled operational audit found electrically unsafe installations in a small number of light poles in Townsville and Cairns. Working with the Electrical Safety Office, an inspection of all 18,000 light poles across the state has been initiated by Main Roads.

I want to make it clear that other than those indications in terms of the small number of light poles in Townsville and Cairns, and they were very small in terms of numbers—it was a handful of individual poles—what has happened is that wiring standards have changed, just like a house built 30 years ago is a different standard to one built today.

I am told that, in terms of the inspections we have completed, 10,400 individual poles have been inspected by the end of June. The remaining inspections in Nerang and Rockhampton districts will be completed by the end of July. The Brisbane metropolitan district called for tenders from private electrical contractors for the inspection of its 6,700 poles. The time frame for these inspections is being negotiated with the Electrical Safety Office.

A significant finding of the inspections is that although wiring of the poles was approved by the regulatory authority at the time of the installation, in the majority of cases the poles no longer meet current standards. That means if you install them today you would wire them differently. That does not mean that they are unsafe. It means that they do not comply with current electrical standards in Main Roads. As a result of it, as each pole is upgraded any electrical upgrading of a simple nature is being undertaken on the spot. A comprehensive program to upgrade all poles to meet the current standards is currently being developed with the ESO. It is expected that such an upgrading program will take five years to complete.

I am advised that the Electrical Safety Office is comfortable with the department's time estimates for the inspections and remedial work. This is an important aspect. If you have a house you would not have to bring it up to today's standard with a safety switch unless you sold it, for example. Main Roads will go through and undertake a program of that.

I am told \$1.5 million in 2006-07 has been allocated—\$0.9 million for planning, \$0.5 million for immediate works and \$4.5 million in 2007-08 for work.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. Minister, I refer you to funding outlined in budget paper No. 3, page 105, for the Pacific Motorway, and I ask: what is the status of the Queensland government's plan for upgrading the Pacific Motorway?

Mr LUCAS: The Commonwealth government has recognised the strategic national importance of the Pacific Motorway and has identified it as a road of national importance which forms part of the Australian national transport network under AusLink. In doing so, the Commonwealth has clearly committed to assist the states in funding upgrades to this road and others under this banner. The state governments have advised the federal government that upgrading the Pacific Motorway would exceed \$1 billion in 2005 dollars. Works will include widening to six lanes the Gateway Motorway north of the Pacific Motorway to Mt Gravatt-Capalaba Road, widening to eight lanes two transit lanes from the Gateway Motorway to Logan Motorway, widening the motorway to at least six lanes from Nerang to the Stewart Road intersection, upgrading of interchanges at Loganlea Road, Nielsens Road, Mudgeeraba, Robina and Reedy Creek Road.

The Queensland government committed, as part of the 2004-05 to 2008-09 RIP, \$392 million to proceed with the necessary upgrading of the Pacific Motorway on the condition that the Commonwealth match our commitment. I have made repeated requests of various federal and state treasurers to commit funding to this project. To date, they have been missing in action. There is the disgraceful display of the member for Chatsworth, and also some no account candidate who you are running in Mudgeeraba, together with the federal member, Mr Ciobo, who, of all people, should be embarrassed to show his face on the Gold Coast, given that New South Wales Liberals seem to be able to get money. In fact, I remember Steven Wardell from the *Courier-Mail*, or was it Matthew Franklin from the *Courier-Mail*, when we opened the six laning at Caboolture, said to John Anderson, who was then the minister, 'Oh, this is a good project, isn't it?' 'Yeah, great.' 'What is different about this on the north of Brisbane compared with the Pacific Highway south of it?' 'Oh.' He was a bit embarrassed by that. Indeed, it is factually easier for you south because it is 50-50 funded by the state and the Commonwealth government, not 100 per cent funded.

In the meantime, we will continue to seek a matched federal funding commitment. As a part of that, we are doing the planning studies in relation to a number of the interchanges there because we want to be in a situation whereby if and when hopefully we get money from the federal government we can get in there and get stuck into it straightaway so we do not prejudice the people of the Gold Coast by saying, 'Oh, look we've got a start now.'

One of the problems that we have with the federal government, and I have raised this repeatedly with Minister Truss, is that it does not provide money for planning. What happens is that all of a sudden, if it wants a project to fund, we have to go through the process of doing the detailed planning and the land acquisition and the like.

What we are doing in relation to the Pacific Motorway is actually doing that now for them, notwithstanding we have not got the federal government commitment. But if we want to construct it we need to get its funding commitment. It is not Paul Lucas being funny about it. Why is it the Gold Coast council has said it? Why is it the Logan council has said it? Why is it the RACQ has said it? Why is it the council of south-east Queensland mayors have said it? Why is it the state government has said it? Why is it the federal opposition has said it? The only one that has not said it is federal Liberal government, aided and abetted by the state Liberal opposition, who ought to get some gumption and put some pressure on it to do something. Why would the opposition not call on it to do it? It is your money, too, and it affects you politically. I really am at a great loss to understand why you would not want to have it putting up money for the Pacific Motorway. It desperately needs it. We have got the money. It was announced in 2003, I think, for the Tugun bypass. What about the rest of it?

CHAIR: Minister, I would now like to turn to the Tugun bypass, which is page 2-3 of the MPS, and ask: what is the status of construction approvals and the other major milestones to its scheduled completion? In other words, how will we know it is on track?

Mr LUCAS: On 8 June work began on what will become a tunnel under the Gold Coast airport land. The work will continue over 18 months, during which about 800,000 cubic metres of dirt will be moved—enough dirt to fill 256 Olympic swimming pools. The tunnel will be 350 metres long and 20 metres wide.

I have to say that when I took over as transport and roads minister, one of the first major tasks that I took was to get the Tugun bypass project on track. That is what we did. The regrettable problems of negotiating with the NSW government and asking the Commonwealth government to have some influence, because it is the government both sides of the border, were what we spent the time resolving.

I undertook to the people of Adina Avenue in Tugun, after meeting with them for a lengthy period of time, that we would actually come up with an option that was the best possible outcome for the Gold Coast and northern New South Wales. The Tugun bypass, by the route that was indicated, was certainly a great outcome.

Significant environmental obligations were placed on the state government. I do not actually have the federal environment minister's letter of environmental approvals with me, but I think I have actually tabled that in parliament before. They were substantial requirements in relation to the state government because we take environmental issues seriously.

The bypass will alleviate substantially existing traffic congestion on the Gold Coast's highway. I know very well, because I travel down there frequently and often spend my holidays down there—and the member for Currumbin would know—the problems that we have where the M1 currently joins with the old Pacific highway at Tugun.

People who opposed it on environmental grounds fail to consider the important issue of the significant amount of fuel and other things that were wasted notwithstanding the inefficiency of that current road as it is. So we are progressing with the project. It will reduce congestion along the Gold Coast Highway, saving \$1.8 billion in reduced travel times and \$59 million in avoided accidents over a 30-year period, according to the EIS. The travel time between Currumbin and the border will be reduced to five minutes. Currently, it takes about 10 minutes and often much longer during peak times. We are getting very good cooperation from the New South Wales government and the federal government now that the project is on track. The Coolangatta Airport has approved plans to extend the main runway, which is due to be opened by March 2007. A road and rail tunnel is therefore required under the southern end of this runway extension.

The department of planning's project approvals were announced on 22 December 2005. Commonwealth environment and other planning approvals were announced on 23 February 2006. PacificLink were announced as Main Roads' partner to deliver the project on the receipt of Commonwealth approvals on 23 February 2006. PacificLink is an alliance between Abigroup Contractors, SMEC Australia and the Department of Main Roads and will complete the preconstruction works to the Commonwealth owned airport land and also the tunnelling that I mentioned.

Preliminary work, including the translocation of endangered species and clearing, commenced on Queensland land on 7 June. We will deal with court matters as they come, but thus far anything that people have thrown at us we have successfully resisted. This is too important a project for Queensland and New South Wales to ignore.

Mr FINN: I would like to turn to the Gateway upgrade project, which is at pages 2-1 and 2-20 of the MPS. Can you explain what this work involves? What are the time lines for the completion of this project?

Mr LUCAS: On 17 February 2005 I announced the government's decision to proceed with the Gateway upgrade project. The project includes the Gateway Bridge duplication and upgrade of 20 kilometres of motorway—that is National Highway to which the federal government reneged on the people of Queensland—at a total estimated capital cost of \$1.6 billion in out-turn dollars.

The Australian government's responsibility for the Gateway Motorway is approximately \$1.05 billion. In comparison, the state government's responsibility for the Gateway Bridge and the approaches from Lytton Road to Lavarack Avenue is approximately \$590 million in out-turn dollars. The Australian government has not made any funding commitment under the five-year AusLink plan for the road component of the Gateway upgrade project beyond \$8.037 million for assistance with planning in 2004-05. Other than that, they scrubbed it. So there is no money for the physical construction of the project.

Tenders were called in September 2005 and closed on 28 March 2006 with three consortia submitting tenders. A comprehensive program of tender evaluation is now underway. The DCM contract is scheduled to be awarded by September 2006 with construction to commence in late 2006.

I indicated earlier that Basic Construction Services has won the contract to do the interchange on the Wynnum Road intersection at Tingalpa. It is a cooperative effort between the state government, the Brisbane City Council and Queensland Motorways Ltd. Isn't it funny that we can work with the Brisbane City Council? No-one can work with the federal government. Campbell Newman cannot work with the federal government. Why is that the case?

The overall Gateway upgrade project is on schedule to be completed by 2011. Key sections of the motorway will be opened progressively to reduce congestion and improve traffic flows. The localised upgrade at the intersection on Wynnum Road at the motorway will be commenced by mid-2006. The target completion date is mid-2007. In relation to the widening of Wynnum Road to Lytton Road to eight lanes, the early works—two additional southbound lanes to be opened from the bridge to the Wynnum Road off-ramp—will be opened in late 2010. There will be a new four-lane deviation through old and existing airport sites to rejoin the existing motorway near Nudgee Road by late 2008; works to Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road to Wynnum Road by late 2009; a new second Gateway Bridge by late 2010; and the refurbishment of the existing bridge by 2011.

The Gateway project will provide significant benefits for commuters, industry and commerce. During the four to five years of design and construction, 5,000 to 6,000 jobs will be created. Weekday traffic on the Gateway Bridge is expected to rise to 137,000 vehicles per day by 2016. On local roads we expect improvements such as 1,700 fewer vehicles per day on Creek Road northbound and 1,500 fewer vehicles per day on Wynnum Road eastbound. There is the potential to reduce travel time from Rochedale to Brisbane Airport by approximately 15 minutes and from Caboolture to the port of Brisbane by approximately 10 minutes during peak periods.

Queensland Motorways Ltd will deliver the Gateway upgrade project in partnership with the Department of Main Roads and private sector through a design and construct and maintain contract. QML will also operate and maintain the project over a 30-year franchise period ending 2041. Obviously, we would need to wait until the bridge is opened.

Mr O'BRIEN: Regarding the additional \$220 million of funding allocated in the 2006 federal budget for the Bruce Highway between Townsville and Cairns, can you outline the extent of upgrading that this funding will allow and the expected time lines for the upgrading? What funding was in the federal budget for planning for the National Highway upgrade?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for the question. Federal Minister for Transport and Regional Services, the Hon. Warren Truss, and I announced on 30 June 2006 that the federal and state governments had signed an MOU for the expenditure of the additional \$268 million, announced in the federal budget, for the Bruce Highway between Townsville and Cairns. One of the things that I try to do is when the federal government does the right thing on a project, I acknowledge that. I believe it to be inconsistent if I do not. There will be an additional \$48 million allocated to the Bruce Highway project south of Tully, with the remaining \$220 million to focus on other flood immunity and improvement works between Townsville and Cairns as well as safety works.

Of the \$220 million, around \$50 million will be committed to a series of safety works that will get underway over the next year. They include overtaking lanes, road surface strengthening, repair work and some intersection improvements. Some flood immunity projects will be carried out, including the replacement of culverts at Fig Tree Creek and Canal Creek between Innisfail and Cairns and near the August Moon Caravan Park just south of Innisfail. Flood-prone Pound Creek on the section of the highway near the cemetery just south of Ingham will also be upgraded.

Minister Truss and I also agreed to a preliminary list of more complex projects for which planning and design work will be carried out to determine project costs and ultimately what can be done with the \$220 million and what we need under AusLink 2. For example, the Tully-Murray project is funded and we are proceeding with that. But if you go north of Innisfail, you have the Mulgrave River, which is a significant flooding issue at Gordonvale, Arnot Creek, Seymour River, the Gairloch floodway and Kingsbury Creek, all north of Ingham and Cattle and Frances creeks south of Ingham. What we want to do with the federal government is undertake the planning studies for these so that then we can say to them with some precision, 'This is likely to be the cost for this if we do it now. Which do you want to do?' It is their choice. It is their National Highway. But to actually get there and do that planning is important, because unless you do the study for the flood immunity and the like you just cannot whack up a road through country like that overnight. You would end up with a massive dam. You would flood everyone out and also have water flowing over the road.

I wrote to Minister Truss on 3 May 2006 seeking an extra \$70 million for planning design and corridor acquisition costs on the full length of the Bruce Highway. As stated in the letter that I wrote to him, there is continued frustration in the community and at state and local government levels regarding the inability to immediately start design and construction works once federal funding is announced. That is typical of all federal projects. If we can go through and do the planning and the land acquisition beforehand, then at least they are sitting there for them to say, 'Right, we now want you to go to the detailed design and construction of these projects.' So it is absolutely imperative that we work with the federal government to achieve that. As I said, the one bright announcement out of the federal budget was that money between Townsville and Cairns. Other than that, it was very, very slim pickings indeed.

Mr O'BRIEN: Regarding page 2-42 of the MPS, grants and other contributions, I understand that the cessation of the federal government's Fuel Sales Grants Scheme, which subsidised purchases of petrol and diesel in regional and remote areas, was to be accompanied by an increase in road funding. What is the impact of this cut? Has there been a commitment to increase the funding?

Mr LUCAS: The Commonwealth government's 2006-07 budget papers' estimates indicate that it will recover \$14.65 billion in 2006-07 from the collection of fuel excise. The total estimated expenditure by the Commonwealth government on roads in Australia is \$2.582 billion for 2006-07. I challenge the federal government to put 100 per cent of the money it receives from fuel taxes back into Australian transport. I have indicated that 93 per cent of registration goes in. We put in much more than that, anyway. We are now going to make it 100 per cent. It is not that there will be additional money for it this year, but we will just guarantee that the full 100 per cent goes in there. It is a growth amount. The growth amount of the 93 per cent went in there, but now the growth amount of the 100 per cent will go there. That shows how serious we are about committing money directly to the road network in Cairns, Longreach, Bundaberg and Toowoomba—right across the state.

The Commonwealth government proposes to remove the fuel excise subsidy scheme to rural and regional Queenslanders that is currently available under the Fuel Sales Grants Scheme. This has the potential to increase the cost of goods and services for regional and remote communities. One of the reasons for the introduction of the scheme was to ameliorate the price differential between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas brought about by the introduction of the GST. Queensland is Australia's most decentralised state and, as a consequence, this change could have a more severe impact in Queensland than in other states. Vulnerable communities in regional and remote areas, particularly Indigenous communities, are already being significantly impacted by the rising price of fuel. This only creates further hardship.

The bipartisan parliamentary committee into petrol pricing concluded that the Fuel Sales Grants Scheme should be extended beyond the federal government's proposed closure date of 1 July. We made the commitment, with revenue from speed and red-light cameras, that that money would go directly into road safety projects. Now we are doing that with 100 per cent of the registration as well. The RACQ was also opposed to the abolition of the scheme. Just off the top of my head, it is out of metropolitan areas as well. So they have abolished that as well in Redlands, not just in remote areas like the area represented by the member for Cook.

My great criticism of the federal budget is that it is fine to say, 'Okay, let's have tax cuts, let's have superannuation benefits and the like. Gee, that's wonderful! Isn't it fun?' We all appreciate that. But there is no vision from them on infrastructure. They will not spend money on infrastructure. If you put money into a road or rail solution that saves you 10 minutes travel time a journey, that is 20 minutes a day and 100 minutes a week—about 1½ hours a week—reduction in your down time in your working week. That is an amazing opportunity for improving efficiency, and that improvement is there for good. So it is really very unfortunate that we have a federal government that will not play that role.

Mr ENGLISH: Page 2-46 of the MPS refers to federal funding for work on the Ipswich Motorway. How much is actually being provided by the federal government to Queensland for the Ipswich Motorway?

Mr LUCAS: The Australian government has committed \$556 million for the Ipswich Motorway. This is a far cry from the \$1.16 billion that was estimated in 2005 for a full upgrade of the Ipswich Motorway from Dinmore to Rocklea. Instead, Michael Caltabiano's protege, Cameron Thompson, has derailed them.

Mr CALTABIANO: I am sure he is flattered.

Mr LUCAS: Are you flattered? I would not be. The 'Typhoid Mary' of federal road funding in Queensland has Michael Johnson, the member for Ryan, apoplectic and Bruce Flegg, your rival for the leadership of the Liberal Party, apoplectic in relation to his ridiculous half northern bypass project, and at the same time he has put off the rest of it. There is now \$10 million being wasted on a further study for the half northern bypass. Of course, as the time frames blow out construction costs and like will inevitably increase.

Maunsell completed an independent review of the full upgrade estimate to allow a comparison between this project and the ANC. So Maunsell did the comparison, as the probity auditors, with the federal and the state governments doing it together. The cost of the state government's preferred full upgrade of the existing motorway was updated to reflect more recent costs and it is \$1.1 billion in 2005 including \$160 million for the Logan Motorway interchange. It can be completed in a 4½-year time frame. The 19-kilometre full upgrade is an integrated transport solution for all modes of transport; that is, pedestrians, cyclists, access to public transport and service roads. The ANC covers only the western end of the Ipswich Motorway—eight kilometres—and is a bypass for vehicle travel only.

Despite having little support among local, state and federal politicians, the federal member for Blair continues to be the only supporter of the ANC. Any ANC option caters for only an eight-kilometre section of the road, it costs as much or more than the full six-lane, 19-kilometre upgrade between Dinmore and Gailes and provides no solution for the 11 kilometres east of Gailes—a section that carries traffic volumes exceeding 60,000 vehicles a day. Clearly, the Queensland government's priority is for a full upgrade of the existing motorway to six lanes plus additional auxiliary lanes where necessary along its entire 19-kilometre length between Dinmore and Rocklea.

In relation to the Logan Motorway interchange, the federal government announced \$160 million for that. We will see what we can get for that. Construction is anticipated to commence in late 2006 with a completion date of late 2008. The awarding of the tender is expected in September 2006. Progress to date and timing of future works aligns with advice given to the federal government and stakeholders since the project was announced in June 2004.

In relation to the Ipswich Motorway, the Wacol to Darra project, \$320 million was announced on 12 November 2005. Funding excluded \$50 million for land acquisition. There is a lot more that I can say, but I want to say that if you have a look at the cash flows, this rubbish about us having the money for it is not correct. What they have done is provide us with cash flows that are consistent with constructing it over a particular time period. We will work with them in relation to that.

CHAIR: The time for this block of government questions has expired.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 2-4 of the MPS and corporative initiatives. The Department of Main Roads takes part in the Queensland government's shared services HR initiative. What does the client satisfaction survey show about the delivery of these shared services for your department and what cost saving was handed up to the shared service operation for the delivery of these services for the department?

Mr LUCAS: The shared services initiative is a whole-of-government approach to corporate services delivery. Previously each department provided its own services in relation to such functions as accounts payable and receivable processing, payroll and operating their own SAP systems. The objectives of the establishment of shared service providers are to provide high-quality, cost-effective corporate support services to multiple customers from centres of excellence and at the same time reduce costs of providing these services.

Main Roads is a customer of CorporateLink and CorpTech. CorporateLink performs functions in the area of finance, procurement, human resources and fleet management. CorpTech performs functions in the area of maintenance and development of the SAP system. Payments are made to CorporateLink and CorpTech for the operational costs of providing these services. Payments are based on the costs that were incurred by the department of providing these services. Specific questions relating to the operations of CorporateLink and CorpTech should be referred to the Treasurer or the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Water.

The shared services CEO committee has agreed to extend the quarantining period to 30 June 2007. CorporateLink will develop a costing and charging regime to replace quarantining. This will be tested by notionally charging agencies from around July 2006.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 2-4 of the MPS regarding the duplication of the Gateway Bridge and note that the budget shows Queensland Motorways allocating \$346.7 million to commence the project. What briefings have you and your government received on the timeliness of the delivery of the Gateway Bridge duplication program? Will you confirm that in 1998 your government was briefed that the current Gateway Bridge duplication would need to be completed by 2005?

Mr LUCAS: We would have liked to have undertaken the Gateway duplication as soon as possible, but the federal government has not committed to the project. It is an absolute disgrace that the federal government has not—

Mr CALTABIANO: It does not own the bridge, Minister.

Mr LUCAS: No. Well you cannot duplicate the Gateway Bridge without the roads connecting to it. The traffic does not begin and end at the toll plaza. That is a ridiculous assertion. The simple fact of the matter is that to deliver it all in the one project is a sensible way of doing it. Also, how could you have a bridge there alongside an existing one that was not connected to it? You would have chaos at the toll plazas and then you would have to get the federal government to meet the entire cost of the project excluding the bridge itself. It has shown no inclination whatsoever to do it. It has showed no inclination to put the money up for it. It has delayed and obfuscated. Obviously we would like the Gateway duplication to be completed as soon as possible and the timing is consistent with proceeding at all possible speed.

I have also ensured that, in relation to the project, we have early openings as far as possible. What that means is this: the benefits from the Gateway upgrade project will not just be realised when the duplicated bridge is opened. We have the early work at Wynnum Road and the six-laning of Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road to Wynnum Road. We have the additional work in relation to Wynnum Road to the toll area and the bridge itself and its four lanes. Past the Gateway we then have the issue of what happens on the National Highway north of Nudgee? There is no commitment from the federal government in relation to that. You have said nothing. Also, for the Gateway south of Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road, which is not a national highway but a Road of National Importance—which is fifty-fifty funded—again, there is no commitment to that. So why is it that this federal government could not put one red cent more into national projects when it comes to south-east Queensland? That is the problem.

The one thing I am repeatedly briefed on is how much the federal government does not put in. It is not just what people say to me in relation to the government. It is what the RACQ say. It is what the local mayors say. It is what the mayor of Brisbane says. It is what the Gold Coast mayor and council say. It is what the Logan council says. Everybody says, obviously with the exception of you, that the federal

government is not meeting its responsibilities. It is not there to do it. One might very well ask: what is the difference between the Gateway and these other projects in New South Wales? What is the difference between the Pacific Motorway and the Pacific Highway in New South Wales? What is the difference between people who live in south-east Queensland and the rest of Australia? All I can conclude is this: very poor federal representation and a state opposition that is not prepared to put the wood on them. Maybe if you did, they might give us the money.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I again refer to page 2-4 of the MPS regarding the duplication of the Gateway Bridge. Of the \$346.7 million in the budget for Queensland Motorways to commence the project, how much of this money is borrowed money? What is the total to be borrowed for the whole project in anticipated form? And what are the borrowing costs over the repayment period for the project?

Mr LUCAS: Here we go. This is the member for Chatsworth's great furbury that he has been putting around that has not got any traction because no-one is silly enough to believe it in relation to what loan repayments are over the course of a project like this. I note that you had a go at certain people when this was argued in the Brisbane City Council but, of course, you are inconsistent. I am consistent.

Obviously the loan funds that are required for a project the size of the Gateway are substantial. The new debt of \$1.6 billion will be in addition to the existing debt and is scheduled to be fully paid by 2041. As anyone knows, with borrowing that level of money—including what happened on the original project itself—an enormous amount of interest will be incurred over that period of time. That goes towards the cost of the project. It does not matter who delivers it, whether it is delivered by a private sector consortium or, indeed, by Queensland Motorways, when you have borrowed the money to do a project like that. That is part of the cost of the project.

It will be substantial over the time of the project. That is what happens when you have substantial projects. That is what will happen with the Brisbane tunnel. That is what will happen with Airport Link, if it is approved. That is what will happen with any toll road. That is what will happen with the Toowoomba second range crossing if that is approved and built on a loan basis. That is the nature of these projects. It is important that you show a bit of maturity in relation to these sorts of issues. The simple fact of the matter is that when you borrow that amount of money—just as you do with a house, which is far, far less—you have lengthy interest components over a lengthy period of time.

Mr CALTABIANO: A bit of a consistency out of the ALP over these things would help also, Minister.

Mr LUCAS: You get consistency out of me.

Mr CALTABIANO: We do not actually. I refer to page 2-12 of the MPS regarding the road system planning quality measures. The road system seal age is a critical indicator for maintenance operations, particularly in rural and regional Queensland. This budget indicates that 15.7 per cent of the road network exceeds the optimal seal age for a quality pavement. How does this benchmark with the other states in Australia?

Mr LUCAS: I am told that the seal age is published by Austroads. In relation to the overall condition of the network, the road right quality indicator shows that the surface standard of the state controlled network has been maintained relative to the increase in the amount of traffic on the network. This reflects the fact that road seals are providing better than expected performance due to a combination of factors such as improvement in pavement construction methods, variations in traffic volumes and climatic conditions.

Optimal seal age is the estimated point in time when resurfacing should commence. This is a desktop estimate using road seal data recorded at the completion of construction, rehabilitation and maintenance projects. It should be noted that a certain length of road may have exceeded its optimal seal age but not require resealing due to better than expected performance of the seal and variations in the mix and volume of traffic. The measure is calculated by dividing the total road length by the length of road that it seals exceeding its optimum age. The department uses this measure to monitor the overall size of resealing requirements of the state controlled network. Main Roads strives to improve its knowledge of the state road network.

When you consider that we spent 2½ times per capita, even on those 2001 figures, what Victoria spends on its roads and when you consider the substantial increase in road funding for local roads of regional significance for example, we certainly are at the forefront of capital expenditure. To give you an indication, we have been redirecting available state road funding to a five per cent increase per annum on average maintenance works over each of the five years from 2001. Over 50 per cent of our base road funding allocation is devoted to maintaining the existing road asset. In 2006-07, \$400 million is to be spent on our rehabilitation program and routine maintenance, up from \$391 million in 2005-06.

The Commonwealth has not been keeping pace with growing needs on the AusLink network, despite a repeated state government request for an immediate injection of \$100 million towards redressing backlog and maintenance plus an annual increase from \$55 million to \$65 million to keep pace with growing national transport tasks in Queensland. The Commonwealth's response is to spread already inadequate funds over a larger network.

Mr CALTABIANO: Minister, I refer to page 2-15 of the MPS regarding the infrastructure program development and delivery output and the list of recent achievements. The \$32 million Linkfield Road connection was opened on 16 February this year as the only wholly state road project delivered in Brisbane city by the government since its election. This project is conspicuously missing from the recent achievements list. Are you aware of any failings in the surfacing of this road or whether any part of this road is going to require resurfacing? What provisions for rectification for failures have been made in the 2006-07 budget?

Mr LUCAS: I am not aware of that. I will check whether there are any issues with respect to it. I will say this though: it was built by the private sector under a design and construct contract. If they have not met the requirements for that contractually with respect to the road, we will take action in relation to that. I am told that there was some resurfacing prior to opening for that reason because they are required to make sure that they meet their contractual requirements. That is what you do, of course, with a project. You inspect it prior to completion, just like any project, and say, 'I want that attended to and that attended to,' and the like. That is what I am told happened.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: Minister, I refer to page 2-1 of the MPS regarding federal government funding for Queensland road projects. In May 2004, \$4.25 million was made available to upgrade the Eight Mile intersection of the New England and Cunningham highways, north of Warwick. DOTARS engineers have undertaken assessments and found that the most appropriate solution to the problems at the intersection is a roundabout. This work has not yet commenced. Is this funding allocation going to be taken up in 2006-07 and when is the anticipated completion date of this important safety work? In regard to state projects, can you update the committee on the Regional Bridge Renewal Program and also the traffic congestion issue at the Ferry Street and Alice Street intersection in Maryborough?

Mr LUCAS: I obviously cannot do that in three minutes, but I will attempt to do what I can. I am glad you asked me the question about the Eight Mile intersection because it is a major intersection of the Cunningham and New England highways, 13 kilometres north of Warwick. It has a tight and poorly aligned curve, visibility issues and a significant crash history involving heavy vehicles. Over the past 20 years there have been 60 accidents. Obviously the alignment of the intersection needs to be improved to reduce crashes and near miss incidents. It is federally funded.

In 2002, Main Roads approached the federal government for \$13 million that would have been needed then to fund an overpass as the ultimate safest solution. In 2005, the federal government advised that the project needed to be refined using \$4.25 million approved under AusLink. The local mayor is fuming over the federal government's decision to rule out an overpass after planning consultation had been done on that basis. Scope is now confined to developing new options for \$4.25 million and greater separation is obviously not possible. I want to make it crystal clear here: the federal government has decided that it wants to do the project that way with no grade separation for \$4.25 million. That is its decision. The Main Roads recommendation was that the best outcome was to have an overpass.

In relation to regional bridges—I know this is important to you—within the Maryborough electorate two new bridges will be constructed at Miva and Little Bruya Creek on the Bauple-Wooloonga Road within the next three years for \$2.8 million. Within the adjacent Burnett and Callide electorates seven bridges and a significant 20 bridges with road approaches will be constructed progressively over the next five years. I want to try to fit in the next thing so I will try and finish that and then I will go to your next issue if that is okay.

In relation to the regional bridge program one has to actually look at systems when it comes to bridges. We have ageing timber bridges. Timber available for bridges is obviously declining. We need to find new methods of building these bridges. We are doing some work with fibre composites in relation to replacing these bridges. This is really good. We are trying to do a systems approach. It is no good if you just replace one bridge in one area and the next bridge up the road is timber and load limited. If people are going to Maryborough with their trade or produce the fact that in your electorate one bridge is done is wonderful news for your electorate but it does not really help the people going through. The Ferry and Alice Street intersection is currently Maryborough's busiest intersection and is signalised. It carries 20,000 vehicles per day. There is poor drainage and it is flood prone. Heavy vehicles have trouble negotiating the intersection. Could I seek an extension?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr LUCAS: The intersection is a junction of four state controlled roads: the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road linking to the Bruce Highway, the Maryborough-Hervey Bay Road linking to Hervey Bay, the Maryborough-Caloola Road and the Maryborough-Biggenden Road. The project is to widen the intersection to provide separate turning lanes from Alice Street to Ferry Street and from Ferry Street to Alice Street. The right turning lanes on Alice Street will be extended, a 'left turn at any time with care' at two corners and the intersection will be surfaced in asphalt.

The ineffective aged stormwater system will be upgraded eliminating current periodic flooding. The 2005-06 RIP allocated \$3.5 million over three years: \$300,000 in 2005-06, \$1.8 million in 2006-07 and \$1.4 million in 2007-08. The project is on schedule. Community engagement is expected to start in

August. Obviously the honourable member will take an interest in that. Land resumptions are expected to start in August. Final planning and design is to be complete by September. Tenders are expected in October 2006 with construction to commence early 2007.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. We now have government questions through to 4 o'clock.

Mr WILSON: Can I take you to page 2-25 of the MPS which refers to the Transport Infrastructure Development Scheme and the Roads Alliance. What are some examples of state and local government working together?

Mr LUCAS: There are a lot of advantages in state and local governments working together. I know that sometimes we have arguments with local authorities. By and large I always get very positive feedback from local authorities. The state government has an ongoing close working relationship with local government. This relationship was strengthened in 2002 when Main Roads entered into an alliance with local government to better manage the lower order state and higher order local government controlled roads. This road network is known as the Local Roads of Regional Significance. The award-winning Roads Alliance is an innovative approach to planning, managing and funding the regionally significant local roads.

The LRRS network forms 31,443 kilometres of Queensland's total 177,000 kilometres of public roads assets. The alliance is a strategic partnership between Queensland state and local governments and involves 16 regional road groups, including 124 councils and Main Roads operating cooperatively managing the LRRS network regardless of road ownership. It is about taking a systems approach, grouping the councils together to work with state government; it does not matter if it is a state road or a local road.

The state is committed not only to maintaining the previous base funding of \$150 million per annum but also committed to indexing these funds on an ongoing basis. State and local governments will invest some \$2.35 billion across the next five years into the preservation and improvement of the LRRS network in Queensland. This includes some \$878 million in special initiatives funded by state government. This commitment towards a road set which is typically the sole responsibility of local government in other states demonstrates our close working relationship with Queensland. In other states they say to local government 'bad luck'. There are more state controlled roads proportionately, I am advised, in Queensland than in other states. That really says a lot about our relationship.

Following the recent federal budget announcement under the federal government Roads to Recovery program the Australian government has announced \$1.5 billion over four years from 1 July, 2005. The strategic component of R2R is an additional \$250 million of which \$127 million nationwide remains to be allocated. Of this Queensland is currently receiving only \$62.5 million per annum and has to bid for the remaining \$127 million of strategic R2R that remains.

It is obvious that this level of commitment is significantly less than the real dollars Queensland is putting on the table, noting the \$1.622 billion five-year state commitment to the LRRS network from 2005-06. The state's commitment to funding Queensland roads has been supported by an independent review commissioned by the Local Government Association of Queensland. The 2005 update of the Layton report has identified that in comparison to real state budget increases towards transport infrastructure the federal government has been slow to meet the identified needs for additional funding for transport infrastructure in Queensland.

In addition, on 24 June 2006 speaking on behalf of the South East Queensland Council of Mayors, the Liberal mayor of Brisbane, Campbell Newman, said, 'The south-east is getting a raw deal when it comes to road funding. We are sick of excuses. The federal government just doesn't get it.' Some recent examples of where the strong partnership approach of local government and my transport portfolio has worked successfully include the north-south bypass tunnel, Airport Link, the Boundary to Kelliher Road projects and now the Wynnum Road intersection with the Gateway.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to page 2-33 of the MPS. In the wake of Cyclone Monica would you please advise what the state government is doing to upgrade the Peninsula Developmental Road?

Mr LUCAS: I thank the honourable member for his question on this. The honourable member is 'Mr PDR' when it comes to his advocacy. A lot of people would not understand that the cape is a very remote place and it is challenging getting around there even in very good weather conditions. On 19 April far-north Queensland did feel the brunt of Cyclone Monica when it crossed Cape York with flooding the worst in 50 years. The Peninsula Developmental Road, particularly from Musgrave to Coen, and the local access roads, sustained enormous damage. The honourable member and I are going to go for a bit of a drive up there later this year. I am the sort of person who hops in the cab of a train or a truck to actually experience things. The way to really understand it from the point of view of the locals is to put my backside on a seat and to go through it.

We are continuing to invest in the upgrading of the PDR as well as carrying out a massive repair effort. The state government has spent some \$63 million in state funding on maintenance and upgrading works on the PDR over the six year period 2000 to 2006. With the recent release of the 2006 budget we have announced another almost \$10 million for a range of projects on the PDR mostly to extend the bitumen seal.

In comparison, the federal government has spent less than \$10 million on the PDR in the same period. We have spent \$63 million and announced another \$10 million; they have spent \$10 million in total. Half of this has been National Disaster Mitigation Relief arrangements and even then these programs are subsidised by state funding. This funding only repairs damage; it does not contribute to upgrading the road to provide better access to help it withstand events such as Cyclone Monica.

The other \$5 million of federal funding came from Roads of National Importance funding. The federal government abandoned this program in June 2004 after only two years and two small projects. Also abandoned were the thousands of residents in the Cape York peninsula and industries dependant on this road. A real opportunity currently exists for the federal government to increase its commitment to the PDR under AusLink. There is \$127 million available through the AusLink Strategic Regional program on a fifty-fifty basis and the money can be used to fund transport projects such as roadwork projects on the PDR.

Main Roads recently assisted Cook Shire Council to prepare a \$20 million funding submission to seal a 30 kilometre section of the road between Lakeland and Laura. Should the federal government provide \$10 million the state government is more than happy to match this amount. That is in addition to our other money. On 26 May 2006 the Premier announced that state funding had been set aside for this purpose.

Towards the end of 2006 the federal government plans to announce which projects have been successful. The federal government has recently toured the cape and seen first hand the extensive damage Cyclone Monica caused to the road. Should the federal government decide to make the funds available Main Roads could deliver these works during the 2007-08 dry season.

I join the Premier in welcoming the Prime Minister's announcement of a feasibility study to consider upgrading the PDR so that it can better cope with events of this kind and the annual wet season. The federal government has said it wants to do a feasibility study. We are happy to do one with them. When we get the results of that we need to get some serious dollars from the federal government in relation to this. I get on reasonably with Warren Entsch. We need to work together to get some money out of the federal government,

Mr ENGLISH: I would like to refer to page 2-1 of the MPS. With regard to the record roads budget would you outline the funding commitment the state government has made to road infrastructure projects in my electorate of Redlands?

Mr LUCAS: Yes. The honourable member is a pleasure to deal with as a local member. He, of course, having a history as a police officer, understands the importance of road funding. Redlands is very dependant on roads. That is why you support the busway, of course, in terms of getting people around and into Brisbane. The current five-year RIP includes a further \$48.5 million to upgrade and maintain state controlled roads commencing in 2005-06. These works include upgrading intersections on Cleveland-Redland Bay Road at German Church Road; on Capalaba-Cleveland Road at Finucane Road-Elizabeth Drive-Cambridge Drive; on Birkdale Road at Old Cleveland Road East; on Redland Bay Road at Mt Cotton-Lyndon-Duncan roads; and the roundabout improvements at Duncan-Taylor-Boundary roads to improve safety and efficiency. Duplicating major roads from two lanes to four lanes will meet future population growth and demand. Tenders are being called this month for the construction of a section of the Capalaba-Victoria Point Road from Vienna Road to Taylor Road-Redland Bay Road at an estimated cost of \$14 million. Tenders will be called later this year for another section from Panorama Drive to the Cleveland-Redland Bay Road at an estimated cost of \$16.6 million. There will also be improved road lighting to enhance the safety and minimise harm to fauna crossing the road and improved facilities to provide cycle-friendly roadways, fauna crossings at strategic locations and incident friendly road dividers.

The SEQIPP projects that will benefit the Redlands area include \$200 million for the Redlands sub-arterial Mount Gravatt-Capalaba Road-Tingalpa Creek duplication—while this project is technically within Brisbane City Council it is the major east-west link between Redlands and the Gateway, Logan and Ipswich Motorways, carrying over 14,000 vehicles a day; \$78 million for the Redland Bay Road, Tingalpa Creek-Taylor Road, duplication from two lanes to four lanes; \$65 million for the Cleveland-Redland Bay Road, South Street-Boundary Road, duplication from two lanes to four lines. Main Roads has recently carried out a road safety audit of Mount Cotton Road. Projects identified include intersection improvements and roadside hazards, \$3.8 million. Two have been constructed in 2005-06 including intersection upgrades at Redland Bay Road, \$1 million, and the driver training centre, \$700,000.

Main Roads tell me that in the O'Keefe Street bus tunnel there is a longitudinal crack along the tunnel lining at its apex. Initial inspections have been undertaken and further analysis is underway. Main Roads believe the crack is a consequence of concrete shrinkage rather than any structural defect. There is no issue about the safety of the tunnel. Monitoring of the crack will continue. That is what I am told.

Mr WILSON: I note the record funding provided under the Roads Implementation Program. That is at 2-31 of the MPS. There have been some significant road improvements on the Samford Road in the Ferny Grove area. What work has the department undertaken and how is this benefiting the community?

Mr LUCAS: I am pleased to advise that the second stage of the Samford Road upgrade was completed in May this year, three months ahead of schedule. This recently completed project was the second stage of a two-stage works package to upgrade Samford Road between Cobalt Street and Ferny Way. Stage one of the project involved the upgrade of Ferny Way and Arbor Street intersections with Samford Road. Work on stage one included the installation of a new set of traffic signals with Arbor Street, a new entrance into the Queensland Rail car park at the Ferny Grove station and widening of Samford Road to four lanes. Works on stage one were completed in April 2004. This provided major community benefit by removing congestion and making access to the Ferny Grove rail station more direct and safer for cars and pedestrians.

The main component of the stage two works which were recently completed included the upgrading of Samford Road to four lanes between Cobalt Street and Arbor Street, new traffic signals at Upper Kedron Road and Claverton Street, together with the upgrading of signals at Tramway Street.

These works will bring enormous benefits to the community in terms of reducing peak hour congestion and improving traffic safety and helping to satisfy continuing traffic growth in the Brisbane to Samford corridor. Upgraded bridge structures over Cedar Creek have increased flood immunity for motorists using Samford Road and extensive bikeways and noise barriers have also been incorporated into the project to improve the amenity of the local community.

As a responsible corporate citizen, landscaping works have been put on hold during the current water crisis and will be installed once sufficient water is available for the establishment and maintenance of vegetation.

CHAIR: Before I conclude this session, I want to note that the standing orders require that items taken on notice be provided within 48 hours. It was a decision of the committee to interpret that to be 9 am Monday morning. There were a few things in this examination that were taken on notice. It would also be appropriate if those materials that you presented which are to be incorporated into *Hansard* be provided by 9 o'clock Monday morning.

That concludes the examination of the expenditure of estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Transport and Main Roads. I thank the minister and his advisers. The committee will now adjourn and resume at 4.15 to examine the proposed expenditures for the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development.

Mr LUCAS: I thank you, Mr Chair, Mr Deputy Chair, other committee members, committee staff, parliament staff, *Hansard*, et cetera and could I also thank my departmental and ministerial staff. Thank you very much.

Sitting suspended from 4.00 pm to 4.16 pm.

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE C—TOURISM, FAIR TRADING AND WINE INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

In Attendance

Hon. MM Keech, Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development

Mr M Caldwell, Senior Policy Advisor

Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development

Ms H Ringrose, Director-General

Mr R Broadfoot, Director, Financial Management Unit (Acting)

Ms C Maconachie, Principal Policy Officer, Policy and Coordination Unit

Ms J Kinross, Commissioner for Fair Trading

Mr B Bauer, Deputy Commissioner, Office of Fair Trading

Mr B Date, Director, Wine Industry Development Division

Mr C Watters, Executive Director, Liquor Licensing Division

Mr N Scheffe, Director, Commercial and Consumer Tribunal Registry (Acting)

Ms N Doumany, Commissioner, Office of Body Corporate and Community (Acting)

Mr I Mitchell, Chief Executive Officer, Tourism Queensland

Ms H Moore, Executive Director, Corporate Services

CHAIR: On behalf of the committee, welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to our hearing. I am Simon Finn, member for Yeerongpilly and chair of the committee. My fellow committee members are Mr Michael Caltabiano MP, member for Chatsworth and deputy chair; Mr John English MP, member for Redlands; Mr Chris Foley MP, member for Maryborough; Mr Jason O'Brien MP, member for Cook; Mrs Jann Stuckey MP, member for Currumbin; and Mr Geoff Wilson MP, member for Ferny Grove.

The next portfolio to be examined relates to the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development. This portfolio will be examined in the following order: tourism until 5.15; dispute resolution from 5.15 to 5.45, followed by a short break; fair trading from six to 6.50; wine industry development from 6.50 to 7.10; and Liquor Licensing from 7.10 to 7.30. I remind the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and three minutes for answers. A bell will ring once 15 seconds before the end of these time limits and twice when the time has expired. I will allow more time for answers if the questioner consents.

The standing orders require that at least half the time for questions at today's hearing be allotted to non-government members. Government members and non-government members of the committee, commencing with non-government members, will take turns at asking questions in blocks lasting approximately 15 minutes for the tourism, dispute resolution and fair trading components of the hearing. The blocks will be approximately 10 minutes for wine industry development and Liquor Licensing.

In relation to media coverage of today's hearing, the committee has resolved that video coverage without sound and still photographs are allowed only during the opening statements and at the commencement of proceedings after the change of departments. There was a note, I think, that I removed the media too quickly last time so this time we will give them a bit more time.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask advisers to the minister to identify themselves before they speak. Please also ensure that mobile phones or pagers are switched off while in the chamber so as to not disrupt the chair or the proceedings. I remind all those participating in the hearing today that these proceedings are similar to parliament to the extent that the public cannot participate in the proceedings. Standing order 206 provides that a person admitted to a committee public hearing may be excluded by order of the committee.

I call on the estimates of the proposed expenditure referred to the committee and declare the proposed expenditure for the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, under standing order 177 you are able to make an opening statement that does not exceed five minutes. Would you like to make an opening statement?

Ms KEECH: I would, and I thank you and the committee for an opportunity to present the proposed expenditure of my portfolio to the committee. Queensland's tourism industry is entering a bold new era. Never has the need for the Beattie government and the tourism industry to work together been more important than right now as we face challenges but are presented with great opportunities. I am proud to have been the instigator of our exciting Queensland Tourism Strategy, a 10-year blueprint for the future. The strategy is a genuine partnership between the industry and a government that continually raises the bar in terms of support for tourism.

The QTS will be completed following the most comprehensive consultation ever within our tourism industry—21 forums and workshops across the state and direct involvement of more than 800 people from industry, state government agencies and local government. The strategy aims to increase visitor expenditure in all Queensland regions, to increase the value of tourism to Queensland and to maximise sustainable tourism growth. It will include action plans based on the key themes of coordination, partnerships and community, investment, infrastructure and access, workforce development, developing and marketing a Queensland style visitor experience, natural environment and culture, and future insights and research.

The strategy highlights what can be achieved from a positive and cooperative approach. The benefits have already started to flow, with the first down payment being an extra \$4 million over four years to regional tourist organisations. Our 14 RTOs do a fantastic job and they deserve their funding boost. The government will also continue its support for conventions and incentives, with \$7.5 million over four years to the state's six convention bureaus on the Gold Coast, Brisbane, the Sunshine Coast, Whitsundays, Townsville and Cairns. We have also delivered a record base budget for Tourism Queensland and special purpose funding to swell the direct allocation to more than \$46 million.

The Beattie government takes its consumer protection role very seriously. The Office of Fair Trading is building on its regulatory record in compliance and enforcement and in proactive programs aimed at equipping consumers to make responsible decisions in the marketplace.

Residents of retirement villages have hailed our delivery of new legislation, offering vastly improved protections and clearly setting out the rights and obligations of residents and village operators. The amendments followed extensive consultation with residents, the representative groups and village operators.

I was recently able to inform the parliament that the Beattie government will systematically reform the security industry. My department's review of the Security Providers Act will result in a new licensing and regulatory regime, tough new standards of conduct and ongoing training, and a new era of cooperation between security officers, security provider firms and my Office of Fair Trading. The reforms I announced will provide better public safety, higher standards for those in the industry and tougher penalties for those who do the wrong thing.

Fair Trading will continue in 2006-07 to improve its own standards, performance and service delivery. I am proud that my department is cementing solid relationships with major stakeholders. That is how you get the best results. We listen to the people, whether they are community groups affected by association or incorporations legislation, retirement village residents, consumers who have been ripped off, honest traders seeking a fair go, or industry associations.

Public safety in and around licensed premises is also a particular priority of mine, as minister, and of the Beattie government. Queenslanders expect to feel safe when they go out, and we are implementing statewide safety action plans to help protect them. Again, we are working with licensees, community groups, police and other government agencies to deliver practical and effective strategies. Consultation has been a priority in development of legislation over the past two years and it will continue to be a major focus of policy development this financial year.

Members of the committee, as minister I am proud of the achievements of my department and Tourism Queensland over the past year, and I congratulate staff on delivering for the people of Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The first round of questions is from non-government members. I call the member for Currumbin.

Mrs STUCKEY: I would like to say what a pleasure it is to be here, and I would like to thank everyone for their attendance today as well. With reference to page 2-4 of the MPS, I understand that the Queensland Cruise Shipping Plan now has the Gold Coast cruise terminal going through a planning stage. Can the minister advise the committee of projected figures with regard to numbers of tourists that the Gold Coast can expect to see in the first, second and third year of operation? What indicators were used to arrive at these numbers?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. Before I do that—and I have spoken to the member and to the chair—I would like to seek the committee's leave to table an updated answer to government question on notice No. 1. I would like to correct the record in relation to a minor error in the

answer tabled yesterday. The answer indicated that the figure for cooperative marketing support, given in the MPS, showed estimated actual support as at the end of May 2006. This should have read as at the end of March 2006. The figure of \$13.3 million in cooperative marketing support for Tourism Queensland's tactical destination campaigns, or an increase of 11.4 per cent on the previous year, remains unchanged. This is an outstanding result for tourism in Queensland and is a sign of the strong partnership between the Beattie government and the tourism industry. I seek leave to table that.

Leave granted.

Ms KEECH: With respect to the question that the member asked regarding the Gold Coast tourism industry, cruise shipping is the fastest growing segment of the tourism industry in not only Queensland and Australia but also the world. Particularly when there are more and more security issues happening, wealthy visitors, particularly to Australia, are seeking a safe and enjoyable environment. One way they can do that, particularly at the luxury end, is through enjoying a cruise shipping holiday. That is why the Beattie government has a very focused strategy and plan to grow cruise shipping in Queensland.

The industry is said to be worth \$89.4 million to Queensland—a sixfold increase from 2001, when the industry was estimated to be worth just \$14 million. Nearly 180 cruise calls are expected in 2006—up 78 per cent from the 2004 season. Passenger numbers in the 2004-05 cruise shipping season continue to grow, with more than 39,000 passengers visiting Brisbane—up more than 120 per cent from the 2003-04 season. Based on information from cruise ships in Australian ports, it is conservatively estimated that a 1,500-passenger vessel injects approximately \$1 million into the local economy per base port call.

With regard to the cruise terminal on the Gold Coast, as the member is aware the Deputy Premier and minister for state development has indicated that the environmental impact study is progressing. We have also indicated that there will be rigorous analysis of the project to ensure that the environmental impact study stacks up.

When it comes to the cruise terminal on the Gold Coast, as tourism minister I am absolutely determined that the cruise terminal will be the missing link for tourism on the Gold Coast, and it has my strong support provided that it stacks up environmentally.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you, Minister. With reference to note 4 of the non-departmental output statement on pages 2-6 and 2-7 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, would the minister please provide details of the terms and conditions of the licence of the Tourism Queensland commercial division to a private tourist operator on 1 July 2005, as this was excluded from the 2005 Ministerial Portfolio Statement?

Ms KEECH: The issue with regard to the licensing of the commercial division of Tourism Queensland which relates to the Sunlover sector was made, as the member is aware, for a variety of reasons. The particular reason was that Sunlover and the Queensland travel centres were developed back in the 1980s, when there was a real need for Queensland product to be taken to Australian visitors. What we have found since 1980 is that there has been a real change in the way that visitors purchase holidays and research for holidays. In fact, I have been informed that about 40 per cent of domestic holidays are booked through the internet. So we had a situation where the government had to ensure that Tourism Queensland and its commercial division maintained those cutting-edge issues. We believed the best way to do that was licensing Sunlover Holidays to AOT.

There are a number of benefits for the operators from this licensing agreement. They include: the ongoing distribution of products through the licensee; expanded opportunities for distribution, especially through the AOT Group's online network; greater access to domestic and international distribution opportunities; and key performance indicators embedded in agreements encourage business growth.

With respect to the treatment of the licensee agreement in the 2005-06 MPS, as the member has indicated my MPS states that Tourism Queensland substantially progressed negotiations for the licensing of the commercial division comprising Sunlover and the Queensland Travel Centres. At the time of printing last year's MPS, legislative amendments needed for the transaction to proceed had not been passed. Therefore, the financial statements included in the MPS were produced on the basis of the commercial division remaining within Tourism Queensland. The 2006 Ministerial Portfolio Statement excludes the commercial division for this reason.

I was recently in Adelaide for ATE, the second largest tourism trade show in the world, and I had the opportunity and pleasure to launch the international brochure for Sunlover. This is the first time that Sunlover has been presented internationally, except for in New Zealand, and it has been widely recognised and appreciated by the industry. The AOT-Sunlover licensing agreement has been working well for industry and has my full support.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to the explanation of variances in the financial statements on pages 2-8 and 2-13 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, could the minister confirm the calling for and advise of the process for any tender or application which was undertaken prior to the licensing agreement of the commercial division of Tourism Queensland to a private tourism operator?

Ms KEECH: I will ask Ian Mitchell, my CEO, to give the details.

Mr Mitchell: There was no public tender for the business. The government had received an unsolicited offer from the AOT Group. After the government had undertaken a valuation of the business it had identified that the business was at that stage losing money and the offer was a very generous offer. Tourism Queensland and Treasury were involved in a process of negotiating the terms of that agreement. They had to come back to the government on whether the deal was able to be achieved on that basis. That went to parliament in May last year.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you very much. It would appear that that process was not open and transparent because it was not a public one. With reference to the explanation of variances in the financial statements on pages 2-8 and 2-13 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, would the minister detail the specific amounts received and outline future amounts anticipated to be received in respect of the licensing arrangement?

Ms KEECH: With respect to the licensing agreement and the licensing income there are a couple of things I would like to note for the member's benefit. I am advised that the licensing income will be reflected in Tourism Queensland's annual report from 2005-06 onwards. Income generated from licensing fees is allocated to Tourism Queensland's international marketing budget and allocated to priority projects to help to grow the market for all operators and distributors. I am advised that for 2005-06 the licensing income was \$2.1 million and the estimate for 2006-07 is around \$2.5 million.

Particular projects utilising the licensing agreement income in 2005-06 included very important initiatives for growing the international market in Queensland. The reason we are focusing on the international market is that we know that international visitors to Queensland stay longer and spend more money. It is very important that we target the international market, despite the fact that the domestic market is our bread and butter and contributes to about 80 per cent of visitation.

Some of the projects that we utilised the licensing income for in 2005-06 were: \$675,000 to continue Tourism Queensland's agreement with Australian Airlines and Tourism Tropical North Queensland to maintain the momentum after finalising a three-year specific initiative grant in 2004-05; \$200,000 to implement an MOU with Singapore Airlines; \$50,000 to support Korean Air charters; \$25,000 to support Qantas charters from Korea; \$50,000 to support Queensland on Tour China; and \$80,000 for research in Singapore and Germany as to how we can most effectively target these very important markets. I am also advised with respect to the licensing income that for future years the calculation will be based on turnover and depend on the growth of sales.

With respect to the question the member raised earlier regarding the licensing arrangement and why it was not an open tender, I am reminded that a probity check was conducted by independent parties. Queensland Treasury and external parties were involved. The whole process was audited very thoroughly indeed.

Mr CALTABIANO: With reference to page 2-8 of the MPS, does the minister agree with the Premier that state government funding for *Big Brother* is good value for money given that the show is tawdry, sexist, low grade, demeaning—especially to women—and sets a poor example to young people watching at prime time? Does the minister support comments made by the Deputy Premier that the filming of *Big Brother* on the Gold Coast is a tourism drawcard?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. He has raised a couple of issues that are not within the MPS of Tourism Queensland, except for the final comments regarding the comments alleged to be from the Deputy Premier. I have not heard those comments. Can I say a couple of things. Despite the fact that we are not actually discussing tourism issues and the MPS for Tourism Queensland, I am happy to talk about my electorate. Dreamworld is in my electorate. I support the Beattie government's, the Premier's and the Treasurer's strong support of the film and television industry in Queensland. When it comes to issues regarding censorship and the level of sexual content in programs, that is an issue for the federal government.

I used to watch *Big Brother* when it first started, which is a long time ago. I was very interested in it and used to watch it with my teenagers. I do not watch it anymore for a variety of reasons. First of all, I am too busy. Secondly, the content does not appeal to me. I say to anybody who is offended: simply make the choice and turn it off. If you like that type of television program and if it adheres to the classification that the federal government has given it then it is up to individual viewers whether they watch the program.

I turn to the allegation that the Deputy Premier has made certain comments. I would agree that *Big Brother* is a tourism attraction for Dreamworld. When I have been queuing there I have seen people queuing up to go and visit the *Big Brother* house. Young people in particular find it very exciting. There are two issues there. Do I agree it is a tourism attraction? Yes, it is. Do I support the Beattie government in its funding of the film and television industry in Queensland? Yes, I do.

CHAIR: The time for that block of non-government questions has expired. I refer you to page 2-4 of the MPS under the heading 'Future developments'. You mentioned earlier in your opening the

Queensland Tourism Strategy. Can you expand on what this strategy will mean for Queensland and our tourism industry?

Ms KEECH: I would be happy to do that, because I am very excited about the Queensland Tourism Strategy. The Beattie government understands how critical the tourism industry is to Queensland's long-term growth and prosperity. Tourism is our third largest export earner, generating visitor expenditure of around \$18 billion a year and employing almost 140,000 Queenslanders. Never has the need for the government and the tourism industry to work together been more important than right now as we face challenges and are presented with greater opportunities.

I am very proud to have been the instigator of our exciting Queensland Tourism Strategy, which is helping to unite the industry in this state like never before. The strategy is a genuine partnership between the industry and government that continually raises the bar in terms of support for tourism.

The QTS will be completed following the most comprehensive consultation ever conducted with the tourism industry. As I said earlier, we had 21 forums across the state and almost 1,000 people were consulted. We had people from the luxury hotels to single industry operators, from our largest boat operators to Indigenous groups, from conservationists to chambers of commerce, from police to outback mayors. We met with these people in convention centres, in RSL clubs and even a motel.

The strategy has four goals. These goals are unique to any tourism planning strategy of any jurisdiction in Australia. They are: to increase visitor expenditure; to increase visitor expenditure to all Queensland regions; to increase the value of tourism to Queensland; and to maximise sustainable tourism growth. It has action plans, but I am positive that these action plans are not something that will gather dust in a corner. It is a living document which sets out a blueprint for government and industry to work together in a genuine partnership. We are developing a range of action plans based on the key themes of coordination, partnerships and community; investment, infrastructure and access; workforce development; developing and marketing a Queensland style visitor experience; natural environment and culture; and future insights and research.

As I said, I really do believe that the Queensland Tourism Strategy will take Queensland into the 21st century. It is a long-term blueprint to keep us ahead of the rest. It will put us on the path to prosperity and sustainable industry growth by setting the industry direction for the future and accommodating our challenges and opportunities.

The draft strategy is currently in its final consultation phase before I prepare a submission on the final plan for cabinet. I am also working on a submission for the Cabinet Budget Review Committee to fund implementation of the strategy. We already have seen a down payment in the Beattie government's state budget with an extra \$4 million over four years for the RTO.

Mr O'BRIEN: I refer to page 2-2 of the MPS under 'Recent Achievements' relating to the partnership between your department and Tourism Queensland in progressing a long-term vision for tourism. Minister, given the contribution made by Terry Jackman as chairman, how will TQ be different under a new chair?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for allowing me to put on the record my thanks to Terry Jackman. The Queensland tourism industry owes a massive debt of gratitude to past Tourism Queensland chairman Terry Jackman. Terry Jackman is the best chairman Tourism Queensland or its predecessor, Queensland Tourism and Travel Corporation, has had.

He stepped down recently after helping guide the industry through one of its most challenging and turbulent periods. He stood aside to concentrate on his many business interests and his new role on the board of the Australian Rugby Union, a sport he loves. Mr Jackman has been an extraordinary and generous chairman who never failed to bring the very best of vision and leadership to Tourism Queensland. He is a giant of the tourism industry who will be missed. His outstanding contribution to tourism has been marked by Queensland's success in rising above global and domestic impacts over recent years to become Australia's recognised tourism leader. He was a steady hand on the helm as the industry recovered after being hit by terrorist attacks, the SARS outbreak and the collapse of Ansett Airlines.

I appreciated his strong support for me as minister and for the Beattie government's tourism policies. During his eight-year stewardship Mr Jackman revolutionised Tourism Queensland and the way we do tourism business in this state. He was instrumental in building strong international networks and important and fruitful relationships within the aviation industry which have led to unprecedented growth in direct and indirect air capacity into Queensland. There is no individual more deserving of our praise for his services to our industry, or to Queensland for that matter. In 2003 Mr Jackman was made a member of the Order of Australia for his contribution to Australian tourism and film industries and in 2005 he was named a Queensland Great by the Beattie government.

Businessman Peter Wade, who has worked in the travel industry since 1978, is the new TQ chair. The appointment will ensure a high level of consistency and strengthen the leadership and direction of Tourism Queensland. Mr Wade is one of Queensland's most respected tourism leaders. He has a proven track record and, since joining the Tourism Queensland board in 2001, has made a considerable

contribution to the direction of tourism in this state. In 2004 he was appointed deputy chairman and has given great support to outgoing chairman Terry Jackman since that time. I value the close working relationship I had with Mr Jackman and look forward to working just as closely with Mr Wade. While we are losing the service of an excellent chair, we are gaining an energetic and highly talented replacement in Mr Wade. Mr Wade will play a major role in supporting the implementation of the Queensland Tourism Strategy and ensuring a strong tourism future for Queensland.

Mr WILSON: Minister, I refer to page 2-1 of Tourism Queensland's Ministerial Portfolio Statement and the fact that Tourism Queensland 'continues to support the government's economic objectives and priorities'. Minister, tourism is an important industry to Queensland and a major contributor to the state's economy. Can you detail for us the economic contribution tourism does indeed make?

Ms KEECH: I certainly can, and I know that the member for Ferny Grove, as a Brisbane member, recognises the contribution of tourism in his area, particularly with many of the B&Bs in the region.

I am proud to say that tourism is one of Queensland's key industries. It is Queensland's third largest export earner, generating \$3.2 billion annually. The latest Queensland Treasury figures of 2003-04 show that the tourism industry contributes \$8.4 billion to Queensland's economy and accounts for 5.8 per cent of Queensland's gross state product. They also highlight that tourism's contribution to gross state product grew by a significant 35 per cent over the five years to 2003-04.

More than 136,000 Queenslanders are employed in the tourism industry, which is 7.3 per cent of all persons employed in Queensland. Treasury indicates that one job is created in Queensland for every 212 domestic visitors or 81 international visitors. Total visitor expenditure to Queensland in the year ended 2005 was significant. The overnight domestic market to Queensland was valued at \$11 billion, with Queensland receiving 28 per cent of expenditure, second to New South Wales at 29 per cent. Daytrippers spent \$2.5 billion in Queensland, giving the state a 21 per cent share of national daytrip expenditure. International expenditure of course is significant. Over the same time it was \$3.2 billion, with Queensland second behind New South Wales with 25 per cent of expenditure.

Tourism reaches into every corner of Queensland—whether you are in Brisbane, regional areas or rural areas or the cape. Every single corner of Queensland benefits from the tourism dollar. I have been encouraging councils across the state to play a role in the development of this magnificent industry. I am pleased to report to the committee that a growing number of Queensland councils and their communities are embracing tourism as a way to broaden their economic base and generate jobs for locals. In particular, the Gold Coast City Council, as the member for Currumbin would know, is leading the way with a \$10.6 million contribution to tourism this year provided through a tourism levy. Tourism has always been the lifeblood of the Gold Coast, and Australia's holiday mecca will now be further promoted nationally and internationally. But other councils are doing fantastic work in our regions. The Boonah Shire Council should be congratulated, as should the Roma Shire Council where the local mayor, Councillor Bruce Garvey, is doing fantastic work in ensuring that Roma grows its tourism product. Roma Shire Council is a shining example for other local authorities when it comes to recognising the potential of tourism in rural and regional areas.

Mr ENGLISH: Minister, page 2-1 of the Tourism Queensland MPS refers to additional funding provided by the Beattie government to Tourism Queensland. Can the minister advise of the government's level of support for tourism?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member and would be pleased to do that. The Beattie government's funding and support for tourism are stronger than ever. We continue to lead from the front. The level of a government's commitment is determined by more than funding allocations to its tourism marketing body; the commitment is shown by its support for the industry through direct and indirect support. On both these fronts the Beattie government shines. This is reflected not only in record base level funding for Tourism Queensland but also in the hundreds of millions of dollars spent on tourism and tourism related initiatives to drive regional development and to create jobs across our state.

Examples of direct government funding indicate that for 2006-07 the government will deliver approximately \$632 million to tourism made up of \$214 million in direct support and \$418 million in indirect support for the industry. This includes record base funding for Tourism Queensland of \$41.37 million with additional and special purpose funding of \$4.7 million, providing a total budget of \$46.07 million. When combined with \$15 million in funding for the Queensland Events Corporation and \$11.4 million for the Indy event, the events tourism budget is \$72.5 million—something we can be very proud of. The 2006-07 budget includes funding for a broad range of tourism related initiatives being progressed across government.

Examples of direct support include \$2.25 million for enhanced visitor facilities across Queensland's national parks; \$6 million for planning, assistance, monitoring and management of commercial activities on Queensland's Parks and Wildlife Service estate; \$15 million for Queensland Events Corporation; \$28 million for tourism hospitality training delivered by TAFE; \$11.4 million for the Lexmark Indy event; and \$2.98 million for the Bundaberg Turtle Interpretive Centre. Other important issues particularly regarding indirect government funding include a massive \$113 million for the Cairns Airport, \$13 million for regional centres programs, and \$6 million for the Mackay convention precinct. In

addition, recreation fishing receives \$4.8 million in indirect government spending as well as \$5 million for rural airport upgrades.

CHAIR: Minister, I know that you are proud of your Queensland Tourism Strategy, and so you should be after providing the state's first ever long-term blueprint for industry prosperity. Can you explain the role investment and provision of infrastructure play as part of your vision for the future?

Ms KEECH: Yes, I would be happy to, and I thank the member for the question. Consultation for the Queensland Tourism Strategy highlighted the need for investment in tourism infrastructure. When Queensland is entering a new era for tourism, provision of infrastructure is vital to the long-term future of the industry, and this was an issue that was reported to me time and time again and to the consultants as well and to Tourism Queensland as we consulted throughout Queensland. If we are to tap into the enormous tourism opportunities that will be presented over the next decades and beyond, we need to be laying the foundations now. Our industry has limitless potential in a fierce global market and we have to plan carefully to ensure we continue to develop our tourism infrastructure to address the ever-increasing demand.

The draft Queensland Tourism Strategy suggests a four-stage process is necessary. As part of the destination management planning process, we need to develop regional investment and infrastructure plans in all regions to identify product, public and private sector infrastructure, and investment requirements and opportunities similar to what is already underway in the Mackay-Whitsunday region. We need to build on the regional plans through a Queensland tourism investment and infrastructure plan that details statewide investment in infrastructure needs and opportunities, including metropolitan hotel shortages and infrastructure needs in regional Queensland.

CHAIR: Minister, the time for government questions has expired. We are now in a situation where we have 21 minutes remaining for the tourism section. We will allocate that with 11 minutes for non-government questions and 10 minutes for government questions. It is now time for non-government questions.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference again to the explanation of variances in the financial statements on pages 2-8 to 2-13 of the Ministerial Portfolio Statement, I ask the minister: where is the transactional effect of the licensing arrangement of the Tourism Queensland commercial division specifically recorded? What options are available to be taken up? Would the minister please clarify the licensing arrangements?

Ms KEECH: On page 2-8 of the MPS with respect to user charges, the member will note that for the 2005-06 budget the indicator is \$66.52 million. For 2005-06 the estimated actual is \$12.977 million and for 2006-07 the estimate is \$13.366 million. Then it also rolls into employee expenses as well as supplies and services. The note for user charges indicates that the commercial division commission fees and other revenues are no longer included in Tourism Queensland's financial statements, of course, due to the licensing arrangement which was effective from 1 July 2005. The employee expenses are, as the member would note at page 2-8 of the MPS, \$28.634 million for the 2005-06 budget. The estimated actual for 2005-06 is \$12.538 million and the estimate for 2006-07 is \$12.977 million. Commercial division and employee costs are no longer included in Tourism Queensland's financial statements due to the licensing arrangement. I also invite the chair to make any additional clarifying comments.

Mr Mitchell: I just want to say that in future years obviously the Tourism Queensland annual report will reflect the information. As well, the licence fee will be represented in the user charge element of the \$12.977 million.

Mrs STUCKEY: As will the licensing arrangement?

Mr Mitchell: The licensing arrangement is a commercial-in-confidence agreement between the operator, but it does reflect in \$2.1 million, as the minister has indicated, for 2005-06 and \$2.5 million estimated for 2006-07. It is based on a parameter of a percentage of the licence fee based on turnover, so if the turnover is stronger the licence fee gets impacted by that.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you. Minister, I note that you were highlighting the importance of targeting the international market. With reference to the MPS at page 2-2 regarding the marketing and development strategic review of the International Operations Division, in respect of international TQ offices what KPIs are in place to measure productivity and performance? Do they have targets to meet and, if so, what are the tourism targets—in visitor numbers, please—for specific destinations like Japan, New Zealand and the USA?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. It is an important question and a question that she has actually asked on notice. Just before I do that, I want to go back and follow up with regard to the Sunlover licensing arrangement, because the member was keen to note where the additional funding was going. So far in 2006-07, specific projects using the licensing income include \$675,000 to continue promoting Tourism Tropical North Queensland with Qantas and \$100,000 to support Jetstar flights from Osaka to Brisbane. The member asked about the international offices, and they do play an important

role. As the member would be aware, I have indicated in my response to her question the location of those offices.

Tourism Queensland's key international focus is based on a five-pillar approach involving trade relationships, public relations media activities, e-marketing, consumer marketing and aviation. Activities conducted internationally across Tourism Queensland's international offices include a whole range of activities, and I will not go into those because the member would be aware of those.

When I have visited our international offices—and I have had the opportunity to visit offices in both Japan and Korea—I have been so impressed not only with the excellence and the skill of the staff but also with the way that Tourism Queensland worked so closely with them in giving them leadership and guidance and how we worked very closely with our federal counterpart, which is Tourism Australia. As you would be aware, it is its responsibility to market Australia to the world and Tourism Queensland, through our international offices, works very closely with Tourism Australia. We have not always seen eye to eye on some of the marketing campaigns that Tourism Australia is doing, but we work with it, and we do support it closely.

Regarding KPIs, the member would be aware that the performance of Tourism Queensland international offices is included in the MPS on page 2-6, measures numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 12. Again those performance targets for the international offices are based on the following five-pillar marketing strategies which I have already mentioned. Specific actions to be undertaken over the coming year vary from office to office. As you could imagine, an office in Japan, for example, would have very different priorities to an office in New Zealand or Singapore.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you. With reference to the marketing and branding of Queensland, other state competitors are marketing in a big way, except Tourism Queensland, and it appears that Queensland is being trampled by competitors with beautiful imagery and much larger budgets. What does Tourism Queensland do to monitor its efforts? How does it seek to gain a market share of the competitor markets in other states of Australia?

Ms KEECH: I certainly do not support the fact that other states and territories are marketing their state better than us. In fact, I do not know if the member was able to get to her home state of Adelaide for the ATE, but I will be certainly inviting her to go to Brisbane for the next ATE, which the Beattie government has given funding of \$1.5 million to host next year. If you do go to it—and I would invite you to come along next year—you will realise that when it comes to marketing the state Queensland is head and shoulders above the other states. As you have heard me indicate, when it comes to our marketing campaigns and the state government's contribution to the marketing campaigns, Queensland leads the nation. The difference is—and TTF has also indicated it—that there is a range of ways that other states count their tourism dollar when it comes to the state government's contribution. In some other states the events section will be included and the marketing for the events will also be included with tourism marketing. We really are not comparing apples with apples; we are comparing apples with tomatoes. But as the minister I am incredibly proud of what we are doing, particularly with our 'Where else but Queensland?' campaign.

I would encourage the member to have a look at the web sites. I have had the pleasure just recently to launch our Dive Queensland web site. Our web sites are absolutely fantastic. In fact, I believe just recently the Queensland Holidays web site topped all tourism web sites for travel on 30 June. We even beat Wotif, which is something that we are incredibly proud of. Our marketing campaigns are thanks to the brilliance of the officers we have working in Tourism Queensland. We are also able to get the very best and brightest consultants. We can be very proud of our brand marketing.

We have done brand reviews for the Whitsundays, the Sunshine Coast and tropical north Queensland, and they were given priority during 2005-06. The reviews were undertaken in conjunction with the regional tourism organisations and industry. This is the first time a significant review of the campaigns has been undertaken since 1998. In fact, a very important interactive web site, which was launched in July 2005, was the Drive Queensland web site. I encourage all members to get on board and have a look at that web site. If you are looking for a short holiday, it is a really fantastic web site.

CHAIR: The time for that block of non-government questions has expired. Government questions.

Mr O'BRIEN: Minister, the rugged beauty of Cape York and Torres Strait is becoming increasingly popular with Queenslanders, other Australians and international visitors. I note that on page 2-3 of the Tourism Queensland MPS under the heading 'Policy and Planning Initiatives' there is reference to the development of a Cape York and Torres Strait Tourism Development Action Plan. Can the Minister provide more information about this plan and the tourism potential of the cape and Torres Strait?

Ms KEECH: Thank you. I know that the member for Cook is absolutely passionate when it comes to tourism in his area, and he has every reason to be so. Before I do that, can I just make a correction. Ian Mitchell has just advised me that, with respect to comments we made regarding the AOT licensing agreement, it is to be found in 'Other Revenue', not 'User Charges'. Thank you for that.

Working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to provide economic and social wellbeing is one of the Beattie government's core tourism priorities. In fact, I am convinced that the cape and the strait can rival Kakadu as tourism destinations. Many of us visiting the Torres Strait for the first time for community cabinet recently were stunned by its beauty. I know that Tourism Tropical North Queensland chief Rob Giason was mightily impressed. The Beattie government has recognised this relatively untapped potential, and a new tourism blueprint for the region is nearing completion. The plan will help local communities in their efforts to develop a coordinated tourism direction and focus for the region. We see tourism opportunities in the cape and strait that could transform the region through the development of new tourism businesses.

Visitor numbers to some parts of the region have exploded over the past decade, particularly to the Cape York tip. The Cape York Tourism Development Action Plan was announced in September to provide a clearly defined framework for tourism development and visitor management. We later extended that plan to include the Torres Strait region. The action plan will establish key tourism priorities for the region including infrastructure development, training and capacity building for communities and operators, new product development opportunities and marketing direction. It will also assist the regional communities to identify target markets and sites of high visitor demand as well as their tourism capacity and capability. Clear strategies for government, industry and the community will help the region reap the economic and social benefits of tourism.

Not only will sustainable tourism development in the Torres Strait provide a range of new and exciting nature based and cultural tourism experiences for the Queensland tourism market; through tourism, island communities will have an opportunity to improve their economic self-sufficiency.

There are a range of current initiatives, as the member would be aware, to develop Indigenous tourism with Cape York communities including developing a remote turtle conservation program with the Western Cape Regional Consultative Group—I had the pleasure of visiting Mapoon, and I was incredibly impressed with what is happening there—assisting the Injinoo Aboriginal Corporation find suitable operators to sublease and redevelop the Pajinka Wilderness Lodge, and providing advice and assistance to the Mapoon Aboriginal Council in planning for a fishing lodge at Cullen Point.

Mr O'BRIEN: Minister, at page 2-1 of the Tourism Queensland MPS there is a reference to the close relationship between Tourism Queensland and the state's 14 regional tourist organisations. Can the minister expand on support for RTOs provided by the Beattie government?

Ms KEECH: I certainly can. One of the unique characteristics of the Queensland tourism industry is our regional tourism organisations. It is the strength and the uniqueness of our industry. Queensland's RTO network has existed in various forms since Tourism Queensland's inception in 1979. The Beattie government has recognised the work done by the RTOs by allocating more than \$40 million in direct funding since our election in 1998. There has been more than \$23 million in RTO grant funding and another \$17 million in convention and incentive funding for the six RTOs with convention bureaus. Since 2001, Queensland's network of 14 RTOs have received \$3.1 million per annum in funding from the government. Between 1998 and 2001 they shared an annual allocation of \$2.6 million. RTO grant funding is designed to support the administrative and marketing needs of the organisations.

In the 2006-07 budget, the government recognised the work of RTOs by increasing RTO funding by 30 per cent—something I was very proud of. This announcement of \$4 million over four years was a funding boost. An additional \$1 million per annum will assist RTOs implement initiatives outlined in the Queensland Tourism Strategy and destination management plans. The grants, which will be on application, will be available for research, capacity building and initiatives in the regional tourism infrastructure, in investment plans, Queensland Tourism Strategy, destination management plans and destination action plans. There will be a focus on development activities. As part of the program, there will be a \$5,000 grant per annum to each RTO to assist in forming destination action groups to act as champions and to take ownership of the destination management plans in each region. The six RTOs with convention bureaus have shared \$1.9 million a year in funding.

I would also like to take this opportunity to recognise the work of the chairs, the CEOs and the committees of the RTOs as well as the members of their boards. They do incredible work. It is sometimes challenging work working with tourism operators, local councils and, of course, Tourism Queensland. They work very hard and they work very well.

A four-year allocation for the convention bureaus was due to expire in 2005-06. I am happy that we have been able to continue the funding for another four years because convention bureaus and the visitors that they bring to the regions are incredibly important. That means another \$7.5 million in direct funding to the six RTOs with convention bureaus—Gold Coast, Brisbane, Sunshine Coast, Whitsundays, Townsville and Cairns.

CHAIR: Member for Redlands, I just note there is about three minutes left, so we have time for one more government question.

Mr ENGLISH: Minister, at page 2-4 of the Tourism Queensland MPS there is a reference to continued implementation of the Queensland Backpacker Industry Taskforce Action Plan. Minister, can

you detail for us the value of backpacking to Queensland and if your action plan is producing any positive spin-offs?

Ms KEECH: I would certainly be pleased to do that because backpacking is a very important segment of the Queensland tourism industry. In June 2004 I convened a forum with Queensland's backpacking industry and government, and this was the first time that the industry and government actually got together to discuss their issues. The reason I did this was because we did have concerns that there was a slump in the backpacker market, and I wanted to hear the industry's concerns and how we could work together to address the issues.

I am pleased to say that following this forum the Queensland Backpacker Industry Task Force was formed, together with four working groups, to develop a broad backpacker industry action plan for Queensland. The task force comprised four working groups focused on the following issues, and these were issues that came from the task force: industry standards and accreditation; compliance and regulatory issues; access, marketing and industry profitability; and communication and public relations.

The working group outcome was the development of the task force action plan. The plan's actions include investing \$20,000 in the redevelopment of Queensland's key backpacking information web site by Tourism Queensland in conjunction with Backpacking Queensland, implementation of a strategic plan and marketing strategy for Backpacking Queensland, consumer research to better understand the backpackers' market perception of Queensland and actively pursuing Tourism Australia's Visiting Journalist Program to target the international youth adventure market as well as working more closely together with the backpacking industry and government agencies, such as the Office of Fair Trading, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service and local governments, to assist in addressing issues of standards and safety within the industry. I am happy to say that since that report we have seen a steady growth in the number of international backpacker visitors to Queensland. That just goes to show that, whether it is water, infrastructure or managing growth, if you have a plan you can actually move the industry forward.

In the year ended December 2004, there was a 13.3 per cent increase in international backpacker visitors to Queensland and a 20 per cent increase in visitor nights. Average annual growth rates since 2004 have been 11 per cent. When you consider that New South Wales' rate of growth is 3.8 per cent and Australia's rate is 3.4 per cent we see that that is a pretty impressive climb. During the same period, Victoria, which was said to have poached some of our share of backpackers before 2004, managed just only a 2.2 per cent growth compared to our growth of 11 per cent. The bottom line for Queensland is that we hosted lots of backpackers in the year to March this year and that there has been a huge growth. I am very pleased about that.

CHAIR: That concludes our examination of the estimates for Tourism. We will now commence our examination of dispute resolution. The first round of questions is from the non-government members. The member for Currumbin.

Mrs STUCKEY: I refer to pages 1-23 and 1- 24 of the MPS, dispute resolutions. Are there any circumstances where the Office of Fair Trading investigates individuals or companies without giving notice to that individual or company of the investigation?

Ms KEECH: That is an Office of Fair Trading question, which we are doing at six o'clock, so it is probably best to wait until then. I am happy to answer, but it is an Office of Fair Trading question. Currently, we are doing dispute resolutions.

Mrs STUCKEY: I am happy with that. You have previously stated that it would be inappropriate to comment on matters involving management rights company S8 as the Office of Fair Trading is investigating allegations of excessive commissions. An article titled 'S8 probed over Gold Coast rent payments' on 25 May 2006 in the *Australian* stated that S8 chairwoman, Jenny Hutson, was not aware of the Fair Trading investigation. Can the minister advise the committee whether S8 or its subsidiary, Driftcove Pty Ltd, are under investigation by the Office of Fair Trading despite claims to the contrary by S8's chairwoman? At what stage did the Office of Fair Trading notify S8 of its investigation into the company? I realise that it is the Office of Fair Trading that I am mentioning again.

Ms KEECH: Again, it is an Office of Fair Trading question. The best time to respond to that is through the Office of Fair Trading session, which starts at six o'clock.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to page 1-23 of the MPS, how many disciplinary proceedings have been pursued and fines issued by number and value against real estate agents making unsolicited approaches to grieving families to sell properties through the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal?

Ms KEECH: Again, that is a Fair Trading question.

Mrs STUCKEY: I thought they were dispute resolution.

Ms KEECH: That would come under the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act, which is an act under the Fair Trading portfolio.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to pages 1-23 and 1-24 of the MPS regarding the Body Corporate and Community Management Commission, what powers have been given to the commission to enforce orders against managers to obey those orders? What steps have been taken to register managers?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question regarding body corporate and community management. As the member would be aware, with 1,500 people coming to Queensland every week many of them are looking at enjoying community living. When people move from an individual home to community living, there is an adjustment period which sometimes leads to disputes.

Regarding the question of body corporate managers, I inform the member that there is currently a review of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act. Within that review, the issue regarding body corporate managers and their activities was highlighted in the discussion paper. There are a range of proposed amendments relating to managers arising from the BCCM Act review. We will seek to amend the code of conduct to state clearly that a body corporate manager must not attempt to unfairly influence the outcome of an election for a body corporate committee.

Submissions to the BCCM Act review also raised concerns about the performance and conduct of some body corporate managers. I am advised that these submissions did not demonstrate systematic or widespread problems. In fact, I am advised by the departmental officers who conducted the review regarding body corporate managers and a call for regulation of the managers that there was no clear indication whether those who were responding to the discussion paper indicated clearly one way or the other whether they wanted the regulation of body corporate managers. However, my department takes concerns about the current regulatory framework for body corporate managers very seriously and has undertaken a comprehensive examination of the regulatory option for body corporate managers. My department intends to progress this issue separately from issues identified in the review of the act.

I am advised that orders can be enforced by parties through the Magistrates Court. That is the process that parties would need to undertake if they were unhappy with the activities.

Mrs STUCKEY: I go back to the questions that the minister asked me to tide over to Fair Trading. I refer again to page 1-23 of the MPS. The page says 'Dispute Resolution Services' and the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal is actually included in that page. I am wondering when dispute resolution is not dispute resolution on this page. Can I not ask that question again?

Ms KEECH: Because it is an investigation, that investigation would be undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading. That is why it would be appropriate for you to be asking that question—which I am more than happy to take—in the Fair Trading session.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to estimates committee non-government question on notice No. 10, the minister omitted to answer part of this question. I once again ask the minister to detail individually all adjudicators appointed in a permanent or acting capacity to their current position on the Body Corporate and Community Management Commission from a previous role within the Public Service and state their previous role. I further ask why the government has done nothing to address the problems by upgrading the classification of the position and improving salaries to attract better-quality staff?

Ms KEECH: The member asked several questions. I have to say that, in relation to the questions that were asked by non-government members, I think the chair has been very, very generous—as he is because he is a generous person—when it came to those questions. The standing orders indicate that no member should be asking questions that contain many subparts or contain several questions within it. On several occasions I note that the opposition's question had up to about six questions within the one question. So I thank the chair for his generosity. I believe that I have answered the questions fully.

With respect to the questions that the member has asked regarding the adjudicators, I can say that the Body Corporate and Community Management Office provides a quasijudicial dispute resolution service acting independently in making decisions relating to dispute resolution applications. I know that that issue regarding independence has been something that the member has had some issues with and has had some problems coming to terms with. The majority of applications that are received are resolved by an order of an adjudicator. Departmental adjudicators have proven experience in litigation, alternative dispute resolution or adjudication as well as superior knowledge of the legislation.

With regard to adjudicators' qualifications, training and remuneration, I can inform the committee that there are six adjudicator positions within the BCCM Office. Five adjudicators have law degrees, one has a Bachelor of Business and Accounting and extensive experience of body corporate legislation. The BCCM Office arranges additional training for adjudicators, including Certificate in Arbitration through the Australian Institute of Arbitrators and Mediators and mediation and conciliation training. Remuneration for adjudicators is calculated in line with government policy and procedures.

I would have to say that the number of applications received during 2005-06 was extensive. In fact, it was 1,143, with 783 being resolved by an adjudicator's order. In terms of timeliness, the BCCM Office aims to finalise 80 per cent of its applications within 60 days of the close of the time frame for an applicant's reply to submissions. In 2005-06, 80.5 per cent of the applications were resolved within this time frame, which means that they more than met the time frames. In recognising the need for timely

dispute resolution for the community title industry, the government has allocated an additional \$1.6 million in recurrent funding to assist in meeting these increased service demands.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference again to pages 1-23 and 1-24 of the MPS in relation to the Body Corporate and Community Management Commission, what steps are being considered to prevent managers from placing owners' levies in bank accounts where the bank regards the manager as the client, not the unit owner's body corporate? What steps are being taken to prevent managers from acting as returning officers in the election of office-bearers and motions in which they have a vested financial interest?

Ms KEECH: Body corporate and community management managers are compelled to abide by the act. I welcome the commissioner to make some comments.

Ms Doumany: In terms of bank accounts which are operated by body corporates, the act provides for the body corporate and the owners to make decisions—self-management under the act is a fundamental objective—about how it will set up its bank accounts, who will have access to them and what the role of the body corporate manager should be. My office provides a dispute resolution service where a body corporate has a dispute with its body corporate manager in terms of how it might deal with accounts. The act requires body corporate managers and body corporates to conduct a yearly financial audit or make a decision not to. So the real control of body corporate managers and their actions in terms of how they deal with accounts is in the hands of the owners of the body corporate. We certainly have dealt and will deal with disputes where disputes arise. Secondly, I think the question was in relation to returning officers?

Mrs STUCKEY: Yes.

Ms Doumany: Again, the fundamental objective of self-management will apply. The act provides that in certain circumstances motions at a general meeting, for example, must be held by secret ballot. If a body corporate and its owners are concerned about who the returning officer should be, they can vote on that. If there is some impropriety in that process, again, an individual owner would be able to lodge a dispute resolution application with our office. I think some of the issues that are raised are not ones that are often raised in disputes with our office, particularly where owners take care of and take an interest in their body corporate.

Ms KEECH: Thank you for that thorough response. I am advised that the body corporate code of conduct will be amended by review to prevent them influencing the election of office bearers.

Mrs STUCKEY: I have tried to simplify one of those earlier questions. With reference to page 1-23 of the MPS, how many disciplinary proceedings through the CCT have been pursued against real estate agents making unsolicited approaches to grieving families to sell properties?

Ms KEECH: The response to that at this stage, I am advised, is none because the regulations are being amended for prosecutions of funeral-chasing real estate agents.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions in this section has expired. Minister, community living is becoming an increasingly popular lifestyle in Queensland. The fact that so many Queenslanders have chosen community living is highlighted in the MPS at pages 1-23 and 1-24. Minister, can you explain how the Beattie government is improving services available to the community living sector?

Ms KEECH: I certainly can and I thank the member for Yeerongpilly for this question. I am sure that he has a large number of community titles in his beautiful electorate.

As I have indicated, the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management has notched up some important achievements which help ensure that Queensland continues to have a fair, socially cohesive and culturally vibrant society. The office is staffed by very hardworking people—the acting commissioner and her staff—and they do an excellent job.

The community titles sector is booming, with 1,000 new schemes representing some 8,000 to 10,000 lot owners being added each year. The sector is a significant driver of construction and property development in Queensland's economy. The government is taking action on a number of fronts to improve the delivery of services to Queenslanders now and in the future. The Beattie government has provided additional ongoing funding of over \$1.6 million to improve services for Queenslanders. This represents a funding increase of over 130 per cent and is a sure sign of the government's very strong commitment to this vital sector. This builds upon the gains made from initial one-off funding of \$0.3 million in 2004-05.

The review of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997 is on track. Agreed recommendations for improvements to information services are currently being implemented. I was pleased to have the opportunity to launch a key new information product for this sector, *Body Corporate: A quick guide to community living in Queensland*, at a seminar organised by my department at Broadbeach in May of this year. Last year the information service in the Body Corporate and Community Management Office of my department handled an incredible 21,100 client contacts, highlighting the crucial role played by government in preventing disputes by educating consumers about their rights and responsibilities. As you can see by that number, the consumers of Queensland recognise the incredible service of the Body Corporate and Community Management Office and are using that service. Further, I

anticipate bringing legislative amendments to improve dispute resolution services to parliament later this year.

A pilot voluntary conciliation project that started in April this year to improve alternative dispute resolution is meeting early success. Twenty-one conciliation conferences have been held and 11 of these were resolved, I am pleased to say. While the failure of one party to quickly respond to requests for information can delay the process of applications, the BCCM Office resolved 1,124 applications and exceeded its target for timeliness.

Mr WILSON: Minister, the Queensland consumer court, better known as the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal, has a very broad role. I refer to pages 1-23 and 1-24 of the MPS regarding its activities. Can you expand upon the important role played by the tribunal in dispute resolution, reviewing decisions and conducting disciplinary proceedings?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for Ferny Grove. I would be pleased to. The Commercial and Consumer Tribunal has been extremely successful in providing Queenslanders access to a just, fair, informal, cost-efficient and speedy means of resolving disputes. The tribunal provides dispute resolution services for a wide range of industry groups and consumers which include: architects, builders, building certifiers, engineers, liquor and wine licensees, owners of manufactured homes, property agents and motor dealers, plumbers and drainers, residential service providers, retirement village residents and tourism service providers. As you can see, the CCT is very busy, but it has an enviable track record.

Since the tribunal commenced in July 2003, approximately 1,210 decisions have been delivered and only seven have been successfully appealed, which is less than one per cent in three years—truly an outstanding result. The tribunal received 1,299 applications during 2005-06 and resolved 1,272—that is 1.7 per cent ahead of target.

The tribunal remains a low-cost means of resolving disputes, despite increasing complex and prolonged cases requiring extended hearing days. For example, the cost for parties to commence proceedings in the tribunal ranges from between \$66 for a party with no financial interest in the dispute and \$223 for a commercial issue such as a building dispute. Tribunal mediators continue to achieve a high success rate in assisting parties involved in domestic and minor commercial building disputes, negotiating settlements worth a total of \$2.4 million in 2005-06.

The tribunal has updated its case management system for more efficient reporting and uses modern technologies such as videoconferencing to provide regional clients cost-effective access to services. At this stage I would like to commend the chair, the members and the administrative staff of the tribunal for the excellent work they are doing and the fantastic service they are providing to Queenslanders. The effective and efficient services of my portfolio's tribunal model has been recognised by other departments which are bringing administrative review matters to the CCT rather than set up a separate review board.

Mr ENGLISH: Page 1-27 of the MPS outlines that the dispute resolution budget of your department has been increased for the 2006-07 financial year. Can you tell the committee how that new funding will be utilised?

Ms KEECH: I would be pleased to and I thank the member for the Redlands for the question. I am also aware of his continued interest in finding just and equitable outcomes for his constituents. One of the fundamental planks of the Beattie government's demonstrated commitment to consumer protection is ensuring that consumers have available to them an accessible and cost-effective means of resolving disputes which arise from time to time. The dispute resolution services output detailed in my MPS strongly delivers on this commitment. It includes the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal, the Office of the Commissioner for Body Corporate and Community Management and an allocation of indirect costs of executive and corporate services and the office of the director-general.

As detailed on page 1-27 of my MPS, the dispute resolution services output has a revenue budget of \$8.337 million in 2006-07. This is a net \$1.461 million increase from the 2005-06 budget. This increase is testament to the Beattie government's commitment to provide an efficient service where consumers and traders who are party to a dispute are able to resolve their concerns without the need for costly court time.

In allocating additional funding to the dispute resolution output, the Beattie government has provided over \$1 million in ongoing funding in the 2006-07 state budget to enhance body corporate and community management services linked to proposed legislative amendments. As the member would be aware, my department is currently finalising amendments arising out of the review of the Body Corporate and Community Management Act 1997, which will significantly improve the community's access to dispute resolution services under the act.

Some of the proposed amendments I am pleased to discuss today include vesting authority in the CCT to hear appeals against orders of body corporate adjudicators. This will allow those parties to a dispute who have a genuine concern about the outcome of adjudication to have their issues considered in an accessible and cost-effective environment. In addition, we are considering vesting authority in the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal to hear complex body corporate disputes. This will make

adjudication in these cases far more accessible and cost-effective while maintaining an appropriate level of formality. In addition, we are considering requiring parties to body corporate disputes to undertake mandatory conciliation before making an application for adjudication. Trained conciliators within the body corporate commissioner's office will assist parties to resolve their current disputes and avoid future disputes by settling their issues in an inclusive and less antagonistic environment.

Mr O'BRIEN: Minister, I believe your department is using videoconferencing to help settle disputes. Can you please outline how this is occurring and what benefit this will have for residents in remote areas?

Ms KEECH: We certainly are, and it will benefit constituents in the member for Cook's electorate. In order to maintain a cost-efficient dispute resolution environment and also to provide the opportunity for participation by parties in regional centres, the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal has videoconference capability in one hearing room and in another a large conference room also able to be used for hearings. When not in use for hearings, the facilities in the conference room are available to other divisions to support their work.

The formal hearing room with videoconference capability is part of a shared facility with other tribunals which negotiate the use of the room when they require those facilities. The technology consists of an integrated video camera, microphones, control unit and large display unit. The facility in the conference room allows communication with up to three additional locations simultaneously and incorporates smart board technology which allows interactive touch-screen presentations.

The hearing room facility is limited to a single additional location. Security of matters being heard is achieved within an in-built firewall, a technical capability that allows encrypted calls to be managed without administrators having to have security expertise. The hearing room facility has been in operation for several years and has proved invaluable in providing options for listing remote matters. As a result of the increase in demand for videoconferencing in tribunal matters, the more modern conference room facility was introduced in May 2005. Over the past year, approximately 82 hours of videoconferencing were booked for the conference room and hearing room. Currently, remote parties are able to participate via teleconference, but the videoconference facility introduced improved participation through the extra visual dimension to the proceedings.

The videoconference facility permits flexibility and cost savings for both the tribunal and the parties involved since hearings can be better matched with the availability of members and interested parties. Both the cost of travel and the time committed by the participants is reduced using this strategy. The tribunal has members in Cairns and Townsville. Due to the requirement to access their specific skills or to balance the demand for matters to be listed, videoconferencing is able to be used without the need to bring the members to Brisbane, and again saving costs. Witnesses are required to appear in person before the tribunal. This facility provides a satisfactory approach particularly for regional issues, such as when an inspection of a remote building site at short notice is needed.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. It being 5.45 pm, that concludes the examination of dispute resolution. The committee will adjourn for a break and resume at 6 pm, continuing with the estimates of the Fair Trading section of the Department of Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development.

Proceedings suspended from 5.45 pm to 6.01 pm.

CHAIR: The Estimates Committee C hearing is now resumed and the question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

We will now examine the estimates of the Office of Fair Trading.

Ms KEECH: The member for Maryborough has submitted a tourism question which he did not have time to ask. I am happy to take that question on notice.

CHAIR: The member has written it out on a notice form. If you would take that on notice, you can respond to it according to the decision of the committee, in accordance with the standing orders, that responses to any matters taken on notice will be provided by 9 am on Monday morning.

Ms KEECH: 9 am Monday morning, yes.

CHAIR: The first round of questions in relation to the Office of Fair Trading is from non-government members.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to page 1-6 of the MPS, what are the direct and indirect costs associated with the eight-month investigation conducted by retired Supreme Court judge Des Derrington?

Ms KEECH: Thank you for the question. I will provide some background first with regard to the inquiry. After receiving anonymous allegations through a media outlet to my office I referred these allegations to the Public Service Commissioner. I was advised that an inquiry was implemented through the Public Service Commissioner with a retired court judge, the Hon. Des Derrington QC, appointed to conduct the inquiry. The investigation was rigorous and the allegations which formed the public interest

disclosure were found to be unsubstantiated. With regard to the question of costs, I have been advised that matters regarding costs are yet to be finalised.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to page 1-11 of the MPS in respect of business process transferred to Smart Service Queensland, could the minister advise the committee the true cost of shifting these services, whether any cost-benefit analysis has been undertaken to quantify the costs of transferring phone inquiry resources out of Fair Trading yet still expecting Fair Trading to answer more complex inquiries, and whether the regional managers are expected to spend considerable time dealing with SSQ issues rather than focus on managing the regional offices?

Ms KEECH: I will start by responding to the final part of the question first, which is regarding the regional offices. I would like, through the committee, to put on the public record my recognition of the hard work of the regional offices and the work that they do, particularly members who are in regional areas themselves. I would like to commend the managers and the staff in the nine regional offices—in Cairns, Townsville, Mount Isa, Mackay, Rockhampton, Hervey Bay, Maroochydore, Toowoomba and Southport—for the work that they do on behalf of Queenslanders.

Smart Service Queensland is actually administered by the Department of Communities, so detailed questions regarding SSQ should actually be directed to my colleague the minister for communities and disability services. However, I am very happy to set out the Beattie government's commitment to provide a single one-stop shop for all government services and the benefits that such an approach provides.

As the Premier has indicated publicly, the government is committed to providing access to services and information and making it easier for the public. Smart Service Queensland provides Queenslanders with a front door to Queensland transactions and information via the Internet, over the phone or through face-to-face customer service through our regional offices.

There are a huge range of benefits to Queenslanders with the SSQ initiative. For example, all calls are now monitored and recorded for quality purposes. Members of the public are now able to access government services through extended hours of operation. This is something which has been welcomed. The Smart Service Queensland call centres operate from 8 am to 6 pm Monday to Friday and, pleasingly, from 8 am to 4.45 pm on Saturday. As well, all types of department call inquiries have been scripted to ensure that callers are provided with consistent information and advice. Consumer warning information can be broadcast to all call centre operators, allowing for quick responses to calls about new schemes and rogue traders.

I also can inform the member that there have been significant savings to the department with SSQ. For example, in 2005-06 Smart Service Queensland charged \$1.68 million to deliver the same services. This has provided my department with the opportunity to reallocate regional resource savings to improve dispute resolution and compliance service delivery.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to page 1-15 of the MPS, what proportion of output funding is spent on corporate services, particularly non-service delivery, and is this proportion higher than other departments? How much of that output funding is spent on non liquor, fair trading and dispute resolution outputs?

Ms KEECH: I will ask an officer of the department to respond to that question, given that it requires such detail.

Mr Broadfoot: In the 2006-07 budget total revenue allocated to the fair trading services output was \$36 million. \$6.8 million of that was from indirect allocation of corporate services and \$9 million was an allocation from the Service Delivery and Development Division, which encompasses delivery across the regional offices and the Brisbane customer service centre. I am not aware of the allocation of indirect costs of other departments.

Ms KEECH: And it is not something that would be examinable under the MPS. For the committee's information, can I give an overview of what the executive in the corporate services division of my department provides: business support services to all operational divisions, a strategic planning and policy coordination role to the department and executive support services to the officers of the minister and the director-general. The total budget for 2005-06 was \$8.57 million. The total number of full-time equivalent employees as at 30 June 2006 is 55.

Following on from a question that the member asked me in the last session regarding funeral chasers, I am advised that the Office of Fair Trading has received only a very small number of complaints about this conduct. Unconscionable conduct is a breach of the PAMDA code of conduct, and I have to say that I personally find it abhorrent that any real estate agent would carry on such activity and take advantage of grieving people by knocking on their door when they know that a relative might have passed away. I am on the public record about that.

If the member is aware of any complaint that she wishes to be investigated, I ask her to refer it to my office and I am happy to have it progressed. I have said that I will amend the code so that there is no

uncertainty that this offensive conduct will be an offence and hope that we will not even receive a small number of such complaints in the future.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to page 1-10 of the MPS regarding consumer and industry awareness and the introduction of increased fee revenue subsequent to the regulatory impact statement for the Fair Trading (Fees) Amendment Regulation 2002, how much of the increased appropriation in respect of these increases was actually spent on fair trading and what has it specifically been spent on?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. This is something that she has shown interest in before, and it is a legitimate question. First of all, during 2005-06 revenue raised by the Office of Fair Trading included: REVS searches, \$9.95 million; business name searches, \$20.65 million; licence application fees, \$17.94 million; fines of \$0.61 million; and trust account interest from real estate agents of \$26.8 million. That came to a total of \$76 million.

The member is right in the fact that the Office of Fair Trading actually receives more income than it spends. This is because, as we are all aware, departments such as the Office of Fair Trading which are able to raise revenue return that revenue to the consolidated revenue fund so that it can be spent on very important services such as schools in your area, the Tugun bypass—since the federal Liberal government has not been able to fund it adequately—and a whole range of services. It is very important indeed that this revenue is not only spent on the Office of Fair Trading but also returned to the consolidated revenue fund.

In fact, the Office of Fair Trading's budget provides extremely good value for money for Queenslanders when you consider that it employs 332 full-time equivalent staff to achieve its wide range of outputs. I would like to highlight some of those achievements for 2005-06. For example, not only did we have a review of large amounts of legislative framework; we also provided business services of approximately 83 staff who are engaged in licensing and registration activities.

In the past year the division processed a total of 395,250 licensing and registration services. That is an incredible result and includes, as at 30 June 2006, the 64,275 people or companies who held licences. So you can understand how very busy the business services section of the Office of Fair Trading is. It really is commendable that such a large number of licences were processed during that period.

In 2005-06 the average fee for a one-year licence was \$535.40 and the average fee for a three-year licence—and we are talking about licences for not only property agents and motor dealers but also auctioneers and a whole range of licences—was \$1,190.07.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to 1-13 of the MPS in respect of the project office, funded by the department from output funding in the last three years, why are there no tangible outputs for the program areas? What specific outcomes have been set? What specific outcomes have actually been delivered?

Ms KEECH: I will invite the Commissioner for Fair Trading to respond to that question.

Mrs STUCKEY: I would be happy to take it on notice if you would prefer that, Minister. I am referring to the project office under 'administrative infrastructure'.

Ms KEECH: My advice is that the project office is within the office of the director-general and it was focused on Smart Service Queensland transitioning.

Mrs STUCKEY: Does that mean that we do not have access to the facts for the last three years?

Ms KEECH: I am happy to respond and repeat the comments I made earlier, if the member would like, with respect to Smart Service Queensland and the services that they provide to the Queensland community. They provide services with respect to encumbered vehicle and boat searches, bill of sale searches, occupational licensing, charities and associations information, business names processing, general fair trading inquiries, Liquor Licensing inquiries and payments for liquor infringement notes, and processing of liquor permits for one-off events.

The transfer of services to SSQ has been a considerable task for my department, and products are now being delivered for online delivery through the government web site. These include security provider renewals, liquor premises detailed reports, register of encumbered vehicle searches and business name renewals. I am pleased that these services are being delivered online because it is all about making the services more accessible to the people of Queensland, in particular to businesses, and cutting red tape wherever we can. As the member would know, that is one of the priorities of the Beattie government when it comes to supporting businesses.

CHAIR: The time for that block of non-government questions has expired. Minister, I note at 1-11 of the MPS that finalisation of the Security Providers Act 1993 is on the list of future developments for the Office of Fair Trading. I have also noted your public comments that you intend giving Queensland nation-leading laws covering the security industry, and I ask you to detail your progress with your review of the act.

Ms KEECH: Thank you for the question. It is very important, particularly with respect to a timely review of the Security Providers Act. The Beattie government will dramatically boost security industry standards under a package of reforms that is near completion. I am determined that Queensland will have the best security provider regulatory regime in Australia. You may have read or heard about criminal elements allegedly infiltrating the security industry on the Gold Coast and some people allegedly bending the rules to enable them to continue working in the industry.

To all committee members I have to say that the government certainly does not want crooks in our security industry. The Beattie government's model will include tougher industry probity checks including the use of charges, unrecorded convictions and criminal intelligence, so we can weed out the thugs before they start work and ensure that criminal elements do not infiltrate the industry. We will have tougher penalties for those operating without a licence and those who employ them. We will boost resources and operations to ensure compliance with our tough new laws.

The Beattie government will strengthen training requirements to make security providers more capable of diffusing violent and difficult situations. Ongoing training by approved industry based training providers will be a condition of corporate licence renewal, ensuring that security providers use the most up-to-date methods to quell potentially explosive situations.

Staff employed by corporate licence holders will have to operate under a code of conduct based on industry standards. Non-compliance with the code could cost their licences. The government will expand licensing requirements to cover persons who install, maintain or repair security equipment, persons who carry out activities in monitoring centres and controlled room operations, security advisers, in-house security officers and security officers using guard dogs. The overhaul will mean amendments to the Security Providers Act and Liquor Act.

I want to make liquor licensees responsible for the actions of those people providing on-premises security. Licensees have a responsibility to provide a safe environment for patrons and staff. Security providers working on licensed premises will also have to complete responsible service of alcohol training and undertake ongoing training in alcohol related issues to better equip them to handle difficult patrons. The Beattie government is serious about cleaning up the industry. In doing so, we have the strong support of the industry and community.

Mr ENGLISH: At page 1-2 of the MPS I see reference to the Office of Fair Trading playing an essential role in protecting consumers while at the same time delivering effective marketplace regulation. Page 1-8 of the MPS under 'recent achievements' refers to finalisation of amendments to the Retirement Villages Act. Minister, can you tell us how your work in this area has boosted protections for those living in the numerous retirement villages in my electorate and across Queensland?

Ms KEECH: I certainly can, and I thank the member for the question. I know that he and all government members are very strong supporters of the recent amendments to the Retirement Villages Act.

Amendments to the act commenced on 15 March 2006 following a comprehensive review and extensive public consultation. The act amendments increase consumer protection for residents while making the rights and responsibilities for both residents and operators clear. For example, residents will benefit from a cap on payments for general services after nine months if their unit has not been resold. Exit fees are to be calculated when a unit is vacated, not when it is resold. Operators will be required to provide residents with draft budgets before the start of the financial year and then meet with residents to discuss the drafts. Residents have a great opportunity to be heard at village meetings and may appoint a family member or lawyer as proxy. In dispute resolution matters before a tribunal, they may be represented by a family member or join with other residents to bring a group action. The amendments should assist in reducing the number of disputes brought before the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal by residents.

I have to say that recently I had the pleasure of meeting with the member for Ferny Grove at the Keperra Sanctuary Retirement Village and with members of the retirement village industry and association, and they certainly commended the government and the member for Ferny Grove, as the local member, on the actions of the Beattie government. I, in turn, commended the industry on their support. Obviously there were issues where we had to negotiate and some of those issues we will continue to discuss, but all in all the response from the retirement villages industry and from consumers has been extremely positive.

I also gave a commitment to the industry association that both I and the Commissioner for Fair Trading will be available to continue talking with them and being open to listening to any issues that they have with implementation of the new amendments.

Going back to the amendments, as I said, they have added transparency in relation to budget setting, and other financial decisions will lessen resident distrust and therefore reduce the likelihood of disputes. Operators will have better access to resident meetings, particularly when a special resolution is being voted on. The process for increasing charges in line with the consumer price index has been streamlined to better reflect current industry practice. Aged Care Queensland Inc. is the peak body

representing retirement village operators, and I appreciate its support and consultation throughout the amendments to the bill.

Mr WILSON: Minister, we know that the Office of Fair Trading has regulatory responsibility for many associations of all types and sizes across Queensland. At page 1-11 of the MPS there is a listing of amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act. Can you explain how the government is helping associations ease the burden of red tape?

Ms KEECH: I am happy to do that and thank you for the question. Each and every one of us is involved in a range of associations in our electorate, whether they be sporting clubs, gardening clubs, cultural clubs, music clubs and associations. I am very pleased to be introducing amendments to the Associations Incorporation Act to relieve the clubs and associations of red tape.

The act provides a simple and inexpensive method of incorporation for non-profit organisations. Many Queenslanders belong to a voluntary non-profit association at some time in their lives, whether a social or sporting club, an artistic society, an association with religious, patriotic or political interest, or professional or charitable organisation. In fact, approximately 20,000 associations are currently registered in Queensland.

In reviewing the act, public consultation was undertaken in 2005, and 280 responses were received. It is proposed that the act be amended in two stages, as some issues require further consultation and policy deliberation while other issues are more appropriately dealt with immediately. The staged approach will ensure that straightforward issues and minor technical amendments are dealt with first.

The key issues identified in the review include eligibility for incorporation, types of association, dispute resolution, conflict of interest, public liability insurance, and reporting and auditing requirements. In developing the amendments, consideration has been given to reducing the regulatory burden on small associations. In particular, the existing requirements for small associations to submit professionally audited annual statements are more onerous than requirements imposed on small proprietary companies under the Corporations Act 2001. It is proposed to introduce a tiered reporting system whereby associations with a total income of \$100,000 or less in a financial year and total current assets of \$100,000 or less are relieved from the need to have their finances fully audited.

It is also proposed that associations with income or assets between \$20,000 and \$100,000 will only need to provide a statement from an accountant advising that the financial records show the association has bookkeeping processes in place to adequately record income, expenditure, assets and liability.

Other proposed amendments have the potential to reduce internal association disputes and ensure transparency between members by, for example, clarifying the role of a secretary and their relationship to the management committee, ensuring members can obtain copies of minutes of general meetings and setting a minimum quorum for general meetings. The proposed amendments reflect community experiences and will be designed to meet the needs of associations and the general community.

Mr O'BRIEN: One area in which consumers need protection is from telemarketers. Can you inform us whether there has been new developments in protecting us from these very annoying people?

Ms KEECH: They are very annoying indeed. I am happy to say that, while there is no specific regulation of telemarketing in Queensland, telemarketers are subject to the fair trading laws that apply to all traders conducting business in this state. The Fair Trading Act 1989 is the key fair trading legislation in Queensland and sets minimum standards which traders in all industries must observe. My department has commenced a review of the Fair Trading Act 1989. I have asked that telemarketing and other forms of direct marketing be considered during the course of that review.

During discussions at previous meetings of the Ministerial Council on Consumer Affairs I spoke strongly in favour of the federal government establishing a do-not-call register to help reduce unwanted telemarketing. In response to persistent lobbying by state and territory Labor ministers, on 4 April 2006 the federal Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts announced that a do-not-call register will be established by 2007. The register has long been federal Labor policy. The Howard government was dragged kicking and screaming to the same position.

On 10 May 2006 the Australian government announced that it has allocated more than \$17 million over a period of four years to the do-not-call register and indicated that the register will provide for national minimum contract standards covering calling hours, disclosure of information requirements and termination of calls. The Howard government's announcement is welcome but long overdue. Considering its previous reluctance to take action to protect consumers, this announcement came as something of a surprise. It was a case of succumbing to enormous pressure from federal Labor, the states and territories and Australians from around the nation.

The ministerial council at its most recent meeting supported the Australian government's move to establish the register and will maintain an active interest in this issue. I congratulate my state and territory Labor ministers for their successful advocacy on behalf of their consumers.

But people do not have to wait more than 12 months for the national register to be established and working. They can place themselves on a do-not-call register. The first step to reduce annoying calls is to ask the callers whom they represent, write down their contact details and then ask firmly or make a written request to be taken off their calling list. The second is to contact the Australian Direct Marketing Association and use its free do-not-mail, do-not-call consumer service on its new number 1300792664 or register online at www.adma.com.au/consumer. I have done this for my mother. She was receiving about five or six annoying calls a day and now they have been reduced to about one or two a week. I thoroughly recommend the service.

Mr ENGLISH: I refer the minister to page 1-10 of the MPS and particularly the heading 'Effective Consumer Protection'. Mention is made there about finalisation of enforcement actions before the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal. Can you advise whether those actions are related to property marketeering?

Ms KEECH: I can. I thank the member for the question. The emergence of two-tiered property marketing in the late 1990s and early 2000s has severely tarnished the reputation of Queensland as a safe place to invest in property. The Beattie government was the first and remains the only government in Australia to have taken action to regulate property marketeers and protect consumers.

The Office of Fair Trading conducts compliance and enforcement activities to ensure consumers are protected from property marketeers. In 2001 new laws were introduced to better protect consumers and property investors from the deceptive practices of property marketeers. The Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act 2000 and its marketeering provisions make Queensland the only state in Australia to have implemented specific measures to protect consumers from this type of unscrupulous activity.

CHAIR: That is the end of this block of government questions. There are 16 minutes remaining. We will have two blocks of eight minutes starting with non-government members.

Mrs STUCKEY: Page 2-8 of the MPS deals with employee expenses, and I refer to the staffing of senior officers. Would the minister advise the committee how much is allocated in this year's budget for Greg Morrow, who is the project director of Smart Service Queensland's integration project, which is listed as falling under your portfolio? What is his job description and who does he report to?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. The output relates to the transition of services to SSQ. Mr Morrow reports to the director-general.

Mrs STUCKEY: Under your department?

Ms KEECH: The project office is a division of my department that is working towards the transfer of services to SSQ. This relates to what the member asked earlier. Given it has an internal focus, it has no specific MPS output—just like many areas such as the Internal Audit Unit and the Office of the Director-General. It does, of course, assist the divisions in achieving MPS outputs.

I have additional information, since the member commented on Mr Morrow. I find it quite odd that she would be commenting on a particular public servant. The funding of his position in the department's project office is for him to continue the transition of services to Smart Service Queensland. The position is at an SO1 level. I am advised by the director-general that the salary costs and on-costs come to \$125,000. That is paid out of the savings from SSQ.

Mrs STUCKEY: From your department?

Ms KEECH: Yes.

Mrs STUCKEY: I would like to return to the question I asked earlier that I was advised to ask in this section. You have previously stated that it would be inappropriate to comment on matters involving management rights company S8 as the Office of Fair Trading is investigating allegations of excessive commissions. An article entitled 'S8 probed over Gold Coast rent payments' on 25 May in the *Australian* newspaper reports that S8 chairwoman Jenny Hutson stated that she was not aware of the Fair Trading investigation. Can the minister advise the committee whether S8 or its subsidiary, Driftcove Pty Ltd, are in fact under investigation by the Office of Fair Trading despite claims to the contrary by S8's chairwoman? At what stage did the Office of Fair Trading notify S8 of their investigation into the company?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. I cannot comment on the alleged comments by the chairperson of S8. I have spoken in the parliament about the S8 investigation. I have written to the complainants to update them as well. The Office of Fair Trading investigators are in the process of sorting through thousands of documents they have obtained from S8's lawyers. So if the chairperson of S8 is not aware of this she should be.

I have said in parliament before that this is a serious issue. It is under investigation. It would be totally inappropriate for me to make any comment whatsoever. I know that this is an issue that the

member for Currumbin is interested in. I would say to her that if she is genuine in attempting to support constituents or consumers on the Gold Coast she would be best to take note of the comments I have made which relate to not interfering in the investigations in any way and allowing those investigations to continue.

I am advised that the Office of Fair Trading's investigation is thorough and continuing. Any comments by me as minister or by members of parliament do not help this investigation whatsoever. In fact, they could possibly hinder the investigation. I know that the member for Currumbin would not want to do that.

Mrs STUCKEY: I certainly would not, as the investigation has been going on for some 13 months now. Are there any circumstances where the Office of Fair Trading investigates individuals or companies without giving notice to that individual or company of the investigation?

Ms KEECH: The issues regarding the process for investigation are not things that the minister should be involved in. Investigations are conducted completely at arm's length from the minister. Just like you would not expect the police minister to be involved or notified about investigations that the police are carrying out, there is no need for me to be involved in the investigations. My responsibility is to ensure that the investigations adhere to the act.

I can say with regard to prosecutions undertaken by the Office of Fair Trading in cases of more serious legislative breaches that the Office of Fair Trading has a compliance and enforcement framework which sets standards and guidelines for investigation procedures. Prosecution and disciplinary action is taken in the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal or through the Magistrates Court. Briefs of evidence are prepared by the Fair Trading compliance officer which are then submitted to legal officers in the Office of Fair Trading for determination as to whether sufficient evidence exists and if there are appropriate grounds for prosecution.

Court or tribunal action would then be initiated based on the evidence brief. Further work may then be required to seek additional corroborating evidence including witness statements. During 2004-05 there were 83 court and tribunal actions commenced. In 2005-06 there were 174 commenced. That is a massive increase of almost 110 per cent.

In terms of the cases finalised during 2005-06, the courts and tribunals imposed fines, costs and orders to pay compensation exceeding \$466,000. There were 113 prosecutions. There were 102 successful prosecutions. The fines awarded were \$426,250. The Office of Fair Trading has been successful in over 90 per cent of its prosecution actions undertaken during the year, demonstrating thorough and robust investigatory work. I commend the officers for their excellent work.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired.

Mr WILSON: We sometimes hear of terrible stories about young children being seriously injured or worse in incidents involving consumer products. The MPS at page 1-10 refers to the Safety Sells campaign. Minister, can you provide details to this committee of what is involved in that campaign?

Ms KEECH: Yes, I can. I am very happy to do that. This is an area that is very close to my heart. The Beattie government is determined to reduce the potential tragedy and massive costs to the community of injuries caused by consumer products. Many of these injuries could have been prevented. It has been estimated that the lifetime treatment costs of consumer product related injury in Australia amount to \$2.8 billion annually. The estimated lifetime treatment costs for injuries actually caused by consumer products is estimated to be more than \$250 million.

Product related injuries are believed to be associated with 70 per cent of all unintentional injuries requiring medical attention in Australia each year. It is estimated that they cause three million medically treated injuries annually. Research suggests that one in five of these injuries is the direct result of an unsafe product, product malfunction or failure or could have been prevented or mitigated by design solution or safety equipment. Reducing product related injuries is therefore the responsibility of the whole community.

I recently launched Safety Sells as the first stage of a long-term campaign by the Beattie government to educate traders and consumers. Some Queensland traders are contributing to the rate of injury by letting unsafe or potentially unsafe products fall into consumer hands. This is not intentional but generally as a result of poor forward planning and a lack of awareness of good compliance practices. Safety Sells will highlight how businesses can reduce the injury rate by only supplying safe products, and I encourage all businesses to get on board with Safety Sells.

The campaign is a key part of the Beattie government's strategy to inform and educate businesses and the community about product safety. We will be advising traders of what they can do to ensure they comply with the mandatory product safety standards that apply to products they sell and what they should do if they discover that they are selling an unsafe product. The campaign will be rolled out over a number of years as a long-term strategy to engage businesses and industry leaders in the future of product safety. The first phase of Safety Sells targets variety and discount retailers that sell products subject to mandatory safety standards and/or high risk products such as toys. The Office of

Fair Trading's Product Safety Unit has already ramped up education and compliance activities. It is a very busy unit and does excellent work in safeguarding Queenslanders. A number of unsafe toys and products have been removed from the marketplace. The Beattie government is also developing a simple online tool through the Office of Fair Trading to allow traders easy access to key safety requirements relating to the products they import or sell.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The Beattie government has a proud record when it comes to consumer protection, but we do need the support of the community and business to help prevent vulnerable Queenslanders being ripped off. I refer the minister to page 1-10 of the MPS and ask how the Consumer Protection Awards recognise those who play the behind-the-scenes roles in consumer protection, advocacy and awareness?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. Given that he was on the committee that chose these award recipients, I do thank him for his efforts and for the question. I know that he had a hard job deciding on the winners of the categories. Consumer confidence in the Queensland marketplace can only be achieved when educated consumers trust traders to be fair and ethical. The Consumer Protection Awards are a way of recognising and rewarding the important work of individuals and organisations that continually strive to a fair, safe and competitive marketplace in Queensland. Award winners receive \$1,500 and also increased public confidence in those organisations by demonstrating how they implement fair trading principles and work to protect consumers. Award winners also receive public recognition of their achievements, including having their organisation's name mentioned in advertising, media releases and other Queensland Consumer Protection Awards promotional materials.

I am pleased to say that the Queensland Consumer Protection Awards commenced in 2005. The 2006 awards were presented, as the member knows, at Parliament House on Tuesday, 23 May 2006. Nominations were received in the categories of trade smart, consumer advocacy and public awareness media, and I thank the members on both government and non-government sides who helped to advertise the awards through their local outlets. All nominations were considered for the minister's award for excellence in consumer protection which recognises exceptional consumer protection, promotion, education or advocacy. Nominated activities ranged from customer service and staff training initiatives to effective dispute resolution mechanisms and consumer welfare and education initiatives.

In 2005-06 the winners for the category of trade smart award were Archer Gowland accountants. The consumer advocacy award went to the Queensland Tenants Shelter Toowoomba branch. The public awareness media award went to 96.5 Family FM. The minister's award for excellence in consumer protection was awarded to Queensland Tenants Shelter Toowoomba branch. Winners in each category received a trophy and \$1,500 cash prize. The awards will be undertaken, I am very pleased to say, again in 2007. I congratulate all winners and also the nominees.

Mr O'BRIEN: Minister, tourism is a major export industry for Queensland and, as such, our reputation is all important. I refer to the subheading 'Responsible Business and Consumers' in the MPS at page 1-9 and ask the minister what the government is doing to target rogues in the inbound tourism industry?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. It is very important indeed because inbound tourism industry rogues can severely damage Queensland's hard-won reputation as a great tourism destination. Negative experiences have the potential to impact heavily on the tourism industry. Tourists who do not enjoy their holiday or leave feeling they have been exploited or ripped off may take a distorted view of Queensland back to their friends and relatives, and that is the last thing the Beattie government wants. To counter this, the Beattie government has introduced the Tourism Services Act. The act promotes positive experiences for overseas tourists by addressing problems from controlled shopping, misrepresentation, overcharging for goods and services, and unconscionable conduct. The Tourism Services Act is another first for Australia for the Beattie government. No other Australian jurisdiction has attempted to clean up problems in the inbound tourism industry with targeted legislation despite them facing similar problems. Queensland has been at the forefront of regulating this vital industry and has had success in stopping rogue operators. However, there needs to be greater harmonisation of inbound tourism regulation across Australian jurisdictions, and I thank the Commonwealth government as well for its strong support and Minister Fran Bailey.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That concludes the examination of the estimates for Fair Trading. We will now commence our examination of Wine Industry Development. The first round of questions is from non-government members.

Mrs STUCKEY: Minister, I am told—and please do correct me if I have been misinformed here—that Queensland wine is not sold at the Brisbane Convention Centre. Would the minister inform the committee if this is correct and whether establishments that receive government funds such as Suncorp Stadium, the Queensland university and also Queensland House in London sell or feature our wines?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. I am pleased to be able to inform the committee and the member that, with respect to the sale of Queensland wine in government controlled licensed venues, a review of government owned licence facilities such as the Parliament House restaurant, the schools of hospitality, TAFEs and the Queensland Cultural Centre, for example, have been carried out

and I am pleased to say that a high percentage of government licensed venues do offer Queensland wines.

Mrs STUCKEY: With respect, Minister, I think you misunderstood my question.

Ms KEECH: I am still continuing.

Mrs STUCKEY: I was asking about government funded organisations, not government owned organisations.

Ms KEECH: However, some sporting venues such as Suncorp Stadium and the Gabba are currently unable to offer Queensland wines for sale due to their contractual arrangements with major sponsors. My department is monitoring this situation regularly. It is similar to the situation we have at Parliament House with respect to Queensland wines being available, but when it comes to wine with the Queensland crest on it we still at this stage do not have Queensland wines available there because of contractual arrangements. I am also informed that at the Brisbane Convention Centre we definitely have Queensland wines with four types. Also, there have been a range of marketing opportunities to promote Queensland wine. For example, on the Traveltrain—which is obviously government funded—we once again have a range of Queensland wines available to both Queenslanders and visitors. As they enjoy Traveltrain, they can also enjoy Queensland's fine food and wines.

Mrs STUCKEY: Minister, I refer to the MPS at page 1-19 dot point 7 regarding ongoing implementation of actions contained in the Queensland Wine Industry Development Strategy. Are the time line targets being met for the following items—the Queensland Wine List Awards on page 24, the event guide for industry on page 22 and the establishment of a regional branding and marketing fund on page 17 which are all due for completion by 1 July 2006?

Ms KEECH: Before I refer to those particular strategies, can I say that I am very pleased and indeed very proud of the Queensland wine industry strategy. As you would be aware, it was released in December 2004 and to date I am advised that the department has implemented 27 of the 69 strategy action items. I said at the very beginning that this would be a partnership between the Queensland wine industry and the Beattie government, and that is exactly what it is.

With regard to those particular issues, I have just received advice that, regarding the Wine List Awards, yes, it has been implemented. The event guide has also been implemented. That is industry led and is going to be developed by the new Queensland Wine Industry Association officer when that person is recruited. One action item that I am particularly proud of is the Queensland wine map. If members do not already have one, I would encourage you to get one. It is absolutely fantastic and notes all of the regions in Queensland which grow wine and is also very easy to read, particularly for a driving holiday.

CHAIR: Minister, there is a request from the deputy chair that you table the wine map.

Ms KEECH: I will table it. You can contribute the \$10 to a charity.

CHAIR: He wanted a free copy.

Ms KEECH: Just following on from that for the member's information, I presented the 2005 wine award to BarZu alfresco cafe restaurant in Townsville.

Mrs STUCKEY: Thank you. I refer to non-government reply to question on notice No. 7 where the minister states that the wine niche market team will be in attendance at the Tourism Queensland wine business conference. Could the minister outline the composition of this team and its specific purpose? Does it, for example, teach wine appreciation courses?

Ms KEECH: The member loves her wine appreciation courses and she keeps forgetting that I am the minister for wine industry development, not wine appreciation. First of all, I am very pleased indeed once again to have another wine industry conference led by my department. The previous conference which focused on export markets was very successful, and this year we have planned it to focus more at the domestic level. The conference will be in July in Toowoomba, and I would encourage the member to come along. I will be there; I will be learning a lot. It is also a great opportunity to meet with the industry.

The question the member asked on notice regarded Tourism Queensland and Tourism Queensland's contribution to the conference and the Tourism Queensland wine niche market team. I am advised that the wine niche market team has three people who are Tourism Queensland staff. They will be attending. One will be on the panel and the other two will be in attendance. I am very excited about the conference in Toowoomba. I thank Bill Date and his team for the hard work that he is putting in for the conference. In fact, we actually have a brochure here which I will table for the deputy chair. It is titled *Grape to glass—adding value to your business*. The conference will be on Tuesday, 25 July and Wednesday, 26 July 2006 at Cathedral Centre located at 123 Neil Street in Toowoomba. It is only \$85 per person—that is, for two days plus conference dinner. So it really is a great opportunity to get to know the industry and to support the industry. As you can see from the agenda, there is a lot happening. So I would encourage the member and committee members to attend the conference. Just for your information, I am advised that 125 people have indicated that they will be attending that conference.

Mrs STUCKEY: In answer to government question on notice No. 5, you stated that 17 producers were granted licences. Considering the wine glut that Australia is experiencing, what measures is the minister undertaking to protect the industry? Are you considering a licence restriction while this glut is on? When will the emergency response protocol kick in?

Ms KEECH: Given that the member is, as she has told us last estimates, from Adelaide and is well aware, I guess, of the wine glut in southern states, she would also be aware that, fortunately, Queensland is not suffering from a similar wine glut for the simple reason that we do not have the area under grapes that those southern states have. In fact, when I was at ATE in Adelaide we took the opportunity, with my director-general, to visit McLaren Vale. It was actually pleasing to hear South Australian winemakers saying, 'Why don't we have a state government that supports our industry the way the Beattie government supports their industry?' In fact, we met with one operator who was actually interested in moving his operation to Queensland because of the opportunities and support that the Beattie government gives to its producers and winemakers.

Regarding the comments that the member has made about the oversupply in southern regions, the Winemakers Federation of Australia and Wine Grape Growers' Australia convened a national summit on 9 June 2006 to develop strategies to address the present wine and grape glut. Gerald Keatinge was Queensland's representative.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. Minister, I was very pleased when you tabled this wine map of Queensland because I was hoping that it would provide me with some advice that is within walking distance in about half an hour, but it turned out to be a far more comprehensive document than that. I am wondering if you can outline how this wine map will help boost the state's growing wine industry and put more Queensland wines on tables around Australia and the world?

Ms KEECH: Thank you, and I thank the member for his strong support for the Queensland wine industry. The Beattie government has put the state's wine industry on the road to further success with Queensland's first wine specific tourist map. The wine map of Queensland, which I launched in March of this year, includes 170 wineries in 10 wine-producing regions. This impressive map is tangible proof of the Beattie government's resolve to help the wine industry reach its potential. It shows Queenslanders and tourists alike where to find our many and varied vineyards and wineries and details the facilities available including restaurants, accommodation, and wheelchair access. This additional information not only makes our map the most comprehensive of its kind in Australia but also provides potential visitors with that little bit extra to entice them out into our regions. It not only identifies where our wineries are but also provides a network of wine appreciation routes across the state. This map will bring more tourists to more wineries. The industry has played an important role in the consultation for the map, and I thank them for it.

Queensland Wine Industry Association president, Maryanne Pidcock, told me soon after I was given this portfolio by Premier Peter Beattie that the industry craved an all-inclusive, comprehensive wine map of the state. Through the hard work of my Wine Industry Development Division, Hema Maps and through partnering with the industry, the Beattie government has made that happen. The map is available through Hema Maps in Queensland, interstate and in international outlets and is on sale for \$9.95. It is also available online at www.hemamaps.com.

The map is an important deliverable of Queensland's Wine Industry Development Strategy. It also demonstrates the important relationship between tourism and wine in this state. Unlike southern states, the Queensland wine industry relies heavily on tourism, making this new map not only a comprehensive and valuable tourist resource but an essential part of growing the industry. Members of the committee will be very pleased that I have been advised that the map is also available at Borders book store in the city, so you really do not have very far to go to get the map.

Tourism is a key to growing this dynamic industry, with cellar door business making up the majority of sales of Queensland wine. The wine industry is worth \$75 million to the Smart State. It provides more than 1,000 jobs, mostly in our regions. Establishment of the Wine Industry Development Division has helped push our industry to the next level. We are opening up new trade channels and export opportunities. We are throwing educational resources behind the industry with the development of the College of Wine Tourism at Stanthorpe. Most importantly, we are raising the profile of Queensland's quality wine in Queensland, Australia and the world.

Mr WILSON: Minister, on page 1-19 of the MPS there is a reference to building awareness within the banking and finance industries of the development and operational requirements of the Queensland wine industry. Perhaps that is to help the parties facilitate the conclusion of appropriate financial arrangements, but I wonder whether the minister might like to explain why it is important for these industries and others to support the development of Queensland wines?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question; it is an important one. I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that support from the finance sector is essential if Queensland's wine industry is to achieve its ultimate goal of long-term growth and prosperity. The clear message we sent to a group of

financiers at Sirromet recently is that Queensland's wine industry is a bankable investment. I told the bankers that the Queensland government has led the way in supporting the Queensland wine industry and had taken on the challenge of putting Queensland on par with Australia's most recognised wine regions. We brought them together to show them how far the industry had come in recent years and to demonstrate its potential for the future. Our aim was to show that it was a bankable investment for them. Particularly at this stage where there is a lot of doom and gloom in other states regarding the wine industry, it is only in Queensland where you can find such optimism.

Participants were later taken on a familiarisation tour of Witches Falls and Cedar Creek wineries on Mount Tamborine. Witches Falls focuses on contract winemaking with less emphasis on wine tourism. Cedar Creek is a diverse wine tourism focused outlet with multiple income streams such as a restaurant, glow worm tours, cellar doors and spring water. The familiarisation visit was important to confirm the opportunities for investment that were discussed at the earlier briefing and to also allow them to sample local wines. All the financiers were very impressed with what they tasted.

Advancing the Queensland wine industry is closely linked to development of the state's food and wine tourism industries. Wine tourism is a major growth factor for many smaller wine producers. Queensland's wineries and vineyards are adding another dimension to the tourism experiences now available to our visitors. The Beattie government recognises the importance of the wine tourism market and is working closely with the industry to increase visitation to our wine regions.

We already have a vibrant tourism industry, and the wine industry benefits from the wine tourism link and investment in infrastructure. A thriving wine industry will have positive flow-on benefits for the entire state. There are many long-term benefits, including increased investment, employment and profitability throughout Queensland's 10 wine regions.

The Queensland wine story, I am pleased to say, is spreading around the nation. As I said, I have just returned from the Australian Tourism Exchange in Adelaide, and while in South Australia I visited a number of local wineries. They are very aware of what we are doing here with the Wine Industry Development Strategy and so impressed that some even indicated a willingness to relocate from South Australia and New Zealand to Queensland because of the opportunities here and because of the strong support of the Beattie government.

Mr ENGLISH: Minister, I am aware that over the past 12 months Queensland wines have been awarded many gold, silver and bronze medals for their outstanding quality at national and international shows, including, of course, the lovely Sirromet wine, which is made in my electorate. Can you please outline some of these awards and how they are helping to put Queensland winemakers on the map around the world?

Ms KEECH: I certainly can, and I know the member is very proud indeed of the award-winning Sirromet Winery and, of course, its restaurant as well. Queensland winemakers have demonstrated their prowess on the state, national and international stage, winning a total of 460 medals in the past 12 months. Queensland hosted seven wine shows during 2005 with Queensland wines awarded 18 gold, 54 silver and 355 bronze medals at these shows. This is up from 15 gold, 46 silver and 254 bronze in 2004. There really has been a huge increase in winnings at the shows.

Nationally since 2001 Queensland wines have been awarded at least seven gold, 11 silver and 94 bronze medals at major interstate wine shows. On the international stage, Queensland has performed exceptionally well and has received seven gold, nine silver and seven bronze awards as well as six seals of approval at various international wine shows over the past few years. Symphony Hill Wines from the Granite Belt took out a gold medal at the 2006 Sydney International Wine Competition in February this year for their 2005 reserve verdelho. Sirromet Wines, as the member would be aware, won its first international gold medal in the prestigious San Francisco International Wine Competition in the United States in June last year for its 2002 Seven Scenes cabernet sauvignon made from 100 per cent Queensland fruit, and I know it is something that the member was very proud of.

Each of these awards draws attention to our wine industry and recognises the hard work of local wineries. These accolades will also serve to help promote our industry and put us in good stead to compete with other industries around the country.

As Queensland continues to increase its production each year, more wineries are producing the volume of wine required to enter their wines into state, national and international wine shows. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the winners, and I look forward to seeing more of our wines on the winners' list this year. In fact, I am absolutely confident we will as the Queensland Wine Industry Development Strategy focuses on improving the quality of Queensland wine. I would like to commend the work of the director-general, through WID, for these achievements throughout the year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. That concludes examination of the estimates for Wine Industry Development. We will now commence our examination of Liquor Licensing. The first round of questions is from the non-government members.

Ms KEECH: Before do you that, and before the member asks the questions, can I through you, Mr Chair, ask for permission to table an updated answer to non-government question on notice No. 8?

Leave granted.

Ms KEECH: The answer for non-government question No. 8 indicated that a total of 5,710 compliance inspections on security providers throughout regional areas and in the greater Brisbane area were carried out by the flying squad during 2005-06. The figure is, in fact, the total number of compliance inspections undertaken on security providers throughout regional areas and across Brisbane by the Liquor Licensing Division. The correct figure for inspections taken solely by the flying squad is 668. I am happy to correct the record in the interests of transparency and to showcase to the committee that, despite the work of the flying squad, there is also significant work undertaken by other members of the Liquor Licensing Division.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee appreciates that.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to the licensing conditions, nonsmoking legislation and 3 am lockouts imposed on licensed establishments, has the minister done any consultation with all licensees about difficulties encountered by their businesses since this legislation came in?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. She would be aware of the reasons the lockouts have been instigated through Premier Peter Beattie's Brisbane City Safety Action Plan. I believe that at this stage I do not need to go through the reasons for that because the member will be well aware of them. The lockouts, as the member would know, prohibit the entry or re-entry of patrons to licensed premises after a specified time. They are imposed on licensees to address problems associated with the management of public intoxication and to restore public amenity in and around late-night trading. Lockout conditions mean that patrons are not permitted to enter or re-enter licensed premises after a designated time, usually 2 am or 3 am, and the premises can continue to trade until their approved closing time.

Lockout conditions are designed to improve public and patron safety by minimising the number of people moving between venues in varying stages of intoxication. I am pleased to say that lockouts are supported by local councils, police, community groups and members of parliament. Previously, lockout provisions were imposed through licence conditions. However, as part of the Brisbane City Safety Action Plan, a legislative 3 am lockout was applied to all premises in the Brisbane City Council area from 29 April 2005. From 1 July 2006, a statutory 3 am lockout was imposed on all late-trading premises in Queensland under the government's Statewide Safety Action Plan. Earlier lockouts may be imposed as licence conditions if required.

As to the member's questions regarding the implementation of smoking laws and the lockouts, can I say that overall the new smoking laws have been welcomed by the industry and patrons. I do not frequent post 3 am closing facilities, but I can say that I have spoken to licensees and to customers. During the State of Origin I was at the Beenleigh RSL and there one lady actually said to me, 'Just smell the air,' and it was so fresh because, of course, there was no smoke. We are finding that people are actually staying longer in licensed premises. They are actually spending more money on alcohol and spending more money on food. From the licensees' point of view, that means that the significant costs that have been imposed on them in getting ready for the smoking legislation they are now able to recoup.

Regarding the lockout, can I say that it always has been a part of the legislation that a person cannot go outside. So whether you want to go outside for a smoke or not, if you are outside you are outside. So basically, the smoking reforms do not come into it at all.

Mrs STUCKEY: With reference to the Liquor Licensing Flying Squad, can the minister advise if the four staff allocated to this squad were additional resources to the existing number of investigators or the same four investigators announced by the Premier to assist in the implementation of the 17-point plan? What is the current level of Liquor Licensing investigators in Brisbane, including those allocated to the Liquor Licensing Flying Squad and the 17-point plan? How many licensed premises are these investigators expected to monitor?

Ms KEECH: There are quite a number of questions there, so we will do the best we can. I can confirm that for 2005-06 new officers were employed for the Liquor Licensing Flying Squad. In fact, there were four for Brisbane and in addition one for the Gold Coast and one for the Sunshine Coast. Even though they are based in Brisbane, the whole idea is for them to be a flying squad, which means that they have to be available to go into any area where there might be a need for additional compliance. In addition, staff from the Brisbane office from the flying squad visit regional centres on a planned and regular basis to support regional staff with targeted operations. As well, as the member would be aware all police officers are authorised investigators under the Liquor Act 1992 and have the same powers as the liquor compliance officers. What was the other part of the question?

Mrs STUCKEY: How many licensed premises are they expected to monitor?

Ms KEECH: The number of licensees in Queensland is 6,400. Both the flying squad and the compliance officers on a regular basis investigate or regulate these premises.

Mrs STUCKEY: Do you have the total number of officers?

Ms KEECH: The total number of compliance officers comes to 35. Also, remember that all police officers are authorised investigators. They can do exactly the same work, and there are about 9,000 police officers.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: With reference to page 1-17 of the MPS—and let me preface this question by saying that I am completely unskilled in pub crawling—in Maryborough there is an event which is called the World's Greatest Pub Crawl. It has become somewhat of an iconic event. We won a world record which went into the *Guinness Book of Records*. Unfortunately, in our last attempt eight publicans were fined between \$207 and \$1,200 for the fact that, as bus loads of people arrived at a pub, people ended up spilling out onto the footpath. This would seem to be a reasonably heavy-handed approach in that the inspector had 12 months since the last event, if there was any problem, to talk to the organising committee if he had concerns. However, on the positive side he has now suggested that they work proactively together to find some solutions. Would you consider waiving those fines in the light of the spirit of goodwill with those proactive plans in place?

Ms KEECH: I thank the member for the question. I know that, as a Maryborough-ite, he would be proud of and support any tourism events that bring more tourists and visitors to his city. I come from Bundaberg. We have always had our rivalry between Bundaberg and Maryborough. In fact, I remember beating you people in hockey a long time ago.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: That would be a rarity.

Ms KEECH: I commend you on a range of events, particularly the World's Greatest Pub Crawl, which was staged as a *Guinness Book of Records* attempt. The member may or may not be aware that, in fact, in 2005 when this event occurred there were a lot of problems which resulted, I am advised by Liquor Licensing, in some disorderly behaviour, drunkenness, patron and community safety issues and overcrowding. So there was a problem, but certainly the Liquor Licensing Division was keen to work with the promoters to ensure that the event was a success.

I would have to say that, given that there were problems earlier in 2005, I would have expected that the event organisers would have been aware of that and they have had 12 months to work with the Liquor Licensing Division and with the police to ensure that this year the event was very successful.

Mr CHRIS FOLEY: I understand that these were different kinds of problems.

Ms KEECH: My understanding—and I have had discussions with the Liquor Licensing Division—is that, in retrospect, there could have been more communication on both sides. Certainly, the event's organisers have a responsibility to ensure that all issues and possible problems may be addressed. So from that point of view, I think in retrospect there could have been more work done by them but also Liquor Licensing could have taken a proactive stance.

We are looking at a protocol in future to ensure that we can be working early with events like yours to ensure that it is successful from both points of view. However, I say that, regardless of whether you live in Maryborough, Brisbane, Beenleigh, or wherever, you have the right to feel safe in an environment where alcohol is being consumed. Event organisers have responsibilities.

Regarding the waiving of the fines, I do not have any role whatsoever regarding fines or the possibility of waiving fines. These fines could perhaps be before the courts. I have no jurisdiction whatsoever to interfere with the judicial process. There is a well-established administrative review process for consideration to be given to waiving fines for breaches of the Liquor Act in certain circumstances. Such arrangements provide for any person who is aggrieved by being issued with an infringement notice of the breach of the act to write to the chief executive of my department outlining the facts and circumstances of the on-the-spot fine and stating the reasons or justification for the fine to be waived. If you would like to consult with my office, I am happy to give you further information, if you would like, to be able to assist the people in Maryborough in looking at an administrative review of the fines.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions on Liquor Licensing has well and truly expired. I call the member for Cook.

Mr O'BRIEN: At page 1-17 of the MPS there is the subheading 'Harm minimisation initiatives'. Can you detail for the committee one of the major initiatives being implemented by the government to boost the safety of Queenslanders?

Ms KEECH: I certainly can. The safety of Queenslanders has always been and remains a priority for the Beattie government. Members of the public have a right to feel safe when they go out at night. On 10 April 2006 the government announced a Statewide Safety Action Plan to address alcohol related disturbances in and around late-night trading premises throughout Queensland. The Statewide Safety Action Plan will be implemented in two stages. Stage 1 commenced on 1 July 2006 and extended the Brisbane City Council area 3 am lockout to late-trading premises statewide. Stage 2 will impose strict licence conditions on all premises across the state trading after 1 am.

Over recent years the Liquor Licensing Division of my department has put in place a number of initiatives to reduce the impact of late-night trading on the community. These include imposing strict

conditions on liquor licences, developing accords with licensees in some nightclub precincts, introducing a lockout and strict conditions for post 1 am traders in Brisbane, a statutory ban on the external advertising of drink promotions and the development of a code of practice. The rationale for applying tough conditions only to post 1 am traders is that the sale of liquor after 1 am represents a significant risk to the community through increased numbers of intoxicated people in and around licensed premises and the associated potential for violence and street disturbances. Imposing strict licence conditions helps minimise the negative impacts of early morning trading on the community.

The cumulative impact of these measures has been to improve public safety, I am pleased to say. However, further measures are needed to ensure that the negative impacts of late-night trading on the community continue to be minimised.

The Liquor Licensing Division, police and councils consider that lockouts successfully address problems associated with the management of public intoxication and minimum harm by restricting early morning clubhopping. Strict licence conditions in stage 2 will apply to all post 1 am traders across the state and will prescribe the minimum number of crowd controllers for venues. In addition, it will prescribe the installation, monitoring and maintenance of CCTV at all public entrances and exits as well as mandatory responsible service of alcohol training and the development and implementation of house policies.

Stage 2 of the plan will also include a limit on the frequency and duration of happy hours and a ban on competitions involving the consumption of alcohol or the giving of alcohol as prizes. As well, there will be restrictions relating to the staging of activities or promotions that may encourage the rapid or excessive consumption of alcohol. Those will apply to all traders, not just post 1 am traders.

CHAIR: Thank you. Standing order 185(1) states that the hearing must be completed by 7.30. Being chair, I want to ensure that I have the last word. That completes the government's questions in relation to Liquor Licensing. That concludes the examination of expenditure of the estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism, Fair Trading and Wine Industry Development. It also concludes the committee's consideration of matters referred to it by the parliament.

Can I thank you, Minister, and your advisers for your attendance. I also thank all departmental officers and advisers for their work in each of the portfolios that we have examined today. I understand the amount of work that goes into putting this scrutiny process together.

Before I conclude, on behalf of the committee I also thank the committee's research director, Ms Lyndel Bates, who is sitting on my left; the Hansard staff; the timekeepers; and the attendants for their assistance today.

Ms KEECH: I also thank the members of the committee and the chair for their hard work. I also thank the Hansard staff. I particularly would like to thank the staff of my own department and my own office: Michael Caldwell, David Smith, Karla Steen, Cameron Crowther and Ryan Robertson, and my departmental liaison officer, Dan Harradine. In relation to the staff of my department, I would like to thank Claire Maconachie, who has worked very hard on the preparation of estimates, and Brett Creedon and Lynda Koci, who are part of Claire's team. As well, I thank my director-general, the divisional coordinators, my executive directors and the deputy director-general for all of the work they have put into estimates as well as all the staff in my department and Tourism Queensland. Thank you very much.

CHAIR: I declare this public hearing closed.

Committee adjourned at 7.30 pm.