

TUESDAY, 25 JULY 2017

ESTIMATES—EDUCATION, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE—EDUCATION, TOURISM, MAJOR EVENTS AND THE COMMONWEALTH GAMES

Estimate Committee Members

Mr SJ Stewart (Chair)
Miss VM Barton
Mr MA Boothman
Mr BM Saunders
Mr TJ Sorensen
Mr RA Williams

Members in Attendance

Mr SA Emerson
Mr JP Langbroek
Mrs JR Miller
Mr JM Krause
Ms TE Davis
Mr SL Dickson
Mrs T Smith

In Attendance

Hon. KJ Jones, Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism, Major Events and the
Commonwealth Games

Mr M Jutsum, Chief of Staff

Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

Mr D Walker, Director-General
Ms K Petersen, Deputy Director General, Office of the Commonwealth Games
Mr J McAlister, Deputy Director-General, Tourism

Gold Coast Commonwealth Games 2018 Corporation

Mr M Peters, Chief Executive Officer

Tourism and Events Queensland

Ms L Coddington, Chief Executive Officer

Department of Education and Training

Mr J Watterston, Director-General
Mr J Hunt, Deputy Director-General, Corporate Services
Ms L Nixon, Assistant Director-General, State Schools
Mr B Brennan, Assistant Director-General, State Schools—Operations
Ms D Dunstone, Assistant Director-General, State Schools—Disability and Inclusion

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Mr C Rider, Chief Executive Officer

Committee met at 9.00 am

CHAIR: Thank you and good morning everyone. I declare open this hearing of the estimates for the Education, Tourism, Innovation and Small Business Committee. I would like to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which we meet and pay my respects to elders past, present and emerging. I would like to introduce the members of the committee. I am Scott Stewart, the member for Townsville and chair of the committee. Ms Verity Barton, the member for Broadwater, is the deputy chair. The other committee members here today are Mr Mark Boothman, the member for Albert; Mr Ted Sorensen, the member for Hervey Bay; Mr Bruce Saunders, the member for Maryborough; and Mr Rick Williams, the member for Pumicestone. The committee has granted leave for non-committee members to ask questions in this hearing today, so other members may be present over the course of proceedings.

Today, the committee will consider the Appropriation Bill 2017 and the estimates for the committee's area of responsibility. I remind everyone present that a person may be excluded from the proceedings at my discretion as the chair. The committee has authorised the guidelines for camera operations that will apply to this hearing. Copies of the guidelines are available from committee staff if necessary. I ask that mobile phones or electronic devices be turned off or switched to silent mode. I also remind you that food and drink are not permitted in this chamber.

The committee will examine the portfolio areas in the following order: the Commonwealth Games from 9 am to 10.30 am; Tourism and Major Events from 10.45 am to 12.15 pm; Education from 1 pm to 4.45 pm; Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy from 4.45 pm to 6.15 pm; and Small Business from 6.15 pm to 7.15 pm. The committee will suspend proceedings for the following breaks: from 10.30 am to 10.45 am; 12.15 pm to 1 pm; and 3.30 pm to 3.45 pm.

The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Education and Minister for Tourism and Major Events and the Commonwealth Games. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio of the Commonwealth Games until 10.30 am; the portfolio areas of Tourism and Major Events from 10.45 am to 12.15 pm; and the portfolio area of Education from 1.00 pm to 4.45 pm.

Visiting members present today are Mr John-Paul Langbroek MP, the member for Surfers Paradise and shadow minister for the Commonwealth Games, and the member for Bundamba, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller. I remind those present today that these proceedings are proceedings of the parliament and subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules that apply for questions in parliament also apply to this hearing today. I refer to standing orders 112 and 115. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings so that the relevant issues can be explored and there is ample opportunity for questions from government and non-government members.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome to the hearing the minister, the Hon. Kate Jones MP; Mr Damien Walker, the director-general of the Department of Tourism, Major Events and Small Business and the Commonwealth Games; departmental officials and members of the public. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games, the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games Corporation—GOLDOC—open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, you may make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

Miss BARTON: Point of order, Mr Chair. Earlier today, I put a request into the committee that the State Archivist be compelled to appear before this committee during its consideration of the estimates for the Science, Innovation and the Digital Economy portfolio. I again move—

That this committee compel the State Archivist to appear before the committee today and be compelled to appear and answer questions.

CHAIR: There is no point of order. The committee does not deliberate in public. I now call the minister to make her opening statement of up to five minutes.

Ms JONES: Thank you. I am so excited to be talking about the Commonwealth Games, given that this is the Commonwealth Games segment of the estimates hearing today, as I am sure are other members. As the honourable member said, it is a very exciting time as we lead up to the Commonwealth Games. There are just 253 days to go until we will be hosting the largest event ever in Queensland, the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, in 2018.

As we sit here today, the Queen's baton is making its way around the Commonwealth nations and territories across the globe. Today, the Queen's baton is in Bermuda. As I said, we know that the games will be not only the largest event that Queensland has ever held but also the largest event in Australia this decade. In 2009, I was very proud to be part of a Labor government that launched our bid for the Commonwealth Games, because we knew that it had the potential to grow jobs, infrastructure and tourism on the Gold Coast and for Queensland. With an international audience estimated at 1.5 billion, we committed \$1.5 billion to deliver the games. I am pleased to inform the committee that the games are on track, on time and on budget. That was the formal tick of planning approval from the Commonwealth Games Federation at the most recent coordination commission review. All of our sporting venues are now complete. Our \$320 million games construction program delivered three brand-new world-class venues and major upgrades to seven venues. This supported more than 1,000 construction jobs. It was great to officially open the most recently completed venue earlier this month, the Gold Coast Hockey Centre, with the Gold Coast mayor, Minister Ciobo and the member for Southport.

Momentum is building. We know that we are in for big crowds and a great atmosphere when the Commonwealth Games gets underway on 4 April 2018. Already, hundreds of thousands of tickets have been sold. Most finals are sold out, but there are still great opportunities for families and people to secure tickets in the earlier rounds of competition. My family and I have purchased tickets to attend the squash, the boxing and the athletics. The creative team of Jack Morton Worldwide are busy preparing the opening ceremony.

This year, thousands of Queenslanders are already getting involved in the games. We have received more than 47,000 applications for people wanting to be volunteers at the games and thousands of nominations for baton bearers for the Queen's baton relay. Off the back of the Queen's baton relay, we are making the most of the opportunities to explore trade opportunities and attract investment from our major Commonwealth trade partners. Our Commonwealth Games trade legacy program, Trade 2018, which was launched in London—and I want to thank the shadow minister for his attendance at that launch—it positions Queensland to engage with new international business partners. The opportunities are endless.

We are also making the most of the opportunities to drive social change through the games with the global One million Stars to End Violence project and the Women of the World program to celebrate the achievements of women and girls across the Commonwealth. This is the first time ever that the Commonwealth Games has had the same number of medal events for men and women. It is the first ever Commonwealth Games with a reconciliation action plan, which guides our efforts to acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander values, culture, heritage and advance outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the strong partnership that we have to ensure that we deliver the best Commonwealth Games ever on the Gold Coast. I want to thank the shadow minister for his support for the games, both in his role as the shadow minister and as the member for Surfers Paradise; the City of Gold Coast and the mayor, Tom Tate; Townsville mayor Jenny Hill; Cairns mayor Bob Manning; the Brisbane Lord Mayor, Graham Quirk; the federal government and its investment—and last weekend it was great to have the Prime Minister up here seeing for himself some of the venues—the Commonwealth Games Federation; Commonwealth Games Australia, GOLDOC and its CEO, Mark Peters; and, of course, most importantly, the Gold Coast community, Queenslanders and Australians. Together, we will leave a lasting legacy for the Gold Coast. We look forward to sharing the dream with you all.

Mr LANGBROEK: My first question is to the CEO of the Commonwealth Games. How many priority tickets were given to Commonwealth Games partners—tickets that were exempt from the public ballot?

Mr Peters: Overall, there were a number of categories. As in the tradition of the games, certain partners are allowed to access tickets to purchase. That is across sponsors: the Commonwealth Games Association, the CGF and the key partners, the state government, the federal government and the council. What we do at the time is we look at what has happened in past games and we look at the

opportunities that may present themselves, always wanting to maximise the number of tickets that are made available to the public, which is around 80 per cent. We go out to the partners and ask, 'Can you let us know how many tickets you may wish to purchase to use for different purposes during the games?' We ask them to respond, certainly, around September. All the tickets that are not taken up are then put back to the public ballot on 1 November. We went out. We have had those responses. Obviously, the city council has announced that it will not use all of its tickets. Now, we are looking at having the finalisation of the numbers that the other entities will require.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can you expand a little bit on the hospitality provisions? I think in your answer you mentioned that up to 20 per cent of total tickets are potentially for hospitality. I presume that at particular venues there are portions of stands that are not public ticketed at all; they have been quarantined for use by either sponsors and/or government officials and departments, which I would like to ask about in a moment.

Mr Peters: One of the benefits that you put forward for particularly the sponsors is the fact that they can have access to buy tickets and those tickets can be in prime areas. When you say 'hospitality', they have the opportunity to buy the tickets and that will give them a seat in the stadium. That is the same with all the other partners, whether that be the state government, the federal government, local government, the Commonwealth Games Association and the Commonwealth Games Federation. They will have an area in the stadium that is designated for the seats that they require. That goes together with other tickets, which starts to get a bit complicated. The athletes have the ability to come in and watch other sports if they wish. That is a particular area set aside as well. It does not include hospitality. The ticket requests stage was which of our partners would like to purchase how many tickets and that gives them a ticket in the stand.

Mr LANGBROEK: The tier 1, 2, or 3 categories of sponsorship does not include packages of tickets for particular sponsors?

Mr Peters: Those sponsors have the right to purchase a seat. There is another program that our commercial team will run, which is about hospitality suites that may be available. We are working through that at the moment. If you look at Metricon Stadium, there are sponsors' boxes there for the Suns. Under a corporate hospitality program, we utilise the ability for those to be sold to corporate sponsors. They may want to go to just one session and buy a box. That includes them purchasing the tickets and then they can purchase food packages, or whatever, similar to a normal sport. It can be successful. It can be a challenge as well. That is the process that we work through with our sponsors.

Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Peters, can you advise how many tickets have been given to state government departments, public servants and senior executives?

Mr Peters: No tickets have been given to anyone. Every ticket is purchased. At the moment, we have asked our partners, including the state government. They have nominated around 2,000 tickets, subject to the finalisation of that, and we have held those tickets waiting for the business cases. I read this morning the process that the state government has put in place. We will look forward to seeing that final order being confirmed around September so that then we can put whatever tickets that are not used back into the public arena. As I said earlier on, we looked at what happened in previous games. If you look at Glasgow, the city council purchased around 6,000 tickets and the Scottish government around 5,000. So far the requests that we have received are far lower than what happened in Glasgow.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you. My next question is to the minister. It is about this ticket issue again. Mr Chair, I seek leave to table an answer to a question on notice that was asked on 10 May. I think it is pretty straightforward. There is a copy there for the minister as well. I asked the minister at the time about how many tickets have been quarantined for Queensland government officials and what is the total cost of the tickets. I note that that is an answer we received just a month ago and there was no detail and today we see a significant announcement about the public register. I wonder if you could expand on the progress of that over the last month? A month ago there was no specific answer able to be given but today there is a little more detail but not a lot.

CHAIR: Before you respond. Leave is granted. Please respond.

Ms JONES: As I said, today I am very pleased to announce that our government is going to deliver the most open and transparent ticketing policy when it comes to public officials of any Commonwealth Games ever. This goes to the legacy that we have about delivering and saying that in all decisions that we make we want to have the best Commonwealth Games. As I said, we will be working very closely to ensure that we deliver transparency, but can I also make it very clear that there are no free tickets at this Commonwealth Games. That has been consistently said by the CEO and the chair of GOLDOC as well as the Premier of Queensland. Any ticket to the Commonwealth Games must

be purchased, whether that is a sponsor, whether that is officials, including, for example, the director-general when we host, for example, royalty that will be visiting, as well as also trade delegations and heads of state. There are more than 70 Commonwealth nations and territories, as I spoke about, that have been invited to the games. We are still hearing back from those Commonwealth nations about who they will be sending to the Commonwealth Games. We will have a clearer understanding of exactly what each ticket will be used for as we hear back from those nations and territories around the Commonwealth.

As you have just heard from the CEO, our policy and our approach is consistent with previous Commonwealth Games, but the policy that we have announced here today provides new rigour in regard to having a panel, that will be a shared assessment panel, to approve any ticket that is purchased by the Queensland government. This will include representatives from the Department of Tourism and the Commonwealth Games and also the Premier's department. Together they will assess the allocation of every single ticket that is finalised for purchase for the Commonwealth Games.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is also to the minister. Is the minister confirming that this policy announced today is a policy that has come about as a result of the issues over the last month between the chair of GOLDOC and the mayor of the Gold Coast?

Ms JONES: No. This has been a work in progress for our government in regard to making sure that we have a very clear policy in place. I can confirm that this has been the consequence of work over a number of months.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you. I note that there was no reference to this particular policy just a month ago when we received that answer to question on notice 548, but I will move on. Can I then refer to this issue about ticketing has actually arisen since the stoush—I suppose we can call it tartgate—between the chair of GOLDOC and the mayor. Do you support political commentary about the Gold Coast City Council by the chair, Peter Beattie.

Ms JONES: I have already made public comment about that and I had the great opportunity to meet with both the mayor and the chair of GOLDOC last Saturday at the official opening of the last venue to be completed well in advance of the Commonwealth Games being delivered in 253 days from now. They have kissed and made up. I support that. I think that anyone who knows Tom Tate and anyone who knows Peter Beattie, and I know that you know both well, knows that they are both very passionate men and what they are most passionate about is delivering the best Commonwealth Games ever.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is still pretty unprecedented though, is it not, for a chair of one of your statutory authorities under your control to make political commentary, and I say that as a former minister for education. If the chair from the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority were to make political commentary would you have the same view?

Ms JONES: Yes, but I am also very aware that when I became the minister my first estimates was dominated by the fact that the former Commonwealth Games minister did not have a very good relationship with the mayor at the time either. In actual fact, that was highlighted in the Auditor-General's report and the reporting at the time that there had been a breakdown in the relationship between the state government and the mayor of the Gold Coast. I took it upon myself in the very early days of becoming the minister for the Commonwealth Games to repair that relationship.

In actual fact, one of the very first meetings I had was with the mayor of the Gold Coast because I understood as the mayor of the city in which we were going to deliver the Commonwealth Games it was crucial that we work hand in glove. I am very pleased to be sitting here as the minister who has repaired that relationship. I actually feel that we have a very good relationship not only with our federal colleagues on the Gold Coast but also the mayor of the Gold Coast, the City of Gold Coast and, indeed, the state government. I think we are in a very good position leading into the Commonwealth Games. As I said, I was very fortunate to have the Prime Minister come and visit to see first hand the Commonwealth Games venue. He had very nice things to say as well. I think he repeated them at the Suns game that night. I think that we are in a very good position and I want to assure all Queenslanders and Gold Coasters that we are definitely on track to deliver the best Commonwealth Games ever.

Mr LANGBROEK: Have you had any feedback from the Commonwealth Games Federation about concerns on the political commentary by the chair?

Ms JONES: I have not received any.

Mr LANGBROEK: It is just that the chair, when concerned about the ticket sales, was talking about the international ramifications of what the council allegedly had done in its purchase of tickets. You did mention in your opening statement about the CGF having had a most recent visit and I am interested as to whether there have been any ramifications?

Ms JONES: No, there have not been.

Mr LANGBROEK: Have you sought any or reassured them?

Ms JONES: No, because they have not sought clarification. I do not think it is a big problem, to be honest with you. As I said, the mayor and Peter Beattie met last Saturday. They have put it behind them. They have both said that. As you saw, we were all hugging, laughing and smiling at the opening of the new venue. I do not think there are concerns. As I said, I think we are in a much better position than when I became the minister two and a half years ago and we saw repeated commentary weekly in the *Gold Coast Bulletin* with the honourable member for Currumbin attacking the mayor of the City of Gold Coast. That was happening every single week. That no longer happens because the state government now has a very strong relationship with the City of Gold Coast.

Mr LANGBROEK: There was definitely never that level of coverage between the chair and the former minister compared to what happened with the chair and the mayor only three weeks ago.

Ms JONES: I do not agree with that, if you don't mind me saying so. I talked a lot about this at my first estimates hearing when I became the minister: that the most recent CoCom report had talked about the fact that there was not enough coordination between the state government and the City of Gold Coast. I worked really hard to address that by changing the governance arrangements that were in place and as a consequence two and a half years later I think we are in a much better position.

Also can I say that the Commonwealth Games Federation, in its most recent public statements, said—

It is hard to believe that Peter Beattie has only been in the post heading up Gold Coast 2018 for just over a year.

So much progress has been made across the partnership.

I would like to thank Peter, his team and the Games' partners in the Queensland Government, the City of Gold Coast and Commonwealth Games Australia for their leadership and commitment to the Games.

I was just thinking as I said that, that this stands in stark contrast to what the mayor Tom Tate said when Jann Stuckey was the minister. I think if I recall he said that he felt like he was a mushroom left in the dark when Jann Stuckey was the minister. I certainly do not think we are in that position any more.

Mr LANGBROEK: When was the date of that CGF statement about the chair and have you counselled the chair?

Ms JONES: Yes, I have counselled the chair and that also got publicity in your local paper and the *Sunday Mail*.

Mr LANGBROEK: The date of that?

Ms JONES: The rave review about the honourable chair, I think that was 8 June.

Mr LANGBROEK: Before the ticketgate issue.

Ms JONES: Let us be honest, my job here is to deliver the best Commonwealth Games ever. I am absolutely committed to that. I also know for a fact that Tom Tate is committed to that, the shadow minister is committed to that, as is Peter Beattie. To be frank with you, I think there are going to be a lot more people heading out to the Commonwealth Games who want to be sharing in the limelight. I understand that and I get that. I am sure there are going to be a lot of people claiming that they have delivered the best Commonwealth Games ever and I am happy to take all of you on board because you are all part of the committee that has been a real key process in ensuring that we are delivering an accountable games. I hope you have all bought your tickets and I look forward to seeing you there.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, on page 3 of the SDS, the Palaszczuk Labor government is creating jobs and delivering infrastructure. I ask: given the Commonwealth Games are only 253 days away, will the minister provide an update on the competition venues, the athletes, the officials and visitors going to the Gold Coast?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. As you said, it is really exciting because we are 253 days away from the Commonwealth Games yet every single one of our competition venues has now been delivered. We have 18 new and updated venues as part of our record investment in the Commonwealth Games. All venues have been completed and the Palaszczuk government has delivered the competition venues on time and on budget.

Our government is focused on delivering benefits by creating jobs. We know that through the construction program for the Commonwealth Games that this has supported the creation of around 1,000 jobs. Forty-six per cent of contracts went to Gold Coast businesses and 94 per cent of contracts went to South-East Queensland businesses. Our focus from day 1 was about saying that we would deliver, wherever possible, local content and I am very pleased to be sitting here today saying that we have achieved that. I want to commend the officers of the Department of Commonwealth Games as well as the CEO and the chair of GOLDOC for putting into practice and reality the purchasing of local content. We have many success stories in that regard.

The new venues, as we talked about, are the Gold Coast Sports and Leisure Centre at Carrara, which is a \$105 million investment, and that was officially opened in April. I note that the shadow minister was in attendance. This will host the badminton, wrestling and weightlifting. Already we have had the Sudirman Cup there. I talked about that the year before last. It was the first time the Sudirman Cup has even been held outside of an Asian country here in Australia. That is a huge win for us. We know that it reached a global audience of more than 500 million people. The Anna Meares Velodrome in Chandler, a \$60 million investment, I am very pleased to report to the committee has just won the 2017 Queensland State Architecture Award. Congratulations to Cox Rayner Architects for their outstanding work. The Coomera Indoor Sports Centre will be hosting the gymnastics and netball. It is a \$40 million investment. We have also seen upgrades to another seven venues, including the Broadbeach Bowls Club in the honourable shadow minister's area. That was something that he personally advocated for to get a good outcome for his local community as well and I want to acknowledge that publicly.

Mr SAUNDERS: I refer to SDS page 25 which makes reference to the Commonwealth Games workforce and I ask: will the minister please provide the committee with an update on the jobs generated by the Commonwealth Games and the economic benefits for Queensland?

Ms JONES: I thank you very much for that question. As I said, the Queensland government has invested \$1.5 billion in delivering the Commonwealth Games. Since estimates last year GOLDOC has grown significantly, as we anticipated that it would. Now that we have moved from the phase of planning into delivery we will continue to see a ramp up at GOLDOC. I know that Mark is working very hard. We expect GOLDOC will grow by another 800 employees this year. The Office of the Commonwealth Games has grown from 61 employees to 85 and OCG expects to have another 12 employees by games time.

With works now completed on all competition venues, we can talk about the 1,000 jobs with the Commonwealth Games Village construction that is happening there. There is a further 1,500 jobs. Up to 16,000 men and women have played a role in the construction of the Commonwealth Games Village and games venues. Excitingly, at least 90 per cent of construction contracts for the games village and venues have been awarded to South-East Queensland businesses.

In my opening remarks I mentioned that this is the first ever Commonwealth Games to have a reconciliation action plan. We are already getting very good feedback from other Commonwealth nations and territories, talking about how they can get learnings from our reconciliation action plan. I know that this is an area that is very personal for you, member for Townsville, in your advocacy on behalf of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders who live in your community. So far, we have included 147 Indigenous employees from over 24 Indigenous businesses. Thousands more have benefitted from the broader supply chain. I think that is a great win. The Meet the Buyer event encouraged local and Indigenous businesses to partner with prime contractors.

Eighty per cent of the contracts awarded by GOLDOC have gone to Gold Coast and Queensland businesses, with over \$260 million being spent in our local community. The tender for the Queen's Baton was awarded to Designworks, a local Brisbane business. The local member and Deputy Premier and I visited West End, where the baton was designed and manufactured. As a state and as a government—and I know this is something that would have bipartisan support—we want to see as much of this work being spent in local economies, supporting local jobs. I am very pleased to be sitting here today saying that we have done that.

In fact, in answering the question of the honourable member for Pumicestone we talked about the venues. With one of the venues, for example, we had a very good outcome—and I spoke about this previously—delivering the new sound stage at Village Roadshow. Today's *Courier-Mail* quotes the studio boss of Marvel as saying, '... I don't know if there's something in the water there in Australia; if that's the crews; but that's a fact'. He was also quoted as describing the set as 'by far the happiest, most pleasant, most effective set that I've ever been on'. That is a direct legacy of our Commonwealth

Games investment. He was in America, talking about how he will be promoting having more films produced on the Gold Coast, because of the investment we made in that sound stage. If it means that we get Thor back, all the better for Queensland.

CHAIR: I refer to page 24 of the SDS and the key strategic priorities to ensure the success of the games with the sale of over one million tickets after the launch of the ticketing program in April this year. Minister, will you provide a progress report on ticket sales and requests for tickets for the Commonwealth Games?

Ms JONES: As I said very clearly, there are no free tickets for the Commonwealth Games in 2018. As I said earlier, our ticketing policy ensures strong accountability and transparency. Any tickets that will be purchased by the Queensland government under the policy that we have released today will be used to host dignitaries, advance economic and trade partnerships and support community programs. As I said in my earlier remarks in answering the questions of the honourable shadow minister, there will be an assessment panel of both the department and the Department of the Premier and Cabinet to assess all allocations and every single ticket that will be allocated. There will also be a public register, with allocations published online.

Excitingly—and I think this is the overwhelming story when it comes to ticket sales—we have seen really strong public interest in ticket sales, with more than 1.2 million ticket requests during the very first phase. In the first phase, where some of us dipped out, we sold tickets to each of the 274 ticket sessions across the 11 days. People like myself who did miss out on the first phase were given an opportunity to purchase tickets in the second round, which went live on 5 July. I was very pleased to be able to do that myself.

I am pleased to report that through that process we have sold hundreds of thousands more tickets to the Commonwealth Games. We had a lot of deliberations about ticketing and making sure that we got the appropriate cost to keep prices low, so that families from all over Queensland and Australia can come with their children. With ticket prices starting as low as \$10 for children and \$20 for adults, I think we have struck the right balance through this policy and we have seen strong interest and overwhelming sales. Getting that ticket price point right has made it very inclusive. I am very pleased that we continue to see people wanting to come to the Commonwealth Games and continuing to buy tickets.

Mrs MILLER: As many people cannot afford the ritzy five-star accommodation at the Gold Coast, I ask this question on behalf of workers, retirees and the campers and caravanners of Queensland. For the Commonwealth Games, is there enough accommodation in Gold Coast caravan parks for caravanners and campers?

Ms JONES: Like the honourable member for Bundamba, I am absolutely committed to ensuring that people who are on minimum wages or low wages—or do not have a wage—have an opportunity to come to the Commonwealth Games. We have done that at a number of decision-making points, as I was saying before you asked your question. One is by making ticket pricing fair and reasonable, with prices as low as \$10 for children and \$20 for adults. Included in that ticket price is free public transport. Not only do you get entry to the venue and to the event; you can also access free public transport.

In addition to that, one of the things we looked at in making a decision about whether we could host the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast was whether there would be the accommodation available. As Gold Coast members would know—and we have a number of Gold Coast members on this committee, quite rightly—the Gold Coast boasts a very broad range of accommodation. Yes, there is some wonderful high-end accommodation, but what is great about the Gold Coast—and I know many people who have holidayed at the Gold Coast in modest accommodation year in, year out—is that there are more than 30,000 accommodation offerings. That was actually one of the things they looked at when making a decision as to whether the City of the Gold Coast, which is the first regional city ever to host a Commonwealth Games, was able to cater for that. I believe there will be enough accommodation and options around being able to get to the venue and back for day visits to cater for everybody across the market.

Mrs MILLER: With respect, you did not answer my question, Minister. I am particularly asking about those who have caravans and tents.

Ms JONES: In answer to that, as someone who grew up in a sole-parent household, certainly we could not afford a caravan, but mum could probably have afforded to bus us down there, pay \$10 for a ticket and bus or train us back. There is a broad range of people. Certainly people who can afford caravans will be able to access caravan parks on the Gold Coast. I think there is another group of

people who could only dream of being able to afford a caravan and I feel we have catered for them. You can buy a \$10 ticket and you get free public transport, so family members get the opportunity to experience that. As you can see, that is something that I am very passionate about.

Mrs MILLER: So there is not enough accommodation.

CHAIR: I call the member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question is about the fairly sensitive issue of security. Minister, I thank you for allowing me to have a number of briefings with the director-general and senior staff, as well as police and security. Have you had any meetings with police or security in the last five months to talk about games security, because no meetings have been recorded in your official ministerial diary?

Ms JONES: Thank you for asking that question, because it gives me the opportunity to clarify. The Police Commissioner and the deputy commissioner who is responsible for counterterrorism both attend the Commonwealth Games and tourism subcommittee of the cabinet. At the Commonwealth Games subcommittee of the cabinet we discuss those matters directly with the Premier, as well as the Police Commissioner and the deputy commissioner. Our next meeting is scheduled for next week, when we are governing from the Gold Coast. The Police Commissioner will be in attendance at that meeting next week.

Mr LANGBROEK: Would you agree that the security threat at the moment in 2017 is higher than it was in 2015, given events that we have seen around the world and locally?

CHAIR: Order, member for Surfers Paradise. You are asking for an opinion. Can you rephrase that question, please?

Mr LANGBROEK: My question refers to your answer to question on notice No. 18 for the estimates prehearing, which says that the security budget was updated to reflect the current security threat level in 2015. Could you explain why there has been no uplifting of the security threat level, because I think most Queenslanders would think we have a significantly different security threat to 2015?

Ms JONES: At the first estimates hearing in 2015 I talked about the fact that we had seen a lifting of the security threat from 'possible' to 'probable'. At that estimates hearing we also described it going to 'high'. I assure all Queenslanders, all Gold Coast residents and, indeed, all Australians and other people intending to attend the Commonwealth Games that I believe we have a strong response to security to ensure that everyone has a safe and secure games. As part of that, as the honourable shadow minister is aware, we have been working very closely with the relevant offices at a federal level, including of course the Australian Federal Police, which are primarily responsible for the counterterrorism threat, as well as working with ASIO and other organisations and the Queensland police.

I absolutely believe that we have the very best minds working on this in a collaborative fashion. I know that the Prime Minister also made that comment when he was on the Gold Coast on Saturday. He said that he felt there was a good collaborative approach when it comes to security. As part of the security response we will be employing more than 10,000 people including security officers, Queensland police, Australian Federal Police and the Army. I might ask Mr Peters to add to that, as the person with primary responsibility for delivering a safe games.

Mr Peters: It is certainly a great partnership between the federal government, the state government and GOLDOC. It works on three tiers: national security is the responsibility of the federal government, the Queensland police have all of the out-of-venue responsibilities around the games and GOLDOC, as an organisation, has all of the security responsibilities within venue. Everyone operates cooperatively. It has been recognised by the CGF as one of the best models around the games. Recently there was a meeting in Canberra of all of the agencies, with the conclusion that the planning for the security around our games is of the highest order. Obviously there is no room for complacency, but the cooperation between the three levels around security certainly is first class and has been recognised that way.

Mr LANGBROEK: My next question, and I do not mind if the minister or Mr Peters answers it, is about contingency funding for enhanced security. Can you explain where that may come from and what line item it is in the budget? We have seen that contingency funding of \$19 million had to be allocated for beach volleyball. I am interested in where the line item is for the committee's consideration for contingency for security, as well as for the changes in venues.

Mr Peters: One of the challenges around any major international event such as the Commonwealth Games, and in this case our games, is that we had to prepare a budget in 2010 for a games that is in 2018 and we then look at the economic and budget pressures over that period. I was lucky enough to lead the bid. We looked at past games, we looked at Australia's situation, we worked with the agencies involved and we determined a budget. We then put in 10 per cent for what we did not know and 10 per cent for contingency. The role of GOLDOC is how to run the most efficient games and how to reduce the impost on the taxpayers of Queensland. As we go through each year and we go out to tenders or review delivery mechanisms, we look to save funding wherever we can and then utilise that in other areas where costs may go up.

The example from the bid stage until where we are now, with the support of the government, was that there were savings identified around the original village model. When the security rating went from 'possible' when we put the bid budget in to 'probable', there was funding used from the savings on the village to actually put additional money into security. That is what we do all the way along. Similarly with beach volleyball, we are looking to efficiently run the games and, hopefully, we can fund the beach volleyball from within that allocation. Always, as in good governance, there is a contingency fund. We hope never to have to use it, but it is always there to make sure that we deliver the best games we possibly can deliver.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am just looking for some clarification. Given that the security threat has changed from high to probable, or whatever you said in your previous answer, does that contingency funding mean that extra funding has already been provided for security arrangements or it is potentially there, given the advice from the police and security people?

Mr Peters: In your planning you always plan for the next level of security. In the bid stage it was possible, but we were planning with police and with our own security people to go to probable. When it did go to probable, the ability to find money from within the existing budget met the request from Queensland Police and also our own security people to put us at a comfortable level. We are now continuing to review with the federal government what happens at the next stage. Ultimately, that is why contingency exists. The difficulty is that if it does go to the next level that means that something is likely to happen. Certainly with the minister's support and the government's support we are not going to put anything in jeopardy in terms of having this the safest possible games.

Mr LANGBROEK: I come now to capital works. You mentioned the savings on the village. Could you advise the committee about the savings that have been made on the village that have enabled the beach volleyball to be funded? I have a couple of questions about other projects which have cost more than they were originally going to?

Mr Peters: Perhaps to clarify, the savings from the village were not in relation to beach volleyball. The example I was trying to use is that we will look at savings through procurements. There will be overs and unders. We will look to find the funds.

When we put the bid book in Mark Stockwell, a well-known developer a Brisbane, was the Chairman and we had a more permanent style village with permanent buildings rather than a temporary village, which is often the case. There were discussions about whether we should go for a more temporary village. There was additional funding required for the temporary nature of a village. That was reviewed again and we went back to the original model. Money had actually been put in the budget for a temporary village. That is where the saving was in terms of the ability for the government to distribute that funding back into the security budget.

In terms of the beach volleyball and other expenses, I point out that as an example at the moment we have gone out for fencing. That has come in well over budget. We negotiate that budget down and we look for savings in other areas. It very much involves constantly negotiating with suppliers and trying to do sponsorship deals so that we can get value in kind. That is our life every day.

Mr LANGBROEK: It sounds like a wonderful life—balancing the budget.

Mr Peters: If it all adds up at the end of day, yes.

Ms JONES: Put it this way: he has \$1.5 billion and that is it. He has to do everything within that remit.

Mr LANGBROEK: I want to specifically ask about the Gold Coast Hockey Centre. I seek leave to table a media release and an Embracing 2018 website statement. There are a number of things that are not contentious. I seek leave to table those documents.

CHAIR: Leave is granted to table those.

Mr LANGBROEK: In February 2016 the Gold Coast Hockey Centre was a \$14.5 million project. The Embracing 2018 website said it was \$15.8 million. At the opening on 15 July it was a \$16.5 million venue redevelopment. I was wondering whether the minister can explain this \$2 million variation in cost, notwithstanding the things that the CEO has explained about changing costs? We are talking about just over a year and we are talking about a 15 per cent increase for the hockey centre.

Ms JONES: As I said, we are delivering the Commonwealth Games within a budget envelope of \$1.5 billion. We have said that from day one. Similarly, for construction the envelope was \$320 million. As I said in my opening remarks, we have delivered all of those venues 253 days ahead of the Commonwealth Games. They have been delivered within the budget allocated the construction of venues.

Mr LANGBROEK: Can you confirm the date that the Gold Coast Hockey Centre was due for completion in its original contractual form?

Ms JONES: I can get that information for you.

Mr LANGBROEK: The release that I tabled in the previous question states that the Gold Coast Hockey Centre was scheduled for completion in early 2017, 12 months ahead of the games. Given that the venue was unveiled on 15 July this year—I think you referred to coming down to the coast last weekend—more than three months after the scheduled completion date, can the minister confirm that the project was due to be delivered by 4 April 2017 in its contractual form and what are the arrangements for late delivery?

Ms JONES: There are a couple things I want to say. As I said in my opening remarks, this is the largest event that will ever be held in Queensland. It is also the largest event that will happen in Australia in the next 10 years. Our government, in bidding for the Commonwealth Games—there were knockers at the time; I know members of the LNP criticised the Labor government for getting our priorities wrong and committing \$1.5 billion for the Commonwealth Games—

Mr LANGBROEK: I did not, Minister.

Ms JONES: I know you did not.

Mr LANGBROEK: I was the opposition leader and I endorsed it 100 per cent.

Ms JONES: He did. I will put that on the record. Absolutely he did; he showed true leadership in that regard. Maybe you can go for another leadership bid. When it comes to venues we have also taken a programmatic approach, which is basically saying that we want to make sure that this is the money that is allocated for venues—the \$320 million that I have talked about—and we will deliver those venues well ahead of the games so we can utilise opportunities.

With regard to the issues that you have raised, my understanding is that the predominant issue was with soil. There were unforeseen issues with regard to soil. That meant that there was a change in time frame. We had the opening of that venue this year and the Commonwealth Games is still 253 days away. We are the first Commonwealth Games, as I understand it, to have all venues completed and upgraded this early. That means that the people of the Gold Coast predominantly, as well as the broader community, get the opportunity to use those venues not only for training leading up to the Commonwealth Games but also for community use. The hockey centre is in the same situation.

Mr LANGBROEK: Apart from the village, are there any other venues that cost less than were budgeted for? Will you provide details to the committee?

Ms JONES: For clarification, the delivery of the venues was the responsibility of the department. I will either get the director-general or Kerry Petersen—who also delivered Suncorp Stadium on time and on budget; high five—to answer that.

Mr Walker: The minister touched on the fact that we have a venues program of \$320 million and it was a programmatic approach. We have overs and unders across that venues program. In terms of the detail you are after, could you please repeat that part?

Mr LANGBROEK: I was just asking whether there were any venues that cost less than originally budgeted for. I have asked about the hockey centre which cost more. The CEO has indicated that the village cost less. I am looking for details for the committee about venues that cost less than the original budget. You can give us as much programmatic specificity as you like?

Mr Walker: I am thinking that might be something that we come back to the committee on towards the end of the session, if that is possible. It is a detailed program.

Ms JONES: I want to give confidence to all committee members that we have delivered all the venues within the original budgeted expectations.

CHAIR: I call the member for Pumicestone.

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to page 24 of the SDS and the use of integrated planning, event logistics, competition planning, infrastructure delivery which are all designed to give us a great games and an economic benefit and meaningful legacy for all Queenslanders. Will you provide an update on the support of sponsors in helping the Queensland government to deliver a successful games?

Ms JONES: As we have said from day one, having sponsors come on board was a crucial part of delivering a successful games. It also talks to confidence in the event when you get major sponsors who choose to associate themselves with the Commonwealth Games. Some honourable members have tried to use the logo without approval, but I think that was dealt with a couple of years ago. It shows the interest in people wanting to associate their brand and name with the winning brand of the Commonwealth Games.

I am very pleased to report that we have 44 sponsors on board to date, representing 67 per cent of revenue—an increase of 25 per cent since last estimates. We are well ahead of previous games, including Melbourne and Glasgow, when it comes to having this many major sponsors on board at this stage of the lead-up to the games.

I want to acknowledge and thank the Gold Coast community in particular for coming on board in such a significant way. Star, for example, is one of our tier 1 sponsors. As you know, they are an accommodation and entertainment provider and have invested as part of the legacy from the Commonwealth Games \$850 million to renovate the old Jupiters on the Gold Coast. They are also one of our tier 1 sponsors. Griffith University is another. I know that the honourable shadow minister has a very strong relationship with the university and their vice-chancellor. It is fantastic to see that Griffith University has taken a real leadership role not only with regard to being a tier 1 sponsor but also in creating opportunities for more than 250 university students to have internships with GOLDOC.

TAFE Queensland has also come on as the official training partner. I acknowledge the great work that TAFE has done with regard to the training of our volunteers. TAFE has been coordinating a lot of the training of the thousands of volunteers we are going to need. Longines has come on as a tier 1 sponsor and official timekeeper.

Tier 2 sponsors include KPMG. I want to acknowledge them. As you all know, they are a professional services provider. MinterEllison lawyers have also come on board as well as Seek, which is an recruitment advertiser. I think it is crucial that we have Ticketek as a sponsor. They have also worked hard with us on ticketing sales. As I said earlier, we have seen strong ticket sales to date. They are the best in the world when it comes to ticketing and making sure there is robustness with regard to ticket sales.

Hard Yakka is the official uniform provider. That is a big job for this event because there are going to be 15,000 volunteers and a workforce of 1,500 workers. They will be wearing 200,000 items from Hard Yakka. We expect to unveil the uniforms of the volunteers in October.

Optus has also come on as the official telecommunications provider. They will be delivering high-speed telecommunications infrastructure to more than 30 games sites and providing high-speed video and audio services at 23 broadcast locations. RGS Events has come on as the official furniture supplier.

We also have tier 3 sponsors including Tourism Australia. I want to acknowledge the federal government and their support through Tourism Australia. The list goes on. Speedo, a well-known brand that many of us have seen at many Commonwealth Games and Olympic Games, has come on board for our athletes. It is an exciting time. We have a number of businesses that want to associate themselves with the Commonwealth Games through their sponsorship arrangements.

Mr SAUNDERS: I refer to page 24 of the SDS where it refers to building safe, caring and connected communities by engaging a volunteer workforce. Minister, will you please update the committee on the selection and training of volunteers who will assist with spectator services, uniforms and other services to help ensure the Commonwealth Games is the best games ever?

Ms JONES: In April this year we officially opened the volunteer selection centre at Burleigh. I have had the privilege of going there a number of times now. We know that our volunteers are going to be absolutely crucial to, as the honourable member said in his question, delivering the best games ever.

We estimate that we are going to need around 15,000 volunteers. We have received more than 47,000 applications. The majority of those are Queenslanders. I want to give another shout out to the Gold Coast because we have seen a strong response from Gold Coast local residents who want to participate in the games in a volunteer capacity.

We actually received applications for volunteering from people from over 117 countries around the world. The youngest volunteer application was from a 16-year-old and the oldest volunteer application was from a 91-year-old. Interviews began in May this year and GOLDOC have already interviewed more than 14,000 applicants. In my visits to Burleigh I have met a number of applicants. Some of them have previously worked at Olympic Games. Some of them have worked at the Commonwealth Games when it was held in Brisbane in 1982 and have very fond memories of that. We have well-trained volunteers.

I had the opportunity of meeting Declan Roe again—I had met him at his school in my other role as Minister for Education. He is the school captain at Benowa State High School and he has previously volunteered at schoolies and Surf Life Saving. He was one of the first volunteers that we welcomed into the fold.

In the coming months, GOLDOC will continue to make thousands of offers to volunteers. They are recruiting a whole range of volunteers for a whole heap of roles including specialist volunteers who have specialist knowledge and skills—with qualifications in sport, for example, and also in the medical field, so doctors and nurses.

To help stage the biggest sporting event in Australia, as I said, TAFE Queensland, one of our sponsors, will be providing 360,000 training hours leading up to the Commonwealth Games. This is a great legacy of the Commonwealth Games not only from the perspective of getting volunteers involved in the games but also by virtue of the fact that we are going to have that many Queenslanders and others getting the opportunity of training.

Each volunteer will receive a free uniform from Hard Yakka, which, as I said before, will be providing more than 200,000 pieces of clothing. Volunteers will also receive free public transport to get to and from the games and free meals during the games. We are looking forward to seeing them there.

Mr WILLIAMS: On page 24 of the SDS a key strategy is the Queen's Baton Relay. Given that the baton will travel through 70 nations and territories before it arrives on the Gold Coast, can the minister provide an update for the committee on the benefits to Queensland in staging the relay on that scale?

Ms JONES: I think your last comment about scale is really important because, as the longest ever baton relay, we do not do anything in half-measures here in Queensland. It is very Gold Coast to always go for the biggest and the best. The baton will travel to 70 Commonwealth nations and territories before landing here in Australia. As I said, this is the longest in the history of the Commonwealth Games. It will be travelling around the world for 388 days in total. On Commonwealth Day, 13 March, the baton was launched from Buckingham Palace. Once again, I want to acknowledge and thank the shadow minister for attending that event. I think it was really important that we showed to the world a bipartisan approach to the Commonwealth Games being delivered here in Queensland.

The baton was delivered to the palace by Commonwealth Games Ambassador and Paralympian champion Kurt Fearnley, who is someone many of us know. As I said, the Premier was there, as was the Gold Coast mayor and the shadow minister. The Premier also had the opportunity—and this goes to the heart of your question, honourable member for Pumicestone—to launch as part of our trade and investment program. In the unprecedented times that we find ourselves in globally, I have already heard politicians in the UK talking about the fact that this is a unique time for us as Commonwealth nations to use our economic block across the globe in a new way. What do we estimate it to be around? Is it \$6 billion or \$6 trillion? It is a lot. The buying power of the Commonwealth nations around the world is significant. I think there is a bit of a renaissance in having the Commonwealth nations working collaboratively together. We are in the box seat by having the Commonwealth Games post Brexit here in Queensland.

The baton will land in Australia on Christmas Eve and spend the first 30 days travelling to major events across the country. The baton arrives in Queensland on Horn Island on 5 March, commencing its 33-day journey around our state. There will be opportunities for the Queen's baton to come to Queensland and other venues in January as well. Some of the communities that will be visited—and I am very pleased to report to the chair and the member for Pumicestone—are Townsville, Hervey Bay, Maryborough, Caloundra, Ipswich, Redcliffe and the Gold Coast.

There is a unique opportunity for us as Queenslanders to mobilise around the baton relay. More importantly, as I said in my opening remarks—it is currently in Bermuda—we have to have activation in every single country that we visit around our trade and investment program. I want to acknowledge and thank the trade department, the Deputy Premier's department, which has been working closely with us, as well as the tourism division.

Mrs MILLER: Minister, Bazza and Dogger from the Royal Mail Hotel at Goodna have asked if you could please answer a question in relation to 'no free tickets'. For example, you have said quite firmly that there are no free tickets. Will the Queen or Prince Charles and Camilla be invoiced for their attendance at the games care of Buckingham Palace, London, or will they be issued with free tickets?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for her question. Before I answer that question, I want to say in regard to camping and campervans that we are working with a company called Campingninja, who are going to look at creating pop-up venues to provide more camping.

In answer to your question, I might be old school and a bit traditional, but I think that if you invite someone, as the Premier did, to come to the Commonwealth Games then they should be provided with hospitality. There is a longstanding process for royalty that, through the Commonwealth Games Federation internationally, they will be accredited through that process.

Mrs MILLER: So they will be getting free tickets?

Ms JONES: They will be part of the Commonwealth Games Federation allocation, which is the case for every single Commonwealth Games.

CHAIR: I call the member for Surfers Paradise.

Mr LANGBROEK: My first question in this block, Minister, comes back to your answer about the hockey centre. You mentioned there was an issue with the soil there. Is that something that means that whoever was providing it had an out in terms of providing compensation for late delivery? Can I get details from the director-general, who is responsible for delivering the projects, if he has them or if you have them?

Mr Walker: We have used the Department of State Development for the on-ground delivery of the venues. A matter of that detail around the contract itself is something that I would need to seek some advice on from DSD with regard to how that was undertaken.

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy to have it taken on notice. I am not talking about the amount of money that might be involved. If it were delayed three months, would the contractor say, 'That is something we could not anticipate. Therefore, we will not be paying any compensation'? I am interested more in the principle about what happens with delivery of a project as to what is the 'out' clause for the contractor.

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I am happy to get some further detail on that. I know that the hockey club is in the electorate of the member for Southport and it is something that he was advocating for on behalf of the hockey club, as indeed was the hockey club. In responding to the community, the hockey club had asked for a slight change in scope to the project. In addition to the soil, there was also the fact that we were trying to respond—given this is about the long-term legacy. I certainly would not want my agency to be bullish in saying, 'No. We said this date and this date only,' given the reality that we need the venue for the Commonwealth Games, which, as I said, is 253 days away.

Where there was scope to make a change to the specification to respond to the local needs of the local Gold Coast community, then certainly I would much rather that we did that. My advice is that we did have a slight change in scope to the project to cater for the local hockey club in that local community. There was also wet weather at that time of year. Remember that at the beginning of this year we saw Cyclone Debbie and we saw significant rainfall on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane as a consequence of that weather event.

Miss BARTON: Just to clarify, Minister, you are happy to take the remainder of that question on notice?

Ms JONES: Yes, of course.

Mr LANGBROEK: Minister, you referred to sponsorship details. Without breaching commercial-in-confidence, could you provide some details about the number of sponsors that we have in tiers 1, 2 and 3 compared to, say, last year? Is it on track compared to projections et cetera?

Ms JONES: I think that is a legitimate question. As the shadow minister is well aware, sponsorship is a key part of delivering a successful games and obviously part of our revenue. I am very pleased to report that we have seen an increase of 25 per cent in sponsorship since we were last here at estimates.

As I said in my earlier remarks, we are ahead of where Melbourne and Glasgow were at this time leading up to their Commonwealth Games. Did you want to talk through each of the sponsors or the numbers per sponsor tier?

Mr Peters: As an overall summary, tier 1 is the highest level sponsor. What we have seen in recent years is that particularly banks, the automobile industry and airlines have not ventured into major sponsorship of events like the Commonwealth Games. As the minister said, we are very pleased and buoyed by the numbers—44. There is a lot of interest around tier 2 and tier 3—much bigger than Melbourne already. Our next few months are about trying to look at a couple of those tier 1s, because they become crucial in terms of the final outcome.

We are still confident that we will get 100 per cent of the target, but we are working very hard, particularly with the banks in recognition that this is a way of going back into the community, particularly around the Queen's Baton Relay. The challenges for us are in that tier 1 area. Certainly, as the minister said, we can provide that overall summary to you about what our expectations were and where we are at the moment. Overall, it has certainly been a tremendous response from corporate Australia. We are now looking at that tier 1 area which would allow us to go beyond what our expectations are.

Ms JONES: What I am excited about, too, is that this is the first Commonwealth Games where we have had a university come on as a tier 1 sponsor. The fact that we are having the games on the Gold Coast—as I said, the first regional city to host a Commonwealth Games—has delivered new partners that we otherwise would not have had. It is a first. The Commonwealth Games Federation has been very interested in the fact that we have a different mix of sponsors coming into this Commonwealth Games. As I said, clearly having the Commonwealth Games on the Gold Coast has also meant that The Star has seen extreme value in that. I think we are at four tier 1 sponsors. I could count up all the tier 2 and 3 sponsors that I have listed here. Most importantly, at this stage we are advising the committee that we remain confident that we will get to the sponsorship targets that we have set for ourselves.

Mr LANGBROEK: CEO, did you say there were 44 in tiers 2 and 3?

Ms JONES: Forty-four in total.

Mr LANGBROEK: That is great. Is it possible to get the breakdown of tiers 1, 2 and 3?

Ms JONES: Absolutely. I can provide that for you at the end of the estimates, if you like.

CHAIR: Minister, would you like take that on notice?

Ms JONES: No, I do not want to take it on notice. I am going to provide it to the honourable member today.

Mr LANGBROEK: Is it common knowledge what the tier amounts are, CEO? Am I allowed to say what they are? I understand that tier 2 is \$1.5 million and tier 3 is \$500,000.

Mr Peters: We do not release that information because of the commercial-in-confidence and the competitiveness out there in the market.

Mr LANGBROEK: I apologise.

Ms JONES: As part of the sponsorship, we look at providing—for example, I talked about Longines coming on as the time sponsor. We build into the contract, as you would know, how we deliver the resources we need for the Commonwealth Games. It is not always just a cash amount; it is also in-kind support and support that we need to deliver the Commonwealth Games.

Mr LANGBROEK: When it comes to a potential contractor looking to get something like procurement for the overlay at the village, how much of a percentage of whether they are prepared to come on as a sponsor affects their ability to get that contract? Can you answer that, Mr Peters?

Mr Peters: It varies between procurement. We have what we call a sourcing document. We look at whether there are companies where we may be able to pick up some sponsorship. At the end of the day, the company has to be able to deliver in terms of 'this is what we require them to do and this is what we are looking for' in terms of their response to any procurement opportunity. If we see sponsorship opportunities in that then our sponsorship team will go and speak to them to see whether there is an opportunity. Is it the determining factor? No. They have to be able to deliver on the project and they have to be able to work preferably with companies on the Gold Coast or in Queensland. That is the discussion that we have with them.

Longines is the only company in the world that can deliver the timing equipment to such a scale. They are looking for their brand around the world to be associated with a major event. They will always come in as a sponsor. They were the negotiations we did. The Commonwealth Games Federation has had previous negotiations, so we knew there was an opportunity to go to them direct because they

were the only ones who could perform at the level we needed and sponsorship was attached to it. At the end of the day, value for money is the key proposition, as we know, under the state procurement policy.

Mr LANGBROEK: With some of the outstanding projects in the Capital Statement, I presume that the amounts still outstanding in the 2017-18 budget, at page 118 of the Capital Statement, are mainly for overlay. Director-General, could you clarify that for me, especially 'Other Games Projects' with still \$3.5 million to spend?

Mr Walker: Thank you for the question. If you do not mind, I might quickly touch on the question you asked earlier about the Gold Coast Hockey Centre and the contract itself and then move on to your most recent question. I have been advised that the contract with the hockey centre was a traditional contract which allows for extension of time to be granted. I think the minister touched on this. There were certainly some instances where extensions of time have been negotiated between the Department of State Development and the contractor—namely, the latent conditions the minister spoke about in terms of the ground; the wet weather caused by TC Debbie in the earlier part of this year; and some client changes to scope.

What has been useful is the way in which the Department of State Development, the Gold Coast Hockey Management Group and the contractor have worked together around the staged delivery of aspects of that facility. For instance, my understanding is that pitch 1 was provided in a staged way so that it would minimise impacts to the operations of GC hockey. In terms of the contract itself, it does permit for extensions of time within that contract. My understanding is that they were allowed for after those very significant events and changes that have been put forward.

In regard to your question, there are still some timing matters, as I understand, with regard to the capital payments for the venue's upgrade and new venues that are still to come through in this coming financial year. There is clearly moneys that need to be spent on overlay with regard to the Games.

Mr LANGBROEK: At the bottom of that table on page 118, other games projects is listed at \$3½ million. Could you provide us with some information on that? We have specific venues mentioned throughout that table but a general line item there for other games projects at \$3½ million. I am wondering if I could get some clarification. Given that the minister has already said that venues are ready, I acknowledge that overlay may well be part of what is still to come, but can we get some detail either here or on notice about those specific amounts please?

Mr Walker: I will hopefully get back to you towards the end of the session. I have been advised by the Deputy Director-General that it is the Carrara indoor stadium, the non-venue component, that is within that other games projects line.

Mr LANGBROEK: What does that mean?

Mr Walker: Because it is not a games venue, the others have all been listed specifically. Then under the heading of 'other games venue' there is the existing building, you will recall, at Carrara that is being used for other things during the games, not for the venue proper—not for use for sporting activities.

Mr LANGBROEK: I see. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. I want to ask about the cost of taking two Borobis to London for the official launch.

Ms JONES: It cost less than taking you.

Mr LANGBROEK: I do not know about that.

Mr Peters: Aware of the cost of travel, we always look to utilise any opportunity we can. The use of Borobi has become very much part of Tourism and Events Queensland's marketing campaign in some of the key markets. If we look at the UK, that is England, Wales and Scotland. The proposal was to have Borobi go to those particular countries, be used in television advertisements and to have some in-country promotions. We coincided that with the launch of the baton and Borobi became a star, as the member would know, having dignitaries up dancing in the foreground of Buckingham Palace, which is a sight never seen before.

Ms JONES: Did you dance?

Mr LANGBROEK: Badly, Minister—white man dancing.

Ms JONES: You should have sent the member for Mermaid Beach!

Mr Peters: Under our work health and safety rules, Borobi has to be accompanied by a chaperone. Borobi's character is not developed by someone just being there. It is actually people trained in dance and trained in hand movement. They are also trained in how to repair the Borobi suit. We did have an incident between London and Scotland with a fairly significant depressed head which

had to be repaired, otherwise the entire program would have been in jeopardy. It is all about the skills of the people, not taking some English person and shoving them in the process. That information was provided to the media who wrote the article.

Ms JONES: They flew economy, by the way. In answering another question on sponsors, we have five tier 1 sponsors, 11 tier 2 sponsors and 19 tier 3 sponsors. We are currently in conversations with a further nine people at the moment which have not been announced yet, but I am happy to provide the individual sponsors for each of those categories.

Mr LANGBROEK: Thank you. I have a final question about the Queensland Rail timetable which we heard from Mr Peters has not been completed and will not be ready for some time. Can you advise in your negotiations with that particular department when the timetable is likely to be complete so that both Brisbane and local visitors have time to plan?

Ms JONES: Was that to Mr Peters?

Mr LANGBROEK: I am happy for you to answer it, Minister.

Ms JONES: The Commonwealth Games Federation have said that the timetable we are working towards to provide them with that detail is absolutely within the requirements of the Commonwealth Games Federation towards the end of this year, but I know and you know that the Minister for Transport answered a number of questions in regard to transport readiness for the Commonwealth Games. I share her comments that we are doing everything we can to ensure we provide as many public transport options as possible for people to travel to the Commonwealth Games including train travel as well as additional park 'n' ride facilities between Brisbane and the Gold Coast.

CHAIR: Minister, I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the Trade 2018 program which is designed to strengthen Queensland's trade and investment ties in international business profile, and I ask: will the minister please provide the committee with an overview of the Trade 2018 and the economic benefits that the program is expected to generate for Queensland?

Ms JONES: The Games, as I said, will feature a world-class sporting event—the largest event Queensland has ever hosted—to a global audience of more than 1.5 billion. This provides Queensland with a unique opportunity to leverage trade and investment through the Commonwealth nations I talked about earlier. I also mentioned, for example, in the post Brexit world the opportunity to establish and strengthen our ties with Commonwealth countries.

The Trade and Investment Program is one of the legacy pieces of the Commonwealth Games. In this part of the estimates hearing I want to acknowledge on the public record the great work of the Hon. Rob Borbidge, who is the chair of the legacy committee. He is doing a fantastic job. In the first phase of our Trade and Investment Program for Trade 2018, we will capitalise, as I mentioned earlier, on the Queen's baton relay and using mobilisation and the publicity that is generated through that. I take the CEO's point that Borobi has been a big part of doing that.

We will hold a series of events in priority markets including the United Kingdom—which has already happened—Canada, India, Malaysia and Singapore as the baton passes through. These events will allow Queensland to identify and encourage priority trade and investment partners. More importantly, heading into the next session, which is tourism, it will encourage people to come and visit Queensland and the Gold Coast. The department and Tourism and Events Queensland will be working on a separate program in regards to trying to capitalise on the tourism benefits of the Commonwealth Games.

In the second phase, key buyers and investors will be invited inbound for a trade mission. I talked earlier about trying to use the Commonwealth Games and events for trade and investment partners. Recently I had the opportunity with the Hon. Rob Borbidge to host the torch delegation from China with the Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology. The torch program has established more than 156 national level high-tech precincts hosting half a million businesses. This is certainly one that we think would be a great partnership in regards to the health and knowledge precinct on the Gold Coast. The businesses within the torch precinct produce 11.9 per cent of China's GDP in 2015—that is huge—and accounted for 18.5 per cent of Chinese exports to other markets.

In the third phase, the program of trade and investment events during the Games will connect international businesses and government visitors with local business partners. I have previously spoken in the parliament and at other venues about Commonwealth House. I had a meeting very early on as the Minister for the Commonwealth Games with the Governor-General of Australia and the mayor of the Gold Coast about how he believed we could do it better in regards to having a specific venue for heads of state such as himself. Governors of states around the world could have a place where we

could have engagement in a very meaningful level around trade and investment opportunities. This will be held in the heart of Broadbeach at a purpose-built international trade and investment centre, Commonwealth House. The tender for this is already out at the moment in market and Trade 2018, as I said, provides us with a unique opportunity.

I have just been advised, honourable member for Townsville, that James Cook University has just gained a foothold into Singapore—one of the priority markets that we are targeting. India is another important trade partner for us and one which we are working very closely with. Just recently the Indian High Commissioner to Australia met with the Office of the Commonwealth Games about those opportunities. The advice I have received is that he was greatly interested in the opportunities that Trade 2018 presents and was excited to learn about the information that we provided. In closing, I might ask Kerry Petersen to answer to finalise on some of the budget savings on venues.

Ms Petersen: To clarify on the venues, the bid was set in 2011. We have worked with basically the same budget that was set back in those days. During the course of the development over the past six years we have worked closely with all the stakeholders. Some of the budgets have changed and been adjusted but we still have some available contingency from the original budget. We have worked very closely with the athletes, the officials, GOLDOC—the organising committee—the police and transport stakeholders to ensure the venues that we now have are world class and meet everyone's needs. Without going to every single venue, we do have an available contingency left.

Ms JONES: Well done!

Ms Petersen: Thank you, Minister. We still have some projects now in defects liability period, which lasts for 12 months. If unforeseen issues arise, we still have a small amount of budget to ensure that they will be ready for the games.

Ms JONES: So there is money available in contingency still for venues?

Ms Petersen: Yes, and any unspent contingency that is available from the venues will be returned to the overall state contingency budget.

Ms JONES: Believe me, if you want someone to build your house on time and on budget, this is the woman for the job.

Mr SAUNDERS: I refer to page 24 of the SDS which refers to the delivery of infrastructure for the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games, and I ask: will the minister please advise the committee of the legacy benefits that will be achieved for Queensland beyond the Games?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I said, legacy is a key part of what we are trying to achieve in the Commonwealth Games. As I said, the legacy chair, the Hon. Rob Borbidge, has done a fantastic job in regard to that. We have talked at length about the legacy infrastructure—\$320 million worth of new venues and upgraded venues including the hockey centre and the Broadbeach Bowls Club in the shadow minister's electorate—and the Trade and Investment Program. We also have the Embracing 2018 Legacy Program, as I said, that is chaired by the Hon. Rob Borbidge. Its focus as a committee has been on enduring jobs, powering economic growth, accelerating the Gold Coast to a world-class boutique city, delivering in 2018 the inspiring games, and building active, engaged and inclusive communities.

We also have as part of the legacy the largest ever parasports program and equal medal opportunities for men and women. The Games will boost record visitation to Queensland. This is another massive legacy outcome: we will have more people visiting Queensland than ever before. We have spent \$320 million on infrastructure as part of our legacy, but there have also been significant transport infrastructure upgrades.

I know—and Malcolm Turnbull, the Prime Minister of our country, spoke to this—that the commitment the federal government made was to deliver the Gold Coast Light Rail stage 2 well ahead of the Commonwealth Games. We have also seen the duplication of the Brisbane to Gold Coast heavy rail corridor. As we know, the Joh Bjelke-Petersen government ripped up the line between Brisbane and the Gold Coast. I am very pleased that our government is delivering this heavy rail corridor.

The Trade 2018 program is another one as well as the reconciliation action plan that I talked about earlier. It was the first time at Buckingham Palace that we had a traditional owner and elder of the Yugambeh people of the Gold Coast speak at that event. The Premier did not speak. The shadow minister did not speak. It was the Yugambeh elder who spoke at that event. That was a moment which every single person who was there has said to me was very special and something they will always remember.

The arts and culture program is another big part of the legacy that we will be delivering in Festival 2018. This will have activation right across our host cities including Cairns, Townsville, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. Once again, what we are really looking for is strong participation by art workers in creative talent. Am I out of time?

CHAIR: You may finish that sentence.

Ms JONES: There is also Women of the World celebrating the women of the Commonwealth. This is the centrepiece of Festival 2018. It will be a three-day festival for participants to find a way towards gender equality. I want to finish with one more thing, which is One million Stars to End Violence. I know many of the members here have already—

CHAIR: Minister, we are out of time. The time allocated for the consideration of estimates of expenditure for the Commonwealth Games portfolio in the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games and GOLDOC has expired.


Mr LANGBROEK: Mr Chair, can I thank the committee for having me as a guest. I thank the minister, the DG, all ministerial staff and the Hansard staff. Thank you for having me here today.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Surfers Paradise. I thank the minister and officials for their attendance. I think questions on notice have now been answered.

Ms JONES: I am happy if there is anything outstanding that you want me to get.

CHAIR: Thank you. The hearing will now adjourn. We will resume at 10.45 with the examination of estimates for Tourism and Major Events including Tourism and Events Queensland.

Proceedings suspended from 10.31 am to 10.46 am

 **CHAIR:** The hearing will resume. Welcome back, Minister and officials. The committee will now examine the estimates for Tourism and Major Events, including Tourism and Events Queensland, until 12.15 pm. Visiting members with us here today are Mr Jon Krause MP, the member for Beaudesert and shadow minister for tourism. Mr Nicholls, the member for Clayfield, will also be attending. Of course, we have Mrs Jo-Ann Miller, member for Bundamba, joining us. For the benefit of Hansard I ask officials to identify themselves the first time that they speak in answer to questions referred to them by the minister or director-general. I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Tourism and Major Events, including Tourism and Events Queensland, open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

I call the minister to make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Ms JONES: Our government is laser focused on growing the tourism industry because we know it has great potential to expand our economy and support thousands more Queensland jobs. Under the Palaszczuk government tourism has gone from strength to strength. The industry is now worth more than \$25 billion, supporting 230,000 jobs. When we were elected we discovered the LNP did not listen to the concerns of industry. They ignored their pleas for funding to boost growth. Even before the election in December at a CBRC meeting chaired by Tim Nicholls the LNP failed to deliver adequate funding for tourism. When we were elected we absolutely delivered what industry have asked of us. We introduced our tourism funding guarantee. During our term of government we have committed more than half a billion dollars to tourism to grow tourism jobs in Queensland.

Since we were elected we have seen international visitors grow by 17 per cent, to 2.6 million visitors; international expenditure is up by more than \$1 billion, to a record \$5.2 billion; and more Australians than ever before are visiting Queensland. Since we were elected, domestic visitation has grown more than seven per cent, to 21.2 million visitors. Australians are also spending more when they come to Queensland—up 8.5 per cent, to \$15 billion. A quarter of the domestic tourism spend in Australia happens here in Queensland.

Our long-term investment in tourism, providing that funding guarantee, is delivering results. Our events calendar is punching above its weight. Since we were elected we have added more than \$220 million to the value of events, now worth more than \$600 million to the Queensland economy. Who could forget the epic 'Battle of Brisbane' that catapulted local teacher Jeff Horn to the world stage and beamed Queensland around the world? I know that the shadow minister for major events was watching that fight and was unequivocally, parochially Queensland in his tweets.

It is not just the events that are soaring. Through our Aviation Attraction Investment Fund we are securing more flights for Queensland. Since we were elected we have secured additional flights, bringing 640,000 new inbound seats to Queensland and generating up to almost half a billion dollars for our economy each year. We recognise that the growing middle class in Asia presents an awesome

opportunity for further growth. That is why we set up the \$33.5 million Connecting with Asia Fund, to partner with industry to grow tourist visitation from Asia. Through our Connecting with Asia Fund we have already announced that China Southern Airlines will fly three times a week direct to Cairns from Guangzhou. This is something that the local Cairns economy has wanted for years, and I am so proud to be the minister that has delivered it. This is the first direct flight to Cairns from mainland China ever. I want to acknowledge the great work of Tourism Tropical North Queensland as well as Tourism and Events Queensland.

Today I am also pleased to announce a new partnership with Flight Centre. We have entered into a new four-year, \$6 million deal with the travel retailer to market Queensland around the world. This partnership will bring new visitors to Queensland and help grow our tourism industry.

Wherever we go in Queensland, our tourism regions are experiencing new optimism and confidence. Our industry is riding high on record visitation and we have much to look forward to. I am very proud to be the Minister for Tourism in our great state of Queensland.

Mr NICHOLLS: I have a few questions in relation to the Major Events portfolio. I agree: it was great to see the 'Battle of Brisbane' take place. Of course, I also acknowledge the great work done by the Brisbane City Council and the Lord Mayor, because of his close relationship with Jeff Horn—not forgetting also some of the other great events that have occurred including the netball final—

Ms JONES: Hear, hear!

Mr NICHOLLS:—that took place, which I also attended with my daughter.

Ms JONES: Well done!

Mr NICHOLLS: That was a lovely thing to be able to do—

Ms JONES: I could not get tickets to the Commonwealth Games netball.

Mr NICHOLLS: Indeed. I refer the minister to page 4 of the SDS in relation to 'attract and coordinate government support'. Last year I asked a number of questions in relation to the Brisbane Baroque Festival, which had very public issues around performers not being paid. Subsequently, there was a media article stating that TEQ was offering to pay creditors money owed by the festival. Can Ms Coddington provide the final figure as to how much funding was paid to creditors by taxpayers arising out of that series of unfortunate events?

Ms Coddington: As we know, on 16 January 2017 Brisbane Baroque placed the company behind the festival into voluntary administration. TEQ does not owe any sum of money to Brisbane Baroque. TEQ has continued to liaise with the appointed administrators, Mayfields, and offered to contribute a voluntary payment to creditors equal to the post-event payment. TEQ made that payment of that voluntary sum to Mayfields on 15 June 2017. TEQ understands that Mayfields has commenced communication with the outstanding creditors to distribute the voluntary funds. TEQ remains committed to investing in events which drive the best tourism outcomes and deliver exceptional value for the people of Queensland. TEQ offered the voluntary payment to Brisbane Baroque's creditors, a sum equivalent to the post-event payment of \$30,000 that was referred to in the terminated event contract.

Mr NICHOLLS: Ms Coddington, I guess there will be a number of figures relating to the payments. The voluntary payment that you referred to—

Ms Coddington:—is equal to the post-event payment that was questioned.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is the \$30,000?

Ms Coddington: That is right.

Mr NICHOLLS: That is the final amount: \$30,000?

Ms Coddington: That is right. Correct.

Mr NICHOLLS: Can you identify for us the total amount of taxpayer funds provided to the Brisbane Baroque Festival including the voluntary payment? That is the contracted amount, the amount actually paid—that is, how much we physically paid if it is different from the contracted amount—together with the payment made to the creditors?

Ms Coddington: As we discussed last year, the contracts that we have are commercial-in-confidence and we do not discuss the amounts within those contracts.

Mr NICHOLLS: So we do know how much the additional or ex gratia payment was—

Ms Coddington: Correct.

Mr NICHOLLS:—but we do not know how much the total figure was in terms of the full funding paid for the contract with that organisation? I guess it is fair to say that that money has, effectively, gone for no or little benefit at the end of the day.

Ms Coddington: The event was held and we paid for the event, so no money was spent on—

Mr NICHOLLS: I understand—

Ms JONES: It is not like there was no Baroque Festival.

Mr NICHOLLS: I understand that, but it is not ongoing, so it is money that was paid for an event that is not going to continue to occur.

Ms Coddington: There have been two editions of the event; that is right. We will continue to look for events similar to that in the future.

Mr NICHOLLS: Ms Coddington, can you advise whether in the past financial year there have been any instances of financial impropriety that have been identified by Tourism and Events Queensland through the internal audit process in relation to events sponsored by TEQ? Has TEQ, through its audit process, identified any financial impropriety in relation to events that it may have sponsored?

Ms Coddington: Not that I am immediately aware of or that comes to mind. We will look at that and if there is anything I will notify you throughout the meeting.

Mr NICHOLLS: Can I ask the minister to take that on notice, then?

Ms JONES: Yes, I am happy to take it on notice, but I am not aware of any issues either. As I said, I am very proud that we have increased the events budget from around \$300 million and it is now valued at more than \$600 million today.

Mr NICHOLLS: Talking now of other events, I see there have been some notable appointments to the commission of the NRL today.

Ms JONES: I have not seen it. I have been doing estimates for the Commonwealth Games.

Mr NICHOLLS: Have you? Good. Of course we would like to see the grand final take place here in Queensland—and as many of them as we possibly could attract. I understand that ANZ Stadium in Sydney could be closed for up to two years. Are we negotiating for both grand final events over that period of the potential closure of ANZ Stadium, given that we want to see not just one but two potentially and even more take place up here, including in Townsville?

Ms JONES: One thing that the honourable shadow minister and I have in common is that we are mad Rugby League fans, although I think you really like—

Mr NICHOLLS: You might be mad, but I am certainly very keen. This is in the spirit of good nature, Minister.

Ms JONES: That is right. I am mad keen on getting an NRL grand final here to Queensland. I have been meeting extensively with the NRL on opportunities to grow the NRL calendar of events here in Queensland—not only the NRL grand finals but also any new product and opportunities that come along, for example, the very successful double-header that we delivered here in Queensland which was negotiated through our partners including the stadium, AEG Ogden and Tourism and Events Queensland. It was a great success and has been repeated as a consequence.

In relation to the NRL grand final, the honourable shadow minister is absolutely correct. The biggest hurdle we face here today is his colleagues in the New South Wales government. We are still waiting on clarity with regard to their building time frame. In the last conversation I had with Todd Greenberg, the CEO of the NRL, only a matter of weeks ago I was told that they are still seeking clarity on that time frame. We are in conversations about securing one, if not both opportunities that come up.

Mr NICHOLLS: Thanks, Minister. We know, for example, the Intrust Rugby League cup games that are played—and I think it was played last week in Mundubbera, if I understand correctly—are very successful throughout regional Queensland. Has TEQ or your office given any consideration to how games may be played in places such as Mackay, Cameron Munster's home town of Rockhampton or indeed Townsville?

Ms JONES: In answer to an earlier question I talked about how we were in continuous negotiations with the NRL to bring more NRL events to Queensland. We are doing this because not only do we know that Queenslanders love Rugby League but we also know they generate significant gains not only for major events held here at Suncorp Stadium—the best Rugby League stadium in the world which I was very proud to work with the Hon. Rob Swarten to deliver—but also because it has

a great economic impact, including in regional Queensland. I can confirm that, as part of the discussions that are ongoing with the NRL, we are looking at ways to deliver more content to regional Queensland. We are also the government that is delivering the new stadium in Townsville. That will give us an opportunity to host major NRL matches in Townsville for the first time.

Mr NICHOLLS: Finally on that topic, Minister, whilst a grand final in Brisbane would be terrific for Brisbane, of course the rest of the state may wish to participate in those celebrations and activities. Has any thought been given to things such as grand final breakfasts in regional towns or tours and travel by players as part of that process as well?

Ms JONES: I agree with the honourable member: I think there is really huge opportunity for activation. This year for the very first time as part of the State of Origin the Queensland government partnered with the QRL to deliver Maroon Fest. This was a festival that lasted for a week leading up to the win by us at the State of Origin. I think we are in 100 per cent in agreement that, not only do we talk specifically about the game and the event itself, but how is it that we can partner with the QRL and the NRL to create activation across Queensland. I think our government has demonstrated that we are committed to providing more opportunities for regional Queensland. As I said, our commitment to the new stadium in Townsville speaks volumes about our commitment do just that.

Mr NICHOLLS: With regard to the Horn-Pacquiao fight, given your discussions with the promoter is there anything you would like to tell the committee about the potential date of the next election, given that you have seen fit to discuss it with the promoter during a radio broadcast?

Ms JONES: I think Bob Arum is mad keen to see me re-elected, honourable member. I will keep on saying this because I am very proud: we have grown our events calendar by \$220 million. It now stands at more than \$600 million in economic benefits to Queensland. The fact that we had someone as well known around the world as Bob Arum, the promoter to Muhammad Ali as well as a personal friend of Hillary Clinton—he supported Hillary Clinton at the last election and not Donald Trump, like yourself, honourable member—is very exciting. Obviously we will be in the running for a rematch if there is a rematch. We are waiting on the honourable Senator Pacquiao to make a decision in that regard.

Mr NICHOLLS: Returning to Tourism and Events Queensland's funding of major events, can Ms Coddington provide a regional breakdown as to how many events were sponsored or funded in South-East Queensland in 2016-17 and how many events were sponsored outside of South-East Queensland?

Ms Coddington: I will have to get that regional breakdown for you, so I will come back to you on that.

Ms JONES: Can you answer the other question the member asked?

Ms Coddington: Yes. There is no financial impropriety that we are aware of across any of the events inside our portfolio.

Mr NICHOLLS: As a result of the internal audits that TEQ—

Ms Coddington: Yes.

Mr NICHOLLS: I would ask the minister to take that on notice.

Ms JONES: I think we have answered that in a question on notice, but I am happy to provide it again because I have already answered a question leading up to estimates on the breakdown of events. I am happy to provide that additionally. In my time as minister we have worked really hard to grow major events in regional Queensland. The Mount Isa Rodeo has been upgraded to a major event; similarly, the Carnival of Flowers has been upgraded to a major event. Two of the most iconic events that Queensland is known for have been upgraded to major event status under our government. I believe there is very strong demonstrated evidence as well as a commitment by our government to grow major events in regional Queensland.

I had the honour of attending the rodeo with the Governor last year and I am going to the Carnival of Flowers this year. During the recent school holidays I took my kids to Toowoomba to see all the great tourism opportunities there, so I want to assure the shadow minister that we have an active program of trying to deliver new and upgraded major events in regional Queensland.

Mr NICHOLLS: There have been changes to the Queensland Destination Events Program, which was previously the Regional Development Program. What mechanisms are in place to ensure that regional events do not lose out on a large share of the available funds to South-East Queensland given that, for example, the Brisbane City Council area is now part of the regional destination events program?

Ms JONES: As I said in my opening comments, our government's commitment is all about driving not only an opportunity for all parts of Queensland but also value for dollar. We want to ensure that the events we sponsor deliver the best opportunities to deliver tourism and jobs outcome for Queenslanders. Leanne will specifically address some of the issues that the honourable member has asked.

Ms Coddington: The Queensland Destination Events Program is very much focused on getting events throughout all of Queensland and we have a wide spread of events through that. We have to remember as well that the Brisbane regional footprint extends beyond the inner core of Brisbane, so events like the Abbey Medieval Festival at Caboolture and the Quandamooka Festival at Stradbroke Island are inside the Brisbane footprint.

Mr NICHOLLS: My question was more directed to the mechanisms to ensure that occurs. What is the assessment process? How do you determine that takes place?

Ms Coddington: At the centre of any program is ensuring that we get the best return for taxpayers' money, so there is a thorough assessment process that we work through. There is a set amount of grant money put aside every year for that program, and we assess every event against the criteria that are in place. We work with the regional tourism organisations and the event proponents to ensure that we are delivering sound events across the state. We look for that balance, though the predominance is to ensure that we get the best events in the best destinations going forward. We also work very closely with our regions to ensure that events are coming through a pipeline. We have a mechanism called 'E minus 12', which means that we start working with event proponents 12 months out from the event to help nurture that event through to its fruition. We are continually working with them to grow their events so they do prosper.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, you made mention of Queensland's record visitor numbers in your opening comments, and I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the Palaszczuk government's commitment to growing tourism. Minister, can you expand on the growth in domestic and international visitors to Queensland?

Ms JONES: I can. As you know, our government—of which you are an active part and a very strong advocate for the people of Maryborough—is determined to deliver greater tourism opportunities for all of Queensland because we know that this is one of the megatrend industries in terms of growth across the globe. There are an unprecedented number of people movements. More people across the world have an opportunity to travel than ever before, and we want to make sure that we continue to see visitors choose Queensland as a destination. In 2016 we grew international visitors by 10 per cent to 2.6 million visitors, and consequently expenditure grew by more than \$5.1 billion. This growth was led predominantly by China. You will hear me talking a lot about the fact that in Queensland we are in a unique position—on the doorstep of China—for Australia to get not only direct flights but also to encourage more Chinese visitors to choose Queensland as a destination as well as traditional markets such as New Zealand, the US and Japan. It is true that China is now our largest and most lucrative market. Expenditure from Chinese visitors grew by \$1 billion in 2016; we also saw visitation grow by 24 per cent. This is significant growth, and I think that the industry as a whole should be commended for seeing the opportunity in China and capitalising on it and delivering jobs for Queensland.

International visitors also grew across every sector of the tourism market. Holiday expenditure in Queensland increased seven per cent to \$2.8 billion and holiday visitation increased 14 per cent to 1.8 billion. Business expenditure in Queensland—which is another other key market and one that we have been working very closely with Brisbane Marketing and the Lord Mayor on—increased five per cent to \$231 million. Visiting friends and relatives increased by four per cent to 600,000 visitors. We also saw records smashed when it comes to domestic visitors, with more Australians visiting Queensland than ever before. As I said in my opening statement, 20.8 million Australian visitors pumped more than \$15 billion into the Queensland economy. When you think about it on a day-to-day scale, that is delivering \$55 million a day for Queensland. We know that Australians are choosing to holiday in Queensland with close to half of our domestic market expenditure at \$7 billion.

We are determined to work with industry to fund Tourism and Events Queensland, as I said in my opening remarks, with half a billion dollars to tourism and events here in Queensland. We have put our money where our mouth is. We said that we would back tourism. We did not pretend it was a pillar and then underfund it. We have said that we would put the money in. We put the money in and it is driving dividends, which means jobs, jobs, jobs for Queenslanders.

CHAIR: I understand that one of the keys to international visitor growth is growing aviation access to Queensland. With reference to page 5 of the SDS, can the minister discuss how the Palaszczuk government is attracting new flights to Brisbane through the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund?

Ms JONES: The member is absolutely right in saying that we know one of the key things we can invest in to make a difference—and I recognise that we have bipartisan support for this approach—is aviation attraction. We know that by investing in supporting direct flights into the Queensland market we can encourage people to not only stay in Queensland longer but spend their money in the Queensland economy, and it gives us a competitive edge over other destinations. You will remember that at the election we promised we would boost the aviation attraction fund. That was a \$10 million commitment and we have been delivering that funding. It has already delivered dividends for Queenslanders. Through our Attracting Aviation Investment Fund we have secured 600,000 additional seats on flights directly into Queensland. Isn't that a great win for us? As I said, we know that this has delivered around half a billion dollars' worth of economic impacts. This is a really good example of where the government can use its contribution to leverage a much greater win for the economy.

We have secured: China Airlines daily flights from Taipei to Brisbane; Hong Kong Airline flights between Hong Kong, the Gold Coast and Cairns; Air Canada flights from Vancouver to Brisbane; EVA Air flights from Taipei to Brisbane; AirAsia X flights from Kuala Lumpur to the Gold Coast; China Eastern Airlines flights from Shanghai to Brisbane; JINAIR flights from Seoul to Cairns; and Singapore Airlines flights from Singapore to Brisbane. I listened to industry when they requested some flexibility while we are waiting for upgrades to the Brisbane Airport. I want to acknowledge Julieanne Alroe, CEO of the Brisbane Airport, and the great work they are doing to increase capacity at the airport, because that will also be a game changer for tourism going forward. We also did our first domestic deal, which is Tigerair from Melbourne to Townsville. Mr Chair, I know this is something you are very passionate about.

The reason I thought industry had a very valid point and I thought it was worth assessing this on a case-by-case basis is because if we can link that to an international flight and create a connection between us and Melbourne or Sydney, for example—the two major capital cities in Australia—and a market like Townsville, then we are opening up opportunities for Townsville. We are making it easier for the consumer to say, 'Do you know what? I will go to Townsville.' It is such a beautiful area why wouldn't you go to Townsville? I think this is a win, and we have already demonstrated that we have been able to deliver that. I know from feedback not only from you but other members in the Townsville area and the Townsville Airport that that has been a great win. I think this shows that, when we listen to industry and take industry advice, we can deliver great outcomes for regional Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. Why wouldn't you go to Townsville?

Ms JONES: I will be there Friday.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, page 4 of the SDS refers to the 'Advance Queensland: Connecting with Asia Fund'. Minister, in addition to your success in attracting new flights through the AAIF, can you advise how the Connecting with Asia Fund will help attract new international flights to Queensland and open up the state and our regions to new Asian markets?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for this question. I am very proud we have been able to deliver this. I know that the honourable shadow minister has a good relationship with many of our RTOs across Queensland and he would know Alex de Waal very well. He would also know that Alex is a very passionate man and someone whom you cannot really say no to. I have to acknowledge and thank Alex for the great work that he did when he was at Tourism Tropical North Queensland. He has now taken another job in the tourism industry—thankfully we have not lost him from the industry—but I want to acknowledge that he was a big advocate for a new fund with a bit more scope and a bit more flexibility to provide new opportunities to provide flights directly from China.

We knew that if we were able to secure direct flights from China into Cairns this would be a game changer for the Cairns economy. This has seen a lot of media attention and also a lot of public acknowledgement. Through our new Connecting with Asia Fund, which I announced at or around estimates last year when I said that we would do this, I am very pleased to be sitting here today saying that we have done it. Here we are, and the first direct flight from Guangzhou to Cairns will deliver more than 30,000 visitors each and every year into the Cairns economy. We expect that from December, when China Southern Airlines will operate three flights a week from Guangzhou to Cairns, that will pump more than \$90 million into Cairns and the tropical North Queensland region. We actually think around 33,000 visitors a year will take advantage of this flight and, as I said, I think this really is a game changer for us.

I want to take this opportunity to thank on the record all of the partners that worked really closely with us and the *Cairns Post*. I think the *Cairns Post* have been a great advocate on behalf of their local community in saying how important this new flight would be. I also thank the Treasurer of Queensland, the honourable member for Mulgrave. This is something that I know he understands fully and he supported me heavily through the process because he knows what a difference it would make for that economy. I also thank Cairns Mayor Bob Manning and Cairns Airport Chief Executive Officer Norris Carter. I think it is wonderful that we have had Norris appointed to that airport; he has been doing a fantastic job since he has been there. I also want to welcome new CEO Pip Close, who has taken over from Alex de Waal. I had the privilege of meeting with her recently when I was in Cairns and she will do a fantastic job. I also thank Tourism Australia Managing Director John O'Sullivan and Leanne Coddington and her team.

This just shows you once again that in an industry like tourism it is really important that government works closely with industry, listens to industry and acts on what industry recommends. When I became the minister this was one of the first things I was lobbied about. I have listened. I managed to get the money through the CBRC process and get the money out the door. As a consequence, we now have a new \$90 million injection into the Cairns economy. It is a great win for Queensland.

Mrs MILLER: My question is in relation to overseas direct flights. What planning is in place for overseas direct tourism flights into the new Wellcamp Toowoomba airport given that one of the priority areas for marketing is Queensland lifestyle, culture and people and given that the Granite Belt is a tourism area of Queensland?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. One of the great things about our Connecting with Asia Fund and the aviation attraction fund is that we have record funding available for airports and airlines to come and talk to government about new opportunities. I think your point about the Granite Belt and that Toowoomba region is really important. It is a great tourism destination. As you heard me say earlier, I holidayed in Toowoomba during the school holidays with my children and they had a fantastic time.

I have not been approached about that opportunity at this stage, but we have funding available—a record investment because of the government that you are a part of—to have that conversation. You and I should both be very proud that we have that funding now to have that conversation. At this stage I have not been approached about an opportunity there but would be happy to have those discussions.

Mrs MILLER: Will you approach them? Are you prepared to approach the Granite Belt Tourist Association and others, rather than them coming to you?

Ms Coddington: We are in ongoing conversations with South Queensland Country Tourism. That is the area where West Wellcamp is. We also have a very good relationship, I would like to think, with John Wagner and his team at Brisbane West Wellcamp. We have been out there. We have visited the airport and we have seen how he has designed that airport to enable it to expand over time and we will continually work with them. Bringing international direct flights into Queensland, or anywhere in the world, is not an easy task. It takes a long time for those flights to come to fruition. Two years on average around the world is how long it takes to bring a new direct flight into an area, so we will continue to work with him. West Wellcamp already has international freight flights, which is a fantastic start.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, I know that.

Ms Coddington: We need to work with the region to build the demand to ensure that the flights are sustainable. There is nothing worse than a new flight coming and it not being sustainable, so we need to ensure the demand is able to be sustained and that we have the right product on the ground for people when they come to the region. That work is ongoing in partnership with the regional tourism organisation and, as I say, we are also in conversation with John Wagner and his team on an ongoing basis.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, how is the Palaszczuk government growing tourism through its major events calendar?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I have mentioned a couple of times here this morning, we know that by investing in major events we can create jobs. That is why I want to thank the Premier for her support of the Major Events portfolio. One of the things that was raised with me when I first became the minister was the fact that under the former government there was no long-term funding guarantee. I want to raise this again because the events calendar goes to the heart

of the issue that industry raised with me. One of the very first meetings I had was with then chair Stephen Gregg. He talked about the fact that they could no longer negotiate in good faith to attract new major events to Queensland because they did not have the funding in the forward estimates.

When we came into government—and I know this for a fact—the Treasurer and I were aghast that there was a \$188 million shortfall in the forward estimates for Tourism and Events Queensland. That is, they had been traditionally sitting at around \$100 million a year and that fell away. I secured that funding. As I said, we as a government have allocated more than half a billion dollars to grow tourism events in Queensland. This is important for the events calendar because many events, as you have already heard here this morning, are events that happen annually. Normally in an events contract you have that contract negotiation to secure an event over a number of years. How can you go into a negotiation to secure a new major event to Queensland over a number of years if you do not have the money in the kitty? You cannot.

This was highlighted to then treasurer, Timothy Nicholls, and the now shadow minister for tourism and events in a letter directed to him on 4 December 2014. He chaired a meeting of CBRC in December, before the election was called by the former member for Ashgrove, where he failed to address the issues raised by Tourism and Events Queensland and the tourism industry. He had an opportunity before we went to the polls to deliver that funding for Tourism and Events Queensland—and I am happy to table the letter here today, but it has been tabled previously—and he did not do it. That is a good example of what bad leadership looks like. Industry is saying, 'We need this funding to attract new major events to Queensland,' and Tim Nicholls failed. He failed to listen to industry. He failed to deliver funding security and, as a consequence, industry was placed in a terrible position.

I am very pleased that all of the government members sitting here today are part of a government that listened to industry and delivered that funding guarantee. As I have said, as a consequence of giving that funding guarantee so that we can have negotiations in good faith, half a billion dollars has been committed by our government to do just that. I believe that we will continue to see the fruits of those decisions in coming years. The contrast between our approach and the approach of the Leader of the Opposition in this regard could not be more stark.

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

Mr KRAUSE: Good morning, Minister and everybody. Minister, can you confirm whether or not in the performance of your ministerial duties you have ever used your personal email to conduct government business?

Ms JONES: No. As you well know, you had an RTI on my personal email accounts that you received the answer to on 29 June. You will see in that email that there was one email sent to me, which has been provided to you and your office, which I forwarded to my ministerial account so it would be under the Public Records Act. I am happy to table that correspondence that was sent to my private email by Mackenzie State Special School. For example, it said—

Dear Kate

I was very moved by your recent address to school principals at the recent conference at the Brisbane Convention Centre. Your passion for education and belief in how we can change the lives of people was self-evident. It is my view that such passion inspires and creates an optimism that, even with a large department collective, can be made to make a real and lasting difference.

As I said, I refer you to the RTI information that has already been provided to you.

Mr KRAUSE: Thank you, Minister. I refer to page 33 of the SDS in relation to aviation services. Ms Coddington, when was it known that Cairns had lost direct flights from China Eastern Airlines ahead of the Chinese New Year celebrations earlier this year?

Ms Coddington: Thank you for the question. China Eastern Airlines was expected to operate scheduled charter services into Cairns from Shanghai for Chinese New Year 2017. TEQ was initially advised in late November 2016 of China Eastern Airlines's intention to cancel this seasonal service. This intention was confirmed in January 2017 when TEQ was advised that under Chinese airspace regulations no additional China Eastern Airlines flights were permitted out of Shanghai Airport in January and February 2017. We are advised that in December 2016 Tourism Tropical North Queensland communicated the cancellation to members active in the China market and subsequently advised its broader membership base.

Mr KRAUSE: As a follow-up to that, Ms Coddington—and I think you may have alluded to it in your answer just then—what was the reason for those direct flights from Shanghai into Cairns being cancelled?

Ms JONES: Shanghai Airport. We have said that. It has been on the public record now for months.

Ms Coddington: It was Chinese airspace regulations that they did not allow any additional China Eastern Airlines flights out of Shanghai Airport in January and February.

Ms JONES: Just to give context, it was not just Cairns; it was also around the world. New Zealand was in the same boat, as were other markets right across the world. It is the Shanghai Airport Authority that has made those decisions, so it is totally out of our hands. Indeed, the money was there for those flights. Absolutely the money was there in the budget, so the issue was with regard to the Shanghai Airport and it was not just Cairns that was affected.

Mr KRAUSE: Thank you, Minister. Ms Coddington, were you aware of the cancellation or the fact that they may be pulled from the Cairns market at the time that new direct flights from China to Brisbane were announced in mid-December 2016?

Ms Coddington: Not to my recollection. I do not know the exact timing between those two announcements, but they had no connection.

Mr KRAUSE: In your first answer, Ms Coddington, you said that TEQ became aware of it in around late November 2016 and you just said that you could not recall whether you were aware of it when the China-Brisbane flights were announced in December 2016—but someone at Tourism and Events Queensland and TEQ as a whole would have been aware of it, if your first answer is correct; is that not correct?

Ms Coddington: Yes. The organisation was advised, but there is a difference in the way that the—from my understanding—Chinese airspace regulations deal with year-round scheduled flights and charter flights.

Ms JONES: Just for clarity for the other members, the Cairns flights that the honourable member was asking about were charter flights. Now, because of our investment, we are going to have direct flights year round and the flights to Brisbane are locked in, secure flights that are year-round flights. One of the big things the community wanted was not to have charter flights but to have a long-term, year-round service. That is what we have delivered with the aviation fund.

Mr KRAUSE: I think around Chinese New Year there was a very significant loss of revenue and business because of those flights not being there, but I take your point, Minister. Minister, why did you not at the time fight harder to retain those direct flights from Shanghai to Cairns?

Ms JONES: Because I have no influence on the Chinese government's operation of the Shanghai Airport and I do not see how I ever would. I am not a Chinese national citizen, either. I am an Australian citizen, born and bred.

Mr KRAUSE: No, I understand that. I turn to page 33 of the SDS again in relation to aviation services and ask the director-general: under the Connecting with Asia Strategy, the \$33.5 million strategy that was announced last year, how are negotiations undertaken to secure airline partners coming into Queensland?

Mr Walker: We have prepared guidelines for the Connecting with Asia program that provide overarching guidance to the way in which those negotiations take place. The minister made reference to great announcements like the recent Connecting with Asia Guangzhou-Cairns. A number of parties are involved in the exercise—from the airport, through to the local tourism marketing organisation, through to Tourism and Events Queensland. It is an outcomes based process whereby those groups essentially start to negotiate with airlines overseas to bring them to Queensland. As I say, we have detailed criteria and an overarching guideline that oversees that. Essentially, the department's role is to take the business case put forward by Tourism and Events Queensland on behalf of the consortia and assess that to ensure that it delivers value for money for the state of Queensland.

Mr KRAUSE: You said that the groups approach airlines to bring in capacity. Do you mean the groups collectively that are part of that consortium or certain members of that group?

Mr Walker: No, the consortia membership will hold conversations variously, informed by things like the Asia strategy that TEQ prepared and published last year, or use it internally to guide its deliberations. Certainly, the consortia itself will have conversations with airlines in key marketplaces.

Mr KRAUSE: How does this differ from the process under the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund?

Mr Walker: There are certainly similarities to the two processes—in fact, there are many similarities to the two processes. The key point to draw out with regard to Connecting with Asia is that it is not just about aviation itself. It has a key component, namely, to bring either increased capacity to a particular location or a new airline to that location. It also seeks to build in-market marketing. One of

the things that we learned as part of the advancing Queensland tourism strategy is that we need to be particularly clever in the way in which we market Queensland into particular markets. Part of this is also about how we are at the cutting edge of that marketing, making sure that people are aware, for instance, that Cairns is a tremendous place for people out of Guangzhou to visit. Equally, it also seeks to build other things, such as the digital capability of the industry in Cairns. A very important component for us to ensure that we continue to grow tourism in Queensland is that we have tourism operators who are able to participate on a digital platform that is bespoke and appropriate to China. Equally, we are looking to boost our experience piece.

Another part of this is to drive the consortia members to think a little differently about how we encourage new, different and improved experiences within that particular location. For me, the key bit is the way that I consider CWA compared to the AAIF, which is simply about how we get more flights into Queensland. This is about how do we get more flights into Queensland and keep them in Queensland by growing our experiences and the way in which we market and ensure that we are interacting appropriately with those who want to come to Queensland.

Mr KRAUSE: What feedback has there been from airport operators about the two different schemes, the Connecting with Asia Strategy and the AAIF?

Mr Walker: The conversations that I have had—and I would be happy to defer to both the Minister and Ms Coddington regarding this because they, too have many conversations—is they have certainly been positively received. I think both schemes are positively received. I certainly have not ever received anything negative about the AAIF. It is a very strong program that has run for a number of years. With regard to the CWA, what is key to that is that it has a number of layers to it that are very much focused on sustainability.

Ms Coddington: I think Mr Walker has covered it. The two schemes work very well side by side. Obviously, Connecting with Asia is relevant for only Asian flights that are coming in from Asia. The aviation fund is a global scheme and can be used in the domestic market if the right experience is there.

As has been explained, the CWA is a much more expansive program. It enables us to look at the whole tourism network, not just the marketing fund. Marketing is a key part of it, but it is also about that experience development, itinerary development and the right platforms being developed as well, which is key to the sustainability of those flights.

Mr KRAUSE: Further to the director-general, the answer to question on notice No. 9 part (d) provides that the Connecting with Asia Strategy has a budget allocation of \$16.6 million in 2017-18. How much of that is allocated specifically towards negotiating contracts with airline providers to attract those additional routes into Queensland as opposed to other marketing activities undertaken as part of the Connecting with Asia Strategy?

Mr Walker: There are two comments that I would make. One is that I would need to look into the detail precisely around the negotiation piece. Secondly, and probably most critically, we need to be very cautious about the way in which we start to detail those numbers. We have a number of conversations that are currently occurring with three consortia in particular. I think it is important that we keep a level of commercial-in-confidence to those discussions.

Mr KRAUSE: I am not asking for—

Ms JONES: It is the allocation for the next 12 months.

Mr KRAUSE: I am asking how much is allocated specifically towards negotiating contracts with airline providers to bring more people to Queensland as opposed to other activities in the \$16.6 million in 2017-18?

Ms JONES: For 2017-18 we have allocated the money. We are still having negotiations. As you know, we are into day 25 of this year's financial year. That will come to light as we continue our negotiations. Can I say that we have already had great success by securing the direct flights to Cairns. As you have just heard from the director-general, we are currently in discussions with a number of other consortia. We are hoping to have a new announcement coming up in the forward. As you have heard, there is flexibility, which is what the industry has asked for and what I am delivering, which is why we are able to get these new flights that we have never had before. Obviously, I will have a better picture this time next year at the next estimates hearing. Hopefully, I am sitting here answering these questions. We will know, because this is an allocation of funding for the 2017-18 budget and we are in day 25 of the 2017-18 budget.

Mr KRAUSE: To follow up on that as well—and this is again to the director-general—in relation to the answer to question No. 19 part (b) where the words ‘close to half’ were used to describe the amount committed and contracted under the \$10 million boost to the AAIF, are you able to confirm exactly how much has been committed and contracted and, therefore, also how much remains available for aviation attraction?

Ms JONES: Around \$4.5 million. It is a 10-year allocation.

CHAIR: Order! The question was directed to the director-general.

Mr Walker: The minister was indeed answering the question there. The answer to that question on notice is certainly correct. I want to check with my departmental staff and come back to you.

Mr KRAUSE: Yes, I am happy for you to take that on notice, if the minister is agreeable.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to take the question on notice?

Ms JONES: Yes. I make the point that it is a 10-year program over four years. As I said in the answer, we have spent almost half of that in the first two years. It is a 10-year program over 10 years and I understand that it is around \$4.5 million in the first two years.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We will come back to that question later—

Ms JONES: I do not think you need to. I am happy to provide the committee with whatever you want.

Mr KRAUSE: I have a further follow-up question to the director-general in relation to the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund. Once the AAIF is fully committed and contract payments are made, is it the intention that more money would be allocated towards it? My apologies, that question should have been directed to the minister.

Ms JONES: Yes, I was going to say that is my decision.

Mr KRAUSE: That is a matter of policy, I understand. Once the AAIF runs out of money—is fully committed and contracted payments are made—is it your intention that more money would be committed to the AAIF?

Ms JONES: Absolutely. I thank the shadow minister for his question, because it goes to the heart of what our government has done in government compared to his colleagues when he was in government. Unlike when they were in government where there was no—

Mr KRAUSE: Fair go, Minister, we did start the AAIF.

Ms JONES: No, you did not. We had an aviation attraction fund before that. You just gave it a different name. In all honesty, if you want to talk about the record—and you asked the question; it is a political question: will I commit more funding—the answer is yes and I am going to give you a political answer. In addition, we have also seen record investment with the aviation attraction fund of \$33.7 million. In addition, we have given a funding guarantee that your honourable leader, when he was the Treasurer, failed to deliver for the industry. I am very proud that I am part of a government that has listened to industry and put our money where our mouth is, unlike your leader, who said one thing before the election and did another thing once he was elected.

Mr KRAUSE: Minister, I have one final question in this segment. It relates somewhat to the question asked by the member for Bundamba previously in relation to the process for the AAIF as opposed to the Connecting with Asia Strategy. Some of the feedback that I have received about the strategy—

Ms JONES: The AAIF.

Mr KRAUSE:—comparing the two is that, under the AAIF, it is easier for airports to go directly to airlines into the market to seek them to come to the destination without dealing with any other agencies, whether that be TEQ, or RTOs, or other tourism bodies. Would you not say that AAIF would be a more nimble initiative for bringing new airline capacity into Queensland as opposed to the Connecting With Asia Strategy, particularly in terms of an example like Brisbane west where they might go directly to the market, to airlines, and get negotiations underway themselves to bring airline capacity to Queensland?

Ms JONES: I think you have highlighted that you understand how this works and our answer to the question asked by the member for Bundamba goes to the heart of that. There are two things. I would not say that one is more nimble than the other. I would say that they cater for two different things. Both the director-general and the CEO of TEQ spoke to that.

The Connecting with Asia Fund was set up as a direct consequence of the industry coming to me saying that AAIF did not cater for what they needed to deliver and what they needed to deliver was not only direct flights from new markets but also opening up new markets. As you heard the director-general talk about it, it is not only marketing, which is predominately what AAIF is, but also working with the local tourism industry to create new experiences that talk to that Asian market. I know, through the conversations that you have had with the industry, you would know that the consultation that regional tourism organisations do show that we need to be providing a different message as well as using different platforms, as Leanne said in her contribution, to the Chinese market and the Asian market.

The Connecting with Asia Fund came as a direct result of the industry saying to me that the AAIF fund did not work in this circumstance. Absolutely, AAIF has a place and it is a great program. I acknowledge that we have bipartisan support for AAIF. I thank the honourable member for that. In addition, the Connecting with Asia Fund was all about the industry saying to me that the AAIF did not cater for their needs in order to deliver not only new flights but also to build content, new experiences and itineraries that we can market in China using our partnerships in China.

For example, some of the funding that we have done with the Connecting with Asia Fund includes having new people selling Queensland in markets in China—that is, we now have new people, contractors who we have been working with, to sell Queensland to the Chinese market. It is not just about flights with Connecting with Asia; it is a much more holistic approach, whereas AAIF is specifically only about flights. They are two different programs doing two different things complementing each other in the great work that both programs do.

Mr WILLIAMS: Given your outstanding success with the Battle of Brisbane, the boxing bout with Jeff and Manny, can you expand on the tourism outcomes of this major event?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. As he said, the Horn fight—the Battle of Brisbane as it was known, and that is because we made sure that Brisbane was promoted as part of the battle—was a huge success. I think you were there, shadow minister?

Mr KRAUSE: Yes.

Ms JONES: I am sure that he and I both share the view that it was a unique experience. In fact, I had a number of people say to me that it was better than the State of Origin. That is a big call. Even my husband said that at the end of the fight as well.

I want to take this opportunity to thank Jeff Horn, his family and supporters. As Queenslanders, we should be very proud of the display that he showed not only within the ring but also outside the ring. With my other hat on as education minister, I am very proud that Jeff Horn is an upstanding Queenslanders who all of us can be proud of. It was wonderful to see his pop—his grandfather—there, whom I have had the opportunity to meet many times, sitting so proudly ringside. News Ltd covered that. I watched his grandfather see his grandson win. I was so proud of him and his family I even got a bit teary.

That is the emotional side of it but, in reality, a lot of people put in a lot of effort to make it happen. I want to acknowledge our partners, including Bob Arum, who has already featured here today, and Dean Lonergan from Duco Events. He is a New Zealander, but he is a great guy. I also acknowledge Freddie Roach, Pacquiao's trainer; Glenn Rushton, Horn's trainer; and the Lord Mayor of Brisbane, Graham Quirk. This is an example where, when two levels of government work closely together, we can deliver a great win for our city.

We always knew that this event would pack a punch for Queensland. That is why, through Tourism and Events Queensland, for the Battle of Brisbane we worked very closely with Suncorp Stadium, Duco Events and Brisbane Marketing. No doubt, the Battle of Brisbane was the biggest boxing event in Australia's history. More than 52,000 fans packed out Suncorp Stadium. An interesting fact that most people would not realise is that that was the largest audience that Pacquiao had fought in front of. Even with the long-term career that he has had throughout the world as an outstanding boxer and athlete, this was the largest crowd that he had fought on front of. We know that close to 20,000 people travelled to Queensland and from interstate and overseas. Certainly, part of the way that we did the marketing and ticket sales was to drive that strong interstate and international visitation.

The biggest overseas markets, unsurprisingly, were the Philippines—my tourism adviser is a Filipino and was actually backing Pacquiao, but that is okay—New Zealand and the United States. Over the fight weekend hotels in Brisbane—and I know that the Lord Mayor is also on the public record talking about this—were at 95 per cent capacity. You only had to be in town at the time to know that restaurants, cafes and bars were all reporting a massive surge in business.

This is a really interesting fact. At the fight I had the opportunity to meet the CEO of the Brisbane Museum and the CEO of the art gallery, and they said that this was the largest weekend they had ever had. The influx of visitors to Brisbane not only delivered a win in regard to boxing fans and supporters but also, with that influx of 20,000 people from interstate and overseas, saw more walk-ups to our art gallery and museum than any other weekend ever. It says to me that people came to Brisbane early, they stayed in Brisbane and they saw everything that Brisbane had to offer. I can keep going. I can read the *Courier-Mail* editorial. That rocked. It stated—

The Battle of Brisbane demonstrates just what can be achieved when various levels of government work together to attract and stage an event that was never a sure bet for Brisbane.

Culturally, we are enriched, and the economics of attracting thousands of international and interstate visitors to Queensland—above and beyond the visits for the event itself—speaks for itself.

I do not think I could say it better than that.

Mr SAUNDERS: I refer to page 34 of the SDS and the Tourism and Events Queensland service area objective to achieve economic and social benefits for the state by growing the tourism and events industry in a partnership between industry and government. Minister, what new partnerships have you entered into with industry to grow tourism in this great state?

Ms JONES: Thank you, member for Maryborough. As you rightly say, we understand that the best way to grow tourism and tourism jobs in Queensland is to work very closely with regional tourism organisations and industry partners. For example, as I said in my opening remarks, I am very pleased to announce today a new four-year partnership with Flight Centre. Everyone knows that Flight Centre is the great success story of Skroo and Jude Turner. I do not know if everyone saw the biography piece on Jude Turner in the weekend paper. It was an inspirational article. It is fantastic that we have two people, in Skroo and Jude, who are so passionate about tourism and are very passionate about putting Queensland on the map.

I am pleased to announce, as I said, a new four-year partnership with Flight Centre. Tourism and Events Queensland are joining forces with Flight Centre in a new \$6 million deal to market Queensland to the world. Under similar arrangements we saw a 38 per cent sales increase at travel expos in New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Flight Centre is Australia's largest travel retailer, with more than 4,500 travel agents in more than 800 stores across Australia. This company also has outlets in New Zealand, the United Kingdom, USA, Canada and South Africa. Queensland I think will capitalise on this global footprint to make sure that we are encouraging people to visit Queensland. We understand that through this arrangement they will focus on key markets, as I said, in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Canada and will help us grow Queensland's \$25 billion tourism industry. Specifically, Flight Centre will lead marketing campaigns on consumer promotions, travel agent education and training, product growth and events and support. Flight Centre Travel Group manager Graham Turner—I should put this on the record too—has endorsed the partnership, saying—

This new agreement will ensure that the Flight Centre Travel Group and Tourism and Events Queensland continue to work together proactively to highlight the state's world class tourist attractions and to help grow visitor numbers as travellers from throughout the world capitalise on this golden era.

Mrs MILLER: I refer to page 35 of the SDS that deals with the staffing numbers, and I ask: is the department holding positions vacant so that it can meet the efficiency dividends of Treasury? When will these positions be advertised, what Public Service levels are the positions and when is it anticipated that they be filled?

Mr Walker: With regard to our staffing numbers, within the Tourism and Majors Events component of the department in fact we have stable staffing numbers. The movement has primarily been around our Office of Commonwealth Games. We are moving into a very busy period and we have adopted a process currently where we are taking secondments from other departments that have an affiliation with the games. That means that those staff are appearing on those departmental books. Generally our staff numbers within the Tourism component, given our discussions today—there are indeed no movements. The 2016-17 actual was 28 staff. Our proposed budgeted FTEs for 2017-18 are indeed 28 staff.

Mrs MILLER: On page 35 of the SDS it says for Tourism and Events Queensland in 2016-17 the estimated actual is 144 and the budget estimate is 151.

Mr Walker: I might need to hand to Ms Coddington from TEQ.

Ms Coddington: Our base FTE for Tourism and Events Queensland is 140. In this year we had a few contracted temporary positions for the Commonwealth Games, so additional roles to help us fulfil our obligations to assist with the marketing of the Commonwealth Games, and next year we will have additional roles that are covered through the Asia Boost Fund, which is part of Connecting with Asia, to ensure that we deliver on the Connecting with Asia program that has been talked about.

Mrs MILLER: Another 11 positions?

Ms Coddington: Temporary positions fully funded through the Asia Boost Fund—a separate allocation of money—to make sure we can market those flights and do the work in regions to make sure those flights are sustainable.

Mr WILLIAMS: Thank you for outlining the Palaszczuk government's success in attracting new flights and events to Queensland and the partnership with industry. With reference to page 4 of the SDS, can you please update the committee on the efforts to support development and tourism infrastructure across Queensland?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. Before I answer I want to provide for the record an answer in relation to a question asked by the honourable shadow minister for major events about how many events on our events calendar—

Ms Coddington: On the whole events calendar, how many are in South-East Queensland and how many are in the rest of Queensland.

Ms JONES: In the rest of Queensland there are 71 events and in the south-east corner—which includes the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Southern Queensland Country and Brisbane—there are 81 events. This stands in stark contrast to, for example, New South Wales and Victoria, where the majority of their events are held in the capital city. As you can actively see, we are working really hard to provide events right across Queensland. I think it is important to note, given that the question was around Toowoomba, that Toowoomba is part of Southern Queensland Country. That is included in South-East Queensland, even though many of us would count that as a regional community. There are 81 in Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Southern Queensland Country and Brisbane and 71 in the rest of Queensland, including the Mount Isa rodeo.

In relation to the pipeline—this is Jeff McAlister's favourite subject to talk about—I want to acknowledge the work that the former government did in this regard in the sense that this is one of the areas that was not cut. They made a decision at a departmental level not to cut this area because they thought it would deliver. I cannot remember how many jobs were cut from the Tourism and Events portfolio. Anyway, this is one area where the public servants had the good grace to see that this was going to deliver jobs for Queenslanders and decided they would reprioritise their workers into this area. They tried to protect this area from the jobs cuts under the Newman-Nicholls government.

Miss BARTON: Point of order. The Speaker has been very clear about the terminology that should be used.

Ms JONES: I apologise. I withdraw and I sincerely apologise to the member for Broadwater. We now have \$14 billion worth of projects in the investment pipeline that either are being delivered or will be delivered here in Queensland. We have more than 30 significant infrastructure investment projects, from the Gold Coast to Cairns, slated for development between now and 2022. These projects will create thousands of jobs for Queenslanders, inject billions of dollars into our economy and ultimately make Queensland a more attractive place to visit for tourists.

We are now rejuvenating our tourism stock—I can see the shadow minister nodding because he would have heard this too in his travels—as a key part of growing our market share. This includes the new \$50 million Cairns Aquarium and Research Centre under construction, which is expected to add \$300 million to the local economy each year and support 130 jobs. Key projects in the pipeline are the \$3 billion Queen's Wharf Development Program; and the \$600 million Lindeman Island upgrade, which has been featured in the *Courier-Mail* today. Our government is absolutely committed to working with the proponents, White Horse, that are putting Lindeman Island up. I have personally met with White Horse multiple times, including in China on my first trade and investment and tourism visit to China. I have also met with them here since, when the CEO has travelled here at my invitation. We met during the parliamentary sitting. We also had representatives from White Horse attend our DestinationQ event in Mackay.

In answering the editorial in today's *Courier-Mail* while I have the opportunity, I can assure all of the industry and indeed Queenslanders that our government is working extremely closely with the White Horse group to see the Lindeman Island development go ahead. In fact, you would have seen that the

Lindeman proposal, as highlighted in today's paper, includes ecotourism opportunities. This is a direct consequence of the discussions that the environment minister had about how we can showcase the national park there in a sustainable way. I want to thank White Horse and Lindeman Island for listening to that and working collaboratively. I will say, though, that the key challenge will be the federal government approvals in the sense that they want to build a marina in the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park. The state government does not have that jurisdiction—that falls within federal government jurisdiction under GBRMPA—but I am sure that the federal minister for tourism, Steven Ciobo, whom I know well, would be doing everything he can to see that. I am sure that if questions were put to him he would provide that answer because I know that he is a big advocate for tourism as well.

I want to take this opportunity to assure everyone that we are absolutely committed to working with White Horse. As I have said, I have met with them multiple times. We believe that seeing a rejuvenated Lindeman Island is a great outcome for Queensland and we will be doing everything in our power at a state government level to deliver that.

CHAIR: I now call the member for Beaudesert for the next series of questions.

Mr KRAUSE: Director-General, which country is the source of our largest number of inbound tourists?

Ms JONES: I already answered that. It is China.

CHAIR: Minister, the question has been directed to the director-general.

Ms JONES: I answered in my opening comments.

Mr Walker: China.

Mr KRAUSE: Is that a statistic that is new? It was my understanding that the highest number of overseas arrivals to Queensland in the past had been from New Zealand.

Ms JONES: That is so exciting. This is what we are delivering. I am so proud of this. You are right. Traditionally it has always been New Zealand, but this year for the first time it is China.

Mr KRAUSE: Is that a statistic that has come out from 30 June 2017?

Ms JONES: I have been talking about this in the parliament for two years.

Mr KRAUSE: The numbers I was able access for the year ended 30 June 2016 clearly demonstrated the biggest number of overseas arrivals into Queensland was from New Zealand. If that situation has changed in the last 12 months that is obviously a significant outcome. However, be that as it may—and I am happy to table that if members would agree to that—New Zealand is clearly still a major source of tourists for Queensland

Ms JONES: Absolutely.

Mr KRAUSE: Why is there no reference to New Zealand in the *Advancing Tourism Strategy 2016-2020*?

CHAIR: Before you answer that question, the question is that this be tabled. Leave is granted.

Ms JONES: In my earlier comment I talked about the new deal that I have announced today with Flight Centre, that \$6 billion partnership. I clearly talked about New Zealand being a key part of that marketing strategy. I talked about New Zealand three times in that answer. In regard to the question you asked, I have also been on the public record—maybe you do not listen to me when I am in the parliament, but when I am talking in parliament I have been talking—

Mr KRAUSE: I will listen.

Ms JONES: I have talked a lot about how, for the first time ever, the highest number of international visitors coming to Queensland is now from China and not New Zealand. I see the member for Maryborough nodding. He listens to me. We are not walking away from our traditional markets. We know that we need to continue to invest—and through our marketing spend we continue to invest in key traditional markets such as New Zealand, the US and England—as well as understand the unique opportunity that we have.

You also spoke today about the importance of having those direct flights from China. The reason that is important is that we think Cairns is in a unique position as it is an eight-hour flight between Cairns and Guangzhou. Not many other places can say, 'You can have a direct eight-hour flight to our country,' from a population as large as that of Guangzhou.

I know that the former Chinese consul general to Queensland was very proud of the fact that Queensland has worked really hard to grow the Chinese market. We are not doing that at the expense of other markets; we are doing it on top of. For example, that is why I got a new allocation in the budget

for the Connecting with Asia Fund of \$33.5 million. That is additional funding. I have talked about the AAIF funding, which still goes to all the traditional markets. The Connecting with Asia Fund is new money to capitalise on the new growth.

Chinese tourist numbers are growing faster than those in any other country in the world. More Chinese people have a passport than ever before. That will continue to grow over the next decade. I know that you know well the Chair of Tourism Events Queensland, Bob East. As he has said, it is the size of the prize. I wanted Queensland to be up-front and out front, grabbing that Chinese market. We are doing that, but certainly not at the expense of traditional markets. And they spend more.

Mr KRAUSE: How come it did not make it into the *Advancing Tourism 2016-20* document, Minister?

Ms JONES: I think the key is how much money we allocate and we continue to allocate money there. I am talking about the future. I believe a big difference between conservative governments and Labor governments is that we are very much future focused. As I said, the fastest growing tourism market in the world is China. I want us to be there. More than that, as I have just alluded to, we also know that Chinese travellers spend more money than any other tourists when they come into market. We know that the Chinese travellers I have been talking about spent more than \$1 billion last year alone in the Queensland economy. For the Gold Coast members who are here, the Gold Coast has had huge dividends from the increase in Chinese visitors.

I certainly want everyone to be of the understanding that we will continue to support existing markets. In actual fact, if you look at the growth figures, we have seen consistent growth in all international visitor numbers across the board. I am unabashed about saying that, where there will be the hugest potential for growth, I want Queensland to be in there, front and centre, and front of mind. The member for Broadwater would know that, in a recent survey, the Chinese said that the Gold Coast is the No. 1 destination that they want to visit. How do I turn that into reality? I spend money there, on marketing and flights.

Mr KRAUSE: Minister, this is at a time of record international tourism numbers visiting Australia. Everyone acknowledges that international visitor numbers are very high. However, in terms of Queensland's slice of the market, we continue to fall behind New South Wales and Victoria in picking up those international visitors. You talk about the future and grabbing those Chinese tourists and, of course, that is a good thing. However, we do not agree that we need to focus on the intrastate market—

CHAIR: Member for Beaudesert, do you have a question?

Mr KRAUSE: I do. Again, I ask: why does New Zealand not feature in this document, when we are falling behind in international visitor numbers compared to the rest of the country?

Ms JONES: I believe that our relationship with New Zealand, as you rightly pointed out, is strong. It is a strong market that we have had for years and years. In actual fact, everyone knows that New Zealanders travel to Queensland and we continue to fund and develop that market. There has been no withdrawal of funding for the New Zealand market and we continue to see growth in that area.

However, I want to address one key point in regards to market share and the slice of the pie. Queensland tourism is growing faster than that of New South Wales and Victoria. The latest comprehensive analysis of the state of the visitor economy in the State Tourism Satellite Accounts, which were released on 28 June this year, shows that we are now growing at a faster rate than those two states. You are absolutely right: when there was no funding guarantee under the previous government, we did start losing market share. I have spoken about that at length in the parliament and at estimates. My job is about growing market share and we are starting to see the green shoots of our investment delivering, as we are now growing faster than those other two states.

In actual fact, we have seen the tourism industry grow from 2015, when it was worth \$23 billion to the Queensland economy, to now being worth \$25 billion to the Queensland economy. That is supporting more than 225,000 jobs, which is an increase of 12,000 jobs in the tourism sector under our watch. Our record shows we are delivering real jobs growth for Queensland, with 12,000 more jobs in the tourism industry. As I said, when the LNP was last in government the tourism industry was worth around \$23 billion; it is now worth \$25 billion to the Queensland economy. The rate of growth in Queensland is now faster than in New South Wales and Victoria. I am very proud of that.

We are also supporting direct Qantas flights to New Zealand, on the Christchurch to Brisbane route, through AAIF. We saw an increase in flights to New Zealand through our AAIF funding, as well.

Mr KRAUSE: I refer to page 33 of the SDS in relation to the Connecting with Asia Strategy. I note the aspirational goal of making Queensland the leading Australian destination in market share, reputation and experience delivery for Asian travellers. I ask the director-general: how is this aspiration being measured?

Ms JONES: Seats.

CHAIR: Minister, that question is asked of the director-general.

Mr Walker: You will notice in the SDS we have a number of detailed measures around the performance of the department. Given that aspiration, it is a broad one. The minister touched on the fact that we are certainly seeing growth here in Queensland. Notwithstanding our detailed SDS targets and measures, the—

Ms JONES: Read them in.

Mr Walker: Maybe I will do that. The broader detail that the minister touched on about success with regard to our visitations is certainly one of those. In terms of the two specifics found on page 5 of the SDS, we have additional seats by targeted airlines on routes supported by the Attracting Aviation Investment Fund. In 2016-17, we had a target of 220,000 additional seats. In 2016-17, our actual was, indeed, 436,000 additional seats. The second target that speaks to your question is growing international overnight visitor expenditure in Queensland supported by the Advance Queensland: Connecting with Asia Fund. This is a new measure, so we are looking forward to next year and the years beyond as to how that is tracking. We have a target in 2017-18 at \$40 million.

I might take this opportunity to touch on your earlier question regarding AAIF. In particular, I refer to question on notice No. 19 and section C to the answer. This related to the AAIF boost of \$10 million over four years. In terms of the question you asked, \$4.45 million is currently committed and \$5.55 million is uncommitted.

Mr KRAUSE: Thank you, Mr Walker. Minister, according to TEQ market snapshots to the year ended March 2017, Chinese tourism expenditure in Queensland has reduced; Hong Kong and Malaysian visitor numbers have reduced; Indian and Singaporean visitor numbers, visitor nights and expenditure have reduced; and Indonesian, Thai and Korean visitor nights have reduced. Would you call that a successful implementation of the Connecting with Asia Strategy?

Ms JONES: You know for a fact that with the Connecting with Asia Strategy the flights come on board in December. How can data from last year reflect flights that come on board in December 2017?

Mr KRAUSE: In fact, Minister, the Advancing Queensland: Connecting with Asia Strategy was announced by you in the 2016-17 budget.

Ms JONES: I am sorry. I was on the other one, because we have been talking about that all morning. I am happy for Leanne to answer this, too. As you said, we saw a small dip in that snapshot of minus 1.2 per cent, year on year for that quarter, but that was reflective of the time frames. As you know, the data is from March to March, December to December, September to September. That is reflective of when Chinese travellers visit. You know as well as I that we see a spike in Chinese visitors in different parts of the year, when they get holidays. They do not get holidays like we get here in Australia. They get much fewer holidays than Australians get. When you compare a March-to-March 12 months with a June-to-June 12 months or a September-to-September 12 months, you will see a small variation. In this case, you are talking about one per cent.

Overall, we have seen significant growth in Chinese visitors choosing to come to Queensland in the past three years. As I said, in the past 12 months alone we have seen a \$1 billion increase in expenditure by Chinese visitors into Queensland. Leanne, did you want to say anything, given that it is your data that he is referring to?

Ms Coddington: As we were discussing earlier, Chinese New Year was a very difficult time for us in regard to flights.

Mr KRAUSE: Yes, particularly in Cairns.

Ms Coddington: It was a phenomenon that hit Australia, as well—

Ms JONES: And the world.

Ms Coddington: Yes. We saw that Europe became very competitive, given the situation that Europe had been in previously. They were very competitive from a pricing point. A lot of the Chinese visitation, we have been told, went in that direction in the Chinese New Year.

Ms JONES: In really good news for you, in that same time New Zealand visitor expenditure increased by 7.5 per cent to a record \$6 million, so the extra New Zealanders coming were spending more money than ever before. From New Zealand, visitor numbers increased by 6.6 per cent to a record high of 454,000. The same statistics that you are talking about clearly identify that any concerns you have about New Zealand are unfounded and we have really good data.

Mr KRAUSE: I was talking about the Connecting with Asia Strategy—

Ms JONES: I am looking after your cousins in New Zealand very well. At the same time, with Taiwan, which is in the Asian market, we saw visitor spending increase to \$233 million, which is up by \$18.5 million. There is no denying the impact of the Shanghai airport decision not to have those direct flights. As I have said here today and I have said repeatedly on the public record, they make decisions about that around the world. I think Canada was another country that was affected by the decisions at the airport. It had an impact here and I am not denying that. However, can we influence the Shanghai airport on which flights they say yes or no to? We cannot. I am advised that that was an operational decision of the airport that affected the global market. What I can do is get more money in the budget so that we can negotiate new flights. I have done that. The first direct flights into Cairns were a consequence of a Labor government providing \$32 million through the Connecting with Asia Fund.

Mr SORENSEN: Minister, I refer to page 33 of the SDS and attracting visitors to Queensland. Have you received representation from the environment minister about the issues raised by frustrated ecotourism operators on Fraser Island who are fed up with the two years of bureaucracy and run around, and endless green and red tape?

Ms JONES: I regularly meet with the environment minister in regards to ecotourism. When I was the environment minister, I regularly met with the tourism minister. As you will recall, I was the first ever environment minister to say that we needed to open up our national parks to ecotourism development. At the time that I made that decision as the environment minister, as you will recall, because we used to talk a lot about dingoes in those days, it was something that both sides of politics support. I am very pleased that we are the first government ever—despite the LNP talking about it when in government—to approve new tourism product in national parks. Labor has done that with the Spicer's Scenic Rim guided walk, which is also owned by the Turners, as well as Greenmount campground and Lamington National Park. Getting to your question, I have had discussions with the environment minister about Fraser Island and better opportunities there. I am happy to have a discussion with you about anything I can do in terms of more advocacy in that regard.

Mr SORENSEN: This has been going on for two years. It has to come to an end, sooner or later.

Ms JONES: Ted, I am happy to sit down with you and have a discussion about how I can work with them. As you know, I appointed the owner of Kingfisher Bay Resort, which is the premium tourism have a lot of respect. I think he is doing a great job on the Tourism Events Queensland board.

CHAIR: I refer to page 3 of the SDS and the Palaszczuk government's commitment to supporting recovery for areas impacted by Tropical Cyclone Debbie. Minister, can you update the committee, in about one and a half minutes, on the government's support for the tourism industry in the Whitsundays?

Ms JONES: As the honourable member rightly pointed out, we saw large parts of Queensland affected by cyclone Debbie. In particular, the Whitsundays and that part of the world caught the brunt of cyclone Debbie. Immediately after cyclone Debbie, I had the opportunity to go with the Premier to see the recovery efforts, along with the mayor of the Whitsundays and the CEO of Tourism Whitsundays, Craig Turner. We were there with the federal tourism minister, Steven Ciobo. Together we delivered a \$10 million tourism recovery package. I acknowledge and thank the federal government for coming to the party in regards to funding. That is what industry asked for. Through my conversations with Craig Turner, with whom I have a good working relationship, and Mayor Andy Willcox, also with whom I have a good working relationship, they both said that getting that immediate support was critical.

I also want to acknowledge Flight Centre, which is one of our partners that we have been talking about today. One of our other projects was a new deal with Flight Centre, which gave a lot of in-kind support because they recognised that getting the tourism industry back on its feet was really critical. For the record, my family and I holidayed there during those school holidays. I went to the Whitsundays in the immediate aftermath of cyclone Debbie. I think it was two weeks after. I saw firsthand the great work happening, for example, in that region to get tourism product back on the market. It was a weekend, by the way. I left on Friday.

The package of \$10 million includes \$2 million for domestic marketing, \$1 million for median trade investment and \$7 million for tourism infrastructure recovery. The \$7 million will go towards creating new tourism experiences for the region and the tourism recovery fund working group, which has been set up to identify those top priority projects. Of course, we have been failed in the infrastructure that we need from the federal government, but that is another story.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio areas of Tourism and Major Events has expired. There are no questions on notice, as they have all been answered.

Mr KRAUSE: There was a question from the Leader of the Opposition.

Ms JONES: I answered that, about the breakdown of region versus south-east Queensland.

Mr KRAUSE: My apologies.

CHAIR: Thank you for that clarification. I thank the minister and department officials for their attendance. We will now break until 1 pm, when we will resume to examine the estimates for Education, including the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

Proceedings suspended from 12.15 to 1.00 pm



CHAIR: Welcome back, Minister. Welcome Dr Jim Watterston, Director-General of the Department of Education and Training, and departmental officers. The committee will consider the estimates for Education, including the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority, until 4.45 this afternoon. The committee will suspend proceedings for a break from 3.30 to 3.45 pm.

The visiting members present this afternoon are: Ms Tracy Davis MP, the member for Aspley and shadow minister for education; and Mr Steve Dickson MP, the member for Buderim. I remind those present that these proceedings are proceedings of the parliament and as such are subject to the standing rules and orders of this parliament. It is important that questions and answers remain relevant and succinct. The same rules for questions that apply in parliament also apply here during this hearing. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue and should not contain lengthy or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio area of Education open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, you may make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

Miss BARTON: Point of order, Mr Chair. I again move that this committee compel the State Archivist to come before this committee and be added to the witness list so that when the committee considers the estimates for Minister Enoch's portfolio later he can be asked questions by this committee.

CHAIR: We have made that decision. There is no point of order.

Miss BARTON: Mr Chair, you have said that you would be transparent and accountable.

CHAIR: You are reflecting on the chair. We have made that decision. It is not open for public debate and it will not be.

Miss BARTON: Stop running a protection racket for Minister Bailey—

Ms JONES: No-one ran a protection racket for you.

Mr SAUNDERS: Mr Chair, we have to move on.

CHAIR: We will.

Miss BARTON: No, Mr Chair—

CHAIR: There is no point of order and I have made that decision.

Miss BARTON: Perhaps the committee can leave so that we can consider the motion that I am trying to put before this committee which is that we allow the State Archivist to come before this committee.

Mr SAUNDERS: Point of order, Mr Chair. We voted on this. This is the Education portfolio. Let us move on with this portfolio. The minister is a very good minister. I want to talk to the minister for my constituents.

Miss BARTON: This whole process is a farce if we are not being accountable. The whole point of estimates is to be transparent and accountable and this government is running a protection racket.

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, the decision has been made. You may not agree with it.

Miss BARTON: Disgraceful.

CHAIR: Minister, I invite you make your opening statement with regard to the Education portfolio.

Mr SAUNDERS: Leave if you do not like it.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Maryborough.

Ms JONES: Given that there was such a political opening to this, I should say that I think it is a disgrace that the LNP preselected against their own sitting member—particularly a woman.

Thank you for the opportunity to talk about education. We are delivering another record investment in education because we want to continue to improve education outcomes for all children in Queensland, no matter where they live. We want to support our hardworking teachers and the great work that they do in our more than 1,000 state schools across Queensland. In this year's budget there is a record \$9.8 billion investment to fund the best quality education we can provide. We want to provide an inclusive environment for all school students. This includes record funding for students with a disability, more teachers in our classrooms, better school facilities and more classrooms where and when we need them.

We know that the former LNP government closed and sold off schools. We also know that they cut 500 teachers from our classrooms. A Labor government will always prioritise education because we know that it has the power to change lives. It also has the power to create new opportunities for people to improve their circumstances.

We have listened to our school principals, our teachers and the hardworking staff in all of our schools, including business service managers and our other school staff. We have listened and we have done what they have asked—that is, employ more teachers in our classrooms. Since we were elected we have employed more than 3,400 teachers. This includes our election commitment to employ 875 teachers above growth.

We are also building new schools to meet the growth we are seeing around the state, including in the honourable chair's backyard of Townsville. This includes the first new high schools to be built in the inner city in more than half a century. We will build a new high school in South Brisbane and a new high school on the former Fortitude Valley school site. We are also building new schools in Townsville, the Sunshine Coast, the Gold Coast and Logan. It is all part of our record \$765 million investment in infrastructure which underpins the capital works and maintenance needed to make every school a great school.

Our students are doing better than ever before in the classroom. Queensland is the only state that is continuing to improve in NAPLAN year in and year out. In fact, we are increasingly seeing more representatives from other jurisdictions come to visit to see the great work that is happening in Queensland classrooms, including the deputy director-general of the New South Wales Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Our 2016 NAPLAN results were the best ever, with our year 3s leading the way. They were first in grammar and punctuation and second in numeracy. Of course, NAPLAN is not the be-all and end-all, but it does provide us with information that we can use to better target our resources where they are needed most. This is what principals are telling me and that is exactly what we are doing.

We are also lifting the outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, boosting enrolments at kindy and boosting the number of students who successfully complete year 12. We are investing more than \$1 billion to support students with a disability. We are driving a new focus—as we saw during the lunch break—in science, technology, engineering and mathematics, including coding and robotics. This is about ensuring our young people have the skills they need for the jobs of the future.

A big part of our STEM strategy is an \$81 million investment over four years to employ STEM specialists in primary schools throughout the state. As we announced during the lunch break, we are taking STEM learning experiences to rural and regional Queensland through our Create Queensland regional roadshow. You saw the beautiful smiles on the faces of the students out on the lawn today when I asked them what they had learned and they said, 'A lot.'

Finally and most importantly, I want to acknowledge our 60,000 hardworking teachers and teacher aides who work so hard each and every day in our state schools to provide opportunities and learning for all our students. We really cannot thank them enough for their passion and dedication in inspiring young Queenslanders, the leaders of the future.

CHAIR: I call the member for Aspley.

Ms DAVIS: My first set of questions is to the minister. Minister, I refer to pre-estimates question on notice No. 6 around drug and weapon related incidents in Queensland state schools. The numbers that you provided in your response show us that since January 2015 there were 5,796 drug related incidents reported, including legal substances such as tobacco. What I am very interested in is how many of the 5,796 involved illicit substances.

Ms JONES: I can get that information for you. We work very closely with our schools to ensure that students make healthy lifestyle choices. Through the Health and PE curriculum and the life skills programs that we provide in schools students are taught to say no to substances such as tobacco and illegal substances. Every school has a behaviour management plan. They are implemented with the extra support we have provided in our regional offices through our new behaviour management coaches. They are now in every region.

We are not only addressing inappropriate behaviour in our schools but also working with our success coaches to support those students who have made poor decisions. We know at high school age that we do see some students make the wrong decisions. I want to work with those children so they get onto a better learning journey.

I am very proud—and we will talk about this today—that we have had 4,000 students re-engage in learning in the secondary phase of learning that otherwise would have disengaged. We are taking a holistic approach. We are not only supporting our principals to take tough action with regard to students' disciplinary absences but also supporting students to get back on the right track and finish year 12 and have the best chance at life.

CHAIR: Minister, I just want to clarify that you said you would come back with those figures.

Ms JONES: I think the question was how many related to a particular category so I am happy to get that.

CHAIR: So you are happy to get that and come back to us later?

Ms DAVIS: Will that be today?

Ms JONES: I am just trying to see whether I can find that out. I now have it. The figure for conduct involving illicit substances was around 3,000 over three years. That was 2014 and 2015, when you were in government, and 2016. In 2014 it was 996, in 2015 it was 970 and in 2016 it was 1,110. The school population has grown by approximately 30,000 since 2014. When you consider there are 30,000 more students in the state schooling system than in 2014 the figure has remained fairly stable from when you were in government. Exclusions of students in the senior phase have decreased by 12 per cent and cancellations of enrolments—

Ms DAVIS: I am specifically asking about illicit substances and students involved in taking those, particularly about that happening on school campuses. What I am also very interested in is whether the types of illicit drug incidents—the numbers of which you have just provided me—are identified in any data collection from the department. With the terrible scourge of ice that is pervading our community, I am very interested to know whether that has started to infiltrate our schoolyards. Minister, are you or the director-general able to provide me with some figures around that?

Ms JONES: I think it is held at a school level but we collect the data around illicit substances centrally. We know that tobacco is the biggest killer of people who are taking a legal substance. We are working with all schoolchildren across Queensland in all sectors, I am sure, to encourage them to make better choices about any substance abuse.

Ms DAVIS: Of the figures of children who are identified as using illicit drugs on school campuses, do any of those figures relate to primary school students?

Ms JONES: We can search that out. Clearly, we have a whole-of-government approach to ice, which I know you are aware of from comments you have made in parliament in relation to family breakdown. We know that ice is leading to a lot of kids having really tough lives at home.

We have provided boosts in our budgets each and every year to provide additional support for students, including our election commitment in relation to guidance officers, for example. We are providing support through our guidance officer program, our school chaplaincy program, our behaviour coach management and our success coach management. Whilst we have seen illicit substance use remain stable, I think it is important to reflect that we know that for students who come from homes where there are more complex needs, such as the issues you have highlighted, we have seen a decrease of 19.5 per cent in the cancellation of enrolments of students. That means that those kids are staying at school. We are working with them and getting them back—

Ms DAVIS: You might be able to talk about that later. We are really focused on something that I think is a terrible scourge on the community—that is, the prevalence of illicit drugs. You have provided me with some figures. Even though you talk about them being stable, the fact of the matter is that there are children who are currently attending Queensland state schools who are either taking drugs or bringing drugs to school, which is wholly inappropriate.

CHAIR: Member for Aspley, do you have a question?

Ms DAVIS: I do. The minister has just spoken about the ice strategy and what is being done in the community. What has come of that is that there is an ice corridor that has been identified. Can you please advise whether you are working even more strongly with schools that track along that corridor to ensure that those students who are more vulnerable to taking illicit drugs are being supported?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I certainly agree with the honourable member. The Premier has been on the public record talking about the fact that we needed to be more open about having the conversation about how we address the ice scourge in Queensland. It is our Premier, the Premier of Queensland today, who has started that conversation. She has held round tables across regional Queensland including in those corridor areas.

Ms DAVIS: Are you tracking the schools, Minister?

CHAIR: Member for Aspley, you have asked—

Ms DAVIS: I am not—

Ms JONES: I am giving a holistic—

Ms DAVIS: All I want to know is: are you tracking the schools?

CHAIR: Order! Member for Aspley, you have asked the question. The minister is now responding to your question.

Ms JONES: In order to address any concerns about school-age students getting access to ice, it is also about stopping the production of ice, the import of ice and the use of ice in homes. No parent wants their child to use illicit substances anywhere at any time. We are working with families as well as schools. I reject your assertion that there has been a massive increase; there has not. As I said, when you were in government it was at 970; now it is at 1,100. We have had a 30,000 increase, I believe, in student numbers since 2015 in our state schooling sector. Despite having a massive increase in students, we have actually seen this issue stabilise.

I want to acknowledge and thank the hard work of our principals, our guidance officers, our school chaplains, our behaviour management coaches and our deputy principals, who are often in charge of doing a lot of the disciplinary work and implementing those disciplinary action plans that I talked about. Those behaviour management plans are at every state school. We are working harder than ever to deliver long-term education outcomes. We do not see that a child coming to school and making the wrong decision should be the end of their schooling. It is our job as a community and as a society to re-engage those students in learning.

I actually want principals to demonstrate to me that they did not just kick the child out but that they worked with that child and that family to get them back into learning. That is why I will continue to talk about the fact that we have seen a decrease of almost 20 per cent in students who have had their enrolments cancelled. I think we are doing a great job. My focus as a minister—and I said this at my first estimates—is about how we get those at-risk and vulnerable children back into learning so they complete year 12. That is how I judge myself. I am very pleased to say that I can sit here today at my third estimates and say we have delivered a significant decrease in that regard.

I have the data on primary school children. There were 23 in 2014, 24 in 2015 and 34 in 2016. How many extra students do we have in the primary school sector, Jeff, in 2016 compared to 2015? To be really clear, we have not seen a net increase. There have been 20,000 additional students in primary school but only 10 more incidents of which the member is talking about. In actual fact, on a per student rate basis we are continuing to see a decline in students coming to school with illicit substances. Members of the committee will be very pleased to hear that we are seeing on a per student rate basis a decline in students presenting with these issues.

Ms DAVIS: My next question is to the director-general because it is a process question. When a student is identified as using drugs or bringing drugs to school, whether that is identification by a teacher or a student or whoever it is—

Ms JONES: Or a parent hopefully.

Ms DAVIS: My question is to the director-general, Chair, if I could continue to ask my question. Are the police called on those occasions?

Dr Watterston: I thank the honourable member for the question. I also share your concern about illicit drug usage at any age. We have drug and alcohol programs in all schools. These are case-by-case basis responses. There are guidance officers. In secondary schools there are school based police officers. Depending on the nature of the offence or reporting of the offence, the response is appropriate. I cannot tell you that in every case the police are called. Anecdotally I can tell you of some examples where a child has brought to school a tin that has contained a small amount of nicotine or cigarettes and was obviously not using, so you would not call the police under those circumstances.

Ms DAVIS: No. I am referring specifically to illicit drugs.

Dr Watterston: Okay. Where that happens, it is an appropriate response. As the minister said, we trust our principals. We work very closely with them to empower them to be able to make decisions that will be proactive to ensure that not just that the child recognises that the behaviour is inappropriate but there is a strength based approach to improving the aspects of their life that created that situation. There is not a blanket answer is the short answer. Yes, in some cases the police are called. Certainly the response can range from being a caution right through to further action.

Ms DAVIS: What would be something that would be cautioned? If a child came to school with an illicit drug, why would they receive just a caution? What would that be?

Dr Watterston: As I said before, every circumstance is different. I am aware of a child holding a container for another student and that container was then found to have drugs and it was investigated. There are a lot of different circumstances.

Ms DAVIS: Would the child holding the container appear in this number?

Dr Watterston: If it were recognised as a school disciplinary matter then they would appear. That is for sure. We do not take any of it lightly. Let me reinforce that point. The most appropriate response is one that is supported by the school and utilised in a way to make sure that the end result is that the child remediates their behaviour. It can be a number of different ways.

Ms DAVIS: In the figure that was provided, would that include students who are dealing drugs at school or would that be a separate cohort?

Dr Watterston: Again, 'dealing drugs' makes it sound like there is some kind of cartel involved in a school.

Ms DAVIS: No. I am not suggesting that. There are children who are dealing drugs in schools. I am asking whether they appear in that figure.

Ms JONES: You are not asking about learning outcomes.

Dr Watterston: Some students come to school and they are in possession of drugs. They have them there to show off. There is a whole range of different reasons why. I cannot answer your question, to be honest. Dealing drugs is possibly something that could happen. As I said to you before, each case is a separate issue and we deal with it as appropriate.

Ms DAVIS: Just to clarify, you are unsure in the figure that was provided whether that includes instances of dealing drugs. That might be a different data set.

Dr Watterston: Just to clarify, I am not unsure at all. What I am saying to you is that there is no explicit category that says dealing drugs because there is a broad continuum of some of the reasons and issues involved in students bringing those drugs to school.

Ms JONES: Children get in possession of drugs in all manner of places including their parents, their family or people in the neighbourhood.

Ms DAVIS: I am not talking about—

Ms JONES: I know you are not.

Ms DAVIS: You are not the 'minister for parents at home'; you are the Minister for Education and I am specifically asking—

Ms JONES: I do not think any parent wants their child to use illicit drugs.

Ms DAVIS: I did not ask you the question, Minister; I asked the director-general.

Ms JONES: What I am saying—

CHAIR: Order!

Ms JONES: I want to get to the point. I want these kids to finish school.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Aspley, please finish your question to the director-general.

Ms DAVIS: Director-General, I take from this that the department does not collect data for particular drug offences, whether that is possession or using and/or dealing in schools. Is that what I am to take from that answer?

Dr Watterston: We collect data on the categories. Let me say very clearly that there is holistic data. We have a very clear picture of each individual situation. We deal with those situations on a case-by-case basis. We are completely aware. We know the names of these children.

Ms DAVIS: You only know the ones who have been caught, Director-General.

Dr Watterston: In terms of the numbers that we talked about today, we know the names of all of those people. Many of those case histories come across my desk and certainly come across the desk of other officers in this room. We make sure that the approach is responsible and one that fits with the offence. We do have the data. We have very explicit, clear data.

Ms JONES: We provide it to you.

Dr Watterston: We make sure that every young person gets the best response that they require to be able to move forward—

Ms JONES: Finish school.

Dr Watterston:—and be on that pathway to give them a successful life. I am not trying to equivocate the answer. What I am trying to demonstrate is that we deal with these situations individually because that is the response they require. Just dealing with a category and finding a summary offence does not work.

CHAIR: I call the member for Maryborough.

Ms JONES: Let's start talking about learning.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, I will. Page 7 of the SDS notes the Palaszczuk government's commitment to yet another record year of capital investment in education. Minister, how does this commitment to new and improved facilities in Queensland schools translate to jobs for Queenslanders?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for his question. As I said in my opening statement, I am very proud to be a part of a government that has delivered record investment in infrastructure, particularly with regard to our schools. In fact, we have seen a more than \$200 million increase in the investment in infrastructure since we were elected. We have seen a 22 per cent on last year's investment of \$475 million and that will support more than 3,000 jobs across Queensland.

As we continue to see growth in our state schools, we are focused on providing additional accommodation at existing campuses, as well as delivering the new schools where they are required. For example, there is \$14.3 million for stage 3 of the Mackay Northern Beaches State High School and additional classrooms at Eimeo Road State School in the electorate of Whitsunday. I had the opportunity of visiting with Principal Catherine Rolfe a couple of months ago and was so impressed by the energy and drive of the school leadership and the student body.

We have delivered \$11.6 million, which is 57 jobs, to deliver stage 3 of the Highfields State Secondary College in the electorate of Toowoomba North; \$9.5 million to build new classrooms at Currimundi Special School in the electorate of Caloundra; and \$5 million to provide additional classrooms at Meridan State College, which is a great school, in the electorate of Kawana. I have been there too. They do a fantastic job. It was great to visit that school earlier this year where all the focus was on teaching and learning and how we can engage students to stay at school and complete school so they have the best learning outcomes in their life and we give them the best possible start in life. Our focus in everything we do is about how we can improve teaching and learning and how we can provide the infrastructure and the support that students need to be successful in life. As a parent and as the Minister for Education, I will not sit here and talk down schools. I will talk about the great work that we are doing every day to re-engage students in learning.

The data that I concentrate on and the data that I look at is, even when students do the wrong thing, what is it that I can do through the extra support that we provide as a government to get them to finish school, to do well at school and to be successful at school? I think that every single Queenslanders who is watching this now—and I hope that a lot of teachers are able to see this estimates hearing today, because they will get a real taste of the difference in approaches by governments—our government will always be focused on providing the additional support that teachers and principals ask for. That is why,

for example, since I have been the minister we have implemented positive behaviour coaches. We have been talking a lot about how we can turn these kids' lives around, the ones who are vulnerable. I am very proud to say that we have already re-engaged 4,000 students who were deemed to be at risk. We have success coaches, autism coaches and mental health coaches. All of these roles, in addition to the wonderful infrastructure spend that we are doing, are providing a better learning outcome for all students so they can be successful at school.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, on page 7 of the SDS and in more detail in Budget Paper No. 3, there is an unprecedented \$200 million commitment to building new school halls, upgrading existing halls and expanding the education land bank for new schools. Minister, can you update the committee on this commitment please?

Ms JONES: The Advancing Queensland State Schools program, I am very proud to say, will deliver an additional \$200 million and will support almost 1,000 jobs. It includes 30 new and upgraded halls, capital renewal at 24 schools, 10 upgrades to special education units and upgrades to nine administration buildings which I know the honourable member for Townsville would support because often this is the sort of project that is always put last on the list because we normally talk about providing a better workplace for our teachers and principals. I am very pleased that when you get a new injection of funding from CBRC, unlike the way that the previous government funded their PPPs—as I said previously at estimates, we had John-Paul Langbroek, the then education minister, write to the now Leader of the Opposition saying, 'Please don't take this funding for the PPPs out of our existing capital works budget because that puts additional constraint on our ability to deliver new infrastructure in our schools.' Did Tim Nicholls listen to that advice from his education minister? No. He did not listen to it. As a consequence, those PPP payments have had to come out of the bottom line of our capital works budget.

I am very pleased to say that the programs I am talking about have come as a consequence of me going to CBRC and getting new, additional funding into our budget so I can deliver real growth in capital works spending including projects that I know all sides of parliament have endorsed. For example, the LNP member for Cleveland, Mark Robinson, went so far as to say—

I was recently delighted to deliver the Cleveland State High School \$6 million funding to construct their long-awaited indoor sports auditorium.

I do not know when he became the minister for education, but it is always good to have third-party endorsements like that, particularly from the other side. The member for Albert, who is here today, posted—

Pimpama State School Principal Marius Marx new administration building was a much needed addition to the school.

I thank you for your support on behalf of the hardworking principal and staff at your school. It is wonderful to see you standing up for them in that regard. The LNP member for Toowoomba North, Trevor Watts, said—Following years of pushing for the construction of an indoor arts and sports facility for Wilsonton State High School, I have delivered the new facility ...

Well, congratulations to Trevor Watts! I think he promised it when he was elected but did not deliver it in the three years they were in government. If he feels that he can claim credit for me delivering it in my CBRC submission, all the merrier I say because at the end of the day this infrastructure provides a better learning environment for our students.

I will at all times talk up the great work that is happening in our state schools. We have had the New South Wales government come to see firsthand the great achievements that we are seeing because we are the only state, as I said in my opening remarks, that continues to see improvement in the national data. I want to acknowledge the director-general for the great leadership that he has provided, along with our team, to provide that support in schools so that we can deliver excellence in learning. The member for Nanango welcomed it, too, in Kingaroy.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, further to the previous answer, can you give the committee an update on the status of the program with respect to the jobs impact for Queensland?

Ms JONES: I think that is a very good question. When we make decisions about capital infrastructure as a government we look not only at the impact of that infrastructure investment but also at how it can support jobs, particularly jobs in rural and regional Queensland. That is exactly what the Advancing Queensland State Schools program does. It supports up to 1,000 jobs across Queensland.

Already 15 design firms have been engaged and, where possible, construction and design works have been done locally. I know this is something that the deputy director-general is very focused on. Of the 30 school halls funded, 27 projects have been tendered. Two projects will be tendered this week.

Twenty-four tenders have closed. Two projects have been awarded including Bounty Boulevard and Wilsonton. I recently had the privilege of being at Wilsonton State High School to turn the first sod, and that was a wonderful day. Sixteen projects are subject to recommendations in the next week, and there is one more project that is a combined investment. As I said, work has already begun on Bounty Boulevard State School and construction is underway at Wilsonton, where I had the privilege of turning a sod.

In addition, we are acquiring land for two new schools which I talked about in my opening remarks. Sixty additional state schools will benefit from a range of capital works programs including classrooms, administrative facilities, special education facilities, new shade structures and covered learning areas. More than \$4 million for security fences will be delivered, with four of these sites expected to be completed by the end of the year including a fence at Kruger State School in the electorate of Bundamba.

Mrs MILLER: Director-General, given the serious allegations of corruption in Ipswich concerning developers and the council development processes, how is it that the Fernbrooke State School was named after a real estate development called Fernbrooke Ridge, meaning that this development has gained a financial advantage of potentially millions of dollars in advertising and goodwill over its developer competitors in Ipswich? I would also like to know why no audit has been done of this process, given that anyone can jump online from anywhere and vote.

Dr Watterston: I thank the member for the question. I am not familiar with all the details—

Ms JONES: I am.

Dr Watterston:—but can I say that it is a local decision by the P&C. I am happy to get the minister to elaborate further on that.

Ms JONES: I can answer it because this has been raised with me previously—

Mrs MILLER: I raised it with you as a matter of potential corruption in Ipswich. Given that the former Ipswich mayor was a factional colleague of yours, I am wanting to know whether anyone knows whether there were any backhanders given to anyone in Ipswich as a result of this decision?

Ms JONES: From the department?

Mrs MILLER: Anywhere.

Ms JONES: No, and if you had any evidence or allegation of that I know that you know, as a former police minister, you would take that to the CCC, and I know that you would. To answer your question about the naming of the school, this was done by consultation. It was the normal process we use at every single new school that is opened which includes the P&C and the principal. I, as the minister—

Mrs MILLER: I am aware of that. You do not need to give me a lecture on that.

Ms JONES: I am not giving you a lecture.

Mrs MILLER: My issue is this: the naming of schools is open to an online vote and anybody anywhere—not only in that local community, not only in the P&C—can vote. Therefore, the naming of a school can be rigged.

Dr Watterston: In answer to your question to me, I am not aware of any elements of corruption in that process.

Mrs MILLER: Why has it not been audited?

Ms JONES: Because we are not aware of any allegations of corruption. I started working for the public works minister many years ago, as you well know, and I have never, ever heard of corruption in the naming of schools process.

Mrs MILLER: Maybe you should talk to some developers, because they are very concerned. The issue is that when a developer names a development and a school is named after that development they get an unfair advantage in terms of advertising and in terms of goodwill. In other words, it is wrong.

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for that. In terms of the consultation process, we understand that the naming of the school had the full support of the P&C—I have never had any allegations raised with me that the P&C is corrupt—and the principal. In fact, the name of the school had 98 per cent support in the consultation process. If the honourable member has any concerns about that process, I ask her to provide them to me.

Mrs MILLER: It needs to be audited as to who voted.

Ms JONES: That is the first time you have raised the audit with me, and I am happy to have a look at that, but I can assure you that at no stage will I as minister override the local principal and the P&C on the naming of the school. If the P&C—

Mrs MILLER: You did not even contact me in relation to the naming of this school. In fact, you could not wait to—

Ms JONES: I listened to the school community and you could have made a submission.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Bundamba, we are not going to debate this. You have asked your question. I believe the minister has answered the question—answered it several times. We will move on to the next question. Minister, page 7 of the SDS refers to the \$500 million Building Future Schools Fund to address enrolment growth pressures in state schools. Can you outline to the committee why this fund is necessary and how it will support public education in Queensland?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that in a number of meetings that the chair and I have had he has raised with me personally his concern about the growth that is happening in Townsville, particularly in the northern area of Townsville. We are seeing strong growth not only in inner-city Brisbane but also in new city suburbs and in regional centres such as Townsville, Gladstone, the northern Gold Coast and Brisbane south.

Over the last 10 years, in the 33 state schools and special schools within five kilometres of inner Brisbane we have seen approximate growth of 5,000 additional students in Brisbane. We have not had a new school built in the inner city of Brisbane since 1963. In addition to that, we now have in State High the largest high school in Brisbane—and in fact, the largest school in Australia. On the current trajectory we expect to see an additional 3,500 students requiring classrooms in inner-city Brisbane in the next five years. The key fundamental issue—and I think estimates is a good opportunity to flesh this out—is that we have also maximised a lot of the land at inner-city schools. Because no new school has been built in inner-city Brisbane since 1963, successive governments on all sides have been maximising the assets that we currently have. A lot of those schools are now at capacity when it comes to the ability to put additional infrastructure on those sites.

Our government is determined, given these real constraints, to build a new high school in the inner south in partnership with UQ and a new state high school in Fortitude Valley in partnership with QUT. This is in stark contrast to the former government, which pledged to sell off that site. We will also expand West End State School. We have seen significant growth. When I spoke with the principal of that school, I think she said that she had more than 130 students enrol. As an ex-principal, you can understand this pressure: imagine between day 8 and halfway through the year getting an extra 133 kids at your school. We are planning for new high schools in Mount Low in Townsville, Yarrabilba, North Lakes, Mango Hill and Calliope. This year we are building new schools at the Gold Coast, Sunshine Coast, Logan and Townsville. We will keep on building with that record investment.

Ms DAVIS: Minister, I refer to page 20 of the SDS which outlines the Advancing Queensland State Schools Program that you have just spoken about. Whilst I appreciate that many of the schools are very happy to be part of that program, there are certainly some concerns at other schools. Minister, you have stated in media releases that these projects were identified in consultation with school communities. Can you outline exactly what that consultation looked like and how recently that consultation was undertaken?

Ms JONES: As I said, I am very fortunate as the education minister that my Premier and my Treasurer listen to me. Unlike the previous education minister, who wrote to the now Leader of the Opposition saying they wanted additional capital dollars to deliver additional projects, I made those representations and was able to get that additional funding.

As I said, part of this program was not only to deliver infrastructure that has been overwhelmingly welcomed by local communities—and today I have read into *Hansard* members of the opposition who said that they delivered these projects—but also to create jobs. I am happy to get the deputy director-general who manages this project delivery to talk to that. From day one there was consultation about who had a project ready to go, whether we could get that project happening as soon as possible to create jobs, particularly in rural and remote Queensland, and the impact it would have at the school. Did you want to add anything to that, Jeffrey?

Mr Hunt: I thank the member for the question. This is an outstanding program for us from an infrastructure perspective. While I am speaking I would like to acknowledge my infrastructure services team that are delivering this outstanding program. The prioritisation process we go through is similar

to, or almost the same as, that which was enshrined when the LNP government were in power. We went through a review of the infrastructure investment program and made sure there was a prioritisation process in place to inform the investment of our capital funding.

That involved the network of regional infrastructure managers across the state working with individual schools to identify what are their key priority projects. Those projects are profiled into a program of work that is overseen by the infrastructure services branch with principals association representatives to inform the prioritisation process. That program then forms our investment strategy for the one-year, four-year and 10-year outlook that we go through.

To answer your question, the consultation is between the regional infrastructure manager and the local school principals to ensure that we are getting the investments right, and those investments are making a difference. Without this particular investment, these schools probably would have waited a very long time to have those investments put into place. School halls typically do not get prioritised at the top of the tree because we are dealing with growth and renewal issues in the main as a growing state. We are very proud to invest in those issues, but it is important that when there is new initiative funding available we use the same prioritisation process. I, as the chair of the infrastructure investment board and the infrastructure investment program, have oversight of the investments and where they go.

Ms DAVIS: Mr Hunt, did the local infrastructure managers that you referred to, which deal directly with the schools, go back, once these schools were identified as being part of this program, to determine that the plan or the school met the needs of the school presently? I assume that some of those school halls were looked at some years ago and there may be a change to the dynamic of the school—the number of enrolments, pressing need, things may need to change. My question is: was there some contemporary consultation done with the schools to ensure that what was going to be offered as part of this program was going to deliver what the school was after?

Mr Hunt: The short answer is yes. We took a provisional budgeting approach to the allocation of the funds to the prioritised projects. There was a project manager assigned to each of the projects and they consulted with each of the principals about the project brief. As the minister indicated, this was about driving investment and making sure that we were stimulating jobs and the economy and delivering an outstanding outcome for those schools. We went back and consulted with each of those schools around the project brief to ensure that we could deliver the project within the budget that we had allocated provisionally and negotiate with them around the full project scope and design. That has been rolling through and, as the minister indicated, those projects have largely gone to tender based on the consultation that we have had with those schools to make sure that the halls are fit for purpose and they are going to meet the needs of the school locally. We have had a number of consultations—I personally have had a couple of conversations with those principals to make sure that the little things that they would like added into those halls are also included. That might be as a result of a co-contribution effort from the school or from the program funding. We are going out to tender. We are getting good value for money. Any allocation of funding out of that program is available to enhance the project builds that we are doing.

Ms DAVIS: My next question is to the minister. I refer to the Kelvin Grove State College, which is amongst the schools that are identified in this program. Given that there was consultation done with the school, can you tell me whether there was any specific consultation done with the parents of students enrolled at the tennis excellence program given that this new building will wipe out half of their tennis courts and significantly impact on their program?

Ms JONES: Yes, there was. Jeff can go into details about that.

Mr Hunt: I have had personal conversations with the principal of Kelvin Grove State College and we have been discussing the impact on the tennis excellence program. The executive principal has been doing an outstanding job to negotiate how to do this significant building project that they are fully behind and fully wanting because it will provide them with a significant asset for their growing school. They have put into place alternative plans for accommodating the tennis program during that construction time. We are continuing to look at other projects—

Ms DAVIS: Can you explain what these new arrangements are, because the school does have a contract with parents to provide particular periods of court time?

Mr Hunt: That is correct.

Ms DAVIS: Now that there are half the courts on site, how is that going to be delivered for parents and for the children to also be able to attend their regular class?

Mr Hunt: The school was negotiating with Frew Park and that tennis centre there. They were also looking at other tennis courts in other schools in surrounding areas. Remember this is potentially short-term pain for a long-term gain. A significant infrastructure investment in a hall for that school is an outstanding piece of work. It is part of that school's master plan to ensure that it has the extra facilities that it requires as a growing and significantly iconic P-12 school in our system. The reality is that obviously whenever there is a building program, there is a level of disruption, be that a small project or a large project like this. We have been working very closely with Kelvin Grove State College, and Llew Paulger, the principal there, and I speak regularly. The reality is that there is an issue that we need to address with the school and the school community, and Llew is doing that very well—negotiating with the parents of the tennis program. There are other parts of that school's programs of excellence that are also likely to need some different accommodation during the time of the construction. We do that with all building projects to make sure that we can accommodate the teaching and learning needs of those schools as we go forward. Remember that these are significant community assets. I acknowledge the importance of the tennis excellence program. The reality is that school has a range of programs. We want to support all of those programs—

Ms JONES: I did the extension drama program.

Mr Hunt:—and we will continue to support that school. As I said earlier, the school has been doing an outstanding job trying to balance the various needs of its school community.

Ms DAVIS: Where are the new courts going? There must be some new courts going—

Ms JONES: On the other side of the oval.

Ms DAVIS: Thank you, Minister. I am asking Mr Hunt.

Mr Hunt: We are still in the final throes of negotiating. The minister indicated that there is one hall project that is still being consulted. That is the Kelvin Grove State College hall because it is a significant piece of infrastructure. It is a challenging site because of its topography and soil type. We are working with that school. There are other projects that are going on in that campus that we need to accommodate and we need to balance the projects across the time frame.

Ms DAVIS: Perhaps you can help me with this. I refer to Budget Paper No. 3, page 38, which states that the project cost is \$5.16 million. I refer to the Public Works website for capital works building projects, which states that the project cost is \$6.42 million. I also refer to a *Brisbane Times* article of 13 June 2017, which states that the school will receive an initial \$6.2 million towards the total project cost for this new facility. Which one is it?

Mr Hunt: With all of these infrastructure projects you would understand that there are both capex, or capital expenditure, items and operational expenditure items. It is not uncommon for different numbers to be used in the description of the project in terms of a capital expenditure or an operational expenditure notion. As I indicated a moment ago, this particular project is also subject to current consideration around bundling that particular project with other works that are in the mix. We will try to maximise the benefit for that particular school to ensure that they get the very best outcome to meet their local needs. We will work with that school and we will work across our range of infrastructure and investment programs to ensure that we do get that outcome for the school.

Ms DAVIS: Minister, I refer again to the *Brisbane Times* article that states that the school will receive \$6.2 million towards a \$14.2 million facility. Can you please provide me with information as to where that additional \$8 million is budgeted for to complete the project?

Ms JONES: I think when we announced the Kelvin Grove hall we had always spoken about it in the concept of around \$6 million for the hall. That is consistent with what I have said publicly—\$6 million for the Kelvin Grove state school hall.

Ms DAVIS: It is not only for the first part of a two-part—

Ms JONES: It might be over two years. I am trying to understand what you are referring to.

Mr Hunt: Which figure?

Ms DAVIS: The figure that was cited—I am just taking it from the *Brisbane Times* article—was that there is an initial amount of \$6.2 million and a second amount—

Ms JONES: We might go to the budget papers instead of the *Brisbane Times*, no offence to Fairfax Media.

Ms DAVIS: I am asking the question—it is not in the budget. I am asking whether that is, in fact, correct. Further to that, it is my understanding that it is part of the master plan of the school that they were after a facility that would accommodate the whole school community, which is around 2,800 students and teachers. This building only provides for half of that. My question, Minister, is this: in a

letter to parents the principal said that 'the quantum of money does not deliver the type of facility that we believe we need to future proof the college'. I am just interested to understand whether this is half of the facility being built, whether there are plans for an additional amount of money to, in fact—

Ms JONES: It would not have been built under your watch.

Ms DAVIS:—provide a facility that will deliver what the school was after. I am seeking clarification.

Ms JONES: Is it for me? Who do you want to talk to? Is it for Jeff Hunt or me?

Ms DAVIS: You can answer it if you can.

Ms JONES: I met with Llew Paulger in my office—he is the principal of the school. As you know, I went to Kelvin Grove state high school. That is my high school—I actually was in one of the extension programs, believe it or not—and the chair also went to Kelvin Grove state high school. This is a school that I do know well. I have also met with one of the parents from the tennis excellence program. That is why I was able to say that I can answer the question about whether the principal is talking to the parents about putting additional courts on the other side of the school oval, a school oval I know well because it is the school oval where I used to do cross country and athletics. Kelvin Grove state high school is a great school and I am very proud to be a past pupil of that school.

I can confirm that, without a Labor government, there is no way on God's earth this hall would have been built. It is only being delivered, as Jeff said in his comments, because of our record investment in infrastructure. The conversation we are having today, as Jeff has articulated in the multiple conversations—and I said in my comment—is we are currently actively working with the school to deliver the best outcome for the school. I can also say as the local member in this community that parents are overwhelmingly saying to me, 'Thank goodness you have built the hall.' I had a number of meetings with the P&C. They came and met with me when I first became the education minister saying that the LNP promised a hall but did not fund the hall. I am the minister that will deliver the hall for Kelvin Grove State College and I am very proud of it. I will continue to work with the school—

Miss BARTON: Half a hall.

Ms DAVIS: Half a hall—

Ms JONES:—to get the best outcome for this school. Sorry, Verity?

Miss BARTON: I was not talking to you.

CHAIR: Minister, keep going, thank you.

Ms JONES: I have met with the P&C multiple times. I have met with the principal multiple times. The principal hugged me when I told him that we had actually secured the funding—thank you, Llew—and I will continue to work with the school to deliver the best outcome.

Ms DAVIS: For half a hall?

Miss BARTON: It only has two walls.

Ms DAVIS: I understand that the school already has a multipurpose hall; is that right?

Ms JONES: Yes, the hall where I was the lead in *Oliver* in 1994. I was actually in the same musical as Larissa Waters.

Ms DAVIS: How many schools in Queensland do not have a multipurpose hall?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for that question because, as you know, when the LNP were in government—how many halls did they build in existing schools, Jeff?

Ms DAVIS: That was not my question.

Ms JONES: No, I am just talking as a contrast.

Ms DAVIS: Minister, that was not my question. I am simply asking—

Ms JONES: It is my choice.

Ms DAVIS:—how many schools in Queensland do not have a multipurpose hall? That is all I asked.

Ms JONES: I will get Jeff to provide that answer, but can I say we are sitting here talking today about the first school hall building project that has been delivered in a generation. I am very proud to be the minister delivering that. Only through our record investment in capital works are we starting to deliver those halls in those schools. For example, when I went to Townsville—and it was not in your electorate, Chair, but in Aaron Harper's electorate—I met the principal of Kirwan State High School where 2,200 students were sitting in the sun together. I think that they deserve a hall and we are delivering that hall. Do you have that data available immediately to you, Jeff, or do we need to get that?

Mr Hunt: What was the question again, Minister?

Ms JONES: How many high schools do not have a hall currently?

Mr Hunt: High schools? I will need to get that. I am happy to take that on notice and get that.

CHAIR: Thank you. We will come back to you.

Ms JONES: I am very proud that we are delivering halls.

Miss BARTON: Get Kevin to answer that!

Ms JONES: I take that interjection. That is a really good point. It was a Labor government federally that delivered halls in all the primary schools which has freed up the state government to focus on the high schools. We know that the LNP did not build halls when they were in government. In actual fact, they reduced the ability to build halls by pulling their PPP payments out of the capital works infrastructure. Tim Nicholls overruled the education minister at the time. I am very fortunate to have a Premier that listens to their line ministers and now I am delivering a halls program.

Mr DICKSON: To all the educators in the room I say thank you for what you do. Minister, on page 7 of your SDS under service area highlights it lists 'allocating \$500 million in total capital funding over five years for the Building Future Schools Fund to address enrolment growth pressures'. I have a school in Brightwater in my electorate. The enrolment statistics are as follows: 2013, 402; 2014, 575; 2015, 641; 2016, 888; and 2017, 979. This equates to an increase in student enrolment of 144 per cent over five years. I have read through your 26-page document in entirety and Brightwater ranks in the top five schools in Queensland in terms of population growth—in fact, in the top five schools in terms of population growth outside of Brisbane. I ask: how much of the \$500 million or other government funding is going towards addressing enrolment growth pressure at Brightwater State School, as publicised recently? Is the \$500 million instead going towards the electorate of South Brisbane and the Deputy Premier's seat?

Ms JONES: Jeff will get some more details about the building program at Brightwater. I will say a number of things first. I also highlighted in my earlier answer that when we make a decision about where we need to build schools or new classrooms, it is based on two things. One is obviously population growth, as you have highlighted, but it is also based on the size and capacity of the existing school infrastructure and facilities. For example, the fact that no new high school had been built in Brisbane since 1963 had meant that the capacity for the existing school sites to grow those schools more was going to be a problem. We have had the shadow minister talk to the fact that the Kelvin Grove site, for example, is becoming more constrained. If we want to provide the full suite of curriculum opportunities at that school, we have to be mindful of all the activities that happen at that school. In regards to Brightwater, Jeff, do you have some detail?

Mr Hunt: We have invested \$7½ million or thereabouts in meeting growth in Brightwater over the past five years and we will continue to manage within that school catchment with the infrastructure that they require.

Ms JONES: We are building classrooms for growth at Brightwater—\$7 million.

Mr Hunt: I will get the capacity figures for you. The way we approach this is, as the minister said earlier, we want to make sure that we maximise the current investments in infrastructure to meet local community need. We understand that Brightwater is a growing community and has been a growing community. It is not the only growing community across the state, and we are responding to growth in a whole range of areas to make sure that we have the infrastructure that is required for teaching and learning.

Mr DICKSON: Very clearly the question was: it is in the top five in Queensland. We are experiencing immense growth—

Ms JONES: No, but it is not. I totally understand you are making genuine representations on behalf of your community. What I am saying is that the growth might be high, but we do not just look at growth data; we also look at growth and the capacity within the school. If we spent \$7 million at the school in the last five years, therefore we are building infrastructure to cater for that growth—

Mr DICKSON: It is a brand-new school; I get that. I am saying that it has gone beyond the development capacity that your government had planned for. Now we are outside of that and nobody is doing anything and we are locked into a small block of dirt.

Ms JONES: My advice is that the current enrolment at the school is at 90 per cent. West End State School, for example, which I just spoke about, is close to being over capacity because of its growth. We will continue to monitor that. At the moment it is sitting at 90 per cent capacity, so every

student at the school who needs a desk, a chair and a classroom has one. Working with you and representations from your local community, I am happy to sit down with you and say that next year we will do an assessment—like we do every year—to build the classrooms to cater for growth. For example, from the information you have given me—and I will get the department to have a look at this—you believe that we will need additional classrooms next year. If that is the case I can give you an assurance, honourable member, that we will deliver those classrooms for you to cater for that growth.

CHAIR: Minister, the Palaszczuk government went to the successful 2015 election with a commitment to restore front-line teachers cut from Queensland schools by the LNP government. Pages 4 and 7 of the SDS refer to this commitment to fund additional teachers. Can you inform the committee how the Labor government has worked to restore teachers who were cut from Queensland classrooms?

Ms JONES: I know I have referred to this, but the reason you are sitting here as chair is that the Premier believed that having a former principal in the role would be beneficial. You know firsthand what a difference it makes to have additional teachers in your classrooms. The Queensland Teachers' Union is the industrial body that represents teachers in our classrooms, and I want to acknowledge Kevin Bates, president of the Queensland Teachers' Union, who is in the gallery. Kevin is passionate—as are you and I and many Queenslanders—about not talking down our state schools but instead talking up the great work that is happening in our state schools and providing the infrastructure and support that teachers need to do the great work they do every day. That is why we made an election commitment to deliver 875 teachers above growth. This stands in stark contrast to the opposition, who cut 500 teachers from Queensland schools through a number of programs which I have talked about. It highlights the fact that there is a clear difference in approach between us and the former government.

In fact, as a consequence 3,400 extra teachers have been employed to address enrolment growth and put downward pressure on class sizes. I know that there is a lot of conjecture about class sizes, but I have never met a parent who asked whether I could put their child in the largest class. Fourteen thousand classes were oversized under the LNP, but because of the extra investment we have made we have reduced this to 10,000. We are making a real and tangible difference in restoring front-line services in Queensland schools. While they cut teacher positions, we increased teacher positions. More than 3,400 more teachers are working in Queensland schools, making a difference to every child's life. I congratulate and thank the Queensland Teachers' Union for their advocacy on behalf of their members and the great work that our teachers do every day.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, with reference to page 7 of the SDS, can you outline how Queensland state schools are being supported to deliver an ever-increasing digital curriculum?

Ms JONES: The *Financial Review* commented that if we do not provide IT support for students and schools we will breed a generation of burger flippers, and I say that as an ex-Maccas chick. When I was at Kelvin Grove State High School I used to work at McDonald's. As you know, the LNP cut 270 IT staff from Education. When they go around to visit schools saying that we should be doing more in the IT space, what they do not say is that when they were in government they had a choice to step up support for IT in schools. That is not the choice they made. They did not listen to teachers. They cut 270 jobs from the IT department. We want every state school and each student to have access to a secure, reliable and personalised IT platform to support modern learning. That is why we are investing \$140 million over four years to fund dedicated information technology support in our state schools.

I am glad that Kevin is here at this point in time, because often without these IT specialists in schools the responsibility would fall on our hardworking administrative and BSM staff. They do a great job in our schools and are integral to the delivery of good, quality education. This investment will provide an extra full-time-equivalent IT support staff member for every 1,000 students across all Queensland state schools. We have more than 370,000 devices across our schools' networks, so having this IT support—I have previously had this conversation with the member for Maryborough—is something that schools say they really want to see. I am sure that all of you from both sides of politics have attended P&C meetings where they have talked about IT support. I am very pleased that I am the minister sitting here today saying that I will deliver IT support for the very first time through a dedicated officer. I am very proud of that, and I think we all have a right to be.

IT support was identified as a high priority during our review of school administrative support staff. That was an election commitment, as you recall, and I am very pleased that, as a consequence of the consultation we have done with workers in our schools, we have been able to do this. This resourcing will mean that a school with 2,000 students—like Kenmore State High School in the Moggill electorate—will be able to employ two full-time IT staff, or a state primary school with 500 students—like Woodridge North State School—will receive an allocation of resourcing to employ an IT support technician five days a fortnight.

To strengthen IT support we are also providing funding for smaller schools. I do not know where you did your remote country service, Mr Chair, but we have schools with fewer than 50 students. We will also provide base support of an additional \$3,000 in their allocation to provide IT support in those schools. I am very pleased that in your first term you have been able to be part of a government that has delivered something that I know you have advocated for on behalf of your community for some time.

Mr SAUNDERS: Referring to page 7 of the SDS, could the minister outline how the Palaszczuk government is continuing to support school administrative and support staff? They are very close to me.

Ms JONES: Likewise. I want to once again acknowledge and thank the wonderful support staff. I always joke that you have to be on-side with the business services manager because often they are the ones who control a lot of things in the schools. The announcement that we made was about supporting not only our business service managers but also the admin support staff. Business service managers are now called business managers. We have to get that into our vernacular, because that is something they also asked for and we have delivered. I am really excited about this in particular, because a lot of the people in these roles in our schools are women.

As the Minister for Education I am very proud that, as part of this \$100 million, we have been transitioning a number of our staff from lower paying jobs to higher paying jobs; for example, no longer having AO2s but having AO3 positions in school support staff. More than 620 business services managers—or business managers—have now been upgraded, and more than 550 admin officers in small schools have also been upgraded. An additional \$7.4 million will provide additional grounds care support to small schools from 2018, and grounds and facilities officers are being upgraded as well. We are also strengthening grounds care resourcing from 2018 to provide the opportunity for additional school officers to be employed across approximately 400 small schools. I want to acknowledge on the record Alex Scott, president of Together Queensland, and Kate Flanders, also from Together Queensland, who said, 'We commend the Palaszczuk government for the first real reform to these positions in 20 years. For the first time school support staff have been recognised for the work they do.'

We did this via a video announcement to staff. The day that we actually got the money I was there with Kate Flanders and Sharon Abbott from School Business Managers Association Queensland, and we cried. We had tears in our eyes because this has been talked about for 20 years and we finally delivered it. I am really proud that we have provided pay parity for some of the lowest paid workers in our schools, but they are an integral part of our schools. Often you hear the comment that different sides of politics do not make a difference or that politicians do not make a difference, but this is a really good example of where a government decision has had a real and direct impact on the livelihoods and the ability for those women to provide for their families.

Mrs MILLER: My question is to relation to the curriculum. The new national curriculum is being rolled out in state schools and it includes a new subject that rolls geography, history, social science and civic education into one subject. Education has said that this will not occur in distance education. Why are distance education students being treated as second-class students, as they are going to be required to use the old, outdated curriculum?

Ms Nixon: We will be providing that support to schools of distance education. We are currently negotiating with them about support we can provide in updating all the resources they have to support students in the distance education environment.

Mrs MILLER: How long will that take?

Ms Nixon: I would hope that we would have it in line with the rest of our resources, so it would be towards the end of this year, into the beginning of next year.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, I refer to the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Can you update the committee on the Palaszczuk government's preparations for the new Senior Assessment Tertiary Entrance system?

Ms JONES: It is a really exciting time to be the education minister because of the record investment I have talked about and the fact that Queensland is the only state that continues to see a massive improvement in the NAPLAN data year in and year out. We are doing a major overhaul of the senior secondary system which is the largest since I was at Kelvin Grove State High School more than 20 years ago. While the current assessment and tertiary entrance procedures remain fair and reliable, it has been more than 20 years since the last comprehensive review. We have been working very closely with the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. I want to acknowledge Chris Rider,

Chief Executive Officer of the QCAA. He is doing a fantastic job with regard to rolling out the SATE, and I know that the shadow minister has had a number of meetings with the QCAA in her advocacy on behalf of all schools to ensure that the transition to the new curriculum and the new system for senior assessment and tertiary entrance is one that is responsive to all schools' needs.

The week before last we chaired a meeting of the stakeholder task force, which I have spoken about at previous estimates. It has representation from independent schools, Catholic schools, state schools, independent parents, Catholic parents, state school parents and universities as well as QTAC. We have been making all the decisions around SATE reforms in a collaborative way because I want to ensure that every school and every child, no matter which school they go to—we strongly believe as a government in parent choice when it comes to education—is being catered for.

We are currently working on the professional development phase, so we have been rolling out professional development. Mrs Wilton, who used to be at The Gap State High School and who has been a teacher in the education department running a lot of these workshops, said that this is the largest professional development program that has ever happened in her time in Education. It is a massive piece of work that is being extensively funded in this year's budget, but I am confident that the work of the QCAA will deliver the best outcome and a fair and transparent system for our students.

CHAIR: Minister, with regard to external assessment trials, can you update the committee on the preparation happening in schools across Queensland so that teachers, parents and students are ready for 2019?

Ms JONES: Chris, given that you have come here today, do you want to speak to this?

Mr Rider: In response to the question, we have had 13 external assessment trials in the last 14 months. They have ranged across all learning areas, from English to mathematics B to chemistry to visual arts to physical education and so on. We have been really heartened, because teachers have been really keen to be involved in these trials. Some 340 secondary schools have volunteered to participate in those external trials. We have had many teachers who have been very keen to be involved as external markers. As you would all know, we have not had external assessments in subjects in Queensland since 1972. In introducing external assessment in Queensland for the first time in more than four decades, we were a bit concerned about whether teachers would be excited to be involved in external marking. I can say to you that 900 teachers have performed the role of external markers in the trials we have done so far, and in many cases we have been oversubscribed by twice the number that we needed to conduct the external marking. It has been a very successful set of trials across the state so far. We have learned a great deal about administering external assessment trials, but we have also done a lot of work with schools in terms of preparing teachers to work with the new resources that we have provided for them to help students undertake those external assessment trials.

Ms DAVIS: I have some questions around the QCAA also. Mr Rider, the QCAA advertised for a manager of mathematics, which was an AO8 role, to redevelop the year 11 and 12 maths syllabus. Can you explain to the committee why the recruitment package required the candidate to hold a C-class driver's licence, which I am sure was probably very handy to have, but however a qualification in mathematics was not listed as a requirement, which one would expect would be desirable, if not essential?

Mr Rider: Thank you for the question. We have six positions inside the QCAA that are learning area managers' positions. Mathematics is one of those. We have a range of other experts in those learning area manager roles. All of the people who have those roles currently all have expertise as teachers in those learning areas, so in the mathematics area the person who runs the learning area of mathematics has mathematics expertise, as does the science person and as does the English person. I assure you that the people who are leading this work in terms of syllabus development across the state of Queensland are all expert.

To further answer your question, there are 46 general subjects in the future offerings from 2019. Those 46 general subjects have three internal assessments and one external assessment. The people who have been involved in writing those syllabuses—and I focus particularly on the mathematics area that you raised—have all been mathematics teachers. An expert writing team of mathematics teachers wrote the new senior mathematics subjects for this state. There is a learning area reference group that advises that writing team that consists of a whole range of representatives from the tertiary sector, from schools and so on who are also people who have expertise in the mathematics area. I assure you that in every area, specifically your question around mathematics, the expertise that goes into the writing of a syllabus comes from people who are expert in that subject area when they write it.

Ms DAVIS: Just to clarify, the successful applicant has a mathematics degree?

Mr Rider: The person who works in the learning area manager role is a mathematics person, yes.

Ms DAVIS: The person who was successful in the position that I just outlined?

Mr Rider: I assure you that in all of the learning area manager roles there are people who have expertise in that area. Very importantly to come back to the syllabus documents and the 46 general subjects, those syllabuses have been written by expert subject teachers who teach in Queensland schools. Over a period of more than 12 months we have had teachers who have gone through a selection process to become an expert writer for us. They must have expert knowledge in the subject syllabus that they are being asked to write in.

Ms DAVIS: One would expect that that was a given.

Mr Rider: Absolutely, but those teachers have given up weekends and many of them have given up large amounts of time in their school holidays to come in and actually write those syllabuses. I am particularly proud of the fact that of the 46 general subjects we have 40 of those approved and ready to go in Queensland schools now. Teachers can access those syllabuses online for the first time in Queensland. Of the other 25 subjects—the applied subjects—22 of those 25 are available. As the minister mentioned earlier, for the first time after my almost 35 years in education we have just undertaken an unprecedented activity in professional development. Almost 17,000 teachers in this state teach at least one year 11 and 12 senior subject. All of those teachers who teach those 46 general subjects will be given face-to-face professional development for the first time in my almost 35 years in education. Up until last Friday 1,100 teachers from schools right across the state had already participated in their face-to-face professional development, so between the beginning of this term in July until June next year we have 650 workshops for almost 17,000 teachers to attend face-to-face professional development. As I said before, it is unprecedented in my almost 35 years in education. The feedback that we have had already from the 1,100 from the last two weeks on every question we asked them in the evaluation sheet showed that the satisfaction ratings are better than 90 per cent in every single question.

Ms DAVIS: Thank you for that, Mr Rider. Mr Rider, in the answer to question on notice No. 7—I do not know if you have it there—in paragraphs a and b it shows that the QCAA has handed back over half a million dollars. In fact, nearly \$600,000 was reprioritised back to Treasury over the last two budgets. Can you please advise the committee what that almost \$600,000 was originally allocated to?

Mr Rider: Minister, I would have to take the question on notice about the specifics, but can I just say this to you.

Ms JONES: Just talk about the budget you have before you.

Mr Rider: We received almost \$69 million for the first three years of implementation of the senior assessment tertiary entrance reforms. You would know from October last year that in my position as CEO and the QCAA board we made a recommendation that we take one more year to do this implementation because we thought it was so important to get this right. We thought it was very important to engage teachers in the syllabus development and the professional development before young people walked into a classroom in the new system. In terms of that \$69 million that was allocated for the first three years, we simply recast that \$69 million across a four-year implementation so no additional money from the original \$69 million was sought. It was simply reprofiled across four years instead of three.

Ms DAVIS: That was not exactly my question, but thank you for that—

Ms JONES: We can—

Ms DAVIS: Minister, I am not asking you a question. I appreciate that you want to give me an answer, but I am asking Mr Rider some questions. Mr Rider, you mentioned in one of your earlier answers that there were double the subscription of teachers who wanted to undertake some professional development in the external marking course.

Mr Rider: They wanted to be considered for external marking, yes.

Ms DAVIS: Will those teachers get that PD or get that training or was it only for 1,100?

Mr Rider: Absolutely. If we go back to the question that I was asked earlier about the number of the external assessment trials, we have conducted 13 external assessment trials. Of those 13 external assessment trials, 40,000 year 11 students participated in those 13 external assessment trials. We asked for people to volunteer to be trained as external markers for that. If I use the example of English and mathematics B, we had quite large numbers of people who wanted to be external markers for

English and external markers for mathematics B, and bear in mind that that was a trial. When we actually get into the implementation years in 2019 and 2020, we will call for people to participate as external markers and much larger numbers of teachers will be able to volunteer. In fact, we will need much larger numbers of teachers to be external markers when we actually implement in 2019 and 2020. The simple answer to your question is more and more markers will be needed in the first two years of implementation.

Ms DAVIS: There were enough spaces for 1,100 teachers to become markers. It will not be any time soon until a year down the track—that is how I am understanding your answer—when there will be a call for additional markers. Why would you not continue to roll that out rather than doing another large tranche further down the track?

Mr Rider: One of the purposes of the external assessment trial was to start to learn how to conduct and develop those external assessments in Queensland because it was something we had not done since 1972. We originally decided to do 13 of those up until the middle of this year. The time between now and the end of next year we are devoting to the development of mock assessments in all external subjects. If you are a year 11 and 12 teacher of a general subject in Queensland, between now and the end of next year the QCAA is turning its hand to the development of external mock assessment, so every teacher who teaches one of those year 11 and 12 subjects will get the advantage in the first year of implementation of having a mock external assessment that they can use with students. The reasoning behind that is if you are in other jurisdictions like New South Wales and Victoria they have many years of external assessments that teachers go back to and draw from in the preparation of young people for external assessment. In Queensland we would not be going back and looking at external exams that we conducted in 1972, so the authority is turning its hand to developing those 46 mock external assessments over the next 18 months which is about helping teachers prepare young people for their first round of external assessments. I just assure you though that there is plenty of opportunity for teachers to engage in the processes to learn how to be an external marker in the new system.

Ms DAVIS: Mr Rider, you work in with some of the other jurisdictions like New South Wales and Victoria that currently have external examinations and assessments. Have you been using any of their frameworks or PD or whatever rather than reinventing the wheel? There would be similarities, I would expect, in some areas between what they are doing in the other jurisdictions and what will be required here when this finally rolls out.

Mr Rider: Thank you for the question. In terms of what New South Wales and Victoria do, it is very important to understand that the policy position that Queensland has taken which was a key recommendation from the ACER review from 2014 is that we should strengthen the quality assurance around school based assessment in Queensland and we should complement that with external subject assessment.

Ms DAVIS: Yes.

Mr Rider: It is very important to understand that in Queensland in those 46 general subjects we will have three internal school based assessments which are developed by the school but go through a process of endorsement and confirmation with us, but we will also use external subject assessment. I guess the key thing to remember about what our southern friends do in New South Wales and Victoria is that their external assessment that they conduct in November of year 12 scales the results of school based assessment that go on throughout grades 11 and 12. Whilst we have some similarities with New South Wales and Victoria, we are quite different. Let me explain that we are trying to develop something that is world class here in Queensland. We are trying to take the best of what Queensland has done for four decades, affectionately called school based assessment, but we are putting much tighter quality assurance around the assessment that is prepared by teachers. We are endorsing that assessment in the future and we are also confirming the results of the school. We are adding external assessment to school based assessment to arrive at a subject result. Whilst there are some learnings from southern states about how to prepare external assessment, how to go about expert panels writing that and how to scrutinise those papers before they are used, that is only part of the future of Queensland. We are indeed keeping the best of what we have been doing for four decades and making it stronger and adding some of the things that we think are really valuable about other jurisdictions.

Ms DAVIS: Thank you for that. Mr Rider, I had the opportunity to go to the Brisbane Youth Detention Centre four to six weeks ago and it was quite an eye-opening experience. Can you explain to me whether there is any direct work being done between the QCAA and detention centres to prepare any student who might be in detention at a time when their senior assessment is occurring? I

acknowledge that many of the young people who are in detention centres may not reach that level of education, but in the event that there are children who can participate in that as part of their education journey is there anything that is being done? Are you working with them? Is that something that the QCAA does or is it another area?

Mr Rider: If we think about what QCAA does, I have just described the 46 general subjects. There are 25 applied subjects. Those applied subjects typically are for school based assessments. You will find lots of those subjects are available for students in detention centres, but in addition to that you also have an enormous vocational education and training range of pathways across Queensland schools. Queensland leads the country in nationally recognised training being taught in schools.

Ms DAVIS: I understand that. My question was really specifically is there direct work being done between the QCAA and detention centres to ensure that the teachers who are there are in fact—

Mr Rider: Let me—

Ms DAVIS: Really a yes or no is all I am after, Mr Rider. I do not—

Ms Jones interjected.

Ms DAVIS: Mr Chair, I am attempting to get an answer from a particular witness and the minister continues to interrupt. I simply ask, Mr Chairman, that in the questioning that I pose to the witnesses they are allowed to answer it directly.

CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, when a question is asked of another witness, I ask that you refrain from answering for that person. Thank you.

Ms DAVIS: So there is work being done directly?

Mr Rider: The work of the QCAA is to provide service and products to all schools across the state of Queensland.

Ms DAVIS: Great, and the answer will be yes. Perfect; thank you. Minister, I have a question for you; you will be very excited. I refer to question on notice No. 1003 regarding the education facilities at the two youth detention centres in Queensland. Minister, the figures that are cited in that response have a general increase each year, but what stood out to me was that in 2015 the Cleveland Youth Detention Centre had a budget of \$2.291 million and it jumped by nearly half a million by 2017, which is quite different to Queensland's other youth detention centres. Can you explain what that spike was about?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. The reason I was saying something before is that, obviously, QCAA, as you have heard, is rewriting—

Ms DAVIS: Thank you very much, Minister, but the question I have just asked you—

CHAIR: Member for Aspley, the minister was answering your question.

Ms DAVIS: Not around the detention centre.

Ms JONES: I am actually answering about detention centres. The department of education is responsible for delivering education programs to children in youth detention centres. The QCAA has a separate role, as you have heard from the QCAA, but, when it comes to working with students to make sure that the students who are in the youth detention centres are getting the education they need now and into the future, including the reforms that are being led by the QCAA, that is the responsibility of these two over here, which is the department of education. We provide that response.

In doing so, I pick up the point of the honourable shadow minister in regard to saying that there is an increase. The increase would be, I imagine, representative of the fact that we provide the educational needs that are required of the children who are in detention at that time. Of course, depending on the complex needs, depending on the learning needs, depending on whether that child has had access to education leading up to their time in detention, that will reflect the numbers, need and support required for each individual child's learning. Did you want to add anything to that, or that is pretty spot-on?

Dr Watterston: I do not have the budget in front of me—and I am happy to get it clarified—but my understanding is that we have also enhanced the VET in Schools Program in the Cleveland detention centre.

Ms DAVIS: I am sorry, my apologies. I did not hear what you said that program was.

Dr Watterson: My understanding is that we have enhanced and broadened the VET in Schools Program—vocational education and training opportunities for those young people in addition to their Australian Curriculum lessons.

Ms DAVIS: That would have been in 2015? That is when the spike occurred. In 2015-16 there was a significant spike where the others had—

Dr Watterson: As I said, we will get that verified for you, but my understanding is that we have broadened those programs.

Mr DICKSON: Minister, I note in reading your department's SDS for 2017-18 that there is no mention whatsoever of any funding for school chaplaincy programs. Why does the current Queensland Labor government not provide any funding for this vital support program in Queensland schools?

Ms JONES: No, that is not true. We provide funding for chaplaincy programs. In fact, I was a member of parliament in the Beattie government when we were the first state government in the history of Queensland to provide direct funding for chaplaincy. That has long been a Labor position. My advice is that we continue to fund chaplaincy through our support services.

Mr DICKSON: Where is that in the SDS?

Ms JONES: It is funded as part of our operational expenditure. We have operational funding for state school chaplaincy. We will get you the data, but can I say very clearly that there has been no cut, no removal of funding or support for chaplaincies in state schools under the Palaszczuk government. In fact, we have maintained our effort, consistent with what Labor governments have done term after term in Queensland. We support school chaplaincy. You have heard me mention school chaplains a number of times already in my contribution. We will continue to. I have great chaplains in my own community. I was there when the chaplain, Jocelyn, was appointed under our program when it was introduced. She continues to do great work in The Gap. We will continue to provide support for chaplains in state schools in Queensland.

Mr DICKSON: Where is that in the SDS? If you could direct me to it, that would be great.

Ms JONES: State funding for the chaplaincy program stands at around \$4.3 million in this year's budget. It is part of our operational cost.

Mr DICKSON: Zero four?

Ms JONES: It is \$4.3 million, consistent with our long-term Labor commitment.

Mr DICKSON: How much is the value of that?

Ms JONES: I think it is invaluable when you look at the work that chaplains do in our schools.

Mr DICKSON: No, the financial value. How much money?

Ms JONES: \$4.3 million.

Mr DICKSON: Sorry, I thought you said 'section' 4.3.

Ms JONES: No, sorry. It is \$4.3 million. I hope you did not think I was being cheeky in that answer.

Mr DICKSON: Thank you very much. I appreciate that.

Ms JONES: We support all religions in schools.

Mr WILLIAMS: The SDS refers to Commonwealth funding. In the 2017-18 federal budget there is a proposal for a new funding process for Queensland schools. Can you inform the committee how Queensland has fared in this process?

Ms JONES: Yes, I can and I cannot, in the sense that I have been talking to my colleagues in a number of states, including conservative government states and Labor states, about the changes that we have seen to federal funding. I acknowledge that there is more funding under this offer than was originally offered under the Abbott government, but still there is no clarity on what strings are attached to this funding. Worse than that, to use the words of the Victorian education minister, a gun is being held to the head of state governments, including New South Wales and other states, in that if we do not sign up to the deal, without understanding what the deal is in regard to the requirements, then all funding for all schools, including Catholic schools, state schools and independent schools, is at risk.

This is an unprecedented way of dealing with education funding. A lot of the amendments to the funding arrangements that have been proposed under the amendments to the education act that were passed by the Senate were not ever run past any state or territory jurisdiction ahead of them being passed in national legislation. The great concern for many of us is that, ultimately, under the pathway, we will see in six years time an unfair system where independent and Catholic schools would be funded at 100 per cent at the SRS yet state schools would be funded to only 95 per cent. It is locking in disadvantage. I have to acknowledge the work and discussions that I have had with my colleagues interstate. Nobody thinks this is fair.

Today I am calling on Simon Birmingham to either call or attend an urgent education council meeting. I think one is needed. It is not scheduled until September, yet in September if we do not do the do-or-die 'sign the deal' we will pay financial consequences. While Simon Birmingham might be comfortable with using our children as ransom, I certainly am not. Today, I am calling on all state education ministers and the federal minister to have an urgent education council meeting in August. I think it is critical that we sit around the table and get some clarity for our principals and our teachers in regard to exactly what is required.

Furthermore, there have been revelations this week that Catholic schools are \$1.1 billion worse off under the arrangements. This will hit Queensland harder than other states. Catholic schooling operates as a sector in Queensland. Like state schools, they also do the heavy lifting when it comes to providing support for students with disabilities and inclusion and supporting families who have made a choice about faith based education.

We stand shoulder to shoulder with our colleagues in all schooling sectors to ensure that we get the best deal for Queensland schools. Very clearly, I think Simon Birmingham needs to front up, meet with education ministers and have a proper discussion about the implications of the last-minute dodgy deals done in the Senate overnight. We went to bed with one piece of legislation before the House and woke up with another. There was no consultation with state schools or, I understand, with other sectors—unless there were conversations that I am unaware of.

I think that was a real walking away from the principles of Gonski 1. I want to acknowledge at the table here today that a lot of the amendments that were made in the Senate were not run past David Gonski. My understanding is that he was not aware of the changes that were made in the twilight hours in the Senate to try to get the legislation through. They are a significant departure from the principles of Gonski 1 in the sense that, at the time, the conversation was very much focused on us as a nation saying that we needed to invest more in education and that the federal government would have a leadership role in doing that, sector blind, for all students. That is not what has been passed in the education act. I call on Simon Birmingham to front up and answer some legitimate questions from state governments in this regard.

CHAIR: Page 7 of the SDS refers to the support for schools that deliver something very close to my heart—that is, world-class STEM education. Can you inform the committee of progress in improving education in these disciplines?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. I know that this is an area that is near and dear to his heart. I also know that, as an educator, you know that getting this learning in those critical early years of learning is really important.

Today we made an announcement in regard to our partnership with Google and YouTube about our Create Queensland regional roadshow. We had the bus on the lawn. I spoke about the students who were there from Murarrie. They are some of the students who will get the benefit of having a bus go on the road. In fact, it will be going to 60 communities as part of the pilot program to give this digital technology and hands-on experience to our young people across Queensland. I believe that a team is in Pormpuraaw at the moment. They are going to places such as Mount Isa and other parts of the state.

As a former principal, you would know that principals care about resourcing. I am also very pleased to say that, in this budget, for the first time we are investing \$81 million over four years to provide STEM specialists in our primary schools. Once again, we are doing this because I have listened to teachers. I have listened to the people who are doing the hard yards and the hard work at the front line. They have said that it would make a big difference to them if they had an additional resource of a STEM specialist in primary schools.

As I said, this is also talking to the issue that has been highlighted in the *Australian Financial Review* today in that we have to get this right. We have to invest in those early years of learning and give students hands-on STEM experiences. Next week my son has his first science fair presentation, which I have to work with him on this weekend.

We are also providing training to our additional staff. Last year at estimates I think I talked about it. Certainly, between then and now I have announced that we are going to provide an opportunity for our existing schoolteachers to be upskilled or to be refreshed in their knowledge in regard to STEM. I want to thank our teachers, because, as you have heard already in the contribution made by Chris Rider from the QCAA, a lot of the work that our teachers are doing is on weekends and after school. They are making that contribution because they want to deliver the best outcomes for teaching and learning in schools.

We provided these programs in STEM subjects through Griffith University and QUT, including junior secondary maths, primary science, junior secondary science, senior mathematics B, senior chemistry and senior physics programs. This is a really good example of where I was presented with an issue. We looked at some of the tangible ways that we could deliver something in a way that would make a real difference now. I am very pleased to say that it is making a difference. Two and a half thousand teachers have taken advantage of this.

CHAIR: Thank you.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, you have made robotics and coding a strong focus for schools. How are you ensuring that Queensland students in regional and remote Queensland benefit from this?

Ms JONES: I thank the member. This follows on from the answer that I just gave in regard to today's announcement of the Create Queensland roadshow. I have worked really closely with the ICPA, which has raised a number of concerns to me about how we can provide equal opportunity to students no matter where they live in our great state. As a government, we are very cognisant and mindful, as you have seen in our capital spend and other amendments, about ensuring that every child, no matter where they live in Queensland, gets an opportunity. That is why I am very pleased to say that the YouTube bus, or the Create Queensland roadshow that was out on the lawn, not only will visit western parts of Queensland, including Longreach's Westech Innovation Space and Technology Precinct, but also will be at the Ekka this year. That will be good for students who come to Brisbane and Queensland for the Ekka. The roadshow will focus on students in years 3 to 6. Tammie Irons, the treasurer of the ICPA, said—

ICPA Queensland welcomes the YouTube bus to our rural and remote schools. Our students will certainly benefit from the opportunity to have this hands-on digital experience that would be otherwise unavailable to them.

I thank the ICPA for representations on behalf of their school communities. As I said, the additional support that we are providing in IT support, STEM support and other staff will also roll out to all schools, including our smaller schools with under 50 students, across Queensland.

Mrs MILLER: My question is in relation to professional development. What professional development programs are available for teachers who believe that their primary or their high school students may be suffering from depression, anxiety or other mental health conditions? How are these teachers supported in assisting those students, including referrals?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for the question. We do provide ongoing professional development in all areas with our teachers. In actual fact, just last week we had a professional development program for behaviour management which I think 500 teachers attended. As you well know, honourable member, sometimes students who are experiencing the issues you have talked about such as depression and anxiety and those things might demonstrate behaviour in schools that is not appropriate. That is what we are doing. In addition to that, I am very proud to say that, as the minister, I have provided additional resources to support those teachers. For example, every regional office now has, as a consequence of our government, a mental health coach. Their specific job is to work with teachers to identify mental health issues in our students and support that teacher to provide the right advice. I believe that something you lobbied for personally was to see an increase in guidance officers. That election commitment that you were a part of has been delivered by our government. I thank you for your advocacy in that regard.

In addition to that, we also have student protection principal advisers. This is a position that has been jointly funded with Child Safety where we are providing another additional resource to support teachers to support students who may be experiencing depression because of issues that are happening in the home. We have additional resources there.

Mrs MILLER: I would like to have some further information if you do not mind, because teachers are saying to me that they are seeing an increased number of students with mental health conditions. I am not talking about behavioural conditions here necessarily, I am talking about severe mental health problems and conditions that they have.

Ms JONES: I will get Bevan to answer that. But as I said in regard to your specific question about mental health, we have provided for the first time mental health coaches who are there to support teachers addressing mental health issues of our students.

Mr Brennan: We are very aware that the mental health of our students is of concern to teachers and that is why we have just undertaken a huge professional development undertaking whereby all of our guidance officers and senior guidance officers have undertaken STORM training, which is precisely the training that they need to respond to the mental health concerns amongst our students. Those

guidance officers and senior guidance officers work with teachers in terms of trying to make sure that the policies, procedures and practices in the school support the students in the learning that they are undertaking and certainly making sure that there are resources available to teachers to address concerns of mental health.

We also, of course, have our school based youth health nurses, we have chaplains, we have our student welfare workers and we have our other officers in the school in relation to supporting senior students and certainly those officers work with the support team in the school. It is a concerted effort by the support team in the school in relation to the combination of officers that I have mentioned that support students and thereby support teachers in relation to mental health concerns of students.

Ms JONES: In actual fact, honourable member, the principal of Silkstone State School, which I know is not in your electorate but is up your way, said that the mental health and wellbeing coach has been terrific, he has shown a real commitment to the school and helping them work on this important area and has been responsible and flexible in his way of working with them. There is some direct feedback from a principal who is saying it is making a difference. I think you are absolutely right, there is a growing concern about the mental health of our young students, but I feel we are providing additional support and will continue to provide that support to our teachers.

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to the SDS, in particular advice regarding the NAPLAN targets on pages 8 and 9. Will you provide information regarding the performance of Queensland students in 2016, please?

Ms JONES: Yes. Thank you, honourable member, for the question. As I said in my opening remarks, Queensland is getting both interstate attention and even international attention, because the standardisation tests, which NAPLAN are, are being done around the world. Many, many jurisdictions around the world used standardisation tests such as NAPLAN to track improvement. In the NAPLAN data from last year we actually saw Queensland's strongest results ever. What is very encouraging to me is that we have had a real focus on those early years of learning and we actually got Queensland's strongest results in years 3 and 5 which led to some of the highest national rankings ever for Queensland against national minimum standards: first in year 3 in grammar and punctuation, second in year 3 in numeracy and third in year 5 in numeracy. As a student who went to a school in Queensland, this was certainly not the way that Queensland's education was characterised in my childhood. It is fantastic to see that parents and carers who support their children take an active part in providing and promoting education but also the great work that our principals and teachers are doing.

I know that we have to get the balance right between collecting data and putting too much unnecessary pressure in our classrooms. But we also must make sure that we are tracking the right things and providing that support to our teachers so that we create an environment where our teachers can provide that great learning journey for every single student. The director-general might want to talk about this. We have seen other states stagnate yet Queensland continues to be the one where there has been improvement and, as a consequence, my director-general is in high demand. Do you want to talk about a bit about some of the things you have been doing?

Mr Watterston: Sure. It has been reflected around the nation that most states have plateaued in terms of their national testing results. Certainly states that have been higher performing have not been able to get that additional lift. It has been well recognised that Queensland has been able to get exponential growth across the NAPLAN testing to lift us into that sphere where New South Wales and Victoria are. We have a number of states that have wanted to use us as a case study, in particular the Australian Capital Territory, Western Australia, Tasmania and the Northern Territory where we are working directly. I am also working with the South Australian Department of Education and Training in helping them to examine their strategies and processes, as my deputy Patrea Walton is doing with the Northern Territory.

I think what is really also required to be pointed out in terms of our NAPLAN results, and as the minister said they are not the only measure and we have many other performance indicators that we triangulate with that information to make sure that we are increasing human potential right across the board, but last year Queensland's Indigenous students outperformed Indigenous students right across the nation.

Ms JONES: Hear, hear!

Mr Watterston: I think that is something to celebrate long and hard because our department, as brilliant as it is, has rallied to make sure that we do not just focus on getting great outcomes, we really case manage individual students and make sure that those students who are capable of developing to

a higher level get the support, as the member for Bundamba talked about before, get the mental health issues sorted, assist them with other government agencies through challenges that they may have in the home and try to free them up so that they can focus more intently on educational outcomes. I think that result is one that we all feel very proud of.

There is still a gap between Indigenous students and non-Indigenous students and while we are proud, we have a lot more work to do; but we are encouraged by the work we have been able to do. One of the outcomes that we are most proud of, that sort of stems from improvement in NAPLAN results right across the board, has been our QCE graduation rate. Nowhere in Australia has this been emulated, even with an approximal outcome, that Indigenous students in the last two years at year 12 level have increased their graduation rate from 84 per cent to equal to non-Indigenous students which is 96 per cent. That is phenomenal.

Ms JONES: The New South Wales target, correct me if I am wrong, they are only aiming for 65 per cent of their senior secondary students in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island population to go to year 12. We are up there closing the gap and we did close the gap in Brisbane last year and are working across that in regional Queensland.

Mr Watterston: The outcomes across the board, not just in our NAPLAN testing, certainly show us that we are on the right track. We are not complacent. We are working harder. We are certainly all encouraged and very collaborative right across Queensland to make sure that we can continue to build on those gains. We have a motto in the Queensland state school system that every great school has a great school down the road and that sense of collaboration that comes out of that belief is what is driving this improvement practice, where schools are working together, developing strategies that they can share across their own context and sharing expertise to make sure that they can focus on making sure that every young person in this state is on a pathway to success.

CHAIR: For the next questions I move to the member for Albert.

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question is to the deputy director, Jeff Hunt, in regard to the SDS document page No. 7 where it talks about STEM in schools. I am curious to know, for example, in the last 24 months how many schools have actually requested upgrades to their internet?

Ms JONES: I have a good story here. Let's go.

Mr Hunt: We have been investing in broadband and wireless upgrades so we have a significant program of broadband and wireless upgrade activities going on right across the state. As to the exact number of requests I will have a look and see if I have that figure for you. We have over 1,050 schools that have benefited from our partnership with Telstra and our other technical providers to enhance broadband delivery and we have a whole range of schools, about a thousand, that will benefit from the wireless upgrade program over time. I will check that figure for you.

These are significant investments that we have been planning over multiple years to ensure that we can make sure that children have access to 21st century learning in a technological sense.

Mr BOOTHMAN: One thing I do hear from my local schools is once they receive these upgrades they feel that in a very short period of time the internet slows right down again. Is this because with the focus on technology we are getting more and more iPads in these schools which are then, therefore, drawing more and more data off this very small pipeline? Also, can you elaborate on how the school internet actually works? How does the architecture actually work? Is it to a single point?

Mr Hunt: A couple of things there. What we basically do is scale the internet provision to schools and we have a target of 25 kilobits per second per student. As more devices come onto the network locally then we are scaling up. We will continue to work with schools and we monitor that centrally to ensure that the provision of the internet speed is available firstly through the school gate if you like and then through wireless distribution within the school. It is important that we continue to do that and we monitor that actively so that we can support those schools with ensuring that as more devices come on they can be appropriately supported in the delivery of connection to our network.

In terms of the network itself, basically the pipe comes in, we run it through our network and there is a whole range of security and network features that you would expect us to have. We have recently instituted a script basically that when any device comes onto our network we are making sure that that device is patched and ready to come onto our network to reduce our vulnerability to any network traffic that we would not want to otherwise be there. We also have internet filtering, of course, to ensure that only appropriate websites are available to scan at the school level to ensure that the content that is being viewed is also appropriate.

Schools also have a capacity to manage the internet consumption locally to ensure that the content not only is appropriate but it is scaled. Schools may turn off certain sites to ensure that there is not undue demand or download from the network. If students are downloading music or so forth at lunchtime that might interrupt internet speed. There is a whole range of layered process that we use. We run the largest network in government and so we have anything like 350,000 to 370,000 devices on our network on a daily basis. It is a significant piece of work that we do and we make sure that students are well catered for in their local context. But as you say, this is a bit like painting the Harbour Bridge. When there are more devices when we provide more bandwidth that consumption is often taken up fairly quickly so we are then going back and supporting schools to make sure that they can have the access to the internet that they desire.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Further to your comments about the actual internet architecture, correct me if I am wrong, but do other states have a similar type of network set-up or is Queensland unique in that we have a single portal? Do other states go through internet providers directly?

Mr Hunt: Different jurisdictions have different approaches. We are very proud to architect our network as we do, because it is important that we provide for students in rural and remote locations. Some of the technological challenges of those locations have been challenging for us and we have been working, again, with Telstra, local shire councils and so forth to try to boost the internet speed and access that is available. We have recently partnered in the Jundah/Boulia/Bedourie area with the local council to get fibre into those communities. That will benefit not only the schools but also the communities more broadly.

Mr BOOTHMAN: As you said, you are going back to a central point and, therefore, you are reliant on the network traffic on that central point. Again, my question is: why are other jurisdictions going away from that course of action?

Mr Hunt: It is a distributor network in that we have servers based locally. We have a server upgrade program to ensure that the servers are generally no more than four years old, so they are contemporary in their design, their speed, their access and their utility.

Ms JONES: He is trying to say that it all goes from one point.

Mr Hunt: It is a distributor network and we manage that network traffic—and we can actively manage that traffic across our network. This also buys us purchasing power in terms of broadband. We have had significant purchasing power.

Ms JONES: We would have to wait for the federal government. Since I have been minister, my understanding is that we have doubled the number of schools that have access to broadband because we used our contract buying power globally to do that. That was a great win for us, using that to provide that connectivity. We have more schools getting access to broadband than ever before.

Mr Hunt: My CEO and I chatted about that this morning, not surprisingly. Basically, our network is filtered and secure. Others are unfiltered and less secure than Queensland's. We take a fairly active approach, and have done so from the start of our network architecture, to ensure that we have the best we can have for Queensland schools. If the question is about the whole slowing down of the network back to the centre, we have a whole range of mitigations, techniques and technologies that support network speed across our network. We know the importance of that.

Mr BOOTHMAN: I find it very curious, as I hear complaints from schools that they wish their internet was far superior than it is, especially with all of the devices they have on the network.

Mr Hunt: There might be a couple of elements to that. I talked about the broadband upgrade project and I am also talking about the wireless upgrade—so inside the school and inside the classrooms within the school. As more and more devices come onto the network locally, they need to upgrade their wireless connectivity within classrooms and across the school. This year we are investing—and I will get the figure for you—significant millions of dollars in a wireless upgrade to ensure that we continue to support that network construction at the local level. It is one thing to have it to the school gate; it is another to make sure that the connectivity is in every classroom. As schools grow or as kids bring more devices onto the network, the network speed has to be there.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Have any surveys been done by the department on internet speeds at local schools? Are staff surveyed on whether the speeds are acceptable or too slow?

Mr Hunt: There is a range of things that we do. As I said earlier, certainly we actively monitor the network. We work with schools that are identified as not achieving standards that we would otherwise want them to achieve. Often that is as a result of their own local activity—which sites are open for use, how many staff and students there are locally, making sure that the settings of their servers are right,

making sure that their wireless switches are right and making sure that we have worked with the network providers in the form of Telstra, so that we have the right settings in place for those schools. It is a continuous effort on our part and we want to make sure that we are doing that. We make no apology for investing in this area. It is a significant investment of the department's funding.

We have also made sure, as the minister mentioned earlier, of investment in IT support staff. I hope I am not stealing the minister's thunder here. As the minister said and in my almost 30 years with the department, one of the things that schools have continually said to me is, 'Can we get access to IT support staff?' As device use has grown, how do we support both teachers and students in the connectivity of their devices to our networks and make sure that they are active and available for the support of learning? The reality is that those IT support staff will now be able to provide that support to students and teachers across the state, which is sensational.

However, as I said earlier, this is a bit like your own home network. We can all remember the dialup internet that we started with. Then we got ADSL and then those of us who are lucky enough—and I am not one of them—got NBN. The more speed you have, the more you consume and the more you enjoy it, the more speed you would like going forward. We will continue to work with schools to invest in a smart way across both the technical and the non-technical elements of our network.

Ms JONES: For example, we have spent \$32 million on upgrades to IT. In addition to that, we have the \$9 million partnering program that schools can apply for to upgrade their broadband. Jeff is right and I agree with you: IT has been an issue that gets raised at P&C meetings, as I talked about earlier. We have listened to that. The No. 1 thing raised with me is IT support for teachers in schools, because, as you rightly identified, there is a growing focus on it in schools, so we are providing IT support staff for the very first time ever. In addition, we have a strong capital works program which, under my watch, has seen a doubling of the number of schools that have access to broadband. We will continue to invest in this.

As the deputy director-general highlighted, I note that, to be frank, I do not think Australians are happy about the rollout nationally. At a state level, we have used our purchasing power to deliver that outcome to the point where, for example, a small school may be the major infrastructure in town and, because of our commitment to IT, the IT capital works investment that we have made at the school has delivered a greater outcome for the community, because it is the only reliable broadband in the community.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Jeff, have staff been surveyed about internet speeds with the new rollouts in schools? It is something that keeps coming up at local P&C meetings, with people saying that the internet speeds are not fast enough. They will say that new connections have been installed but, unfortunately, within a few weeks they feel that they go back to the same old speeds. For instance, with iPad devices, do automatic updates overwrite the protocols of the department's server systems?

Mr Hunt: There are a couple of things there. Regional technology managers, or RTMs, and regional technology support staff are available in regions to support individual schools. Those RTMs work with schools to make sure that they have the best settings available to maximise availability. Again, we are the education department and we cannot dictate to the telcos as to the internet provision that runs past the door. We negotiate because we are a big customer in that regard and we have done very well with the negotiations with Telstra.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Have surveys been done?

Mr Hunt: The regional technology managers report on a school-by-school basis those schools that are not meeting the standard in terms of the network traffic speed that we would expect to see. They come up with technical solutions, working with the schools. We also ask staff in the annual school opinion survey whether they have access to the technology and the resources that they feel they need to do their job. That is done each year as part of our school opinion survey.

I guess in terms of the surveying, we have a central responsibility. That is why we have a central IT function and that is why we manage our network centrally, so that we can tune up and down as we need to—typically, tuning up—to meet demands at the local level. We have also instituted a whole range of things that enhance that network speed locally, like caching to the server, caching to the local site, so that the schools are not having to hit the internet and go outside, if you like, for every internet request. Those are the smart techs that we can use, with scale and with a centralised approach, that a local approach does not necessarily offer.

In terms of your question about when students bring their devices on, the responsibility for the device is typically with the student, the owner of the device. Our protocols say when a device is not up to par, with patching and fixing and that sort of thing, and will provide an alert or prevent the device

from coming onto the school network. It is fair to say that the greatest risk to most computer networks is the people who hold the devices—people who click on things that they should not. All the best internet filtering will not stop people from inadvertently clicking on things that they should not. However, our protocols are very secure and they make sure that the devices are not coming on to our network if they are not fit for that purpose of coming on to our network.

Ms DAVIS: My question is to the director-general. I refer to page 11 of Budget Paper No. 4, Budget Measures, and also to the answer to question on notice No. 7. It is around reprioritisation. In the response, there is a \$75.6 million amount allocated to reprioritisation in this year's budget, on top of the nearly \$2 million in reprioritisations last year. Can you provide me with some more detail with respect to how much of that \$75.6 million relates to procurement savings, which are mentioned in the response, and how much relates to back-office service delivery areas?

Dr Watterston: As you would appreciate, we have an annual budget of around \$13.5 billion. That reprioritisation—

Ms DAVIS: Just say 'cuts'. It is a lot easier and a lot truer.

Dr Watterston: It is 0.01 per cent of the budget. As a big agency, we are able to create that reprioritisation in a way that does not affect front-line services. I can get our deputy director-general of corporate services, who manages the finances, to give you the specific results of how we are managing that reprioritisation.

Ms DAVIS: In the response you cited two areas. One was back-office service delivery and one was in procurement savings. Maybe, Mr Hunt, you can provide that for me. I want to know which amount relates to procurement and which amount relates to the service delivery area.

Mr Hunt: I am sure you will understand that ours is a large and complex budget. Reprioritisation represents a very small fraction of one per cent of our budget. Each year we set a procurement savings target. I acknowledge the procurement services branch, which does an outstanding job in making sure that we maximise the benefit of public spend in this department. This year's target was about \$60 million for them to save in procurement spend across the ICT categories, the general goods and services category and the construction categories. By working smarter and making those savings, it prevents us from having to make any other more complex decisions around budget maximisation.

Already I think to the end of May the procurement savings were about \$57 million, from memory. That is why, when we answered that question on notice, procurement savings are the significant contributor to our internal savings. That is how we go about our business. That means we can protect the front-line service delivery whilst also maintaining an appropriate but frugal back office, so that we can support schools in the way we have been talking about through IT, HR, finance and other areas.

Ms DAVIS: Could you be a little more explicit for me about what the procurement savings look like? Is it about a capital works program—

Mr Hunt: It is in operational expenses, because you would be confusing capital and operative. The reprioritisation is typically operational expense funded, so the opex savings in procurement basically relate to areas of ICT, general goods and services, which are the—

Ms DAVIS: All product and no people? Is that what you are telling me? No positions were—

Mr Hunt: That is right, and in infrastructure spend. I can say, as I said a moment ago, that our savings are around \$50 million. The ICT category year-to-date savings to the end of May, I think these figures are at, are \$21.9 million for ICT, \$10.4 million for general goods and services and \$18.1 million for infrastructure savings of an operational nature. That is how we go about making sure that we can balance our budget.

CHAIR: I call the member for Maryborough.

Mr SAUNDERS: The SDS references a commitment to enhancing teaching and learning in Queensland schools. Teacher aides are an important resource in assisting teachers to achieve this outcome. What has the government done to enhance teaching and learning in the early years in this budget?

Ms JONES: As the member knows, one of the great announcements we made was with regard to additional teacher aide hours which are critical in earlier years learning. An additional 4,000 teacher aide hours every week will be rolled out for prep classrooms right across Queensland. I know this will be something that is extremely welcomed by teachers. It is something they have been calling for for a long time.

In response to the questions in the last segment that were asked of the DDG, I point out that the shadow minister said that there were cuts to spending as opposed to cuts in people. I think that is a really good point. There is a clear delineation and difference between Labor governments and LNP governments. For example, when the LNP was in government they cut 500 teachers through the way they changed their resourcing. It is true that 270 IT staff were cut.

We just had a heap of questions from the member for Albert about IT support. How did the LNP go about providing IT in schools? They cut 270 people from the IT division. That was their solution. Some 270 were people ripped out of IT. We will not do that. We have been talking about the record investment we are making.

They also cut 70 staff from the infrastructure division. We had a lot of questions this morning about infrastructure and the contrast between our government and their government when it comes to infrastructure. We have record investment in infrastructure with regard to capital works which is making a real difference in the schoolyard. They demanded that 70 people—and I know that they are laughing now—in the infrastructure division be cut. I speak to some of the public servants who had the responsibility of having to look people in the eye and say to them that they no longer had a job. It was a very tough time for public servants across-the-board.

We will stand by our election commitment which is to restore front-line services unlike Tim Nicholls's slash and burn approach as treasurer and what he would do if he were ever elected Premier of this state. Tim Nicholls has form when it comes to support staff in our schools, including teacher aides. The last time the LNP were in government, some years ago, they went after the cleaners. We know that each and every time they get onto the treasury bench—and Tim Nicholls is a classic example of it—

Miss BARTON: Point of order, Mr Chair. There is a very clear rule in the House that members must be referred to by their appropriate titles. The minister is well aware of that protocol and that standard.

CHAIR: Minister, could I ask you to refer to members of the House by their correct title.

Ms JONES: I am sorry. The Leader of the Opposition has form in this regard. When he was the treasurer he did not listen to the advice of his education minister and cut front-line services—in the classroom as well as 270 people from IT, 46 people from human resources, 70 staff from infrastructure and staff from 100 regional offices.

I was reading some of the third-party endorsements from our teachers and principals. They are saying that the support that we have devolved down to the regions—closer to schools where they have those direct relationships—is making a real difference in terms of the support they can provide in all years of learning. Every single Queenslander knows that there is a strong difference between the approach of the Leader of the Opposition, Tim Nicholls, which is to slash and burn jobs and that of the Labor government which is to restore front-line services as we promised.

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to page 5 of the SDS. Can the minister please explain how the Palaszczuk government is expanding access to the integrated early years service?

Ms JONES: This also goes to the heart of a number of issues that have been raised by members on all sides today about how we support families that need that integrated support service—families that may be experiencing difficulties with regard to health as well as family support. The integrated early years service brings together a number of different disciplines and services in a comprehensive strategy. It is about giving our youngest Queenslanders a positive start in their early development and lifelong journey.

We are providing a flexible model in this regard. We know that the first five years of a child's life is the most critical in terms of developing physical, emotional, social and language skills. We provided \$23 million in grants to organisations to support the delivery of integrated services at more than 53 Queensland communities—for example, the Gordonvale Early Years Centre, located in Mulgrave electorate; the Gowrie Barcaldine and Gowrie Blackall, both located in the Gregory electorate; the Kuunchi Kakana centre in Lockhart River, located in the Cook electorate; and the Kummara Early Years Support Service in the Inala electorate.

We are working very closely with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities to provide these integrated early services. In this year's budget I am very pleased to advise that a further \$24 million has been allocated to continue the great work that we are doing through this integrated model of support.

As the shadow minister would know being the former minister for communities, the integrated approach is one that is backed up by research. Having an integrated approach to early childhood services delivering help to families, particularly vulnerable families, and access to assistance where and when they need it is critical for us to ensure that children get access to early years learning. We have seen a lot of work with regard to access to playgroup and pre-prep programs and kindergarten programs as well as prep. We are working with families in an integrated way. It is a winner and we are backing it again in this year's budget.

Mrs MILLER: I have a question in relation to the interaction between teachers and child safety officers. I note that child safety officers are going to join police on the front line. Teachers are there and expected to teach and not expected to be child safety officers as well yet many teachers believe they are child safety officers in some shape, manner or form, particularly when students are coming to school and have not been bathed, fed et cetera. I would like to know whether there has been any discussion at all about child safety officers in situ in some state schools, particularly to keep a watchful eye over the students who are subject to child safety orders and also whether some consideration could be given to using schools to teach parents how to in fact parent?

Ms JONES: I could not agree more with the member in the sense that parents have a critical role to play in this space. I am very pleased to say that last year was the first year that we trialled a new support for our schools—the student protection principal advisers. This commenced in January 2016 and that was the first year we did it. That came about as a direct consequence of representations both from child safety officers working on the front line and teachers in schools.

For the first time ever we as a state Queensland said we would jointly fund out of the department of child safety and the department of education new student protection principal advisers. We have done that. I am very pleased to confirm that in this year's budget we are going to continue that program. Teachers have raised with me what a great help this additional resource has been.

The role of the student protection principal advisers is supporting teachers with their obligations under the child safety act and the education act and also provide continued monitoring and support for children who are in the in-care system to complete their studies. This is a new resource that goes to the heart of what you are talking about. In addition to that, we have also been providing professional development to our principals as well.

Mr SAUNDERS: With reference to page 5 of the SDS, can you please provide an update on how the Palaszczuk government is assisting the early childhood sector to support a child's positive transition to school?

Ms JONES: Once again this goes to providing our teachers with the best possible information and resources to deliver the best possible education, particularly in those early years of learning. We know that starting school is an important milestone not only for every child but also for every parent. I am sure every parent in this room still has the photograph of the day their child first started school.

We are making it easier and we have listened once again. I have an early years education round table where I meet with all sectors of the education system, including independent, Catholic and state education, as well as childcare providers to ask them what reforms we need in the early years space to provide more support not only for our prep teachers in the school space but also for our kindergarten teachers. You would have seen in the media recently that they want to mimic what happens in other states with a transition statement. The transition statement written by the qualified educator in the kindergarten program is provided directly to the prep teacher. Currently the model has been that this would be done through the parents. The onus has been on the parent to provide that transition statement. Under our process this will go directly from the educator in the kindergarten program directly to the educator at the school.

This is something that, as a parent, I think makes sense. I agree with our sector that this is a good way forward. We expect that the provision of that will increase from around 40 to 90 per cent. It is something that the industry has asked for and we have listened to. When we made this announcement that we would be implementing this Nicole Lessio, the Acting Executive Director of The Parenthood, said—

The Parenthood commends the efforts made by the Queensland government to making the early years count for young Queenslanders. We know that we can have the most impact in that three to five year age bracket to combat disadvantage and are impressed with the initiatives such as Deadly Kindy, elders, story tellers, e-kindy and the interesting and informative early years website.

There is universal support across the early education sector saying that transition statements will make a real difference for prep teachers. Once again, this is another example where we have listened to educators who have asked for reform and we are delivering that reform.

Mr WILLIAMS: On page 3 of the SDS it references the Palaszczuk government's commitment to ensuring Queensland schoolchildren have access to quality early learning and development opportunities to give them a confident start to life. Can you inform the committee how the Labor government has worked to ensure children's health, safety and wellbeing in the family day care arena?

Ms JONES: We believe, as does the federal government and the shadow minister, that family day care has to remain an option for families. We support families having a range of choices when it comes to the care of their children when they are at work. In 2016 I announced a new family day care task force to conduct targeted monitoring of higher risk services. Task force officers met with approved providers to discuss the outcomes of monitoring visits to drive continuous improvement and raise quality in services.

We have also put in place the toughest regulatory regime in the country. When you look at the national data you will find that we have said no to 60 per cent of people who have applied to open a family day care centre in Queensland. This is in stark contrast to Victoria, for example, where we saw an explosion. This has happened off the back of the childcare reforms put in place, predominantly by the federal government, with regard to how they fund support for child care. We have taken an approach which is a strict and strong and in the best interests of children. We are putting strict conditions also on approvals. The Palaszczuk government has secured \$9 million over two years to fund regulation and compliance of child care. I believe that we have taken a strong approach in this regard.

This is in stark contrast to what is happening at a federal government level. For the last five years we have had to go cap in hand every single year to try to get the funding we need to provide the regulation required under the national law. It is a national regulation that states, under the agreement, have to implement. The Turnbull government has not provided us with the funding that we need.

Despite the demand in child care in Queensland growing by more than 50 per cent since 2009 and family day care more than doubling, the Turnbull government has only offered \$8 per child to meet the obligations. In order to maintain the high-quality standards that I want as minister and what we believe Queenslanders expect, the Commonwealth should be, given the rate of growth and what they were previously funding, providing an additional \$35 million. Instead they are only offer \$6.9 million. This really is a slap in the face to families like mine—parents who are working—who rely on having a strong national framework.

All the hard work was done to put in place a proper national framework across Australia so parents could have confidence in that system. Yet the federal government is failing to fund it. What this means for me at a state level is that, instead of saying that we will accept that, I have had to go to the Treasurer and ask for additional funding, which he has given me, so we are in a position where, as I say, Queensland is once again seen as the state that has the toughest regime in the country.

CHAIR: I note that it is 3.30 pm. The committee will adjourn for a short break. The hearing will resume at 3.45 pm to continue the examination of estimates for Education.

Proceedings suspended from 3.30 pm to 3.46 pm



CHAIR: Welcome back, Minister and officials. The committee will continue to examine the estimates for Education. Before I call the member for Aspley, I believe we have a response to a question on notice from Mr Rider.

Mr Rider: Chair, with regard to the question in relation to the \$600,000 that I was asked earlier, I can advise that the QCAA was asked under the reprioritisation measures to refund three figures over three years. For 2017-18, it was \$183,000. For 2018-19, it is \$228,000. For 2019-20, it is \$276,000. I am assuming that is the \$600,000 that you were referring to. I have also just been told that, because we have just signed a lease extension at 154 Melbourne Street, the reduction that we were asked to do under the reprioritisation is covered by reductions in our lease. We have been given an incentive to sign the lease extension which will result in a \$260,000 saving each year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Rider. I call the member for Aspley.

Ms DAVIS: My first question in this session is to the director-general and goes to the Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3. The Claremont Special School was promised \$4.5 million in additional classrooms in 2016-17, yet there was an underspend of \$2 million. It looks like there was an overall quantum cutback. Will Claremont Special School get all of its extra classrooms as promised and on time?

Dr Watterston: I thank the member for the question. I will hand that over to the deputy director-general, who manages our infrastructure.

Mr Hunt: The Claremont Special School project, as you say, was for additional classrooms. The total estimated cost of those is \$8.174 million. Expenditure to date as at 30 June 2017 was \$2.7 million, with \$5.4 million allocated in this budget. As you would appreciate, these are budget estimates on projects that we are going forward with. Often they are yet to go to tender. We go to tender. We explore best pricing, making sure that the design and scope of those projects are there to meet the benefit of the school. We have a significant investment in special school infrastructure. We absolutely prioritise that.

Ms DAVIS: So this project will be delivered with the classroom numbers that the plan provides for and it will be delivered on time?

Mr Hunt: To the best of our ability, yes, weather permitting. Often infrastructure projects do find issues along the way, as you would well appreciate—if there is a wet summer or something. We typically try to do the building projects over school vacation periods to minimise the impact on schools. We work with contractors to get those projects ready for the next school year. To the best of my knowledge, there is nothing that would stand in the way of this, unless you have information that you need to share with me. Our project managers will obviously work with the school, as they do with every school project, to make sure that the project is delivered as well on time and on budget as is possible.

Ms DAVIS: My next question is around Currimundi Special School, which was promised more than \$6.8 million in extra classrooms last year but only \$100,000 appears to be spent. How is it that this project was delayed? It appears that it might blow out in costs by an extra \$2 million. Is that extra money purely overruns or will there be additional classrooms for that money?

Mr Hunt: Thank you for the question. Currimundi Special School, as you might appreciate, is a very constrained site. To put the additional infrastructure into that site, we have been going through a community consultation exercise. We looked at a range of options with regard to the design. The original design did not meet with favour from the engagement we had with the local community. We have gone back to a redesign model to make sure that we get something that works both for the school and for the community. You might appreciate that it is a very coastal seaside location at Currimundi Special School. We want to make sure that we work with the community to get the best result for that particular school. The project will proceed. It has been delayed because of the consultation and the redesign work to get the best result for that particular school.

Ms DAVIS: As a result of that consultation—I appreciate that you have told me that there has been a redesign—if you take that proposal back to the community and they are unhappy with it, will it go to another round of consultation or will it go ahead?

Mr Hunt: I believe we have gone through that process and we are now with an agreed design to go forward.

Ms DAVIS: It is agreed?

Mr Hunt: I believe so. I will wait until my infrastructure people tell me otherwise. I understand from my knowledge of that particular project that we have worked very hard to get the best solution on a difficult site to make sure that the students at Currimundi Special School can benefit from that new infrastructure investment.

Ms DAVIS: We certainly want them to be well catered for. There is no doubt about that. There was a new school announced at Coomera about 12 months ago at a cost of about \$50 million. It appears that this now has been scaled back to \$30 million. Will we see a smaller school? What happened to the other \$20 million allocated in the project?

Mr Hunt: Thank you for the question. That particular school is part of a bundle of school projects that we have gone to market on. We put a proposal forward to go to a new model, an innovative approach—design, construct and maintain. The intent of that was to put the bundle of schools together for purchasing power from the market in the tender process. We achieved significant savings through that and we will deliver those projects' full brief, with a lesser budget allocated as a result.

Ms DAVIS: Which are the schools involved in that bundle?

Mr Hunt: Yarrabilba, Caloundra South and Coomera.

Ms DAVIS: They will be delivered by the same construction company?

Mr Hunt: Yes. We went to tender as a bundle of schools. That will give them the purchasing power. That will help them work across the projects. It will help them make sure that they are involved in the design process and they can drive efficiencies across the projects. We are inviting them to

participate in the 'maintain' part of the model. There is no reduction in the scope of the schools. We typically build the schools to our standard requirements. That is what we will deliver with these schools. They are in growing and emerging communities. We want to make sure that they are signature schools for us. I guess they are a little bit of a hybrid between a traditional build and a PPP.

Ms DAVIS: Given that the locations of those schools are a little way away from each other and given that the successful tenderer is getting a bundle, as part of that, does that mean that they have to support local jobs?

Mr Hunt: Yes. We have gone to the market with a proposal to achieve the best spend for government. The market has responded and we have achieved that. We will be happy to deliver those schools. Again, these are signature community infrastructure investments in growing and emerging communities. If I take Yarrabilba, for example—I was there recently—it is a growing and emerging community at Yarrabilba, of course, south of Logan Reserve. That will be a signature school for that community. We are looking at how we can make sure that is a signature school that meets the needs of that particular community. We are doing that well within budget, which is what the Treasurer would expect us to do.

Ms JONES: And me!

Mr Hunt: And the education minister, of course, yes.

Ms DAVIS: Minister, can you explain how the Labor candidate for Everton knew about the funding for Albany Creek State High School when the school did not even know? I refer specifically to a tweet by the candidate.

Ms JONES: I do not even know who the person is. This is about the hall? I really do thank you for your line of questioning to the deputy director-general because it highlights the capital spend that we are investing. For example, we have spoken a lot about the investment we are making in special schools which is a direct consequence of our decision to increase the funding for capital works. As part of our decision to increase the funding for capital works, not only are we delivering jobs but also we are delivering new infrastructure. In regard to Everton—

Miss BARTON: I raise a point of order, Chair. There was a very particular question. I was wondering if the minister could get particularly to Albany Creek high school.

CHAIR: The minister has the ability to answer the question the way she sees fit. Having said that, Minister, I will also say to remain relevant.

Ms JONES: I am getting there. In regard to Everton, I thank the Labor candidate for Everton for their strong advocacy on behalf of their community. They should be very proud of what a Labor government is delivering in infrastructure. The decision to spend this infrastructure was a decision of cabinet. Who I talk to—

Ms DAVIS: I raise a point of order, Mr Chairman. The question was quite simple and it was: how did a Labor candidate find out about an announcement at Albany Creek State High School before the school knew?

CHAIR: Member for Aspley, I have made a ruling on that and I will reiterate that ruling. The minister can answer the question whichever way she sees fit.

Miss BARTON: She needs to be relevant.

Ms DAVIS: She needs to answer the question, surely, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: Excuse me! Do not show your disrespect to the chair while I am giving a ruling. The minister will answer the question in whichever way she sees fit. I have also guided the minister to say that she needs to remain relevant.

Ms JONES: I am happy to answer the question in the sense that, as I said, it was a decision of our government to build the hall. Our government has every right to tell our candidates about our spending as a government. I think—

Ms DAVIS: Just not the school.

Ms JONES: No. What I would say—and this answer has already been given in regard to the school—is that, as the deputy director-general said, there was a process of identifying need in local communities and delivering those halls consequently. I have had no-one raise with me through that school community that they do not want the hall. In fact, just like the candidate for Labor in that community, they have welcomed the announcement of the hall.

Ms DAVIS: Thank you, I think, Minister, for sort of answering the question. It was not about whether the school community wanted some extra infrastructure; it was about why a Labor candidate was advised and able to send out a tweet before you or your department rang Albany Creek high school and let them know. That was simply the question. My next question, though—

CHAIR: Member for Aspley, are you re-asking the question?

Ms DAVIS: I would, except it will not get answered, so I will move on to my question.

CHAIR: The answer is no?

Ms DAVIS: No. I will move to the next question.

CHAIR: Thank you. I ask you to move on to the next question.

Ms DAVIS: Minister, the people of Redlands are still waiting for the promised Redland Bay early years service that was announced last year. It appears that it is no closer to completion, despite promises that it would be almost finished by now. Why the go-slow on this particular project?

Ms JONES: I will try to get an answer for you in regard to that.

Ms DAVIS: Mr Hunt might be able to answer.

Ms JONES: No. It would be early childhood and education. This is the new integrated early years service. I was talking about those earlier. I am advised that Save the Children Australia was appointed earlier this year to operate an early learning service. I am not sure. I will have to find out for you. The only reason we have been talking about this is because Labor has funded integrated early years services. This is a Labor initiative and I will work on getting that information for you.

Miss BARTON: Are you taking it on notice?

CHAIR: Minister, will you take that on notice and you will—

Ms JONES: No, I am happy to answer it today. We still have another 45 minutes.

Mr BOOTHMAN: My question is in relation to the Capital Statement, Budget Paper No. 3, page 35, when it comes to addressing the high-priority needs for students and staff health and safety. That draws my attention to a *Gold Coast Bulletin* article from November 2015 when they quote the Minister for Education saying this regarding CCTV cameras in our schools—

I think all principals need to have a look at security at their school. As I said, there is funding available for security cameras and other security measures where principals feel they need to toughen up.

My question is to Mr Hunt. Could the deputy director-general tell us how many schools on the Gold Coast have actually had CCTV cameras rolled out to them?

Mr Hunt: I can advise that there are 198 Queensland state schools with CCTV systems. I would need to take that on notice, if that is okay, with regard to those that have already got CCTV. The question goes to the heart of school security. As I think we have talked about at previous estimates, the government does invest in a school security program. There is an allocation of funding this year of over \$9 million to support schools and school security. CCTV is not always the first option. We look at the data. We work with schools around the issues that they have been experiencing. We work with them to determine what is the security solution that might be best suited to their local context. That might be upgraded alarm systems, security fencing, increased government patrols or CCTV installations.

CHAIR: If I can just interrupt. Minister, will you take that question on notice whether you either report back later today or at a later time?

Ms JONES: I do not know. Yes. I can get back to you on Redlands.

CHAIR: The question was the number of schools down the Gold Coast that had either CCTV installed—

Ms JONES: I am happy to do that, but I think I have previously provided that in answer to a question on notice.

Mr Hunt: Sorry, Minister, we do not typically advise that publicly because of the nature of the security installation. It then often invites further targeting of those schools or damage to our CCTV systems. Approaches from the media in the past have similarly asked for that information and we do not give that out from a security perspective.

Mr BOOTHMAN: How many principals have actually asked for these CCTV cameras to be installed in their schools?

Mr Hunt: There are 65 Queensland state schools that have requested consideration of CCTV. As I said a moment ago, we work with them in relation to the data that is available for incidents at their school, be they vandalism, break and enter, damage to facilities or playgrounds, or material left on the site in playgrounds and the like. We work with them to get the best solution for the particular context. Again, we need to prioritise this work from within our budget to make sure that we are putting the investment where it is most needed to respond to the particular issues at a given school.

Mr BOOTHMAN: Is it the department who actually pays for the installation, or is it coming out of the schools' funds themselves?

Mr Hunt: We have a budget, as I indicated, of over \$9 million to address individual security issues. The opportunity is there for schools to also invest. A number of our schools have chosen to invest their own funds in a whole range of security measures be they different locks, different gating systems and the like. We work with those schools. As I said, there are 65 schools that we are currently talking with about the appropriate response to their solution. I think the member for Aspley would be familiar with the installations that we have put in at Aspley State High School. That was security fencing, not CCTV. That has reduced markedly the security incidents at that school. Again, for security purposes, I do not really want to talk about a particular context, but there has been a significant reduction.

Mr BOOTHMAN: My point is if the school needs these cameras and they are requesting them, are they getting them?

Mr Hunt: We have done six schools in the last 12 months with CCTV installations.

Mr BOOTHMAN: There would be a lot greater need than just six schools, especially in my region. I know my school communities are very keen to have them to protect their assets from vandalism and to know exactly what is going on at the front of their schools.

Mr Hunt: I can only reiterate what I indicated and that is that we work with those individual school principals to work out what is the best solution and it is a combination of factors typically. If there are particular contexts I am more than happy to meet with you outside of estimates to talk those through.

Mr WILLIAMS: I refer to page 8 of the SDS. Can you outline how the Palaszczuk Labor government is improving the attendance and engagement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, please?

Ms JONES: It is a real achievement, as we heard from the director-general previously. Before I get there, with your indulgence, I might answer the question that was asked of me in regard to the Redlands new early years service. I can say to the honourable member for Aspley that I am advised that the refurbishment of the existing buildings at Capalaba State School where it will be housed will be finalised this year. It is meant to be completed in late 2017, so it is on track to be delivered this year. In regards to the delay that you talked about, I have been advised that the department did seek to appoint a service provider in 2015. However, the proposals that were submitted did not adequately address the needs of the local community. In consultation with the local community we are delivering this solution. The funding has always been there. Works are now underway and we expect it to be completed this year. Chair, when do we get clarity on what the questions on notice are? Do we do that at the end of the session?

CHAIR: I can advise you at the end of this line of questioning if you wish.

Ms JONES: Great, thank you. Honourable member for Pumicestone, we are very proud that as a government we have had a real focus—and I want to acknowledge the great work that is happening in state schooling in particular, both through Patrea Walton's leadership and also Sel in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education. We are working hard to close the gap. We know that if every single child is able to have a good quality education, life outcomes improve. The state school attendance gap, for example, still stands at 7.2 per cent with 85 per cent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students attending each day compared to 92.2 per cent. However, we have just launched our second phase of the Every Day Counts campaign to reach isolated and disadvantaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families to lift school attendance rates. We plan to close the gap completely in the next four years. We are working very hard to close the gap in this measure. As the director-general said earlier, we already have closed the gap, for example, in QCE attainment here in Brisbane and we are very close to closing the gap in the rest of Queensland.

We are also trialling and piloting new programs and new partnerships including programs such as the Clontarf Foundation academies, which have successfully re-engaged Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys in school by actively working with them through sport. I have had the opportunity of

seeing this firsthand in Cherbourg. Two years ago the program began in seven Darling Downs south-west schools—Cherbourg State School, Kingaroy, Murgon and Mount Lofty state high school in Toowoomba. There you go; I visited Cherbourg State School. This year we expanded the program to Cairns in semester 1 and Townsville in semester 2, which the honourable chair would be very pleased about. I also want to acknowledge your leadership once again, member for Townsville, in this regard. He lobbied strongly for this support for young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys to complete their schooling. Our government has now committed more than \$18 million over five years for the Clontarf Foundation, supporting more than 1,700 boys to stay longer in schools. Importantly, we are also delivering engagement strategies with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander girls as well in partnership with, for example, the Stars Foundation, the Brisbane Broncos and Netball Queensland. This sports and also art related program is due to start in term 3. This will be supporting almost 600 girls in schooling.

As I have already advised, Queensland has achieved some of Australia's best NAPLAN data when it comes to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. I want to rephrase that. Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students have achieved some of the best NAPLAN data in our country. It is because of their work and their determination as students, working closely with our teachers in our schools, that we are seeing this significant lift. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students in all 20 test areas for mean scale scores achieved the national minimum standard in 12 out of the 20 test areas for the upper two bands. As the director-general said in his contribution earlier, our story of closing the gap for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Queensland is one that other states can look to as an example of what we are able to achieve. I mentioned a little bit earlier that, for example, the New South Wales government only has a target of 65 per cent of their Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students completing year 12. That is not good enough. We have closed the gap here in Brisbane and we want that to be the experience of all of our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students. In actual fact a couple of weeks ago I was at the opening of our second—we ran one last year and we ran one this year—Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander education conference which Selwyn Button helps organise. It was a great conference and there were many educators in the room; some of our great principals and teachers were in the room. The goal there was for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students to be the smartest kids, the highest achieving kids in every classroom, and they should be. That is exactly what all of us should be aiming towards.

CHAIR: I have a question for you. With reference to page 3 of the SDS, can the minister outline how the government is enabling more students to stay in the Torres Strait to complete their senior schooling?

Ms JONES: I think that most members of parliament have had the opportunity to go to the Torres Strait. It is a beautiful part of Queensland. I know the shadow minister has been there a number of times wearing different hats in her career. It is a beautiful part of the world. I had the opportunity to be there also a number of weeks ago. I want to acknowledge not only the great work that is happening at the school there but also the collaborative approach we have with the federal government. Nigel Scullion, the federal minister for Indigenous policy, has said that he will support us in trying to build a boarding facility there. I went to Thursday Island and Tagai College where we got to meet a number of the students and meet the principal and staff there. We made an announcement that we would be making a \$3 million contribution to building a new college facility there. This will enable students from across the Torres Strait to not have to leave the Torres Strait Islander community to come down to either Cairns, Townsville or Brisbane for secondary school but to stay within the Torres Strait and be closer to their family, friends and connections. When I spoke to the students about what this would mean for them—and I also had the opportunity to go to the primary school campus and talk to some of the year 6 students that are actively making that choice about where they will be completing boarding school. We as a department support all choices. There is a strong tradition in some families for students to go to the boarding school that their mum or their father went to here in Brisbane, Townsville or Cairns. Also there are some families who want to have their little ones—and I still call them little ones because they are only in year six. I cannot imagine my boy going that far. I joke that he can go to the boarding house across the road if he does not behave. We give that choice to families. I am very hopeful that with the announcement of our \$3 million contribution we will also see funding forthcoming from the federal government. I do want to put on the Hansard record today that Nigel Scullion, the federal minister, has been a great advocate in this regard. I am very hopeful that we will be able to deliver a new boarding house facility in this community.

Mr SAUNDERS: With reference to education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, can the minister update the committee on the situation in Aurukun?

Ms JONES: As I said, we have been working really hard to improve the learning outcomes for all students across Queensland including in Aurukun. I want to acknowledge up-front the great work of the executive principal there, Michael Ennis. I have received very good feedback about not only his leadership but also his collaborative approach in working with not only elders in the community but also the local council and, really excitingly, the P&C. We have previously talked at this forum about the fact that there was not an active P&C in the past. I am very pleased to advise that we do have an active Parents and Citizens' Association now at the school. They have met five times recently and we are seeing really high numbers of attendance at those P&C meetings as well.

One of the reforms that we introduced following the review that was undertaken in 2016 was the reintroduction of years 7 and 8 to the Aurukun State School. This is something in particular that the council and the mayor raised with me personally saying that they believe that, as I have just talked about with the Torres Strait, Aboriginal students who live in Aurukun have the opportunity to go to school in their local community and also be supported to go to boarding school if that is what their family and the student chooses. They have that flexibility there.

I am very pleased to say that since we have reintroduced years 7 and 8 into schooling up there we have seen 39 full-time enrolments in the secondary years of schooling in Aurukun State School. That figure has now climbed to 47, including two students who were beyond the compulsory age of schooling and have chosen to attend school and participate in learning. In term 1, for example, the 2017 attendance data for Aurukun primary school was 10.5 per cent higher than in term 1 in 2016. We will continue to work with the principal, the Aurukun school community and the parents and citizens of the school to continue to see improved outcomes with regard to teaching and learning in the Aurukun community. I also think it is correct to say that we have full employment of our teacher positions there. We wanted long-term teacher positions there, and that is certainly what we have been seeing.

Mrs MILLER: My question is in relation to infrastructure. In relation to Kruger State School, can you advise when the new admin block will be built and when the security fence will be built?

Mr Hunt: I do not have that detail to hand, but I will have it very shortly and I will come back to you.

Ms JONES: Apparently the security fence is term 3, so that will be delivered in term 3 this year. We will get you advice on the admin block.

Mrs MILLER: In relation to Springfield Central State High School, I know that the money has been allocated for their new hall. Can you please advise me about any delays in relation to the construction of that new hall at the high school?

Mr Hunt: I think we are in the very early stages of that project at the moment. As the minister indicated, we have just gone out to tender for those hall projects and we will know more if there are. I am not aware of any. I have not been briefed on any specific delays with that particular project but, as I indicated to the member for Aspley a little while ago, there are often delays when we get into the detailed elements of some infrastructure projects, and we will work with vendors and the school communities to deliver as soon as possible and on time and on budget.

Mrs MILLER: Maybe I could enlighten you. It is not a delay with the tendering process on behalf of the department; I think it is a delay in relation to the ownership of the land.

Mr Hunt: I am not aware of that.

Mrs MILLER: If you can take that on notice and get back to me.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms JONES: Yes, I think the question is: can we get to the bottom of whether there is a delay? We have been advised that there is no delay, but we are happy to have a look at that on the basis of the question.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, for a number of reasons not all of the more than 540,000 students in Queensland state schools are suited for the mainstream learning environment. Page 4 of the SDS references at-risk disengaged students and supporting them through alternative learning options. Can you inform the committee of these initiatives?

Ms JONES: This goes to the heart of what I have been talking about all day. The opening questions from the opposition were all about what is wrong with our schools; I have always been focused on what is right with our schools. Our focus as a department and my focus as a Labor minister has to be how to engage those students who are at risk of falling out of the education system. We have a strong belief in social justice, and we know that students who finish year 12 have much better life

outcomes in terms of health outcomes, economic outcomes and overall wellbeing. Even if you do not want to do it from a social justice perspective, which is often where Labor governments come from, if you want to use an economic rationalist's position, which is often the domain of the opposition, we also know that for every dollar invested in re-engaging young people in schools and education we get a \$12 return. Not only is this an investment well worth making for the wellbeing of young Queenslanders; it is also a worthwhile investment with regard to providing good value for money for taxpayers and Queenslanders.

When I was privileged enough to become the education minister, that was one of the very first conversations the director-general and I had when we met and spoke about what our focus would be during our term. I said very clearly up-front—and it was great to have the assurance of the director-general that this is something he is also passionate about—that if we are going to make a difference in someone's life, this is it. We can make a difference when we start to see that a student may not be on the path to success.

I have talked about the success coaches that we have rolled out, and this is a direct consequence of those success coaches in regions. When we identify a student who we think may be at risk of not completing their schooling, we start intervention. We start working with the families, we start working with their home group teacher and we start working with the guidance officer and those other support services we have been putting in place over the last three budgets, because we think it is our No. 1 responsibility to get to those students.

As we said, in 2016 we had a lot of success: 4,146 young people have re-engaged in education. That is something that I know the director-general and I are very proud of, and I think the whole department has a right to be proud because it does take a holistic approach. We estimate that the lifetime economic benefit of this is almost \$500,000 per student and \$2 billion across the education system. Of course there are major community benefits, whether it be reduction in unemployment costs, reduction in health system costs or reduction in crime and justice costs.

Our strategies to re-engage disadvantaged at-risk youth range in a number of ways. One is the provision of additional vocational education and training. As you heard before, one of the most at-risk groups of students, as the honourable shadow minister highlighted in her questioning, is students who are in the juvenile detention system. As the director-general said, one of the reasons there was a spike in that data is that we provided more additional vocational education and training in our juvenile detention centre in Townsville to re-engage those students in learning. There are also pathway colleges at Mount Gravatt, Bundamba, Goodna, Bracken Ridge and now Townsville, as well as the Eagleby Learning College and support campuses at Varsity Lakes. We have also been supporting training and employment pathways for our students through the state government's very successful Skilling Queenslanders for Work program. I will not go into too much detail about Skilling Queenslanders for Work, because I think that Yvette D'Ath does a very good job talking about that whenever possible. Skilling Queenslanders for Work has seen more than 1,350 young people supported in the Get Set for Work and Youth Skills programs.

The other thing is—and I talked a lot about this today because I know all of the senior executive team here today and I think it is critical—looking at how we can better resource our regions to provide education for those students who need it most. The director-general talked about disengaged at-risk students. We know who they are; that is the key thing. We are working on early identification and putting supports in place, like the member for Bundamba talked about, for students who are, for example, suffering from mental illness. We are trying to identify earlier, through additional resources, those students who are at risk and putting supports in earlier. I think that is all I need to say. Director-General, I know that this is something you are passionate about so I do not feel that I can deny you the opportunity to speak.

Dr Watterston: I would like to say a few things. First of all, probably the foremost educator in the world, Michael Fullan, says that if every person in an organisation focuses on the same goal then you will always achieve it. We have 86,000 people who work for our department. I think we have energised every single one of them to focus on the ultimate moral imperative. The ultimate moral imperative is to make sure that everyone is able to access their right to a quality education. For lots of different reasons, in a range of different challenging circumstances, people fall out along the way. A lot of our students have been early leavers or for some reason disconnected. It is not always in a school's interest to go back and find those students and bring them in because they lower the achievement rate. Their literacy is not great. What we have done in Queensland is really focus on making sure that we not only bring

those students back in but also wrap services around them, and the whole community strives to make sure that everyone gets a quality chance to be on a pathway that is going to give them success as they get older. As the minister said, there were 4,146 students in 2016 and 1,471 this year.

I wanted to speak at the end of the minister's explanation of what we are doing to thank everyone in our system who has really galvanised their energy behind this most important imperative. I have worked in three other states and territories and, while everyone has cared about students and trying to re-engage them, I have never in my life seen a strategy that has changed the culture of an organisation and has given everyone that warm glow about making sure that those who are the most challenged and marginalised in our society get a second, third or even tenth chance if they need it. That is what life is about. I think everyone makes mistakes or has choices thrust upon them that do not suit them in the long term, and it is so important to know that there is a system here.

I also acknowledge the non-government schools, the alternative settings—there are 19 of them in Queensland—that work hand in glove with our department. We have managed to set up a network of those schools along with our own flexi centres and the regional hubs, so this is a statewide approach. Every single region in Queensland is focusing on making sure they identify who these young people are, and then they find ways to entice them back into formal engagement so we can work with them and meet their needs. To do that you have to make sure that it is more enjoyable inside the fence than outside the fence. I applaud every single principal who has worked hard to make sure they create a setting that welcomes these people back and sustains their focus within the education setting.

There is a lot of work to do. There are still more potential students out there—young people who have disengaged—but everyone now is on task and we are all focused on the same outcome. It is a wonderful department to be the director-general of when you know that so many people are striving to do right by their community.

CHAIR: Before we go to the member for Hervey Bay, there is some conjecture around a question which may have been taken on notice about the number of schools requesting internet upgrades.

Mr Hunt: In 2016-17 we had 22 requests for broadband upgrades, 14 of which have been completed and eight of which are in the process of being completed.

CHAIR: What about the recent questions from the member for Bundamba?

Mr Hunt: In relation to Kruger State School, the admin block is identified on their school infrastructure plan as their priority. It has not been allocated funding in our capital works program yet, but we are working with the school and that will go through the prioritisation process that we discussed earlier. The Springfield hall is going on council land. We understand that the council contribution towards that project is over \$2 million, and we are working with council. We are in the design phase for that project.

CHAIR: According to our records, they are the only questions that need answering.

Mr SORENSEN: While we are on the subject of internet, will Hervey Bay schools be hooked up to the internet when the NBN comes through next year?

Mr Hunt: The NBN is obviously a great opportunity for us. As I said earlier, albeit Telstra do not run the NBN, we are partnering with them in terms of network architecture and traffic. We certainly are looking forward to the benefits of NBN for additional school internet speed. We will work with those schools again to achieve the speeds they would want to have for teaching and learning purposes. The NBN presents a range of opportunities for us but it also presents a number of challenges, with our copper based telephony systems and the like. We need to reconsider how we go about integrating them in an NBN world.

Mr SORENSEN: Is the government looking at continuing to put air conditioning into schools, especially with temperatures reaching about 40 degrees? I have a few schools in Hervey Bay, especially Urangan high school, that have reached that temperature. It makes it very uncomfortable for teachers to teach in those conditions. Would the government put solar panels in to reduce electricity costs when they do that?

Mr Hunt: There is a Cooler School Zone that is identified as part of our infrastructure investment. We have allocated \$18.5 million in 2017-18 for air conditioning upgrades and maintenance. You would understand that, as that program rolls through, often that air-conditioning infrastructure wears out and needs servicing and upgrading, particularly in coastal areas, so there is an \$18.5 million allocation for that. In addition to that, any new school that we build has what we call passive cooling design, so it has breezeways and draws the air up and through the buildings to keep them as cool as possible. With

regard to the third part of the question in relation to solar energy in schools, almost 100 per cent of our schools have some form of solar installation currently and you might have seen recently that we have just been out for a market sounding process under what we call our ACES program, Advancing Clean Energy in Schools program, and that has been to collect information from the market about how we can best do energy efficiency in terms of anything from energy efficient lighting, coatings that will be reflective through to insulation through to solar through to electricity monitoring and the like—the full gambit of opportunities—and we are currently in the consideration of the feedback that we got through that market sounding process. The short answer to your question is, yes, we are looking at opportunities to enhance energy efficiency in part with solar.

Mr SORENSEN: The Urangan school has a program where parents are looking at ways of doing it. I think it is important because it is an older school. It is built on the ground and has very little airflow. It is not like the new classrooms at Hervey Bay High where there is ventilation going through the school and it cools it down. The school at Urangan State High is terrible. The design was not to get that airflow going through the school's classrooms. One teacher nearly fainted there one day.

CHAIR: Member for Hervey Bay, with all due respect, do you have a question?

Ms JONES: I was enjoying listening to him advocating on behalf of his community.

Mr SORENSEN: I am just explaining what is needed.

Ms JONES: He can have all the time he wants.

CHAIR: Thank you. Do you have a further question, member for Hervey Bay?

Mr SORENSEN: No.

CHAIR: If not, I call the member for Aspley.

Ms DAVIS: Thank you very much, Mr Chair. I want to continue to ask some questions around the CCTV cameras, Mr Hunt. Just to clarify, did you say that you have a budget of \$9 million and in a 12-month period you provided CCTVs for six schools?

Mr Hunt: Our budget for security, which includes fencing responses and other installations to enhance school security, is over \$9 million. What I indicated was that we have had 65 requests. We are scoping 20 of those projects and, to answer the member for Albert's specific question, I think there are from memory eight requests from your electorate, two of which we are scoping. We are doing 20 projects out of those 65 during 2017-18. That is what we are looking at.

Ms DAVIS: So there is a cap. If 100 schools came to you and said, 'We want CCTV cameras,' you would say, 'No, there's only 20.' Is that what you are saying?

Mr Hunt: No. We will continue to work through the prioritisation process. As you indicated earlier, we have made some savings from some other parts of our capital program and from our infrastructure program and that will allow us to reinvest into other installations as we go forward. As I indicated earlier as well, some schools have chosen to—even though they have been classified as low or not requiring immediate attention by us by our prioritisation process and by the data that informs that—make some installations on their own accord which they can do.

Ms DAVIS: I visited a school in the last 12 months—and thank you, Minister, for allowing that to happen—and the weekend prior to my visit they had once again been vandalised and the school leadership team had been in contact with whomever it is that deals with putting CCTV cameras in and essentially was told, 'You must pay half.' I imagine there is a process, but are there guidelines? This was not the first time the school had been vandalised—it had been several times—and they were explicitly told that they would have to pay half. I am not a security expert, but whoever came on behalf of the department to scope the school was only prepared to put in one CCTV camera and it was not going to have the span it needed. I am not sure, to be fair, whether that school now has CCTV cameras, but it was interesting for me in that I do not know what else the school had to have happen to it in order for it to receive priority to get CCTV cameras.

Mr Hunt: I will go back to my earlier response, and that is that CCTV in itself is not a magic bullet necessarily to solving vandalism or incidents at schools. This is a structured framework where basically we look at the range of solutions that can contribute to overall security, and I guess it is no different to our own homes in terms of alarms, fencing, locks, window protection and all of those things that go towards insuring and assuring schools.

Ms DAVIS: Mr Hunt, if you went down there you would see that the CCTV camera is quite isolated. My uneducated guess would have been that that would have been the right response for that school, but thank you very much for clarifying that.

Mr Hunt: And very happy to talk about that if you would like to.

Ms DAVIS: I want to ask some questions around disability education, specifically the Deloitte report. Minister, recommendation 5.3 of the Deloitte disability education report relates to restrictive practices. Given my former role I appreciate the issues that surround restrictive practices, but since the recommendations were accepted by government how many times has the use of a restrictive practice been reported?

Ms JONES: I thank the honourable member for her question and I will endeavour to get that information for you, but can I be very clear: I know that the shadow minister has a genuine commitment to improving the support for students with disability and indeed everybody with a disability in our Queensland community. Similar to the shadow minister, when I came into this role, given some of the incidents that we have seen reported, the best thing to do was to do a wide ranging review because that had not been done in Queensland ever and certainly not in the last decade or more. As a consequence of that, as you said, we had a wideranging review. I think there were more than 3,000 submissions or teachers who were interviewed as part of that process, and the recommendations we are working through now. It is also about minimising any restrictive practices but recognising that we have many students that we cater for in schooling that have complex needs. Unfortunately the leader of One Nation has now left, but I want to reject firmly Pauline Hanson's assertion that children with autism do not belong in our schools. Of course they belong in our schools and they deserve the right to be educated like every single other student in Queensland.

For me this is a line in the sand. It is about taking a leadership response that says that we want to upskill our staff and support our staff to provide for all students, including those with a disability. One of the key things that we said was that we needed a new position in our department to drive this reform. Deb Dunstone has now been appointed as a Disability and Inclusion Assistant Director-General to run this role because I think genuinely, and as the shadow minister appreciates, it is about cultural change and reform. As I have said to Stephanie Gotlib, the CEO of Children With Disability Australia, who has been a fantastic advocate on behalf of children with a disability and was also heavily involved in being interviewed as part of this process, I want to provide the resources and leadership to deliver that reform. Did you want to talk about that, Deb, in your new role?

Ms DAVIS: Mr Chair, if you do not mind, given that our time frame is reducing—

Ms JONES: Yes, but she is trying to answer the question now, sorry.

CHAIR: I ask you if you can keep your response quite short.

Ms Dunstone: I note the question and, yes, restrictive practices are part of the recommendations that sit in the Deloitte review. We are working hard with school communities and leadership teams to think about inclusive practices and what we need to do as an organisation to build on that. We are currently talking to principals right across the state as part of a state school roadshow that we are conducting with the deputy director-general and I think we are all looking for the least intrusive approach to manage some very complex behaviours for students.

Ms DAVIS: Thanks very much for that, Ms Dunstone. As part of that roadshow that you were talking about, will all teachers be trained in the use of restrictive practices or only in special schools or those schools for whom there are—

CHAIR: Order! You need to direct your question either to the minister or to the—

Ms DAVIS: My apologies. My question is to Ms Dunstone further to her comments.

Ms JONES: I am happy for Ms Dunstone to answer again. This is why we created this position—exactly for this reason.

Ms DAVIS: Will all teachers be trained in this?

Ms Dunstone: Yes, and I think as the minister has mentioned before just last week we had the Positive Behaviour for Learning Conference and there were 500 teachers as part of that process. We have had all of the heads of special education recently come in for a two-day meeting to talk to them about the capability development that we want to invest in. There will absolutely be investment and teacher development in this space and we are currently working through the PBL lens, which was one of the recommendations in the Deloitte review, and evidence based practice that certainly leads the work in this way. That is our intent and we will absolutely provide that to staff.

Ms DAVIS: Thanks very much. My next question is to the director-general. Director-General, in answer to question on notice No. 510 I was advised that the Department of Education and Training does not collect information on the number of student plans created by schools in terms of students with a disability. Why would that be?

Dr Watterston: There are school plans obviously and every school has a school improvement and a plan that focuses on the needs of the whole site, but every student who has a disability has a plan.

Ms DAVIS: Is it mandatory?

Dr Watterston: Absolutely. For us to collect those would be a redundant task because they are the focus of the school's work. We have assistant regional directors that work in every region. We have increased our number of assistant regional directors from 23 four years ago to about 48 now, so they have a ratio of about 27 schools each and they work across those schools and are the interface, I suppose, with the policy end of the department and making sure the practice meets those needs. Even though we do not collect them, there is quality assurance and there is work that goes right across the system to make sure that those plans are not only constructed around the individual needs of the student but the implementation with fidelity occurs in every case. That is the explanation around the planning, but I think the planning process is incredibly thorough and supported by experts in the field.

Ms DAVIS: Director-General, I have had a few meetings with some parents with children with ASD who have told me that at their schools the plans are not mandatory and that there is no conversation between the carer or the parent and the school. Why are schools not implementing or creating these plans if you are saying that they are mandatory because there are parents who are very concerned about this, particularly with the number of kids with ASD? I agree with the minister: I think they have a place in our classrooms, but there needs to be the right support behind it and often times that support can be driven by having a well constructed and considered EAP.

Dr Watterston: The plans should be there and from time to time communication is not always perfect and some of those complaints get through to my desk as well. Without knowing the person concerned, they would need to work through their regional office or through their autism coach or through Ms Dunstone's new role to make sure that we can then support the school to ensure that that plan is developed to the level that it should be.

Ms DAVIS: But why do not school principals or heads of the special education units know that creating an EAP is mandatory, because it is not just one parent who has come to see me, Director-General; it is a swag of them? We want children to have the very best educational journey that they can, irrespective of ability. That complements and supports their abilities, so if parents are coming and telling me that schools are not doing these plans then I think the message needs to get down from the top that you will create these plans to support these children so that they have the best educational journey in the classroom. I think it is imperative that that occurs.

Dr Watterston: I want it noted in *Hansard* that I support your answer to that question.

Ms JONES: Bit of leverage there too, Chair.

Dr Watterston: I support that entirely and I think that that is what unites us all in this room today—that we all do want the very best for children. Where that communication or that practice breaks down exactly as you explained, that message needs to be reinforced.

Ms DAVIS: Will you commit to me that you will reinforce that message?

Ms JONES: That is Deb's job. That is why I appointed her. That is exactly what her job is.

Dr Watterston: That is the brand-new position that we have created.

Ms DAVIS: It needs to be done and it needs to be done as a matter of priority.

Ms JONES: I can organise a meeting with you and Deb Dunstone in this new role. As I said, I am taking this at face value and am genuine in the sense that we have not done well enough to support students with disabilities in schools across the country. I think that the number of initiatives that we have done go to the heart of that. The autism hub came as a consequence of parents of children with autism coming to me saying, 'We need to do more.' That is why we have done it. The reading centre is there. We have worked with SPELD because parents have said to me, 'We need to do better with children with dyslexia. We have spent \$1 billion a year on supporting children with a disability and upgraded an inclusion and disability coach as a consequence of the wideranging review that I implemented, because I want to do better to support every student, including students with a disability.'

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The time allocated to consider the estimates of expenditure in the Education portfolio has expired. I do not believe that there are any questions on notice.

Ms JONES: I thank the committee, all four of my shadow ministers, the *Hansard* reporters and the staff, as well as the department. Thank you.

CHAIR: The transcript of this session will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within two hours. Thank you, Minister, and departmental officers for your attendance.

Proceedings suspended from 4.45 pm to 4.50 pm

ESTIMATES—EDUCATION, TOURISM, INNOVATION AND SMALL BUSINESS COMMITTEE—INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND THE DIGITAL ECONOMY

In Attendance

Hon. LM Enoch, Minister for Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business

Mr D Lato, Acting Chief of Staff

Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation

Mr J Merrick, Director-General

Mr E Hills, Deputy Director-General, Corporate

Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games

Mr D Walker



CHAIR: The committee will now examine the proposed expenditure in the Appropriation Bill 2017 for the portfolio areas of the Minister for Innovation, Science, and the Digital Economy and Minister for Small Business. The committee will examine the minister's portfolio of Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy until 6.20 pm and the Small Business portfolio from 6.20 pm to 7.20 pm. The visiting members we have with us today are Mrs Tarnya Smith MP, the member for Mount Ommaney and shadow minister for science, innovation the digital economy, and the member for Bundamba, Mrs Jo-Ann Miller.

I remind everyone today that these proceedings are proceedings of parliament and are subject to the standing rules and orders of the parliament. It is important that questions and answers are relevant and succinct. Standing orders 112 and 115 that apply in parliament also apply in this hearing. Questions should be brief and relate to one issue. They should not contain long or subjective preambles, argument or opinion. I intend to guide proceedings so that relevant issues can be explored and there is adequate opportunity for questions from government and non-government members.

On behalf of the committee, I welcome the minister, the Hon. Leeanne Enoch MP, the Director-General of the Department of Science, Information Technology and Innovation, Mr Jamie Merrick, and departmental officers. For the benefit of Hansard, I ask the departmental officers to identify themselves the first time they answer a question referred to them.

I now declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas of Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy, including the State Library of Queensland, and Small Business open for examination. The question before the committee is—

That the proposed expenditure be agreed to.

Minister, I invite you to make an opening statement of up to five minutes.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair and members of the committee. I am proud to come before this committee again to report on progress in my portfolio. Our task is the transformation of our economy, our society and how the government works and interacts with Queenslanders. Through Advance Queensland we are working to position our state for success in a rapidly changing world. We are supporting Queensland innovators, encouraging collaboration between industry and researchers, and shaping the critical skills that are needed to engage in today's knowledge economy.

The direct results for our small businesses, start-ups and entrepreneurs are great, but the wider tangible benefits will improve the quality of life for all Queenslanders. Through Advance Queensland we are assisting researchers seeking cures for cancer and those making the early detection of cerebral palsy in newborns. We are helping to improve the long-term prospects for people suffering from heart disease and providing funding for next-generation wheelchairs to be designed and manufactured here in Queensland. Just as importantly, we are delivering improved environmental outcomes for our waterways and the Great Barrier Reef so that future generations, too, can marvel at our state's unrivalled natural beauty.

Across all regions of our state there are hundreds of examples of where our \$420 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative is working. As at 30 June 2017, our government has committed more than \$205 million of this investment to back 1,650 innovators across Queensland

whose projects, I am proud to say, are driving 4,821 jobs. We are powering the innovators, the entrepreneurs and the small businesses. We are powering the great ideas of Queenslanders because that is the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the staff of my department for the role they played in particular to support the community through Cyclone Debbie. This ranged from deploying ocean buoys to track the path of Cyclone Debbie to answering over 100,000 SES and community recovery calls and making 64,000 community payments. We contributed to the 24/7 recovery efforts over a number of weeks and helped families, businesses and communities get back on their feet.

My agency is also at the heart of improving government services and operations to deliver the next generation of digital government. Through the one-stop-shop program the Queensland government is now delivering more than 400 online services. Visits to qld.gov.au increased from 33.4 million in 2015 to 62.9 million in 2017. We are committed to designing services around the needs of Queenslanders to bring simplified and personalised experiences to citizens and businesses. DSITI has completed the delivery of some of the most complex ICT programs in recent history, including the government wireless network and the 1 William Street ICT integration.

QSS has migrated eight agencies from legacy finance solutions into a single consolidated and supported solution now shared by 19 agencies. QSS has also upgraded the core payroll system, supporting 34,000 public servants. This is in addition to successfully migrating the Inspector-General Emergency Management and Queensland Corrective Services staff from the Lattice to the Aurion system throughout the HRIS program.

Meanwhile, through CITEC we have maintained an industry-leading 99.98 per cent availability of services. CITEC has successfully protected our government against 36 denials of service as big as or bigger than the one that impacted last year's census. The growing importance of CITEC, as our front line in cyber resilience, demonstrates how right we were to retain CITEC in government ownership.

These results show that we are not just talking; we are also delivering new services for Queenslanders and major savings for customer agencies. We continue to open up new opportunities for Queensland SMEs and start-ups to contribute. Eight agencies are now part of the Advance Queensland Testing Within Government program. Following on from last year, when we doubled the number of SMEs the department is doing business with, I am proud to say that we have more than doubled that number yet again. That is good for taxpayers and it is good for jobs in Queensland.

We are making the government smarter, more efficient and more responsive to the changing needs of Queenslanders. We are delivering a truly digital government—one that best supports Australia's most entrepreneurial state, Queensland.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. I call the member for Mount Ommaney for her series of questions.

Mrs SMITH: Thank you, Chair. Thank you to the committee for allowing me to participate today and thanks for coming along, Minister. I refer to page 7 of the SDS. Minister, can you outline the importance of the Public Records Act 2002 and the importance of maintaining official public records by all public servants, ministers and their officers?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As the member would be aware, we have a State Archives facility in Runcorn where some of the most important stories of Queensland are held. This is an historic capture of our state from its inception and before. This information that we are able to gather as public records is incredibly important for the story of Queensland. In terms of the importance of public records with regard to members et cetera, of course, this continues to tell a story of what is happening today in terms of decision-making so that we can have an accurate portrayal of the story of Queensland into the future.

Mrs SMITH: Thank you, Minister. Minister, again, referring to page 7 of the SDS, have you ever used a personal email account to conduct government business?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the follow-on question. In keeping with the Public Records Act, I have not conducted any ministerial business with third parties via personal email.

Mrs SMITH: Thank you, Minister. Since the State Archivist is not allowed to be here today, can the director-general advise how widespread the use of public email accounts for ministerial business is in the Palaszczuk government ministry?

CHAIR: Can I just ask the member to be clear about who she is directing the question to? I am happy to talk about the fact that the state—

Mrs SMITH: That was to the director-general.

Ms ENOCH: Just checking, because at the beginning it was not clear.

CHAIR: The question is to the director-general. The member for Mount Ommaney can ask questions of the director-general. Director-General, do you need the question asked again, or are you happy to answer?

Mr Merrick: I would request that the question is asked again just so that I can understand the question.

Mrs SMITH: Can you advise how widespread the use of private email accounts for ministerial business is in the Palaszczuk government ministry?

Mr Merrick: I thank the member for the question. I think it is important to note in relation to the functions and powers of the State Archivist, conferred under the Public Records Act, that matters relating to the disposal of records or records management are covered under the independent statutory role of the State Archivist. I am not in a position personally to answer that question. That is a matter for the State Archivist. In relation to such matters, I would reinforce that the State Archivist is independent from any direction from either me or the minister in relation to those sorts of issues.

Mrs SMITH: That is a question you cannot answer because it is not in your portfolio or arena?

Mr Merrick: I think, just to clarify as well, the question was about the use of personal emails. The jurisdiction of the State Archivist is around public emails and they are separate matters.

Mrs SMITH: Do they answer to you, just out of curiosity?

Mr Merrick: The State Archivist and the Archives answer to me operationally, yes, but as I have explained, in terms of matters in relation to disposal and retention of public records, that role is independent of me.

Mrs SMITH: Given the warning of the CCC that the use of private email accounts by government officials presents a corruption risk, will you advise the committee if the State Archivist is undertaking an audit of private emails used by Palaszczuk government ministers?

Mr Merrick: Can I thank the member for the question and, sorry, can I just seek clarification of the question again because you mentioned public servants in the preamble but then the question relates to ministers?

Mrs SMITH: No, I actually said the CCC, that the use of private email accounts by government officials presents as a corruption risk and would you be able to advise the committee if the State Archivist is undertaking an audit of private emails used by government ministers? I would think that that would fall under operational.

Mr Merrick: The issue of private email accounts as used by ministers is a matter under the ministerial code of conduct and that is out of the jurisdiction of this agency.

Mrs SMITH: Are you aware of any audit being undertaken?

Mr Merrick: With respect, the State Archivist would not per se be undertaking an audit of the use of private emails. The State Archivist is concerned with public records. The use of private emails is dealt with matters outside of this agency.

Mrs SMITH: SDS on page 7 states—

To provide citizens and businesses with simple and easy access to integrated Queensland Government services and to ensure Queensland public records are preserved for the benefit of current and future generations.

I would have thought that ministerial email accounts would fall under that jurisdiction.

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair, obviously, as I have already said, public records come from various different places. They are the stories of our state and the State Archives, the facility, is the facility that holds those stories.

Miss BARTON: Point of order. I understood that the question was put to the director-general. Any member is able to put a question to the director-general. I am wanting clarification, is the minister attempting to answer for the director-general?

Ms ENOCH: I think, through the chair, my view is that the director-general has answered this question in a number of ways now. I am trying to help the member understand that public records are many things. As the member would be fully aware, the use of private emails is actually not a breach of the Public Records Act and so it is not within the domain of the State Archivist.

Miss BARTON: Potentially it would be if ministers were conducting government business and I think that is where the member for Mount Ommaney is going, because obviously that would be an important public record that would need to be maintained in terms of ensuring that Queenslanders have free and open access to appropriate government records.

CHAIR: With regard to your point of order, member for Broadwater—

Miss BARTON: I was simply seeking to understand—

CHAIR: Member for Broadwater, I am answering your point of order. There is no point of order. I think what the minister is saying is that the director-general has already answered that question and so I will ask the member for Mount Ommaney if she could rephrase or move on to the next question.

Mrs SMITH: I will move on. My next question is to the director-general. What dedicated resources does the State Archivist have to undertake his investigation into Minister Bailey's alleged breaches of the Public Records Act?

Mr Merrick: Can I thank the member for the question. Obviously the matter has been referred to the State Archivist from the CCC. The State Archivist has been in consultation with the CCC about the scope and conduct of the next stage of that investigation. The State Archivist has prepared and has been planning thoroughly for that investigation, including the resources necessary. That team will be drawn from the specialist capability of the State Archives, supplemented by additional technical or legal support that will be required. On 20 July I wrote to the State Archivist confirming that whatever resources or funding he needs to conduct that review, both effectively, robustly, rigorously and in a timely way, will be provided to the State Archivist to do that.

Mrs SMITH: How will that actually be funded? That would not be included in these budget papers, would it?

Mr Merrick: We will ensure that that investigation is fully funded from within departmental resources and we would reallocate funding to do that and I have given assurances to the State Archivist that that will take place.

Mrs SMITH: Also could you advise if there is a timeline on the investigation? Are you aware of any timeline or time frame that will be on that investigation?

Mr Merrick: I think it is important to note that I am not party to that investigation. It is being conducted by the State Archivist in the context of his statutory independent role. That said, I understand that the CCC has provided specific time frames for reporting back, given that the review is still being conducted under the auspices of the CCC. Those time frames have been set by the CCC.

Mrs SMITH: Will that become public knowledge?

Mr Merrick: In terms of the time frames?

Mrs SMITH: The time frames and when that can be expected?

Mr Merrick: That is a matter for the CCC and the State Archivist.

Mrs SMITH: Justice delayed, justice denied; you would have heard that terminology?

CHAIR: Member for Mount Ommaney, I think the director-general has indicated on several occasions that that lies outside of his portfolio area. I will ask you to move on to the next question.

Mrs SMITH: Thank you very much. Mr Chair, I seek leave to table an email. It is from the Director of Ethics in the Department of State Development that advises the opposition in response to an RTI request.

CHAIR: Member for Mount Ommaney, the secretariat will scan through that before we table it.

Miss BARTON: The member can continue to put her question while that is considered?

CHAIR: I am happy for that to occur.

Mrs SMITH: The RTI request is that Mr Lynham has been using a private email account to progress ministerial business. Additionally, that there are over 8,000 emails on this private account and to comply with mailbox size limits Minister Lynham has been regularly deleting emails. How many public records has the State Archivist provided approval for Minister Lynham to destroy?

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair, it is not clear who the question is for, but I am happy to take that question.

Mrs SMITH: That was for you, Minister.

Ms ENOCH: As I have already made clear on this matter, from the information available to date the State Archivist has indicated that there does not appear to be a breach of the act. The member would be aware that the use of personal email is not a breach of the Public Records Act. Ministers and their senior staff are responsible for ensuring ministerial records are captured in ministerial record keeping systems.

CHAIR: One moment, if I may interrupt. We have had the secretariat check through that and it has been deemed to be suitable to table. Leave is granted to table the document. I encourage you now to continue now, Minister.

Ms ENOCH: The advice I was given was that Minister Lynham's actions in ensuring emails identified as potential ministerial records are forwarded to his office to be logged would appear to be in keeping with the Queensland State Archives guidelines. In terms of that question, it has already been made clear that there does not seem to be a breach of the act.

Miss BARTON: Point of order, Mr Chair. The question was not necessarily about how someone may or may not maintain records; the question was how many records had the minister been given approval to delete. That was the very specific question, and I ask that you draw the minister back to that question so that she can answer it and we can move on to the next question.

Mr SAUNDERS: Point of order. The minister was answering the question. Can we let the minister get on and do her job.

Miss BARTON: She was not.

CHAIR: The minister may answer the question in whichever way she sees—

Miss BARTON: It still needs to be relevant.

CHAIR: Excuse me. The minister may answer the question in any way she sees fit but, Minister, I will also say you need to remain relevant and on topic, thank you.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair, for your guidance. The act, of course, is with regards to public records and the State Archivist has given us advice about the fact that personal emails—

Mr SAUNDERS: Point of order. Can the opposition stop talking while the minister is. I am very interested in this, Chair. I want to listen to it. Could they stop interrupting the minister.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Maryborough. Member for Broadwater, your interjections are not being taken. Can I ask you to cease.

Miss BARTON: It was not an interjection, it was a conversation with a colleague.

CHAIR: Minister, I will get you to continue.

Ms ENOCH: It is very clear that personal emails are not a breach of the Public Records Act. The State Archivist is concerned with public records, not with the use of personal emails.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, are you aware whether the State Archivist provided approval or not?

Ms ENOCH: That question is a matter for the State Archivist in his independent role.

Mrs SMITH: If the State Archivist had been allowed to come along today we may have been able to get through some of these questions.

Ms ENOCH: In helping the member understand, the State Archivist is not a witness today because it is convention for the DG and the direct reports and CEOs of related entities to be listed. The State Archivist is neither a direct report or a CEO of a related entity and according to standing orders, schedule 7, and I will refer the member to that, the State Archivist is not listed as a person who can be directly questioned anyway.

Mrs SMITH: There has been a bit of interest in what the State Archivist has been doing. It would have been prudent probably that he did attend today if we were going to keep with openness and transparency.

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair, it is also prudent to follow conventions and to follow standing orders.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. The next question?

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, with reference to page 3 of the SDS, can you please provide an overview of the impacts of the Palaszczuk Labor government's Advance Queensland initiative?

Ms ENOCH: I am absolutely delighted to update the committee on the progress and impacts of the Advance Queensland initiative, which is continuing to drive economic growth, create jobs and improve the lives of Queenslanders by backing cutting-edge innovation projects. Recently we celebrated the second anniversary of Advance Queensland. All the indicators show that our initiative is on target and gaining further traction.

Since July 2015, 2,780 applications have been received for funding through DSITI Advance Queensland programs. As I have already said, as a government we have invested more than \$205 million and backed 1,650 innovators. Their projects will drive 4,821 jobs. Through my department alone, we have committed \$117 million and backed 705 innovators whose projects will drive 2,740 jobs. Those innovative projects are being supported right across the state, from Norman River to Noosa and from Townsville to Toowoomba. We are getting behind great ideas in manufacturing, mining and agriculture, and we are encouraging new industries like biofuels and, of course, drones. More direct and indirect jobs will flow on from this investment and the increasing focus on turning ideas into action across the state. This is a solid foundation for our long-term vision of diversifying our economy and investing in our innovators as they create new jobs for our workforce.

This is a stark contrast to the record of the previous Newman-Nicholls government. In two years of Advance Queensland—

Miss BARTON: Point of order. Mr Chair, the Speaker has been very clear about the appropriate use of titles. I ask that you provide the minister with guidance.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Broadwater. Minister, you need to refer to the previous government in its appropriate form, as already indicated by the Speaker.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you for your guidance, Chair. This is in stark contrast to the record of the previous LNP government. In two years of Advance Queensland, we have invested more than three times the amount the LNP government invested in three years. That funding is creating more than 33 times the number of jobs. While we are talking about jobs, I remind the committee of the LNP government's record on jobs. Over 14,000 jobs were cut from the Public Service. That is 14,000 people who lost their jobs because of the ideological bent of an arrogant and out-of-touch LNP government. That meant 14,000 families lost an income, crushing confidence in Queensland. While the LNP's approach to governing is to slash, burn and tear down, the Palaszczuk government is investing and building a bright new future for Queenslanders. Importantly, we are driving future economic and employment growth.

Not only do those projects have economic benefits; they are also making life better for Queenslanders. To the 195,000 Queenslanders who live with a cancer diagnosis, research backed by the Palaszczuk government is giving hope. For the one in three men and one in five women who will suffer heart disease, innovation can help them survive and recover. For the one in 70 Australians affected by coeliac disease, we are backing new approaches that can help improve their daily lives. The global economy is on the cusp of great change, with huge advances in science and technology, including the rise of artificial intelligence, the internet of things as well as major advances in medical science and biotechnology.

Advance Queensland is positioning Queensland to take advantage of those opportunities and build on our traditional strengths while also creating new pathways for our workforce. There is still more work to be done, but we know that we are on the right track with Advance Queensland, our strategic long-term investment in Queensland's future.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, with reference to page 10 of the SDS, how is the government delivering ICT and corporate services through CITEC?

Ms ENOCH: Innovation and digital capability are not just things for the private sector to embrace. Government must be an exemplar when it comes to digital service delivery if our state is to grasp the opportunities presented by a growing digital economy, but it is not just about services. Customers must also trust that they can access those services when they want and on any device and that their data is secure.

In 2015 I announced that CITEC will remain a Queensland government owned information and communications technology provider and that we were committed to upholding our employment security policy for Queensland public servants. I firmly stand by that commitment. We know that the former LNP government spent \$3.3 million on preparation for the divestment of CITEC—a move that would have Queensland jobs lost interstate and overseas. We also know that that move sent negative signals to many Queensland government agencies and information brokerage clients, leading to a decline in CITEC's financial performance.

However, through continued support and the implementation of a new business operating model, CITEC is making an incredible contribution towards a digitally enabled Queensland government. This includes moderating 25 terabytes of secured internet data every day, processing an estimated 19 billion government business transactions every week worth over \$40 billion per year, and stopping denial-of-service attacks such as WannaCry, which crippled the UK health system. In fact, as I have already said, during the past 12 months 36 attacks have been stopped by CITEC. Those 36 mitigated attacks were of a similar magnitude to the UK's WannaCry. CITEC also provides security intelligence through the collection of analytics of, on average, eight million logged events per day from over 130 sources. It maintains an industry-leading 99.98 per cent availability and reliability over 22,590 network devices, 1,800 servers, 1,925 terabytes of stored data and 2,800 kilowatts of data centre power and it resolves 100 per cent of incidents within agreed time frames. CITEC is reshaping its business, putting customers at the centre of service design and delivery. CITEC will continue to play an important role in this commitment.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, in your response to question on notice No. 3 you made reference to Hot DesQ, which is also in the SDS at page 3. Can you update the committee on the progress that recipients are making?

Ms ENOCH: Queensland's global reputation as the start-up state in Australia continues to gain momentum. That reputation has been strengthened as start-ups, attracted to our state from around the world through the Hot DesQ program, choose to make Queensland a long-term business base. Already, nine of the 10 start-ups that have completed their six-month stay under the Palaszczuk government's Advance Queensland Hot DesQ program have chosen to continue their presence in Queensland.

The program's first round supported 25 start-ups to relocate to Queensland for a minimum of six months. All have contributed to our innovation ecosystem by mentoring and creating new connections for local start-ups. They have particularly focused on regional Queensland. The new start-ups that stay will leverage off our proximity to the Asia-Pacific, as well as our sectorial strengths and growing industries in agricultural technology, health, education, tourism and robotics.

The Queensland Chief Entrepreneur, Mark Sowerby, said the 25 first-generation recipients of the Advance Queensland Hot DesQ program have made a significant impact on the local innovation ecosystem and that we must make interstate and international connections to be able to help our entrepreneurs crack global markets. Queensland start-ups and scale-ups learn and grow from the Hot DesQ teams. International experts such as Josh Lerner from Harvard have categorically told us that those programs are needed and that they work. In her response to the Palaszczuk government's 2017-18 budget, the shadow minister said—

We—

I assume she means the LNP—

fail to see the value in luring overseas companies to Queensland...

This is despite the LNP's own 2013 science and innovation action plan committing to promote our knowledge industries' trade and investment opportunities by attracting 'international investment and businesses that grow the sector and create more jobs'. The LNP might prefer to play politics and develop their own policies, but what they are doing is an insult to the hardworking entrepreneurs and innovators who have become partners in our journey to build a dynamic and sustainable industry here in Queensland. Those entrepreneurs include inaugural Advance Queensland Hot DesQ recipient and Australian expat Flow Pay, which will permanently relocate from Silicon Valley to Queensland to continue to build its interests, after hiring three Queensland based team members. Flow Pay founder Manfred Neustifter spent two years working on his new payments technology in Silicon Valley before moving to Queensland. He said that he was impressed by the local start-up community. He said—

Our start-up will remain based in Queensland because we have begun building a team here, and because this is a fantastic place to grow a business.

Following that testimonial, I trust the shadow minister has a better understanding of why the Hot DesQ program is included in the Advance Queensland portfolio of initiatives. The Palaszczuk government's \$420 million whole-of-government Advance Queensland initiative is a long-term vision, encouraging Queenslanders to embrace new ways of thinking and to back their own ideas, helping generate growth that creates employment.

Mrs MILLER: Can I call Ms Christine Williams, the Assistant Director-General for Science?

CHAIR: Member, you will need to direct your question to either the minister or the director-general.

Mrs MILLER: No, I do not. This is a list of witnesses.

CHAIR: I will seek clarification for that through schedule 7.

Mrs MILLER: The research director gave us this list of witnesses earlier today.

CHAIR: Standing order 181(d) states—

a committee member may ask the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer questions;

Standing order 181(f) states—

advisers may answer questions referred to them by the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer;

Mrs MILLER: Chair, your research staff have got this wrong.

CHAIR: Standing order 181(f) states—

advisers may answer questions referred to them by the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer;

Mrs MILLER: So why do I have this list, which was placed before me by the research director, which says 'List of witnesses' for the Innovation, Science and the Digital Economy portfolio and specifically has 'Ms Christine Williams, Assistant Director-General, Science' and also the Acting Queensland Chief Scientist? I am happy to table that document. I seek leave to table it.

CHAIR: I am happy to table the document. Is leave granted? Leave is granted. In reference to that, that document lists the names provided to us by department staff. Again, under the standing orders, which I have read a couple of times now, 181(d) states—

a committee member may ask the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer questions;

Standing order 181(f) states—

advisers may answer questions referred to them by the Minister, Director-General or Chief Executive Officer;

Mrs MILLER: Chair, given the standing orders, the department has messed it up.

CHAIR: I am not going to get into a debate with you about what has happened.

Mrs MILLER: Those are the facts of the matter. I will ask the director-general, but this particularly relates to the Office of the Chief Scientist. I want to know: what is the role of the Corporate Administration Agency within the Chief Scientist's area?

Mr Merrick: The Corporate Administration Agency sits under the Department of the Premier and Cabinet and not under this agency.

Mrs MILLER: It provides services to the Chief Scientist. I want to know what those services are and how much it costs.

Mr Merrick: I am not aware that the Corporate Administration Agency provides services to the Office of the Chief Scientist at all.

Mrs MILLER: How does the Corporate Administration Agency provide services to your agency, the department or the agencies within the portfolio?

Mr Merrick: I will refer the answer to the Deputy Director-General, Corporate. In terms of primary corporate services for our agency, that is provided by Queensland Shared Services. I will defer to the director-general.

Mrs MILLER: Are you sure of that?

Mr Merrick: Yes, absolutely. It sits within the agency.

Mr Hills: I will clarify that through the course of the proceedings. My understanding is that the Corporate Administration Agency would provide a small support role in relation to the electronic document records management system and support to DSITI. With the minister's approval, I will take that on notice and provide that specifically.

CHAIR: Minister, can you acknowledge that you will take that on notice?

Ms ENOCH: I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr Merrick: Can I also provide a further point of clarification that the Corporate Administration Agency is the shared service provider for the Queensland Museum and not the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist.

Mrs MILLER: What role does the CAA provide to the Museum and how much does it cost?

Mr Merrick: With respect, that is outside of our portfolio. The Queensland Museum sits within the portfolio of the Minister for the Arts.

Mrs MILLER: So the CAA has basically no role within the portfolio except for what the deputy director-general said?

Mr Merrick: Except for the role that was outlined by the deputy director-general.

Mrs MILLER: I think you need to check that.

Mrs SMITH: My question relates to page 7 of the SDS and is to the director-general. Can you guarantee that all public records on the private email accounts of Palaszczuk government ministers have been handled in accordance with the Public Records Act, including section 13 of the Public Records Act regarding the disposal of records?

Mr Merrick: The issue of the proper disposal of public records and the management of public records is governed by the act and is within the jurisdiction and the responsibility of the State Archivist under the relevant sections of the act. The proper treatment of those records is dealt with in the relevant retention and disposal schedules of individual agencies that apply to those agencies alongside the general retention and disposal schedules. It is a matter for agencies around their particular compliance with the schedules and ministers around compliance with the schedules that their records fall under.

Mrs SMITH: Director-General, is Minister Lynham also under investigation by the State Archivist for the deletion of government records in breach of the Public Records Act?

Mr Merrick: I think there is imputation in the question, Mr Chair.

Mrs SMITH: No, I am genuinely asking whether he is under investigation.

CHAIR: Can I ask you to repeat that question.

Mrs SMITH: Is Minister Lynham also under investigation by the State Archivist for the deletion of government records in breach of the Public Records Act?

CHAIR: Could you answer the question for me.

Mr Merrick: The disposal of records is fine as long as it is consistent with the relevant retention and disposal schedules that are set out that cover the portfolio of the minister in question. At this stage, I am not aware of any suggestion that there has been disposal which is not consistent with the schedules. That is certainly the advice that has been provided.

Mrs SMITH: I go back to the document that I tabled earlier. You might like to have a read of that document.

Mr Merrick: This comes back to the separation of public records from the medium within which they are being stored or transferred. The medium itself is not the issue it is that there is proper compliance with the general retention and disposal schedules and any particular departmental retention and disposal schedules that apply to any potential public records. In this case, my understanding is that because the public records were being captured within a ministerial system they were being managed in accordance with the retention and disposal schedules that apply.

Mrs SMITH: I am just trying to understand the difference between the actions of Minister Bailey and the actions of Minister Lynham?

Mr Merrick: I am not party to the detail of the issues in relation to Minister Bailey. That is an independent investigation being undertaken by the State Archivist under the auspices of the CCC.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, I refer to the SDS at page 7 which states that a service area highlight for 2017-18 is—

Work with agencies to meet the needs of modern government to improve the standards of recordkeeping across government, to ensure that records are available for present and future generations.

I would view what has been highlighted as nonnegotiable and that the actions of Minister Bailey and Minister Lynham have made a mockery of that statement. The real question is: how can Queenslanders have confidence in your ability to do something about this when it should have been fixed from the start?

Mr WILLIAMS: Point of order, Mr Chairman. We have gone around in circles. How many chances does the member get to ask the same question? Is it not clear to her that it is a matter between the CCC and the State Archivist? She has gone around in circles. How many times do we have to do this?

CHAIR: Minister, can I get you to answer that question. Member for Mount Ommaney, if we continue to go down this road I will ask you to move to the next series of questions.

Ms ENOCH: The member is asking for opinions. However, what I can say is that the work that we are doing in terms of ensuring that we have the records and story of our state kept for this generation and beyond is of the highest priority. Right now we are working on the digital archives project which will see the hard copies of various public records of varying natures digitised for future generations.

We have kilometres of facility at Runcorn and we have kilometres and kilometres of documents, from pieces of legislation through to great stories of the way that developments were created hundreds of years ago. These are great stories that we keep right now. One of the things that we have been working very hard on is our digital archives project. We will digitise our history, our stories and our public records for not just this generation but for generations to come. That will allow people to understand the story of this state for decades to come.

Mrs SMITH: How can Queenslanders have confidence that records are being kept after we have all of this scandal surrounding this current government? Queenslanders need to have confidence that government records are being kept and stored correctly.

CHAIR: Thank you member for Mount Ommaney. Your question is seeking an opinion from the minister. I ask you to kindly rephrase your question or we will go on—

Miss BARTON: How is asking a minister to give the people of Queensland confidence seeking an opinion?

CHAIR: Excuse me. I am making a judgement call. You will wait until I have finished, thank you. I kindly ask you to rephrase your question or go onto the next question.

Miss BARTON: Point of order, Mr Chair. Asking a minister to give confidence that her agency is able to do what they are expected to do is not seeking an opinion; it is asking a minister to confirm that they are doing their job.

CHAIR: I have made a ruling. I interpret it as asking for an opinion or expressing an opinion and I am not going to debate this further. Please rephrase your question or move onto the next question.

Mrs SMITH: This question is for the director-general. How many kinds of investigations like this has the State Archivist undertaken before?

Mr Merrick: I am obviously aware that the State Archivist is currently undertaking an investigation under the auspices of the CCC that has been referred to him. Beyond that, I am not aware of any other investigations that the current State Archivist has undertaken. I am happy to take that on notice with the minister's permission.

CHAIR: Are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms ENOCH: I am happy to take that on notice, absolutely.

CHAIR: You may come back and answer that later in the evening if you find the answer to that.

Ms ENOCH: We will do our best to go through the history of that.

Mrs SMITH: Was the State Archivist consulted in relation to the terms of reference for the investigation into Minister Bailey's alleged breach of the Public Records Act?

Mr Merrick: I think I answered this question earlier. The State Archivist has been engaged with the CCC in relation to the terms of reference scope of this stage of the investigation, for which responsibility has been referred to him by the CCC.

Mrs SMITH: Was this before or after the terms of reference were finalise by DPC?

CHAIR: I think that is the same style of question that you just asked. The director-general actually informed you that it was outside of his portfolio area.

Mr Merrick: Just to clarify that there have been two stages. There was the first stage which was the original audit where the State Archivist worked alongside the Department of the Premier and Cabinet. There was liaison with the CCC in relation to the scope of that inquiry. In terms of the matter that has subsequently been referred back to the State Archivist, the State Archivist has worked with the CCC in terms of the scope of that next stage of work.

Mrs SMITH: One thing I am wanting to raise with you is what steps are being put in place to ensure the State Archivist does not come under any pressure to ensure he comes up with the right outcome in this investigation?

Mr Merrick: I think I have answered that matter on a number of occasions. The State Archivist is independent of any direction from me, the minister or anyone else in relation to matters around the retention or disposal of records. That is set out under the legislation.

Mrs SMITH: How many emails and attachments has the State Archivist been unable to retrieve from Mark Bailey's deleted email account?

CHAIR: I believe that that sits out of the minister's portfolio area. Can I ask you to move onto your next question.

Mrs SMITH: Are any of these emails and attachments that have been unable to be retrieved considered to be public records?

Ms ENOCH: This matter is to be investigated by way of a public interest review under the Crime and Corruption Act. This is an investigation that is underway. I think we are having a line of questions that is actually interfering with a process that I take quite seriously.

Miss BARTON: Not serious enough to produce the State Archivist.

CHAIR: Your interjections are not being taken, member for Broadwater. I do not need you to add anything in there.

Mrs SMITH: I think it is a very serious matter. I think the member for Broadwater does make a point that these questions could have been put to the State Archivist if the State Archivist had been allowed to attend today.

Mr SAUNDERS: Point of order, Mr Chair. We have been through this before. We know why the State Archivist did not turn up. Can we just move on. I have constituents who would like to find out more about the digital economy and what is happening.

Miss Barton interjected.

Mr SAUNDERS: I do not appreciate the member for Broadwater trying to talk over me. I will ask you once more to not talk over me, thank you very much—show some manners.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Maryborough. Can we move on to a question?

Mrs SMITH: Did the State Archivist uncover any emails between Mark Bailey and public servants relating to government business?

Ms ENOCH: That is within the remit of the State Archivist in his statutory role. That would not be revealed to me or the DG. That is something that is being reviewed and under investigation through the CCC in their relationship with the State Archivist. That is a matter for that investigation. This is an estimates hearing on the Appropriation Bill. This is not a CCC investigation hearing.

Miss BARTON: We are not talking about the CCC investigation.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Broadwater. The minister is answering the question. I ask you not to interject. Do you have anything further to add, Minister?

Ms ENOCH: I will call on the director-general to add to that.

Mr Merrick: Just for clarity, in relation to the original audit work that was done, neither the minister nor I have been party to that audit, so we would be unable whatsoever to answer that question. It is a matter for the State Archivist acting independently in their statutory role. It is very clear under section 27 of the act that we have no authority in relation to the disposal of records. We have not been party to any of the investigation work to date or ongoing.

Mrs SMITH: Can I call the Chief Scientist, Professor Suzanne Miller, to the table for questioning?

CHAIR: Member for Mount Ommaney, I have read standing order 181 to the member for Bundamba and explained to her that you can only ask the minister or the director-general or the CEO any questions. Your questions need to be directed to those people.

Mrs SMITH: So the Chief Scientist is not here today to make an appearance?

CHAIR: You need to direct your questions to either the minister or—

Mrs SMITH: Minister, is the Chief Scientist here today to make an appearance?

Ms ENOCH: The witness list has been made available to the committee. The Acting Chief Scientist is available.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, are you able to advise the committee what the Chief Scientist's total wage package is?

Ms ENOCH: I will take some advice on that. I thank the member for the question. That is an operational question. However, from advice from the director-general, we will take that on notice because that is in some other documents.

CHAIR: You are happy to take that on notice? Minister, you have the opportunity to report back later if it comes to hand.

Ms ENOCH: We will do our best.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, when the Premier chose Professor Miller as the Chief Scientist, did she seek your advice? What was your advice in relation to her appointment?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. With respect to the member for Mount Ommaney, the Premier did not choose the Chief Scientist. There was a full merit process that was undertaken in the selection of the Chief Scientist.

Mrs SMITH: Does Professor Miller have your full confidence, Minister?

Ms ENOCH: With respect, what page of the SDS is the member referring to?

Mrs SMITH: I am referring to page 1 of the SDS and the Office of the Queensland Chief Scientist.

Mrs MILLER: I raise a point of order, Chair. The Speaker, on the advice of the Clerk, ruled about SDS issues at the Finance and Administration Committee's first meeting. Just for your benefit, Chair, the ruling was that you do not have to refer to SDS pages anymore.

CHAIR: I take your point of order. You do not have to name it in your question, but you need to make sure that your question is relevant to the consideration of the estimates budget which is the purpose here. That is under standing order 181(g). I remind members under standing order 181(g) that questions must be relevant to the Appropriation Bill being considered. Member for Mount Ommaney, can you explain to the committee how your question is relevant to our consideration of the budget estimates?

Mrs SMITH: I am interested to know whether the minister has full confidence in Professor Miller, who is listed as the Chief Scientist—a very highly regarded position in the Queensland government and in the minister's portfolio.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. I acknowledge that the member is correct. It is a highly regarded position. The Chief Scientist is a very important position for our state. It is one that puts science at the forefront of our conversations as a government and obviously as a community across the state. That is why it plays such an important role in what we do—in everything that we do. In terms of Ms Miller, there is an ongoing investigation that is before the courts. Any comment we make here would be inappropriate.

CHAIR: With that, I might also add that it may relate to sub judice under standing orders 223 and 115(c) (iii). I remind all members that they should exercise care about matters that may invoke the sub judice rule. I give a little word of warning there. I call the member for Pumicestone.

Mr WILLIAMS: Minister, I would like to talk about good news. I refer to page 4 of the SDS. Can the minister tell the committee how investing in global industry leaders is helping to support Queensland's small and medium sized enterprises?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Attracting international investment into Queensland is an important part of diversifying our economy and ensuring our state can leverage its existing strengths to develop new industries. An example of this approach can be seen in Queensland's partnership with global aerospace giant the Boeing company through the Platform Technology Program. The partnership has great synergy, with Boeing and Queensland both considered leaders in relation to remotely piloted aircraft systems technology. More than a third of Australia's RPAS industry is located in Queensland, providing services to a range of industries including LNG, agriculture and mining. The global market for remotely piloted aircraft was valued at \$US10.1 billion in 2015 and is expected to account for \$US14.9 billion by 2020. The Palaszczuk government is determined to ensure Queensland gets its fair share of that market.

Twelve months ago our government invested \$1 million in a project being delivered by Boeing in conjunction with QGC and Telstra to develop and test cutting-edge RPAS technologies right here in Queensland. This investment had to be spent in Queensland and, importantly, 40 per cent of that investment had to be spent with Queensland small to medium sized enterprises. This morning I got to see firsthand the impact our investment has made in just one year. I joined six Queensland small and medium sized enterprises that have already been engaged to provide systems engineering support and to develop and manufacture hardware for the high-tech project. I am pleased to advise the committee that over the past year 60 staff have so far worked on the project. I can also advise that, as a result of this engagement with Boeing, 29 of those jobs are new positions, with nine inside Queensland's small and medium sized enterprises.

One of the ambitions of the project team is to export the technology which, of course, will be a big win for Queensland and the local SMEs involved in developing the prototype system. That ability to support that supply chain right here in Queensland for what is a massive growing industry is a great win for Queensland. You do not have to just take my word for it about the positive impact the investment is having. RF Technologies Director Michael Symes said the project had been a tremendous enabler for his business. I caught up with the team from RF Technologies this morning. They have just moved from Sumner Park, I understand, in the member for Mount Ommaney's area. He said that this project had been a huge enabler for his business, requiring its traditional design and manufacturing capabilities blended with innovative technical concepts to suit the demanding application and prominent customer. Mr Symes said—

The potential to extend our reach into global markets and the association with Boeing came at a good time for RF Technologies, following our business relocation to a wholly-owned, larger facility coupled with an investment in additional skills and technologies.

By building these strong links with global industry leaders, we are not only opening up new opportunities for Queensland SMEs but also continuing to position our state as an attractive destination for investment.

CHAIR: Page 4 of the SDS refers to start-ups in Queensland. Can you please tell me how the Chief Entrepreneur is supporting the growth of the start-up ecosystem?

Ms ENOCH: Chair, I thank you for your question. The Office of the Queensland Chief Entrepreneur is the first of its kind in Australia and is already making a significant impact on Queensland's start-up sector. The office was established to encourage others to back themselves, become entrepreneurs and turn their ideas into commercial success. The Palaszczuk government put the office in place because we know that start-ups present a huge opportunity for employment growth in our state. Figures from the Australian government's Office of the Chief Economist have shown that between 2006 and 2011 the largest contribution to job creation in Australia—around 40 per cent—came from young SMEs that had been operating for five years or less.

In October 2016 Mark Sowerby commenced as the inaugural Queensland Chief Entrepreneur. He is performing this role pro bono for one year. Our Chief Entrepreneur believes that anyone can be an entrepreneur. Mark came to the role with a wealth of experience as an investor, but just as importantly he has brought a passion that is inspiring a culture of entrepreneurialism and another voice promoting our great start-up and entrepreneurial talent to local, national and international audiences. Through his role he has been able to share the kind of advice that only comes from experience to help our Queensland entrepreneurs to scale and develop their products and services. He has also been connecting investors to opportunities, educating new and emerging investors, as well as attracting national and international investors to Queensland.

His dedication to the role and to our state cannot be questioned—for example, in March this year Mark took six of Queensland's most successful entrepreneurs and businesspeople on a regional tour to inspire the next wave of talent in Queensland. During the tour, more than 1,300 people from 10 regional locations listened to and engaged with Mark and other inspirational speakers. This is just one of the activities he has delivered to support and grow our developing start-up sector. Mark also provides insights, analysis and constructive advice to government on how we can continue to make the most of our investment through the Advance Queensland initiative. Put simply, the Chief Entrepreneur has strengthened our sector to ensure all areas of Queensland can share in the opportunities created by the Advance Queensland agenda and a diversifying economy.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, I refer to page 4 of the SDS. How is the Ignite Ideas program helping Queensland businesses turn their ideas into commercial outcomes?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Ignite Ideas is probably one of our most successful programs. The Ignite Ideas Fund represents a significant investment in diversifying the Queensland economy and driving future employment growth. Ignite Ideas promotes the commercialisation of ideas into innovative products and services in Queensland. Its focus is on encouraging early-stage and high-growth firms in key industries and supporting small businesses to prove the feasibility of their new ideas. It is helping Queensland firms identify new customers, attract investment and launch into global markets.

Ignite Ideas has proven to be one of the most popular programs in the Advance Queensland portfolio and has received extremely positive feedback from businesses and start-ups across Queensland. In the first two rounds alone we received 817 applications. Round 3 was announced on budget day and closed on 13 July. Over the first two rounds of Ignite Ideas, the Palaszczuk government has committed more than \$16.5 million in commercialisation funding for 119 businesses. This represents a significant co-investment in those innovative small and medium sized enterprises to enable them to further develop their ideas and contribute to more knowledge based jobs in the future.

When the shadow minister in her budget reply mentioned the so-called ‘innovation agenda’, she demonstrated just how little she understands about the rapid change that is happening in our economy. Those comments give me little faith in the LNP’s ability to take advantage of the opportunities available to innovative Queensland businesses in a rapidly changing global economy. Their one policy so far is a proposal to build a \$1 billion aquarium beside the Brisbane River—definitely not exactly in the space of innovation and definitely not a game changer when it comes to diversifying the Queensland economy and driving future employment growth.

One example of the ingenuity and game-changing innovations Ignite Ideas is enabling is the development of lighter and stronger power wheelchairs. Local business Next Generation Mobility is putting our funding to work to develop wheelchairs using the latest aerospace materials. If that is not already innovative enough, these wheelchairs can be remotely driven by a carer’s smart phone, allowing the carer the option to completely override all controls of the wheelchair, if needed, in safety or fatigue environments. These wheelchairs, being designed and manufactured by Queenslanders on the Gold Coast, will be used by people all over the world. This is just one of the many great innovations coming out of Queensland right now. This program is about tapping into these significant ideas and supporting them to become successful commercial outcomes.

Mrs MILLER: My question is to the director-general. I assume the State Archivist is an SES officer under contract. Can you please tell us what level the SES officer is and when the State Archivist’s contract is due to conclude?

Mr Merrick: I can confirm that it is an SES level 3 contract. I just have to take on notice when that contract is due for renewal.

CHAIR: Minister, are you happy to take that on notice?

Ms ENOCH: Yes.

Mrs MILLER: I again ask the director-general: will the State Archivist be given whatever budget is required for the investigation? If there is not going to be a special budget given to the State Archivist, will special funding be sought from Treasury like an unforeseen expenditure, or do you intend to cut other programs to pay for the investigation?

Mr Merrick: I think I answered that question that I wrote to the State Archivist on 20 July confirming that whatever budget is required we will provide for him to conduct that investigation in a thorough and timely way. That will be found from reallocation of resources from within the department. We will not be culling other services to do that.

Mrs MILLER: How can you reallocate other resources within your department? I know a department gets a global figure. How can you reallocate resources that go into other programs without cutting other programs, either cutting staff or cutting those programs? In other words, why do you not go back to Treasury and ask for the money? That is the simple way.

Mr Merrick: I am advised by the State Archivist that the primary resources required are existing resources in terms of the staffing of the QSA and the additional resources required may be additional technical or legal support and they can be encompassed by finding efficiency savings within the agency. We have an overall global budget of \$777 million, so we are talking very much on the margins of that overall budget to provide the resources necessary to complete the next stage of work.

Mrs MILLER: You must have an expected budget of what this investigation may be then. If you believe that you can fund it internally, you might have some ballpark figure. If so, do you know what that is?

Mr Merrick: I have not been provided a figure to date by the State Archivist, but he assures me that primarily, in terms of costs, it is from within the existing staffing complement of the State Archives. The State Archives has 78 FTE this financial year budgeted and that is an increase to budget this year.

Ms ENOCH: Just to clarify, earlier I talked about Ignite Ideas and round 3, and I said that it was launched on budget day. However, it was the day after budget day on 14 June.

Mrs SMITH: Will the director-general produce to the committee the register of interests signed by the Chief Scientist, Professor Miller?

Mr Merrick: I will have to take that one on notice. I am happy to do that. Chair, can I clarify an answer to a question from earlier that we agreed to take on notice?

CHAIR: Can we do that at the end of this line of questioning? Thank you. We will give you that time.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, who appointed the current Chief Scientist?

CHAIR: We have actually had this question answered.

Mrs SMITH: No.

Miss BARTON: Was it a cabinet appointment or—

Mrs SMITH: I would just like to have a bit more information on the process—who appointed and what was the process.

CHAIR: Just clarifying that, it is around the process.

Ms ENOCH: As I have already said, there was a full and proper merit process as you would expect for any senior role. I am happy to defer to the DG as an operational matter with regard to how that merit process was undertaken.

Mr Merrick: The Queensland Chief Scientist, as the minister said, was appointed through an open, merit based process in accordance with the recruitment and selection directive and is in employment of the department. The position was advertised widely and there was thorough engagement with the research community in terms of that process. The selection panel included very senior representation from government, the then acting Public Service Commissioner and a very eminent Queensland scientist. The decision of the panel was unanimous. As I said, the Chief Scientist is employed by the department.

Mrs SMITH: Is that a cabinet appointment? Does it ultimately go to cabinet for the tick off?

Mr Merrick: In terms of the Chief Scientist, I advise the minister and there is additional advice to the Premier about the appointment, but it is not actually a position that is approved through cabinet.

Mrs SMITH: I refer to SDS page 4. I would like to get the minister to explain the intent, purpose and benefits of Advance Queensland in the simplest of terms?

Ms ENOCH: We know—and I think we all know this instinctively—that the world is changing at an ever increasing pace. We know that that is happening in large part due to the rapid change of technology. That is why right now we understand that that is making huge shifts in our traditional industries and that new industries are being created as a result of this rapidly changing world.

We know as a government the importance of work and the dignity of work. We want to make sure that we have the jobs that are being created now and that are on the horizon; we want them to be available for our kids and their kids. That is why diversifying our economy is such an important task for our generation and for this government right now and for any government in this country and in other developing countries. It is incredibly important. That is why Advance Queensland has been initiated. It is to ensure that we are able to meet that transformation and prepare Queensland right now for the jobs of the future. We know that that is changing and we want our children and our workforce right now to be ready for those changes. Ultimately, that is what Advance Queensland is all about: transforming Queensland, diversifying our economy, making lives better of course in the meantime and meeting some of those massive global challenges that we are all faced with. We are doing that through a whole series of programs to make sure that we are fully prepared for what is on the horizon.

Mrs SMITH: Minister, earlier I think you made the claim that through Advance Queensland 4,821 jobs had been created.

Ms ENOCH: Just to clarify, my words were that we have backed a number of innovators in our state and they are driving, through these programs in which we have been able to invest Advance Queensland funding—yes those innovators and entrepreneurs, small businesses, start-ups and industries are driving those jobs.

Mrs SMITH: Advance Queensland is designed to create sustainable jobs. Are the 4,821 jobs all, if you will, real jobs, so they are created from customers purchasing a service or a product, or are these created due to a government grant?

Ms ENOCH: There is a great body of evidence from various sources across the globe that give us an indication that the nature of these jobs that the Advance Queensland initiative is supporting are knowledge based, high-skill jobs in areas of massive growth, which makes them more likely to last. Evidence from the United States has shown that for every high-tech job, five additional jobs are created outside of the high-tech sector, both in skilled and unskilled occupations. That means not only—

Mrs SMITH: Excuse me, Minister, can we talk about Advance Queensland and how many actual jobs have been created? I just want to keep it relevant, Mr Chair, considering the limited time. Evidence in America is good, but I do not think it is relevant to a question about Advance Queensland and the actual number of jobs created, given that the amount was quoted—4,821.

CHAIR: Again, I will say that the minister can answer the question whichever way she may choose to do so. Having said that, Minister, I guide you to make sure it is relevant to the question.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you. I would argue that this is relevant. Advance Queensland has been developed and co-designed based on world best practice and what we are seeing in terms of understanding where the greatest growth is happening. That is what we want for our kids. That is why I explained how important Advance Queensland is right now for our future.

In terms of the number of jobs, I could give multiple case studies of how Advance Queensland funding and our Advance Queensland investment is supporting jobs right now. For instance, Elevare Energy is doing a whole heap of work in the smart battery system area. The funding of this project has enabled the company to expand and has resulted in the addition of 13 new jobs. That is double the size of the company. I talk about the research—this massive body of research that has been made available to us, that we have sought out. That is why we are investing in this space. We know that this kind of investment sees massive growth very quickly for the support of jobs. These are jobs that have long-term impacts on our economy.

I could go through a number of these if you wish. Natural Evolution won gold in the food and beverage category of the Edison Awards in 2017. They were one of the first recipients of our Ignite Ideas Fund. They report that they have already put two extra people on and will see six more to come. Gruntify, another Ignite Ideas recipient, does a lot of work in the real-time incident and report management platform. They report that they have already established 10 new jobs right now and expect to grow again. This is the kind of investment that we know gives us this very quick acceleration in terms of jobs.

Mrs SMITH: How is that actually being measured from the department? What are the measurements? How are you measuring the jobs that are being created?

Ms ENOCH: In terms of the Advance Queensland funding, the applicants make clear in their proposals the number of jobs that the investment from the Queensland government will support. I am happy to defer to the director-general for the operational aspects of that process if the member needs to understand further. I can say that we are seeing evidence of jobs being created right now and jobs in the pipeline that are absolutely going to fire up our state. We are now seeing our state recorded as the most entrepreneurial state in Australia. We have seen our state overtake Victoria to be second in the country for the number of start-ups. We are absolutely positioning Queensland in terms of being able to attract that talent and grow talent in this state to ensure that we get our fair share of the new industries and the new jobs that are already here and that are on the horizon. It is incredibly important. Everybody is in a race for this and we are already positioning ourselves in a very, very positive way. In terms of the operational aspects, I am happy to defer to the DG.

Mr Merrick: As the minister said, the great majority of our programs require applicants to state the jobs impact upfront when they apply. Clearly, in relation to those programs that are around training schoolchildren about STEM education we do not hold that—and you can understand why. The numbers are initially derived from the ex ante appraisal of applications. They are tested through the process. For many of our programs we have independent experts who are party to that assessment process. The assessors then advise government of which projects to fund. Projects selected are those with the most potential within the available budget envelope.

It is important to note that jobs in many of these projects will accrue in a staged way as R and D and other projects mature. If I take the example of a company that was just touched upon in the software space, the jobs may initially be in the R and D software development stage. That may give rise to business development, sales, distribution, after-care, manufacturing et cetera as products develop and the company sees traction in the marketplace. What we also have is a regular process of monitoring grants. Companies or applicants are required to provide completion reports. They are very detailed in terms of the nature of the jobs that are generated through the projects, both those that were forecast in the original application and any additional jobs that accrue. We have also been working with Deloitte Access Economics in terms of the development of a robust and rigorous evaluation framework which builds on Treasury guidance and international best practice in terms of the evaluation of innovation programs. That is a consistent framework to be applied across the whole of the Advance Queensland initiative and it will look at the gross and net jobs created, any additionality from these projects and potentially indirect and induced jobs as well.

Mrs SMITH: After two years, with all of those measurements in place, do you have an actual number of jobs that have been created after the grant money has been spent and utilised? Do we have those figures?

Mr Merrick: It is worth saying that the projects themselves vary in length, so some projects may be short term and other projects may take place over four years. In terms of the cycle of measuring the jobs impact, it will be over the lifetime of individual projects. We do aggregate monitoring. The issue is that at a single point in time we will only ever have a partial picture because different programs have different frequencies of getting monitoring reports from applicants.

Mrs SMITH: Going to page 5 of the SDS, I am very interested to understand how success is being measured. Under subnote 6, claim for return on investment of \$1.25 for every dollar invested under Advance Queensland, you have said that has improved from last year. Because we have used best practice around the world, the director-general would be aware that under the UK Knowledge Transfer Partnership for every one dollar spent there is \$7.50 returned; under the UK Smart Funding for every one dollar spent there is \$5 returned; and even under the Bligh-Beattie government and the Smart State investment for every one dollar spent there was \$4.53 returned. When you look at the return on investment for every one dollar spent being \$1.25, it really is not good betting odds, is it?

Mr Merrick: I think there is some confusion in relation to what that is measuring. The measure in the SDS is the direct other funding leveraged, so what other partners are putting into the projects. The figures you are citing are from the evaluation of programs overseas, which are actually the total economic impact from the dollar invested. Earlier I referred to a valuation framework, and that will produce equivalent figures to the sorts of figures you are citing from overseas. It is actually a different measure. It is not a direct comparison at all.

Mrs SMITH: It is comparing apples and oranges? They are both completely different measures?

Mr Merrick: Absolutely, yes. One is the direct measure of the additional funding that partners are bringing in the SDS; the other figures you are citing are the total economic impact of the dollars invested. They are different figures.

Mrs SMITH: The \$420 million that has been spent in the Advance Queensland overall, that has been—

Ms ENOCH: The whole-of-government initiative so far. So far, \$205 million has been invested.

Mrs SMITH: \$420 million whole-of-government—

Ms ENOCH: Over the life of the project.

Mrs SMITH:—over the life of the project. At the end of the day all of the measurements that are in place are really quite flimsy, aren't they? For that amount of taxpayers' money we really only see very different—

Ms ENOCH: When you consider—

Mrs SMITH: Minister, may I finish the question?

CHAIR: Allow the member to ask the question.

Mrs SMITH: For that amount of Queensland taxpayers' money there is no amount of jobs that you can point to. We have a lot of quantitative measurements that at the end of the day do not pull it all together to give us an idea of exactly where we are going.

CHAIR: Member for Mount Ommaney, do you have a question in there?

Mrs SMITH: Yes. The measures that have been reported and adopted are quite flimsy given the amount of money being spent. I am saying that Queensland taxpayers should have a better way of measuring the \$420 million that has been spent.

CHAIR: Unfortunately, we have run out of time.

Ms ENOCH: I was happy to talk about the LNP's \$58.3 million investment in 142 jobs!

CHAIR: The time allocated for consideration of estimates of expenditure of the portfolio in the area of innovation, science and the digital economy has now expired. There are a number of questions that have been taken on notice. There were two questions from the member for Bundamba taken on notice and the member for Mount Ommaney had three questions taken on notice. Unfortunately, we do not have time for you to respond. We will have to get you to respond by 5 pm on Thursday, the 27th. To those officials who are leaving us, on behalf of the committee I thank you for your attendance.

The committee will now examine the estimates for Small Business. Visiting members are the Hon. Scott Emerson MP, the member for Indooroopilly and shadow minister for small business, and Mrs Jo-Ann Miller MP, the member for Bundamba. Minister, you may make an opening statement of no more than five minutes.

Ms ENOCH: As the Queensland Minister for Small Business, it is a privilege to work with and support so many of our state's outstanding small businesses. Small business employs 44 per cent of Queensland's private sector workforce and contributes over \$110 billion to our state. Small businesses are not only key economic drivers in our cities; they also stand as the lifeblood of our suburbs, towns and regional centres. A strong small business sector means more jobs for Queenslanders, which is why the Palaszczuk government is focused on creating the right environment for small businesses to start, grow and employ.

The 2017-18 Queensland state budget demonstrates our commitment to maintaining high levels of business confidence in our state. It features a range of measures and investments to support small business and stimulate our economy. This includes \$50 million for our Back to Work Regional Employment Package, a \$27.5 million extension of that package to South-East Queensland over the next three years, and doubling the payroll tax rebate for hiring apprentices and trainees to 50 per cent. The Palaszczuk government has also allocated more than \$22 million over three years to deliver targeted, practical and innovative initiatives that support and empower small business. Our hard work is paying off, with Queensland business confidence at its highest level since 2014.

We have achieved a great deal since we launched our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy 2016-2020 and opened the Office of Small Business. Over the past financial year more than 600 small businesses have benefitted from around \$3.1 million in grant funding. We have built strong partnerships with local chambers and consulted to develop programs around advancing women and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in small business.

We have also shown that this is a government that listens to small business, and when they need us we respond. After Cyclone Debbie devastated areas of Queensland, our Office of Small Business staff were on the ground to assist just days after the event. In addition, we allocated \$4 million to affected small businesses as part of our tourism and small business recovery package.

In this area of connectivity, small businesses need an operating environment that allows them to be strong, profitable and globally competitive. To help achieve this we are working to implement the recommendations of the Red Tape Reduction Advisory Council's report which was submitted to government last year. After seeing how red tape increased under the previous LNP government, we have committed to reducing operational burdens for small business. We have taken action on all of the report's 14 recommendations, which include improving online resources for small business and facilitating the adoption of the Commonwealth government's SmartForms platform to make doing business with government easier.

This morning I announced the Business Impact Statement Project, which will see an Australian first with the establishment of small business consultation panels to provide government departments with easier access to experienced small business owners and operators when developing policy and legislation. The intent of this project is to complement the current regulatory impact assessment process. This work is an important part of the Queensland government's broader efforts to put in place a business-friendly regulatory environment and make it easier to do business in Queensland.

We know that small business success depends on a balanced regulatory environment. That is why we formed the Better Regulation Taskforce, to guarantee that we as a government are receiving the best possible advice when it comes to removing barriers to entry and stimulating growth. With small business numbers increasing and survival rates up, there is no better state in Australia to be a small business owner than Queensland. The Palaszczuk government is committed to seeing small business thrive. Small business in Queensland has a big future, and by working together we will unlock that full potential to create and keep more jobs in Queensland.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, can you outline how many times you have written to the federal small business minister on small business matters?

Ms ENOCH: I have had interactions with various iterations of small business ministers but I do make the point that, at least in this government in this state, there is a small business minister inside the cabinet. At the federal level there is nobody in the inner cabinet as the small business minister. I have had various interactions with ministers who have been responsible for small business—

Mr EMERSON: Point of order, Mr Chair. The question was very specific. The question was: how many times has the minister written to the federal small business minister?

CHAIR: I think the minister is answering the question and getting to the specifics.

Ms ENOCH: I have had various meetings, of course, over the telephone et cetera, but on top of that I have written to the Prime Minister with regard to small business and not directly to the small business minister. Given that the small business minister is not in the inner cabinet, I wrote to the Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, to discuss small business issues.

Mr EMERSON: The answer is no, you have not written to the small business minister; is that correct, Minister?

Ms ENOCH: Given that there is no small business minister in the inner cabinet of the Turnbull government, I wrote to the Prime Minister in lieu.

Mr EMERSON: Let us be very clear. The question is very simple: have you written to the federal small business minister? Yes or no?

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, the minister has actually answered that question.

Miss BARTON: She is obfuscating.

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, the minister has answered that question. I ask you to move on to the next question.

Mr EMERSON: All right, Mr Chair. Given her answer is, no, she has not written to the federal small business minister, can the minister advise how many times she has written to the federal Treasurer about issues relating to small business who is in the cabinet?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As I have already said, I have written to the Treasurer's boss, the Prime Minister of Australia, with regard to small business in Queensland.

Mr EMERSON: Again, I ask the question: you have not written to the Treasurer at all about small business matters; is that correct?

Ms ENOCH: I have written to the Prime Minister of Australia with regard to small business in Queensland.

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, I am sorry, but the question is fairly straightforward. The minister can run down the clock all she likes. The question is very clear: has she written to the Treasurer? Yes or no?

CHAIR: And, member for Indooroopilly, the minister has actually answered that question.

Mr EMERSON: No, Mr Chair. With all due respect, she has answered the question that she has written to the Prime Minister. She has not answered the question that was asked. The question was very clear: has she written to the Treasurer?

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Indooroopilly. I am not going to debate this with you tonight. The minister has answered the question. We will move on to the next question please.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. As we have just heard from the minister, given you have not written to the small business minister and you have not written to the Treasurer, what conversations have you had with the federal government in relation to the \$300 million on the table for the states that are prepared to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers?

Ms ENOCH: Sorry, but I was distracted for a moment there and if the member could ask the question again.

Mr EMERSON: I will start the question from the beginning. Given that she has not written to the small business minister and given that she has not written to the Treasurer, what conversations has the small business minister had with the federal government in relation to the \$300 million on the table for the states that are prepared to remove unnecessary regulatory barriers?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. With respect to the member, of course these are conversations that the Treasurer of Queensland, as are other treasurers across the states and territories, is having with the Treasurer at a federal level and that is the responsibility of the Treasurer with regard to that.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, given the fact that this relates to regulatory barriers, why would you not write to the Treasurer or at least contact the Treasurer about this? Would that not seem to be the obvious task as the small business minister in Queensland to contact—speak to—the Treasurer about these issues?

Ms ENOCH: Again, those negotiations with regard to that particular matter are with the Treasurer of Queensland, so that is where that responsibility lays. What I can say is that the work that we are doing in the Office of Small Business has seen some incredible outcomes. We now have more small businesses in Queensland than we have had in over three years. We have 414,000 small businesses in Queensland. We have had a rise of 2.1 per cent in small businesses—

Miss BARTON: Point of order: Mr Chair, the minister does still have a responsibility to be relevant to the question. The question was very specific about conversations the minister had had with respect to regulatory burden in Queensland. If the minister wishes to obfuscate, I am sure we can move on to the next question.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Broadwater. The minister is actually answering the question and, as I have already highlighted several times today during the estimates hearing, can answer in any way she chooses to. However, Minister, I ask you to also remain relevant to the question. Minister, do you have anything more to add?

Ms ENOCH: No problems. As I have said, in terms of the negotiations with regard to that matter, that is the remit of the Treasurer of Queensland. Perhaps the member should have asked that of the Treasurer.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, given that you have not written to the federal small business minister, given that you have not written to the federal Treasurer and given that you have not had any conversations about regulatory barriers with the federal government, what do you do? You seem to have outsourced your entire job to someone else by not contacting your relevant counterpart at the federal level?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for his passionate question. I have said already that I have had numerous conversations with various members of the federal government with regard to small business. In fact, I have had conversations with Minister Hunt and with Minister Sinodinos. I have actually written to Minister Sinodinos now that I make some recollections and those conversations have been about particular projects, in particular the National Business Simplification Initiative which we have been able to progress in Queensland. So I have—

Mr EMERSON: But you never felt it necessary to write to the small business—

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, thank you. The minister is answering your question. You do not need to interject while she is answering your question. Minister, you have the call.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. To be clear, I have written to the Prime Minister of Australia with regard to small business in Queensland. I have written and had conversations with Minister Hunt and Minister Sinodinos. I have engaged in those conversations at the national level to ensure that the projects that we are supporting here and working on with regard to our advancing small business strategy are being supported at that level.

Mr EMERSON: So, Minister, your engagement at the federal level—at the national level, to quote your words—does not involve contacting your federal counterpart the small business minister, Michael McCormack?

Ms ENOCH: Again, just to be clear, unfortunately for Australia the LNP federal government does not have small business in the inner cabinet. I want to get as greater influence as we can to support small business in Queensland, so I have written directly to the Prime Minister with regard to small business in this state. I have spoken to and written on occasions to Minister Hunt and Minister Sinodinos—inner cabinet members—to ensure that Queensland small businesses are represented and that we have the ability to collaborate on particular high-level strategic projects.

Mr EMERSON: Can the minister advise how many days a week the Small Business Champion works?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As the member would be aware, the Small Business Champion is a part-time position and the Small Business Champion is required under her contract to work 10 days per month.

Mr EMERSON: Ten days per month, so how many per year does she normally work or work on average in the last couple of months? How many days would she have worked over the last couple of months since her appointment?

Ms ENOCH: Ten days per month is what she is contracted—

Mr EMERSON: So 120 days she will work at least; 120 days per year?

Ms ENOCH: That seems like the math.

Mr EMERSON: How much is she paid?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. As I have been advised, that is a question on notice and I am happy to read that to the committee if that is what the member would require.

Mr EMERSON: I just thought you would know how much she gets paid for 10 days a month.

Ms ENOCH: Yes, I do, but it is a question on notice and I am happy to read that.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. You can refer to your question on notice thanks.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you. The response to the question on notice with regard to this matter states—

The Queensland Government appointed Ms Maree Adshead to the role of Queensland Small Business Champion on 21 December 2016. Ms Adshead's appointment ensures that Queensland's more than 414,000 small businesses have a voice on issues affecting them at a national level, working with fellow mainland State Small Business Commissioners, the Federal Government and other jurisdictions.

Miss BARTON: Point of order, Mr Chair.

CHAIR: One minute, Minister.

Miss BARTON: The question was the salary, so I would have thought it would have been a dollar amount.

Ms ENOCH: It continues—

The Queensland Small Business Champion is remunerated—

CHAIR: Minister, thank you; continue.

Ms ENOCH: I am reading the response to the question on notice as I flagged at the beginning—

as a professional service contractor and receives \$150,000 per annum ... The professional service contractor payment was determined by the Department of Tourism, Major Events, Small Business and the Commonwealth Games after undertaking research with regards to other contractual positions within Government, reviewing against other states (noting roles vary between jurisdictions) and seeking advice from the recruitment agency.

Specific responsibilities that are fulfilled by Ms Adshead include:

- representing Queensland small business at the national level by attending inter-jurisdictional meetings—

Mr EMERSON: I got my answer, Mr Chair: \$150,000 a year.

CHAIR: Thank you, Minister; yes, I think you have answered the question quite adequately.

Ms ENOCH: As I said at the beginning, I am just using the—

CHAIR: Thank you. Member for Indooroopilly, your next question.

Mr EMERSON: So \$150,000 a year I think plus another \$50,000 on top of that is possible; is that correct?

Ms ENOCH: I hope that you have read the response to the question on notice—

Mr EMERSON: I am asking you, Minister; is that correct?

Ms ENOCH: That is what is in the response to the question on notice.

Mr EMERSON: So \$200,000 a year for 10 days work a month; is that correct?

Ms ENOCH: There is a nominal further allocation of \$50,000 per annum available, if required, for travel and other miscellaneous support costs, but this funding is at the discretion of the department.

Mr EMERSON: So 10 days a month and \$150,000 at least. Given the amount being paid to the Small Business Champion, it appears you have outsourced your own task here by paying someone else \$150,000 to advocate on behalf of small business. Is that not your job to be advocating for small business?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question, but this is from a member that was part of a government that axed the Small Business Commissioner, leaving Queensland absent—

Miss BARTON: It is not about history, Minister; it is about this estimates and this budget.

CHAIR: Order! Member for Broadwater, the minister was responding to the question asked by the member for Indooroopilly. I ask you to cease your interjections please. Minister, I ask you to continue with your response.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. Abolishing the Small Business Commissioner left Queensland absent from the national Small Business Commissioners network. That meant that we were the only mainland state in Australia that was not present at that national table—a table where we see key issues being discussed with regard to national regulation programs and legislation. This national table is one where elected officials are not able to attend, but we were able to negotiate with the chair of that table to get our position back on there. Let us be clear: we saw ourselves missing as a state from those conversations for many years as a result of the decision by the former government. The establishment of the Small Business Champion is to ensure that we have the ability to be at that table.

Miss BARTON: I think we have got the answer, Mr Chair.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, do you think most small businesses out there would think that \$150,000 a year at least for 10 days of work a month is a pretty good deal?

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, you have sought the minister's opinion in your question. I ask you to rephrase your question or we will have to move on to the next one.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, would there be many small businesses out there earning \$150,000 a year for 10 days work a month?

Ms ENOCH: What I do know is that small businesses across Queensland want to make sure that their views are represented at that national table. Kate Carnell, the Australian Small Business and Family Enterprise Ombudsman, said that the appointment of Queensland's first Small Business Champion meant that Queensland had taken a positive step in the right direction. That is directly from Kate Carnell. She said that the Queensland Small Business Champion provides another strong voice for small businesses in the state and specifically Ms Carnell said that the more voices we have standing up for small business the better.

Miss BARTON: Point of order: Mr Chair, the question did not go to what the federal Ombudsman said but went to the number of small businesses in Queensland that might be paying people, effectively, \$1,250 a day.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Broadwater. I believe that the minister is answering the question in response to what was asked by the member for Indooroopilly.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. I also say that representatives of small businesses—heads of chambers et cetera—also had positive things to say about the fact that we had appointed a Queensland Small Business Champion, including Marie-Claude Brown from the Townsville Chamber of Commerce, who I know the chair knows very well. She said that upon the Small Business Champion's appointment the Queensland Small Business Champion, Maree Adshead, initiated contact with the Townsville chamber and has been listening to the issues of their members, mostly small businesses, ever since and that Ms Adshead is genuine in her interest to progress the agenda of small business issues for Queensland at that national level.

These are representatives of small businesses who see the importance of this role. We saw the small business commissioner axed under the former government and our absence from that national network table became a real issue.

Mr SAUNDERS: Can you outline how the accelerate small business program, delivered through the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy, is helping small businesses?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question. Queensland supports more than 414,000 small businesses throughout the state. As we are all aware, the first few years of starting a small business can be really tough. The Palaszczuk government recognises these trials and difficulties. That is why we developed the \$22.7 million Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy to deliver a suite of small business assistance programs. The Queensland government committed \$12 million over three years to three grant programs. Over the past 12 months, 2,749 businesses have applied for support through the suite of grants. More than 600 small businesses were successful.

I am really excited about the level of interest that has been shown and also the positive engagement from small businesses that have come on board to participate in the suite of programs developed and being delivered by the Office of Small Business. These grant programs are designed to support the creation of new businesses, help existing businesses to work smarter and be more resilient, and assist business with high-growth aspirations to grow and employ.

One program in particular is the Accelerate Small Business Grants Program, which provides grants of up to \$10,000 for businesses with high potential to grow and employ. Three million dollars has been allocated over the next three years to enable Accelerate grant recipients to engage an advisory board or independent adviser for between six and 12 months.

This grant program has truly hit the mark. Redzed Cookies Australia is a luxury biscuit manufacturer at Arundel that quickly developed a loyal following by supplying cafes and restaurants and eventually moving into wholesale distribution. RedZed's owner said that the grant could not have come at a better time and that they were extremely grateful for this Queensland government initiative. The business had grown quickly and it needed advice to make sure that it had the right structure to meet increasing demand. The business will use the funding provided to engage with a mentor and grow their operations further.

These examples and others show that the Palaszczuk government is committed to seeing Queensland small business thrive. Small business success strengthens our economy now and for the future and ensures that more operators have the confidence to start, grow and employ.

Mr WILLIAMS: How is the Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program supporting small businesses in Queensland?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the honourable member for the question. As I have already stated a number of times, there are now 414,000 small businesses throughout Queensland. There has been a very welcomed growth in that sector. As we are all aware, the first few years after starting a small business can be really challenging. The suite of programs administered as part of the Advancing Small Business Strategy includes the Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program, which has a budget allocation of \$3 million over three years.

Under the entrepreneur grants program, newly started small businesses are able to access professional advice and support during those critical early stages of establishing a business. The program has already assisted 148 budding Queensland entrepreneurs, including travel agency owner Mandy Wilson. Ms Wilson is a small business entrepreneur grant recipient who is using her funding to develop a promotional strategy for her Springfield Lakes business. Ms Wilson started her business in January this year, offering destination weddings as a special service. Since receiving her grant funding she has reported—

I'm experiencing growth and already have part-time staff who will convert to full time in the near future. I need a solid plan to create sustainable brand awareness and digital marketing engagement and I am now able to do this because of the small business entrepreneur grant.

The Palaszczuk government's Small Business Entrepreneur Grants Program is about encouraging entrepreneurship in every region of our state and increasing overall business capability and skills in our workforce. The targeted approach of this program is essential to help small business owners and operators such as Ms Wilson to start, grow and employ.

One of the things that I find through speaking to the thousands of small business operators who I get to speak with across Queensland is that it is not uncommon for me to come across small business operators who find themselves in difficulty in those first few years. You discover that there have been times when they have not even had a business plan. This small business entrepreneur's grant makes sure that people who are starting off in business have all the tools they need to be able to get that right start, to get through those challenging times and to help them be able to grow and employ, as we have seen with Ms Wilson's example.

Mrs MILLER: I am a bit intrigued with the opposition's questioning in relation to the Small Business Champion. I direct my question to the director-general. It has been stated here today that the Small Business Champion is a half-time full-time-equivalent position at \$150,000 a year. If you double that, which is full time, it is \$300,000 a year, which would be equivalent to a lower level director-general or CEO. Then you add on the 40 per cent on-costs. Director-General, where do you fit in this? Does the Small Business Champion, in effect, earn more than you do as a director-general?

Mr Walker: I thank the member for the question. There are probably a number of parts to that question. Where do I fit in? I am the director-general of a broad portfolio but, I must say, with a particular focus on small business. I regularly meet with small businesses. I regularly meet—

Mrs MILLER: No, in relation to the Small Business Champion.

Mr Walker: I was providing some context.

Mrs MILLER: In relation to the Small Business Champion. You have now said that you spend a lot of your time with small business, and I accept that. Why do we need a Small Business Champion costing, I would think, close to the equivalent of \$400,000 a year with on-costs?

Mr Walker: The decision to engage a Small Business Champion is to further provide a voice for small business. You are right: I certainly provide a voice within government for small business. The minister provides a voice for small business, but Ms Adshead, an owner of a small business, someone who is well respected in the small business arena, is able to provide engagement with the small business sector in Queensland and, in particular, focus the issues that she hears in that federal arena, as the minister mentioned.

Mrs MILLER: Can you provide the committee with your own duty statement as director-general and also the duty statement of the Small Business Champion?

Mr Walker: Can I provide it?

Mrs MILLER: Can you provide that on notice to us, please?

Mr Walker: I am happy to talk to some aspects of it now, in particular the role of the—

Mrs MILLER: No, I am happy for it to come on notice.

Mr Walker: Can I talk to some aspects of it now perhaps? Would that be useful?

Mrs MILLER: No, I am happy to read it later on, thanks.

CHAIR: It may be best to provide it tonight as part of the estimates hearing.

Mrs MILLER: I am specifically interested in the duty statements and the key performance indicators. That will be quite detailed.

Mr Walker: Perhaps if I can clarify for the member, we have a professional services contract with the Small Business Champion. It is not classically a duty statement as you framed in the public sector nature of things, but we certainly have a number of objectives that we require the Small Business Champion—

Mrs MILLER: Was the position advertised, Director-General?

Mr Walker: Yes, it was indeed, publicly.

Mrs MILLER: There would have to be a duty statement attached to that advertisement.

Mr Walker: Certainly a description as to what the role would need to fulfil.

Mrs MILLER: Yes, but there are Public Service standards and guidelines in relation to any approved position, whether that be SES or not. Is this position an SES position or equivalent to a CEO position?

Mr Walker: It is, as I mentioned earlier, a professional service contract.

Mrs MILLER: No, I am not interested in that. What I want to know is: is it equivalent to a CEO position?

Ms ENOCH: I am happy to take that on notice, member for Bundamba, and to provide the duty statements. Can I add this: the Small Business Champion provides a very vital role. Every other state and territory in mainland Australia is present at a national small business network where there are some key issues discussed at that federal level. It is absolutely vital that Queensland is present at that table. Not only does the Small Business Champion attend those meetings on behalf of Queensland, which is important; the Small Business Champion is also the chair of the Better Regulation Taskforce.

I can say that she has attended some 66 small business engagement opportunities. She has met with my office five times. She meets with industry representative bodies, regional chambers of commerce, including chambers in the regions, she participates in small business and industry events and, as I said, she is the chair of the Better Regulation Taskforce, which is able to bring all of those issues and take them to that national table, which it is critical that Queensland is present at.

Mrs MILLER: Why can't—

CHAIR: I call the member for Maryborough.

Ms ENOCH: Sorry, the member for Bundamba asked why an elected official cannot be present at that national network meeting.

Mrs MILLER: No, I said why can't the director-general do that?

Ms ENOCH: In negotiations with Kate Carnell, who is the chair of that group, we had to have a like position separate from an elected official and separate from a director-general position. This is where we were negotiated to—

Mrs MILLER: And paid for as a CEO?

Ms ENOCH: I would say that, after we saw the small business commissioner axed, cut—another job cut from this state—it is absolutely essential that we are able to be at that table. Kate Carnell has been incredibly supportive publicly of our ability to be there once again.

Mr SAUNDERS: Minister, can you update the committee on the key industry indicators that demonstrate the outcomes from the support that the Queensland government is providing Queensland small businesses?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the honourable member for the question. In the past year, the number of small businesses operating in Queensland, as I said, has grown to 414,000—an increase of more than 8,000 small business on the previous year. This growth is testament to the Palaszczuk government's commitment to supporting small businesses and the delivery of our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy.

The strategy is designed to create the right environment for small businesses to start, grow and employ. The numbers are already showing the impact it is having on the small business sector. For example, the National Australia Bank Monthly Business Survey for June 2017 shows that business confidence in Queensland has remained positive, at plus 13, being the second highest among all states. Meanwhile, the March 2017 CCIQ Pulse survey showed that Queensland's business confidence has recorded a rise of 1.7 points and is now at 49.4 points—its highest level since December 2014. These figures prove that the work that our government is doing in delivering targeted grants programs, providing extra mentoring sessions and reducing the burden of red tape is generating the results that are needed for our small business sector to thrive.

Our work and positive results are in stark contrast to the environment that we saw created for small business under the previous government. We know that the LNP government slashed 14,000 jobs from the Public Service and pushed the state's unemployment rate to its highest level in over a decade. The effect of this reckless behaviour on Queensland's small business was huge, as evidenced by the loss of 14,034 small businesses throughout the state in the 2012-13 financial year. That is an average of 269 small businesses lost per week in the first year of the LNP government.

Those types of losses took their toll on the confidence of the Queensland small business sector and impacted communities right across the state. It has taken the Palaszczuk government's dedication and hands-on commitment to develop the groundwork needed to properly support small business and boost their confidence once again.

Mr EMERSON: Director-General, when was the Small Business Champion appointed?

Mr Walker: It was December last year.

Mr EMERSON: That is, what—eight months ago? In eight months the Small Business Champion has met with your office, according to the minister a moment ago, five times?

Ms ENOCH: Sorry, just to be clear, I was referring to my office—the ministerial office, five times.

Mr EMERSON: Has met with the minister's office just five times in eight months?

Mr Walker: The appointment was made in December. The Small Business Champion commenced in January—I think, towards the end of January.

Mr EMERSON: Five times in seven months. I was being generous with the eight months.

Mr Walker: The point to make too is the other meetings that the Small Business Champion has been having also in that period of time.

Mr EMERSON: With the department or with the minister?

Mr Walker: Many meetings with the department, but certainly and most importantly meetings with the small business community.

Mr EMERSON: To the minister, I refer back to your previous answer a moment ago where you cited the CCIQ pulse survey and business confidence. Can you clarify? You said that was the highest business confidence since when was that?

Ms ENOCH: I have been advised the highest level since December 2014. That is what I have been advised.

Mr EMERSON: It was the highest since the LNP government was in power so it has been below that ever since.

Ms ENOCH: Right now—

Mr EMERSON: Can I clarify that?

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair, the fact that what we saw was the ongoing impact of when you cut 14,000 jobs practically overnight from the Public Service and the knock-on effect of that, we saw that eventuating—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, the minister is not answering the question.

Miss BARTON: Point of order. This question goes directly to confidence levels since December 2014. The minister might like to give a history lesson. She was not there. We were. This is about her budget now. The minister is refusing to answer the question. It is about confidence levels since December 2014 not before then.

CHAIR: The minister is not refusing to answer the question. The minister is, in fact, answering the question that was asked by the member for Indooroopilly and will continue to do so in the way that she chooses to do so. You may not like the answer.

Miss BARTON: She still needs to be relevant.

CHAIR: Excuse me. You may not like the answer, but the minister will answer the question how she sees fit and again, Minister, I will also add, by making sure that you are relevant to the question asked.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. Of course, what we need to understand is that we saw the decline of the number of small businesses in this state. When you literally take out that kind of economic buying power from the ecosystem what you see is small businesses hurting. What we have seen in just the last 12 months is an increase of 8,000 small businesses, now 414,000 small businesses, as a result of our interventions with regard to the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, going back to your answer previously, is it not a fact, based on what you have just said, that the CCIQ pulse survey has had business confidence at a lower level throughout the Palaszczuk Labor government's time in office compared to the previous LNP government?

Ms ENOCH: Let me provide the member with some other information.

Mr EMERSON: No, can I ask you that question?

Ms ENOCH: The March quarter Sensis business index also recorded Queensland's business confidence—

Mr EMERSON: Mr Chair, I specifically asked, quoting from the minister, who referred to the CCIQ pulse survey, about that survey. She is now going on to other surveys. It cannot be relevant to the question. I am relating it back to the minister's own question from her own members. She quoted the CCIQ pulse survey. She pointed out that the pulse survey is now the highest it has been since December 2014. It is now a fact, is it not, Minister, that it is now lower than it was under the LNP?

CHAIR: You have made your point of order. The minister was attempting to answer the question very early on in her response. We will allow the minister to continue to respond, which will answer your question I am sure. Thank you, Minister.

Ms ENOCH: Thank you, Chair. I can also point to the CCIQ pulse survey in March 2017 that also profitability rose by 6.4 points in this quarter to 49.5 and its highest level since September 2007. There are multiple aspects of what we are seeing in terms of growth and confidence in small business. There are multiple surveys that are indicating growth in confidence and growth in small businesses in this state, something that we should all be very proud of. There are more than 8,000 more small businesses in this state. We know that they are an important part. A lot of people talk about small business and it being the backbone of our economy and it is true, but we also know that big business is not employing the way that it used to and that small business and medium sized enterprises is where we will see the highest job growth into the future. That is why we are supporting small business through our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy ensuring that we have small business advocates at every level to get the voices of our small businesses into every part of the way that we create legislation, programs, policies and processes so that small businesses can thrive in this state.

Mr EMERSON: The CCIQ pulse survey, which you cited a short time ago, has listed business confidence in Queensland at negative levels every single quarter since the Labor government was elected in 2015. I am interested in the fact that you have cited that survey. Do you agree with the fact that most small businesses surveyed by CCIQ have viewed your government negatively?

Ms ENOCH: The member is asking for an opinion. However, what I will say is this: one year ago we launched the Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy recognising that small businesses had been through the wringer under the LNP. When you cut 14,000 people from the Public Service it is a shock to the system. Many small businesses were struggling a great deal with regard to that extraction of consumable income in their areas. Regional Queensland was particularly hard hit. One year ago we established our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy and I am very pleased to be able to report to the committee again this year on the positive impact that we are seeing as a result of the work that we are doing.

Mr EMERSON: Why was, under the CCIQ pulse survey, business confidence higher under the LNP than it has ever been under the Palaszczuk Labor government and your time as small business minister?

Ms ENOCH: Can I just be clear for the member—

CHAIR: Before you answer that question, member for Indooroopilly, your question is actually seeking an expression of opinion.

Mr EMERSON: I asked a question: why.

CHAIR: I am not going to debate it with you. Member for Indooroopilly, can you rephrase your question, please?

Mr EMERSON: Why was business confidence higher under the LNP than it has ever been under the Palaszczuk Labor government?

Ms ENOCH: Through the chair, of course I mentioned the CCIQ pulse survey, but there are many other surveys that indicate that small businesses had gone through the wringer under the LNP. One year ago, not long after I had become the Minister for Small Business, we established—

Mr EMERSON: Point of order. I asked a very specific question. The minister is not talking about the pulse survey, the same survey that she quoted from. I have quoted from it. I am asking her a very specific question regarding the pulse survey which the minister herself cited before I even mentioned it.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Indooroopilly. If you were listening to the minister's response she actually did refer to that survey.

Mr EMERSON: No, she referred to other surveys, the Sensis survey and other surveys.

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Indooroopilly. I am not going to debate it with you. What I will say is that the minister is actually responding to your question, cited that survey as you had highlighted and continued to cite other surveys in her response. Minister, I will ask you to continue if you have anything further to add.

Ms ENOCH: I thank the chair for his guidance. As I have already said, I know firsthand, and I do not need to read a survey, to be honest, from the conversations that I have been having with small businesses right across this state that they absolutely had been devastated by the way that the LNP had cut public servants, which had impacted their businesses as a result of that. One year ago we established our Advancing Small Business Queensland Strategy: \$22.7 million to support small businesses in this state to start to grow and employ. We are seeing the benefits of that strategy: 414,000 small businesses. We are up 2.1 per cent with regard to the number of small businesses we have in this state. That is the highest increase in three years.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, according to information from the Australian Financial Security Authority, Queensland has led the nation in business related bankruptcies every single quarter since Labor was elected. As the Minister for Small Business, why are businesses finding it so hard to survive in Queensland on your watch?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question, but I will point again to the fact that we have seen incredible growth of small businesses in this state. We have seen a 2.1 per cent increase in the number of small businesses. In fact, we are also seeing an increase in the survival rate of small businesses. The survival rate in terms of a business that exists after four years of operation has increased. The actual number that the member is using is actually with regard to all businesses not just small businesses. In fact, what we have seen from the ABS data is an increase in survival rates of small businesses in Queensland—that is the area that we are discussing—and we have seen an increase in the number of small businesses in this state. Again, the number that the member is referring to is all businesses.

Mr EMERSON: Again I make the point that every single quarter since Labor was elected we have led the nation in business related bankruptcies. Given that you are involved in this government, you are part of this government, why is Queensland leading the nation in business related bankruptcies?

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, I believe that is the same question that you asked in your last question.

Mr EMERSON: I did not really get an answer last time.

CHAIR: You may not have liked the answer that the minister gave you, but the minister actually very clearly articulated a response that related directly to your question so I ask you to please move on to your next question as it was repetitious.

Mr EMERSON: Thank you, Mr Chair. Can the minister explain why wholesale electricity prices have increased by 70 per cent in the last two years, increasing power costs for small business?

CHAIR: Is this an area of your portfolio?

Ms ENOCH: I thank the member for the question and the chair. The specific aspect of the question is outside of this portfolio so I will take your guidance.

CHAIR: Member for Indooroopilly, would you like to rephrase your question?

Mr EMERSON: Given that small businesses cite rising electricity costs as one of the major factors in whether they survive or not, why have wholesale electricity prices gone up by almost 70 per cent under your government in the last two years if you are so much a supporter of small business?

CHAIR: I invited you to rephrase it. I think you have just asked the question again. That falls outside of the minister's portfolio area. You may argue with me. However, you have asked about the increase in prices to wholesale electricity which the minister clearly has no direct responsibility for.

Miss BARTON: Point of order. The minister is clearly responsible for making sure that small business is able to operate effectively in this state. The costs of operating small business are absolutely relevant to the minister's portfolio and the minister's estimates. Absolutely this question is relevant and should be put to the minister. It goes to her ability to be able to conduct her portfolios and the confidence of small business.

Mr SAUNDERS: Point of order, Chair. Can anyone on this committee or anyone else tell me if the Minister for Small Business in Queensland sets our electricity prices?

CHAIR: Thank you, member for Maryborough. Member for Indooroopilly, I will invite you to rephrase your question so it fits within the minister's portfolio area.

Mr EMERSON: The Chamber of Commerce and Industry Queensland have cited that electricity costs are the number one issue for small business and that 20 per cent of businesses may have to cut staff in the wake of rising electricity costs under the Palaszczuk Labor government. What are you doing about that?

Ms ENOCH: I remind the member that under the former government we saw a 43 per cent increase in power prices. As I said earlier, small businesses have indicated to me that they went through the wringer under the LNP. That 43 per cent increase in electricity prices was just one of the knockout punches for some of those small businesses in our state. We have been able to stabilise electricity prices to a 1.9 per cent increase per year on average, compared to that whopping 43 per cent increase under the term of the LNP.

Mr EMERSON: For small business?

Ms ENOCH: I also say this, seeing as the member for Indooroopilly wishes to interject: acknowledging that the impact that cost increases can have on individual small businesses, especially those costs that are essential to running a business, the Palaszczuk government recently announced our \$1.16 billion Powering Queensland Plan, to put downward pressure on wholesale energy costs, deliver new jobs and investment, mostly in our regions, and lead the transition to a clean energy future in a responsible and affordable way. Inside that plan is a \$771 million electricity affordability package. One aspect of that is \$10 million for the regional business customer support package. We understand that we need to act to be able to support all Queenslanders and businesses by seeing electricity prices stabilising in the state.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, you have cited rising electricity prices. Again, 85 per cent of businesses surveyed by CCIQ indicate that bills have gone up by 50 per cent in the past two years, not the one to two per cent that you quoted a moment ago. Is CCIQ wrong in citing a 50 per cent increase in costs to businesses for electricity over the past two years?

Ms ENOCH: I think we all acknowledge the pressure that electricity prices have on all Queenslanders and small businesses. The 43 per cent increase that we saw under the former government hit everybody—every family, every small business and every major business in this state. It was a huge impediment to growth. As I have already said, we are looking at ways to support small business and Queenslanders to be able to stabilise electricity pricing in their households and in their businesses.

Again, \$10 million for the regional business customer support package is looking at a tariff trial for small agricultural customers to better understand how the price signals on standard tariffs affect small-customer bills. There is an awareness campaign to better explain the bill impacts of different tariff options. There is a deployment of digital meters to large customers to help them understand the way they use electricity and a large-customer adjustment trial to test the case for government co-contributions to help fund step changes in customer operations and equipment to lower bills. This is part of the \$1.168 billion Powering Queensland Plan, which is funding a number of these initiatives.

Of course, we know that, in terms of the National Energy Market, that system is a mess under the federal LNP. It is an absolute mess. We are doing our bit in Queensland. One of the ways that we have been able to do that is through retaining the ownership of our assets, so we have been able to apply that downward pressure. Of course, there are still challenges with regard to electricity. We are supporting small business in every way that we can. Our Advancing Small Business Strategy is absolutely doing what we expected it to do, with 414,000 small businesses in Queensland, which is an increase of 8,000 small businesses in the past 12 months.

CHAIR: We have time for one more question.

Mr EMERSON: Minister, you have been keen to cite the Sensis Business Index. Under that index, just seven per cent of businesses surveyed believe that the state government has policies to support them—just seven per cent. Why do only seven per cent believe that the government has policies to support them, according to that index?

Ms ENOCH: The member is asking for an opinion, again. He is asking me why that is the case.

CHAIR: I was distracted. Member for Indooroopilly, can you please repeat the question so that I can make a determination?

Mr EMERSON: The minister has cited repeatedly the Sensis Business Index. According to the index, just seven per cent of businesses surveyed believe that the state government has policies that support them—just seven per cent. Why has the government failed small business, according to this survey?

Ms ENOCH: When you look at the growth of small businesses and the number of small businesses that are still in existence after four years of operation, you see that those numbers have increased in the state in the past 12 months. These are the indicators that we are supporting small businesses. There is no more positive a story than when you see small businesses growing in this state.

CHAIR: Minister, the time allocated for the consideration of the estimates of expenditure in the portfolio area of Small Business has expired. Minister, one question was taken notice. It was around the duty statements. Could you provide that answer by 5 pm on Thursday, 27 July—that is, this Thursday coming.

The transcript of this session of the hearing will be available on the Hansard page of the parliament's website within two hours. I thank the minister and departmental officers for their attendance. I thank Hansard and our sound people, who have helped out today as well. I declare the committee's estimates hearing closed.

Committee adjourned at 7.20 pm