

THURSDAY, 22 JULY 2010

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G—POLICE, CORRECTIVE SERVICES AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

Estimates Committee G Members

Ms AA Johnstone (Chair)

Mr GW Elmes

Mr VG Johnson

Mr SA Kilburn

Mr ER Moorhead

Mr RA Stevens

Mrs CE Sullivan

In Attendance

Hon. NS Roberts, Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services

Queensland Police Service

Mr B Atkinson APM, Commissioner of Police

Mr C McCallum APM, Deputy Commissioner (Acting), Regional Operations

Mr A Henderson, Deputy Commissioner (Acting), Special Operations

Mr P Brown, Deputy Chief Executive, Resource Management

Mr A MacCracken, Manager, Corporate Reporting Unit

Department of Community Safety

Mr J McGowan, Director-General

Mr D Melville, Commissioner, Queensland Ambulance Service

Mr K Anderson, Commissioner, Queensland Corrective Service

Mr L Johnson, Commissioner, Queensland Fire and Rescue Service

Mr B Grady, Chief Officer (Acting), Emergency Management Queensland

Committee met at 8.30 am

CHAIR: Good morning, everybody. I declare the meeting of Estimates Committee G now open. My name is Mandy Johnstone. I am the member for Townsville and the chair of this committee. Joining me on the committee today are: Mr Ray Stevens MP, member for Mermaid Beach and deputy chair; Mr Glen Elmes MP, member for Noosa; Mr Vaughan Johnson MP, member for Gregory; Mr Steve Kilburn MP, member for Chatsworth; Mr Evan Moorhead MP, member for Waterford; and Mrs Carryn Sullivan MP, the member for Pumicestone.

The committee will examine the proposed expenditure for 2010-11 as contained in the Appropriation Bill 2010 for the portfolios assigned to it by the order of the appointment made on 20 May 2010. The proceedings for today will commence at 8.30 am until 12.15 pm, examining the portfolio of the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services. From 1.15 pm to 3.45 pm, the committee will then examine the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading. From 4 pm to 6.30 pm, the committee will then examine the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability. The committee will suspend proceedings for the following breaks: morning tea from 10.30 am to 10.45 am, lunch from 12.15 pm to 1.15 pm and afternoon tea from 3.45 pm to 4 pm.

The proceedings today are similar to parliament to the extent that members of the public cannot ask questions. In that regard, I remind visitors that, in accordance with standing order 206, any person admitted to a public hearing of a committee may be excluded by order of the committee or at my discretion as chair.

In relation to media coverage of this hearing, I ask that television and film coverage and photography be allowed only during my introductory comments and the opening statement of each minister as well as for a short period during each changeover of ministerial advisers. The committee has agreed to the live broadcast of the hearing via the Parliamentary Service website and to receivers throughout the parliamentary precinct. I ask that all mobile phones and pagers be now switched off.

I remind members of the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the end of each time limit. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. A double chime will sound two minutes after an extension of time has been given. Standing orders require that at least half the time available for questions and answers be allocated to non-government members. Any time expended while the committee deliberates in private is to be equally apportioned between government and non-government members. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves if the minister calls them to answer a question.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, departmental officers and members of the public to the hearing and declare the proposed expenditure open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed.

Minister, would you care to make an opening statement?

Mr ROBERTS: Yes, thank you. The 2010-11 budget demonstrates that the government has a plan for a safe and secure Queensland and we are delivering on that plan. This budget includes a record \$1.8 billion funding allocation for the Queensland Police Service and \$1.67 billion for the Department of Community Safety.

For police, the budget delivers more officers on the beat and provides modern facilities and technology needed to keep the community safe. In line with our election commitment to fund an additional 600 officers this term, the 2010-11 budget funds an additional 203 officers. Under Labor, the police to population ratio is currently around one officer for every 430 people—better than the national average. In the past 12 months we have seen the development of 18 police facilities.

This budget allocates more than \$32 million for new police stations, forensic facilities, district support facilities, watch-houses and water police facilities. In this budget \$50 million is allocated for the continued development of the new state-of-the-art police academy at Wacol, forecast to be operational by 2015. More than \$50 million is invested in information and communication technology including a new weapons licensing system, computer aided dispatch system, digital integrated traffic camera system and telecommunications interception capability. In this budget \$24.67 million is provided towards a new 24-hour state-of-the-art non-emergency Policelink service, which will deliver significant benefits to front-line police.

The 2010-11 state budget also delivers a funding boost for the Department of Community Safety. Around \$1.67 billion is allocated to help the department deliver the government's vision of safe and secure communities across Queensland. The Bligh government continues to focus on ensuring front-line services are in line with growing demand. Since 2007-08, the government has funded an extra 630 ambulance officer positions. This budget provides for an additional 75 ambulance officers and 24 firefighters. Queensland already has the best ambulance officer to population ratio in the country and our investment will ensure this continues.

The government has allocated more than \$18 million for 165 new or replacement ambulance vehicles and more than \$15 million for new and improved firefighting equipment and vehicles. We also continued the rollout of GPS devices into front-line ambulance vehicles. Our ambulance officers currently respond to 90 per cent of code 1 incidents within 16.4 minutes and 50 per cent within 8.1 minutes—a significant improvement on recent years. The government's continued investment in front-line services has helped ensure our ambulance response times remain the best in the country.

In the past 12 months, 11 ambulance facilities and five fire and rescue facilities have been completed. This year \$17 million has been provided for 20 new or replacement ambulance stations and more than \$7.5 million for 10 new replacement or redeveloped fire stations. We have also provided \$1.2 million for the new Combined Emergency Services Academy at Whyte Island to ensure our firefighters and paramedics have world-class training facilities.

The government is also planning for the future by investing in the prisons of the future. More than \$88 million is allocated for the expansion and redevelopment of Lotus Glen Correctional Centre and

more than \$80 million is allocated for the first stage of the South Queensland correctional precinct near Gatton. We remain committed to the Corrective Services social responsibility charter, which holds offenders accountable for their actions and encourages them to turn their lives around by becoming responsible, law-abiding citizens.

In line with the Bligh government's election commitment to support our volunteers, regional councils will share in \$5.9 million for equipment and vehicles for SES groups. Surf Life Saving Queensland will receive close to \$5.4 million to support its activities, and the Royal Life Saving Society will receive \$300,000 to provide water safety programs. The budget also includes continued support for our Volunteer Marine Rescue Association and Coast Guard, who do an excellent job of keeping Queenslanders safe on the water. The Bligh government remains committed to increasing funding for police, emergency and corrective services agencies, and we have delivered on this commitment in this budget.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: Minister, I refer to page 102 of the Capital Statement 2010 and major capital works. In 2009-10 your department failed to spend a budgeted \$2.8 million on the refurbishment of the Beenleigh Police Station, failed to spend a budgeted \$2.26 million on the construction of the Camp Hill Police Station, failed to spend a budgeted \$2.4 million on the refurbishment of the Lockhart River Police Station and failed to spend a budgeted \$741,000 on the replacement of the Mareeba Police Station and watch-house. In 2009 your department also failed to spend a budgeted \$2.5 million on the replacement of the Murgon Police Station and watch-house. Why does your department continue to let down the people of Queensland by failing to deliver capital works projects for Queensland police in the time frames promised?

Mr ROBERTS: Firstly, the Queensland government has made a significant commitment to capital works in the Queensland Police Service. At the time of the last election we made a commitment to significant works over three years, and we are programming those capital works activities over that period of time. There has been a significant amount of success in delivering that infrastructure over that time.

I cannot recall all of the particular projects that the member raised, but I can recall one which was the Camp Hill or Carina station. One of the issues there was securing an appropriate parcel of land. The member for Chatsworth has been heavily involved in ensuring that that project for the new station is now up and running. I also acknowledge that the Brisbane City Council have been cooperative following discussions that I had with the Lord Mayor in ensuring that the appropriate parcel of land was delivered. With that project and indeed other projects there are always issues which impact upon service delivery. There could be land tenure issues such as land use agreements with Indigenous people et cetera.

Member for Gregory, I can assure you that I am very proud of the record of the Queensland Police Service capital works program. We have a great team of people there who are doing a lot of very hard work in delivering projects. In every department in government there will obstacles put in the way for a range of reasons beyond the department's control. A lot of the projects, both in the Queensland Police Service and indeed across Community Safety, have been impacted heavily by severe weather events. You might recall in your area that there has been significant flooding and cyclone activity throughout the state. That has had a definite impact on some of these capital works programs.

In terms of the general program, since 2005-06 to 2009-10 the government has invested \$337 million in police infrastructure. In terms of the capital works program overall, last year the report on government services indicated that the Queensland Police Service had the largest capital works program in the country of any state. So to criticise the excellent work that has been undertaken by Police Service officers who are dedicated to delivering this program I do not think is a fair criticism. These people put in a lot of effort. As I have indicated, there are times when events beyond people's control impact on the delivery.

In the 2009-10 budget in terms of delivery, the projects accelerated in the 2009-10 program include Badu Island. You might be aware that we have committed \$10 million to construct a new police station on Badu Island. This will be a significant enhancement to police resourcing in the Torres Strait. There are real impacts on the delivery of that due to trying to resolve the Indigenous Land Use Agreement. My response to the member for Gregory is that, yes, there have been some delays but they are due to sometimes many reasons beyond the department's control.

Mr JOHNSON: Minister, I refer to page 1-137 of the Service Delivery Statements and Task Force Argos. Budget papers report that in 2009-10 Task Force Argos arrested 37 more offenders on 115 more charges than in 2008-09. Why are your government's policies failing to decrease the number of organised paedophiles preying on our children?

Mr ROBERTS: This is an issue which the member has been out in the community making a lot of wild accusations and claims about. Let us get a few facts on the table first.

Mr JOHNSON: I don't think they are wild allegations.

Mr ROBERTS: It was a Labor government which introduced tough legislation to monitor and supervise sex offenders in the community. When the member for Gregory sat around the cabinet table when he was last in government, sex offenders walked free—no supervision, no monitoring.

Mr JOHNSON: They are still walking free.

Mr ROBERTS: That was the National Party record on sex offenders—absolutely nothing at all. A person finished their time, walked out into the community, lived where they liked, worked where they liked and mixed with whoever they liked, including children, clubs et cetera. That is the record of the National Party government. What this government has put in place in conjunction with a national register, the ANCOR offender register, is to ensure that all sex offenders who have committed offences against children are registered on ANCOR. That puts requirements on them once they leave prison to report annually where they live, who they work for, what vehicle they drive, what distinguishing marks they have on them et cetera.

In 2008 the government passed legislation—the original legislation was passed in 2005—to enable police to get additional orders on top of those requirements for offenders who displayed higher risk. The Queensland Police Service through Task Force Argos and the monitoring unit, which is specifically designated to monitor these offenders, do an excellent job. As of last night, there were no offenders whose whereabouts were unknown. I give credit to the people within that unit for the monitoring that they undertake. There is a central unit that monitors the offenders, and every district has dedicated officers who manage this offender register.

Member for Gregory, the other aspect of the government's legislation is for dangerous sex offenders. Again, under the National Party government when you sat around the cabinet table, when dangerous sex offenders finished their time they walked out into the community without any supervision. The Labor government has put in place the Dangerous Prisoners (Sexual Offenders) Act. In all instances, the government argues upfront that these people should be kept in jail. Where the courts determine that those people are able to be released, they impose very strict supervisory conditions on them—some 40 or 50 conditions. Again, under a Labor government, the people who are in this category of sex offenders are now required to report to police on an annual basis. The most dangerous offenders, who are deemed by the courts to be in that level, are either kept in prison or released into the community under very strict supervision orders.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to page 1-139 of the Service Delivery Statement and traffic police staffing. In the 2009-10 budget you promised to deliver 2,829 traffic police staff for 2009-10. The 2010-11 budget papers show that you have rewritten history to promise only 2,697 traffic police staff. You fell 100 staff short of your original promise. For 2010-11 you have promised 2,805, which is 24 short of your original 2009-10 traffic police promise. Why have you not committed to a visible police presence on Queensland roads as you have promised?

Mr ROBERTS: That is an absolutely ridiculous claim. The member is obviously aware that full-time equivalents is a dark science which does not reflect actual bodies out in the field. A couple of years ago, this government gave a commitment to increase the number of traffic police by 106, and we have delivered on that. In fact, the number of traffic police now in the field is 578, which is 106 additional to what it was two years ago. The member is confusing the actual traffic officers who are out there day in, day out in their vehicles and on their motorcycles enforcing the road rules. We gave a commitment to appoint 106 additional officers and we have delivered on that. The first 53 were delivered last year and the final 53 were delivered in the last 12 months. So they are actually additional officers out in the field performing great work in helping to reduce the road toll. On that note, I might give credit to these officers by saying that the current road toll in Queensland is 131, which is 71 below where we were last year.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr ROBERTS: I acknowledge the member's acknowledgement of that. This is a result of officers on the front line—extra officers. We have delivered a 20-plus per cent increase in the number of front-line traffic police for the people of Queensland. They do a great job and it is demonstrated in those road toll results.

Of course, it is not just about front-line police. They are the most visible and probably the most important aspect of our Road Safety Strategy, but we have also supplemented the work that those extra officers do—I reiterate: an extra 106 traffic officers in two years—with the technology we are rolling out. That technology includes the additional fixed camera sites and mobile speed cameras, which have been used for some time. We are trialling new technology, including combined red light and speed cameras and point-to-point speed cameras. We have introduced covert mobile speed cameras and covert motorcycles that these officers use.

In combination, all of those factors are helping to drive down the road toll. I do not sit here today and claim that any one particular aspect—whether it be the additional officers or the technology—is solely responsible for that. However, I do believe that the great work of these officers—578 of them—in combination with the technology and the 'anywhere, anytime' mantra that the Police Service now has in terms of road enforcement is helping to reduce the road toll.

The member can quote full-time equivalents. As I have indicated, they do not reflect the actual bodies in the field. They do not reflect the fact that the government has introduced and funded an additional 106 police officers over the last two years.

Mr JOHNSON: Minister, I refer to page 1-139 of the Service Delivery Statements and professional standards and ethical practice. The number of Queensland police officers facing internal disciplinary action has more than quadrupled in the past two years. Why, then, have you chosen to decrease the number of staff allocated to professional standards and ethical practice in 2009-10? Also, why have you slashed 650,000 hours from in-service training for Queensland police officers when results should show that you are ensuring Queensland's police officers have the proper access to training instead of less?

Mr ROBERTS: Again, member for Gregory, you are referring to full-time equivalents and I will try to get some answers on that. With respect to training, the amount of hours in training will fluctuate from year to year for a whole range of reasons. I stand to be corrected by the commissioner if need be, but one of the significant increases in hours in recent years has been the extra training for QPRIME and factors such as that. You will see fluctuations in the actual amount of training hours from year to year.

Additionally, and the Leader of the Opposition actually tried to make some public issue of this, the number of recruits that will be entering the service will fluctuate from year to year depending on people who are leaving the service. This does not reflect in that instance the government's commitment to increase the number of police officers. If we have a low attrition rate, it means that fewer numbers of police have to be trained and that will obviously flow into fewer hours that are conducted for that particular year—as it is with the introduction of new technology such as QPRIME. You may have a spike in training for a range of reasons, including when you introduce new technology. A lot of effort went into providing training for QPRIME. In the last 12 months or so there has been significant additional training for things such as the new taser policy.

I do not think it is a valid criticism to simply pick out a figure from year to year and make out that the Police Service is putting any less effort into training its staff than it has in recent years. The Queensland Police Service, through that professional standards and ethical command, makes a significant effort to provide the appropriate annual training that officers are required to undertake. Every officer is required to continue with their training throughout their career. When new technology or new policies are put in place, significant effort is made to deliver that training. So the member can pick a particular figure, but what you need to do is look behind those figures to understand why those changes have occurred.

Commissioner Atkinson: In terms of training, it will generally be across four areas: new legislation, new equipment such as tasers, information technology changes and policy changes associated with things like policy change for police pursuits. It will vary from year to year.

In relation to the first part of the question, again, that will vary in terms of police misbehaviour and misconduct. That will never be consistent from year to year. We deal with those issues as they arise. Generally speaking, we have about five million plus interactions with the community each year. One out of every 2,000 of those results in a complaint, but it is a very important issue and one we take extremely seriously.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to page 1-141 of the SDS and personal safety offences. Since 2007-08, the number of reported assaults has increased, the number of reported robberies has increased and the number of reported personal safety offences has increased. Why are more violent crimes being committed against people under your watch?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. Yes, those figures do indicate some increases in those areas but we need to put this into perspective. The reality with crime statistics—and we will see this again when the annual statistical review comes out in the next couple of months; those figures are signed off as of the end of the year and they need to be collated and crosschecked—is that in some areas crime rates will go up and in other areas crime rates will go down. In individual districts, you will see spikes and ups and downs. That is just the normal background noise of crime statistics.

The real story about crime statistics is that over the last 10 years there has been a significant trend downwards. In fact, without quoting me directly—or you will quote me directly but I will need to check the figure—over the last nine years there has been a 26 per cent reduction in the overall crime rate. There have been significant reductions in offences against the person and even more significant reductions in overall offences against property. So the real story about crime rates in Queensland over the last 10 years is a significant trending downwards. I repeat: it is significant.

I can probably get those figures if they are available. In fact, I have them now. Over the last 10 years in Queensland there has been about a 25 per cent reduction in overall crime rates, as I have indicated. When adjusted for growth in the Queensland population—and for the member's benefit, it is not just a matter of looking at the actual raw data; you have to look at the rate which is a per population basis—the rate of personal safety offences per 100,000 people increased by three per cent. The rate of personal safety offences which recorded decreases in 2009-10 were homicide and sex offences, which actually dropped by five per cent.

As I have indicated, yes, there will be spikes and ups and downs in particular categories, but what you have to do with any crime statistic is look at the trend over time. I am confident that if the member takes the time to analyse the crime statistics in all of those key areas he will see significant trending down in all of those areas.

CHAIR: Member for Gregory, there are two minutes left.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to page 1-139 of the SDS and staffing. Your ministerial charter and goals at the 2004 election commitment were to put more than 500 sworn officers back on the beat and out from behind desks. That is another Bligh promise at risk of nondelivery. How many officers have been transferred from desk duties to actual service on the street?

CHAIR: Minister, you have just under two minutes to answer.

Mr ROBERTS: The civilianisation program and commitment of this government was a significant one and it is something which the service has been diligently putting in place for some time. I will get the figures for you, but we have well and truly met the commitment that we made. Those areas where civilians are now taking roles that uniformed officers formerly performed, as the member is aware, are some of the front desk duties in a police station and in watch-houses in particular. I have just been given the figures. As part of the civilianisation initiative announced by the government in 2004, there have been 500 positions allocated to replace police in a range of areas.

Mr JOHNSON: How many?

Mr ROBERTS: The figure I have been given here is 500 civilian positions. We can confirm the actual figure for you. I will get that confirmed later in the session. I am confident in the advice that has been given to me that the commitment has been met. I will say, from speaking to the people at the front line, that these positions have freed up a lot of officer time. Officers who were confined in watch-houses and behind desks are now out in the community. In fact, I have just been given the figure. The total that has been given to me is 587 civilianisation positions, which more than meets the commitment.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. I call the member for Waterford.

Mr MOORHEAD: Page 1-135 of the SDS outlines that additional funding has been provided for the continued development of what would be a visionary new police academy at Wacol on Brisbane's south side. Can you please provide the committee with more information on the progress to date and what this facility will deliver?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. The government's commitment to the Police Academy is rock solid. I was very pleased in this year's budget to see the commitment of pretty close to \$50 million to continue with that development. That will provide a significant impetus to this program. In following years even more significant contributions will be required.

In June the government announced, as I have indicated, around \$50 million this budgeted year for the continued development of the Police Academy at Wacol. It is part of the Police Service's massive capital budget of \$218 million for this financial year. The academy is expected to be completed in 2014-15 and will deliver a full range of education and training facilities for both inservice training and new recruits.

The site will accommodate the future Queensland Police Academy and include a number of world-class facilities not available at the current facility at Oxley. It will create an estimated 3,200 jobs over the life of the project, helping with the government's commitment to and focus on stimulating the economy to protect the jobs of Queenslanders.

The first major project to be completed will be the driver training facility. That is due for completion in September 2010. This is going to be a significant enhancement of driver training facilities. It is a world-class design and enables police to receive all of the training they require for the difficult circumstances they are exposed to out on the road.

As at June 2010, \$45.53 million has already been spent on the project. That included the purchase of the 102-hectare site at Wacol, design planning, the construction of the driver training facility shortly to be completed, the refurbishment of LillyPilly House, which will house the driver training unit, and the restoration of the heritage listed cricket pavilion, which has a long history for the Wacol community. It is a spectacular piece of history that will be preserved on that site.

The budget allocation of \$50 million for this year will allow for the completion of the design planning for the academy, whole-of-site infrastructure and a forensic services facility and will enable the commencement of construction of the whole-of-site infrastructure works and also the demolition and removal of hazardous material from heritage listed buildings.

This is going to be a significant enhancement to police resources. It is something that the Police Service needs. I am very pleased that the government has really cemented its commitment to this project with this budget allocation, which will be followed by more significant contributions in the coming

years. It will have a range of facilities such as the driver training facility, the special operations training facility and a firearm scenario village et cetera.

Mrs SULLIVAN: My question refers to page 49 of Budget Paper No. 4 which indicates that the government has made a significant commitment of an additional \$33.7 million over five years to establish a permanent QPS telecommunications interception capability. How will this technology be used? What measures has the government put in place to ensure that the privacy of law-abiding Queenslanders is protected?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. The government's decision to provide both the Queensland Police Service and indeed the Crime and Misconduct Commission with telecommunication intercept powers was a significant step forward in the fight against crime, and organised crime in particular. As you have indicated, the government committed an additional \$33.7 million over five years to establish that capability.

The power to intercept can only be exercised after an application has been made to a federal government issuing authority and a warrant has been issued. The government acknowledges that it is essential to provide our police with these powers but also to keep the community safe and ensure that people's rights and liberties are protected.

An important part of the Queensland framework surrounding telephone interception is the strict provisions involving the oversight of the Public Interest Monitor. The Public Interest Monitor provides independent oversight of the warrant application process and can provide advice to the issuing authority when police apply for the warrant. In addition, the PIM will oversee a strict audit process and reporting and compliance regime concerning the use of telephone intercepts by the Queensland Police Service. The government has ensured effective safeguards are in place to maintain an appropriate balance between the requirements of law enforcement and individual privacy whilst, at the same time, giving police access to a very powerful tool in the fight against crime.

The Queensland Police Service is currently operating an interim telecommunications interception arrangement with another authorised law enforcement agency under a formal business arrangement. The interim arrangement will remain in place while the Police Service establishes its own independent telephone intercept capability. That capability will involve the procurement of the system itself, the fitout of suitable secure accommodation and the establishment of a secure permanent staffing structure. That project is also already underway and the procurement activities have commenced. It is envisaged that the Police Service will establish its own telephone intercept capabilities in the 2010-11 financial year.

The interim telephone intercept operations commenced in August 2009. I know from briefings that I have received from the commissioner that already it is delivering significant results in terms of major crime, high-level drug trafficking, murders, armed robbery, major fraud and other serious offences.

Mr KILBURN: Page 101 of Budget Paper No. 3 highlights a \$217 million capital works program which, as you have already mentioned, includes the new police station at Carina. The delivery of this major police infrastructure in 2010-11 includes capital works, information technology and other essential equipment. Can you outline where the capital works infrastructure will be built and how it will benefit operational policing?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question and also for his support and work in helping to progress the police station in his electorate. As I indicated earlier in answer to a question from the member for Gregory, the government committed this term to a three-year \$126 million program of capital works projects for the Police Service. This year's budget provides \$57.48 million to fund some new and replacement police stations, the refurbishment or upgrading of existing facilities, residential accommodation in some rural and remote areas and some general upgrading of existing housing. I have already mentioned the additional \$50 million for the Police Academy at Wacol.

The budget this year also provides for the development of some significant Water Police infrastructure. I particularly refer to the Water Police facility at the Sunshine Coast and also some additional boat storage on Thursday Island. This year's vessel management program also provides \$1.478 million for the replacement and refurbishing of Water Police vessels. That is on top of some significant enhancements to Water Police vessels over the last couple of years. We have seen the delivery of three spectacular 22-metre catamarans in 2008-09. That has dramatically improved the capability and capacity of the Police Service to respond to Water Police and other general policing issues across the state.

The 2010-11 capital works budget remains significantly high in comparison with earlier this decade, when the annual capital works budget was around \$30 million a year. The government is again demonstrating a significant commitment to capital works. During 2009-10, capital works funding of \$57 million is provided for the development of a number of projects. Some of those included: replacement stations at Carseldine, Crestmead, Holland Park, Mareeba, Robina, Sippy Downs and Springfield; a replacement police station and watch-house at Ipswich; a new district headquarters at Coomera; and a new Horn Island aircraft hangar.

In terms of aircraft, the Police Service now has an additional fixed-wing aircraft in the Torres Strait. The permanent aircraft will be available shortly. It is in the country. There was a temporary aircraft up there to start delivering those services. We have delivered new residences at the Aurukun, Lockhart River and Pormpuraaw. We have fitted out accommodation for the Maroochy joint communications centre, Upper Mount Gravatt station, Fortitude Valley station et cetera.

Major capital works for this year include: a replacement police station at Murgon; the Townsville Police Academy upgrade; the new Carina Police Station in the member's electorate; the Richlands watch-house refurbishment; the Burleigh Heads police complex upgrade; the Beenleigh Police Station refurbishment; the Thursday Island Police Station upgrade; the Pine Rivers district office fitout; and police station upgrades at Goodna, Calliope and Mackay.

CHAIR: My question relates to professional standards and ethical practice. Page 1-141 of the SDS outlines the service standard in place regarding professional standards and ethical practice. In an environment of significant public scrutiny and accountability, can you please outline for the committee what measures and strategies the Queensland Police Service has in place to guard against and deal with unethical behaviour in the service?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you for the question. It goes without saying that corruption and unethical practice are absolutely unacceptable and will not be tolerated within the Queensland Police Service. Members of the Queensland Police Service are not only bound by legislative and procedural requirements to behave in an ethical and professional manner but are also subject to a code of conduct which gives effect to the requirements of the Public Sector Ethics Act 1994.

The Police Service subscribes to best practice in terms of managing risk within the organisation by applying the international standard ISO 3/1000. The service employs risk management processes for all activities and ensures the highest risks are subject to a mandatory focus. The current risk framework includes mandatory risk, such as the use of force, and corruption prevention and professional standards.

To assist members of the organisation in managing ethical behaviour and appropriate decision making, the service has a corruption prevention plan which is regularly updated and has four key foundation pillars: firstly, the QPS corporate governance framework for corruption prevention; secondly, a strategic framework to ensure the QPS maintains a corruption resistant organisation based upon strengthening the ethical culture through training and other activities, targeting of corruption risks and the QPS framework for corruption prevention plans at district, station and work unit level—all of these issues are embedded at all levels, from the leadership team right through to front-line officers in the service; and, thirdly, an individual commitment by officers that 'integrity is everyone's business'. To reinforce all of that, education and ethical awareness is a key plank in that program.

The organisation's commitment to ethical standards is reflected in the allocation in 2009-10 of over \$300 million to provide services that include training, internal investigations, audit, risk management, strategic planning and review and integrated policy development. The Ethical Standards Command of the Queensland Police Service is responsible for the promotion of ethical behaviour, discipline and professional practice within the service. The work of the Ethical Standards Command is supported by a robust relationship with the Crime and Misconduct Commission and the work by professional practice managers in each region and command.

The Internal Investigations Branch of the Ethical Standards Command monitors, investigates and overviews complaints against members of the QPS to ensure standards of professionalism are maintained and to improve service delivery. An Internal Audit branch of the command is an independent function established to assist the commissioner in compliance with the provisions of the Financial Accountability Act.

Mr MOORHEAD: My question relates to internet safety for children. Page 1-137 of the SDS refers to Queensland's Task Force Argos continuing to lead the way in the fight against organised paedophilia. Are you able to outline for the committee how this task force is protecting our children from internet predators?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you. Can I say at the outset that Task Force Argos and the officers within that unit are recognised not just nationally but also internationally as leaders in the field of tackling criminal activity against children. Obviously we are very concerned about the work that they have to do. In terms of the success and the work that they are doing to protect children, these people are world leaders. They are established within the Queensland Police Service. Agencies from across the country and across the world look to Task Force Argos for advice and assistance in developing their own initiatives and programs to deal with this awful problem in our community. As at 1 May 2010, Argos detectives had prosecuted 97 offenders on 369 charges during 2009-10. That outcome is due to proactive and effective policing leading to the detection and prosecution of these offenders.

The range of offences included procuring and grooming children via the internet for sexual purposes, making and distributing child exploitation material and contact offences against children, for example rape and sexual assault. In addition to the prosecutions and charges that were laid, Task Force

Argos work resulted in 39 children being removed from situations of harm and 42 national and international targets were referred to partner law enforcement agencies world-wide. I think this again emphasises the significance of the work that Task Force Argos does. It is not just a Queensland focus. Sexual exploitation of children is something which crosses national and transnational borders. Therefore, we need to ensure that Task Force Argos maintains very productive and strong links with agencies not just across Australia but internationally as well. There have been a number of instances where officers from that unit have travelled internationally to work on some of these very significant cases where paedophiles and people exploiting children have been brought to justice in other countries.

I take the opportunity to give credit again to these people. They work in an extremely difficult environment exposed to some of the worst behaviour imaginable, but they turn up day after day with the sole purpose of bringing these offenders to justice, and they deserve that credit. I can give the committee an actual example of their work. In September last year Argos detectives used world-leading technology applications to proactively identify a Queensland person trading in child exploitation material. Argos detectives executed a search warrant, located the exploitation material and this person was ultimately found to have committed offences against 10 Queensland children.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer you to page 1-136 of the SDS and the recent achievements contained there. Trials of in-car cameras and automatic numberplate recognition technology are mentioned. Can you please outline for the committee what trials the QPS is currently conducting or has conducted over the past year and what are the outcomes and the potential benefits of those trials?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you. Obviously in policing and indeed in all fields of endeavour technology dramatically changes and improves and increases in terms of its availability year after year. So it is obvious that the Police Service needs to do its best to keep up with that technology. The government is funding a range of particular technology improvements in this year's budget. In addition to that, the Police Service is looking at other technologies which can help police officers and indeed the service do its job of making Queensland communities safer. Some of the recent trials that have been conducted within Queensland include the Taser Cam and body-worn video, and that particular trial arises out of the review with the CMC of the Taser policy last year; alternative conducted energy weapons, because Taser is a brand name but there are other conducted energy weapons available, so there has been a review of alternative equipment; in-car cameras, as the member mentioned; and automatic numberplate recognition. These technologies have significant possibilities, and I am keen for that work to continue. Other trials have included TruCAM, unmarked motor vehicles or motorcycles, intelligent traffic camera systems and the Clem7 tunnel digital cameras.

With respect to the Taser Cam and body-worn video, a review conducted last year of Tasers recommended an examination of technology that delivers a recording capability for Tasers. There were two aspects of that particular trial. One is where the camera was actually attached to the Taser itself and records once it has been deployed and the other is actually attached to the officer. It is a video system which records all of the activity, irrespective of whether or not the Taser has been deployed, as I understand it. With regard to alternative conducted energy weapons, again, as I have indicated, Taser is the conducted energy weapon of choice of the Queensland Police Service at the moment. Obviously there are other brands and technologies available, so alternative testing was conducted in January and February of this year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for government questions has expired. I call the member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Madam Chair. I refer the minister to the Service Delivery Statements at page 1-46 relating to employee expenses. The minister stated in last year's estimates hearings that he believed that police deserve appropriate pay rises. Does this minister still stand by this claim and support the government's offer of 2.5 per cent as appropriate to front-line Queensland police compared to 4.5 per cent given to the rest of Queensland's Public Service and the 20 per cent pay rise awarded to Queensland ambulance officers?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. It goes without saying that our police officers deserve a reasonable pay rise. I take the opportunity to speak to officers on the front line at every opportunity, as I do with all Emergency Service workers. They work in extremely difficult and challenging circumstances. They sometimes experience in a shift what many of us would not experience in a lifetime in terms of the trauma and the difficulties and the challenges that they face. So of course they deserve a pay rise. The government has made an offer of 2½ per cent—7½ per cent over three years—in difficult economic circumstances. The member referred to wage increases which have been granted to other public sector workers, and, yes, that is the case. Prior to the global financial crisis when governments, businesses and individuals across the country and indeed internationally faced significant pressures on their revenue streams or their income, the government was able to provide a more generous offer to its employees.

In last year's budget the government made it clear through the Treasurer's statement that those enterprise agreements which expired—and I will be corrected—I think after September of last year would be subject to the new wages proposal. Of course it would be nice to be in different circumstances,

but the government has faced significant impacts on its revenue streams, as have, as I have indicated, businesses and individuals. We have had to make some tough choices in that environment. The offer that we have made of 2½ per cent a year or 7½ per cent over three years is in line with Reserve Bank predictions in terms of the inflation rate.

That being said, Queensland police officers, as I have indicated, do deserve a decent pay rise because they do a fantastic job in the community. I put on the record—and I do not want to get into the detail of the wages individually for officers—that Queensland police officers, when you take into account the entire package, are comparably or favourably paid compared to their counterparts in other states. It is easy to look at one component of a wage rate—be that the base rate, which is often the case, and that occurs in other instances with agreements—and there may well be cases where the base rate in Queensland may be less than the base rate in other states. That is not in all cases. But Queensland police officers receive 18 per cent superannuation. Their counterparts in other states receive nine per cent to 13 per cent on average. So from a total package point of view when you take into account the base rate and the operational shift allowance, which a bit over 70 per cent of officers receive, plus the other allowances plus the fact that they receive a much more generous superannuation package, they are more than favourably comparable to other states.

Mr JOHNSON: So, Minister, in real terms what you are saying is that our Queensland police, who are the most important people we have in the state in terms of public identity, are not as important as these other people who have received these significant rises. I take into account what you are saying in relation to the 18 per cent super. There is up to \$10,000 difference from other jurisdictions for some of our officers. The real fact of the matter is that I think this is a slap in the face for Queensland police. Are you going to continue to up the ante in relation to getting a better increase than 2.5 per cent or 7½ per cent over three years?

Mr ROBERTS: I can only repeat some of the things that I have just said. Of course our police officers deserve a reasonable pay rise. In the current circumstances, that is what I believe the government has offered. I do not know where the member gets this figure of \$10,000 from. By way of example, if we take a constable and we look at the base rate only, in the first year, yes, Queensland constables are paid less than their counterparts in other states, but that does not take into account the fact that they receive an operational shift allowance and they receive superannuation. When you package it altogether, they are very comparable. But if you just look at base rates only—and that is all I am talking about here, so I am not conceding that they are not as badly off as you have pointed out—an experienced constable in Queensland compared to Victoria and New South Wales is basically on par in terms of the wage level. An experienced constable in New South Wales from the figures I have here earns around \$56,000 and in Victoria \$55,800 and in Queensland \$56,000.

They do take a different number of years to get there. In New South Wales it takes five years to become a fully experienced constable, in Victoria four years and in Queensland six. But when they get to the end of the progression in that particular rank, they are basically receiving the same base rate of pay. But in Queensland in addition to that they are getting the operational shift allowance, and allowances differ between states. On top of that again, they are getting 21 per cent superannuation as opposed to, as I have indicated, nine per cent and 13 per cent in those other states. So, member for Gregory, yes, our officers do deserve a pay rise. As I have indicated to you, the government has made an offer in very difficult economic circumstances, and that offer does not just apply to police officers. That offer will also apply to other enterprise agreements that expire following the cut-off date, which was late last year.

Mr JOHNSON: Minister, I refer to the Service Delivery Statements at page 1-134 relating to the Queensland Police Service. Does the minister believe that an urgent phone conversation with a man on a bus with no prior warning and barely half an hour before making the announcement provides suitable time to allow the—

Mr ROBERTS: Sorry, but can I just interrupt. I just need to correct something. It is 18 per cent superannuation, not 21 per cent. My apologies. Could you start again thanks?

CHAIR: Could you start your question again please, member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Minister. I refer to the SDS at page 1-134 relating to the Queensland Police Service. Does the minister believe that an urgent phone conversation with a man on a bus with no prior warning and barely half an hour before making the announcement provides suitable time to allow the chair of the CMC to make a fully informed and considered decision regarding the reappointment of the Police Commissioner in this state in accordance with section 4.2 of the Police Service Administration Act, which this minister is responsible for?

Mr ROBERTS: It gives me an opportunity to actually correct the record, because I did not have a conversation with the chair of the CMC on a bus. This has been one of the myths which has been perpetuated throughout some of the discussions on this issue, and the CMC chair has in fact confirmed that the conversation that I had with him was not while he was on a bus. The conversation I had with him on that morning of 25 February, from recollection, was in his office. When I first called the CMC chairman to discuss the fact that the Premier intended to make a statement in the parliament

announcing the reappointment of Bob Atkinson I was advised that he was not in his office but on his way to work. So to correct the record, member for Gregory, I did not have a conversation with the CMC chair while he was travelling in a bus towards work. The conversation I had with him was in his office after he arrived at work.

Mr JOHNSON: So you believe that the way that the government conducted itself in relation to the reappointment of the Police Commissioner is the appropriate protocol in relation to the recommendations of the Fitzgerald inquiry, as I said, under section 4.2 of the Police Service Administration Act which you are responsible for?

Mr ROBERTS: What the act requires is the development of a recommendation to the Governor in Council agreed to by the CMC chair. In addition to that, a major component of that recommendation is the development of the terms and conditions of employment of the Police Commissioner. Following the announcement in the parliament by both the Premier and myself, I have been engaging in discussions with the CMC chair in accordance with the act to develop the major component of the recommendation of the Governor in Council, and that is the development of the terms and conditions of employment. You will recall in the letter that was tabled I think in the Premier's estimates hearing relating to the CMC chair writing to your leader he indicated that his focus was on development of those terms and conditions of employment, and that is entirely consistent with the activities that I have been engaging in with the chair since the announcement. I have met with him on a couple of occasions to directly speak about this issue. We have exchanged correspondence. In fact, the last correspondence related specifically to the performance plan that will be a part of the terms and conditions of employment.

So since the announcement—and the government has always intended to comply with the act; there has never been any intention not to comply with the requirements of the act—I have been proactively engaging with the CMC chair to progress in accordance with the act the development of a recommendation to the Governor in Council, a major part of which will be the terms and conditions of employment.

Mr JOHNSON: So you honestly believe that your dealings with this situation are in total compliance with the findings of the act and the recommendations set down by the Fitzgerald inquiry?

Mr ROBERTS: Absolutely. There is no conflict at all. The act has been complied with and always has intended to be complied with from day one. If the member is referring to other matters within the Fitzgerald inquiry, I would ask him to be more specific but, as I have indicated, the government has always intended to progress this matter in accordance with the act. Again to repeat myself—because I have said this many, many times but it gets misreported and misrepresented in so many instances—what that act requires is the development of a recommendation to the Governor in Council agreed to by the chair of the CMC. Section 4.3(1) (a) of the act talks about conditions of employment and that is something agreed to between the minister and the chairperson of the Crime and Misconduct Commission approved by the Governor in Council. So, again, going back to the letter which was tabled in the Premier's estimates committee hearing, the chair of the CMC has clearly indicated that his main focus now is on the development of those terms and conditions of employment. That is what I have been doing with him following the announcement. In fact, we have a meeting scheduled towards the end of this month to continue with those discussions.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to page 1-134 of the SDS and the Queensland Police Service. The Police Commissioner stated publicly in February 2010 that police will implement any recommendations from the CMC's findings into allegations of misconduct and corruption into the Gold Coast police. Why does the commissioner's comment to implementing these findings differ from those of the CMC investigation and the death in custody of Palm Islander Mulrunji Doomadgee.

Mr ROBERTS: Could you just repeat that question?

Mr JOHNSON: I can.

Mr ROBERTS: Where are you referring to in the SDS?

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to the Service Delivery Statements, page 1-134 and the Queensland Police Service.

Mr ROBERTS: And which comment in particular?

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to the Police Commissioner's comments stated publicly in February 2010.

CHAIR: Member for Gregory, could you be a bit more specific in relation to which part of the SDS you are referring to?

Mr JOHNSON: In the SDS? Page 1-134.

Mr ROBERTS: I am happy to answer the question; I am just trying to get a clear understanding of the precise nature of the question.

Mr JOHNSON: In the area of the strategic issues—

The Service's strategic objectives are to enhance community confidence in, and satisfaction with, policing in Queensland; to reduce the incidence and impact.

CHAIR: You are going to have to repeat the question.

Mr JOHNSON: Do you want me to repeat it?

Mr ROBERTS: If you could. As I said, I am happy to answer it; I just need to be clear on what you are asking.

Mr JOHNSON: I will repeat the question. The Police Commissioner stated publicly in February 2010 that the police will implement any recommendations from the CMC's findings into allegations of misconduct and corruption into the Gold Coast police. Why does the commissioner's commitment to implementing these findings differ from those of the CMC investigation into the death in custody of Palm Islander Mulrunji Doomadgee?

Mr ROBERTS: I see the point you are making. There is a clear difference here. The Palm Island inquiry—as you would be aware, in its recommendations the commissioner—under the Palm Island inquiry CMC report—was required to report back to the CMC on his proposed course of action. You would be aware, through injunction proceedings, which were taken out by the union on behalf of its members—which is their entitlement—that they have sought to restrain or have an injunction placed upon the commissioner to not respond in accordance with the CMC recommendations. So the clear difference here is that, in the first instance, you had an instance where the commissioner was freely able to express his view on what he would be doing. In this instance, he is in a position where the union has taken out a court case, or is seeking an injunction to prevent him from doing it.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Minister. I refer the minister to page 1-136 of the SDS and the service's strategic objectives. This is about building a safe environment for communities. However, there is no mention of better resources for front-line police officers, there is no mention of helicopters or night surveillance or infra-red equipment to make a safer working environment for police as they execute their duty. Why are speed cameras seen as both a priority and an achievement, yet providing better equipment and resources for front-line police officers are not?

Mr ROBERTS: I suppose that gives me an opportunity to talk about the things that we are doing. The government has provided a significant budget this year, including extra police and extra resources. If the member would like, I can go through and detail that.

The member refers to the range of possible technologies that could be provided to the Police Service. He mentions helicopters. If I could just touch on that issue. Helicopters are not the main priority of the Police Service at the moment. One of the priorities for the Police Service is to expand its fixed-wing capability. We have already done that over the last 12 months or six months or so by providing additional fixed-wing capability over the Torres Strait. With regard to helicopters, the Police Service already has access to helicopter services within Queensland as required through the community helicopter network and also through Emergency Management Queensland. When you look at the hours of operation of police use of those helicopters, predominantly it is search and rescue type of operations in the main and then some law enforcement capability.

I find the debate about the helicopter quite interesting, because other states are often held up as an example. I stand to be corrected, but my understanding is that the Victorian police run their helicopter service down there. They have quite a significant fleet. But when you actually look at the service delivery component of the Victorian fleet, it basically mirrors that of Emergency Management Queensland. In the main, they are aeromedical transfers and search and rescue activities with a very small component of law enforcement activity. So whereas places like Victoria are held up to say that the Police Service has this helicopter service and that we should be transforming or translating that in other states, we have, in fact, almost the same situation here in Queensland except that it goes under the brand name of Emergency Management Queensland.

CHAIR: We have just another two minutes.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to page 1-136 of the SDS and Policelink. With the new Policelink call centre now online, what resources have been put in place to enable existing police officers to cope and deal with the extra workload that this high-tech centre will generate?

Mr ROBERTS: Actually, I disagree entirely with the proposition put by the member. Policelink—and I think that this is a very exciting development—

Mr JOHNSON: What do you disagree with?

Mr ROBERTS: You seem to be suggesting that Policelink will increase the workload on front-line officers.

Mr JOHNSON: No, what I am saying is that I believe that this high-tech centre will generate more work for police.

Mr ROBERTS: I see. Let me just start by talking about Policelink. In fact, what I believe it will do is take pressure off communication centres and, indeed, provide an alternative opportunity for many police matters to be dealt with through the Policelink centre rather than the requirement for front-line officers.

Policelink is a very significant advancement for the Queensland Police Service. It is constructed. They are currently training staff and it will be operational later this year. That 131444 number will provide an opportunity for people with routine matters that are not urgent rather than ringing 000. We already know that the 000 network gets far too many calls when they are not necessarily emergency calls. So what this will do will enable those people with non-urgent calls to call rather than loading up our communication centres and our front-line officers with non-emergency calls.

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

Mr KILBURN: In the 15 years that I spent working as a firefighter, I attended many serious road traffic crashes. So I completely understand the trauma this causes not only to the community but also the police and the emergency services response personnel who respond to it. So I took particular note on page 1-1 36 of the 2010-11 Service Delivery Statements of the road toll and the good progress that has been made towards a national target. Could you outline for the committee the steps being taken to further enhance road safety?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question and acknowledge his role as a fire and rescue officer and, indeed, the trauma that fire and rescue officers, ambulance officers and police officers face on a daily basis as a result of our road toll. I think that is something that all of us who are not put in that situation need to honour and respect because, as I indicated earlier, whether it be police officers performing their general duties, all of our emergency service workers face in a shift what many of us do not experience in a lifetime. It is something which we should recognise and pay tribute to them for.

The road toll is obviously of significant concern but, as I have indicated earlier, currently the road toll is 131—71 fewer than the same time last year. We are heading, in actual raw numbers, to figures which go back to the 1950s. One of the significant targets that was set in the National Road Safety Strategy was reducing road fatalities to a rate of 5.6 fatalities per 100,000 people. One of the leaders in terms of achieving, or getting close to, or even improving on that is Victoria. Members may be aware that in Victoria they have very significant traffic road rule enforcement through speed cameras, both visible and covert. Of course, that is something which we have now moved to in Queensland.

The road fatality rate for 2009-10 has now been confirmed in Queensland. It is 6.04 deaths per 100,000. That is a significant improvement over recent years. Raw numbers are important and they are something which we talk about and, obviously, we try to get a lesser raw number than last year. But the real improvement in the road toll is in the rate. It was 32 per 100,000 in 1973. Last year in Queensland, it was 6.04. That is just a spectacular improvement. It is a combination of a number of things, obviously—improved design of vehicles and roads and stronger, more proactive and more intelligent enforcement of the road rules by the Police Service. The Police Service in Queensland takes this issue very seriously. I referred to the 578—I am pretty sure that was the number—of traffic officers out there day in, day out, enforcing the rules in combination with the technology that we have provided in speed camera enforcement. But there have been a number of important enhancements to road safety in recent years—the introduction of roadside drug-driving testing, again, focusing not just on alcohol but on a range of drugs that people might have that impair their driving capability.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. It is good to see those improvements in our road safety. It is quite staggering when you look at the comparisons from the 1970s. I wanted to ask you a question about the police contact centre. I know the member for Gregory just asked a similar question. I am wondering if you wanted to outline any extra information about how that centre will improve response capability in the Queensland Police Service and improve client service.

Mr ROBERTS: Yes. I thank the member for the question. I am disappointed that the member for Gregory has chosen to undermine, in a sense, confidence in this particular centre.

Mr JOHNSON: No way. Madam Chair, I find that totally out of order. I have never, ever criticised that centre and I ask you, Sir, to withdraw that remark.

Mr ROBERTS: I withdraw. The Policelink centre, as I have indicated, is a significant investment and, in my view, enhancement of police resources in Queensland. I know from speaking to a number of officers throughout the state that people are quite excited about the prospects of the introduction of this centre because what it will do, as I have indicated, is provide the community with an alternative number to call.

The Police Service receives, from memory, 470,000 calls a year to 000. Around about four or five per cent of those are actual genuine emergencies. So we have a significant number of calls going to our communication centres, tying up communication centres, sometimes to the detriment of those people who really need to get through, and having officers going out to incidents that maybe did not need as urgent a response.

This \$46.65 million investment in the Policelink centre, which is a joint contact centre facility with Smart Service Queensland, will provide that alternative means for people to get the issue they are concerned about dealt with. It may be something like the wheelie bin has been stolen, which does not

require a 000 response but is important to that individual and concerning particularly to older people if something is taken from them. It provides another opportunity for them to report and have that dealt with.

Some of the important features of the joint contact centre are that it has been designed and constructed to achieve a six-star green rating, which is a world-class environmental rating. In terms of environmental design—energy efficiency, lighting efficiency et cetera—that building is really up there with the best in the world and everyone who has been involved in the design of it can be proud.

The centre will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As I have indicated, it will enable us to introduce the national non-urgent police number, 131444, which is a number that has been used in other states. Queensland will now join with the other states in having that non-urgent number available.

In terms of the status, it has been delivered on schedule and within budget. The service has been progressively introducing services. As at July this year Policelink was receiving the following contacts: all police reporting functions previously undertaken by the Police Assistance Centre, Crime Stoppers phone calls and headquarters switch calls.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, last year we debated the Criminal Organisation Bill. The LNP opposed that bill which would bring Queensland's criminal organisation legislation into line with other states. On page 137 of the SDS it is noted that Task Force Hydra had achieved significant results during the year. Can you please provide the committee with an update on the Criminal Organisation Act and the activities of Task Force Hydra?

Mr ROBERTS: The member has highlighted the fact that there are a couple of specialist task forces that have been created within the Queensland Police Service. We have mentioned Task Force Argos and the significant work that it does. Task Force Hydra has been specifically established within the State Crime Operations Command Organised Crime Group to target the criminal activities of outlaw motorcycle gangs. The member is aware, obviously, that the government passed legislation. It was disappointing that it was opposed by the opposition. This is legislation which is not a silver bullet, because police have significant powers now under existing legislation, but really just provides another tool in the tool kit to deal with serious organised crime. It is not focused exclusively on outlaw motorcycle gangs. Basically any criminal organisation can be targeted by this legislation.

Task Force Hydra is a unit that focuses exclusively on outlaw motorcycle gangs. It has had some significant achievements in recent years. It has a current staffing of 22 police officers on a permanent basis, four additional seconded police officers and six staff members. Since February 2007—it was established in September 2006, so soon after its establishment—to 1 May 2010 the task force had been responsible for the arrest of 640 people on 1,725 charges relating to varying offences including attempted murder, arson, extortion, robbery with violence and drug trafficking. So, again, through very good policing—great work by these people—they have targeted very serious criminal activity amongst outlaw motorcycle gangs. It has been responsible for the location and seizure of large caches of firearms, drugs and property and cash identified as the proceeds of criminal activities.

Additionally, it has a traffic arm to it. From 1 January 2009 to 1 May 2010 the traffic branch of Task Force Hydra was responsible for issuing 190 traffic offence notices to OMCG members: 107 OMCG members were charged with unlicensed/disqualified driving offences, drink/drug driving, hooning and associated traffic offences.

Task Force Hydra leads and participates in a number of joint operations with the Crime and Misconduct Commission and also the Australian Crime Commission, the Australian Federal Police and also other state jurisdictions. There have been two successful joint investigations conducted by the task force during the previous 12 months. One of those operations, code named Foxtrot Creed, targeted the distribution of drugs in the Gold Coast area by members of the Finks OMCG. The operation resulted in 63 offenders on 249 charges.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, our police officers routinely deal with challenging and often risky situations. Page 1-134 of the SDS refers to recognising and promoting the importance of minimising harm to officers. Can you please outline for the committee what tools and strategies the service has at its disposal to ensure the safety of our police officers?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. It is again an opportunity to recognise the difficult environment in which police operate. One of the awful statistics is that every year about a quarter of police officers or more are assaulted. It is just an unacceptable level of workplace assault, but it is something that officers regularly experience and that the service takes very seriously. It puts in place, as much as it can, proactive and reactive measures to address that.

One of the key areas, of course, is in training. Recruit training focuses on risk management and workplace health and safety. That is delivered throughout all training modules. A continuous risk assessment is reinforced in that training to provide recruits with the ability to assess potential risks in a variety of scenario based role plays. For example, recruit training incorporates coverage of the QPS safe driving policy and also issues such as interception and urgent duty driving. First-year constable training incorporates operational skills and tactics sessions in addition to district training requirements.

Components of compulsory workplace activities require practise of officer safety before competency is achieved. Incident command training covering chemical emergencies and avoiding workplace injuries is also provided. Inservice and preservice training includes safe and effective use of all accoutrements issued to police officers, instructions in self-defence, arrest and control techniques, tactical communication, which is a really important part of de-escalating a particular situation, negotiation skills, and threat or risk assessments. Specific theoretical and practical skill sessions are devoted to officer training strategies as well.

Approximately 9,500 sworn officers undertake skills training twice a year. An additional day is being added to the service-wide rollout of the X26 Taser conducted energy weapon. The service also provides a range of support services to officers to help them cope with difficult circumstances. This year QPS has 120 workplace health and safety representatives, additionally 60 workplace health and safety officers. There is the Positive Workplaces program, which is an organisational improvement program aimed at enhancing the organisational climate of workplaces throughout the QPS.

All Queensland Police Service personnel have access to a number of free and voluntary services: the HealthStart program, which is trying to assess and detect health issues; an early intervention treatment program; the blood and body fluid 1800 hotline, which obviously provides emotional support to officers in those circumstances; rehabilitation services; external healthcare treatment; access to mental health professionals; and access to chaplaincy services.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, pages 1-141 and 1-142 of the Service Delivery Statements provide clear-up numbers for personal safety and property claims. I am aware that the Queensland Police Service has increasingly used DNA to solve crimes. Can you please advise of any significant cold cases which have recently been resolved through the use of this new technology?

Mr ROBERTS: DNA technology is providing significant advances in policing and enabling many cases in which the evidence simply was not available or not able to be detected many years ago to now result in, in some cases, the prosecution of offenders. As I have indicated, the use of DNA has seen an increase in the number of offenders identified and the number of crimes solved. It is an important scientific tool which can give an investigating officer a lead to follow, even in instances where there are no suspects. Crimes, some more than 10 years old, are now being solved using DNA technology. In effect, it means that many criminals who thought they were safe can now be detected if DNA samples have been left, and some of those last for many, many years.

With advances in technology and the use of the National Criminal Investigation DNA Database there have been a number of cold cases reopened for further investigation through what is referred to as cold links. They are those links where a DNA sample from a crime scene has been matched to a person who has not previously been nominated as a suspect in the case. There have been a total of 10,786 cold links made since December 2003, with 538 of those being made in the first quarter of this year.

The matters to which I will now refer have all been finalised before the courts and therefore will not be jeopardised by disclosure. In each case DNA provided police with an avenue of investigation that was not available prior to the cold link being made. For example, in 2002 an on-site resident at a Deception Bay car yard disturbed two people attempting to break into vehicles. One of the offenders successfully broke into a vehicle and caused damage to two others. When confronted, the offender produced a knife and assaulted the resident. It was later discovered that the offender had cut himself while attempting to break into the vehicle and that blood later enabled the offender to be identified by means of DNA. He was arrested in 2009—bear in mind that the offence took place in 2002—and subsequently was brought before the courts.

In 2003 there was a break and enter of a cafe in Emerald. It was a similar situation. An offender smashed a window with a rock and cash was stolen. However, the offender left a piece of skin on broken glass which resulted in his DNA profile being available to police. In 2009—six years later—that profile was linked to the offender, leading to his arrest. The simple message is that DNA now is detecting and bringing before the courts criminals who previously were unable to be identified because the evidence was not as visible.

CHAIR: Minister, the many traffic safety initiatives highlighted on page 1-136 of the SDS show how serious the government is about reducing the incidence of road trauma in Queensland. Could you please outline for us how the roadside drug-testing program is enhancing safety on our roads?

Mr ROBERTS: Obviously drug and/or alcohol affected drivers are absolutely unacceptable on our roads with the impairment to their driving skills and the threat to other people. At the conclusion of the 2006 Road Safety Summit the then Premier announced a range of initiatives, one of which was random roadside drug testing, and the Police Service began implementation of that drug-driving enforcement on 1 December 2007. The Roadside Drug Testing Unit conducts random roadside tests throughout the state for cannabis, methamphetamine and ecstasy by requiring a saliva sample.

Since December 2007 and up until 15 June this year the unit had conducted 33,762 roadside saliva tests resulting in 667 drivers testing positive for a relevant drug, with a detection rate of approximately two per cent. So, on average, one in every 50 people tested received a positive result.

The unit detected the 600th positive drug driver on 3 April 2010, during the state's Easter road safety campaign. Of the 667 drivers detected as positive upon saliva analysis, 582 were male and 85 were female.

The process of sample taking employed is that motorists provide an initial breath sample to test for drink driving. A preliminary saliva based drug test is then taken. That takes about five minutes to test. If the person receives a positive result from the initial screening test they are then taken to a nearby special-purpose vehicle for a second saliva test. If the person cannot supply that, a blood sample is obtained. If the second saliva test proves positive, the remainder of the saliva sample is sent to be confirmed by laboratory analysis by Queensland Health.

CHAIR: The time for government questions has expired.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to the Service Delivery Statements page 1-143 and good order offences. Since 2007-08 the number of good order offences detected has increased by over 5,700 offences—in just three years. Why, under your government, are indecent behaviour, obscene language, disorderly behaviour, obstruct police, fare evasion and other offences against good order on the increase?

Mr ROBERTS: There are probably a couple of reasons for that. One is that there will obviously be an increase in the actual number because the population is increasing. These are offences which are detected, in the main, by proactive policing. If you keep police locked in the police station, you will not get many offences detected in terms of these good order offences. If you have police out on the beat proactively enforcing the law, you will get a lot more offences. It is not a valid criticism, which seems to be what the member is saying, that because there has been an increase in good order offences that means that we have suddenly had an upsurge in violence on our streets. In many instances these increases are the direct result of police out there on the beat, enforcing the law.

The member would be aware that we have recently completed a 12-month trial of the issuing of infringement notices for some of these public nuisance/good order offences. The government has now taken a decision to expand that state-wide. While I am acknowledging that some of these numbers are increasing, as I have said, a lot of these increases can directly be attributed to proactive policing. In some respects that is a good thing. It is a bad thing that people think it is okay to behave in this way. None of us sitting around this room think it is acceptable for people to go out there, drink too much and cause mayhem and discomfort to people who just simply want to have a nice night out. That is why the Police Service takes this issue seriously. That is why police proactively pursue these laws and that is why you will see in particular locations or from year to year increases or differences in the rate of growth of some of these offences.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to SDS page 1-136 and information and communication technology initiatives. The 2008-09 Queensland police annual report stated that the Intelligent Traffic Analysis System, I-TAS, will be fully implemented by March 2010. This year's budget papers now show that you anticipate this system will become operational during the 2010-11 financial year. Why is another Bligh Labor government IT project late and why have you failed to meet the March 2010 full implementation date?

Mr ROBERTS: The commissioner might have a bit more detail on that. Again, I say to the member with respect to the capital works program, whether it be the rollout of new facilities or technology, I have a great deal of pride in the energy, the diligence and the professionalism of the people driving these projects. There are, of course, obstacles which arise from time to time, whether it be the weather—and obviously that is not going to affect some of these technology projects—but a whole range of matters will impact on the delivery and the time for delivery. It could be a change in the scope of works et cetera. I might allow the commissioner to provide more detail on that project.

Commissioner Atkinson: Thank you for the question. There has been a delay. We obviously would like to have had it in place earlier. What we do want to ensure is that the system we put into place is an effective one. In relation to this issue there is a range of other issues as well. For example, one area I would like to see us improve on is the timely information about injury accidents. On a 24-hour basis every day we know how many people have been killed on Queensland roads, but we do not have the information about serious hospital admission injuries as quickly as I would like. That links back to the health department. Other issues relate to the transport department. So this has proven to be more complex than we thought it would be, which is not unusual with information technology systems. The delay is not through any lack of will or desire to introduce this. In fact, this whole concept of having our traffic policing linked to an intelligence base so that rather than just having people out there on patrol without any underpinning theory and substance to that—clearly this is the direction we want to head in.

We are doing this. Our traffic work is based on intelligence activity. If I could cite one example of that, we have given our regional commanders liberty to actually, in some cases, reduce the number of random breath tests they do and increase the number of targeted tests. What we are thinking is that that perhaps works as well. We need to be flexible and have a very open mind with all of these things. I think we are on the right track and I think that the results so far this year indicate that. Clearly, the number of fatals is down. If it was 12 midnight on 31 December now and we had 71 less fatalities, as we do today, it would actually be the lowest road toll in the history of Queensland since 1952 when the statistics were

first taken, which would be a remarkable result. Traditionally, the second half of the year—and I do not know why; research cannot tell us—is almost always worse than the first half of the year. We will have the system in place as soon as we practically can.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to SDS page 1-138 and professional standards and ethical practice. How many investigations currently underway have taken longer than six months since the receipt of the complaint to finalise? How many officers have been stood down, suspended or face disciplinary action for a period of three months or more pending the results of investigations by either the CMC or the QPS?

Mr ROBERTS: Obviously I do not have those figures at hand. If I get them I will provide them to you.

Mr JOHNSON: I would be happy with that.

Mr ROBERTS: I might have some figures here. Obviously, it is in everyone's interest to revolve these matters as quickly as possible for two reasons. One, a person making a genuine complaint about a police officer or the Police Service deserves to have that matter heard and resolved in a timely way. Equally, officers about whom complaints have been made deserve natural justice and deserve to have all the evidence before the decision maker to ensure that justice is served both for the complainant and for the officer. Certainly, the longer matters take to resolve, the more it impacts on an officer's career. Some people are obviously restrained or are unable to progress their careers because they have a cloud over their head with some of these accusations. There is no argument from me, but we need to ensure the process is streamlined as much as possible.

I have absolute confidence in the Ethical Standards Command. These are people of the highest integrity who conduct and operate in a very difficult environment. They have a very important job to do. As the member would be aware, the government recently tasked the Crime and Misconduct Commission to do a thorough review of the disciplinary process. Obviously, one of the key outcomes of that is hopefully recommendations which lead to a streamlining of the disciplinary process. The CMC is currently finalising that report and, ultimately, government will make decisions on it and release the findings.

I am happy to look at that issue, if you do not mind, and will get back to the member. I have not got the figures with me as to how many are six months or 12 months, but we will try to get that information.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Minister. I refer the minister to SDS page 1-154 and increases in the weapon licensing fees. What is the justification for the increase of weapon licences and renewal fees of up to 124 per cent? When will the Bligh Labor government lift the veil of secrecy they have placed over their review of the Weapons Act 1990?

Mr ROBERTS: Firstly, there is no secrecy. The Weapons Act has been under review for some time, as you know. In the not-too-distant future the results of that will be made available. There have been some increases to fees. I would say that the majority of those fees have been in line with CPI. However, there were three fees where the increases were above CPI. There is no secrecy about that.

Mr JOHNSON: Not 124 per cent.

Mr ROBERTS: To put it into perspective, when the weapons licensing laws changed dramatically nationally around 1996, the Queensland Police Service basically absorbed the additional costs—a significant extra burden—of monitoring and oversighting of that licensing regime. The fees in Queensland have, in fact, only increased by around CPI, to my knowledge, since that time and have been kept artificially low.

A decision was made recently. As the member is aware, a number of fees have been increased by CPI. Three fees in particular have increased above CPI, and I will detail those for the member. Permits to acquire are proposed in Queensland to be \$30. That permit is currently \$22 and it is proposed to go to \$30. That compares to \$30 in New South Wales, \$28 in Western Australia. South Australia is a lot less; it is \$17. The Queensland permit to acquire fee of \$30 is now comparable to New South Wales, which in effect is probably our most comparable state in terms of the nature of weapons usage. New licences for five years are now \$210.75. That compares to South Australia, \$280; Western Australia, \$175; New South Wales, \$200. So these are not the highest in the nation, but they more accurately reflect the costs of managing the system. Licence renewals for five years are now \$131 in Queensland; South Australia, \$280; New South Wales, \$200; Victoria, \$206. So you can see from those figures that there are swings and roundabouts on all of these issues. The proposed Queensland licence fees are very comparable with other states. I make the point that the licence fees have been kept artificially low for some time.

Mr JOHNSON: Madam Chair, how much longer do we have?

CHAIR: Four minutes.

Mr JOHNSON: Four?

CHAIR: No, we have adjusted it.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer to SDS page 1-135 and the ICT initiatives. The Queensland Health payroll disaster demonstrates that the Bligh Labor government is incapable of delivering mission-critical IT projects on time, on budget and that are functional. Why are you again gambling with critical operations by allocating up to \$50 million for a new weapons licensing system rather than following the lead of the New South Wales government and utilising an already proven and working licensing system that operates in the department of transport?

Mr ROBERTS: The Police Service has been through a very rigorous process to determine the best weapons licensing system for Queensland and a decision has been made to implement a new system here, which will deliver significant benefits both to the Police Service and also to licence holders. That new system will enable licence holders to conduct many, many transactions over the internet rather than having to turn up at police counters. Obviously, when a person applies for a licence, there still will be a requirement for an individual to personally present to verify their particulars. But there are many transactions—in fact, tens of thousands of transactions—which currently require a person to appear at a police counter to fill out a form, pay a fee et cetera which could quite easily be done through the use of technology.

As I said, the weapons licensing system that the Queensland Police Service will introduce will be a significant enhancement to the current arrangements in terms of its oversight of weapons licensing and use throughout Queensland. It will have direct linkage into QPRIME whereas currently lots of manual searches need to be done. As soon as a person is flagged on QPRIME for a particular offence, that will automatically feed into the new licensing system.

I do not accept the basis of the member's question that the Police Service has made a bad decision here. I think this is a good decision. I think this is going to be a good system. It will deliver a lot of benefits to licence holders and, indeed, release many police hours spent in conducting those face-to-face transactions over the counter.

Again, the commissioner points out to me that in Queensland we have to go through a proper evaluation and tendering process. You cannot just ring up someone in New South Wales and say, 'We'll buy your system.' The Queensland Police Service would have evaluated a range of weapons licensing systems that were available and have made a decision on the current system. As I have indicated, it will deliver significant benefits to licence holders and also the Queensland Police Service.

CHAIR: Member for Gregory, there are 25 seconds left.

Mr JOHNSON: I think we are wasting our time with 20 seconds.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. I call the member for Waterford.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, page 1-135 of the Service Delivery Statements states that Police Service strength will reach 10,600 by March 2012. How will these increases improve safety and security and support the Queensland government's Toward Q2 ambition of a fair Queensland, supporting safe and caring communities? Will this meet the government's commitment to keep the police to population ratio at or above the national average? Can you provide an update on the civilianisation strategy as part of that?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. If I may just add a little bit to the issue about weapons licensing. The member for Gregory seems to suggest that there is some element of secrecy to the proposed weapons bill. Cabinet has recently made a decision for me to release an exposure draft of this bill, and I will be doing that in the not too distant future. The opposition, stakeholders and members of the community have an interest in the new re-formatted weapons bill. We will have that opportunity prior to it being introduced into the parliament. There is no secrecy here. There has been an extended period of time and consultation with all the key stakeholders. There has been a lot of discussion in the development of this bill, and very shortly it will be made available for additional public scrutiny prior to being introduced into the parliament. That decision has been made by the cabinet.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr ROBERTS: In relation to police strength, obviously the government has made a commitment to ensuring Queensland remains a safe place to live and work and do business. A key indicator that our policies are working, as I indicated earlier, is the level of crime rate reduction that has occurred over a period of time. In 2008-09 the overall crime rate fell by three per cent. That is the eighth straight year in a row that the crime rates have fallen. To support the efforts of our police, we remain committed to increasing police numbers across the state. The commitment that the government has given is to maintain the police to population ratio at or better than the national average.

By way of comparison, when Mr Johnson sat around the cabinet table in June 1998, the police to population ratio was one police officer for every 507 people in Queensland. Based on the June 2009 population figures, it is one for every 427 people. So that is a significant improvement. As a result of the commitments of the government with the increase in police in this budget and in previous budgets, the

population ratio at 30 June 2010 is estimated to still be around one for every 430 people, which is a significant improvement not just in real numbers but in the actual number of police officers out there serving the population base than occurred under the previous National Party government.

As I have indicated, we have committed to providing 600 new officers over this term. It means more specialist traffic officers. As I have indicated, there are 578 specialist traffic officer positions that are now funded by the government. Those other officers will be allocated to regions and to units as determined by the Police Commissioner and his senior staff.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Page 1-134 of the SDS lists the strategic priorities of the Queensland Police Service for 2010-11 including improving public safety by reducing alcohol and/or drug fuelled violence and disorder. Minister, can you please advise how the service is combating this issue of broader community concern?

Mr ROBERTS: Yes, thank you. Issues related to alcohol fuelled violence and disorder are of great concern to many people. The government and the Police Service take the issue very seriously and have been devoting considerable resources to dealing with this issue. I referred earlier to a decision of the government to roll out state-wide the ability of police to issue infringement notices for a number of public nuisance offences. That trial over 12 months demonstrated that it provided police with an additional tool to maintain order in some of these precincts. What it effectively means is that police are not tied up taking people to watch-houses. In the main, most people who in the past were issued with these offences do not appear before the court and plead guilty, in effect, by their non-appearance or do plead guilty. The ability of police to issue infringement notices will free up police resources to enable peace and order to be kept in many of these precincts.

In 2009 the government established a parliamentary inquiry into alcohol related violence. That committee has now reported and of course the government response will be provided shortly. One of the additional initiatives which has been put in place is the crackdown on the use of glass in high-risk problem venues across the state—an issue of great concern in any of these offences. Amendments were introduced to the Liquor Act 1992, which meant premises classified as high risk by the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation can be prohibited from serving liquid in a glass container and the risk level which triggers that particular constraint is based on incidents of offences involving glass or other instances of unacceptable violence in those venues. Even though the overall rate of glassing incidents has been low, obviously the consequences, and indeed often media coverage of these events, are quite traumatic. So understandably the community is expecting a tough response, and the government's restrictions on those venues where high-risk violence occurs is, I think, something which the community supports.

As a part of its ongoing operations, the Police Service initiates both targeted liquor related enforcement and early intervention strategies aimed at minimising harm and the potential for a situation to escalate due to alcohol fuelled violence and antisocial behaviour. For example, an operation called Operation Gradient in the Brisbane CBD is a coordinated response to issues surrounding juvenile itinerancy and the use of public space. The strategy is designed to address issues surrounding at-risk juvenile individuals' high-risk behaviours and offending that correlate with increases in crime and substance abuse.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, two strategic priorities for police that are noted on page 1-134 of the SDS relate to drugs. Could you please give an overview of progress in addressing drug misuse in Queensland and particularly of any recent major drug busts?

Mr ROBERTS: Yes, thank you. Police obviously are targeting the production, supply and use of drugs in Queensland with specific operations. Strategies involve everything from investigation to diversion and education out in the community. There are currently 74 specialist police officer positions focused on investigating drug matters across the state. The fight against drugs is taken seriously also by all operational police in the course of their duties. So it is a combined action. You have the specialist units or officers but general duties police obviously are a major part of the fight against illicit drug use in the community.

Police efforts to catch criminals are balanced with innovative responses that target causal factors like drug addiction. On the enforcement front, outlaw motorcycle gangs have been identified as a key target for police in terms of drug distribution. OMCGs are suspected of being heavily involved in the production and supply of illegal drugs including cocaine. I referred earlier to the new Criminal Organisation Act, opposed by the opposition, as an additional tool which will help police crack down on OMCG gangs and their illegal activities. Again, I stress that the police do have a wide range of existing powers and existing legislation to fight crime by OMCGs. The Criminal Organisation Act is simply just another tool in the tool kit. I stress that it is not a silver bullet: it is not going to deliver results overnight. It takes a lot of evidence. You have to convince the Supreme Court of the criminality of a particular association before additional control orders can be issued. That is going to take time and it is going to take a lot of effort and work by police to achieve that. Backed up by tough legislation, in addition to the Criminal Organisation Act, we have the telecommunications interception powers, which I referred to earlier. Those two important initiatives in my view, and I believe in the government's view, will have a significant impact particularly in the area of drug distribution throughout Queensland.

Drug dogs are a proven and effective way of detecting amphetamines, cocaine, heroin and other powder drugs. With drug dogs, police can better target public places, licensed premises, sporting and entertainment venues, and train stations. The Dog Squad has 10 operational drug detection handler dog teams. For the period 1 July 2009 to 30 April 2010, the drug dog teams have attended 164 deployments, and dangerous drugs or associated paraphernalia have been located in 163 instances. I think, again, these are intelligence based operations which, on those figures, are delivering results.

CHAIR: Minister, on page 1-134 of the SDS it states that one of the service's strategic objectives is to strengthen Queensland's capacity to plan for, respond to and recover from disasters and major events. Undoubtedly the service's Air Wing plays a key role in meeting these challenges. I know you have spoken a little bit about this earlier this morning, but could you please outline the current Air Wing capabilities and its future priorities?

Mr ROBERTS: Yes, I can. Again, as I indicated earlier, the major priority in terms of air services for the Queensland Police Service is an expansion of its existing fixed-wing capability. The government provided funding for additional fixed-wing capability in the Torres Strait. That aircraft in that region has significantly enhanced the ability of police to service that region. The service has a fleet of six aircraft in bases in Brisbane, Mount Isa, Cairns and, as I have indicated, the new base at Horn Island in the Torres Strait. In terms of the Torres Strait aircraft, the service took possession of a new aircraft in the United Kingdom some weeks ago. That will be located at the new base on Horn Island. Just to clarify, the provider did provide an interim, on-loan aircraft pending the construction or fit-out of the new aircraft, which is now, as I understand it, in Australia going through the necessary CASA accreditation.

The police Air Wing has the following roles: obviously the rapid deployment of specialist police—for example, our SERT team or our Public Safety Response Team; scheduled flights for police personnel; carriage of prisoners; support for the Government Air Wing in cases such as organ retrieval; executive transport—the commissioner, the senior executive and the minister; assisting with disaster relief and/or emergency community support operations as required; and also support to police operations for extraditions to other states.

For the period 1 July 2009 to 1 May 2010, the Air Wing operated 1,855 flight hours, made 1,741 landings, travelled 669,892 kilometres and carried 19,530 kilograms of freight. Again, this is a resource which does not sit in a hangar. It is out there basically every day providing policing services and other support services to the people of Queensland or particularly to the Police Service in Queensland. The Air Wing transported 9,652 passengers of whom 1,991 were in custody.

The requirement for enhanced service—for example, opening up new scheduled routes in support of police operations—is constantly under review. I have talked earlier this morning about constant calls for a police helicopter. As I have indicated, police in Queensland currently do have access to police helicopters, as required, for law enforcement. Police use of the EMQ helicopters and, indeed, community helicopters predominantly for search and rescue type activities and for a smaller proportion of time for direct law enforcement activities.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, I refer to page 101 of Budget Paper No. 3 and the line item which provides for a \$50.2 million investment in information and communication technology projects. It appears to me that the nature of policing appears to be becoming more and more reliant on state-of-the-art communication solutions. Would you agree that this is the case? Can you outline what this funding will practically deliver for Queensland?

CHAIR: Minister, you have just under two minutes.

Mr ROBERTS: Yes, it is the case. Technology, as we have indicated, is something which all services and government agencies need to be constantly reviewing. As part of the commitment to doing that, the government is providing \$50.2 million in 2010-11 for a range of information and communication technology initiatives. We have touched this morning on the implementation of a replacement weapons licensing system. Again, there has been a thorough evaluation and tendering process for that. The new weapons licensing system will allow the Queensland Police Service to provide a greatly improved management, licensing and registration service to the licensees of Queensland. It will significantly improve customer service through the introduction of online transactions, such as payments and applications. Again, I stress that people—such as a new applicant—will still need to personally present to a police officer to verify their identity. Progressing the QPS computer-aided dispatch system—

CHAIR: Minister, the time has expired for government questions. We are going to take a short break and resume at 10.45. Before we go, I understand that there will be a change of witnesses for the next session, so I thank Commissioner Atkinson and the other witnesses for their attendance this morning.

Proceedings suspended from 10.31 am to 10.47 am

CHAIR: I call the member for Gregory.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to page 1-119 of the SDS and the Queensland Parole Board. In January 2008, Garry Mills was sentenced to 10 years in jail in the Queensland Supreme Court in Brisbane after pleading guilty to the manslaughter of his wife. However, it was reported on 6 July this year that he was released by the Queensland Parole Board after serving only five years imprisonment,

three years of which were presentence custody and two years of which were jail time. Will the minister explain how this release was lawful when under the serious violent offenders provision of both the Penalties and Sentences Act and the Corrective Services Act a 10-year prison sentence for manslaughter would automatically make Mills a serious violent offender whether or not the order was stated in court and this would require him to serve at least eight years before being eligible for parole?

Mr ROBERTS: I do not have the detail of that particular case as to whether that offender was classified as a dangerous offender. Obviously, I will need to get that detail.

The response to the member's question is this. The government appoints an independent Parole Board to make decisions on behalf of the community about when it is appropriate to release offenders from jail into the community. It is not a matter for a minister, a member of parliament or indeed the government to determine when offenders should be released into the community. I have absolute faith and confidence in the chair and indeed the members of the various parole boards in Queensland. They do a difficult job. They rely upon clear advice from prison authorities, experts, psychologists and other people who assess the risk of individuals being released into the community.

I am speaking generally here. I will need to get some more detail on this particular case. Again, the parole boards in Queensland are very professional and dedicated people. They make those judgements with public safety being the paramount concern. When a person reaches whatever point in their sentence that they become eligible for parole, it is a matter for an independent board to determine whether to release them; it is not for a member of parliament, a minister or indeed a government. I will try to get some specific detail on that particular case before the end of the hearing.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to page 34 of the Capital Statement and Queensland Corrective Services's capital upgrade of the Integrated Offender Management System. In 2009-10, the total estimated cost of the Integrated Offender Management System's capital upgrade was \$1.2 million. In 2010-11, the total estimated cost for this capital upgrade has blown out to \$14.6 million. Why has there been a cost blowout of \$13.38 million in just 12 months on this project?

Mr ROBERTS: I will need to get some specific information on that particular project and get back to you.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Minister. I refer the minister to page 1-119 of the SDS and the probation and parole services. Barely a week ago, a registered sex offender attempted to grab a 12-year-old boy at a park at Camira south-west of Brisbane. Was this offender's electronic monitoring active at the time of the alleged offence? Why was this attempt not detected? Isn't this proof that GPS tracking of dangerous sex offenders is more effective than the antiquated system that you persist with?

Mr ROBERTS: Firstly, obviously any offence of this nature is of extreme concern. As I indicated to you earlier today, the Labor government has put in place very strict and strong legislation to deal with sex offenders. When you sat around the cabinet table when the National Party government was last in power, these sex offenders of all types—whatever type of offence they committed—walked free into the community with no supervision and no monitoring, lived where they liked, worked where they liked and joined children's clubs. They could do all of those things. Under your government, sex offenders walked free with absolutely no controls over them at all. It has been a Labor government which has put in place very tough legislation to monitor and supervise sex offenders. Indeed, we put in place legislation which enables those assessed by courts to be the most serious and dangerous offenders to be kept in jail, and there are a number of people in that category.

You referred to electronic monitoring and GPS systems. The advice I have is that the offender in this instance was subject to electronic monitoring and was wearing the anklet at the time. However, the offender at that particular time was not in breach of his curfew. As you would be aware, the way that the bracelets work is that Corrective Services officers determine an appropriate curfew for that individual. That is changed according to circumstances and it monitors when they are in proximity to their home when they are required to be home. The advice I have is that he was not in breach of the curfew at the time of that alleged offence.

In relation to GPS monitoring, it is not a silver bullet. Obviously, the government and Queensland Corrective Services continue to review GPS monitoring as a possibility for the future. I want to say this: we are not opposed to monitoring but it is not a silver bullet. New South Wales currently implements GPS monitoring, as I understand it, in fewer than 20 offenders. We have 3,500 people on our sex offender register. On our dangerous sex offender list, we have around 60 supervised people in the community. Without having the figures, I would guess that New South Wales would have similar numbers, maybe more. New South Wales is the only state in the country which currently uses GPS monitoring. My understanding is that around 15 to 20 people are currently monitored by that particular means.

I have been down there to look at it and Queensland Corrective Services has been there. The point was made to me that you may well know where they are—and this is a very small number of the total number of offenders—but you do not know what they are doing. A specific example was given to me where the only way the offence was actually determined was by surveillance, not by the use of the GPS monitoring device.

CHAIR: Minister, your time has expired.

Mr JOHNSON: I refer the minister to page 1-121 of the SDS and custodial operations staffing. Trainee prison officer Graham Cresswell collapsed and died midway through a gruelling physical test at Queensland Corrective Services's Wacol training facility on 8 June. It is reported that there was no defibrillator and no oxygen tank available during the test and that Graham had sought the instructor's assistance at the start of the 10-week training program but this message was never returned. What has been done to address these failings of the minister's duty of care to trainees during these situations?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. Firstly, this is a tragic loss, and obviously my condolences and that of the Queensland Corrective Services and all members and people present here are given to the family of Graham Cresswell. This obviously was an event which has caused great sadness and trauma for the family and it has also impacted on his colleagues who were with him at the time.

The tragedy happened on Tuesday, 8 June. As you have indicated, the trainee collapsed and died during a training exercise at the Corrective Services Academy at Wacol. He was in the fifth week of his training program. At the time of his death, he was undertaking an activity which is referred to as a response to medical emergencies as part of the custodial officer entry level training program. It involves requiring officers to undertake a distance run including stair ascents, mobility drills and a dummy drag within a time period of four minutes 45 seconds. Staff present at the time immediately endeavoured to assist Mr Cresswell and performed CPR to be relieved by QAS officers.

It is to be noted of the staff present that, whilst the activity was being carried out, five staff had current senior first aid qualifications and four of those had current advanced CPR qualifications. Two of the staff also held fitness qualifications. A basic first aid kit that was fully equipped at the time was available. Before undertaking the course, Mr Cresswell was required to undertake a medical examination and the advice that I have received is that no medical condition was detected during that examination. At the start of the course, all applicants are required to sign documents outlining further the course activities and to indicate whether there are any medical issues or concerns. On the day of the activity, all trainees were asked prior to undertaking the activity whether they had any medical issues or concerns and no issues were identified.

As a result of the incident, a number of processes are currently occurring. There is a full investigation by Workplace Health and Safety Queensland and an investigation by Queensland Corrective Services's Workplace Health and Safety Unit, and the activity has been reviewed by an external agency. The review by the external agency has been supportive of the activity, though it did recommend extending the completion time from four minutes 45 seconds to five minutes.

Mr JOHNSON: Thank you, Minister. Madam Chair, I have no more questions. My colleague the opposition spokesman for Emergency Services will complete the remainder of this bracket.

CHAIR: Thank you. For the record, I will just let the minister and Hansard know that the committee has resolved to give the member for Mirani leave to ask questions of the minister.

Mr MALONE: Good morning, Minister, and staff. It is good to be here on this bright, cool morning. I refer to Fire and Rescue Service staffing figures on page 1-121 of the SDS. The projected population growth in Budget Paper No. 2 for 2010-11 is 2.25 per cent, yet you are planning to increase staffing levels by just 24, or 0.8 per cent. Minister, there has been a decline in the Fire and Rescue Service staff to population ratio every year since 2005-06. As you clearly do not use population growth for your staff planning, can you explain the method that you use?

Mr ROBERTS: It is an interesting approach. We look at demand driven services where people are the primary focus of the demand. Certainly the police to population and the ambulance officer to population ratios are a more significant factor. The emergency services workers or professionals in those instances are responding to people. Therefore, as the population grows you need more police to respond to the activities of people. As the population grows you need more ambulance officers to respond to the activities of people such as their injuries and so on.

You cannot say that you should apply the same principle to buildings—obviously people are in buildings. Fire officers respond not just to road accidents but to incidents involving buildings. Therefore, the determination as to what is an appropriate staffing mix is based on an entirely different set of criteria to that upon which you would base your demand needs for police or ambulance officers. I think the premise of the member's question is fundamentally flawed.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service undertakes continued reviews and continued analysis of the demand requirements for fire and rescue stations in its area of responsibility. Technology, training and a whole range of other factors such as the placement of stations et cetera dictates what resources are required. The population is actually not the key driver. It is certainly an important factor, but it is not the key driver when it comes to the need for fire and rescue resources. It is having the appropriate resources placed in the appropriate places so that the responses can be delivered.

If the member cares to look at the response times for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, he would see that the key determinant is how quickly urban crews in particular respond to structural fires. The benchmark set is to achieve 90 per cent within 14 minutes. The member will see from the Service Delivery Statements that the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service is actually delivering improvements on that.

Therefore, my answer to the member is basically that the premise of his question is fundamentally flawed. It is simply not a valid factor to place the greatest emphasis on. It is certainly an issue of importance, but it is not the greatest determinant of the number of fire officers required. Just as an indication, 90 per cent of incidents are responded to within 12.4 minutes. The benchmark is 14 minutes. I point out that in this budget the government is funding additional fire and rescue officers. We are expanding through our capital works program the number of fire stations and those extra officers are to service those stations.

Mr MALONE: I refer to expenditure on information systems at page 34 of the Capital Statement. As I understand it, the new ESCAD system was rolled out in the Brisbane region before it was rolled out in the south-east region. The old and the new systems had inconsistencies in their geographical boundaries meaning that there was a risk that a call for assistance might go unanswered by both regions. Were you warned of these risks? Were you aware of any instances where calls were not responded to or responses were delayed because of inconsistencies in the system?

Mr ROBERTS: Could you run that past me again?

Mr MALONE: The main part of it is this. When the ESCAD system was rolled out it was rolled out in the Brisbane region before it was rolled out in the south-east region. Therefore, there were geographical boundaries overlapping that created inconsistencies in the call-outs. Were you aware of any inconsistencies or were you warned of any inconsistencies in that rollout?

Mr ROBERTS: To be quite honest with you, I am not sure precisely what you are getting at. If you want to provide some specific examples or details I am happy to try to get the information. The commissioner may wish to add something to that.

The ESCAD system provides a common platform for responding to Queensland Fire and Rescue Service demand and also ambulance demand right across Queensland. Our communication centres are strategically placed—obviously based on geographical locations. The ESCAD system itself is a common platform which provides for that response.

I might let the director-general respond. If you have a specific allegation or a specific instance where there is a problem, I am happy to have that looked at. At this stage, you are making a general claim here. I will let the director-general provide some more information on that issue.

Mr MALONE: I believe the accusation I am making is correct. I can probably go back to my records and find those, but I have not got them with me currently.

Mr ROBERTS: If you have got them then put them on the table and we will have a look at them.

Mr MALONE: I have got them but I do not have them with me.

Mr McGowan: It is true that the ESCAD system was rolled out across the region at different times and that there was an issue with the different timing between Brisbane and the south-east region, which is the Logan-Gold Coast region. At that time we operated both systems. We had people running both systems in those marginal areas—the Gold Coast-Brisbane region.

Mr MALONE: That is fine. I understand that. Following that question up, are there plans for your department to embark on a project that would enable ESCAD to track addresses in retirement villages and/or residential and gated estates? If there are, when are you going to fund that project?

CHAIR: Minister you have two minutes.

Mr ROBERTS: I will ask the commissioner to respond to that.

Mr Johnson: Just to clarify the question. Are you talking about road networks within private estate?

Mr MALONE: Within gated estates or residential estates.

Mr Johnson: Off the top of my head I cannot answer that directly. We are continually updating our mapping database. That has occurred recently. For example, that takes into account things like tunnels and new subdivisions. I think we will have to take that on notice, Minister, the part about private road networks within estates. That is the point the member is asking about, is it?

Mr MALONE: What I need clarification on is whether you can go to an address within a gated estate or a retirement residential village. What provision have you made concerning that? Have you dedicated a project to upgrading ESCAD to do that?

Mr ROBERTS: We will follow that up and get back to you on that issue. In terms of addresses, the ESCAD database, in terms of mapping and street addresses, is updated, as I understand it, quarterly. We work with local government and the appropriate agencies to ensure that the most up-to-date mapping information is available. We will take the member's question on notice and try to get back with some more specific detail before the end of the session.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. I call the member for Pumicestone.

Mrs SULLIVAN: With reference to pages 30 to 35 of the Capital Statement, can you outline what progress has been made on the Department of Community Safety's capital program which is building vital corrective and emergency services infrastructure across this state? Please also advise how the program is getting value for money and sustaining Queensland jobs?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you for the question. As with the Police capital works program, Emergency Services and Corrective Services have very substantial capital works programs which have been rolled out very successfully by those agencies. I am pleased to advise the committee that the overwhelming majority of the Department of Community Safety's 2009-10 capital program is well on track.

As at 30 June, the department expects to achieve an estimated actual capital expenditure of \$470.1 million. Of significance within that, the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service have expended 96 per cent and 92 per cent respectively of their capital budget. I know from meeting regularly with the officers involved in the delivery and management of that program that that is due, in no small part, to the extremely focused attention and professionalism of those officers in staging these projects over an appropriate time frame and ensuring that all the necessary steps are pursued and put in place.

The opposition have, on a number of occasions, talked about projects being put on the backburner. I have provided responses to that on a number of occasions. As I have indicated, I am very proud of the Department of Community Safety's capital works achievements.

There have been a number of measures put in place to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the program. That includes things like having a suite of standard designs to reduce the time and cost of design. Where appropriate—and most specifically with the Ambulance Service—we look at collocation on Queensland Health sites. Over the last couple of years there has been a more proactive engagement with Queensland Health about identifying suitable locations for collocations. The bundling of designs has further reduced design costs. The bundling of the construction of similar projects in close proximity has allowed builders to tender on a larger basis rather than for individual projects.

The department has improved its capital works planning processes and is now phasing projects over multiple financial years. If you look back through previous capital statements there was a tendency, in some cases, to put all of the money in one year rather than properly planning and scheduling it over a few years. We are now more proactively scheduling and identifying in the budget papers the allocation over a number of years.

As I have said, I am very proud of the work that the capital works agency within the department has been pursuing. A lot of those have actually resulted in significant savings. The advice I have is that savings of over \$6 million have been achieved across the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service as a result of these efficiencies that have been put in place. I have not had a chance to talk about Corrective Services so I will try to do that later.

Mr KILBURN: With reference to page 34 of the Capital Statement regarding the Department of Community Safety's capital expenditure, could you please advise whether the department has any plans to move to a new payroll system?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. For the information of the committee, the Department of Community Safety currently operates on the Lattice payroll system which needs to be updated to a newer system in the future. Ultimately, the department does need to move to a new payroll system.

The decision on the preferred payroll system will be based on an assessment of what best suits the needs of this department. The department will not take any unnecessary risks in implementing any new payroll system. Nothing is more important than ensuring the department's employees are paid correctly. To stress, a program of this complexity and scale will not be rushed. Thorough planning, preparation and consultation will be undertaken. This will identify the department's business requirements and benefits before a decision is taken on a particular technology solution.

Recently, the Premier said, in response to the Auditor-General's report, that the government was abandoning its one-size-fits-all approach to payroll across government. She stated—

We want larger agencies with complex payroll requirements to be able to use the payroll system which suits them. At the same time, smaller agencies should have the ability to cluster with similar agencies and utilise the one payroll system.

With respect to the Auditor-General's recent report, the department supports the Auditor-General's view that a focus on implementing the technology cannot be at the expense of delivering broader business outcomes.

The Department of Community Safety has been proactive in creating a new senior management position to identify the business requirements to be delivered by any new solution in the context of what are effectively four relatively distinct payroll processing models within the department. Establishment of the program governance arrangements in accordance with the requisite standard is an initial priority for the department. The director-general has commenced consultation in order to establish a program sponsoring group involving the director-general of the Department of Public Works. That sponsoring group will be supported by a high-level governance board comprising the commissioners of the QAS, Queensland Fire and Rescue and Queensland Corrective Services, the chief executive officer of EMQ and other senior accountable executives from the Department of Community Safety, the Shared Service Agency and CorpTech. Their work will include identification of the benefits and risks of implementation and the assessment of the functional fit of various solutions against the business requirements. A program of lead work has already been initiated ahead of any transition to a replacement payroll system to increase the readiness of the department and its workforce and to minimise the risks inherent in such a significant change. There are a number of non-technical activities—that is, process and procedure changes and data cleansing et cetera—that can be progressed prior to any new system implementation to standardise existing human resource and payroll procedures and reduce, where possible, the complexity of these ahead of any migration to a new system.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. With reference to page 1-116 of the Service Delivery Statements and the Queensland Ambulance Service's commitment to working towards the Bligh government's Toward Q2 vision of a healthy Queensland, can you advise how the QAS is working with Queensland Health and other hospitals to get patients treated as fast as possible?

Mr ROBERTS: Yes. The government has set a target to have the shortest emergency department wait times in the country, and we are already delivering on that commitment. The Queensland Ambulance Service and Queensland Health are working together to get patients treated as fast as possible at our hospitals, and that means improving patient flow. For the first time ever, data on the time taken for ambulance patients to be treated by Queensland Health is publicly available in the quarterly performance report and in the last financial year the state average was 13 minutes for all cases and on average across Queensland in Queensland Health facilities around 90 per cent of ambulance patients were transferred to Queensland Health care within 30 minutes and 68.37 per cent or around about 70 per cent on average were transferred to Queensland Health care within 15 minutes.

The Queensland Ambulance Service does work proactively with Queensland Health in ensuring that when ambulances arrive at hospitals patients are firstly cared for appropriately but then transferred into Queensland Health's care as quickly as possible. A number of initiatives have been put in place to facilitate that. Queensland Ambulance Service hospital liaison officers have been stationed at major hospital emergency departments. They work with hospital staff at the emergency department to release ambulance crews with the prompt triaging of all patients and, where possible, off-loading low-acuity patients to the emergency department waiting areas.

These officers work a 10-hour shift timed to coincide with the peak workload periods as identified by historical data for those hospitals. We have them in place seven days per week from 9 am to 7 pm at the Princess Alexandra Hospital, the Royal Brisbane Hospital, Redcliffe and Caboolture emergency departments; seven days a week from 8 am to 6 pm at the Gold Coast, Logan, Nambour and Ipswich emergency departments; and five days a week from 8 am to 6 pm and every second weekend from 8 am to 6 pm at the Cairns emergency department. The Queensland Ambulance Service now also has access in its communication centres to the Queensland Health ECHO system. A pilot was undertaken in the Brisbane region to provide access to this system. Basically, the pilot has now been completed and the system has been rolled out state-wide to all communications centres. The ECHO system provides a real-time operating picture of the status of emergency departments and available beds and it is a tool which enables communications officers to make judgements about where it is most appropriate to send ambulances. The ambulance arrivals board is again an initiative which is a real-time feed of data from the ESCADs system to hospitals to enable them to view the current status of ambulances which are en route to a particular hospital.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, with reference to page 1-117 of the Service Delivery Statements, can you advise how the Department of Community Safety will continue to provide funding to support the Volunteer Marine Rescue Association Queensland and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association and how this will benefit Queensland boaties?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you. I again want to acknowledge the significant contributions volunteers in both the Volunteer Marine Rescue and also the Coast Guard make to the safety of our waterways. These people, like our other emergency services volunteers in rural fire and ambulance and SES, do this in their own time and they do it for nothing. They are very dedicated. I have recently met with senior leaders of both organisations to hand over some additional funding, and I think those of us who are involved in boating activities can only thank them for the work that they do in terms of rescuing people and also giving people assistance when they run into problems out on the water.

The government provides both Volunteer Marine Rescue and also the Coast Guard with recurrent funding, but over the last couple of years we have through the department looked for additional opportunities to provide extra funds. Recently I joined with the director-general and the leadership teams of both of these organisations to provide significant additional funding over and above the recurrent funding that we provide to them. With respect to Volunteer Marine Rescue, over the last four financial years the government has provided \$1.462 million in addition to the annual payments that this organisation receives from government, and that includes \$1.1 million for the vessel replacement and vessel refurbishment program—that was in 2006-07, so we are looking at the last four-year period here—\$306,800 for training activities in 2008-09 and payments of \$55,000 and \$148,000 in 2009-10 to assist the association with the costs of delivering training programs. As I have stressed, that is in addition to the base funding of \$1.235 million that was provided in the 2009-10 budget.

In terms of the volunteer Coast Guard, over the last four financial years the government has provided \$1.323 million in additional funding on top of the annual payments that the organisation receives from government. That includes \$968,000 for vessel replacement and vessel refurbishment, \$155,000 for training and activities in 2008-09, \$148,000 for a vessel tracking system in 2009-10 and \$55,000 in 2009 for delivering training programs. The Department of Community Safety is currently working with Queensland Transport to have a joint Volunteer Marine Rescue/Coast Guard brochure developed which will be inserted into every registration renewal notice for recreational boat owners, and hopefully that will help these organisations recruit more members to contribute to the worthwhile work that they do.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, I refer to page 1-118 of the Service Delivery Statements where it mentions the new social responsibility charter for Queensland Corrective Services. Minister, can you outline for the committee what is the future direction for corrective services in Queensland?

Mr ROBERTS: Yes, thank you. Again, I want to acknowledge through the commissioner, Kelvin Anderson, the great work that has been undertaken in our Corrective Services prisons and probation and parole offices. Our Corrective Services officers within secure jails and low-security facilities and in our probation and parole offices perform a very difficult task. They are not dealing with the nicest people. They have very challenging behaviours and very challenging circumstances, and all credit to them for their professionalism and dedication to the task of keeping offenders accountable, keeping offenders behind bars and not only holding them accountable but helping them to rehabilitate as law-abiding citizens.

Queensland has some of the most modern and secure custodial infrastructure in Australia. There has been a massive capital program over the last few years to upgrade our facilities. The mission is to be the leading provider of corrective services by 2014, and to achieve that there has been a framework of reform over the next four years which has been developed. That is encompassed within the document *Delivering justice and improving corrections* which outlines how breaking the cycle of reoffending, effectively and consistently enforcing the orders of the courts and increasing community safety confidence and confidence in Queensland Corrective Services's work will improve corrective services throughout Queensland. The document sets out six priority areas of reform: one, serving the community; two, closing the gap on the overrepresentation of Indigenous people in prison; three, working with our partners in rehabilitation; four, pathways for corrections; five, green corrections in terms of our environmental impact; and, six, becoming an agile and accountable organisation.

The first priority is serving the community. The department has begun increasing the opportunities for offenders to give back to the community through community service projects. It is increasing the number of community service sites and improving the training material provided to community partners. Again, there are a number of volunteer and community organisations throughout the state that work very proactively with the department to ensure that offenders get that opportunity to give back to their community through some worthwhile community projects. Queensland Corrective Services will also ensure the victims register, which provides information to victims of crime, is accessible to the victims who need it. The second priority is closing the gap on the overrepresentation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in prison. The causes of crime in Indigenous communities are complex, but the government is committed to improving the wellbeing of women and children in communities who are the victims of violence and abuse.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, with reference to page 1-117 of the Service Delivery Statements, could you please advise how Queensland's tough parole and probation model is ensuring offenders are strictly supervised to maintain community safety?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you. Again, it gives me the opportunity to emphasise that Queensland does take a tough approach to supervision and monitoring of offenders when they are released from jail or released from the courts. Again, I make the point, particularly with sex offenders, that when the National Party government was last in office sex offenders of all types walked entirely free at the end of their sentence out into the community, lived where they liked, worked where they liked, joined whatever clubs they liked and mixed with whoever they liked without any supervision or monitoring. It has taken a

Labor government to put in place tough legislation for monitoring and supervision and also given the courts the opportunity to keep people in jail if the court considers them to be too high a risk to be released into the community.

With respect to probation and parole, in 2006 the government introduced a new supervision and surveillance model, and that delivered improved identification of offenders who breached probation and parole orders. There are over 650 probation and parole staff spread throughout the state, and they proactively monitor and supervise offenders, particularly identifying where breaches have occurred and, when breaches do occur, they are dealt with swiftly. All supervision orders require offenders to report to or receive visits from a probation and parole officer. In order to ensure offenders are complying with their residential status, random home visits are conducted by probation and parole officers and surveillance staff. Prisoners who are released to parole, including court ordered parole, are subject to a range of strict statutory conditions with which they must comply, and the parole board can add additional conditions to a parole order to ensure the safety of the community, depending on the circumstances or the risk profile of the offender.

For example, an offender may be required to attend intervention programs, submit to breath and urine analysis testing or comply with curfew conditions. Offenders subject to orders with substance testing provisions are also subject to urine analysis and breath testing to detect the use of illicit substances. If an offender fails to comply with the community order, contravention action is taken without delay. Sanctions for breaching an order range from a verbal warning—and, again, this a judgement which is made depending on the significance or seriousness of the breach—a formal written warning or the offender being returned to court to be resentenced for the original offences. In more serious cases, a warrant is issued for the offender's arrest and they are returned to custody.

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

Mr MALONE: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Minister, I refer to the ZEROHarm commitment in the SDS at page 1-118. I refer also to page 4 of the 2007-08 Ministerial Portfolio Statement that details the workplace health and safety commitment of zero harm. In the 2007-08 portfolio statement a goal of reducing lost-time injury frequency rate, or LTIFT, and injury down time rate by 70 per cent within three years was set. Minister, did you achieve this three-year goal?

Mr ROBERTS: I will check those figures. But in terms of workplace health and safety, right across all of the agencies in the Department of Community Safety of course workplace health and safety is the most important factor in terms of our employees. Providing the safest environment possible—whether that be in Corrective Services, the Fire and Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service or Emergency Management Queensland—is of the highest priority, and the department takes all of the steps it can in a very difficult environment to minimise and reduce—eliminate where possible—the risk of injury.

The reality with emergency services is that people are working in the most dangerous environments. These are not normal workplaces. These are not workshops where you have, in the main, almost total control over the environment. All of the officers in the emergency services agencies work in environments which are not able to be controlled by the agency. You are walking into circumstances, with fire and rescue officers, of fires which have their own inherent risks. Ambulance officers are walking into situations where there may well be serious violent activity being undertaken or in a dangerous car incident et cetera. So the actual environment in which emergency services workers work is not able to be totally controlled.

So what the department does through all of its agencies is try to provide workers with the best possible training and protection, such as how to avoid difficult circumstances. In many instances I do not ask emergency services to put their lives in danger. For example, for an ambulance officer, I support any ambulance officer who cannot go into a dangerous situation. It could be a violent or life-threatening situation. Ambulance officers—or any officer—would be supported if they made a decision to not go into those environments to undertake their work.

So with the lost-time injury frequency rate—all of those rates—the department spends a lot of time focusing on the programs, the training and the resources to reduce the possibility of injury but, as I have indicated to the member and to the committee, this is a different set of circumstances from those in a normal office environment or a workshop environment where all of the factors which can cause injury can be controlled. So therefore, as a result of that, you will see fluctuations in some of those figures from time to time. Unfortunately, some of the factors which would drive them up are not within the control of the agency.

If I could take the opportunity to respond to some of the earlier questions, I have the information if the committee is okay for that to occur.

Mr MALONE: You can do it in government time, Minister.

Mr ROBERTS: I will leave that to the committee to decide, but I have the information here to answer two non-government questions. These are non-government questions, so I am happy to—

CHAIR: If you ask your question, I will get back to you on that.

Mr ROBERTS: They were non-government questions. It is responding to their questions.

Mr MALONE: You could not answer it straight up, Minister. You can leave it until later on. I refer to emergency services funding on page 1-124 of the SDS and the \$5.39 million allocated to Surf Life Saving Queensland. Except for the one-off funding for helicopter maintenance—

Mr ROBERTS: Can you just tell me—

Mr MALONE: It is page 1-124 of the SDS and the \$5.39 million allocated to Surf Life Saving. Except for the one-off funding for helicopter maintenance and the election promise of keeping our beaches safe, there has been no real increase in funding for Surf Life Saving for four years. Are you concerned that this places at risk the excellent work done by Surf Life Saving?

CHAIR: Member for Mirani, you had one minute for your question and your time has expired.

Mr MALONE: He asked for a clarification, so I repeated it.

CHAIR: Sorry. I beg your pardon.

Mr MALONE: Have you got that question? Are you concerned about the safety of Queenslanders on beaches with no increase in funding?

Mr ROBERTS: The member's claims are just absolute rubbish. The government has been significantly supporting surf-lifesaving for a number of years. In fact—

Mr MALONE: Minister, I refer you to question on notice No. 96.

CHAIR: Member for Mirani, you have asked your question. The minister is entitled to answer how he sees fit.

Mr MALONE: The minister is misleading the committee.

Mr ROBERTS: What was that question on notice? Which one?

Mr MALONE: No. 96, asked on 10 February 2010.

Mr ROBERTS: I do not have a copy. Could you provide a copy of that so that I can have a look at that, thanks?

Mr MALONE: I can.

Mr ROBERTS: While I am getting the question, to suggest that the government has not increased the level of support to Surf Life Saving Queensland in recent years is absolute garbage.

Mr MALONE: Just check the question on notice.

Mr ROBERTS: Indeed, last year the government provided a \$6 million helicopter to Surf Life Saving Queensland—a gift. In addition—

Mr MALONE: One that could not fly, I might add.

Mr ROBERTS: It provided \$400,000 for the operating costs of that helicopter. In addition to that there has been additional funding provided to support—

Mr MALONE: On a pallet.

Mr ROBERTS: Sorry?

Mr MALONE: Sorry.

Mr ROBERTS: Additional funding to provide expanded beach services across the state as well—

Mr MALONE: Could not give it away.

Mr ROBERTS: Again, as I have indicated, the premise of the member's question I disagree with. In fact, if you look at the funding increases which have occurred—and I have outlined very clearly the helicopter, the additional funding for operating it, the additional funding for expanding beach services across the state—you will see that the funding has increased. Indeed, the Surf Life Saving association, in all of the meetings I have had with them, are very grateful for the increased level of support that the government has provided.

Mr MALONE: I refer to question No. 96 that you have in your hands which shows a substantial decrease in funding in real terms over the past four years because there is no uplift of CPI for Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Australian Volunteer Coast Guard Association during a time when there has been a huge increase in the number of boats in Queensland and also a huge increase in the operating costs of the volunteers—for instance, in Mackay, to replace their boat at \$700,000. Again, how do the funding levels that you have in front of you there secure the safety of recreational boaties and commercial fishermen in Queensland waters?

Mr ROBERTS: The member obviously was not listening to my earlier answer where I indicated that over the last four years significant additional funding has been provided to both the Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Coast Guard Association.

Mr MALONE: Look at the answer that you have there.

Mr ROBERTS: The government provides a recurrent grant to VMR and to the Coast Guard. In 2006-07—I am happy to stand corrected—four budgets ago, additional funding of around \$1 million each, or slightly less for one of the organisations, was provided for over and above the recurrent funding for vessel replacement and refurbishment. There is an additional amount of \$50,000, from my recollection, provided for training over and above the existing recurrent expenditure.

Mr MALONE: Right across Queensland—

Mr ROBERTS: About two or three weeks ago I joined with the director-general and the leaders of both the Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Coast Guard and provided them with cheques to the value of around \$150,000 over and above the recurrent expenditure. So over the last four years the government has not only delivered the recurrent expenditure that we provide to both of these organisations; we provided significant enhancements and additional funding to help these organisations. The Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Coast Guard, as I have indicated, do a fantastic job. These volunteers do it tough in many circumstances out there in rough waters rescuing and supporting people. They receive their funding from a range of sources. The government obviously provides a significant contribution and over the last four years we have provided significant additional funding.

We are also, as I have indicated, moving towards a common brochure for both organisations, which will be distributed through the registration renewal process and which will hopefully increase another significant source of funding for these organisations. These are independent organisations of government. They are registered associations and hopefully the outcome of the distribution of that brochure will be many more people joining, which will bring in additional funds. Many of the organisations also receive sponsorship and, of course, they do their own fundraising. But for the member to suggest that the government has not increased the level of funding to these organisations is wrong. As I have outlined, over the last four years in particular there has been a significant enhancement to the recurrent funding that we have provided to both organisations.

Mr MALONE: I think you are using a bit sleight of hand with the facts there, quite frankly. The Volunteer Marine Rescue and the Coast Guard are doing a lot of the work that police marine services used to do. I think the figures you are using, particularly in terms of the boat replacement et cetera, are skew-whiff. But I will go to another question. I refer to page 1-118 of the SDS, supporting staff and volunteer organisations. Minister, in 2006-07 the rural fire brigade had 36,000 members but in 2008-09 this had dropped to 34,000 members. What is the number now? Have you reversed the losses or has the micromanagement and bullying in your government department continued to drive away the volunteers?

Mr ROBERTS: This is another area where the member for Mirani is out there constantly undermining public confidence in our emergency services workers. This is an issue which the member brings up year after year. I can recall—I do not know whether it was last year or the year before—that he made these wild claims about the reductions in rural service volunteers. The sky was going to fall; the state was going to burn down. I have explained to the member on numerous occasions—and indeed on the public record—what has been happening with the numbers which have been recorded in both the Service Delivery Statements and indeed documents like annual reports.

Many years ago—and I know he is a member of a rural fire brigade—numbers in brigades were very loose. In fact, it was very difficult for the department to get a clear view about how many members were actually participating in brigades. A couple of years ago the service undertook a very comprehensive audit and review of actual membership. During that review and audit process it was identified that many hundreds—indeed it was probably in the thousands—of people did not exist. They had passed on, they were listed on the membership of more than one brigade et cetera. So a comprehensive cleansing process took place to identify the actual number of volunteers. The member knows that. The member has been beating up this issue in the community—trying to portray the fact that the Rural Fire Service is going backwards.

One of the other key issues of the Rural Fire Service in terms of its capability to respond to fires across the state is how many qualified firefighters exist within that 34,000 number or thereabouts, because the Rural Fire Service comprises a range of volunteers: those who actually go out and fight the fires and those who are engaged in a whole range of other activities. If the member were genuine about this issue, he would be prepared to acknowledge that. I will give some figures here for the committee. In June 2008 there were around 6½ thousand qualified volunteer firefighters in our Rural Fire Service. Again, that is making the point that many other thousands of volunteers do not directly involve themselves in firefighting. These people do a fantastic job supporting our front-line firefighters in this area.

To date, this has now increased. In a two-year period it has increased to around 10,000. So we have moved from around 6½ thousand qualified firefighters within the Rural Fire Service two years ago to now around 10,000. This is a fact which the member fails to acknowledge. He uses the general figures for the total volunteer number, and I have explained why those figures changed a couple of years ago—because we removed from the volunteer firefighter lists and their records those people who were not actually existing as real members.

Mr MALONE: I refer to staffing figures for the Ambulance Service, page 1-121 of the SDS. In 2009-10, how many ambulance officers were regularly rostered to work within Queensland Health facilities to monitor ramping outside overcrowded emergency departments? Were these staff recruited specifically to undertake these duties or were they taken away from front-line ambulance duties?

Mr ROBERTS: How many were employed?

Mr MALONE: Yes, how many were employed to do that job on the ramps?

Mr ROBERTS: I have already answered that question in a previous answer. We have liaison officers, if they are the people you are referring to. Yes, they play a really important role and that is part of the contribution the Queensland Ambulance Service is making to ensure we facilitate the earliest transfer of patients to hospitals.

Mr MALONE: The rest of the question was: were they taken away from front-line duties?

Mr ROBERTS: I am advised that there are 19 people involved in that role. The advice I have is that they are over establishment; they are not coming from the allocation required to deliver front-line ambulance services in the community. That gives me another opportunity to make the point that these hospital liaison officers actually free up ambulance time.

In terms of resourcing to the Ambulance Service, this government over the last four budgets has funded an additional 630—from memory—ambulance officers. When you look at the ambulance officer to population ratio across Australia you will see that Queensland, as I understand it, is if not the best then one of the best in terms of that population ratio, with about 55 officers per 100,000 compared to places like New South Wales and Victoria or the national average of 40 or 42.

The Queensland Ambulance Service has been receiving significant enhancements to the number of front-line ambulance officers. What that is delivering, as I outlined in my opening remarks, is the fastest response times in the country. The member would be aware, from the last report on government services, that Queensland responded to 50 per cent of code 1 emergencies within 8.4 minutes. The closest comparative state was New South Wales at around 10.3 minutes. So the resourcing that we provide through extra officers, equipment and the smarter management of demand is delivering the best response times in the country. I am very proud of that work.

These hospital liaison officers, as I have indicated, are an important part of our role in ensuring that people get from ambulances into emergency departments as quickly as possible. They free up ambulance crews. They work with the crews to ensure that they can get the patients into the hospital and back out onto the road as quickly as possible.

Mr MALONE: I refer to the commitment to support staff and volunteer organisations, SDS 1-118. Why have rural firefighters been singled out and ordered not to wear dress uniforms to official functions? Do you have something against volunteer rural firefighters? What do you expect them to do with their dress uniforms, as I understand they commit money towards the acquisition of those?

Mr ROBERTS: We are really dealing with the big issues today. I thank our rural fire volunteers at every opportunity I get. We saw last year in Queensland one of the worst bushfire seasons on record. They take a lot of pride in the work that they do. Indeed I do. I know the member is a member of a brigade. Queenslanders one and all should be thanking these people for what they do.

The Queensland Fire and Rescue Service provides the firefighting protective equipment for individuals. I might let the commissioner respond to this because there are a couple of issues here. There is the Rural Fire Brigades Association, which has its own clothing that it distributes, and then there are the official uniforms of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. I might allow the commissioner to explain the difference and how that is rolled out to rural fire volunteers.

Mr Johnson: The issue of dress uniforms to rural brigade officers is underway. In the financial year just gone we issued over a thousand sets and will more likely do the same this financial year. It is targeted at the brigade officer level, those people who are more involved in the community and other activities, and they are fully entitled to them and the take up of those uniforms has been very, very successful. Obviously all our protective clothing is provided free of charge and now we are moving into expanding the issue of the dress uniform for our volunteer firefighters. That program will continue to roll on over time.

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

Mr ROBERTS: I am happy to do this at any time, but I have answers to some non-government questions.

CHAIR: You can incorporate those into your answers to the questions if you like. You can answer that within your time to answer questions. I wanted to go back to a point you were talking about a little while ago with reference to page 1-116 of the SDS in relation to the government's commitment to job creation. Could you just clarify how many additional ambulance officers will be delivered in 2010-11 and how those officers will be distributed and how will the ambulance vehicles, also funded in the budget, be distributed across the state?

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you for that question. The government is continuing to deliver critical resources to front-line emergency services. As I have indicated, the government has funded, over the last four budgets, an additional 630 ambulance officer positions. That is leading to measured improvements in performance, particularly in responses to code 1 emergencies. The budget this year increased funding to the service by \$39.1 million, or 7.9 per cent, to \$533.7 million. As part of the 2010-11 budget we are delivering a further 75 officers, an investment of \$6 million. A comprehensive analysis of demand for services has been completed across the state with the allocation of those officers obviously going to those areas of the highest priority.

I can announce the regional breakdown of those officers and I will provide more detail in the coming days of the actual allocation as to where those officers are going. We are providing four additional officers into the far northern region; six into the northern region; 13 into the central region; seven into the south-western region; 13 into the north region; 16 into the Brisbane region; and 16 into the south-eastern region. The actual locations of where those officers will be delivered to will be finalised and I will be announcing that shortly.

With regard to other resources, one of the key resources obviously is new vehicles. The government has funded for a number of years now significant funding to enable the renewal of the ambulance fleet. There is now a new very distinctive livery which is very prominent now out in the community. This year the budget provides \$18.5 million to commission 165 new and replacement vehicles as part of a comprehensive vehicle replacement strategy and, of course, new vehicles into the fleet. The regional breakdown for 2010-11 is 20 vehicles for the far northern region; 16 for the northern region; 27 for the central region; 25 for south-western region; 25 for the north coast; 31 for the Brisbane region; and 21 for the south-eastern region. Again on average it has fluctuated between 140 and 160-odd—around about an average of 150 vehicles each year—are rolled into the service for renewal and, of course, providing for additional services.

CHAIR: Do you have any further information to add in response to the earlier questions asked?

Mr ROBERTS: I do have answers to some information in response to a few questions from the opposition. In terms of the IOMS system, the figure of \$14.6 million in the budget paper BP3 page 34 lists the total IOMS spend for the project from the project's initiation in the 2002-03 financial year. The \$14.6 million cited by the member for Gregory was, in fact, expenditure over eight financial years and was not expenditure for the 2009-10 financial year. The IOMS upgrade project cost \$1.22 million over the three years commencing 2008-09. It cost \$.431 million in 2008-09 and \$.369 million in 2009-10 with a budget of \$.420 million in 2010-11.

With regard to an opposition question regarding professional standards, in terms of how many investigations are taking longer than six months from the date of original complaint, the numbers, I have been advised, are 434 or 14.7 per cent of the total; longer than 12 months, 16 or 0.5 per cent of the total. As to how many people have been stood down or suspended for a period of more than three months as a result of actions or investigations from QPS or the CMC, the answer is 26 or 0.9 per cent. For that period in question, to put that into context, the total number of complaints from 1/7/09 to 30/6/10 was 2,939. That answers a question from the member for Gregory.

With respect to the offender Mills, Mills was originally sentenced to 10 years imprisonment but appealed the sentence which was set aside and replaced with a nine-year sentence. In accordance with section 161B(3) of the Penalties and Sentences Act 1992, if an offender is sentenced to five years or more or less than 10 years the sentencing court may declare the offence to be a serious violent offence. The Court of Appeal, when reducing the sentence, did not declare the offence a serious violent offence.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, can you advise how many additional firefighter positions will be delivered in 2010-11 and how they will be distributed and how, along with new urban fire appliances, this will boost the responsiveness of the fire and rescue services across the state?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. Just going back to a question from the member for Mirani earlier, obviously population growth and development of the urban environment has an impact on the demand for fire and rescue services. However, the prominence of that fact of population growth to the fire and rescue service as compared to policing and ambulance services, where people are responding to people in the main, is a different driving consideration.

The government has funded the recruitment and training of an additional 24 firefighters in 2010-11 as part of our commitment to boost front-line service delivery. These 24 firefighters will be located as follows: one to head office; two in the Brisbane region; three in the south-east region—that is one each for West Moreton, Gold Coast and Beaudesert; three into the north coast region—one each for Wide Bay, Sunshine Coast and Noosa; and 11 into the central region—one for Biloela and 10 for Mackay to crew an existing specialist rescue vehicle and new command hazmat support vehicle which is scheduled for delivery in the second half of 2010-11 and that will service the Mackay city and country areas; and finally one into the far northern region into Atherton.

In terms of appliances, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service has improved its response capability by designing and building specialist vehicles to meet the changing needs of the Queensland community and the events that it needs to respond to. The government is investing \$10.9 million in

2010-11 to ensure our fire service has new and modern vehicles known within the fire service as urban fire appliances. We are investing in 23 urban fire appliances in 2010-11 to increase the operational capabilities of the fire service: twelve Isuzu base type two and five Scania base type three vehicles, as well as four emergency tenders with advanced heavy road crash rescue equipment and one urban light grass fire vehicle and a field service support vehicle which will go to the southwestern region.

The urban light grass fire vehicle is a Nissan Patrol that can carry 500 litres of water and it will go into the far north region. Type two urban pump appliances are an Isuzu base vehicle allocated to auxiliary fire stations and are designed to enable firefighters to manage the normal incidents occurring in small towns. They are fitted with diesel power pumps capable of delivering 2,400 litres of water per minute and road crash rescue equipment.

Mr MOORHEAD: Can I move to a question about the bricks and mortar in the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. Page 30 of the capital statement refers to the building of two new fire stations, one at Brassall and one at Ripley. Can you please outline how this will boost fire and rescue services in the growing Ipswich region and how does it form part of the larger QFRS capital program?

Mr ROBERTS: This region is one of the growth areas of South-East Queensland. As a general response, the government has allocated a record budget of \$467.9 million for the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service which is an increase of \$34.9 million on last year's budget. As I have indicated in a previous question, that is 24 additional firefighters, 23 urban fire appliances and 25 rural appliances. With respect to the capital program, it does provide for a new fire station at Agnes Waters and new stations at Brassall and Ripley to replace the Ipswich Fire Station. Currently that community is serviced by the Ipswich Fire Station. That will now be expanded to two repositioned stations, one at Brassall and one at Ripley.

In addition, funding has also been provided for seven other replacement or redeveloped stations at Cherbourg, Clermont, Craginsh, Emerald, Noosa, Pullenvale and Toowoomba. I am sure that the member for Noosa is extremely happy that he is getting a significantly refurbished station up at Noosa. I visited the station with the member during the last election campaign and saw firsthand the needs of that particular station. The government is delivering to those firefighters and the people in Noosa on a much needed upgrade to that station.

An amount of \$3.7 million has been allocated for the fire and rescue station at Ripley and \$3 million at Brassall. Works will commence on these projects in the 2010-11 financial year, with the majority of construction phased into future financial years. It is planned that both stations will be operational by June 2012. Both stations will be designed and built to accommodate 24-hour, seven-day-a-week, full-time permanent firefighting crews. The fire station and operational precinct to be built at Ripley will accommodate a permanently approved pumper appliance and specialist rescue appliance, the west Moreton zone and Ipswich area command offices, the rural operations command office, community fire safety and operations logistic support personnel.

The station at Brassall will provide an enhanced and additional operational front-line service capability for the city of Ipswich and will accommodate a new Scania appliance valued at more than \$600,000 and an additional 19 firefighters who will be recruited to work at that station. The operational firefighting appliance crews and front-line support operating from the old Ipswich station located in Limestone Street will transfer to the new Ripley station on its completion.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, throughout this morning's hearing you have spoken very highly of our state's volunteers. You know and I know that we rely very heavily on those volunteers in many non-profit organisations and appreciate very much the work that they do. With that in mind and with reference to page 1-118 of the SDS, can you reiterate this government's commitment to assisting Surf Life Saving Queensland to keep us safe on our beaches?

Mr ROBERTS: This gives me an opportunity to put on the record the significant financial contributions that the government has made to Surf Life Saving Queensland, a wonderful organisation made up of tens of thousands of volunteers who are out there every weekend and during the week on school holidays and during other holiday periods looking after people on the beach.

Funding provided to Surf Life Saving Queensland helps to support its vital beach safety programs and service extensions across the state. In the 2009-10 financial year the government provided over \$11 million in grants and assets to Surf Life Saving Queensland including \$1.6 million provided through the 2006 election commitment for Surf Life Saving Queensland and the Life Saving Services Development Fund and \$100,000 to assist with WorkCover premiums.

As part of our commitment to improving beach safety, the government, through the 2009 election commitment Keeping Our Beaches Safe, donated an EMQ helicopter to Surf Life Saving Queensland valued at \$6 million. That was delivered in 2009. I know that Mr Stevens, the member for Mermaid Beach, is greatly appreciative of that additional helicopter. It is a pity the member for Mirani is not as grateful as you are for the support that we provided to your local surf-lifesaving units.

Mr JOHNSON: I haven't got any beaches in my electorate.

Mr ROBERTS: The election commitment also provided an extra \$400,000 per year to cover the operating costs of the helicopter.

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr ROBERTS: They do. There is also \$310,000 for new beach patrols and equipment for areas north of the Sunshine Coast. These are significant enhancements to the funding provided. These initiatives were in addition to the \$2.979 million provided under a service agreement to support the operations of 59 surf-lifesaving clubs in six branches and the state centre.

In 2010-11 the government will provide \$5.389 million to Surf Life Saving Queensland, and that includes a continuation of the 2006 election commitment Guarding Our Beaches—Saving Lives, which provides \$1.7 million for the Life Saving Services Development Fund and also to assist with WorkCover premiums, \$400,000 to cover the operating costs of the donated twin-engine helicopter, \$310,000 for new beach patrols and equipment north of the Sunshine Coast from our 2009 election commitment Keeping Our Beaches Safe and \$2.979 million under the service agreement to support the operations of 59 surf-lifesaving clubs in six branches and the state centre.

CHAIR: With reference to page 1-118 of the Service Delivery Statements, could you please advise how the Department of Community Safety is working with local governments to boost community resilience planning and preparation for natural disaster events?

Mr ROBERTS: I will say at the outset that the response to disasters in Queensland relies absolutely on a foundation of first-line response from local governments. That is recognised upfront. As a number of people within local government have said, local government is there when the disaster strikes, while it is happening and long after everyone else has gone home to their respective communities. So I always take the opportunity to acknowledge the fact that local government is, and always will be, the foundation of our disaster management system in Queensland and of the front-line response.

The Disaster Management Act, which is currently before the parliament—therefore I obviously cannot discuss it in detail—does provide significant enhancements to the arrangements for disaster management and recognises the critical role of local government. One of the programs which provides significant support to local governments is the Natural Disaster Resilience Program, and that is a jointly funded partnership program with the Commonwealth government. It provides \$44 million over four years for resilience based programs and initiatives within communities. That helps local government minimise the impact of natural disasters on Queensland communities.

The total budget for 2009-10 was \$10.386 million. This financial year a total of 59 applications were received from 27 local governments, and \$7.114 million was approved for 38 projects across Queensland. Examples of some of the projects funded this year include \$1.1 million towards a combined request from the Murweh, Paroo, Quilpie and Bulloo shire councils for a south-west region river catchment flood management planning project, \$524,400 for a community education and training program for the Cassowary Coast Regional Council, \$120,000 to the Gold Coast City Council for the establishment of a disaster management community watch group or groups, and \$53,333 for an emergency power supply for the Carpentaria local disaster coordination centre for the Carpentaria Shire Council. So there is a broad range of initiatives, all focused on improving the resilience and capacity of communities to respond to natural disasters.

A total of \$14.4 million will be available from this program for allocation in the 2010-11 financial year. The focus of Emergency Management Queensland under the proposed new arrangements will change, and I will leave further discussion on that to another time.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, I refer you to page 1-116 of the Service Delivery Statements and the government's Toward Q2 ambitions. Can you advise what energy- and water-saving initiatives have been implemented across the agency?

CHAIR: Minister, you have under one minute.

Mr ROBERTS: Thank you. Again, this is a significant matter, of course. Agencies across government have been given a very clear direction to improve energy efficiencies and to look for ways in which their operations can minimise harm to the environment. The Department of Community Safety has been very proactive and has achieved some significant results in that regard.

With regard to water efficiency, the water efficiency management plans are in operation in DCS facilities in South-East Queensland. There are quarterly and annual reporting requirements and mandatory dates for the submission of management plans. The negotiation and agreement of variations and actions to meet committed retrofits have all been met by the department. To outline some of the achievements in the 2009-10 financial year, the five Queensland correctional facilities achieved 30 per cent reductions—

CHAIR: The time for government questions has expired.

Mr MALONE: Minister, I refer you to SDS page 1-121, and I will talk about the Queensland Emergency Operations Centre. You have spoken extensively in parliament about the operation of that. I understand that the facility was designed to provide improved emergency and disaster management response. This included a number of areas deliberately left vacant, particularly in the disaster management centre.

Mr ROBERTS: A number of what left vacant?

Mr MALONE: SDS page 1-121. It is about the Queensland Emergency—

Mr ROBERTS: No, you said something was left vacant.

Mr MALONE: Yes, okay. I will go back. The facility was designed to provide an improved emergency and disaster management response. This included a number of areas deliberately left vacant, particularly in the disaster management centre, so that during times of response activation support staff and partner agencies could establish presence quickly and collaborate and coordinate their responses. My understanding is that the functional design has changed and the buildings have turned more into a general office block as opposed to emergency and disaster response. Minister, has this compromised the operations of the disaster management centre? Will you actually indicate to the committee your directions in response to this matter?

Mr ROBERTS: This Queensland Emergency Operations Centre will be at the forefront of disaster management coordination in Queensland. Its operations are not being compromised by where staff are placed. This building—and I had the opportunity a week or so ago to go through it—is of ample size to respond. I am told that, on completion, that facility will be occupied by approximately 250 staff and is capable of growing to 350 during major incidents. So there is plenty of scope in the design of this building to bring in a significant number of additional staff—as I said, from 250 who will be located in the building up to 350.

The member has on a number of occasions sought to again undermine public confidence in our emergency services agencies by criticising this building. This building will be state-of-the-art. It brings together in the one location our communications centre for the Queensland Ambulance Service and the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. We will have the State Disaster Coordination Centre in this building as well as the Fire and Rescue Service operations control centre and coordination centre and the Queensland Clinical Coordination Centre for the dispatch of our fixed-wing and emergency helicopters. Not only will it have modern technology and plenty of capability to provide for day-to-day operations and coordination of emergency responses; when an emergency occurs, the design provides some specific allocations of space for all the additional people who are required to manage the disaster.

On the advice that has been provided to me, the premise of the member's question is wrong. This building has been designed to be able to be scaled up in terms of the number of people to respond appropriately to the disasters which are confronting Queensland not just today but also into the future. In terms of its design, in my view it is probably the standout in terms of disaster coordination and response in Australia.

Mr MALONE: Minister, I refer you to SDS page 1-121 and I note the total budget expenditure for emergency services of \$1.1 billion. It is probably a political question more than anything else, but do you regard 30 minutes of questioning, excluding the Dorothy Dixers from party colleagues, sufficient to scrutinise the \$1.1 billion budget of this portfolio? We are very short of time, Minister, so a 'yes' or 'no' will be fine.

Mr ROBERTS: It is interesting that the member asked that question if he is focused on the expenditure because he has been asking me questions about uniforms. They are important issues—

Mr MALONE: It is important.

Mr ROBERTS: Where people can wear their uniforms is extremely important—I do not denigrate that issue—but this is a budget estimates committee. If the member was concerned about the time allocated to ask questions about specific budget allocations, I would have thought he would focus his questions on those specific budget allocations and not meander around a whole range of operational issues. The government provides funding to these services to run them. It is not a matter for me to run the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service or the Ambulance Service. My responsibility is to ensure that the funds of government are appropriately spent. The member tries to raise a criticism about the amount of time allocated to questions when he has wasted the time by not focusing his attention on those specific budget allocations.

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

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, you have said many times that Queenslanders can be proud of their emergency services, and I agree wholeheartedly with you. I refer you to page 1-116 of the Service Delivery Statements and the strategic objective of continuing to provide ambulance services to meet the needs of the community. I ask: how is the QAS building on its enviable record in this regard?

Mr ROBERTS: I thank the member for the question. As I have indicated, I am very proud of the response times and, indeed, the entire service that is provided by the Queensland Ambulance Service. Based on performance, I believe that we can claim that they are the best ambulance service in the country.

In terms of response times, the Queensland Ambulance Service responded to 744,623 incidents last year, which equates to around one incident every 42 seconds. In the latest report on government services, 50 per cent of code 1s were responded to in 8.4 minutes—the best in the country—while New South Wales was 10.3 minutes. On the 90th percentile, in 2008-09 17.2 minutes was the response time—the third best in the country. That was over two minutes better than the national average and compares with New South Wales at 20.8 minutes. New South Wales is the most directly comparable state. So at the 50th percentile, Queensland's response time was 8.4 minutes; New South Wales, 10.3. At the 90th percentile, Queensland's response time was 17.2 minutes; New South Wales, 20.8.

The target for this year was 8.4 minutes and 16.5 minutes respectively. The result at the end of the year was 8.1 minutes at the 50th percentile and 16.4 minutes at the 90th percentile. These are spectacular results for the Queensland Ambulance Service. They lead the nation in terms of responses to code 1 emergencies. Of course there are instances when tragedies occur for a whole range of reasons but, in terms of the overall performance of the Queensland Ambulance Service with response times, these are times which lead the nation, and Queenslanders can be very proud of the work that they do.

I take the opportunity to respond to an issue that was raised about the lost-time injury rate in the Department of Community Safety. The department has a 10 per cent reduction in its lost-time injury frequency rate, consistent with the whole-of-government strategy. With respect to the Queensland Ambulance Service, it experienced a significant decrease in its lost-time injury frequency rate, from 36.39 in 2007-08 to 28.9 in 2009-10—a 30 per cent reduction, which is significantly greater than the whole-of-government target reduction of 10 per cent per annum.

With regard to the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, it experienced a spike in its lost-time injury frequency rate, from 26.15 in 2007-08 to 24 in 2008-09 and 34.35 in 2009-10. That spike has been attributed to a particularly challenging fire season in late 2009. We had one of the worst bushfire seasons on record. I have talked about the more dangerous environment that these officers work in, and that has contributed to that particular result.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time allocated for the consideration of the expenditure estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Police, Corrective Services and Emergency Services has now expired. I would like to thank you, Minister, and your advisers for your attendance today and I thank the witnesses. Before we adjourn, Minister, would you like to say a few words?

Mr ROBERTS: Again, I take the opportunity to thank the committee for the way in which it has conducted the proceedings here today. Most particularly, I want to thank all of the officers within the Queensland Police Service, Queensland Corrective Services, the Queensland Ambulance Service, the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service, Emergency Management Queensland and the other parts of the department who have put a lot of time and effort into preparations. I do believe that the estimates process is a very significant process for government and government departments because it requires people to be right across all of the issues. There is a lot of good work undertaken by my departmental officers and also my own staff, and I thank them sincerely for all of their efforts.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee will now adjourn for lunch and the hearing will resume at 1.15 pm to examine the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading.

Proceedings suspended from 12.17 pm to 1.15 pm

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G—TOURISM AND FAIR TRADING

In Attendance

Hon. PJ Lawlor, Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading

Ms L Whatman, Principal Adviser

Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation

Mr I Fletcher, Director-General

Mr D Ford, Deputy Director-General, Liquor, Gaming, Racing and Fair Trading and Commissioner for Fair Trading

Mr B Turner, Group Executive, Agriculture, Food and Tourism

Mr N Muller, General Manager, Tourism

Office of Fair Trading

Mr B Bauer, Executive Director

Office of Racing

Mr M Kelly, Executive Director

Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation

Mr M Sarquis, Executive Director

Office of Regulatory Policy

Ms L Woo, Executive Director

Tourism Queensland

Mr A Hayes, Chief Executive Officer

Ms M Clarke, Executive Director, Business Performance and Planning

CHAIR: We now resume the hearing of Estimates Committee G. The portfolio of the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading will be examined. The proceedings today are similar to parliament to the extent that members of the public cannot ask questions. In that regard, I remind visitors that, in accordance with standing order 206, any person admitted to a public hearing of a committee may be excluded by order of the committee or at my discretion as chair.

In relation to media coverage of this hearing, I ask that television and film coverage and photography be allowed only during my introductory comments and the opening statement of each minister as well for a short period during each changeover of ministerial advisers. The committee has agreed to the live broadcast of the hearing via the Parliamentary Service's website and to receivers throughout the parliamentary precinct. I ask that all mobile phones and pagers be now switched off.

I remind members of the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute and answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the end of each time limit. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. A double chime will sound two minutes after an extension of time has been given. The standing orders require that at least half the time available for questions and answers be allocated to non-government members. Any time expended when the committee deliberates in private is to be equally apportioned between government and non-government members. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves if the minister calls them to answer a question.

I welcome the minister and his advisers. I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed.

Minister, would you care to make an opening statement?

Mr LAWLOR: I would, thank you, Madam Chair. The Bligh government has a plan for Queensland. It is a plan to continue to create jobs, to continue to build a strong, smart and fair economy. From a strong economy comes a strong community. The Bligh government is committed to protecting Queensland consumers and cutting red tape for business so both can operate with confidence and certainty. As part of this, the Office of Fair Trading obtained \$6.55 million in redress for consumers in 2009-10—more than double the target of \$3.2 million. That is real money back in the pockets of Queenslanders.

Over the past two years, the Office of Fair Trading has worked with the Council of Australian Governments, COAG, to develop a one-stop-shop fair trading system to make it easier for business and safer for consumers. The highlights of these reforms include a national trade measurement system and a national system of regulation for consumer credit.

Madam Chair, 2009-10 was a very busy year for tourism. Tourism was one of the industries hardest hit by the global financial crisis. That is why last year we developed the \$37.8 million Tourism Action Plan to 2012. 122,000 Queenslanders rely on tourism directly for their jobs, and this commitment was part of the protecting tourism jobs plan.

I am pleased to report that we have achieved some outstanding results. Tourism Queensland and its partners created the most successful tourism campaign in history—the Best Job in the World—generating more than \$400 million in publicity value for Queensland. We continue to leverage off that brilliant campaign. Tourism Queensland's domestic marketing focused on hard-hitting campaigns to encourage visitors to Queensland, and this plan has paid off. The latest National Visitor Survey shows that 15.5 million Australians visited Queensland in the year—that is slightly down on the previous year—and they stayed longer and spent the same—that is, the same amount of expenditure from slightly fewer people.

During 2009-10, Tourism Queensland achieved an estimated \$590 million in domestic and international publicity—far in excess of the targeted \$348 million. Our commitment to tourism jobs also includes initiatives funded and administered by the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation such as: \$3.4 million for tourism, \$42.5 million for a cultural precinct in Cairns, \$30 million for a cruise ship terminal in Townsville and \$2 million to complete construction of a terminal in Cairns, \$74.5 million to complete expansion of the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, and \$100 million for the new Gold Coast AFL stadium at Carrara.

The Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing plays a key role in the community. Over the past number of years we have seen social attitudes and behaviours change, and the issue of safety at licensed venues is now at the forefront. We need a balanced and considered approach. That is why we took the responsible approach and conducted a parliamentary inquiry into alcohol related violence. The committee's final report was released in March this year and contained 68 wide-ranging recommendations. The Bligh government is committed to reducing alcohol related violence, and the government response to the inquiry is due to be released imminently.

The Bligh government remains committed to minimising gambling related harm. We are funding about \$11 million to reduce gambling harm, such as Gambling Help services and social marketing campaigns. In addition, we are delivering more than \$46 million to the community through our community benefit schemes from the revenue from gaming.

Finally, the Bligh government's 2010-11 budget is a historic one for the racing industry, with a funding injection of about \$80 million for new and improved infrastructure over the next four years. This is the biggest government cash injection for the industry in history. This investment will create new jobs and take the industry confidently into the future.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all of the staff of Tourism Queensland and DEEDI in the areas of tourism, fair trading, and liquor licensing, gaming and racing for their hard work during 2009-10. I look forward to continuing to work with you over this coming year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. In accordance with the hearing program, we will now commence with questions in relation to the Office of Fair Trading. I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, I refer you to page 2-9 of the Service Delivery Statements and your commitment to provide a consumer protection environment and further to the failed insulation scheme and your government's responsibility to ensure its safe and effective implementation. You would be aware of the Allan Hawke review of the administration of the program and his findings that 'the Commonwealth placed a high reliance on state and territory regulatory authorities to carry out their responsibilities effectively'—that is, householder complaints to consumer affairs or fair trading authorities, occupational health and safety authorities and emergency services authorities. South Australia was the only jurisdiction that had an existing licensing regime for insulation installers, which resulted in Hawke concluding—

CHAIR: Ask your question, please.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, were your officers aware of the South Australian licensing regime and why didn't they insist on its implementation in Queensland?

Mr LAWLOR: This is a question that the member for Mermaid Beach has asked on several occasions. You can ask it as often as you like. I do not see why you think that when you have asked it 200 times maybe if you ask it 201 times you will get a different answer.

Mr STEVENS: I will get the right answer.

Mr LAWLOR: In April 2009, the Queensland Office of Fair Trading participated in a national teleconference with the Commonwealth department of environment, water and heritage, as it was then known, and other consumer protection agencies to discuss the then proposed home insulation program.

The Office of Fair Trading provided input on consumer protection issues based on its experience with similar rebate schemes, such as the rainwater tank initiative. This input included issues concerning possible false and misleading representations and dodgy suppliers and marketing practices. That is what the act refers to. You should familiarise yourself with the act.

Mr STEVENS: Dodgy suppliers are what we are talking about.

Mr LAWLOR: Consultancy firm Minter Ellison provided the Commonwealth department with a risk assessment report prior to the commencement of the scheme. The report identifies that state and territory fair trading offices have a role as regulators over product quality and standards through their existing processes and structures.

Mr STEVENS: Correct.

Mr LAWLOR: The Office of Fair Trading can, for example, consider issues of misrepresentation about product quality or assist consumers in contractual disputes over the quality of the product installed.

Mr STEVENS: That is right.

Mr LAWLOR: Minter Ellison has appropriately identified the core role of fair trading agencies which does not include responsibility for safety issues linked to incorrect installation of the product. It is noted that some fair trading portfolios in other jurisdictions have additional responsibility for electrical safety issues such as in the New South Wales office, which regulates electrical and building services. This is not the case in Queensland. It should also be noted that the Minter Ellison report was not provided to the Queensland Office of Fair Trading at the time of its release but came to light when tabled in the federal parliament in February 2010. So there was a memorandum of understanding between the Office of Fair Trading and the previous department in August 2009. This enabled the Office of Fair Trading to provide details of all complaints received to that department for consideration. On 19 February the Commonwealth government announced the closure of the scheme.

Between 1 July last year and 30 June, the Office of Fair Trading finalised 297 complaints regarding insulation. These complaints covered a broad spectrum of consumer issues including simple requests for assistance to obtain refunds, repairs, replacements, warranty issues and so on; complaints about installers including workmanship; and approaches made by traders offering to install the product. When the Office of Fair Trading receives a complaint outside of its jurisdiction, it refers that complaint to the appropriate authority. For example, in the case of an electrical safety issue with insulation, the Office of Fair Trading—

CHAIR: Minister, your time has expired.

Mr STEVENS: Further to the minister's answer in that regard, in terms of all Queenslanders, in relation to the federal home insulation rebate scheme, did your officers know about electrocutions in New Zealand as a result of the absence of a training regime? And what product standards and installer training did your officers agree to at the initial meeting for the protection of Queenslanders and why didn't that protection work?

CHAIR: Could the member for Mermaid Beach please direct us to which section of the SDS he is referring to?

Mr STEVENS: Page 2-9 of the SDS, further on from the last question.

Mr LAWLOR: I will continue, then. In the case of an electrical safety issue with insulation—

Mr STEVENS: There is a question.

Mr LAWLOR:—the Office of Fair Trading would forward the matter to the Electrical Safety Office, which administers the Electrical Safety Act. Insulation installers and suppliers have an obligation under this act to ensure that their business or undertaking is conducted in a way that is electrically safe. The Office of Fair Trading would investigate an instance where a trader made false or misleading claims about the performance and benefits of an insulation product. That is not to do with the safety issue. The Office of Fair Trading assisted consumers for the duration of the insulation scheme by conciliating complaints where the trader had not completed installation correctly or had not fulfilled their contractual obligations.

Mr STEVENS: Or faulty.

Mr LAWLOR: You are not listening, are you?

Mr STEVENS: I am; you're not answering.

Mr LAWLOR: Depending upon the nature of the seriousness identified, the Office of Fair Trading has a range of enforcement options. During 2009-10 it issued five infringement notices, four warnings and entered into one enforceable undertaking. The issues associated with electrical safety were referred to that particular office. As you would be aware, of the four fatalities, two prosecutions are on foot at the moment relating to breaches of workplace health and safety and the other two matters are still under investigation and may well result in prosecutions. That is properly within the domain of the

Electrical Safety Office. I might add that that is under the jurisdiction of the Attorney-General. You had your opportunity to ask questions of the responsible minister for the Electrical Safety Office and you obviously did not do that.

Mr STEVENS: Further to that, and obviously there was no answer in relation to my question about whether the officers were aware of what happened in New Zealand, I will refer again to page 2-9 of the Service Delivery Statement in relation to the botched home insulation scheme and your department's responsibility to monitor the program and fix the mistakes that were made. If three per cent of houses installed with insulation in Queensland have electrical safety risks—and we are aware of that now—and there were approximately 40,000 Queensland homes installed under the scheme, how many of the approximately 1,275 Queensland homes have had their insulation rectified at your office's direction and supervision? What has been the cost to your department? What is the future expenditure of the government in relation to the rectification work?

Mr LAWLOR: If I can try to clarify it once again: the product is not necessarily the problem.

Mr STEVENS: The installation, which I have been talking about.

Mr LAWLOR: The installation may be the problem.

Mr STEVENS: Correct.

Mr LAWLOR: And that is a matter for the Electrical Safety Office. That is not within the jurisdiction of the Office of Fair Trading. It is not covered by the Fair Trading Act.

Mr STEVENS: There are perhaps thousands of faulty insulation installations out there in Queensland homes and you are not prepared through the Office of Fair Trading to take those matters forward.

Mr LAWLOR: The Office of Fair Trading does not have the power to investigate issues associated with electrical safety. If we get a complaint that relates to electrical safety, that is referred to the Electrical Safety Office, which is the responsible entity for investigating issues associated with electrical safety—hence the name.

Mr STEVENS: All right. I refer the minister again to page 2-9 and the reference is a consumer protection environment provided by the Office of Fair Trading. I refer to dangerous non-tempered glass and inferior imported panels generating insufficient power being utilised in solar panel schemes by shonky businesses to cut costs. I ask the minister, through you, Madam Chair: what measures, checks and balances have been put in place to ensure that Queenslanders are not being ripped off again and put in danger by another unsupervised Rudd-Gillard government half-baked scheme?

Mr LAWLOR: I am aware of the *Courier-Mail* article on 2 June about inferior solar power installations posing a risk of another subsidy issue relating to inferior products and workmanship. The article also commented on poor safety standards which could lead to the deaths of installers, as was the case with the insulation scheme.

The Office of Fair Trading is of the view that the solar power scheme does not present the same level of consumer risk that was evident with the federal government's home insulation scheme. As part of the safety element of the scheme, the connection of solar panels to a home's electricity supply must be performed by a licensed electrician. These sorts of licensing requirements were not included in the federal government's home insulation scheme, and in some states of Australia these requirements still do not exist for the installation of solar PV connection. Installers must be accredited by the Clean Energy Council and solar PV systems must comply with the Clean Energy Council design and installation guidelines. The Clean Energy Council provides a list of accredited solar PV installers on its website.

The Office of Fair Trading will assess complaints received about solar power installations for misrepresentation, false and misleading advertising, and door-to-door trading issues under the Fair Trading Act. Should the possibility of a breach be detected, an investigation will commence. If a breach is established, appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the Office of Fair Trading's compliance and enforcement framework. Where no breach of legislation is evident and the complainant is still dissatisfied with the service or goods provided, the Office of Fair Trading will attempt conciliation on behalf of the complainant. If the matter is not resolved through conciliation, the Office of Fair Trading would inform the complainant of their rights to lodge a civil claim with QCAT or their option to seek independent legal advice. Should the matter be outside of the Office of Fair Trading's jurisdiction, it would be forwarded to the appropriate authority for consideration. This may involve the Electrical Safety Office where the matter concerned is an electrical safety issue or the Building Services Authority for matters about installation safety, as there are requirements under the current scheme that installation must be conducted by a licensed tradesman.

Between 1 September 2007 and 31 May this year, the Office of Fair Trading finalised 154 complaints about solar energy installations. The majority of complaints related to general concerns such as delay or non-delivery of product, warranty matters, energy efficiency, disputes about eligibility of the subsidy, cashback offers and trading practices. Over 90 of the complaints were resolved by the office obtaining redress through conciliation. Out of the 154 complaints, 69 matters were investigated for possible breaches of fair trading legislation—

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, I refer you again to page 2-9 of the Service Delivery Statement and to the relocation of staff from the Office of Fair Trading and Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing, which was also a question on notice. Have all of these staff been fully briefed on their forced move to Ipswich? What is the projected cost of the relocation to Ipswich? You have made a commitment to go out to Ipswich for regional purposes which you indicated in your answer, but what about the cost of relocating, including rental or building costs, staff redundancies and office fit-outs?

Mr LAWLOR: Isn't this ironic—you taking an interest in public servants' jobs.

Mr STEVENS: They are good public servants. They are excellent public servants.

Mr LAWLOR: And you were going to sack 12,000 of them; do you remember?

Mr STEVENS: Not at all. You have got it all wrong. That was just you misleading.

Mr LAWLOR: That was part of your election commitment to get rid of 12,000 public servants.

CHAIR: Order!

Mr JOHNSON: You don't want to answer the question.

Mr LAWLOR: I am happy to answer the question.

Mr STEVENS: We would love to hear it.

Mr LAWLOR: I actually had a call from one of the people you purport to be concerned about who said, 'Minister, don't worry about what the LNP have got to say, because under them we wouldn't be worried about moving to Ipswich because 12,000 of us would be looking for the local Centrelink office.'

Mr STEVENS: They would not have said that because there are not 12,000 in the department. You are probably not aware of that.

CHAIR: Member for Mermaid Beach, the minister is answering the question.

Mr LAWLOR: You were going to get rid of 12,000 people overall. Do you remember?

Mr JOHNSON: Who said that?

Mr LAWLOR: That was an election commitment—get rid of 12,000 jobs.

Mr ELMES: Your version.

Mr LAWLOR: We will hear your version later probably. I have already heard it during the election campaign anyway. The Bligh government believes in decentralisation, and I am surprised that the member for Mermaid Beach would suggest that all of these jobs should be retained in George Street. I thought you had some concern for the regions. This is part of a decentralisation policy.

Firstly, this has been extended to 2013. There has been consultation with staff, and I have spoken to many of them myself in the various offices. They have expressed concerns to me, but many of them agree that it makes good sense to decentralise the department. There are people, for instance, who live in Ipswich and have to come into George Street and other offices to work. That is not logical. So what the department will be doing, and what the government will be doing over time, is treating these on an individual basis and we will be essentially relocating jobs to Ipswich, not necessarily people. In other words, the jobs will be made available in Ipswich and then we will be filling those positions. It will be done on a case-by-case basis and no staff will be required to relocate if they are unwilling to, but there are many, many staff who live in areas such as Ipswich and even west of Ipswich who have to come into Brisbane to work and that does not make sense.

There was a similar situation several years ago with the education department, where you had people from the north of the river going to the south side to teach and people from the south side going to the north side. That was rationalised.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, referring to the PAMDA Claim Fund on page 2-13 of the Service Delivery Statement, how many consumers applied for compensation and how much was given as a relief to wronged customers for the financial year 2009-10?

Mr LAWLOR: Sorry, what was the question: how many claims were there?

Mr STEVENS: How many consumers applied for compensation? How much was given as relief to wronged customers for the financial year 2009-10?

Mr LAWLOR: The Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act licenses motor dealers, real estate agents, auctioneers and commercial agents and establishes a claim fund. The claim fund is available to reimburse consumers who suffer financial loss when a licensee is found to have contravened some of the more significant offences under the act. The claim fund allows consumers to be reimbursed for loss without filing costly and time intensive civil proceedings through the courts.

On 1 July 2009, the Office of Fair Trading had 258 claims on hand and being processed. During 2009-10, 560 new claims were received. During 2009-10, 360 claims were finalised and 202 of those claims totalled \$1.204 million which were allowed. The remaining 158 claims were closed because of the following: they were rejected, 23; withdrawn or settled, 40; out of time, 8; or invalid, 87.

The chief executive's delegate has authority to determine claims valued at \$10,000 or less. QCAT has jurisdiction to determine claims over \$10,000. In 2009-10, the chief executive's delegate determined 246 minor claims of which 237 were allowed, providing \$647,127 in redress to consumers. During 2009-10, QCAT and its predecessor—the Commercial and Consumer Tribunal—determined 18 claims; 16 of these claims were allowed, providing \$302,265 in redress for consumers. It should be noted that claims totalling \$255,428 are still subject to an appeal period and therefore not yet able to be paid from the claim fund. As at 30 June 2010, 458 claims were on hand and being processed.

The Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act provides for the delegate to recover from liable parties all amounts paid to persons from the claim fund. Recovery action is also taken for fine and cost orders made by the tribunal in disciplinary matters and costs awarded in civil proceedings taken by the Office of Fair Trading. Whilst every effort is made to recover outstanding money, the recoverability of these debts is relatively low because the liable parties often have become insolvent, lack financial capacity to repay or are unable to be located. However, in 2009-10, we saw the Office of Fair Trading recover over \$1.2 million in debts owed. The approach taken for recovering moneys is designed to maximise the return of these losses through appropriate recovery and enforcement action.

Mr STEVENS: I quickly have a question relating to page 2-9 of the SDS in relation to a matter that the minister is very well aware of; it is about dummies. How long will it take for the minister to investigate and order the recall of the Happy Baby dummy?

CHAIR: Minister, there are 22 seconds remaining.

Mr JOHNSON: Have you got one, Minister?

Mr LAWLOR: I picked up the one you spat. The Product Safety Unit seeks to reduce the risk of consumer product related injuries by a range of marketplace interventions, including enforcing compliance—

CHAIR: Minister, the time has expired. You can take that on notice.

Mr LAWLOR: We are currently investigating.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. Minister, I refer you to page 2-8 of the SDS. Compliance plays an important part in a range of initiatives across your portfolio to protect Queensland consumers and to promote a fair and ethical marketplace. Could you outline to the committee your department's achievements in relation to the monitoring of compliance across industries, enforcement actions undertaken and redress for everyday consumers?

Mr LAWLOR: I certainly could and I thank you for the question. The Bligh government works hard to protect Queensland consumers and to promote a fair and ethical marketplace because it is good for a strong economy. I am pleased to report that in 2009-10 the Office of Fair Trading obtained \$6.55 million in redress for consumers—double the target.

Over the past three years Fair Trading has obtained almost \$18 million in redress for Queenslanders. Although obtaining redress is important, informing and educating consumers and businesses about their fair trading rights and obligations is a priority for the Bligh government. Informed consumers make smart decisions in the marketplace and are less likely to fall prey to fraud or undesirable marketplace practices.

During 2009-10, 11,870 entities were monitored through proactive compliance checks and the review of trust account audit reports. An example of proactive compliance is Operation Turner, which commenced in March 2010 and targeted unlicensed motor dealing and odometer tampering. To date there have been four successful prosecutions resulting in three recorded convictions and \$23,000 in fines for unlicensed motor dealing and odometer tampering. There are another six prosecutions pending.

Another focus is on Queensland seniors. This group is targeted by two types of scams—letters which claim to offer financial rewards and door-to-door traders selling dodgy handyman services. In addition to issuing consumer alerts, Fair Trading staff regularly address functions involving seniors. One Fair Trading investigation revealed that Mr Alberto Ross Martelli was targeting seniors with the offer of pensioner discounts. In June 2010 Mr Martelli was ordered to pay more than \$10,000 for falsely claiming he had a Building Services Authority licence and for failing to register his business name.

To assist another vulnerable consumer group, in February 2010 the Office of Fair Trading joined forces with the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network, ICAN. In partnership with ICAN, Fair Trading acted to stop Fair Dinkum Rentals, a Victorian company, from entering into unfair contracts for rented household goods with hundreds of Queensland residents. More than \$2 million in potential debt was saved. Fair Trading put out an alert about this trader and then negotiated the cancellation of 800 contracts and the refund of \$15,000 to customers. Through these examples we are demonstrating the Bligh government's commitment to monitoring and enforcing consumer protection for all Queenslanders.

Mr MOORHEAD: I refer you to page 2-22 of the Service Delivery Statements where it talks about inspection activities. Are you able to outline for the committee the results of the compliance campaign undertaken by Fair Trading called Operation Turner?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the honourable member for the question. Operation Turner is a special Fair Trading investigation targeting backyard motor dealers and people selling vehicles with replaced or altered odometers. Unlicensed motor deals and odometer tamperers put Queenslanders buying used cars at serious risk. Consumers spending thousands of dollars to purchase a vehicle deserve to deal with people who play by the rules. Fair Trading issues licences for a range of occupations, from motor dealers to real estate agents, to ensure those working in the industry are professional and suited to the job. As a result, consumers are protected.

Working unlicensed in the motor trade industry is a serious breach of the Property Agents and Motor Dealers Act. While Fair Trading has had success in holding unlicensed traders to account in the past, over the last 12 months it has further refined its intelligence-gathering process through Operation Turner. To date there have been five prosecutions. Another five summonses have been served and these are set down for mention in July, this month, in the Magistrates Court. Fair Trading has another nine major investigations being conducted currently in South-East Queensland and it is likely there will be more prosecutions to follow.

These backyard motor dealers do not pay licensing fees, they have no overheads and so have an unfair advantage over licensed motor dealers. For consumers, the types of vehicles sold are often of a lower quality and may be repairable write-off vehicles that have been significantly damaged in accidents. These cars are then repaired, often badly, and sold on to consumers without a warranty or other protections.

One recent investigation of a backyard trader revealed that 65 vehicles had their odometers collectively wound back in excess of four million kilometres. It is important that consumers make all the appropriate checks on vehicles they are considering buying to avoid being caught out. Consumers who are unaware of a vehicle's background put themselves at risk of expensive repair costs and in the future much worse possibly. All motor dealers selling used cars in Queensland must be licensed.

Motor dealers must disclose to all intending purchasers of motor vehicles that they are licensed and they must provide the cooling-off period and statutory warranty. I am pleased to report that Operation Turner has placed dodgy, unlicensed motor dealers on notice. If they continue, it is only a matter of time before they get caught.

Mrs SULLIVAN: I refer to page 2-8 of the SDS which outlines the significant reforms your department is undertaking with COAG to reduce the red tape burden for everyday Queenslanders. Could you outline some of these initiatives for the benefit of the committee?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. I will just go back to the baby dummy episode for the member for Mermaid Beach. Those complaints have been examined and reported to the ACCC, which has agreed to take the lead role and has given notice of distribution throughout Australia. So that has been passed on to the ACCC because it is an Australia-wide problem.

This work demonstrates the Bligh government's commitment to the seamless national economy reform agenda. Unnecessary compliance burdens on businesses will be reduced and time and savings returned to industry. That is all good for business and it is part of the Bligh government's plan for strong productivity in the future.

There are a number of ways this harmonisation will be achieved. A single national consumer law is due to commence on 1 January 2011. Implementation of Australian consumer law represents the biggest reform of consumer protection law in decades. At a practical level, a single consumer law will mean that businesses trading across borders will have a more uniform set of laws to comply with and consumers will have a more uniform set of protections, no matter where they are in the country. The new generic consumer laws include a broader availability of civil penalties, disqualification orders, redress powers for non-party consumers and, in some circumstances, the ability for regulators to lead representative actions on behalf of consumers.

From May 2011, a single national law governing personal property securities will commence, as well as a national, searchable personal property securities register. This reform will harmonise and reduce the complexity of personal property security laws and make it easier and more efficient to register and search security interests held over personal property. For example, Queensland consumers seeking to purchase a used motor vehicle will no longer need to search multiple registers across different jurisdictions.

The reform will also result in the amendment or repeal of approximately 70 acts across Australia and 40 separate registers across Australia being closed. In Queensland three acts will be repealed—the Bills of Sale and Other Instruments Act, the Motor Vehicles and Boats Securities Act and the Liens on Crops of Sugar Cane Act—and four registers maintained by Queensland will cease operation.

Further significant reform is the creation of a single national online system for business name registration. The system will provide a single electronic gateway for new business entrants to apply for their business name jointly with their Australian business number—again saving time and money. These reforms clearly demonstrate the Bligh government's commitment to reducing the burden of red tape for businesses while continuing to ensure appropriate levels of consumer protection for Queenslanders.

Mr KILBURN: I refer to page 2-8 of the SDS and ask you to outline for the committee the work Fair Trading is doing currently to ensure that consumers have the most up-to-date information about product safety.

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. Fair Trading's product safety unit seeks to reduce the risk of injuries from products through a range of activities it carries out day after day, week after week. Educating both consumers and industry about the safe supply, purchase and use of products is a key function.

In relation to consumer education, a number of major projects were carried out. A consumer awareness campaign was carried out about blind cords and the strangulation risk they can pose to small children. As well as information, free safety tassels were actually provided to consumers who requested them to fit existing blind cords to make them safe. So far about 8,000 of those safety tassels have been distributed. That is thousands of safer families in Queensland thanks to Fair Trading.

In recognition of the need to provide timely and relevant safety information, the Office of Fair Trading also produced a set of new child safety publications based on a 'seven safety steps' theme. These publications were bunk bed safety, child restraints in motor vehicles, portable cots, treadmill safety, blind cord safety, holiday safety and also furniture safety.

Bunk bed consumer education has also been a priority for Fair Trading's product safety unit. Posters on bunk bed safety have been produced and are progressively being sent out to child-care centres and retail outlets. The product safety unit also attended the Pregnancy Babies and Children's Expo in June 2010 and provided product safety information to parents of young children and expecting parents. This expo was attended by more than 20,000 people.

The product safety unit has also conducted compliance checks throughout the year. During 2009-10, 618 compliance checks were undertaken around Queensland to ensure traders were aware of their safety obligations and necessary enforcement action was taken. As the regulation of the safety of consumer products moves towards a national system in 2011, I am confident that by thinking nationally but acting locally Queensland consumers will continue to receive the high level of protection that they expect. At the end of the day, safety is a shared responsibility between government, industry and consumers.

Mr MOORHEAD: The member for Chatsworth, the member for Pumicestone and I all represent large numbers of residents who live in manufactured home parks. We are very keen to find out what the government is doing to protect those residents. Can you outline for the committee what the government is seeking to achieve for those people living in manufactured homes across Queensland?

Mr LAWLOR: I can. Thank you for the question. The reform of this industry is an important step in achieving the Bligh government's commitment to a fairer Queensland. The reform proposes changes to strengthen the Fair Trading requirements of the Manufactured Homes (Residential Parks) Act whilst encouraging the ongoing viability and growth of the residential parks industry, which is an important provider of housing and accommodation options for about 15,000 Queenslanders—and that is a growing number.

In general terms, the reform applies when a person owns their manufactured home but rents the site that the home is positioned on from a residential park owner. A comprehensive legislative review of the existing act and an extensive consultation process has already been undertaken to ensure that the reform meets community expectations and that the provisions of the legislation remain appropriate.

More than 670 responses to a public discussion paper and survey and over 100 written submissions regarding a draft version of the existing act were received. In addition, eight public consultation forums were conducted. These were attended by about 500 people.

The reform is an important milestone and is striking the right balance between protecting manufactured home owners and promoting the continued viability and growth of the industry. This will be achieved by a new requirement for site agreements to be clearly expressed in plain language and by empowering the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal to make orders to vary site agreements where terms are not clearly expressed in plain language. To protect the interests of homeowners, the reform will enable particular special terms and park rules to be prohibited by regulation and made void in existing agreements.

Amendments will also provide homeowners with more confidence and certainty regarding rent increases by substantially limiting the grounds on which a park owner may increase rent outside the terms of a site agreement. The reform will also expand the orders of QCAT to make it possible to assist

homeowners faced with termination of their site agreement. Specifically, the tribunal will be able to postpone the day a termination order takes effect for up to one year and, when appropriate, require a park owner to make another site in the park available to the homeowner.

Finally, the reforms amend the objects to emphasise the protection of its homeowners as its main purpose and also propose a number of more technical changes. In short, these reforms will significantly improve Queensland's strong and innovative consumer protection framework for manufactured home owners.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 2-8 of the SDS which outlines the department's continuing commitment to ensure business and community interests are looked after. I have a particular interest in terms of young consumers, who appear to be increasingly targeted by rogue traders, particularly with new technologies such as the internet and telecommunications. Could you please outline to the committee how the Office of Fair Trading is assisting young people to increase their knowledge of their consumer rights?

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you, Madam Chair. With young people becoming more active consumers earlier—most kids these days, even in primary school, have got mobile phones for instance, so they are constantly exposed to marketing—there is a need to assist young people to develop consumer smarts and make smarter choices. The Buy Smart competition is tailor made for younger people. For the past eight years Fair Trading has conducted the Buy Smart competition for school students which awards cash prizes to those showing the best shopping and money skills. I am sure many Queensland students will be well advanced in creating their masterpieces for this year's competition, but I just want to remind those who have not entered that there is still time. This year's competition closes on 17 September and I encourage students who have not yet entered to get a move on.

It is a fun competition but at the same time it is great in creating better awareness of consumer issues. Students can work in teams or on their own researching and then making a creative presentation which demonstrates how good their knowledge is about their rights. Past entries have taken the form of a brochure, DVD, song, board game and animations on scams, refunds, online shopping, debit and credit cards. Students make their presentation to their classmates and submit it to Fair Trading. Winners are announced in October and first, second and third prizes total \$3,600 in each category and the categories consist of years 5 to 7 and 8 to 9 and also years 10 to 12. Some 381 students from across Queensland entered last year's competition and winners were from Yeppoon, Townsville, Rockhampton, the Gold Coast and Brisbane.

Another part of Fair Trading's young consumer information is the Get Out There website which is a dynamic and flexible way to communicate important consumer messages. The website encourages young people to explore information on buying a car, getting their finances under control and even the pitfalls of booking accommodation to attend schoolies. Fair Trading also offers young consumers a series of pocket guides on topics they are interested in such as cars and shopping. I am pleased to report that the Bligh government takes its job of informing young consumers very seriously, and the products and initiatives we have in place are effective in delivering that commitment.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer you to page 2-9 of the Service Delivery Statements, particularly to the Office of Fair Trading working to minimise harm through educating and protecting vulnerable consumers. Could you outline to the committee what the Office of Fair Trading has done during the reporting period to educate and protect consumers living in remote areas in Queensland?

CHAIR: Minister, you have just under two minutes.

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. Informing and educating consumers about their Fair Trading rights is a priority for the Bligh government and helps everyone make smart decisions. Well-informed consumers are less likely to fall prey to fraud or undesirable practices. Fair Trading this year joined forces with the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network to enhance service delivery into remote Indigenous communities. The partnership with the Indigenous Consumer Assistance Network has provided ICAN with funding for two years to continue its good work. So far, services have targeted communities such as Palm Island and Yarrabah.

Acting on feedback from ICAN, an investigation in April 2010 by the Office of Fair Trading found a Victorian registered company, Fair Dinkum Rentals, had blitzed communities around Queensland and signed up hundreds of consumers to unfair contracts for rented household goods. The items were goods such as home entertainment systems, computers and cameras. These contracts totalled more than \$2.2 million and impacted on about 800 consumers. While consumers around the state were targeted, most contracts were found in remote Queensland communities. The communities most affected were Yarrabah—

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time for government questions has expired. The committee will now move into questions relating to the Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. We will take a minute to change advisers.

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you.

Mr STEVENS: Minister, I refer you to page 2-8 of the SDS relating to the amalgamation of the three racing control bodies, and I ask: how much are the chairman and directors of the new racing control body, Racing Queensland, being paid annually?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. The situation regarding the remuneration of the directors of the company is a matter for the chief executive. That is done on a recommendation of a consultant. It is not the prerogative, as I think I explained when the legislation went through, of the minister to set the remuneration. The amount of remuneration, as I said, is determined by an independent consultant appointed by Racing Queensland and must be approved by the chief executive officer of the department. The amounts approved are fixed for each period of two years. The company cannot approve directors' remuneration in excess of those levels recommended by the independent consultant and approved by the chief executive of the Queensland government department responsible for racing.

The remuneration levels recommended by the specialist remuneration consultancy firm Godfrey Remuneration Group and approved by the director-general of the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation are the chair on \$135,000, the deputy chair on \$90,000 and non-executive director on \$60,000. The report by the Godfrey Remuneration Group recommended Racing Queensland's non-executive director remuneration policy be pitched towards the 50th percentile of market practices for commercial organisations that are broadly similar to Racing Queensland in terms of financial dimensions. All fees are inclusive of superannuation contributions.

The process for the approval of a director's remuneration is the same process used for the approval of remuneration of directors of the former three control bodies. The chairs of Racing New South Wales and Racing Victoria are currently paid \$126,787 and \$107,910 respectively. However, whilst the thoroughbred racing industries in these states are larger than Queensland's, the responsibility for the strategic direction and overseeing the operations and performance of a company managing all three codes of racing would be greater and more complex than applies to one code of racing. The approved total board fees for Racing Queensland amount to \$525,000 compared to a total of \$515,900 for all three former control boards, a rise of 1.7 per cent. This can be compared to Racing Victoria—

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Mr STEVENS: Again, Minister, I refer you to page 2-5 of the Service Delivery Statements and the government's commitment to deliver the Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme which will provide \$80 million over four years, and I ask: can the minister advise the amount of money allocated from the \$80 million to upgrade the Gold Coast Turf Club for the continued running of the Magic Millions Carnival? Can the minister confirm that no taxpayer money will be allocated to the Gold Coast Turf Club unless a joint ownership arrangement of the Gold Coast Turf Club with Racing Queensland is forged? This is taxpayers' money.

Mr LAWLOR: I do not understand the distinction that you are making. The point about it is Racing Queensland—

Mr STEVENS: Would you like me to read the question again?

Mr LAWLOR: No. Racing Queensland is an independent body.

Mr STEVENS: I understand.

Mr LAWLOR: It will prioritise infrastructure which is to come out of that particular fund and then that will finally be approved by the government. With regard to the issue about the Gold Coast Turf Club, that was probably the catalyst for the formation of this particular fund.

Mr STEVENS: Which is your announcement in January.

Mr LAWLOR: So it will certainly get some priority. But at the moment Racing Queensland is working out its strategy plan, essentially prioritising what it sees as the infrastructure needs of the racing industry—that is, the three codes throughout Queensland. The Racing Act 2002 and all subsequent amendments to the act provide the legislative foundation for a modern, competitive and commercially focused racing industry and so on independent of the government. That is what was voted for unanimously in this parliament in 2002—independence of the racing industry. It should be noted that there are a variety of issues that I could go into, including the issue associated with country racing where Queensland has the only legislated minimum level of financial support for country racing. The act provides that the industry is managed by the industry for the industry and not by the government. So any arrangements that Queensland Racing comes to with the Gold Coast Turf Club will be the business of Racing Queensland. I understand Mr Bentley, the Chairman of Racing Queensland, is in Cairns today talking to the industry about its needs regarding infrastructure updates in Cairns. So, as I understand it, members of the board of Racing Queensland are travelling around Queensland—I know they have been to the Gold Coast—to ascertain exactly what is required in the way of infrastructure and working out its list of priorities.

Mr STEVENS: Again, I refer the minister to page 2-5 of the SDS. Can the minister confirm—and I ask the question again—that no taxpayer money will be allocated to the Gold Coast Turf Club unless a joint ownership arrangement of the Gold Coast Turf Club with Racing Queensland is forged?

Mr LAWLOR: I do not know if you are referring to the support for the Magic Millions Carnival, which is \$15.7 million to 2017—

Mr STEVENS: No, the \$80 million is not for that. You know, Minister, that that \$80 million is not for that. I asked you about the \$80 million for capital improvements which is out of your capital development scheme. It is the \$80 million. What I am asking is can you confirm—this is taxpayers' money—that it will not be allocated to the Gold Coast Turf Club unless a joint ownership arrangement of the Gold Coast Turf Club with Racing Queensland is forged? As you would be aware, the Gold Coast Turf Club is an independent body currently.

Mr LAWLOR: The point about it is this: the \$80 million will be prioritised by Racing Queensland and, if the government is in agreement, then it will be given the tick. So if you are referring—

Mr STEVENS: So it is not necessarily going to the Gold Coast Turf Club?

Mr LAWLOR: Not necessarily, but I would imagine that a significant part of it would.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Chair, further to that, and again referring to page 2-5 of the SDS, can the minister confirm what other non-government body is given \$80 million by this government without giving it an idea on how it will be expended?

Mr LAWLOR: As I keep telling you, Racing Queensland is independent of the government.

Mr STEVENS: I just agreed with you.

Mr LAWLOR: I cannot make comments today about what the Gold Coast and Racing Queensland Ltd have agreed on. I have no knowledge whatsoever of what they have agreed on, so we will have to wait to see what Racing Queensland and the Gold Coast Turf Club agree upon, if anything.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Chair, the minister is giving, through these financial documents, \$80 million of Queensland taxpayers' money to an independent body. What other body would ever receive \$80 million without defining to the government how that money was going to be expended?

Mr LAWLOR: That is the process it is going through right now. As I have explained to you, I understand the chairman is in Cairns today. I know that he has been on the Gold Coast. He is now going throughout Queensland to ascertain what infrastructure is required, and that will then be prioritised by Racing Queensland and a decision will then be made. To date, there is no agreement with the Gold Coast Turf Club so far as I am aware. So I cannot comment on something that has not been agreed upon.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you. We will move on. Minister, again I refer you to page 2-8 of the SDS and the amalgamation of the three control bodies. I ask: will the minister release a copy of the constitution of the new entity Racing Queensland to the people of Queensland who have invested \$80.9 million—taxpayers' dollars—into the new entity?

Mr LAWLOR: The constitution of that organisation is on their website.

Mr MOORHEAD: It is very secret!

Mr LAWLOR: Yes, so secret that they put it on their website.

Mr STEVENS: I could not get it before.

Mr LAWLOR: I am sorry about your conspiracy theory.

Mr STEVENS: I refer the minister to page 2-5 of the Service Delivery Statements and the minister's media statement of 9 June 2010 headlined 'Magic Millions redevelopment first cab off the rank', with the minister's quote—

It is the government's desire to see a major redevelopment of the Gold Coast Turf Club, the home of the Magic Millions carnival, undertaken as soon as possible.

Given the Gold Coast Turf Club's refusal to hand over its assets to Racing Queensland, can the minister advise how the redevelopment will proceed without the member/ownership approval for redevelopment? If these taxpayer funds are not going to this important job, where will they be reallocated to?

Mr LAWLOR: You are anticipating and probably death-writing the whole event from the tone. You are anticipating that there will not be an agreement reached. I do not concede that there will not be an agreement reached. I can go on. We have announced that the government is supportive of the Magic Millions racing carnival and also the yearling sales right through to 2017 and we have announced a \$15.7 million investment to ensure that that event, including the sales, is retained on the Gold Coast to 2017.

An economic impact study of the 2008 Magic Millions, for instance, conservatively estimated that the event contributed at least \$24.6 million to the Queensland economy and an additional \$27.3 million in publicity value. The owners of the Magic Millions have repeatedly made calls over a number of years for the racing industry and the Queensland government to redevelop the current Bundall facility or

develop a new greenfield site. We have been down that track and that is no longer a possibility. I cannot understand the negative attitude that you have to the Gold Coast Turf Club and the Magic Millions Carnival.

Mr STEVENS: I have a very positive one.

Mr LAWLOR: It is not evident in the tone of your questions.

Mr STEVENS: It is in their interests that I am asking these questions.

Mr LAWLOR: They wrote them for you? That is very decent of them. That is good.

Mr STEVENS: I can write my own questions, thank you, Minister. I do not need—

CHAIR: Thank you. You will allow the minister to continue.

Mr LAWLOR: You said you were asking on behalf of the turf club.

Mr STEVENS: It is in their interests that I am asking.

CHAIR: Have you finished your answer?

Mr LAWLOR: Yes.

Mr STEVENS: I will move on. Minister, I refer you to page 2-9 of the SDS and I ask: when will your department provide a response and new legislation to the Law, Justice and Safety Committee review into alcohol related violence furnished to your department four months ago?

Mr LAWLOR: It is interesting that you raise the—and that was a committee that I understand you sat on?

Mr STEVENS: For a brief moment at the end, yes.

Mr LAWLOR: For a brief moment.

Mr STEVENS: Not a brief moment—about a month.

Mr LAWLOR: It probably was not brief enough, actually. It is interesting to note—

Mr STEVENS: I take it you have trouble with the findings of that committee?

Mr LAWLOR: It is interesting to note that, among others, the member for Noosa was screaming that the government should act in relation to alcohol fuelled violence, glassings and so on and yet the statement of reservation in the report by the Law, Justice and Safety Committee said that—and you were part of that—essentially the government should sit back and do nothing. So this is another example of some members of the LNP saying one thing and other members saying another. You lot ought to get into a room together and get your stories straight. The parliamentary Law, Justice and Safety Committee final report was provided to the Queensland government on 18 March of this year.

Mr STEVENS: Correct.

Mr LAWLOR: The report contained 68 wide-ranging recommendations—very wide-ranging—and addressed key policy areas, including trading hours; entertainment precincts and lockouts; the use of glass in venues; local management plans: ID scanners and closed-circuit television; changes to the liquor licensing application process; offences and penalties; the deployment of resources for improved services including police, ambulance and transport, education, social media; the need for better data and so on. So although the committee recognised that alcohol fuelled violence also occurs in the home and in Indigenous communities, the final report focuses on violence in and around licensed premises.

There have been several meetings that I have attended and called. The Premier has been present at some, as has the Deputy Premier. We have met with industry and community stakeholders to obtain feedback on the recommendations of the final report. In fact, the last meeting that I had was with representatives from the Police Union. I think it was about a week ago yesterday. So the process is that we have the report. We are going through an exhaustive consultation process, and we have to do that because of the variety of issues that are covered in the report. Also, they cover about nine different departments including, obviously, Liquor Licensing but also Police, Emergency Services, Attorney-General, even Transport—things like that. So there is a wide range of departments that are concerned with the issues that were raised as well as a wide range of issues. This is a very important issue, which the Bligh government takes—

Mr STEVENS: So I take it it is not to be seen in the near future?

Mr LAWLOR: I can say that it is imminent.

Mr STEVENS: Imminent?

Mr LAWLOR: That is what I said. There must be an echo around here.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you. How long is an 'imminent'? I refer the minister to page 2-9 of the SDS and the fact that I have received complaints from stakeholders regarding a number of unfair charges for annual liquor licence fees. The concerns are that many small businesses are being charged full annual fees when they are not even trading for the whole year. Licensees are refused a pro rata refund even

though their licences were suspended at no fault of their own, with some licensees being out of pocket over \$5,000. I note that insurance companies, car registration—most agencies—have systems in place for pro rata payments. Why does your government not offer this or is this simply a money-grabbing exercise for the government through the Office of LGR?

Mr LAWLOR: The licensing fees are risk based. I might note that the LNP supported the legislation that was passed and which became operational on 1 January last year. So you might have asked those questions when the legislation was being debated. They have been introduced and are based, as I said, on the risk that each licensed premises presents to the community. The fees ensure that licensees contribute appropriately to the direct ongoing cost to government of administering, managing and regulating the sale, supply and consumption of liquor at the premises. A base fee applies to each licensed premises according to the licence type and reflects the level of risk that is posed by the principal activity on the premises. In addition to the base fee, specific risk criteria, including trading hours, the licensee's compliance history, the availability of prepared food and so on, determine the total licence fee paid.

The criteria regarding a licensee's compliance history commenced in 2009-10. The provisions relating to the payment of licence fees were amended during 2009 to allow the chief executive to approve staged payments of liquor licence fees after the prescribed due dates. If a licensee is affected by a natural disaster or personal hardship caused by exceptional circumstances—and that does not include financial hardship—then an application can be made to the chief executive and will be considered by him. So far as the complaints that you have got, have you reported those?

Mr STEVENS: Yes, we have sent them through. There have been letters gone to you on the matter.

Mr LAWLOR: All right. They will be dealt with in the normal course of events.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you. I refer you to page 2-9 of the Service Delivery Statements and the government's commitment to provide a consumer protection environment in the liquor industry. I ask: as there are rogue bouncers and security personnel falling through the cracks and they seem not to be complying with the law and getting away with it, which has resulted in a 450 per cent spike in damages claims for one law firm alone, why are you waiting for incidents to happen in these areas and expending funds in a reactive investigation instead of ensuring that your compliance officers have adequate resources to do their job fully on a proactive basis, preventing the current blow-out in incidents?

Mr LAWLOR: I do not know where you get that figure from, the 450.

Mr STEVENS: You can get them out of the media, if you like—the *Gold Coast Bulletin* of 8 July 2010 reporting the document.

Mr LAWLOR: That is where you get all of your information from.

Mr STEVENS: Reporting the document.

Mr LAWLOR: My understanding is that that 450 per cent was actually a number that went from two to nine.

Mr STEVENS: Is that not a bad figure?

Mr LAWLOR: One is a bad figure.

Mr STEVENS: Correct. I agree with you.

Mr LAWLOR: But what I am saying to you is that, when you take small figures like that, it is not a statistically valid figure.

Mr STEVENS: It is an important one.

Mr LAWLOR: It is not a statistically valid figure and that is probably why you used the figure of 450 per cent rather than two to nine.

Mr STEVENS: Two to nine. I will use two to nine.

Mr LAWLOR: Two to nine. The point about it is that I believe there are about 27,000 security providers. Anyway, it is many—up around 27,000. Even one complaint, even one incident such as we have recently seen at Fisherman's Wharf, is obviously a tragedy. You would be aware that, as a result of that incident, two of those security providers were charged and convicted of manslaughter and one was charged and convicted of, I think, assault occasioning grievous bodily harm or something to that effect. Three of them, anyway, have had substantial prison sentences visited upon them.

We monitor and investigate possible breaches of the Security Providers Act. During 2009-10, 50 compliance operations were completed, checking over 572 businesses and 3,110 individuals. That is being proactive: 572 businesses were checked. The Office of Fair Trading works closely with the Queensland Police Service and the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation to identify particular compliance risks in the industry. Only persons of appropriate character may hold licences. In 2009-10, 287 licences were refused or cancelled. In 2009-10 a total of 57 security providers had their licences cancelled. The majority of these cancellations resulted from assaults, drug related matters, stealing and public interest matters.

Under the act, the Office of Fair Trading can consider unrecorded convictions for disqualifying offences, ensuring that inappropriate people do not enter or remain in the industry. Disqualifying offences are defined as including an offence against a provision of the Queensland Criminal Code or an offence listed under the Drugs Misuse Act which carries a possible sentence of imprisonment of one year or more. Public safety is the Bligh government's No. 1 priority and we are committed to protecting the community from any unacceptable behaviour by security providers or within the security industry generally.

Mr STEVENS: I refer the minister to page 2-9 of the SDS and draw his attention to the statistics referred to in his media release dated 23 June 2010 relating to a drop in problem gambling whereby in 2001 problem gambling affected 0.83 per cent of the Queensland population and the most recent figures show that 0.37 per cent are affected. These are the results of the Queensland Household Gambling Survey. I ask the minister: what actual date, month and year were those last statistics taken from? Have the 2009 harm minimisation legislation measures reduced this figure any further?

CHAIR: Minister, you have just under two minutes.

Mr LAWLOR: The Queensland Household Gambling Survey plays an important role in forming responsible gaming policies and initiatives. It is conducted in conjunction with the Office of Economic and Statistical Research in the Queensland Treasury. The survey provides reliable information about gambling activity and problem gambling prevalence in Queensland and it has been conducted in 2001, 2003-04, 2006-07 and 2008-09. Information from the survey acts as an ongoing indicator of the success or otherwise of the government's approach to responsible gambling and gambling harm minimisation.

In addition to the survey's role in informing policy and program directions, the findings are published to provide reliable information on gambling activities for key stakeholders including those in gambling help services, industry, government and external researchers. Results from the 2008-09 survey were released via a series of facts sheets in late 2009. The key results were: approximately 75 per cent of adult Queenslanders had participated in some form of gambling during the 12 months prior to the survey; 68 per cent of Queensland adults are recreational gamblers; 4.7 per cent of Queensland adults are low-risk gamblers; and 1.7 are moderate-risk gamblers. The prevalence rate for problem gambling amongst the adult population was, as you said, .37 per cent. Estimates in previous years were .47 per cent in 2006-07, .55 per cent in 2003-04 and .83 per cent in the 2001 survey.

CHAIR: Time for non-government questions has expired. I call the member for Chatsworth.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, I refer you to page 2-8 of the SDS. Thousands of people rely directly on the racing industry for their employment. Could you please outline to the committee the Bligh government's commitment to the racing industry and any funding initiatives outlined in the 2010-11 state budget?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question.

Mr STEVENS: I think we've heard it.

Mr LAWLOR: Well, you are going to hear it again. The Bligh government is committed to the largest taxpayer funded cash injection in the history of the racing industry in Queensland. The \$80 million Racing Industry Capital Development Scheme represents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to revitalise and energise Queensland racecourses and create jobs in local communities. This investment will be used for building new facilities—because building means jobs, essentially. Racing is already a strong employer—estimates put direct and indirect jobs at up to about 40,000—but it is also vital for strong communities. Under the scheme, Racing Queensland is responsible for the identification of high-priority capital development projects and the preparation of relevant business cases with final approval of funding being a government responsibility. The new Racing Queensland board is currently developing a strategic plan that will address infrastructure requirements across the three codes. I am advised that Racing Queensland expects to finalise the plan by the end of September of this year.

A new racing control body will use \$900,000 specifically targeted at small country clubs that have limited financial options to assist them to upgrade their facilities to the proper workplace health and safety standards. This is an historic time for racing in Queensland with the opportunity for Racing Queensland to determine the industry's future and the ability to redevelop the industry's capital infrastructure. In addition, since 1998 the Training Track Subsidy Scheme has provided more than \$30 million to help thoroughbred race clubs offset the race clubs' costs of maintaining training facilities.

The government has also provided \$12 million to the industry for the installation of synthetic racetracks. This has seen the successful installation of synthetic tracks at Caloundra and Toowoomba with a third track to be installed in the future. The Premier has recently announced a \$15.7 million investment to 2017 to secure the Gold Coast as the home of the Magic Millions racing carnival and yearling sales to be delivered through the Queensland Events Corporation. This government is committed to providing the Queensland racing industry with the best opportunities by providing a sound legislative foundation and concrete funding support to ensure it remains competitive and grows well into the future.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer you to page 2-8 of the SDS. Please outline for this committee the real facts and the real benefits to racing across Queensland of the amalgamation of the three codes.

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. The Bligh government is supportive of the racing industry, as I have mentioned on several occasions today and many times prior to this. We are supportive of the racing industry not only for today but also into the future. Racing is a major employer, as I have mentioned, in this state and I am pleased to say that the recent amendments to the Racing Act allow for a funding boost in excess of \$80 million over four years. This funding boost will do wonders for local economies and for job creation.

This process began last year when Queensland Racing, supported by Harness Racing Queensland and Greyhounds Queensland, submitted an issues paper to government. The paper laid out the problems the racing industry is facing in ensuring a viable and competitive racing industry into the future. One of the main issues that arose was that racing's infrastructure is run down and an impediment to the industry progressing. This is an historic time for racing in Queensland with the opportunity for a single control body to determine the industry's future and the ability to redevelop the industry's capital infrastructure. The amalgamation of the control bodies removes the duplication of resources and ensures decisions are taken in the best interests of the entire Queensland racing industry. The taxpayers of Queensland expect the financial assistance package provided to the industry to be used effectively and efficiently to place the industry on a competitive footing into the future. A single control body with a view of all three codes of the racing industry will allow that to happen.

The next four years are crucial to the racing industry as the current commercial agreement with UNiTAB ends on 30 June 2014. Racing Queensland Ltd will provide an experienced, unified, integrated and stable voice for the industry during these negotiations and will enable long-term planning for the racing industry.

CHAIR: Minister, I have a further question on racing.

Mr LAWLOR: I can't get too many questions on racing.

CHAIR: There has been a lot of discussion about the future of country racing in particular. I refer to page 2-8 of the SDS. Could the minister please outline the protections that are put in place to ensure the future of country racing?

Mr LAWLOR: The Bligh government has supported country racing since the privatisation of the TAB in 1999. We are the only government in Australia that guarantees prize money for country racing. The recent amendments to the Racing Act are good news for country racing because the new control body must pay 5.32 per cent of its revenue to support country thoroughbred racing. The 5.32 per cent of the new control body's revenue is the same as 7 per cent of the old thoroughbred-only control body's revenue. There is no change. The country racing associations and the Country Racing Committee will remain to provide advice and support at the grassroots level to the control body. Rather than being fixed in legislation, the Country Racing Association and the Country Racing Committee are established under the constitution of Racing Queensland. This was supported at a meeting of the Queensland Country Racing Committee in April of this year.

Another guarantee we have put in place to protect the future of country racing is that Racing Queensland is required to consult with the Country Racing Committee on the allocation of country race dates. Should Racing Queensland and the Country Racing Committee be unable to reach agreement on the number of race days, then the number of race meetings must not be less than the number held in the previous year. Whether people are participating in race meetings as a jockey, trainer, strapper or a punter, they should be confident that the club has minimised the risk of harm to them. This holds true whether you are visiting a city track or a country race meeting.

Last year, Queensland Racing and the Queensland Country Racing Committee conducted industry-wide consultation to develop workplace health and safety standards, but we have recognised some of the smaller country clubs may find it difficult to fund the work required to meet the minimum standards. Through the \$80 million which is supplied by the Bligh government to Racing Queensland there is a helping hand. The racing infrastructure relating to workplace health and safety will be funded to the extent of \$900,000 over the next few years to help country race clubs. We recognise the importance of country racing and through these measures we are securing its future.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, I refer you to page 2-5 of the Service Delivery Statement. There is mention there of community safety. Minister, in questions by the member for Mermaid Beach and in the community there has been a great deal of concern about alcohol related violence in recent years. Are you able to outline to the committee the steps put in place by the Queensland government to both understand and tackle some of these problems?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. In response to increasing community concerns about alcohol related violence, the Bligh government has been actively working to reduce alcohol related harm that is affecting not only the victims and the family but also the entire community. The government introduced the most significant alcohol reform program in Australia in 2008. Through legislative amendments, harm minimisation was made the first object of the Liquor Act.

Further amendments were made during 2009-10 to ensure that regulation of the industry occurs for the public good. Some of the specific liquor harm minimisation initiatives implemented by the government following the 2008 reforms included reducing the trading hours of licensed premises and empowering me as minister to prohibit the sale of irresponsible liquor products. There are several other initiatives. The antepenultimate one is introducing risk based licence fees and the penultimate one is introducing mandatory responsible service of alcohol training for all staff as well as responsible management for licensed venues, training for individual licensees and approved managers and, finally, creating an offence for irresponsibly supplying liquor to a minor in a private place.

Following further community concerns, on 4 August 2009 the government initiated a parliamentary inquiry into alcohol related violence in Queensland with a focus on community safety. The committee's final report was released, as I mentioned before, on 18 March of this year and contained a broad range of recommendations in key policy areas addressed, including trading hours, entertainment precincts, lockouts, increases in security measures, use of regular glass in venues, ID scanners and CCTV cameras.

Mr STEVENS: It was a good report.

Mr LAWLOR: It was an excellent report. It is a shame about the dissenting report. That was a bit of a disappointment actually. Other areas addressed were private transport, data collection, education and cultural change. The government has been involved in widespread consultation, as I have already mentioned. In considering those 68 recommendations, because not only do they cover a vast range of topics but also cover a wide range of government departments, we have consulted widely with young people, industry, stakeholders, community groups and police. About 16,000 people responded to an online survey. The government response covers, as I said, Police, Transport, Health, Liquor Licensing, Attorney-General and various other departments. In addition to this, in September 2009 the Premier announced a 12-month moratorium on applications for extended trading.

Mr MOORHEAD: Do you want more time?

Mr LAWLOR: No.

Mr KILBURN: I refer you to page 2-5 of the SDS which refers to measures being implemented to minimise the harm to consumers from liquor and gambling. Could you outline to the committee how Queensland fared in the recently released Productivity Commission's gambling inquiry report and what proactive initiatives you are undertaking to increase awareness and educate people about the potential risks from gambling and binge drinking?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. The Productivity Commission report was released last month and I am pleased to say that the report found a number of areas for which Queensland is a template for the rest of Australia. First the commission suggested that other states draw on Queensland's approach to gaming machine shutdown periods. It recommended that governments introduce a shutdown period of at least six hours duration. In 2008 this government, the Bligh government, put a stop to machine gaming in clubs and hotels before 10 am. The result, as noted by the commission, is that 99 per cent of Queensland clubs and hotels shut down their gaming machines for at least six and a half hours; 74 per cent are shut down for at least nine and a half hours per day.

Queensland already has in place a number of other harm minimisation initiatives recommended by the commission. For example, ATMs should be a reasonable distance from the gaming floor, ATMs will not be visible to gamblers and winnings above \$250 are paid by cheque unless the venue has approved to pay a higher amount. We are also very well positioned with regard to the commission's major recommendation that all states introduce a full precommitment system by 2016. Precommitment systems allow players to set limits on their spending before sitting down at a gaming machine. Players can also limit their time at the machine. Queensland is ahead of the curve here as we already have a partial precommitment system available to clubs and hotels. More than 40 Queensland clubs and hotels use the system already on a voluntary basis.

The system already meets the Productivity Commission's recommended requirements for partial precommitment, which the commission recommends be introduced by 2013 as a transitional step to full precommitment by 2016. The commission also suggested that other states draw on our model of gambling warnings, which the commission found to be effective, through the use of imagery, display of gambling help contact details and prominent placement in venues. It is through progressive measures such as these that the Bligh government has received a steady fall in problem gambling from 0.83 per cent in 2001 to 0.37 per cent in 2008-09.

CHAIR: I refer to page 2-5 of the SDS on liquor regulatory activities. Could the minister please outline initiatives by the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation to improve efficiency?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the honourable member for the question. The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation has undertaken a number of initiatives over the past year to improve efficiency. Recently, a pilot scheme was introduced called the community liquor permit scheme, which allows community

organisations to lodge their request for liquor permits online. The Brisbane based pilot commenced on 30 April this year and the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation has already received more than 30 per cent of applications online.

Often these community groups are staffed by volunteers. They do not have the big offices and large budgets—the administrative backup, essentially—to lodge these applications. The reason that they are applying for a one-off liquor permit is for fundraising at events such as school fetes and other such gatherings. This is a real win for community organisations as it simplifies the work that they need to do to receive a liquor permit for their events—important events to the community. The Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation receives more than 6,000 community liquor permit applications each year from organisations such as P&Cs and a variety of sporting clubs.

The good news is that Brisbane community organisations, event organisers and schools are the first to benefit, with a staged rollout for the rest of the state on the horizon. Applicants are still subject to the same rigorous licensing process as before but, by introducing the online system, the Bligh government is actively reducing the paperwork for low-risk events. Licensing makes up 90 per cent of the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation's day-to-day business, so it is important to use processes that are both efficient and accessible. Following feedback from industry, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation has also increased its online capacity for annual fee payments and is introducing increased credit card limits and BPAY.

In addition, applications for funds from the Gambling Community Benefit Fund have also gone online. Since September last year, community organisations have been able to apply for the gambling and casino benefit funds online. There has been a great uptake of the online application process, with nearly 90 per cent of applications now being submitted online. Again, this is a great benefit to the community organisations as it allows them to cut through red tape. These online initiatives represent a win-win. They cut down red tape for community organisations and also allow these schemes to be more efficiently run by OLGR.

Mr MOORHEAD: I refer you to page 2-5 of the Service Delivery Statements where it mentions that harm minimisation has been a key priority for the Queensland government. Are you able to detail the measures that the government has put in place to protect patrons and minimise harm whilst they are in licensed venues?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. As I mentioned before, Queensland's Liquor Act—and the new act came into effect on 1 January last year—now prioritises harm minimisation as the first objective and legislates to minimise harm from the sale and supply of alcohol. Many of these strategies have been implemented over the 2009-10 period and they include mandatory responsible management of licensed venues and responsible service of alcohol training for licensees and for managers. It is now mandatory for all applications for medium- and high-risk new liquor licences and applications to change the operation of licensed premises to include the completion of a risk assessment management plan and a community impact statement.

Voluntary liquor accords, that is a group of people consisting of licensees, police, local government and representatives from the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation, are a cooperative approach to local liquor related issues and have now been recognised in the Liquor Act. We have seen some of these organisations being very proactive in the banning of certain individuals. Banning occurs in places such as Warwick, Rockhampton, Mareeba—places like that where serial offenders can be banned by the actual people involved in the industry including the police and so on.

The trading hours of licensed premises have also been restricted. Ordinary trading hours are now 10 am to midnight for all venues with limited exceptions for special facilities such as casinos and some airports. Applications for approval to trade in the higher risk post-midnight period are subject to more stringent requirements to ensure harm is minimised and appropriate levels of safety are maintained. The government has also passed legislation in 2009-10 to further reduce alcohol related harm by banning regular glass from high-risk venues. This legislation was accompanied by a social marketing campaign in October 2009 on the Gold Coast which focused on the dire consequences of glassings. We have introduced a 12-month moratorium on applications for extended trading hours after midnight except in a very limited number of designated inner city areas where there is a concentration of late-night trading venues.

Finally, the government is working on its response to the Law, Justice and Safety Committee's inquiry into alcohol related violence, which I went through before. Liquor reforms such as these involve substantial change which has, of course, created some debate. However, the Queensland government's commitment to reducing alcohol related harm and violence remains unchanged. Improving safety is important for all Queenslanders. The Queensland government's liquor reforms have seen Queensland lead the way with the most significant alcohol reform program in Australia.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, the Gambling Community Benefit Fund, introduced by the state Labor government, has benefited thousands of Queensland community organisations for more than 10 years now. Can you outline some of the good work this Bligh Labor government has delivered with that program during that time?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. The Bligh government supports the four community benefit funds throughout the state. They are just one way we can return to the community taxes received from gambling activities. The Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund and the Breakwater Island Casino Community Benefit Fund were established in 1987, with the Reef Hotel Casino Community Benefit Fund being established in 1996. The largest fund is the Gambling Community Benefit Fund and it operates state-wide. It is funded through taxes placed on the Golden Casket lotteries, wagering, Keno and gambling machines in clubs and hotels. Since it commenced in 1994, the Gambling Community Benefit Fund has delivered grants of \$451.6 million to community organisations from Cape York to Coolangatta, from Bedourie to Bundaberg. Groups as diverse as P&Cs, sporting clubs, disability support groups and junior swimming clubs apply for grants to fund worthy projects such as sunshades, vehicles, sporting equipment, computers, meeting halls, new kitchens and solar hot water systems. This fund approved more than 1,900 projects in 2009-10 alone. These projects were worth \$36.8 million.

Recently the Gambling Community Benefit Fund delivered funds for—these are just examples of what these funds are used for—new playground equipment for the Kookaburra Creek Kindergarten Association in Gladstone, a wheelchair lift for the Cooloola Noosa Life Education Association, painting for the Queensland Country Women's Association in the Southern Downs—

Mr STEVENS: Hear, hear! Any Labor electorates?

Mr LAWLOR: Not that I can see. The three so far are Gladstone, Noosa, Southern Downs. Here is another one: the Rotary Club of Murgon is planning an arts festival and we have funded \$8,530 for that. It will be the biggest thing Murgon has seen for quite some time. In the electorate of Mermaid Beach—

Mr STEVENS: Another conservative electorate.

Mr LAWLOR: That is five out of five.

Mr STEVENS: Are there any Labor ones?

Mr LAWLOR: We are trying to look after you lot. You need all the looking after that you can get. Mermaid Waters—

CHAIR: The time has expired for government questions. The committee will now break for a minute to allow changeover of your advisers and then resume with questions relating to Tourism Queensland. The committee will now move into questions relating to Tourism Queensland. I call the member for Mermaid Beach.

Mr STEVENS: I refer the minister to page 2-68 of the Service Delivery Statement and the reduction in funding for Tourism Queensland from \$63.945 million estimated actual for 2009-10 to \$55.1 million estimated for 2010-11, a total reduction of \$8.845 million. I also refer him to page 2-71 where it states that the explanation for the decrease is—

The decrease in grant revenue is due to removal of distributed grants of \$6 million.

I ask: given this funding was removed in last year's budget only to be reinstated six weeks later when the department found it was incapable of appropriately distributing regional funds, why are we seeing a repeat of the same failed exercise in this year's budget?

Mr LAWLOR: One thing we know for certain about this Tourism budget is that the industry will be better off by a factor of \$12 million than it would have been under the opposition. You threatened to cut \$12 million from the government's QIIS scheme, which attracts airline investment to Queensland and extends existing airline services. Without airlines, there would be no tourists. Without tourists there are no jobs. Of course, you also proposed that 12,000 job cut. Many of them would have been tourist related jobs.

What did we do? In June 2009 the Bligh government budgeted contribution to Tourism Queensland was \$43.5 million. If you have a look at page 2-67 you will see the \$43.5 million. But by the end of the 2009-10 financial year the actual government contribution was \$63.9 million, the figure you have referred to. In June 2010, on budget day—again on that page—the government contribution was \$55.1 million. So it has increased from \$43.5 million to \$55.1 million.

I know for a fact that you were briefing journalists on budget day and spreading misinformation about the budget decrease, because you were comparing an actual spend at the end of last year with a budgeted figure for the start of this year. It is comparing apples and oranges, as you should know as a former accountant. For a valid comparison you must compare a budgeted figure with a budgeted figure, just as I have explained. You will only be able to compare an actual figure with an actual figure at the end of this financial year. You will be able to compare the actual figure of \$78.8 million on page 2-67 with an actual figure at the end of this current year. Meanwhile, the only valid comparison is to compare budgeted figures with budgeted figures.

I will walk the member through the variation. This year's budget movement compared to last year's actual is due to a range of factors including \$3.5 million from projects which ran over several years which are finalised; \$3 million for the one-off grant in 2009-10 from the proceeds of the sale of Sunlover Holidays; \$1.6 million from the end of a range of funding grants and activities under the

Queensland Tourism Strategy; \$1.9 million in funding for the conventions and incentives bureau, which has shifted to Queensland Events; \$2.4 million in cooperative marketing. So some projects have ended, some were one-offs and others shifted to another department.

Mr STEVENS: I refer the minister to page 2-68 of the SDS and developing tourism in Queensland. I make the observation that the current chair of Tourism Queensland resides in Sydney and can be best described as an occasional visitor to Queensland. Is the minister of the opinion that there is no suitable person in Queensland to chair Tourism Queensland?

Mr LAWLOR: It is interesting that you make the point about the chairman of the Tourism Queensland board. Where is your chairman today? Where is your leader today?

Mr STEVENS: I am asking the questions, Minister.

Mr LAWLOR: He has voted with his feet.

Mr STEVENS: I am asking the questions, Minister, and obviously it is a very touchy point.

Mr LAWLOR: It is for you, I can imagine that.

Mr STEVENS: No. Obviously it is a very touchy point.

Mr LAWLOR: He has voted with his feet and gone overseas halfway through the estimates hearings.

Mr STEVENS: So you do not like Queensland.

CHAIR: Member for Mermaid Beach, you have asked your question. Let the minister answer it.

Mr LAWLOR: That is how much importance he gives to this process.

Mr JOHNSON: He has capable people here doing it. That's why he has gone.

Mr LAWLOR: Give yourself a wrap, Vaughan.

Mr JOHNSON: Ray, Glen and I. You know that.

Mr LAWLOR: The simple—

Mr JOHNSON: Don't lose your place.

Mr LAWLOR: I won't, don't worry.

Mr STEVENS: Put your finger on it. It helps.

CHAIR: We will allow the minister to continue.

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you. It is interesting because of all your website media releases only one of them relates to tourism. That is how interested you are in it. One of them relates to tourism and that related to the federal budget. So far as your leader, who is off overseas, is concerned, of 639 media releases only four of them related to tourism. That is not much of an emphasis.

Mr STEVENS: What's this got to do with the chairman of Tourism Queensland?

Mr LAWLOR: No tourism policy whatsoever. In fact, I am indebted to the Treasurer—

Mr STEVENS: What has this got to do with it?

Mr LAWLOR:—who, through his forensic skills, got the first sighting of a possible policy from the LNP.

Mr STEVENS: Madam Chair, can we have some relevance here?

Mr LAWLOR: It is like Migaloo—everyone waiting for the first sighting—but unfortunately, like Migaloo, it is a one-off. The policy that the Treasurer discovered was the explanatory memorandum on the LNP draft economic policies. What a cracker of a policy that is! No policy on tourism whatsoever.

So far as the chairman is concerned, I do not know what his living arrangements are. I know he has a unit at Port Douglas that he spends a lot of time at. I believe that he also spends time in Sydney. He is a businessman. We get the best people to sit on that board and I believe that we have a very, very effective board.

Mr STEVENS: I refer the minister to page 2-68 of the Service Delivery Statements with regard to developing tourism in Queensland. This is a follow-up to estimates question on notice No. 3. I raised in this forum last year the fact that Tourism Queensland spent a disproportionate amount of international marketing expenditure—\$3.6 million—on our greatest international market, being New Zealand. Why does tourism spend 10.25 per cent of its international marketing on a market that is 26 per cent of Queensland's international tourists 12 months after I brought this to your attention?

Mr LAWLOR: Probably because Tourism Queensland does not take all its advice from you, and that would be a reasonable approach to take.

Mr STEVENS: Well, they certainly do not take any from you.

Mr LAWLOR: Tourism Queensland has 14, I believe, overseas offices that promote tourism internationally. So far as the details of the spending in each of those markets is concerned, I will hand over to the Chief Executive Officer of Tourism Queensland, Anthony Hayes.

Mr Hayes: The commitment to the New Zealand market has actually gone up dramatically over the last three years. If you were to go back three years ago, our marketing spend would have been approximately \$400,000. Last year it was over \$1 million. New Zealand is a cost-effective market. We do not have to spend as much on the ground there as we do, say, in Great Britain or in Europe or in Japan. So, from the way we focused on that market, the Australian dollar is obviously stronger than the New Zealand dollar. We have 2½ staff, so it is a small office there. The focus out of New Zealand is very much on retail sales activity. We have five key marketing pillars that we would attack for the New Zealand market: retail sales activity; PR and publicity activity; digital marketing activity; the relationship with our airline partners is growing every day, and that is extremely important; and one other that has gone out of my head for the moment.

The main focus in New Zealand is very much ongoing retail tactical activity to drive as many sales as possible. One of our key strategies, and the reason we are putting more money into the New Zealand market, has been to grow the market towards Cairns and the Great Barrier Reef, tropical North Queensland. The Gold Coast does extremely well out of New Zealand, as does Brisbane. But there are certainly opportunities for the Sunshine Coast and for Cairns, in particular, to grow that market over time. So we have in fact put more money into that market. It is one of our top five expenditure markets for the international side of things. I think we are seeing good results for the money we are spending.

Mr STEVENS: Thank you, Mr Hayes. I refer the minister to page 2-67 of the Service Delivery Statements and the performance statement that refers to the decline in the value of cooperative investment in marketing campaigns by half a million dollars. Note 2 provides that the decline may be attributed to 'large accommodation groups negotiating attractive rates directly with the media rather than advertising through Tourism Queensland's cooperative program'. How will Tourism Queensland attract these large accommodation groups back to advertising through Tourism Queensland and why can't Tourism Queensland negotiate attractive rates when they have approximately a \$38 million marketing spend on advertising?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the question. In 2009-10 approximately \$7.5 million in cooperative marketing was generated. That was a decline from the \$10.2 million target. The decline in cooperative investment in Tourism Queensland's marketing campaign can be attributed to the global financial crisis, for one; free of charge industry participation in rescue campaign activity; and large accommodation groups negotiating attractive rates directly with the media rather than advertising through Tourism Queensland's cooperative program.

The increased use of digital marketing has also decreased the amount of investment required in marketing campaigns. For example, Best Job in the World was largely driven by online and social media channels. As a result, Tourism Queensland has proved itself to be a marketing force to be reckoned with globally. Another reason for the decrease in cooperative investment is the increasing trend to use campaign partner websites as a call to action—for instance, through Flight Centre. In 2009-10, Tourism Queensland delivered a dynamic retail focus to its marketing campaigns to support operators through promotions designed to increase visitor numbers and expenditure. These multibillion dollar sales and marketing campaigns were funded cooperatively by government and industry but remove the middleman, with consumers able to book online directly with campaign partners.

TQ uses its resources extremely well, as demonstrated by its astonishing world acclaimed successes, including the Best Job in the World. This innovative campaign was one of the most successful tourism marketing campaigns of all time. It generated more than \$400 million in globally estimated public relations. So Ben Southall, who was the successful applicant for the Best Job in the World, did a magnificent job. It is interesting to see that the man who has probably got the worst job in the world has gone overseas, and that is your leader.

Mr JOHNSON: Come on, be nice.

Mr STEVENS: I refer the minister to page 2-71 of the Service Delivery Statements. The income statement refers to the increase in employee expenses by almost \$2 million. It attributes this increase to external publicity services employed on instruction of the Tourism Queensland board. Minister, what specific promotional areas has this \$2 million been used for? What external company has been hired to do this job? Did this job go out to tender as required to do so under normal government requirements?

Mr LAWLOR: I will give a general answer and I might ask the CEO to contribute to that. Tourism Queensland's employee costs are estimated at \$15.7 million as at 30 June this year, including superannuation, payroll tax and workers compensation. This is around \$350,000 or two per cent higher than budgeted, mostly due to redundancies and higher parental leave costs than anticipated. The increase from 2009-10 estimated actual to the 2010-11 estimate takes into account changing foreign currencies—as I mentioned, there are 14 overseas offices; provision for certified agreements and other wage increases; and also four new positions related to external publicity services brought in-house to maintain media relations.

I think Tourism Queensland does a fabulous job. We only have to look at the Best Job in the World campaign to understand that this is one of the best tourism offices and has been voted as such for the third year in a row. I will hand over to the chief executive to add to that answer.

Mr Hayes: We implement a philosophy where rather than employ people on a full-time basis we do a number of specific marketing projects or development projects where it is actually more cost-effective to bring people in to undertake specific tasks. Once that task is over we can let them go. That is a better way of managing our funds, making the dollars go further. One of the key focuses has been Best Job in the World and that has been a good example of where we have needed to bring in additional resources to do the extraordinary amount of work that was involved. We ended up generating in excess of \$500 million or \$550 million worth of publicity as a result of that campaign.

We have also implemented a significant number of sales campaigns to run off the back of the Best Job in the World to try to drive as many sales to Queensland as possible. So it is not just about the publicity; it is about converting that interest into as many sales as we can. Sometimes we need to put extra people on the ground or extra pairs of hands in the office to make that happen. As I said, when a specific project comes to an end, we are able to let people go and it is not carrying that number on the books.

Mr LAWLOR: If I can just add, the in-sourcing of publicity services complies with state purchasing policy, it is reviewed by the department and also it is reviewed and approved by the Tourism Queensland board.

Mr STEVENS: Back to the minister again on that same issue, what external company was hired to do that job at the direction of Tourism Queensland?

Mr LAWLOR: Oh.

Mr STEVENS: If you could ask your adviser.

Mr LAWLOR: I have not got that level of detail of course. If I can pass that over—

Mr STEVENS: It is a pretty big job.

Mr LAWLOR: Just bear with it. Just be patient. I will hand over to Anthony Hayes, the CEO of Tourism Queensland.

Mr Hayes: The simple answer is none. That role has now been in-sourced because we believe that that will be an ongoing role. Does that answer your question?

Mr STEVENS: No, because that is not what the documents say. Minister, the documents clearly say—and I am quoting page 2-71—that it attributes the increase to external publicity services employed on instruction of the Tourism Queensland board.

Mr LAWLOR: It is now in-house.

Mr Hayes: I can explain the logic behind that, if that would be of use.

Mr STEVENS: Where does external come in-house?

Mr LAWLOR: I will ask the chief executive officer to respond to that question.

Mr Hayes: We are going through the process at the moment, if I may explain, to bring our publicity services in-house. Over previous years, we have used an external company to do the publicity for us. We have found that, because of the increased focus we are placing on publicity and PR activity, it is more cost effective to bring the role back in-house. We are in the process of advertising for four roles at the moment, and those four roles will be to generate articles about the wonders of Queensland, to look at hosting journalists on famils et cetera to try to drive more PR activity. It is just more cost effective to bring that role in-house.

CHAIR: Minister, did you want to add anything more?

Mr LAWLOR: It has just been pointed out to me that it is possibly a typo. It should be 'brought' in-house and not 'bought' in-house. Thank you for picking up that typing error.

Mr STEVENS: I am on to everything—proof reader extraordinaire. I refer the minister to page 2-68 of the Service Delivery Statements. The income statement refers to the increase in employee expenses by \$2 million, and we have been through that one. Therefore, I ask: how was the funding for the four new staff members as per the staffing statement on page 2-67 achieved out of existing staff commitments?

Mr LAWLOR: Again, I will hand that over to Anthony Hayes. He is familiar with the staffing arrangements there.

Mr Hayes: The FTEs will in fact be rising by four. The FTEs to June 2010 were budgeted at 154 and the new approved budget by the TQ board will move that to 158. We did a cost analysis before moving down this path and it is a cost-effective decision to move towards having the staff in-house as opposed to paying the fee. It comes out slightly cheaper to bring the roles in-house and to have them permanently based with us. As a broader answer to the question, in terms of the culture of the

organisation we are trying to introduce, I think the days of focusing on putting an ad on the TV and saying, 'We're done,' are well behind us. The future is all about publicity, digital marketing and social media and we want to have control over the environment in which we are operating. The philosophy then is to bring those four roles in-house. In fact, we believe it will save us in the order of \$50,000 to \$100,000 in terms of paying the staff ourselves versus the contract we previously had.

Mr LAWLOR: In the circumstances, TQ has done a great job in promoting Queensland during the global financial crisis and all the crises we have had, including swine flu and the high Australian dollar. I do not suppose you could describe the high Australian dollar as a crisis; nevertheless, it is an issue that impacts adversely on tourism in Queensland. It dissuades people from travelling to Queensland and Australia and encourages locals to go overseas. I think TQ has done a great job under difficult circumstances. There were other issues, such as adverse weather events, oil spills and things like that. The last 18 months or so has been a very, very difficult time for tourism, as we are all aware—that is not a news flash—but Tourism Queensland has done a great job in minimising the effects of those various issues and I thank them all.

Mr STEVENS: I draw the minister's attention to page 2-68 of the Service Delivery Statements and the income statement. The 2008-09 explanation stated the decrease in the 2009-10 estimate of other revenue reflects the ceasing of the licence fee for revenue from Sunlover Holidays, which was sold during that year for about \$9 million I think. Why is it that a new licence fee subsidy of \$3 million appears in 2009-10 figures, and why isn't that licence fee subsidy being reallocated in 2010-11? I assume that is the licensing for Sunlover Holidays.

Mr LAWLOR: That may be a reasonable assumption. The Sunlover Holidays intellectual property was sold to AOT in 2008. Prior to the sale, the Sunlover Holidays intellectual property was owned by Tourism Queensland and licensed to AOT under a five-year licence agreement. The licence agreement commenced on 1 July 2005 and was due to expire on 30 June this year. AOT had an exclusive option to purchase the Sunlover Holidays intellectual property at the end of the five-year term. The licence agreement included an agreed option price of \$5 million at the end of the initial five-year licence agreement, decreasing by \$1 million for each subsequent year of the lease to a value of zero by the 10th year.

The decision to divest Sunlover Holidays was based on the following factors. The Australian marketplace for domestic holidays had changed, whereby fewer consumers were purchasing wholesale holiday packages. Consumers were purchasing flights and accommodation directly from retailers via the internet. Sunlover Holidays's market share decreased from 30 per cent in the mid-nineties to 11 per cent in 2004. These changed marketplace conditions contributed to downturns in Sunlover's revenue. Sunlover Holidays lost \$2.6 million in 2003-04 and \$0.5 million in 2004-05 prior to the licensing arrangement.

The proceeds from the sale of Sunlover Holidays are accounted for as follows: \$0.7 million was retained by Tourism Queensland for costs and adjustments; the then Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry grant payment to Tourism Queensland was reduced by \$6 million in 2008-09; \$3 million was transferred to the consolidated fund before being returned to the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation as administered appropriation in 2009-10 to be paid as a grant to Tourism Queensland; \$3 million was converted from administered to controlled appropriation from the former Department of Tourism, Regional Development and Industry in 2008-09 to fund the network grants program; Tourism Queensland retained the remaining \$3 million for international marketing activity in 2008-09.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. I call the member for Chatsworth.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, I refer you to page 2-67 of the SDS. There has been quite a bit of misinformation put about from various sources regarding the Tourism budget. Could you please outline to the committee for the sake of clarity the status of funding for Tourism?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for Chatsworth for his question. Tourism Queensland's total budget for 2010-11 is \$63.7 million. This includes a Bligh government allocation of \$55.1 million in revenue, incorporating administered grants. Part of this state contribution is the \$12 million allocated under the 2009 protecting tourism jobs election promise. There is an estimated \$7.08 million in cooperative investment income from the tourism industry—this is also referred to in the budget as user charges—and \$1.52 million in other revenue, including interest and rents. This allocation reinforces the Bligh government's commitment to the industry—an industry that contributes \$9.2 billion net to the Queensland economy and is responsible for 220,000 jobs both directly and indirectly.

Along with this, Queensland's tourism industry will benefit from a broad range of other initiatives covering infrastructure, the environment, employment and training, and the arts and events. Key infrastructure initiatives include: a \$42.5 million commitment to a cultural precinct in Cairns that will enhance the area as a tourism destination; reaffirmation of the Bligh government's commitment to the cruise industry, including a \$30 million contribution to a cruise ship terminal in Townsville and \$2 million to the completion of the construction of a cruise ship terminal at the heritage listed cargo shed in Cairns; a \$45 million local government grants and subsidies program to commence on 1 July 2011; a new

funding pool of \$30 million for councils in Western Queensland to improve key roads for all regional road users, and I am sure the member for Gregory will be interested in that; \$9.4 million for airport infrastructure upgrades for the Whitsunday Coast Airport and the Bundaberg Regional Airport; \$74.5 million to complete the \$146 million expansion of the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre; and \$100 million for the new Gold Coast AFL stadium at Carrara, and the member for Mermaid Beach was supportive—

Mr STEVENS: Great idea.

Mr LAWLOR: He agreed that it was a great idea but he was unable to get the LNP hierarchy to support it in the last election. Nevertheless, I acknowledge his support for that in the face of opposition from the LNP hierarchy. Also, there was \$630,000 for improved public amenities for the Townsville 400 V8 Supercar series. Another important way that we protect and strengthen tourism jobs is through programs to promote innovation, competitiveness and productivity. Most tourism businesses are small businesses.

CHAIR: I have a follow up question in relation to the tourism industry referring to page 2-4 of the SDS. I think you might have covered some of this in an earlier question from the member for Mermaid Beach, but can you tell us what the government has done to assist the tourism industry during the GFC and the impact that has had on the tourism industry?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank you for the question. As we are all aware, and I have mentioned it several times, 2009 was one of the most challenging years ever for the Queensland tourism industry. The Bligh government responded to the impact of the global financial crisis by boosting tourism funding through a \$37.8 million stimulus package to be delivered over three years. The Tourism Action Plan to 2012 is a rescue package to protect tourism jobs by boosting marketing and long-term product and development needs.

Tourism Queensland has been delivering a range of domestic and international marketing campaigns to sustain and grow Queensland's marketing share of the Australian tourism dollar. The organisation delivered the Best Job in the World global campaign, which was one of the most successful and innovative tourism marketing campaigns of all time, generating more than \$400 million globally in public relations value. As I mentioned before, Ben Southall, the successful applicant, did a wonderful job in that position. I have also mentioned that John-Paul Langbroek has decided to vote with his feet. He has got the worst job in the world and he has gone overseas in the middle of estimates hearings and left the members for Southern Downs and Clayfield to argue over who is the Acting Leader of the Opposition.

Domestically, Tourism Queensland has been working on a series of hard-hitting campaigns which offer great deals to encourage Australians to holiday here. The recent Too Easy and Bonus Breaks campaigns generated immediate sales activity and provided opportunities to work with airlines and wholesalers to value-add. For example, the Bonus Breaks campaign generated approximately 23,655 room nights—that does not sound approximate; that sounds pretty precise—and this contributed \$13.4 million in visitor expenditure in Queensland.

Internationally, Tourism Queensland's focus has been on the China and New Zealand markets. We have spent a total of \$1.1 million to stimulate growth from China, including \$1 million on campaign activity and \$100,000 on activity to educate and partner with the Chinese travel industry. We have also spent a total of \$1 million on New Zealand—

Mr JOHNSON: They are all over here.

Mr LAWLOR:—which includes \$700,000 on major consumer tactical campaign activity and \$300,000 on smaller campaigns and industry partnerships. So long as they are leaving their money here; that is what we are really interested in. Chair, can I have a short extension to complete this answer?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr LAWLOR: In addition, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation is complementing this marketing effort with new product development. These include: \$300,000 for tourism project prefeasibility grants; the rollout of new ecotourism projects in or near protected areas; \$470,000 for ecotourism development grants to help with planning, assessments and specialist costs; and \$1.8 million for minor tourism infrastructure grants to boost facilities for the drive tourism market.

Mr MOORHEAD: My question follows on from that. We have discussed what the government has done during the GFC. Minister, I refer you to page 2-65 of the Service Delivery Statements. How will the Bligh government broaden investment in major international and domestic tourism as global finances and markets continue to recover?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for Waterford for the question. In 2009-10 Tourism Queensland delivered a dynamic retail focus to its marketing campaigns as guided by the Bligh government's Tourism Action Plan to 2012 and the organisation's \$4.16 million Global Brand Strategy. The aim of 2009-10 activity was to offer immediate assistance to operators who were feeling the pressure of the global financial crisis through promotion designed to increase visitor numbers and expenditure.

These multimillion dollar sales and marketing campaigns were funded cooperatively by government and industry. Key results include Tourism Queensland's \$1.3 million campaign in partnership with Flight Centre, Infinity Holidays and Virgin Blue encouraging consumers to take a short break in Queensland. Over the four-week period from 13 February to 12 March this year, sales for Queensland were up 10 per cent on the previous year and room nights were up five per cent on the previous year.

The \$1.8 million Best Holiday in the World campaign featured four popular Best Job in the World candidates doing a rendition of *The Monkees* theme tune with the new lyrics 'Hey, hey. This is Queensland'. Since the 10-month campaign, launched on 31 August 2009, visitors to the Queensland Holidays website have looked at more than 495,000 pages of holiday deals for every region in Queensland. I note that the member for Mermaid Beach expressed his dislike for that particular jingle—

Mr Stevens interjected.

Mr LAWLOR: You will be happy to hear that it was not my music taste. In any event, another point of difference with the LNP is that the Leader of the LNP thought it was a catchy tune and a good campaign ad. He is showing a bit of taste in supporting Tourism Queensland. Under the \$1 million Unreal Deals campaign, which ran from 19 July to 23 August 2009, Tourism Queensland in partnership with Sunlover Holidays promoted more than 150 deals from more than 130 operators across Queensland and reaped more than \$6.4 million in sales—the best result of any Queensland domestic retail campaign.

As the global economic situation is slowly recovering, Tourism Queensland is implementing longer term strategies that will help to grow visitation and expenditure from Queensland's major domestic and international markets, strengthen the state's position as the No. 1 Australian holiday experience and deliver a sustainable, compelling and effective brand for Queensland. Tourism Queensland is currently working on a new global brand to reposition Queensland globally, setting the strategic direction for the promotion of Queensland for the next five to 10 years. The aim is to increase brand value. Can I have a short extension, if you do not mind, member for Waterford?

Mr MOORHEAD: Yes.

Mr LAWLOR: Thank you. The aim is to increase brand value, broaden the audience of Queensland's brand and refresh the way it is thought of by consumers in Australia and around the world. Tourism Queensland has engaged relevant stakeholders, including regional tourism organisations, throughout the creative process and the brand is currently being tested in the market. The new brand will be launched in late 2010, so there is something else to look forward to.

Mrs SULLIVAN: I refer to page 2-4 of the SDS. Would you please advise how the Bligh government is supporting the important drive tourism sector in Queensland?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the honourable member for Pumicestone for the question. The Queensland government understands the importance of drive tourism and recognises the important benefits that it brings to the economy both state-wide and locally. That includes the regions and the bush. There were 15.5 million domestic visitors to Queensland in the year ending March 2010 of which 55 per cent, or 5.5 million visitors, drove to their destination for their holiday or to visit their friends and family. Nearly 800,000 leisure travellers took a drive holiday within Queensland in the year ending March 2010, staying at least four nights and staying in more than two destinations on their trip. Queensland welcomed two million international visitors in the year ending March 2010 of which 34 per cent, or 681,000 visitors, were international drive market visitors to Queensland.

Grey nomads are also an important component of the drive market. I should possibly declare a conflict of interest in that. As our population ages, the contribution of grey nomads to Queensland's economic prosperity is likely to increase. As part of the 2009 election campaign the Bligh government committed an additional \$37.8 million to tourism which included a commitment of \$1.8 million over three years to deliver roadside infrastructure.

The Minor Tourism Infrastructure Grants program has an allocated budget of \$600,000 per year for three years. Examples of the routes that have been targeted include: the Great Tropical Drive, from Cooktown to Townsville; the Adventure Way, from St George to the South Australian border; the Great Inland Way, from Charters Towers to Dirranbandi; the Pacific Coast Touring Route, from Gympie to Cairns; the Outback Way, from Winton to the Northern Territory border; and the Country Way, from Wallangarra to Rockhampton.

Since the grant scheme was launched in 2009, 15 projects have been awarded \$584,577 worth of funding throughout regional Queensland. The types of projects that were funded include: the installation of electric barbecues at popular stopover spots, directional signage—

Mr Johnson interjected.

Mr LAWLOR: They probably use solar, I do not know. They also include shade for picnic areas, public art and rubbish bins. The scheme is getting more popular by the day. So far in 2010, 19 projects have applied for funding and are being assessed.

Mr KILBURN: I refer you to page 2-4 of the SDS and ask: how is the Bligh government promoting this state's stunning natural attractions?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for the Chatsworth for the question. I happen to have an answer. In tourism, Queensland's natural assets provide our state with a competitive advantage. Because Queensland is a nature based and experience based destination, ecotourism is a high priority for the Bligh government. Tourism Queensland's marketing focuses on our natural assets throughout the media, online, trade and consumer activity. For example, Queensland's first Great Walk to cross three islands was official opened on 2 June 2010. In fact, I opened that walk on Whitehaven Beach with the member for Whitsunday, Jan Jarratt.

The Bligh government built the \$1.27 million Ngaro Sea Trail Great Walk, named after the traditional owners the Ngaro people, to boost local ecotourism in the Whitsundays. Other great walks include Fraser Island, the Gold Coast Hinterland, the Sunshine Coast Hinterland and the Wet Tropics. They have attracted more than 165,000 visitors. Allowing ecotourism businesses to operate in the Great Walks represents a way of growing businesses and jobs in Queensland.

The Department of Environment and Resource Management ensures that these operations are nature based and ecologically sustainable and contribute to the conservation and preservation of the Great Walks' natural and cultural values. In the Whitsundays, 16 companies have submitted their interest in conducting commercial tours along the Ngaro Sea Trail. To meet expected visitor demand, an additional \$2.2 million will go towards upgrading viewing platforms, camping areas and toilet facilities.

The Bligh government believes that this investment is important for the future growth of the tourism industry in the Whitsundays. As a key deliverable of the Tourism Action Plan to 2012, the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation, with the Department of Environment and Resource Management and Tourism Queensland, is currently investigating a number of potential sites in and adjacent to protected areas to assess their suitability for low-impact tourism. These sites include: Cowan South, Moreton Island, Lamington National Park, the Mount Mee part of D'Aguiar National Park and Ninny Rise, which is more advanced than those particular sites. This initiative is about developing new innovative tourism products and creating new jobs in the industry.

CHAIR: I want to talk a bit more about our natural attractions. Queensland has some of the most beautiful beaches in the world. I refer to the SDS at page 2-65. Our beaches are some of the most beautiful beaches in the world and tourists from around the world are drawn to them. In fact, in North Queensland we have some of the best. Could you please outline what the government is doing to ensure that our beaches remain safe for tourists?

Mr LAWLOR: In North Queensland we have the Portuguese man-of-war, so that makes the beaches very safe so far as the water goes! It is a serious issue. The Bligh government is committed to ensuring all visitors to Queensland are as safe as possible. We have the \$100,000 On the Same Wave campaign, which promotes beach safety awareness in multicultural communities and with visitors to Queensland. To kick-start this campaign we made representations to peak industry bodies, the federal minister for tourism, the state transport minister, airlines, airports and coastal regional councils from the southern border to Cairns. We did this to seek their support and commitment in spreading the beach safety message. The campaign has involved various fact sheets, beach safety awareness posters and fridge magnets promoting beach safety, surf safety and a lot of accommodation. We have conducted about 20 school and community educational workshops and 10 on-beach and water safety sessions for schoolchildren from targeted schools. There has been promotion of the program at large multicultural festivals.

It is important to understand the difference between North Queensland and, say, the Gold Coast. Surf safety is an issue on the Gold Coast. There are other safety issues in the beautiful Whitsundays. We have to distinguish between the two. We are seeking to attract people to the Whitsundays. We have to make sure that the people we attract to the southern part of Queensland are safe in the surf.

My colleague the Hon. Anastacia Palaszczuk, Minister for Disability Services and Multicultural Affairs, launched the first surf and water safety classes under the On the Same Wave program at Milpera State High School on 27 May. At these classes students get two 45-minute surf and water safety sessions from Surf Life Saving Queensland instructors including a simulated experience of being caught in a rip. In addition, I also launched in May an inflight beach safety video developed by Surf Life Saving Queensland. Virgin Blue was the first airline to display this video on incoming flights. I hope there will be more to come in the near future. The Bligh government is committed to ensuring the safety of visitors on Queensland beaches by facilitating and continuing to be proactive in responding to this critical issue.

Mr MOORHEAD: I refer to page 2-65 of the Service Delivery Statements. Can you please advise the committee what the Bligh government is doing to encourage creativity and support innovation within the Queensland tourism industry?

Mr LAWLOR: I thank the member for Waterford for the question. Queensland leads the way when it comes to thinking outside the box and implementing innovative and creative ways to support the state's tourism industry. Again, we get on to the Best Job in the World campaign. I know that I keep going on about that, but that campaign generated more than \$400 million globally in estimated public relations value for Queensland. It received seven awards at the Cannes advertising awards. Even though it did not win the major prize that particular year, it was beaten only by the campaign which was run by Barack Obama for the presidency of the United States. So for a few million dollars we have got a campaign that returned more than \$400 million in publicity value to Queensland whereas the Barack Obama campaign, which won that particular section, cost millions of dollars.

We also received a long list of prestigious international awards that got a host of copycat campaigns going all around the world. During Ben Southall's six-month stint as Tourism Queensland's island caretaker, he travelled up and down Queensland exploring the islands of the Great Barrier Reef—a sensational part of Queensland and indeed a sensational part of the world. In reporting his adventure to the world, he reported mainly via blog but also with videos and images on his blog. The Best Job in the World campaign saw more than 8.6 million people visit the website viewing 56 million webpages.

However, Ben is not the only innovative way the world finds out about Queensland's destinations. Social networking has become a critical component of marketing in the digital environment. Tourism Queensland has established a growing presence in social networking platforms. This presence has proven to be an excellent way of interacting and building interest in Queensland as a destination. An example of the innovation displayed by Tourism Queensland in this field is the recent work undertaken on the State of Origin Facebook application. This application was devised and launched to coincide with the beginning of the 2010 State of Origin series and enabled visitors to create their own customised jersey. By doing so, they were given the chance to win a trip to Queensland for State of Origin match 2. It was expected that Tourism Queensland could tap into the interest in the State of Origin and increase its number of Facebook connections. The activity successfully doubled Tourism Queensland's number of connections from 14,500 to over 29,000. This provides Tourism Queensland with a larger number of consumers whom it is able to target with messages and information about holidaying. Madam Chair, can I have a short extension please?

CHAIR: We are actually out of time, Minister.

Mr LAWLOR: Okay.

CHAIR: Thank you very much. The time that has been allotted for consideration of the expenditure estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Tourism and Fair Trading has now expired. I want to thank you, Minister, and your advisers and witnesses for attending today. Did you want to say something in closing?

Mr LAWLOR: I will be very brief. I want to thank the committee for its assistance and its courtesy. I also thank all of the staff involved, and that was quite a few. I thank the Hansard reporters and all parliamentary staff and also Tourism Queensland staff who have been a great help to me since I got the job but especially over the last couple of weeks. So thanks to everyone.

Mr JOHNSON: I have to tell you, Minister, that I have never seen tourism stronger in the west than it is at the moment.

Mr LAWLOR: That is great news, member for Gregory. Thank you for that, and I hope to see some of it in the next couple of weeks.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The committee will now adjourn for a short break and the hearing will resume at 4 pm to examine the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability.

Proceedings suspended from 3.47 pm to 4.01 pm

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE G—CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY**In Attendance**

Hon. A Palaszczuk, Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability

Mr J Cooney, Senior Media Adviser

Department of Environment and Resource Management

Mr J Bradley, Director-General

Mr T Wall, Associate Director-General

Mr G Clare, Assistant Director-General, Sustainable Communities and Landscapes

Ms C Kinnane, Principal Project Officer, Governance and Strategy

CHAIR: The Estimates Committee G hearing is now resumed and the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability will be examined. The proceedings today are similar to parliament to the extent that members of the public cannot ask questions. In that regard, I remind visitors that in accordance with standing order 206 any person admitted to a public hearing of a committee may be excluded by the order of the committee or at my discretion as chair. In relation to media coverage of the hearing, I ask that the television film coverage and photography be only allowed during my introductory comments and the opening statement of each minister as well as for a short period during each changeover of ministerial advisers. The committee has agreed to the live broadcast of the hearing via the Parliamentary Service's website and to receivers throughout the parliamentary precinct.

I ask that all mobile phones and pagers be now switched off. I remind members of the committee and the minister that the time limit for questions is one minute. Answers are to be no longer than three minutes. A single chime will give a 15-second warning and a double chime will sound at the end of each of these time limits. An extension of time may be given with the consent of the questioner. A double chime will sound two minutes after an extension of time has been given. The standing orders require that at least half of the time available for questions and answers be allocated to non-government members. Any time expended when the committee deliberates in private is to be equally apportioned between government and non-government members.

For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves if the acting minister calls on them to answer a question. I welcome the acting minister and her advisers. I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, would you care to make an opening statement before we start?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, thank you. I want to open by saying how very pleased I am to have served as Acting Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability during the past two months. It has been a relatively short period but it has come during a very exciting and active time for the Department of Environment and Resource Management, particularly this portfolio. During my time I have been nothing but impressed by the professionalism, dedication and passion of DERM staff. This is particularly the case for our hardworking front-line staff in our national parks and forests. I have met with many of our rangers in vastly different locations of the state—from Lawn Hill in the state's remote north-west, Mossman and Barron Gorge in the far north, Byfield in Central Queensland, Fraser Island and in and around South-East Queensland. All of them deserve our praise for the great work they do every day in conservation, in education, in our parks and in our forests.

The department's delivery against its strategic objectives has been well and truly on display since I have been acting minister. Objectives such as preparedness for climate change, healthy, protected and biodiverse ecosystems and well-managed natural resources and Indigenous land access and ownership have been a major focus and will continue to be this year. In fact, nearly two days into the job I was privileged to have signed a very historic agreement in the south of Cape York handing over nearly 80,000 hectares back to traditional owners. More than half of this land will be dedicated as Indigenous national park.

I released a comprehensive management plan to help preserve the strategically significant and beautiful Byfield region on the Capricorn Coast. There was a gala event at which the state government presented its prestigious awards to Queensland's leaders in sustainability from all walks of life. I launched the EzyGreen initiative with the Lord Mayor to provide Brisbane residents with a quick and easy bundled up package of green services and products for the home. There was a major state

government policy paper released to govern how coal seam gas water and brine must be handled, stored and managed and just this week additional staff were announced to enhance compliance and monitoring of this emerging new industry.

In June I released a discussion paper to inform how Queensland prepares for the imminent introduction of electric cars to the market, further stamping this state as a national leader in this field. Later that month I announced a series of additional national park gazettals to follow up from the Cape York agreement, one of which was the Glass House Mountains National Park which will triple in size and now takes in four more mountain peaks. We also declared a new national park in Tewantin in the member for Noosa's electorate spanning 2,000 hectares. Up north we declared 7,650 hectares of new national park protecting large areas of cassowary habitat.

Mandatory tag-along tours began on Fraser Island from 1 July this year as a significant state government measure to improve vehicle safety on the island. Also this month I officially opened the very last of our 10 Great Walks of Queensland at Conondale in the Sunshine Coast hinterland, and we have saved the best of our Great Walks until last. There have been other important initiatives such as restoring more land to protect koala habitat at Redlands under our koala response strategy, and only today I had the great pleasure of presenting conservation agreements to our first two koala nature refuge holders at Brookfield and Grandchester.

Perhaps the biggest occasion during my time as acting minister was that the state budget announced that Queensland would be pulled into line with the other states and introduce an industry waste levy. This will pave the way for both state and local government and industry to address a poor indictment on Queensland—our mounting waste problem. It means we now have the financial capacity to support a state Waste Strategy which will foster a strong recycling and resource recovery sector and deliver significant reductions in the amount of waste going to landfill. Put simply, it is what we need to turn Queensland from a dumping state to a recycling state. We will be carrying out a series of initiatives and reforms particularly focused on helping businesses improve their waste management practices. We want to see one company's trash become another's treasure.

If we continue to dump waste to landfill, we are not only wasting valuable resources; we are also wasting new business opportunities. Recycling creates three times more jobs than disposing of waste to landfill, and at the moment these opportunities just go begging. This is a major initiative of this year's state budget. The Bligh government has had a plan to reach our green targets and we have stuck to it in this budget. It contains a new investment of \$56 million over five years for land acquisition and management, including new national parks. It will see us move towards our target to reach 12.9 million hectares of the state. We provided \$45.5 million to focus on restoring and protecting koala habitat in South-East Queensland. This is the largest funding amount for koalas ever made by the Queensland government. We will invest \$3.5 million in progressing a World Heritage nomination for Cape York. This budget allows us to plot a new course for waste management to meet contemporary waste and environmental challenges. This is a government that has stuck to a plan. This is a budget that is a huge win for conservation, a huge win for sustainability and a huge win for the environment.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Noosa.

Mr ELMES: Minister, welcome. I refer to the SDS at page 3-159 and the average household carbon footprint. The 2010-11 budget papers claim that the average household carbon footprint dropped by 4.9 per cent. What evidence was collected in order to substantiate this claim? What proportion of this amount can be directly contributed to Queensland government projects and not measures such as the Howard government's phasing out of incandescent light globes?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, but can you repeat the page number?

Mr ELMES: The SDS at page 3-159.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. Of course it is one of our Q2 targets to cut one-third of Queensland's carbon footprint with reduced electricity use, and it is something that as a government we are taking very seriously. In 2008 we committed towards this target. We want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from electricity, transport and waste by one-third by 2020. To achieve this target, Queensland households must reduce their average annual emissions to 9.18 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions by 2020 compared with the 2006-07 baseline of 13.77 tonnes. Queensland is already on the path to achieving this target. The latest available data represents combined emissions from electricity, transport and waste. Analysis of the data shows that household electricity use rose marginally in 2007-08. However, a higher proportion of low-emission energy generation from gas resulted in less greenhouse gas emissions per kilowatt hour of electricity which led to a slight decline in electricity related emissions.

Household fuel emissions also reduced slightly due to rises in fuel prices and a shift to more fuel-efficient vehicles. The amount of household waste to landfill also fell slightly during this period due to higher rates of recycling and improved science around calculating emissions from waste. Further progress towards this target will be reported later on this year. As lead agency for the delivery of this target, the department is working with other government departments to drive new policies in a

coordinated action to achieve the target. In 2009-10 the Queensland government implemented a range of new policies and programs to reduce household emissions and help achieve that Q2 carbon target, including a government funded energy conservation and demand management program, a requirement that all new houses and major renovations meet higher energy performance ratings, new conditions on coal-fired power stations to reduce the emissions intensity of the electricity sector, a new solar hot-water rebate to provide an additional incentive for households to purchase solar hot-water and heat pumps, investments in public and active transport infrastructure, climate considerations built into regional plans, and continuing to help reduce household emissions for earlier Queensland government programs such as the Queensland Gas Scheme and a commitment to phase out electric hot-water systems.

Mr ELMES: I again refer to the SDS at page 3-159 and electricity related greenhouse emissions. The budget papers claim an estimated average annual reduction in electricity related greenhouse emissions of up to 2.2 tonnes. What evidence—that is what I was looking for last time, and I am still looking for it—has been collected and calculated to substantiate this claim? What portion of this reduction in energy consumption has been caused by the 54 per cent increase in household energy prices in the four years since the Labor government's decision to deregulate electricity prices in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question, because it is an important question. We are trying to encourage Queenslanders to recycle more, but specifically with regard to the data that you are interested in I am happy to refer to the director-general to expand on that data.

Mr Bradley: To supplement the minister's answer, there has been as part of the Q2 target a fairly analytical framework that has been adopted in relation to profiling the household carbon footprint. As we said, we do focus on the three areas of electricity, transport and waste. Some of the analysis which goes to the effectiveness of our programs relates to the ClimateSmart Home Service. As part of the ClimateSmart Home Service, we expect that a home undertaking the service can save a total of up to 20.4 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions over the average eight-year life of the greenhouse-friendly products installed and up to \$325 on their annual electricity bills. So that program has had detailed quantitative analysis undertaken as part of the development of the program by LGIS. LGIS as a service provider, as members would be aware, is also the same service provider that undertook the very effective Home WaterWise Service which was also based on substantial analysis about individual household changes in water use. So both of those programs have supporting quantitative information.

Mr ELMES: Thank you. I am pleased that you raised the ClimateSmart Home Service. Page 3-159 of the SDS refers to the ClimateSmart Home Service. Based on the government's figures that show a take-up rate of the service of approximately 8½ thousand households per month, the service will not reach its promised target of 260,000 homes by its 31 December cut-off date. Why will you miss the target and what is being done to address this delivery failure? Is the real reason for you ending the program because the state has run out of money?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I dismiss the context of your question, because this month we are going to be reaching the 200,000th ClimateSmart Home Service mark. It is one of the most popular government programs operating in Queensland. As I mentioned in my opening statement, I launched EzyGreen with the Lord Mayor in relation to a package of government initiatives that the government is putting \$3 million into, but as part of this package we are promoting the ClimateSmart Home Service. So people living in Brisbane will be able to get their \$50 rebate.

This program is popular right across the state. I think you will recall that you asked a question on notice and I was able to give you some details about how popular that program is. I think we need to start changing people's habits, and implementing the home service is one of the ways in which we can not only reduce our carbon footprint but also save on electricity bills. So it is a very, very popular program. It has been receiving high levels of customer satisfaction, with independent surveys showing an overall satisfaction rating of 95 per cent. I think the member for Noosa would agree with me that that is a very, very high satisfaction rating. So I am pleased that the program is going extremely well.

In my time as acting minister I was able to visit one of the oldest homes in Queensland which had a ClimateSmart Home Service fitted out, and they were very, very happy with the product. I have people in my local area coming up to me just saying how happy they are with the service. So it is very, very popular. I do not think we will have any problems meeting those targets. I think the government will give very, very careful consideration to continuing the program.

Mr ELMES: I refer to page 3-159 of the SDS, and once again the ClimateSmart Home Service. I am encouraged by what you said there. One of the things that I am interested in is being able to measure the results of programs such as the ClimateSmart Home Service. I have participated in it, but I am yet to find anyone who has been approached a second time to look at what difference has been made to their electricity consumption or at what changes have been made in the lifestyle of that family unit or the people who live in that particular home. So if there has been an audit, is it done on an estimated average annual reduction or is it simply some form of guesswork based on the number of people?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think the member has raised some reasonable questions there and I am happy to provide the answers. The take-up rate is very high. As you are aware, qualified electricians go into the homes. I have been at a couple of homes where the electrician has been there and explained the service to me.

We are definitely making inroads into the ways people can save. For example, you would be aware that there is a monitor and the monitor tells you that by turning certain things off you will be saving on your electricity bill. I understand that you can save more than \$300 on your electricity bills each year by doing a few of the things as part of the ClimateSmart Home Service. The satisfaction rating is very high. I understand that the department has some information on its website as well. The program is running extremely well. I think we have covered off most of the aspects of your question.

Mr ELMES: Just on a change of subject, I refer to page 3-158 of the SDS and the industry waste levy, which you referred to in your opening remarks. You have publicly stated that we need this industry levy to stop other states dumping waste in Queensland. The New South Wales waste levy increases at a rate of \$10 per tonne per annum, meaning that by 2015 the New South Wales levy in regional areas such as Byron Bay and Ballina will be \$70—twice the Queensland levy. How will this levy stop other states dumping waste in Queensland if it will still be cheaper to dump in Queensland, unless the government also intends to keep increasing this revenue-raising scheme to match New South Wales?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, I just missed the second half of your question. Could you repeat that, sorry?

Mr ELMES: Yes. How will this levy stop other states dumping waste in Queensland if it will still be cheaper to dump in Queensland, unless the government also intends to keep increasing this revenue-raising scheme to match?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to take the question. There was some evidence that some parts of northern New South Wales were going to be sending their commercial and industrial waste up here, and the government sent a very clear message that we were not going to be the dumping ground for other states. The whole purpose of the levy, which has been welcomed by the recycling industry, is that we want to change the practices. We want to ensure that people are recycling more and that less is going to landfill.

When the Premier, the Treasurer and I launched the waste policy, we went to a company out at Archerfield. They are doing brilliant work. They are recycling concrete and the recycling of that then goes into road maintenance for roadworks. What we want to do is change industry practice. We want more and more companies across the state to be doing what this company at Archerfield is doing.

I am happy to give you some overview about the waste reforms. Queensland's current waste management policy was out of date and was in need of reform. That is exactly why the government has implemented this major waste reform program. The program takes an integrated approach with the release of a new Waste Strategy for Queensland. Queensland's draft waste management strategy was released for public consultation on 5 June. The strategy includes reform of the state's waste management legislative framework and the introduction of the levy, as we stated.

The strategy describes a comprehensive waste reform action plan that includes programs to help business, industry and local governments improve waste avoidance and recycling over the next decade. This document will be the start of a comprehensive engagement with the waste industry, local government and the broader community about how Queensland will meet its waste management challenges in the years to come. The introduction of an industry waste levy delivers greater certainty for investment and for the future of Queensland's recycling industry. The levy, to be introduced from 15 July 2011, is estimated to raise about \$380 million a year. We plan to use the funds to improve Queensland's waste and resource management practices and reduce the amount of regulated waste.

This is a partnership with local councils and it is a partnership with the industry. It is very good to see that they are on board. Next week I will be convening the first meeting of the waste reform stakeholder group and I am very much looking forward to hearing their views as we go towards the next stage of the implementation of this very, very important reform.

Mr ELMES: I refer to page 3-162 of the SDS, climate change. Does the government have a program in place that mandates or requires all staff in government departments and agencies to turn off lights when they are not being used, turn off electrical appliances when they are not being used and turn off at the wall electrical appliances overnight, at weekends and on public holidays? If it does not have such a program in place, how can this department claim to lead by example when it comes to reducing energy use?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for the question. In relation to the new Environment building, I know that the building the Minister for Climate Change is in does have a very good system because I have been there on several occasions past seven o'clock and all the lights turn out, let me assure you. Then you have to go outside and fix that up. Of course, it would be good practice that we all become a lot more energy efficient. In relation to your particular question and what the practices are in place for my department, I am happy to hand over—

Mr ELMES: Whole of government, Minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: But in the first instance I am happy to hand over to the director-general about that, and I am quite sure that we can get you some more information on the whole of government.

Mr Bradley: Thank you very much. In relation to those issues, as the minister said we are moving into 400 George Street, which is a five-star green rated building. There are very substantial changes in our energy use profile as a result of that. That has provided not only benefits in terms of the carbon footprint of the agency but also benefits in terms of energy costs to the agency as well.

There are a number of specific measures in relation to that. The minister mentioned the use of lighting, which is based around not only movement detection and automatic times at which lights are closed but also the use of green switches through power boards associated with departmental computers and monitors in that building. That goes to the issue that the member is raising in terms of government leading by example. But beyond that there is a requirement, as part of the whole-of-government agenda in relation to the green Q2 target, for every government agency and its director-general or chief executive to have an established program in relation to energy efficiency improvement. It is something that the Department of Public Works monitors across government, and individual agencies are held accountable for their performance in relation to those energy efficiency greenhouse gas emission reforms.

As part of that process, I am pleased to say that DERM has been on track well to manage its emissions from fleet against the whole-of-government targets and also through changes like 400 George Street improving its electricity profile.

Mr ELMES: Just as a supplementary question on that, I understand what the department is doing but I am talking about whole of government.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We will come back to you on that one.

Mr ELMES: But just on that, though, is there some sort of a target by government building, because for someone looking at the Brisbane high-rise buildings around the place at night it would seem that government buildings are ablaze with light. I would be interested to see if there is some system put in place by building that encourages or mandates that staff turn appliances off at the wall, turn the lights out—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, my understanding is that there are some systems in place in that not all government buildings are on at all stages of the night and that different floors are operating but, please, I will get back to you about that hopefully by the end of the session.

Mr ELMES: I would just like to go back to page 3-160 of the SDS and the ClimateSmart Business Service. According to the Queensland government fact sheets, the \$15 million ClimateSmart Business Service is supposed to assist Queensland's small to medium sized enterprises following the introduction of the Commonwealth's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme. Rather than deliver real action, the federal Labor government has abandoned the scheme. What amount of this \$15 million was spent in 2009 and what was delivered to prepare for a scheme that the federal Labor government has run away from?

Ms PALASZCZUK: You might want to talk to your federal counterparts about their views on climate change before you start raising those issues, member for Noosa.

Mr ELMES: They have a lot more on climate change.

Ms PALASZCZUK: But I am happy to talk about the ClimateSmart Business Clusters. Our 2009-10 expenditure was \$754,000 and in December 2008 it was launched as a new initiative of the ecoBiz program. The clusters are groups of up to 20 businesses working together to grow and conduct businesses in more eco-efficient and less costly ways.

At this time there are over 1,000 businesses participating in 60 clusters located across the state—from Brisbane to Cairns and west to Longreach. Of the 11 clusters that have submitted a final report, 189 businesses were involved. In less than 12 months they have already saved 800 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions and 1.7 megalitres of water. The expected financial savings are more than \$800,000 per annum, which is more than seven times the funding provided by the government for these clusters.

These businesses have also identified and costed further actions that will potentially double the savings to date. For example, a Cairns shopping centre cluster has projected an annual energy saving of over 239,000 kilowatt hours. This is equal to an annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 250 tonnes and over \$40,000 in energy savings.

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

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer to page 3-158 of the SDS regarding funding to increase national parks. I certainly at this stage want to commend the government on further additions to the national park in the electorate of Pumicestone, which I represent. What is Queensland's total national park area currently and how much has it increased in recent years?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for the question. As I stated in my opening statement, this year's budget allocation is a very strong demonstration of the state government's commitment to expanding and creating national parks. We understand how important they are, not just to lock up our pristine landscapes to protect Queensland's amazing biodiversity but also to provide much needed insulation against the impacts of climate change.

As I stated earlier, this year's budget provides \$55.9 million over five years for national park acquisition and management programs. It is the single biggest injection of funding for national parks ever made in Queensland. It is an allocation this government is extremely proud of. Queensland already has the largest area of national park of any state but we are not settled on this achievement. We have a Q2 2020 target to increase the total national park area to 7.5 per cent of the state which equates to 12.9 million hectares. To put that in a visual sense, we want to achieve a national park area nearly double the size of Tasmania.

Over the past few years we have made good progress. As at 30 June 2008 the total area of national parks was 7.6 million hectares. We increased that by some 300,000 hectares to nearly eight million hectares a year later. We bumped it up further to more than 8.1 million hectares by 30 June this year, representing a total increase of over half a million hectares in two years. I am very pleased to be involved with this expansion. Since I have become acting minister I have declared large tracts of vital ecosystems and areas of high conservation value.

The Glass House Mountains are the big winners. Last month I announced that this iconic national park will triple in size, adding more than 2,000 hectares and four peaks, ensuring that 13 of the 14 peaks there are protected for life. This was part of a series of gazettals in and around the Sunshine Coast which also included a new national park in the Pumicestone electorate called the Pumicestone National Park. This is a 164-hectare park of enormous strategic significance as it provides a protective buffer between the coastal lowlands of the Glass House Mountains and Moreton Bay.

Last month I also announced more than 7,600 hectares of national park in North and Far North Queensland, including significant sections of vital cassowary habitat. Among them is the new Macalister Range National Park, part of the Wet Tropics heritage area about 25 kilometres north-west of Cairns covering more than 5,000 hectares of important habitat. This is good news for an iconic Australian bird and the many people who have been working hard to ensure its survival. Another four of the new protected areas also serve as vital habitat corridors and ecosystems for cassowaries and other rare native species. This government will continue to create and expand national parks up and down the coast and out west using this unprecedented level of funding. The Department of Environment and Resource Management is currently undertaking a number of priority land acquisition programs.

Mr KILBURN: It is fantastic to hear the great work that this government is doing in expanding our national parks throughout Queensland. Could you let the committee know if there are any other iconic areas of Queensland that the state government is looking to convert to national park?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for the question. Can I say from the outset that we have a strong track record of protecting our national icons with groundbreaking legislation to further protect the Great Barrier Reef which the LNP voted against, green zones for Moreton Bay which the LNP moved a motion against, and further protecting the Glass House Mountains, as I mentioned earlier. But there is one place in Queensland where protection has been overdue, in my view, and that is North Stradbroke Island.

Last month the Premier announced that a new national park will be declared over most of North Stradbroke Island—a true Queensland icon, especially for those of us who live in South-East Queensland. Through this government's vision, North Straddie will turn from a mine site to a green site. Our vision includes national park dedication of more than 80 per cent of the island by 2027, but by the end of next year about 15,000 hectares, or 56 per cent, of the island will be protected as national park. Over time this will continue to grow as mining leases expire and these rehabilitated areas are added. This will significantly add to the visitor appeal of the island that will allow nature based tourism opportunities to thrive and create employment prospects.

Our plan is particularly exciting because the Queensland government and the Quandamooka people will develop an Indigenous land use agreement that recognises their native title rights and will also enable the Quandamooka people to be involved in the management of the island. We have made a significant funding commitment to achieve this vision: \$27 million spread over this and the next four financial years. Twelve additional rangers will be employed, and half of these positions will be set aside for Indigenous rangers who will bring with them a wealth of knowledge drawn from their cultural association with the land. Park facilities such as walking tracks, car parks, signs and campgrounds will be put in place for the safe and sustainable use of the park by all.

As I mentioned earlier, many of the areas that are to become national park have had mining activity on them in the past. The ongoing rehabilitation of these areas will be an important part of creating the new park. The government will work with mining companies to ensure they effectively rehabilitate the areas that they have mined. There will be a lot of work to be done in this regard. However, we are confident that these areas can ultimately be restored to the condition they were in before mining commenced. That is our vision and that is our policy.

In contrast, it is extremely difficult to determine what the LNP's policy on Stradbroke is. We have had the member for Clayfield immediately welcome the announcement and yet the member for Cleveland has constantly attacked the plan, choosing to side with the mining company. Much of the work ahead will involve planning for the future of the whole island. Everyone has an opportunity to be involved in creating a sustainable future for North Stradbroke Island. I would encourage all members to support the creation of this new national park. I am quite sure that there are many members here who have been there on many occasions. I think this is a great outcome and one that we are all very pleased about.

CHAIR: I also refer to page 3-158 of the SDS regarding funding for national parks, and I ask: how is the state government working with traditional owners to protect vital areas in the Cape York Peninsula area?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for your question. Our government has a deep commitment to protect the outstanding natural and cultural values of Cape York Peninsula, as well as enhancing Indigenous outcomes through tenure resolution. Through this initiative we have seen more than 575,000 hectares of new national park in Cape York that will be jointly managed with the traditional owners of the country. In addition, 618,000 hectares of Aboriginal freehold land has been granted to land trusts representing these traditional owners. A further 90,000 hectares of the granted Aboriginal land has been declared as a nature refuge, thereby affording additional protection to those significant natural and cultural values on Aboriginal land.

There are now five Cape York Peninsula Aboriginal land national parks as a result of good negotiations between the government and traditional owners. These are areas of exceptional biodiversity, beauty and cultural significance where future management decisions will be made jointly by the department and the respective Aboriginal land trust.

The government is continuing to negotiate with traditional owners for the creation of new jointly managed national parks and the return of homelands on Cape York Peninsula. I took part in the most recent handback in May. The area up there of 42,000 hectares was handed back on a day of great celebration for the traditional owners present. I was very honoured to be involved in this very moving experience. The signing ceremony was the culmination of several years of consultation and negotiations with the traditional owners following the state government's decision to acquire the property and adjoining property for tenure resolution. In fact, I was speaking to some of the people up there on the day and they said to me that they never thought they would see this in their lifetime. They were just so pleased. People had travelled from all around Queensland for this very significant signing. It was one of the most moving experiences of my life and I think it is one that I will remember for many, many years to come.

I would like to acknowledge the time, effort and level of cooperation which has led to the outcomes that were formalised. Alwal National Park will protect the significant nesting habitat of the endangered golden shouldered parrot, after which the park is named. It will also protect the habitats of rare Cape York rock wallabies and endangered red goshawks. The park includes the upper reaches of Morehead River, features escarpments, low hills and seasonal wetlands and is of great cultural significance for the people. It will be jointly managed by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service and the Aboriginal Corporation Land Trust. The state government will support employment and training of Aboriginal people in park management. They also mentioned to me that this is a great opportunity for the young people in their local communities to gain vital employment opportunities. The ceremony was very, very significant and we are protecting endangered species but, most importantly, we are giving back lands to traditional owners and they are going to be looking after that land for future generations.

Mr MOORHEAD: Page 3-162 of the Service Delivery Statements refers to the department's priorities of protecting and enhancing the health of Queensland's unique ecosystems. Can you provide the committee with an update on the number of rangers employed to manage parks and forests in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for the question. Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service rangers perform a range of important work in our national parks and forests, from building fire resilience and controlling pests and weeds to maintaining our facilities and educating the public on conservation. They are our all-important caretakers and guardians of our natural environment. I have had the pleasure of meeting many of them, during my time as acting minister—at Lawn Hill, in the remote north-west, at Barron Gorge falls outside Cairns and on Fraser Island—and I have to say that I have never come across a workforce more passionate, dedicated and committed to their duties than our rangers. We understand that we need more of them to protect the areas of our national estate. I would like to acknowledge the work and dedication of our rangers.

I am pleased to announce that the number of QPWS rangers will be increasing to more than 822 full-time equivalent employees over 2010-11. This is a significant increase on the 30 June 2009 figure of 793. The expansion of the ranger workforce includes six positions for North Stradbroke Island, six positions at Cooloola, three positions in Western Queensland to assist with the coal seam gas applications on state forests, four additional staff providing supervision as part of the Western

Hardwoods forest transfer process and 10 rangers for Cape York to help implement Indigenous management agreements. More rangers will also be employed as additional areas of land are acquired as national parks under the government's Q2 target for increasing the protected area estate.

In addition, I would like to inform the committee that there are approximately 350 additional Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service staff who provide support in the area of planning and policy development, implementation, tourism and visitor management, asset management, scientific and technical advice, as well as the necessary corporate activities such as financial and human resource management. We also employ five conservation and land management trainees and three school based trainees.

Finally, I wanted to make the point that the opposition leader in his budget reply criticised the average number of hectares covered by a ranger. I think using averages is absolutely meaningless because modern and innovative park management requires that resource allocation reflects the varying management needs associated with visitor numbers, infrastructure, fire and pest management and other land management responsibilities. For example, on World Heritage listed Fraser Island we have nearly 40 rangers to support the approximately 800,000 visitor days per annum and over 260,000 camper nights. I think we need to be very careful when we listen to what the opposition says because sometimes it is pie in the sky.

Mr JOHNSON: You should visit some of those parks, Minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I have. I have been out to Lawn Hill, out in the remote parts up there.

Mr ELMES: Some of them have turned into feral pig parks.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is actually great to see the dedication and the work the rangers are doing out there. Many of them are living remotely.

Mr JOHNSON: They do a good job all right. We need more of them.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I just announced that there was an increase there for the next financial year, if you had listened.

CHAIR: I would like to ask you a question referring to page 3-166 of the Service Delivery Statements regarding the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service Strategic Pest Management program target. Given that you have outlined the state government's efforts to expand national park and other protected areas in Queensland, could you explain how the state government is ensuring that feral pests and weeds are kept under control in these areas?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you, and I think that was what the member was trying to raise a bit earlier so I am happy to give you some more information for the purpose of the whole committee. Controlling pests and weeds is a vital part of managing our parks and forests. It conserves the natural values of our treasured areas and greatly contributes to our biosecurity. The state government takes these responsibilities very seriously, with over \$4.5 million a year invested in getting on top of pests and weeds. Pests have the potential to cause serious environmental harm and economic problems and pose serious threats to biodiversity and cultural qualities of parks and forests. Pest animals may be carriers of many diseases affecting livestock and humans. Feral pigs and foxes are a particular concern as potential carriers of exotic diseases if an outbreak occurs.

As part of the legislative responsibilities, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has to control declared pests on its lands. It has established a comprehensive pest management system to guide management actions. This is truly a state-wide problem, with activity occurring from the New South Wales border to the tip of the cape. Recent results include the removal of more than 1,800 goats from the Currawinya and Sundown parks near the border to islands off the east coast such as Orpheus near Townsville in your own electorate, Madam Chair.

More than 250 feral pigs have been removed from the far west this year around the Welford National Park. Of the \$4.5 million budget for 2010-11, \$1.5 million will be spent on 80 strategic projects across the state. Of the \$1.5 million, a total of \$830,000 will be spent on 47 targeted projects to manage class 1 pest plants, weeds of national significance and other significant environmental pest plants. In addition, a total of \$670,000 will be spent on 33 targeted projects to control pest animals including feral pigs, foxes, cats and wild dogs.

I appreciate the concern that the member for Gregory has raised. It is one that we are well aware of. I know that other members have raised it. When I have travelled up to Cairns people have raised it with me as well. It is a serious issue. It is one that we are managing. We have a clear program. As I mentioned earlier, there are 47 targeted programs right across the state and the government will continue to allocate resources to this weed and pest eradication.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer to page 3-167 of the Service Delivery Statements regarding the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service fire management targets, and I ask: can the minister update the committee on state government efforts to build fire resilience and preparedness in our protected areas?

CHAIR: Minister, you have just under three minutes.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for her question. The state government will be spending around \$6.5 million in 2010-11 to manage fire in protected areas. This includes strategically targeted, planned burns, maintaining the extensive network of fire lines and continuously upgrading wildfire response capability. In the aftermath of the devastating Victorian bushfires last year, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service sought to learn all it could from that experience and take steps to ensure it simply does not happen here in Queensland. It undertook a major operational review of its fire management program, which is all the more important with climate change expected to increase the frequency and severity of wildfires in the future.

The review is now complete and the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service is implementing key recommendations in an improved fire management program. This has been boosted by \$6.5 million in project funding over five years to improve fire management under Queensland's climate change strategy, ClimateQ. This project aims to identify ecosystems more vulnerable to fire in hotter and drier conditions and collect better technical data to support the best possible decision making.

A series of planned burning guidelines are being developed to prescribe how these areas should be sustainably managed. Other elements include better ways to collect and analyse fire data, a strong focus on planned burning and training, on-ground monitoring and fire program evaluation. The results of this will be used to continually adapt and improve planned burn guidelines and programs.

Climate change is expected to increase the size, intensity and frequency of wildfires as well as cause the fire season to start earlier and end later. Planned burning remains our major weapon against fire risk in our parks and forests and, indeed, neighbouring properties. It is used to reduce wildfire risk to life and property, fulfil the ecological requirements of the flora and fauna and other natural assets, maintain and promote sustainable forest production values and maintain cultural resources and practices.

Nearly 600 planned burns have been identified in a forward rolling program and the department has done a good job so far. Rangers have taken advantage of ideal winter burning conditions by already carrying out 150 of the burns this fire year. This covers an area of more than 550,000 hectares. I actually observed one of these burns last month, when I accompanied rangers at Samford forest west of Brisbane. Examples of planned burning conducted by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service to date include 100 hectares at D'Aguilar, 130 hectares at Daisy Hill, 600 hectares on Fraser Island and more on the tablelands, Bribie Island and Magnetic Island.

CHAIR: The time for government questions has expired.

Mr ELMES: I refer to page 3-157 and carbon emissions. In April this year it was reported that, since the launch of the Reverse the Effect program in 2009, just 230 Queenslanders had made voluntary payments to this scheme. What has been the total cost of distributing offset information with registration renewal notices? How many of these information packages have been distributed? How many Queenslanders have made voluntary payments since 13 April? How much of the allocated \$4.5 million has the state government contributed to match these payments?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for the question. As he stated, this is a new program. We were speaking earlier about the ClimateSmart Home Service. ClimateSmart Home Service has been in operation for a number of years. It is very popular. People understand it. The Reverse the Effect program is very new. It is a new initiative of the Queensland government set up to champion environmental outcomes in Queensland through innovative carbon reduction programs. These projects support the Queensland government's target of expanding the state's unique and valuable protected areas to 20 million hectares by 2020.

Reverse the Effect is the first program launched by Ecofund. It encourages Queensland motorists to get involved by making donations towards planting trees and creating native forests that capture carbon from the atmosphere and reduce the impact of greenhouse gases. In support of this initiative, the Queensland government has committed to matching motorists' contributions dollar for dollar up to a total of \$4.5 million over the next five years. Reverse the Effect also raises awareness around sustainability through educational conversations, with over 10,000 motorists visiting the Reverse the Effect website since the program began.

There is a website. People are actively engaged in it. As I said to you, it is a very new program. I do not think we are at the stage where we can evaluate it. What we can do is encourage more people; more people need to hear about it. It is about changing the way people interact with different things. In relation to the saving water campaign, it took a long time for people to understand it, but then they got it and things are working well. I can advise you that this project, a very new initiative, began in November 2009. So it is not even a year old yet. I think a good time for that is when the minister for climate change returns and has a look at the program just to see if it is at the stage where she wants to it to be.

Since November 2009, 395 motorists have offset their vehicle. Reverse the Effect has been developed using the Australian government's department of climate change's Green Vehicle Guide and associated national greenhouse account factors. It calculates donation amounts on the estimated carbon footprint of Queensland's average vehicle use. Reverse the Effect will be extended to cover

private sector corporate fleets later this year. It will also allow Queensland corporate fleets of up to 50 vehicles to access a 50 per cent subsidy. I can advise the member for Noosa that I have actually offset my vehicle and I would encourage other members to do the same.

Mr ELMES: That is only 298 people we need to find in order to—

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a new program, member for Noosa.

Mr ELMES: With respect, it started in November 2009.

Mr MOORHEAD: What have you got against green offsets?

Mr ELMES: I have nothing against greenhouse; I just do not like a program—

Ms PALASZCZUK: Have you offset your vehicle?

Mr ELMES: I just do not like a program that does not work.

CHAIR: I ask the member to ask the minister his next question.

Mr ELMES: I certainly will, Madam Chair.

Ms PALASZCZUK: He has not said if he has offset his vehicle.

Mr ELMES: I refer to the SDS page 3-162 and climate change. Given that there is no international consensus on an approach to climate change following the failure of the Copenhagen summit or consensus at a national level as the Gillard government has deferred any action to beyond the next election, what proportion of the \$29.4 million allocated to climate change in Queensland has been spent on preparing Queensland for the impacts of climate change? Specifically, what real actions are proposed? How will those outcomes be measured?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for the question. Climate change is a very serious issue and it is one that the Queensland government is preparing for. As was stated, the Commonwealth government is looking at introducing an ETS in 2012, but we are not going to sit around and wait for that to happen; we are going to get on with the job and prepare Queensland. The Office of Climate Change is doing a wonderful job coordinating the impacts of climate change right across government with a number of very key programs. In stark contrast, we all know the view of the federal Leader of the Opposition on climate change; we know what he said about it. He has dismissed it and wants to cut funding to programs. I find it quite interesting, whether or not you acknowledge that climate change is happening—

Mr ELMES: My position is very well known.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Your position is very clear. Perhaps you need to make it clearer to your federal colleagues because they seem to not really understand what is happening. I am actually pleased to inform the committee about the role and the achievements of the Office of Climate Change. I welcome this opportunity to discuss this issue with you.

Mr ELMES: Can't wait!

Ms PALASZCZUK: The Office of Climate Change leads Queensland's state-wide response to climate change, developing strategies to guide state action and policies that reduce emissions and prepare industry and communities for the impacts of climate change. Over the last three years the Office of Climate Change has developed major new climate change policies covering mitigation and adaptation across all sectors of the economy including the government's climate change strategy, ClimateQ, which was launched in August 2009 and contains \$196 million in new initiatives. Did you hear that, member for Noosa? It contains \$196 million in new initiatives to reduce the state's carbon footprint, prepare households and industries for a low-carbon economy and prepare communities for the impacts of climate change.

Key ClimateQ achievements in 2009-10 include: under the \$47.7 million Energy Conservation and Demand Management Program, Energex and Ergon are working with residential, commercial and industrial customers to reduce peak demand and load on the electricity grid; under the \$39.3 million Improved Traffic Flow for Reduced Emissions program, new traffic management systems such as vehicle speed limits, lane control systems and coordinated ramp signalling are being rolled out on key arterial roads such as the Gateway Motorway; delivery of emergency response vehicles and safety equipment under the Supporting Our Heroes program; and DERM finalised \$2.1 million of grant agreements with peak rural industry groups, which I know the member for Gregory would be interested to hear about, under the Rural Water Use Efficiency initiative, which assists landholders in preparing their irrigation systems for climate change and improved water use efficiency.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I could keep going, Madam Chair.

Mr ELMES: I will give you the opportunity, Minister. I refer to SDS page 3-160 and carbon emissions. On 2 December 2009, when asked about an emissions trading scheme, the Premier told ABC Radio—

Well, I'm not saying you can't do it in one state and I think that if we don't see national action on this then the states may, well, either do it themselves or we could in fact come together across, you know, say, South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland and put something in place.

What action has been taken to implement an emissions trading scheme, either by Queensland alone or in conjunction with South Australia, Victoria and New South Wales?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think I made the position very clear that the Queensland government is continuing to take action to reduce Queensland's emissions that are causing climate change and is continuing to prepare the state for the impacts of climate change. There is nothing inconsistent about what I have said compared with what the Premier has said publicly. The Minister for Climate Change is very passionate about this issue. We have made it very clear that the Queensland government maintains that the CPRS should be implemented at a national level, and this is the current commitment of the Commonwealth government. The Queensland government believes that a CPRS can only work effectively on a national basis. However, we are not going to sit back and wait; we are going to get on with the job. We are going to implement programs.

Mr ELMES: So she's going to go it alone? She's going to do it in Queensland alone?

Ms PALASZCZUK: No, we are going to continue to implement programs. I think you will be hearing a lot more about this in the coming weeks of the federal election campaign.

Mr ELMES: I refer to SDS page 3-162 and climate change. Estimates Committee C was advised that it was considered necessary to make the former head of the Office of Climate Change an assistant director-general under this new service structure to standardise nomenclature and achieve perfect consistency with others of a comparable level in the agency after the creation of DERM. As a result of departmental amalgamations brought about by these machinery-of-government changes, were any other public servants promoted or retitled as some form of director-general—and, if so, who were they—or was this honour singly bestowed upon the former head of the Office of Climate Change?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for his question. It is good that you are actually asking the question at the right estimates. Another member asked the Minister for Natural Resources and Minister for Trade this question when it is not even part of his portfolio responsibilities.

Mr MOORHEAD: At length on numerous occasions.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes. In fact, I think it was about 10 or 15 minutes. I am more than happy to discuss this issue. Because this is an issue in relation to staffing and that is in the domain of the Director-General, John Bradley, I would ask the director-general to comment and provide an answer to your question.

Mr Bradley: In relation to the member's question, which I think focused on any other changes that were made at the same time—

Mr ELMES: Across government.

Mr Bradley: Across government—in relation to any changes made at the same time, I can only speak for the approach that the Department of Environment and Resource Management took. It was a separate issue across government for each director-general. I do know that other directors-general achieved consistency in their title arrangements. As you would understand, within different departments different approaches to the nomenclature had developed and when you combine, in our case, two departments but in other cases up to four agencies, as we did after the reforms earlier last year, then you do end up with a need to achieve consistency.

The particular officer's title was changed to assistant director-general. At the same time, there was a range of staff within the former EPA—including the current assistant directors-general for Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service, Sustainable Communities and Landscapes, and Environment and Natural Resource Regulation—who were retitled in the same way. That was to achieve conformity in terms of the titling system.

I just wanted to recognise that, in that transition, there was no change to the remuneration of the officer you are referring to in that change in title. Indeed, there has not been a change in the remuneration of that officer since they were transferred at level, in accordance with section 79(1) of the Public Service Act, when they were moved to lead the Office of Climate Change. Retitling of that position to assistant director-general, as I said, just achieves consistency rather than representing a change in salary or conditions.

Mr ELMES: I refer to page 3-159 of the SDS and the Climate Change Centre of Excellence. What is the projected cost of the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence? How many staff are allocated to this centre as opposed to the departmental services of climate change? Given that the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence is, in effect, a self-managing academic unit, why is there a need for a public servant at deputy director-general level to manage this unit?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. As you state, the government, through the Climate Change Centre of Excellence, will release the latest climate projections, especially in relation to what the science is telling us. I can advise you that there is a scientific consensus that climate change is happening, that human activity is the major cause. The Queensland government's response to climate change is informed by world-leading climate research. This includes the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the world's leading authority.

Importantly, the Department of Environment and Resource Management intends to release an updated report on climate science and its implications for Queensland. This report will provide an analysis of climate science and the implications for Queensland based on the 2007 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change fourth assessment report. In the year since, the significant body of new peer reviewed science has been published. To reflect these advances, the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence has updated the 2008 document—*Climate Change in Queensland: What the science is telling us, 2010*.

The updated report provides new information such as regional projections, which are tracking above the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change predictions, that Queensland's Wet Tropics rainforest may be reduced by 50 per cent if temperatures increase by more than two degrees; easily accessible and understandable information on what is happening with climate change and the impact for Queenslanders; a synopsis of the latest regional projections on temperature, rainfall and evaporation to 2050 for the 13 Queensland regions and what this will mean for each region; discussion of the impacts of climate change on key Queensland sectors, including infrastructure and the built environment, water supply, terrestrial biodiversity, marine biodiversity, primary industry, health and wellbeing, and emergency management.

The Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence analyses outputs from climate change models and researches the effects of climate change on Queensland communities and sectors. They compile this information for use by key stakeholders such as farming groups and also local governments.

Mr ELMES: I did ask whether or not we needed a public servant at deputy director-general level to manage the unit. Anyway, I refer to page 3-157 of the SDS and Toward Q2: Tomorrow's Queensland. Despite listing it as an achievement in the 2009-10 budget papers, Ecofund has gone missing from this year's budget papers, has yet to table any reports in parliament and still boasts that a new website is coming soon. Given this absence of information, how many environmental trusts have been established? What amounts have been contributed to these funds, including Ecofund? What projects have they funded to date and have planned to fund in the future? What are the reporting obligations that have been put in place to indicate this information?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for his question in relation to Ecofund. I can advise you that the budget for 2010-11 is \$1.7 million. Ecofund is a Queensland government initiative established as a broker of environmental and carbon offsets and related services. Environmental offsets are actions taken to counterbalance the environmental impacts that result from development. Ecofund facilitates the securing of strategically located offsets that provide additional environmental benefits by linking, buffering and expanding Queensland's protected areas and by enhancing ecosystems through protecting land, vegetation and wildlife habitat.

Carbon offsets are generated by projects or activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions into the atmosphere. Ecofund has been established to encourage the development of the local carbon industry and support positive environmental outcomes for Queensland. It invests in projects including energy efficiency, renewable energy and biodiversity protection. It provides solutions and expert advice to help government, business and individuals meet sustainability objectives through ethical sourcing and brokering of carbon and environmental offsets. I might hand over to the director-general to expand a bit more in relation to the fund.

Mr Bradley: I was just going to add, Minister, that Ecofund Queensland has obviously established accounts to support the program Reverse the Effect, which we were speaking about earlier in relation to the state's commitment of \$4½ million to match offsets. As part of that process, Ecofund has been also making use of the Balance the Earth trust fund, which was previously established within the then EPA, and through that program is in a position where it is looking to not only partner with householders that want to offset their motor vehicles but also provide offset services to a range of corporate clients. Ecofund, apart from that program, is also providing advisory services in relation to environmental assessment and assessment of regional ecosystems as part of the analysis of their offset requirements and is providing a significant number of those services in terms of advisory services as corporate proponents of projects need to assess their offset requirements.

Obviously within Ecofund's life it is at an early stage. The fortunes of Ecofund are partly dependent on the environment in terms of the Commonwealth CPRS. Therefore, the level of take-up is partly related to that regulation environment. But Ecofund is certainly active in providing the services it can.

CHAIR: The time for non-government questions has expired. I call the member for Chatsworth.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, I refer to the capital statements on page 69 of Budget Paper No. 3. What is the capital works budget for your portfolio and how will it improve services across the state?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. The total DERM capital budget for 2010-11 is \$127.5 million and includes a number of projects designed to improve visitors' experience and facilities of our protected areas and to expand those areas. Major components for the environmental part of the portfolio, for which I have responsibility at present, in 2010-11 include

\$8.6 million for a number of land acquisition activities for conservation, including the Koala Response Strategy and the expansion of national parks under the Q2 target; \$15.1 million in capital grants towards a range of activities, including the Koala Response Strategy and to assist in the implementation of the Queensland Waste Reform Strategy; and \$13 million for infrastructure projects within parks and forests.

The Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service capital works program provides infrastructure critical for the management, enjoyment and protection of our outstanding natural assets. Queensland parks and forests host around 16 million visitors annually. That is why we are always investing in suitable facilities to ensure visitor enjoyment and safety. Last financial year was no exception. Despite cyclones and flooding affecting many parks, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service was able to complete most of its capital projects including important boundary fencing projects on several Western Queensland national parks.

Economic activity associated with visitation to our parks is a boon for many regional economies. The work generated by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service capital works program contributes greatly to job generation both directly through ranger jobs and contractors and subcontractors drawn from the local communities where these projects are located. A major project for the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service during 2009-10 was the commissioning of the department's largest remote area solar power supply on Fraser Island at a cost of \$900,000. This is part of an ongoing program to reduce emissions and costly fuel consumption of diesel generators. Also completed was the upgrade of ranger bases at Byfield, Bribe Island and Iron Range, and work sheds at Mundubbera and Taroom. Special funding of \$1.7 million in 2009-10 saw the completion of a \$3 million upgrade in facilities and walking tracks in the Whitsunday national park. The Great Walks program, with a total budget of \$16.5 million, has been completed on time and on budget. I had the pleasure of opening the last one—the Conondale Range Great Walk—just this month. It is truly a special part of Queensland and one deserving its own great walk.

The government's initiative for improving management outcomes under the Moreton Bay Marine Park zoning plan is close to completion at a total projected cost of \$1.7 million. The program includes more vessels for increasing patrols in the bay and regulatory signs at public moorings. In the 2010-11 financial year, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service capital budget is \$13.6 million. Approximately \$5.4 million will be spent on new and upgraded visitor facilities focusing on environmental sustainability and efficient park and forest management. As an example, upgrades at the Lawn Hill National Park, worth \$2.47 million, will include a visitor centre and a keeping place for Aboriginal artefacts. I recently had the pleasure of visiting this wonderful place just this month with the member for Mount Isa to mark the start of this very, very important project for the region.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 3-160 of the Service Delivery Statement regarding the completion of Great Walks. How successful and popular have these Great Walks been so far?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for her question. As I mentioned earlier, this has been a wonderful program because it is bringing more Queenslanders out into the great outdoors to enjoy our natural treasures and encourages an increased appreciation for conservation in this state. I am very pleased to announce that all 10 of the Great Walks of Queensland have been completed. I am delighted to have opened the very last one in the Conondale National Park—it is another world-class Great Walk track. It was great to meet with the people who were involved and the many volunteers who were involved in undertaking the work on this walk. It was a great opportunity for some of the students from Conondale State School. They joined with me and I thought it was only fitting that they should be the ones to open this last Great Walk. I was also accompanied by the local rangers on a section of the Conondale Range Great Walk, showcasing a special section of their patch which they showcased to nearly 100 guests on the day.

The Bligh government invested \$1.8 million in the Conondale walk, which was a welcome boost for the local and state ecotourism. It is a four-day wilderness trail through the upper Mary Valley, rich in natural wonders and historical sites. Although the full circuit spans 56 kilometres, there are both short and long walks through many forest types. We made sure there were walks catering for people of all levels of fitness. They vary from half a kilometre that can be done in 15 minutes to an 11-kilometre walk that takes half a day, to the full challenging 56 kilometres.

Mr ELMES: I will take the first one.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, I did the first one. If I had more time, I would have liked to have done the second one. Its proximity to Brisbane of about two hours and to the Sunshine Coast of about an hour makes this walk very popular. I would encourage members, if they have not been out to this great walk, to go and explore the great outdoors. It is truly a remarkable place in Queensland.

With the network now complete, Queensland's national parks now have a combined total of 739 kilometres of Great Walks. These Great Walks stretch from the World Heritage areas of the Gold Coast hinterland in the south to the wet tropics in the north and then out to Carnarvon in the west. In between are magnificent walks on Fraser Island, the Mackay, Whitsunday and Sunshine Coast highlands, the Cooloola Coast and finally the brand-new Conondale. On most of the walks, there is an opportunity for day users to take shorter walks and on one of them you can take a canoe between the islands, or the more adventurous can enjoy longer multiday walks.

The Bligh government built the \$1.27 million walk to boost local ecotourism and it provides new ways of exploring our beautiful region. Already 16 companies have submitted their interest in conducting commercial tours on the walk—the highest number of any of the Queensland Great Walks.

Mr MOORHEAD: If we can move from Great Walks to Fraser Island, I refer to page 3-167 of the Service Delivery Statement regarding visitor infrastructure measures. Can the minister report on any new infrastructure being provided to improve the visitor experience on Fraser Island?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member for his interest in one of our truly great national parks. Fraser has always been one of our most popular, with about 400,000 people going there every year. With these high numbers and given that it is a World Heritage area, it is important that it receives both state and federal attention when it comes to infrastructure. I am pleased that after over a decade of Commonwealth neglect when Howard was the Prime Minister and funding diminished to barely a trickle—it got just \$8,000 in 2002-03—we now have a government in Canberra that values Fraser Island.

In 2009-10, through this government's Great Sandy Region investment package and with funding from the Commonwealth, an ambitious program of works to upgrade existing visitor facilities is well and truly underway. Highlights of the initiative include an investment of more than \$3 million in new visitor facilities at Lake McKenzie, which I inspected earlier this month. We want to see if we can have all of those facilities ready to be opened in time for the September school holidays. When I spoke to the rangers, I was also interested to find that there is some disability access leading down some parts of the walk to Lake McKenzie. I think that is very important, especially given my other responsibility as Minister for Disability Services. It is going to be accessible to all. There will also be five additional facilities for the disposal of waste along the eastern beach of Fraser Island, a remote area solar power system—which I was talking about earlier—and a further \$1.82 million in capital works, which includes upgrading Central Station toilet facilities and the Waddy Point camp ground as well as upgrades across another nine popular day-use facilities and camp grounds.

I saw firsthand how the iconic Lake McKenzie redevelopment will be benchmarked for sustainable tourism infrastructure in Queensland's national parks. For the first time, it will provide easier access for the elderly and, as I said, people with a disability. The upgrade will also provide improved vehicle access routes, redesigned parking, three new amenity blocks, viewing platforms and dingo deterrent fenced day-use areas, and I was able to look around them as well when I was there. These will add to the visitors' experiences and ensure safe and sustainable recreational use.

Workplace health and safety considerations have required some access restrictions to the lake while construction is underway, but visitors who join a guided tour can still access the site at specified times. The redevelopment is creating employment opportunities in the local area, including work for temporary rangers, traffic controllers and workers employed by Conservation Volunteers Australia and the cultural heritage assessors.

Mrs SULLIVAN: I have another question on Fraser Island. Can the minister report on the dingo survey that was commissioned to better understand the dingo population on Fraser Island?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to answer the member's question. The state government has been hard at work implementing a strategy on Fraser Island which has a sustainable dingo population as its major focus. I recently visited Fraser Island to see firsthand how our rangers are carrying out their duties on the island. I met a number of rangers and observed their interaction with visitors on the island and their public education of the safe dingo messages, which is an important part of the daily routine particularly in and around popular camping spots. I can tell the committee that the rangers we have on Fraser Island are among our best. I was very pleased to be able to take the time and sit down with them and talk about their daily duties as well as accompany them on their patrols.

While our rangers have been carrying out their daily duties in frontline services, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service has been delivering on a direction Minister Jones gave last year in relation to the dingo population. Minister Jones announced the commissioning of a dingo survey to update data collected over the past decade and inform government about the current size and nature of the Fraser Island population. Part 1 of the two-year survey has been underway. It will provide a better understanding not only of total numbers but also of other factors, such as dingo dispersal across the island, the total number of packs and the age and composition of those packs. A full report of phase 1 of the Fraser Island dingo population study will be released soon, but I am pleased to update the committee on the work to date. I seek leave to table a copy of the report for the committee.

CHAIR: Leave is granted.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The report has confirmed that there are currently 231 tagged dingos on Fraser Island. These dingos are currently recorded on an active dingo ear tag register kept by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service. The current figure of 231 comes after an extended period of capturing and tagging; however, experts believe there are still plenty of dingos that have not been tagged. In fact, the report estimates that a third of the population on the island are not tagged, which points to a very healthy and prevalent population.

The survey also included an intensive sighting project carried out between November 2009 and 31 May 2010 which recorded 810 dingo sightings. These figures obviously include multiple sightings of the same animal, but again they show an active population. Other findings of the interim report include that the heaviest weight recorded for an 18-month-old juvenile was 20 kilograms, which is the same as an adult dingo, and that the lowest weight recorded in the age group was 13.8 kilograms, which is the average weight of an adult dingo on the mainland. Also, the dingos are moving long distances in short periods. Young dingos on the western side of Fraser Island and in less visited areas appear smaller, indicating a birth time of up to two months later than those observed on the eastern beaches. Overall, this document offers a good snapshot of our current understanding of the dingo population, which looks to be well in excess of previous estimates which had the population totalling somewhere between 100 and 200.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, I refer to page 3-159 of the Service Delivery Statements regarding liquefied natural gas. How has the state government strengthened environmental monitoring of the emerging LNG industry in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member for this very important question. The state government is working to ensure that the development of the coal seam gas to liquefied natural gas industry does not adversely impact on Queensland's environmental values. I made a point of visiting the gas fields of the Roma district to get a firsthand account of the areas that DERM needs to keep a close watch over. I spent some time meeting with farmers to hear about their concerns and I also paid a visit to Origin Energy to get a better understanding of their operations.

DERM is the lead agency for regulating environmental impacts from this industry. We recognise the importance of placing stringent environmental obligations on these companies to ensure that any impacts are avoided and minimised. Put simply, if companies cannot live up to DERM's high standards of environmental performance set for this industry, they will not be allowed to proceed with their projects. Proponents for large scale gas field development to support the liquefied natural gas industry have completed or are in the process of completing environmental impact statements. These statements will require community input and rigorous assessment by the department and other government agencies. They have already moved to tighten the restrictions around water management in this sector. Legislation passed last month prevents the construction of new evaporation dams for the disposal of CSG water in production fields.

I also recently released the coal seam gas water management policy in Parliament House on 11 June this year. This policy is to ensure that the disposal of coal seam gas water does not contaminate the environment and to provide a clear direction to the industry on the use and management of water and effluent. I confirm that this policy will apply to the regulation of all LNG proponents. Through this new policy, we want to see the CSG industry use this water first and foremost for the benefit of the wider community. Preferred uses of treated coal seam gas water under the policy will include aquaculture, coal washing and other industrial uses, irrigation and livestock watering, and dust suppression. The policy includes a hierarchy of acceptable solutions for the management, treatment and disposal of brine and solid salt residue resulting from the treatment of the coal seam gas water.

Before coal seam gas production activities can commence, proponents must apply for an environmental authority and prepare an environmental management plan. The granting of an environmental authority is subject to a range of strict conditions and there are penalties applying for failure to comply. The department has recently released a guideline detailing the information requirements for environmental management plans. The guideline requires the plans to contain best practice environmental protection commitments and monitoring programs for water, air, waste, land, vegetation and noise management. The plans are also required to address how the sector will protect community values and resolve complaints. In addition, I will soon release DERM's new annual compliance plan which will include a sharper focus on the compliance inspections at gas operations across Queensland.

CHAIR: I refer to page 3-166 of the Service Delivery Statements regarding compliance activity. Can the minister inform the committee of the department's ability to enforce environmental legislation and regulations in Queensland?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for her question. DERM takes its regulatory responsibilities very seriously and has proven in recent times that individuals and companies who cause serious environmental harm will face the full force of the law. This is the case now more than ever as we have beefed up DERM's compliance team in recent years so we can investigate and take action against offences ranging from tree clearing to contamination. We have increased investment in 2009-10 to a total of \$16.7 million, which is now ongoing funding to boost the department's compliance capabilities and resources.

A key focus of DERM's compliance strategy is targeting resources at the areas of greatest risk. An additional 140 compliance officers have been recruited in the past three years. This year, another 14 officers will start, many of whom will focus on CSG regulation. There are also more than 1,000 trained

and skilled staff located across the state who are authorised to exercise statutory powers and issue penalty infringement notices across all legislation administered by DERM. There are also 23 dedicated lawyers whose role it is to progress prosecutions of serious environmental matters.

This serious investment in compliance and enforcement is already reaping results. Last year, DERM issued 144 formal warnings, 1,534 penalty infringement notices, 76 statutory notices for legislation relevant to the Environment portfolio and three restraint orders. DERM is not afraid to take on industry if warranted. The department has finalised 20 prosecutions which resulted in fines of about \$700,000 within the Environment portfolio.

Some examples of these include the following. In June this year in Gladstone, a company was fined \$90,000 and ordered to pay \$20,000 in investigation costs for a vapour release from its aluminium refinery that caused extensive damage to a property. In May this year, a man was fined \$85,000 for storing over 60,000 tyres in South-East Queensland. In March this year, a company outside Mount Isa was fined \$130,000 for releasing contaminated water into nearby creeks after heavy rain.

Perhaps DERM's biggest win in court in recent times has been the sentencing of a developer in North Queensland in June this year. This developer was fined \$182,000 in the Proserpine Magistrates Court over a number of charges, including illegal tree clearing on a Whitsunday coastal property north of Airlie Beach. In early 2007, he began directly clearing earthworks on a 387-hectare property at Clarkes Cove. The works included clearing approximately 13 hectares of remnant native vegetation including rare Whitsunday bottle trees.

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

Mr ELMES: I refer to SDS 3-138 and page 32 of Budget Paper No. 4. Koala numbers have declined by 51 per cent over the three years to 2008 and by 64 per cent over the past 10 years. As there is no performance measure stated to record the success or failure of this program, what is the target number of koalas to be saved from the capital allocation of \$45.5 million over five years and from the \$6.7 million of recurrent allocation over five years?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to very much thank the member for the question. As I mentioned earlier, the government is investing \$45.5 million over five years as part of the Koala Response Strategy that we announced in December 2008. This strategy represents the strongest commitment by any government in Queensland to koala conservation. In contrast, we are yet to hear what your views are in relation to the Koala Response Strategy.

Mr ELMES: They are well known.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We are yet to hear any policy from you in relation to that.

Mr ELMES: Only \$400,000 on research into koala diseases.

Ms PALASZCZUK: We have not heard anything. There is still silence. This government is getting on with the job of delivering in terms of protecting koalas. As I mentioned earlier, this morning I had the privilege of going out and meeting Christine and Justin. Both of them are private landholders who have allocated sections of their land for koala habitat. Christine is studying at the University of Queensland. She is doing her PhD in koala research. She said to me how vital it is to encourage more and more landholders to get on board with signing up for nature refuges. The government can go and purchase land but we need more people out there who actually own the land to say, 'We are prepared to say that this part of our land is going to be preserved for future generations for the protection of koalas.'

We saw a very significant announcement today—that is, the first two nature refuges of this kind to be announced in Queensland. The first one is at Brookfield and the second one is out at Grandchester. I would like to encourage more people out there to come on board.

In relation to your specific question about the money to be allocated, I point out that \$43 million has been allocated to the department's koala habitat, protection and rehabilitation program. This program is a key element in delivering the Bligh government's commitment to a net increase in mature habitat and actively regenerating bushland koala habitat by 2020. We are currently developing a program to monitor progress against this target, including the establishment of a measurable baseline that can be effectively and efficiently monitored over that time. The 2009 koala habitat values map will underpin that process.

DERM's koala habitat programs include an acquisition program aimed at acquiring mostly cleared land that can be rehabilitated back to bushland habitat. The program will focus on the Koala Coast and the Pine Rivers areas where koala populations are known to be in significant decline as a result of long-term population monitoring in those places by the department and the Moreton Bay Regional Council.

Mr ELMES: So we do not have a target number of koalas to be saved. I refer to the SDS at page 3-158 and Budget Paper No. 4, page 32. Most of the remaining koala habitat in the Redland City Council area is privately held. Will the minister guarantee that the government will purchase from the capital allocation enough of this land to ensure the sustainability of the local koala population and not simply regulate its responsibilities onto landholders?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to answer your question. There is money allocated in the capital component for the purchase of land, as you mentioned. There is \$3 million for the Koala Response Strategy. In relation to the capital grants, there is a further allocation of \$11 million for 2010-11.

Some of that money has been used down at Capalaba. There are a number of contracts on foot at the moment. I am not at liberty to discuss them because they are in the final contractual stages of the negotiations. We are trying to purchase land which is going to be most significant for koala habitat. I will ask Geoff Clare to come forward. Geoff, could you expand on the member's question with regard to the Redlands?

Mr ELMES: The Redlands and making sure that the state government's responsibility is not just passed on to landholders.

Mr Clare: The koala habitat protection and rehabilitation strategies that the minister has mentioned are already on foot. They complement the regulatory measures the government put in place earlier this year. They are intended to provide both acquisition and other measures that will support the purchase and rehabilitation of habitat. Those programs were the subject of public expressions of interest earlier this year. Those expressions of interest certainly prioritised, but not exclusively, the two areas referred to—the Pine Rivers and Koala Coast areas.

Mr ELMES: I refer to the SDS at page 3-162 and Queensland highlights. Last Thursday—and it was reported in this morning's *Townsville Bulletin*—four dugong were found dead in Bowling Green Bay near Townsville tied up with fishing nets and makeshift anchors in an attempt to hide their bodies. In parliament and elsewhere this year I have repeatedly highlighted the illegal trade in dugong and turtle meat occurring in North Queensland with absolutely no response from local Labor members or your department in an effort to stop this trade. Question on notice No. 359 of 2010 revealed that, despite numerous media reports since 2007, this government has failed to prosecute a single person for illegal dugong and turtle fishing in North Queensland.

CHAIR: The time to ask your question has expired. I call the minister.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The member raises a very important question. It is one that the government takes very seriously. There are a number of issues involved here. There have been a number of reports over recent weeks, which the member talks about, in relation to deaths of dugongs. There have also been some alleged incidents of the illegal trade in dugong meat.

Mr ELMES: \$150 a kilo.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would say that if the member has any evidence whatsoever of any member of the public—

Mr ELMES: Minister, you can ring the Cairns Airport and they will tell you; I have.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you have any evidence you must submit that information to us so that it can be properly investigated.

Mr ELMES: It has been highlighted in the media in North Queensland for months now.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you are just raising an allegation here it is hearsay.

Mr ELMES: It is not hearsay; it is fact.

Ms PALASZCZUK: If you have factual evidence I would urge the member—

Mr ELMES: The 5.15 flight from Horn Island every afternoon brings in dugong and turtle meat.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—to come forward with that evidence and it will be thoroughly investigated.

Mr ELMES: Some of it is then put into cabs and delivered around Cairns.

CHAIR: Member for Noosa, you have asked your question, please allow the minister to answer.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The person in relation to some of these claims has contacted AQIS regarding the matter and also contacted the Cairns office. If there is any further information we need to know about it.

Mr ELMES: Have a talk to AQIS; they will tell you.

Ms PALASZCZUK: The informant had not personally witnessed the activity but claimed to have received information. I am advised that—

Mr ELMES: Representatives from AQIS have seen the turtle meat come in on the planes.

Ms PALASZCZUK:—the informant did not have any knowledge of the likely distribution of the products. This is a very serious issue.

Mr ELMES: It is.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is a serious issue. It is something that is not and should not be tolerated. The department will investigate these matters as a matter of urgency once the evidence comes to hand. Minister Jones tabled in parliament a discussion paper in relation to marine mammals. That has

received submissions and they are currently being evaluated by the department. The discussion paper was released in September 2009. The discussion paper provided an overview of the conservation and management issues affecting these animals which are held in great affection by the majority of Queenslanders. Comments have now been received. As I said, the department is currently analysing those.

The protection of dugong is a fundamental concern for us. That is one of the reasons the go-slow zones were expanded in the Moreton Bay Marine Park, which the member for Noosa did not support.

Mr ELMES: Minister, we are not talking about Moreton Bay; we are talking about Far North Queensland. We are talking about the protected dugong and protected turtle species and their illegal trade. I will try again. I refer to the SDS at page 3-158 and the 2010-11 highlights. Not one of the 16 2010-11 highlights relates to the care or protection of dugong or turtles. Why is the illegal trade in dugong and turtle meat of so little significance to the Bligh Labor government that the preservation of native wildlife does not rate in the top 16 objectives for DERM in the coming year?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I reject the assertion, because we do take our responsibilities very seriously. The protection of dugong is very important. It is a matter that I think is so important that I have actually written to my federal counterpart about this. I am seeking to convene a joint Commonwealth-state task force. I can advise the committee that at the beginning of this week I had a response from Peter Garrett. The federal minister has indicated that he does support this. I mentioned that this was an urgent issue. He has indicated that he does support the establishment of that task force.

We have put on extra personnel up there. We are continuing to honour our commitments in terms of the protection of dugong. There have been a number of incidents and some of those are currently being investigated.

Mr ELMES: We will have to agree to disagree on that, Minister.

Mr MOORHEAD: It is not about whether you agree or not.

Mr ELMES: The fact of the matter is, Madam Chair, that Peter Garrett has been made aware of the facts that relate to the treatment of dugong and turtle in Far North Queensland and has done nothing about it. We have two Labor cabinet ministers in Far North Queensland and they have not uttered one word about it. None of the Labor members in North Queensland have even come close to addressing the issue so you cannot tell me that you are being serious.

CHAIR: Do you have a question for the minister?

Mr ELMES: Yes, I do. I refer to the Capital Statement for 2010-11 at page 71 and capital projects. The redevelopment of the day use area at Lake McKenzie on Fraser Island was budgeted to be completed in 2009-10. It has seen a \$437,000 cost blow-out and was not completed on time. The redevelopment of the car park at Joseph Banks Conservation Park was budgeted to be completed in 2009-10. It has seen a cost blow-out of \$158,000 and work continuing in 2010-11. The workshop and compound at Bunya Mountains National Park was scheduled to be completed in 2009-10. It has seen a cost blow-out of \$112,000 and work continuing into 2010-11. Why has this department been unable to complete these projects on time and on budget?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I reject the premise of your question. As members of the estimates committee would be aware, capital projects are allocated on a rolling program. The funds allocated for these capital works will be provided. I am happy to address in detail each of the issues you have raised. I think it is very important that the committee is made aware that these projects will be completed.

In relation to Lake McKenzie on Fraser Island, the total cost of the project is \$1.039 million. As I said previously, I have been up there and visited the project. It is almost complete. It is going to provide new vehicle access routes with vehicle barriers, redesign of the car park, new pedestrian access to the beach, three new amenity blocks and waste treatment facility, dingo fences, improved interpretative signs et cetera. The construction is well advanced. As I stated to you, the facility is expected to be open—all of the works—by the September school holidays.

In relation to the Joseph Banks area that you mentioned, I can advise you that the total cost of the initiative is \$673,000. It will allow continued access to the visitor facilities at Joseph Banks Conservation Park. The headland area provides a good opportunity to establish a prominent contact point within the heavily used recreational area. Construction commenced on 13 July 2010 and the project is expected to be completed by September this year. So that one is on track and on time.

In terms of your final question in relation to the Bunya Mountains National Park, I can advise you that the total cost of this initiative was \$500,000. The management unit of the Bunya Mountains has an outdated work base and it needed replacement. There is a new facility now which will allow separation from day-visitor facilities and the development of a modern, efficient base. The 2009-10 expenditure was \$58,000 but the project is forecast for completion in June next year, and the project will be completed. As I said to the committee, this is a rolling program. All of the moneys committed in the capital works budget will be spent on those capital works unless they come in under budget, and that money will be reallocated on a priority basis.

Mr ELMES: I refer to the SDS at page 3-160 relating to reef resilience. What systemic program has been put in place to monitor reef resilience or changes in water quality attributed to changes in nutrient, sediment or pesticide levels? How does the government determine whether any detected changes are attributed to the new regulatory regime, independent action taken by land managers or any other action?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sorry, but whereabouts are you on that page?

Mr ELMES: I refer to the SDS at page 3-160.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for your important question. In relation to the reef regulation issue you raised, our budget for 2010-11 is \$9.362 million, which is a continued delivery of our election commitment. A substantial body of science accumulated for over 30 years supports the Australian and Queensland governments' Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan, which is known as the reef plan, and its programs such as water quality grants under the Reef Rescue regulation and research and extension under the reef protection package. This scientific evidence indicates that the reef's health has had some decline due to nutrient, pesticide and sediment run-off from agriculture in adjacent river catchments.

In relation to some of the programs with regard to reef regulation, the department is leading the implementation of the joint Commonwealth-state paddock to the reef program. The program, with approximately \$10 million identified annually for the five-year life of the reef plan, will build a robust tool for measuring and predicting water quality changes to track and report on progress towards the reef plan targets. Achievement of the reef plan goals will be assessed against targets established for land management and water quality. The targets link land management at the paddock with water quality in subcatchments and the reef lagoon to assess ecosystem health from the paddock to the reef. I might just ask the director-general if he would like to add any comments about this initiative.

Mr Bradley: Thanks, Minister. I was just going to confirm that there is a comprehensive approach to assessing the impacts from both regulation and reef plan investment in practice change. So it is looking at a total outcome, but we are doing that in cooperation with the Commonwealth government.

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

Mrs SULLIVAN: Minister, I refer to page 3-160 of the Service Delivery Statements where, in addition to increased investment in national parks and other protected areas, the state government is committing more funding towards koala habitat, and I ask: how and where will this funding be spent and what has the state government achieved so far in habitat protection?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for the question, because it gives me an opportunity to add further to the comments I was making in response to the member for Noosa in relation to our koala program. Even before this budget, the Bligh government has shown its commitment to increasing koala protection in South-East Queensland. We handed down the toughest koala planning measures ever implemented in Australia. We put on the table \$400,000 for koala disease research. We have been retrofitting road hot spots to make them more koala friendly and we have been purchasing properties to turn them into protected koala habitat.

I just want to reiterate some comments that were made earlier. In our capital statements, the \$11 million and the \$4 million is for purchasing of land, and what I was talking about before in relation to the nature refuges is about encouraging landholders to come on board. I just wanted to make sure that the member for Noosa was very well aware of the two separate issues that I was discussing and I just wanted to clarify that for the purposes of the committee.

I recently joined the Redland mayor to launch a project that will revegetate an old turf farm at Capalaba to make it protected koala habitat. Things are already happening on the ground in partnership with councils and the community, but what we have heard from the LNP on this issue is nothing but talk. We have been waiting and waiting for the koala policy—any sign soon?

Mrs SULLIVAN: Imminent!

Mr ELMES: It is imminent. How long is 'imminent', though? Sometime before the election, Minister. You will be sitting up in bed reading it!

Ms PALASZCZUK: The only reference was that, when pressured by the media to release his koala policy, the member said that he was close to finalising it but he did not want it stolen by the government. That was in March and now we are towards the end of July, so you are saying that it will be before the next election. Our positions on koala protection are worlds apart.

I am pleased to say that we have committed \$45.5 million over five years towards koala habitat protection, rehabilitation and monitoring. I would find it very hard to see how the opposition could beat that commitment—that huge injection of funds in our state budget—and that is in addition to the \$5 million provided last year. This funding is part of the strongest and most comprehensive commitment ever made for koala protection by a Queensland government.

Today I was pleased to announce those first two koala refuges. The landholders were extremely happy and, as I said to the committee earlier, we really want more and more people to come on board with this great initiative. The state government now has a comprehensive package of different measures which it will use towards its commitment to expand koala habitat in South-East Queensland by 2020.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, I refer to page 3-167 of the Service Delivery Statements regarding emission reduction targets through the very popular ClimateSmart Home Service, and I ask: can the minister update the committee on the rollout of this service?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for your question. As I stated earlier, it is a very popular program. It is one of the state government's flagship programs. A lot of people know about it and we know that thousands of Queenslanders have benefited from it already. As I stated, we are expecting to hit the 200,000th booking very shortly. That is a huge milestone for what is a hugely popular program, and it is one of our biggest success stories.

Mr Elmes interjected.

Ms PALASZCZUK: I welcome the bipartisan support of the program from the member for Noosa. It is so good that even the member for Southern Downs wanted his New South Wales neighbours to have access to this service. Since services began in January last year, more than 180,000 services have been completed and nearly 1.5 million energy-saving compact fluorescent light bulbs have been installed. Another of the ClimateSmart Home Service's measures of success is the high level of customer satisfaction. As I stated to the committee earlier, the satisfaction rate is 95 per cent. Furthermore, almost half of the satisfied customers rated the service 10 out of 10. So more good news!

By introducing this program, the state government is not only helping to reduce our carbon footprint but also helping residents tackle the increasing costs we currently face in our day-to-day lives. The ClimateSmart Home Service offers the typical Queensland household, which uses 7,900 kilowatt hours of electricity per year and produces approximately 8.24 tonnes of related greenhouse gas emissions, an easy way to save money and save the environment. It provides a service worth at least \$450 for \$50, and homes participating in the service can save around \$300 on their annual electricity bills. We expect that a home undertaking the service and changing its electricity usage behaviour can save a total of up to 20 tonnes of emissions over the eight-year average life of the items installed. Through this service Queensland could save up to 5.3 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions.

It has proven particularly popular in Brisbane—including in the member for Chatsworth's electorate, where more than 2,500 homes have benefited. But the service has not only been a hit in South-East Queensland. Service demand in regional areas has been consistently strong, with major centres such as Cairns and Townsville leading the way with some 7,000 and 6,000 services received respectively. Other regional centres are also taking to the program, including Bundaberg with 2,900 services, Mount Isa with 1,500, Gladstone with 1,750 and Maryborough with 1,100. There is widespread uptake. As the program enters its 19th month, there are numerous good news stories about the program's popularity. The Scenic Rim, for instance, is shaping up as the state's greenest region, with one in four homes having the service done.

Mr MOORHEAD: Minister, can you inform the committee of financial assistance provided by the state government to find new innovations in sustainability and energy efficiency?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would be delighted to. I thank the member very much for his question. The Queensland Sustainable Energy Innovation Fund is another program like the home service that has kicked a number of goals in the name of sustainability but perhaps does not get the recognition it deserves. Through the fund the state government provides assistance to Queensland based organisations to develop innovative technologies that reduce the consumption of fossil fuels and water and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The state government wants to see Queensland businesses lead the way in doing things greener and shrinking their carbon footprint. One of the best ways to foster this business leadership is to provide seed funding to companies to get their innovative ideas off the ground. The fund provides up to 80 per cent of external cost to a maximum of \$200,000 for approved projects. The aim of the fund is to offset the technical risk of developing new green technologies. Few companies would or could undertake development of such innovative technology without government support.

Since it began in 1999, the program has committed a total of \$9.4 million to some 80 projects. Several Queensland companies have achieved impressive environmental and economic benefits through this fund. I have had the pleasure of visiting two new grant recipients during my time as acting minister. I visited a Woolloongabba company, known as Tritium, which could revolutionise how electric cars are developed and used. It is developing a universal power controller that will provide a seamless link between the electricity grid and renewable energy systems, with state government support of \$158,000. Another innovation I inspected just this month was out at St Lucia, where a UQ company, Bilexys, is using cutting-edge technology to turn wastewater into a crucial chemical in paper manufacturing. This is being helped along with a \$170,000 grant. I was delighted to see the program in action when I visited and to hear from Dr Howard Leemon that he feels the fund is the best state government program running because it gives real help to get cutting-edge innovations out of the lab and into commercial operations.

As you can see, there are a number of projects out there that are benefiting from this. We want to encourage more businesses to apply through the fund and to reap the benefits. I am happy to announce today another recipient under this fund, and it is a company in the Waterford electorate. A Beenleigh company, Vac-U-Digga, is receiving a \$200,000 grant for a technology that aims to slash the amount of water used to clear blockages from stormwater and sewer systems. Vac-U-Digga is developing an alternative to the conventional method of cleaning stormwater and sewer systems which uses high-pressure pipe-jetting equipment to force blockages through the pipes and eventually out to sea. The position of technological leadership that these companies have achieved underscores the value and long-term benefit of the Queensland government's support for innovation in sustainable energy.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 3-166 of the Service Delivery Statements regarding climate science targets. I know that you spoke about this earlier, but I was wondering if you could elaborate on how the state government contributed to climate change research.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much, chair. Unlike the LNP, the Bligh government believes in climate change. We also believe that we should do all we can to understand what is occurring, understand the impacts and understand how we can deal with those challenges.

A key element of our policies is that decisions are underpinned by the best possible science. An integral part of the Office of Climate Change within the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management is the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence. The centre undertakes research on climate change, climate variability and extreme events to inform planning and policy decisions and is fast gaining a very strong and credible international reputation.

The centre has established strong collaborations with leading international climate science system research centres, including the Walker Institute for Climate System Research at the University of Reading and the UK Met Office Hadley Centre for climate change. Work with the Hadley Centre is assisting in the delivery of better information on climate extremes with work based in Brisbane. The centre is contributing to this project by investigating the causes and impacts of major climate events, such as drought. The centre is also involved in a global project, the Atmospheric Circulation Reconstructions over the Earth project, which aims to predict future climate through an improved knowledge of past climate. The centre is contributing to this project by investigating the causes and impacts of major climate events such as drought.

To develop an improved understanding of the key processes that influence rainfall over time, the centre is also working with the University of Reading's Walker Institute. These collaborations are critical for driving more robust climate projects, especially for rainfall and extreme events such as flooding, droughts and cyclones. I think we can all value more research into this area in a state of extreme weather like Queensland.

The centre is also collaborating with the CSIRO on global climate modelling to ensure that the fifth assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change takes account of key climate drivers of the Australian region. The centre will also be preparing scientific papers on Queensland rainfall causes and extreme events to inform the fifth assessment report, which is scheduled for release in 2014. For example, comprehensive regional climate change assessments have been developed for 13 regions of Queensland for use in climate risk vulnerability projections, policy development and planning. The centre, in conjunction with the CSIRO and the bureau, will further down scale global climate models to improve climate forecasting at the regional scale.

Our climate scientists are also working on climate change together with China through the Queensland-China Climate Change Fellowship. There are many other valuable projects underway through the work of the Queensland Climate Change Centre of Excellence.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Can you outline to the committee other ways the state government is recognising leaders in sustainability?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I would like to thank the member very much for her question and I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the recent success of the 2010 Premier's ClimateSmart Sustainability Awards in recognising sustainability champions within the Queensland community. It was a great night on 4 June, which I attended as did the Premier. The awards are now the Queensland government's highest recognition of community and business leaders championing sustainability, innovation and eco efficiency. Winners and finalists were announced at an oversubscribed gala dinner at the Brisbane convention centre on the eve of World Environment Day as part of Queensland Week. I was delighted to see that there were 500 people there at the dinner, representing a cross-section of the 192 applications across nine categories—from schools, community groups, businesses and industries, including agriculture.

The award showcased the achievement of Queenslanders who have embraced low-carbon actions to minimise their impact on the environment. The overwhelming response to the awards highlights the growing number of innovative leaders, businesses, community groups and schools right here in Queensland that are willing to make a difference each and every day. These Queenslanders are leaders in their local community, workplace or businesses who are encouraging others to also live smarter, greener lifestyles and foster eco efficiency across business practices. I am pleased that the Queensland government was able to recognise each of these winners.

The pinnacle award, the Premier's ClimateSmart Award, was presented to Bruce Mitchell of Mitchell Builders, judged to be the most outstanding nominee across the nine award categories. Mitchell EcoEnterprise Park at Staplyton south of Brisbane, is Australia's first industrial estate that is 100 per cent self-sustaining and carbon neutral—a real winner for the environment. The estate uses solar energy for streetlights, water pumps, septic systems and security systems so that the estate can operate apart from the electricity grid. Rainwater is collected and treated to a standard approved by the local council for on-site use and run-off from the road is captured in tanks and used for irrigation. So far the park has captured and stored the equivalent of 5.5 Olympic sized swimming pools. All warehouses face north, have energy-efficient lighting, ventilation and are insulated to remove the need for artificial heating and cooling. Warehouses and fittings are recycled from other sites and all timber is sourced from sustainable forestry plantations. That is how all industrial estates in the future should be constructed and it is a worthy winner of our top green award. I would like to thank all the award nominees for progressing the government's Toward Q2 vision of encouraging a green, low-carbon Queensland.

CHAIR: I am going to ask you another question. Just getting back to the Great Barrier Reef, I refer to page 3-160 of the Service Delivery Statements. An important marine environment within the state that the state government is moving to further protect from the impacts of climate change is the Great Barrier Reef. I have two islands that form part of the electorate of Townsville that sit in the reef area and they are the islands of Palm and Magnetic. I ask: how is the first year of the reef protection legislation panning out?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Yes, thank you very much. It is a very important question. I am happy to say that the first year of the legislation is going extremely well. In less than 18 months new laws and regulations have been put in force to improve the land management practices of up to 4,500 cane farmers and 650 cattle graziers on 14 million hectares of land in the reef catchment. This was historic legislation for an international treasure that Queensland has sworn to protect. Notably, it was legislation that unfortunately the LNP voted against and, in doing so, told Queenslanders that they do not really care about the reef. A lot has been achieved since the middle of 2008 when the Premier held a Reef Summit and announced a \$50 million five-year reef protection package of regulation and legislative measures to protect the Great Barrier Reef from agricultural pollution.

I want to make the comment that it is great to see the cane farmers and the cattle graziers now working with the government. They are filling in their environmental management plans. The department has made a huge effort to make those plans in a reader-friendly format. I have personally had a look at those plans. If there is any assistance that people need, we have staff on hand to help them with filling out those plans. I think it is a very, very important measure. I think Queenslanders are happy that we are all trying to work together to benefit this great icon of ours in Queensland, the Barrier Reef.

The package aims to halve the excess nutrient and pesticides discharged from cane farms and cattle properties in the Wet Tropics, Mackay, the Whitsunday and the Burdekin Dry Tropic regions over four years. The Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Act was subsequently passed in October 2009 after significant consultations with industry and particular key groups such as Canegrowers and AgForce. On 1 January 2010, these farmers and graziers, if not already doing so, began keeping accurate records of their use of chemicals and fertilisers, taking soil tests, calculating and applying no more than the optimum amount of fertiliser and using chemicals under new restrictions designed to further mitigate the risk of impacts on reef water quality. Other requirements were introduced later on in the year, but even before 1 January this involved a massive consultation exercise with farmers and farmer groups. We recognise that they needed and deserved the on-the-ground assistance to understand these practical improvements to land management. Nearly 200 meetings have been held with over 3,000 growers and graziers—over half of the total number. This was supported by 25 extension staff—13 in the Burdekin, six in Mackay and six in the Wet Tropics. I think, as the committee can see, everybody is working together. We want to see the best outcome for the farmers, the best outcome for the reef and the best outcome for the people of Queensland.

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

Mr ELMES: While we are on the subject of the Great Barrier Reef, I refer to page 3-159 of the SDS, the Great Barrier Reef Water Quality Protection Plan. I share your concerns about the protection of the Great Barrier Reef. However, during the debate on the Great Barrier Reef Protection Amendment Bill 2009 Minister Jones made frequent reference to 'listening to industry' and 'I have been listening to industry and its concerns'. Given the new and complex regulatory regime that the scheme has introduced, especially during the middle of many farmers' cane crushing season, will the minister continue this practice of listening to industry by delaying the submission date for these ERMPs to 31 December as I have publicly called for and place a moratorium on any penalties arising from incomplete or unsigned ERMPs until 31 December 2010?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for the question. I cannot comment specifically on the meetings that Minister Jones had. That is a question that you will have to ask her at another time. I think I have explained in quite some detail how significant this Reef Water Quality

Protection Plan is and how I think it is great to see that we have all the staff out there in the regions helping to implement this very significant Queensland government reform. We also have people out in the field willing and able to assist people as they need to.

In terms of the actual time lines, I am now going to ask the director-general to talk about the staff who are out in the field and how they are assisting the farmers comply with their requirements under the act.

Mr Bradley: In relation to the time frames that the member was referring to, Minister Jones in the development of the implementation arrangements around the legislation and the supporting regulation did consult extensively in those early stages with, and has continued to, Canegrowers, AgForce and a range of other peak body representatives, including the Australian Sugar Milling Council and groups like the BSES. Through a stakeholder advisory committee that was chaired by the minister and through a technical working group that was managed by officers, there was extensive engagement with the industry about what were going to be practical time frames. It was for that reason that the time frames for the commencement of the mandatory requirements in relation to chemical regulation were deferred until 1 October of this year. It was also for that reason that the chemical rules in relation to the practices that would be acceptable to achieve compliance have been announced by government as providing new options for growers to comply.

In relation to the specific issue about the timing of the preparation of the environmental risk management plans, the time frames there were set after taking feedback from that stakeholder advisory committee. At that time they indicated to the minister that growers would need more time than 1 January 2010; they would need some time frame later in the year to undertake those more detailed assessments. The department fully respects the fact that for cane growers these plans do require a comprehensive assessment of their risks to water quality that may come from sediment nutrients and chemicals in their fertilisers and in their pest management. For that reason the framework that has been provided is a helpful tool that is being provided with assistance from reef protection officers. So there are significant reef protection officers in the field at the moment assisting those farmers with filling out those forms—over 25 staff at this point.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr ELMES: I simply make the point that it is right in the middle of crushing season and it is a very, very busy time for cane farmers. I refer to page 3-161 of the SDS, equitable vegetation management structures. I refer to the destruction and removal of 300 to 400 mangroves along the Brisbane River in the vicinity of South Bank. My question is: who will pay the \$300,000 fine? The state government or the South Bank Corporation? Or do you intend to share the blame for this vandalism and pay half each?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I think you will find that this question was asked to the Minister for Primary Industries as the issue of the mangroves comes under his jurisdiction.

Mr ELMES: I would have thought mangroves was something to do with the environment.

Ms PALASZCZUK: It is actually under his portfolio of responsibilities. So it was asked of him yesterday.

Mr ELMES: So the health of the Brisbane River and mangroves on the Brisbane River are something for primary industries?

Ms PALASZCZUK: The question was asked to the minister yesterday in his hearing.

Mr ELMES: I refer to page 71 of the Capital Statement 2010-11 and the rainforest/green lands acquisitions. In 2009-10 the capital statement allocated a budgeted \$10 million to the rainforest and green lands acquisitions.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Can you start again, sorry?

Mr ELMES: Sorry, as long as I get my one minute. I am going to have to motor.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Of course.

Mr ELMES: I refer to page 71 of the Capital Statement 2010-11 and the rainforest/green lands acquisitions. In 2009-10 the Capital Statement allocated a budget of \$10 million to rainforest/green lands acquisitions 2009-10. In 2010-11 the Capital Statement shows that actual expenditure by your department on these acquisitions was only \$6.5 million in 2009-10—a failure to acquire \$3.5 million of rainforest and green lands as budgeted.

Why are you boasting of the government's failure to purchase the rainforest and green land it promised in 2009-10 by reannouncing the unspent \$3.5 million as capital expenditure for 2010-11? And does this mean, as per your answer on non-government question on notice No.10, you have failed to allocate any new money to this acquisition program in 2010-11 and have instead continued the habit of recycling old announcements?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to go through the details with the member. I actually look forward to answering questions in relation to the capital budget. As you mentioned, the total cost of the project was \$30 million for the purchase of rainforest and green land. The government has allocated \$3.5 million in 2010-11 to complete the 2006 election commitment for the purchase. I can advise the

committee that the actual expenditure in 2009-10 was \$6.342 million and this was for the acquisition of various properties, including the Strathmore Station in Cape York, additions to the Springbrook National Park, the Jack River National Park in North Queensland and St George Peak near Cooktown. Expenditure to date under this program has been split between Cape York and Springbrook in South-East Queensland.

This funding, completed by other acquisition programs, has provided over 464,000 hectares of land being acquired for national park purposes on Cape York, and at Springbrook the acquisition of 45 lots covered about 694 hectares. The funds that were outstanding are, of course, rolled over, as I have indicated previously when we have had discussions in relation to the capital works budget, and the money will be used to complete the program with particular focus on properties in Cape York. So all of the funds will be spent on this project.

Mr ELMES: I refer to Capital Statement 2010-11, page 77, and the total Environment and Resource Management capital statement. Compared to the total Environment and Resource Management capital statement of 2009-10, the Bligh Labor government has slashed almost \$140 million from the capital expenditure of Environment and Resource Management. How much of this decrease has come from matters under the administration of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability; what were they; and do you lay the blame for this almost \$140 million decrease at the feet of your colleague the Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy?

Ms PALASZCZUK: As the budget is spread across both portfolios of the Minister for Mines and Energy and the Minister for Climate Change, I will ask the director-general to give you a more itemised breakdown, but can you please go back and just refer to the page again?

Mr ELMES: Capital Statement 2010-11, page 77.

Ms PALASZCZUK: That is the total environment resource management capital statement. I will ask the director-general if he can give a breakdown there.

Mr Bradley: In relation to the department's 2010-11 budget for capital acquisitions and grants, the total expenditure is \$26 million more than that originally provided for in 2009-10. In relation to the 2010-11 budget, the capital program includes increases of \$29.6 million with the additional funding for the Koala Response Strategy of \$11 million, Water for the Future of \$7.4 million, dam spillway upgrades and the Waste Reform Strategy. So the member can see that there is a mix of additional capital investment in both Minister Palaszczuk's portfolio and also Minister Robertson's portfolio across DERM.

There are also capital acquisitions rather than capital grants in relation to the Waste Reform Strategy of \$2.1 million, the Nathan and Connors River dam land purchases of \$6.2 million and additional national parks acquisitions of \$2.1 million, which are separately categorised to the operating funding the member would have been aware of that the minister referred to in relation to approximately \$55 million worth of operating, not capital, for acquisition funding.

It needs to be recognised that the capital budget is also being impacted by the fact that there are some projects which are one-off projects. Capital is of its nature lumpy and related to specific purposes. So there are some capital projects which have been completed and undertaken and that includes significant initiatives in relation to rainforest land, as the member was referring to, and the upgrade of water infrastructure. So that is probably the best overview of the capital program I can provide.

Mr ELMES: SDS 3-157 and national parks; how many audits were conducted of park facilities, such as toilets, shelters, walking tracks et cetera, in the last three years and what were the results of those audits and how often are they checked?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I am happy to refer that answer to the director-general as it is to do with park maintenance so it is an operational matter.

Mr Bradley: In relation to that issue, the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service does undertake regular maintenance and upgrades of its park facilities, as you would expect. There are a significant range of facilities within the national park estate including more than 2,000 kilometres of walking tracks, 447 camping areas and 195 visitor day-use facilities.

CHAIR: Time for non-government questions has expired.

Ms PALASZCZUK: Could I correct the record on a couple of issues that the member asked about previously? Should I do that now or at the end?

CHAIR: You can do it now. We are into government time so if you would like to advise the committee of those matters.

Ms PALASZCZUK: In relation to the question from the member for Noosa about does the government have a program in place that mandates government employees to turn off lights, the response is that I am pleased to advise that the Department of Public Works is the lead agency for the management of government facilities including energy management and reporting. There are a number of government strategies and policies in place around the management, reduction and reporting on government's energy use which are administered by the Department of Public Works. The Strategic

Energy Efficiency Policy for Queensland government buildings establishes energy consumption and reduction targets for departments—five per cent by 2010 and 20 per cent by 2015 against the 2005-06 baseline—as well as the need for departments to prepare and implement strategic energy plans.

The Carbon Reduction Strategy for government owned office buildings requires government owned office buildings to be carbon neutral by 2020. The Carbon Reduction Strategy also requires government owned buildings to comply with the ClimateSmart 2050 mandate of air-conditioning temperatures in government owned office buildings being 24 degrees Celsius for summer operation, implement programs to switch off non-essential computers and other office equipment outside normal business hours and new government owned office buildings to meet that minimum four and a half star energy rating with refurbishments. The ClimateQ energy efficiency retrofit program is also an \$8 million program over four years to progressively retrofit government buildings to increase energy efficiency. This program is scheduled to commence in 2010-11. To correct the record, earlier I meant to say \$380 million in relation to the waste industry levy over four years.

Mr KILBURN: Minister, I refer to page 3-159 of the Service Delivery Statement regarding the Toward Q2 targets and ask: can the minister explain how the state government is aiming to cut Queenslanders' carbon footprint by one-third by 2020?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the member very much for his question. It is a very important Q2 target and one that we are absolutely committed to. We know that the debate continues in Canberra over measures to decrease emissions from big polluting industries. There are a number of simple and practical ways households can reduce their emissions and save money. As we have talked about extensively today at the hearing, the big success story is the ClimateSmart Home Service, but there are others such as the ClimateSmart Living Education Campaign which encourages Queenslanders to reduce their carbon footprint through practical household action. Its low-carbon diet provides a step-by-step guide for households and community groups to reduce their carbon footprints by up to two tonnes. The state government's new \$60 million Solar Hot Water Rebate is helping Queensland households reduce emissions and save money on their electricity bills. The rebate is supporting the government's phase-out of electric hot-water systems in gas reticulated areas. The Solar Bonus Scheme being implemented by the Office of Clean Energy pays households with rooftop solar panels for surplus electricity exported into the Queensland grid. Around 30,000 households and businesses have signed up for the scheme and almost 50 megawatts of solar capacity has been connected to the grid.

To further support families in reducing emissions, the Queensland government is sponsoring the EasyGreen program in partnership with the Brisbane City Council to provide Brisbane households with access to discounted renewable energy and energy reduction products. For the first time, all those great green services for the home are bundled up in one quick and easy package. I just know that it will be hugely successful. The Lord Mayor has already indicated to me that there is a very quick uptake on this program. We should encourage other councils across the state to become involved. If they have an idea or they would like to partner with the state government to bundle these programs together, the state government is ready and willing to listen and to respond to their concerns.

The government is also implementing TravelSmart, a travel behaviour change program that encourages people to use public transport, walk, cycle or car pool. At a national level the Queensland government is continuing to work with states and territories to progress initiatives under the National Framework for Energy Efficiency and the National Strategy on Energy Efficiency. This includes the national phase-out of electric hot-water systems, improving energy use, information on household bills and extending and strengthening minimum energy performance standards for household appliances.

This year we have also released, as stated earlier, the public discussion around electric vehicles which have the potential to significantly reduce Queensland's emissions. We anticipate releasing a comprehensive policy position on electric vehicles later this year. In addition, the state government recently released the draft Queensland waste strategy for public comment. A number of proposed actions will help reduce household waste emissions including a recycling target, which the member for Noosa has mentioned in a previous speech, of 65 per cent by 2020.

Mrs SULLIVAN: Just following on from your remarks then about electric vehicles, I refer to page 3-159 of the Service Delivery Statement regarding the government's aim to cut Queenslanders' carbon footprint and I ask: can the minister update the committee on Queensland's preparations for the introduction of electric vehicles to the market?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Sure. Thank you very much for the question. We are determined as a government to be a leader in exploring low-carbon passenger transport options for the future. Electric vehicles are a more efficient form of passenger transport than many traditional vehicles available for sale today. For example, an average petrol powered passenger car can emit about four kilograms of emissions per year whereas an electric car using the current electricity grid mix in Queensland produces at least 15 per cent fewer emissions than an average petrol car. In the long term, electric vehicles offer a significant opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. When recharged by renewable energy, electric vehicles offer an opportunity for zero emission transport.

International investment in the production of electric vehicles is accelerating with major car companies such as Nissan and Mitsubishi planning to have their electric vehicle models on the market here by 2011 with more to come in the following years. While initial numbers may be small, the arrival of electric vehicles in Australia is imminent and planning is essential to ensure Queensland's infrastructure, industry and communities are both prepared and informed as we transition to a low-carbon economy.

To prepare for electric vehicles in Queensland, and to take advantage of the opportunities they present, as I mentioned earlier to the committee I recently released *an electric vehicle roadmap for Queensland*, an issues paper for public discussion. The roadmap introduces the topic of electric vehicles to Queensland and encourages public discussion on the key actions that Queensland will need to take to keep pace with low-emission transport technologies. It is investigating issues and opportunities in the areas of environmental and resource impacts, recharging, electricity grid interaction, standards, planning and regulation, consumer uptake and behaviour change and industry development and renewable energy. A comprehensive policy position on electric vehicles will be finalised later this year. The electric vehicle roadmap builds on existing programs that address electric vehicles within the Queensland government.

CHAIR: I refer to page 3-160 of the Service Delivery Statement regarding assistance to businesses to reduce their energy consumption. Can I ask how has the state government been assisting Queensland businesses to cut their footprint and save money at the same time?

Ms PALASZCZUK: Thank you very much for your interest in this very important topic. One such initiative is the ClimateSmart Business Cluster program, which helps businesses lower greenhouse gas emissions; save on energy, water, materials and waste; and reduce business costs. Business clusters provide a forum for business groups to work together, grow and conduct business in cleaner and more cost-effective ways. Businesses are often motivated to make changes, but individually they can be hesitant or lack the knowledge, skills or direction. However, working together under direction, businesses are more confident to embrace change, learn and share experience. A business cluster is formed by a leader and will consist of about 20 participants who will undertake an eight-month resource efficiency program. Cluster participants are ideally linked through location, industry type or supply chain. Funding of \$10,000 is provided to each ClimateSmart business cluster leader to supplement expenses.

So far, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions of more than 860 tonnes and annual financial savings of more than \$600,000 have been achieved by the first 11 clusters to have completed the program. Impressive as these overall results are, the achievements of the individual clusters are equally as notable. Evolve Energy's Cairns central cluster in Far North Queensland, for instance, has projected an annual energy saving of over 239,000 kilowatt hours. This is equal to an annual reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 250 tonnes and over \$40,000 in energy cost savings. The same cluster is also taking measures to reduce their general waste by over nine tonnes per week and reduce water consumption by 75 per cent, the equivalent to a water usage saving of 16,000 litres per week. The cluster leader, Mr David Smyth, has stated—

The development of the ClimateSmart business cluster for the Cairns central retailers is a logical step following the implementation of the ecoBiz program for the centre management. The retailers' and centre management's operating costs have reduced whilst also delivering an improved outcome for the environment, a real example of a triple bottom line solution.

The ClimateSmart Business Cluster program represents considerable value for investment.

CHAIR: Thank you very much, Minister. The time for the consideration of the expenditure estimates for the portfolio of the Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability has now expired. I would like to thank the acting minister and her advisers for their attendance today. Did you have any brief closing remarks, Minister?

Ms PALASZCZUK: I thank the committee very much for your examination of the budget papers. I thank my director-general and all of the staff who have been involved in the preparation for this estimates hearing. I thank my personal staff, who actually are Minister Jones's staff, who have worked very well and of course all the parliamentary staff who are here today. I just put on the public record my appreciation to everybody involved in this hearing, the very last hearing of the estimates for 2010.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Before I conclude, I would also like to thank my colleagues on the committee. On behalf of me and the deputy chair, the committee would like to thank the secretariat, Hansard and the attendants for their assistance today. That concludes the committee's consideration of the matters referred to it by the parliament on 20 May 2010. I declare this public hearing closed.

Committee adjourned at 6.32 pm